CHAPTER VIII.

CEYLON.

CONTENTS.
Introductory—Anurâdhapura—Polonnaruwa

INTRODUCTORY.

If the materials existed for writing it in anything like a complete and satisfactory manner, there are few chapters in this history that ought to be so interesting or instructive as that which treats of the architecture of Ceylon. It alone, of all known countries, contains a complete series of Buddhist monuments extending from the time of Aśoka to the present day, and in the 'Dīpavamsa' and 'Mahāvamsa' it possesses a history so detailed and generally so credible, that the dates and purposes of the earlier buildings can be ascertained with tolerable precision. We know, indeed, that the early chronology is based on the legend that the kingdom was founded at the date of Buddha's Nirvâna, which was placed in B.C. 543, and 236 years before the Council held in the eighteenth year of Aśoka. But from Indian data we must place the Council about B.C. 246, and this reduces the dates dependent on the Nirvâna by fully sixty years. Lassen accepted the native chronology from the accession of Dutthagâmani, B.C. 161; but there are indications in Indian history that the correction must be continued till at least the 6th century A.D., after which the error perhaps diminishes till it finally vanishes in the 12th century at the time of the accession of Parâkramabâhu I, in 1153 A.D. With this rectification we may be satisfied for our purposes.

1 Lassen, 'Indische Alterthumskunde,' Ed. 2, Bd. II., Ss. 109ff., 266, 287ff., 1225ff. In the 27th chapter of the 'Mahāvamsa,' Dutthagâmani's accession is placed 146 years after Devânampiya Tissa, who began to reign about B.C. 246. Max Müller ('History of Ancient Sankrit Literature,' pp. 268-269 and 298ff.) ascribed the Nirvâna to B.C. 477 or 478; Dr. J. F. Fleet ('Journal Royal Asiatic Society,' 1906, pp. 984ff.) discussed the evidence afresh, and ascribed it to B.C. 482. I am indebted to the latter for the substance of the above statement.
Besides the intrinsic interest of Sinhalese architecture, if it were possible to compare this unbroken series with its ascertained dates with the fragmentary groups on the continent of India, its parallelisms might throw much light on many questions that are obscure and uncertain, and the whole acquire a consistency that is now only too evidently wanting. ¹

The survey of the Ceylon monuments owed its first inception to Sir Hercules Robinson, then Governor, and in 1871 a series of photographs of the principal remains at Anurâdhapura and Polonnaruwa was taken by the late Mr. Lawton, under the personal direction of Mr. J. G. Smither, Government Architect, and supplemented a little later by a second series, by Captain Hogg, R.E. These threw some light on the matter; but photographs alone—without plans or dimensions or descriptions—are most deceptive guides, and, for the time, they added little to our scientific knowledge. In 1873, however, under directions from the Governor, Sir William H. Gregory, a survey was made by Mr. Smither of what was then known at Anurâdhapura, and detailed plans and other architectural drawings of the more important ruins were eventually completed in accordance with recommendations by the late Mr. James Fergusson.² In 1894, however, Mr. Smither's most valuable work on Anurâdhapura was published; the plates of drawings in it are excellent, and the collotype photographs add materially to its interest and value. If we had delineations of the other remains in Ceylon excavated and surveyed since 1890, prepared and described with like skill and accuracy, they would be of the very highest value for the history of Sinhalese architecture.

Meanwhile, much progress has been made, for in 1884 the Governor, Sir Arthur H. Gordon, now Lord Stanmore, intrusted Mr. S. M. Burrows of the Civil Service, under the supervision

¹ Sir Emerson Tennent's book, published in 1859, was one of the best works on the subject. He had, however, no special qualifications for the task, beyond what were to be expected from any well-educated gentleman of talent, and his description of the buildings is only meant for popular reading.

² Nothing was generally known in England of this survey till 1888, when a paper by Mr. John Capper on the Anurâdhapura dagâbas appeared in the 'Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,' N.S., vol. xx., pp. 165-180. His son, Mr. G. Capper, had been employed in the survey under Mr. Smither, F.R.I.B.A., whose work—'Architectural Remains: Anurâdhapura, Ceylon, comprising the dagâbas and certain other ancient ruined structures with fifty-seven plates' (Atlas fol.)—contains the results of the surveys made in 1873-77.

VOL. I.
of the late Mr. R. W. Ievers, with the work of survey and excavation at Anurâdhapura, including the partial conservation of the crumbling remains, and clearing them of vegetation. This he carried on for a year and a half.¹ In 1890 a general survey was organised, and Mr. H. C. P. Bell of the same service was appointed Archaeological Commissioner. He has supplied Government from time to time with progress reports on his work, especially at Anurâdhapura;² but no systematic account with architectural drawings has yet been published to which the student can apply for connected and detailed information.

One of the most striking peculiarities of Ceylonese art, as compared with that of the continent, was the almost total absence of sculpture known to us previous to the excavations made within the last thirty-five years. Now, however, there have been brought to light, besides carved capitals, string courses, friezes, and the like—a number of statues of Buddha, his disciples and other personages. The Tamil invaders, who often ravaged the richest provinces of the island, were Brahmanical Hindus, and had no respect for Buddhist idols; whilst the reported wealth of the shrines was a strong temptation to their destruction in search of treasure. The Sinhalese, moreover, were chiefly adherents of the Hinayâna school, and had no pantheon to compare with that of the northern schools, and their principal figures would be those of the Buddha with his attendants. Further, as is the case in Burma, where is an unlimited amount of painting and carving, but little sculpture properly so called, something similar may have occurred in Ceylon. So far as we can now see, all the great topes were covered with chûnam, which may have been painted to any extent, and all the vihâras, as in Burma, were in wood or brick, and consequently unfitted for permanent sculpture. But there are evidences to show that most of the religious structures were ornamented with figures in chûnam, in more or less relief; and brick cores are met with on which representations of men and animals were moulded. Besides this, such information as we have would lead us to suppose that painting was a more favoured art with the islanders than sculpture.

¹ Between 1874 and 1880 the Ceylon Government had employed first Dr. P. Goldschmidt, and after his death, Dr. Edward Müller, to copy the inscriptions; and in 1883 a thin volume of texts and translations, with an accompanying series of plates, was issued by the latter scholar.

² These reports are printed by the Ceylon Government as ‘Sessional Papers,’ and the earlier ones are accompanied by rough lithographs of plans and sketches in pen and ink. Mr. Bell, however, issues his reports from 1900 onwards, with “half tone” block illustrations.

It is to be hoped the Ceylon Government, after having incurred the expense of the survey, will not fail to make the results available by adequate publication.
When Fah Hian, for instance, visited the island in A.D. 412-413, he describes an accompaniment to the procession of the Tooth relic as follows: “The king next causes to be placed on both sides of the road representations of the 500 bodily forms which the Bodhisattva assumed during his successive births”—the jātakas in fact. “These figures,” he adds, “are all beautifully painted in divers colours, and have a very life-like appearance.”¹ It was not that they could not sculpture in stone, for, as we shall presently see, some of their carvings are of great delicacy and cleverness of execution, but they seem to have preferred colour to the more permanent forms of representation. Early figures of the Buddha are comparatively few: possibly they were destroyed by the Tamil invaders; still the excavations of the last thirty years have brought to light quite a considerable number of various ages. On the embankments of many tanks there are slabs carved with five or seven headed serpents, which may be of any age, and at the foot of every important flight of steps there are two dwārpāls or doorkeepers with this strange appendage, and attached to each of the chapels of the Abhayagiri dāgaba are figures of a great Nāga. These may be regarded as an evidence of the early prevalence of the worship of serpents in the island.

Another peculiarity of the Ceylonese monuments is their situation in the two capitals of the island, for, it will have been observed, none of the remains of Buddhist architecture described in the previous chapters are found in the great capital cities of the Empire. They are detached monuments, spared by accident in some distant corner of the land, or rock-cut examples found in remote and secluded valleys. The Buddhist Palibothra has entirely perished—so has Srāvasti and Vaisālī; and it is with difficulty we can identify Kapilavastu, Kusinārā, and other famous cities, whose magnificent monasteries and stūpas are described by the Chinese travellers in the 5th or 7th century of our era. In a great measure this may be owing to their having been built of brick and wood; and, in that climate, vegetation is singularly destructive of the first, and insects and decay of the second. But much is also due to the country having been densely peopled ever since the disappearance of the Buddhists. It may also be remarked that the people inhabiting the plains of Bengal since the extinction of Buddhism were either followers of the Brahmanical or Muhammadan religions—both inimical to them, or, at least, having no respect for their remains.

In Ceylon the case is different. Though the great capitals were early deserted, the mass of the people are still Buddhists, as they have been for the last 2000 years, and there, consequently, cities are still found adorned with monuments, which, though in ruins, convey a sufficient impression of what those of India must have been in the days of her glory.

Anurâdhapura seems to have become the capital of Ceylon about 370 years before Christ, or about a century after the death of Buddha, and the fabled introduction of his religion into the island. It was not, however, till about B.C. 240, that it became a sacred city, and one of the principal capitals of Buddhism in the East, which it continued to be till the 9th century. Then, owing to the repeated and destructive invasions of the Malabars, an alternative capital was formed at Polonnaruwa, which gradually supplanted Anurâdhapura, and became the sole capital till the 13th century. That city reached its period of greatest prosperity and extension, apparently in the reign of Parâkrama Bâhu I., 1153-86, and then sank during a long and disastrous period into decay. The seat of Government, after 1236, was moved hither and thither, till the country fell into the hands of the Portuguese and Dutch, and finally succumbed to our power.

**ANURÂDHAPURA.**

The city of Anurâdhapura until within quite recent years stood almost deserted in the midst of dense and sparsely inhabited jungle. Its public buildings must have suffered severely from the circumstances under which it perished, exposed for centuries to the attacks of foreign enemies. Besides this, the rank vegetation of Ceylon had been at work for 1000 years, stripping off all traces of plaster ornaments, and splitting the masonry in many places. Now, however, it is a prosperous town of about 4000 inhabitants, the capital of the North-Central Province, and on the railway from Colombo to Jaffna.

The very desolation, however, of its situation has preserved the ancient monuments from other and greater dangers. No bigoted Moslim has pulled them down to build mosques and monuments of his own faith; no indolent Hindû has allowed their materials to be used for private purposes or appropriated as private plunder; and only to a limited extent have English officials rendered them available for mending station roads and bridges.1 We may be sure, however, that these ruins

---

1 As in India, the ruins in Ceylon have suffered at the hands of the Public Works: thus we learn that "countless pillars and steps have been broken up to go into
deserve the greatest attention from the student of Buddhist architecture, and that a vast fund of information may be drawn from them when they have been sufficiently explored and fully delineated and described.

The peculiar fortune of Anurâdhapura is that it continued the capital of Ceylon for about ten centuries; and, alone of all Buddhist cities, it retains something like a complete series of the remains of its greatness during that period. We possess, moreover, in the ‘Mahâwansa’ and other Ceylonese chronicles, a tolerably authentic account of the building of these monuments, and of the purposes to which they were dedicated. Among the vestiges of its former grandeur still to be found, are the ruins of half-a-dozen or more large dome-shaped stūpas or dâgabas, and many smaller ones of numerous monasteries and of a terraced enclosure erected to contain the sacred Bo-tree, besides numerous other ruins and antiquities. Among these is the great mound usually called Elâla Sohona, or the tomb of the usurper Elâla; but this traditional name is incorrect, for recent excavation has shown that it covers the remains of a large stūpa about 180 ft. in diameter—possibly the Dakshina stūpa referred to in the chronicles.

Two of the dâgabas are of the largest size known: one, the Abhayagiri,¹ the dome, continued down to the ground, is exactly hemispherical, and has a diameter of about 328 ft., being thus more than 1000 ft. in circumference, and with the base and spire must have made up a total elevation of about 250 ft., which is not far short of the traditional height of 120 cubits assigned to it in the ‘Mahâwansa.’² It is ascribed to King Walagam-bâhu or Vattagâmanî-Abhaya, who reconquered his kingdom late in the first century B.C. from foreign usurpers who had deposed him and occupied his throne for about fifteen years; and to commemorate the event he built a vihâra on the site of a Jaina temple. Nothing is said about his erecting the dâgaba or chaitya, though there must have

culverts on a road not traversed by a cart once in six months,” and the ruins at Puliyan-kulama were “sadly destroyed for ashar to build three or four large culverts on a branch road.” Besides later damages caused by reckless blasting elsewhere, minor ruins also about Anurâdhâpura disappeared on lands sold to natives prior to 1890. The restorations most to be feared are those by the priests, who “are erecting at Ruwanveli dâgaba a series of shrines in a modern style absolutely frightful.” — Général L. de Beylè, ‘L’Architecture Hindoue en Extrême-Orient,’ p. 364.

¹ Until the accuracy, or otherwise of the current identifications are fully investigated, we can only follow the traditional account which, in the case of the more notable dâgabas can hardly be in error. The capital and pinnacle of the Abhayagiri were restored by prison labour in 1890.

² The cubit of Ceylon is nearly 2 ft. 3 in.; it has sometimes been taken as 2 ft. 3½ in. The present total height from the platform to the top of the ruined spire is 232 ft.—Smither, ‘Architectural Remains: Anurâdhapura,’ p. 47.
been one in connection with the vihāra. It seems to be referred to about a century later; and by Gajabahu I., in the 2nd century A.D. we are told "it was constructed of a greater elevation, and he caused arches to be built at the four gates." Such casing of smaller dāgabas to enlarge them was not infrequent. The stūpa stands on a stone-paved platform 590 ft. square, raised about 9½ ft. above the ground level, and ascended on each side by a flight of steps 27 ft. wide. The excavations here and at the other large dāgabas have shown that, as with the Nepal and Indian chaityas, at each cardinal point there were richly carved, oblong projections from the circle of the lower pāsādas or terraced basement, which were, doubtless, the chapels or thrones for the Dhyāni Buddhas. We have a similar arrangement also at Sānchi and in the Kalinga stūpas.2

The second tope is the Jetawanārāma, begun by King Mahāsena in the 4th century, and finished by his successor, Kittis–Siri Meghavanna. In form and dimensions it is almost identical with the last described, though somewhat more perfect in outline, owing probably to its being more modern than its rival.3 Its chapels seem to have been quite ruined.

Next to these, but far more important from its sacredness, is the Ruwanveli dāgaba, erected by King Dutthagāmani, between the years B.C. 102 and 78, over a very imposing collection of relics, of which a full account is given in the 28th to 31st chapters of the ‘Mahāwansa.’ Its dimensions are very similar to those of the last two described; but it has been so much defaced, that except the remains of the circular plinths round its base, it has, like the rest, become only a huge shapeless mound of solid brickwork. The excavations, however, have made it plain that the dome had a diameter of 252 ft. 8 in., that, like all the others, it stood upon a basement of three plinths called pāsādas, or procession terraces, together 15 ft. high, and rose from a stilted drum to a greater height than a hemisphere. The ‘Mahāwansa’ says it was 120 cubits high, or about 270 ft., but the present mound stands only about 179 ft. above the paved platform, which is 5 ft. 7 in. above the ground.

1. Mahāwansa, ch. 35.
2. ‘Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,’ 1902, p. 32; ‘Buddhist Art in India,’ p. 195. The dhamma, or seat for Vairochana, is in the relic chamber. At the Mirisaveti dāgaba at Anurādhapura, and at Rankot and Kiri dāgabas at Polonnaruwa, Mr. Bell has found several detached cells or chapels—probably of late date. That the Mahāyāna ritual had found acceptance in Ceylon by the 9th century or earlier, is evidenced by Mr. Bell’s discovery at the Vijayārāma monastery of copper plaques bearing invocations to Akāśagarbha, Vairochana, Tārā, etc. — ‘Sessional Papers,’ 1896, pp. 460, 464–467.
3. Its dome is 310 ft. in diameter and its height to the top of the square capital, 187 ft. 6 in., and to the top of the ruined spire 245 ft.—Smither’s ‘Anurādhapura,’ plate 47.
level, and measures 475 ft. from north to south by 473 ft. across, the retaining wall being carved with elephants. The four thrones or chapels are found facing the cardinal points—that on the south being the least ruined.

The same king had previously erected another smaller dâgaba, about 133 ft. in diameter at the rise of the dome. It is known as the Mirisavetiya dâgaba, and like the last described it is very much ruined. Like the other dâgabas it had three low pâsadâs or terraces round the base from 5 to 6 ft. in breadth, together projecting 16 ft. 7 in. from the bell of the dâgaba, and rising to 13 ft. 5 in. from the pavement.¹

An excavation on the west side, however, revealed a handsome chapel, similar to those at the other dâgabas, but differing in detail, and in a much more perfect condition. The whole is elaborately carved in horizontal bands with elephants and other animals, rosettes, etc., and at the ends are richly-carved stelae surmounted by lions. Behind the chapels at the Ruwanveli

¹ For full description and drawings, see Smither’s ‘Anurâdhapura,’ pp. 19-22, and plates 14-21. Excavation on the east side, in search of a corresponding structure proved fruitless. In 1890 the dâgaba was ‘being elaborately restored by prison labour at the expense of a Siamese prince.’—‘Sessional Papers,’ 1890, p. 43. This restoration has been left unfinished for want of funds.
dagaba are flights of steps by which access was had from the first to the second pasàda or terrace. The first was reached from the pavement by a stair on the east side of the south chapel; whilst behind this chapel there is only one stair from the second to the third terrace. A somewhat similar arrange-

ment of stairs also existed at the Abhayagiri and Mirisavetiya dagabas; and it is very probable also at the Jetawanârâma dagaba, though the published results of the surveys do not show. The façade of the chapels consists first of a plain base, above which is a row of kneeling elephants with pateræ between them, very like those used in the metopes of the Roman Doric order; above this are three plain faces divided by ornamental string-courses; then a bracket cornice with pateræ again, and above this two more plain faces and string-courses. Over this there was probably a frieze of animals and a band simulating a Buddhist rail, with a blocking course over it, as at the Mirisavetiya dagaba.

At each end of this projecting arrangement were two stelæ—the inner covered by foliaged and other patterns, the outer in one instance, at the Ruwanveli, by a seven-headed serpent, as will be observed in the Woodcut No. 127; at the Abhayagiri, there are serpent figures at all the chapels—each on a separate stone—and here the inner stele is adorned with a pattern so nearly identical with that on the pillars of the western gateway at Sâñchi, that we may recognise them as belonging to about

1 At the Mirisaveti these are lotus flowers.
2 'Tree and Serpent Worship,' plate 19. In some respects it resembles the Woodcuts Nos. 39 and 40. Similar stelae were also found at Amarâvatî. — Archaeol. Survey of Southern India; Amarâvatî and Jaggayyapeta Stûpas,' plate 33; fig. 2; plate 38, fig. 7; plate 40, fig. 3; plate 44, fig. 1; and plate 54, fig. 1.
the same age. On the other stele in this tope (Woodcut No. 129) we recognise the shield, the Swastika, the Triratna, and other Buddhist emblems with which we are already familiar.¹

129. Stele at the east end of the north chapel, Abhayagiri Dâgaba. (From a Photograph.)

All this is architecturally so unlike anything we find of the same age on the continent of India, while its sculptured details are so nearly identical, that, when we come to know more about it, these differences and similarities may lead to most important inferences; but we must at present wait for the requisite information to enable us to see the bearing of these peculiarities.

Besides these four large buildings there are two smaller ones, known as the Thûpârâma and Lankârâma, very similar to one another in size and arrangement. The first named is represented in Woodcut No. 130. The dâgaba itself, though small, was originally of a singularly elegant bell-shaped outline.² As it

¹ For photographic illustrations of the stele, at each of the chapels of this dâgaba.
—Smithers 'Anurâdhapura,' plates 41-43.
² Since the drawing was made from which this cut is taken, it was thoroughly repaired in 1842, and made as unlike what it was as can well be conceived.
—Smithers 'Anurâdhapura,' plates 2-8.
appears since it was restored in 1842, is shown on Plate No. II. Its diameter and height are now nearly the same—at the base about 55 ft.; and it stands on a platform raised about 11 ft. from the ground, on which are arranged four rows of tall pillars of strikingly slender proportions, which form by far the most important architectural ornament of the building. The inner circle stands about 3 ft. from the dagaba, and the next two about 10 ft. from each other. The shafts are monoliths 22 ft. 10 in. in height in the inner row, and diminish successively by about 18 in. in the next two rows, in each of which the lower part, to a third of the height, is left square, each side being about 1 ft. These sustain octagonal capitals of singularly graceful outlines, 2 ft. 1 in. in height, and 2 ft. 2 in. across the top. They are carved with figures and foliage, and under the capitals the pillars are ornamented with fringes 14 in. deep, depending from kirttimukh faces carved in low relief on the angles. The sculpture on the capitals of the first and second circles are similar, namely squatting or dwarf human figures; in the third row the ornaments differ. The pillars in the fourth or outer circle are monoliths, 14 ft. in height including the capitals; they are entirely octagonal, and their shafts are 10 in. diameter. The capitals are very similar to those of the inner circles, but differ in dimensions and ornamentation. They are 21 in. in height and 18½ in. across the abacus, and are sculptured with sixteen capering dwarfs (Woodcut No. 131). They have octagonal seatings on the tops of 2½ in. high and 10 in. diameter,
THUṆAKAMA DĀGABA (AS RESTORED) (To face page 234, Vol. 1)
over which is a rounded boss 4 in. in diameter. Some of the capitals in the two inner rows have raised pads, and various forms of seatings that might have been supports for images or symbols; all in the third circle have square pads on them. Originally there have been 128 of these pillars belonging to the three inner circles, and 48 more in the outer or fourth row; the latter are more slender than the others, and stand in a circle 14 ft. beyond the third.

This relic-shrine was originally erected by the celebrated King Devānampiya Tissa, about 246 years B.C., to contain the right collar bone of Buddha, which—say the Buddhist chroniclers—descending from the skies, placed itself on the crown of the monarch. As contemporary with Asoke it belongs to the most interesting period of Buddhist history, and is older, or, at least, as old, as anything now existing on the continent of India; and there is every reason to suppose it existed till 1842, as nearly as may be, in the form in which it was originally designed, having escaped alteration, and, what is more unusual in a Buddhist relic-shrine, having escaped augmentation. When the celebrated Tooth Relic was brought hither from India some time during the 4th century, it was deposited in a small building erected for the purpose to the south-east of the circular platform. This was known as the Dalada Maligāwa or Tooth relic Temple.

The Lankārāma (Woodcut No. 132) is extremely similar to the last—though there is no distinct historical mention of its erection in the Sinhalese chronicles. Its being encircled by pillars, like the Thūpārāma, might suggest that it belonged to about the same age, and this seems supported by Mr. Smither’s drawings, which point in that direction. The building, however, has more than once undergone restorations that may have nearly obliterated its more ancient features. Parākrama Bāhu I. (1153-1186) repaired many of the old monuments—most probably

---

1 From Smither’s, ‘Anurādhapura’, plate 7, fig. 3.
2 These pillars were arranged thus: 52 in the inner circle, 36 in the second, and 40 in the third; those in the inner circle are only 2 ft. 5 in. apart, except in front of the chapels, where they are about 9 ft. 4 in. apart in each circle. None of the other pillars in one circle are directly opposite pillars in the next.
3 Captain Chapman said it was built by Abhaya Tissa, A.D. 231; Major Forbes assigned it to Mahāsena between 277 and 304 (Sinhalese dates); and Mr Smither suggests that it might be the vihāra, unnamed by Turnour, mentioned as built by Mahāsiva, cir. B.C. 190; this last, however, was the Nagarangana vihāra. — ‘Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society,’ vol. xx. pp. 175 ff.; Forbes ‘Eleven Years in Ceylon’; Wijesinha, ‘Mahāwansa,’ part i., p. 81.
this among them, and in the 18th century it underwent a special restoration.

The base is 9 ft. high, and the dome upon this is hemi-

spherical and 38 ft. in diameter. The lower 4 ft. of the base has apparently been extended by an addition of varying breadth all round, which includes the innermost row of very graceful pillars. The second circle is 7 ft. 8 in. in advance of the first, and the third—like the fourth at the Thūpārāma—consists of more slender shafts only 12 ft. 5 in. high, and stands 16½ ft. outside the second circle. These pillars are all monolithic—the shaft and capital being in one piece. Those of the second circle stand 16 ft. 11 in. above the raised pavement on which the dagaba stands, the level of the heads of the inner circle being 5 in. higher. In both, the shafts are 13 in. square to about a third of their height, above which they are octagonal. The capitals (Woodcut No. 133) are 26½ in. high and 2 ft. across at 6 in. below the top, from which they

1 From Smithers 'Anuradhapura,' plate 13, fig. 1.
curve inwards to 12 in. broad at the top, which is flat. All these capitals are carved with seated lions. In the third and outermost circle the shafts are 10 in. in diameter and octagonal throughout; their capitals are 25½ in. high and at greatest width 19 in., diminishing to 9½ in. at the top, ornamented, like those of the Thûpârâma, with sixteen dwarf figures instead of lions. There were 20 pillars in the inner circle, 28 in the second, and 40 in the third—those in one circle having no relation in position to those in the next.

As will be observed, the two last-mentioned dâgâbas present us with a peculiarity not found on any example we have elsewhere met with outside Ceylon, inasmuch as they are surrounded by three circles of slender monolithic pillars of very elegant design. The purpose of those pillars is somewhat perplexing: it has been suggested that they may once have carried a roof, but they are so slender, and arranged without relation of those in one circle to those in the next, that any roof—of however light materials—could hardly have been placed on them; and the examination of the capitals does not favour such a hypothesis. They rather correspond to the rails of Indian stûpas, marking out procession paths or pradakshinas, whilst they were probably also employed as stambhas or lâts. The tallest of them, in the two inner circles at the Thûpârâma, had tenons of different sizes and forms on the capitals—hardly two of them being alike—which indicate that they may have supported various religious symbols and images, such as Dharmachakras, Triratnas, etc. The pillars of the outer circles at the Thûpârâma and Lankârâma had also pads or fastenings on their capitals as if to retain metal or other symbols—perhaps of a different type from those on the two inner rows.

There is still another—the Kujjatissârâma, better known as the Selachaitiya dâgâba—between the Ruwanveli and Abhayagiri stûpas, but so ruined that its architectural features were undistinguishable until excavated in 1895. It was a mere mound of ruined brickwork, rising about 15 ft. above the platform. The base has been about 37 ft. 5 in. in diameter, and it stands on a paved platform 46 ft. 9 in. square, rising 7 ft. 6 in. above the ground level, and enclosed by a stone parapet, with entrances on the east and south sides. It may perhaps belong to the reign of Lajji Tissa—about 55 B.C. The spot at all events is said to have been hallowed by the presence of Kasyapa, the Buddha preceding Sâkyamuni.

2 Mr. Bell identifies it with the Sila Thûpa built by that monarch.—'Sessional Paper,' xl. 1904.
3 Smither’s ‘Anurâdhapura,’ pp. 5-7.
Besides these, there are on the hill of Mihintale, eight miles to the east of the city, two important relic-shrines; one of the first class—the Mahâséya, erected on its summit to cover a hair that grew on the forehead of Buddha over his left eyebrow. The other—the Ambasthâla dâgaba—on a shoulder of the hill immediately below this—is of the same class as the Thûpârâma; it stands on the traditional spot where King Devânampiya-Tissa first met the Théra Mahinda, and is said to have been erected by that king. The small central building stands on a base 29 ft. in diameter and about 3 ft. high; and the dome, where it rises from this, is 23 ft. in diameter and about 20 ft. high, rather oval in curvature and surmounted by a square capital supporting a stunted spire—the total height being about 30 ft. from the circular pavement on which it stands. It is surrounded by two concentric rows of pillars, which, as appears to have been usual when this mode of decoration was employed, rose to half the height of the central mound. The inner circle of twenty pillars stands 5 ft. from the basement, and the outer, of thirty-two shafts, is 12 ft. farther out. They are 12 ft. high with octagonal capitals 2 ft. in height. The platform is reached on the west side by a granite stair.¹

There are, in addition to these, a great number of dâgabas of various sorts scattered over the area once covered by the old city, but whether any of them are particularly interesting, either from their architecture or their history, has not been ascertained, nor will it be till the whole site has been systematically and carefully surveyed.

There is another ruin at Anurâdhapura, which, if a little more perfect, would be even more interesting than those topes. It goes by the name of Loha Mahâpâya, or Great Brazen Monastery. We have a full account in the 'Mahâwansa' of its erection by the pious King Dutthagâmani (cîr. b.c. 100),² according to a plan procured from heaven for the purpose—as well as a history of its subsequent destruction and rebuildings.

When first erected it is said to have been 100 cubits or 230 ft. square, and as high as it was broad; the height was divided into nine storeys, each containing 100 cells for priests, besides halls and other indispensable apartments. Nearly 200 years after its erection it required considerable repairs, but the first great disaster occurred in the reign of Mahâsena (4th century), who is said to have destroyed it utterly.³ It was re-erected by his son, but with only five storeys instead of nine; and it never after this regained its pristine magnificence, but

¹ Smith, 'Anurâdhapura,' p. 11.
² 'Mahâwansa,' Turnour's translation, p. 163, ch. 27.
gradually fell into decay even before the seat of government was removed to Polonnaruwa. Since that time it has been completely deserted, and all that now remains are the 1600 pillars which once supported it. These generally consist of unhewn blocks of granite about 12 ft. high; some of the central ones are sculptured, and many have been split into two, apparently at the time of the great rebuilding after its destruction by Mahâsena; as it is, they stand about 6 ft. apart from centre to centre in a compact phalanx, forty on each face, and covering a space of 250 ft. or 260 ft. each way. Upon the pillars must have been placed a strong wooden framing from which the remaining eight storeys rose, as in the modern Burmese monasteries.

There is only one difficulty in understanding the arrangement of the superstructure of this building, and that is the assertion of the 'Mahâwansa' that it consisted of nine storeys—afterwards of five—each containing 100 apartments. For myself I have no hesitation in rejecting this statement as impossible, not only from the difficulty of constructing and roofing such a building, but because its form is so utterly opposed to all the traditions of Eastern art. If we turn back to Fah Hian or Hiuen Tsiang's description of the great Dakhani monastery (page 171) or to the great rath at Mâmallapuram (Woodcut No. 89), or, indeed, to any of the 1001 temples of Southern India, all of which simulate three, five, or nine-storied residences, we get a distinct idea of what such a building may have been if erected in the Indian style. It would, too, be convenient and appropriate to the climate, each storey having its terrace for walking or sleeping in the open air, and the whole easily constructed and kept in order. All this will be clearer in the sequel, but in the meanwhile it hardly appears doubtful that the Loha Mahâpâya was originally of nine, and subsequently of five storeys, each less in dimension than the one below it. The top one was surmounted as at Mâmallapuram by a dome, but in this instance composed of bronze—whence its name; and, gilt and ornamented as it no doubt was, it must have been one of the most splendid buildings of the East. It was as high as the dâgabas, and, though not covering quite so much ground, was equal, in cubical contents, to the largest of our English cathedrals, and the body of the building was higher than any of them, omitting of course the spires, which are mere ornaments.

Besides these there are scattered about the ruins of Anurâdhapura many groups of pillars and basements that evidently belonged to vihâras, monasteries and halls for various
purposes. They were all raised on platforms or stylobates, and approached by one or more flights of steps, of a highly ornamental character. One of these, leading to a group of pillars attached to the Ruwanveli dagaba, will convey some idea of their general character (Woodcut No. 134). At the foot of a flight of steps is a richly carved semicircular stone
threshold, popularly known as a “moonstone”¹ (Woodcut No. 135). Many of these are found at Anurâdhapura, and as many probably at Polonnaruwa. Some are large and some smaller than others, but they are all broadly similar in design. They are not peculiar, however, to Ceylon: in temples, especially in the south of India and in the cave temples, they are usually found in front of the entrance to the shrine and often at the outer doorways, and are known as lotus-slabs—the general pattern resembling the lotus flower. Inside an outer ornamental ring, in Anurâdhapura examples, is a procession of animals, divided from the next compartment by a richly elaborate scroll; within that again a row of birds bearing lotus buds, and then a lotus flower with a disc edged with leaves. The animals are always elephants, horses, lions, and bulls: the birds—hansas or sacred geese—chakwâs.² These, it will be recollected, are the animals which Fah Hian and Hiuen Tsiang describe as ornamenting the five storeys of the great Dakhani monastery, and which, as we shall afterwards see, were also arranged at Halebid in the 13th century in precisely the same manner. For 1500 years they, and they only, seem to have been selected for architectural purposes, but why this was so we are yet unable to explain.

The risers of these stairs, though not adorned with storeyed bas-reliefs, like those of the Jamâlgarhî monastery in Gandhâra, are all richly ornamented, being divided, at Anurâdhapura, into two panels by figures of dwarfs, and framed by foliated borders, while the jambs or flanking stones are also adorned by either figures of animals or bas-reliefs.

These steps lead to platforms on which stood various structures, as witnessed by the monoliths still standing on some of them; and, so far as information is available, the buildings were ecclesiastical, surrounded by brick walls, and the roofs supported on them and the pillars. In the case of the so-called Mahâsena’s pavilion, and many other ruins of that type, there was a central and four subsidiary structures in the corners of the enclosure, which together constituted the vihâra—the larger and central building being probably a temple

¹ In Sinhalese—“Sandakada pahana,” in Sanskrit—“padmasilâm.”—Tawney’s ‘Prabandha-chintâmani,’ p. 57. They are also called “ardhachandras”—“of half moon form.” At the entrance to a vihâra north of the Lankârâma dâgaba, a fine sight of steps was excavated about twenty years ago, the large threshold stone to which presents the lotus only.—Cave’s ‘Ruined Cities of Ceylon’ (8vo. ed.), p. 106, and plate 35. One from the Daladâ Mâligâwa at the Thûpârâma is represented in a photocollootype in Smither’s ‘Anurâdhapura,’ plate 57, fig. 1; and another drawn to a small scale from the mis-named Mahâsena’s pavilion, on plate 59; and in Cave’s ‘Ruined Cities,’ plate 32.

² The Polonnaruwa examples are more crowded with ornament.

VOL. I.
containing an image of the Buddha. In others, such as that styled the Vijayârama vihâra, there was a small dâgâba as well as a temple and other structures; and connected with each such vihâra would be the indispensable Service-hall or Uposathagharam. The “preaching halls” which Fah Hian mentions at the head of the four principal streets, where the religious members of the community of all classes assembled on stated days to listen to the preaching of the doctrine or “bana,” may have been connected with certain of these vihâras.

Besides these there is at Anurâdhapura a temple called Isurumuniya, partly cut in the rock, partly structural. Till within the last forty years the pillars of its porch still carried the wooden beams of a roof, but whether it was the original one or a subsequent addition is by no means clear. From the mortises in the face of the rock I would be inclined to believe that it was at least in the original form, but the building has been so knocked about and altered in modern times, that it is impossible to speak with certainty regarding it. So far as can be judged from photographs, I would be inclined to ascribe the original excavation to the 6th or 7th century. The architecture of the steps and the Nâga dwârpâls are all of the old pattern, but coarser and showing unmistakable signs of decadence.

The excavations directed by Mr. Bell, among other important discoveries, have brought to light a regular “Buddhist railing” surrounding a rectangular site, near the Abhayagiri Dâgâba. The pillars of this rail were only 3 ft. 10 in. in height by 8 in. square—quite diminutive as compared with Indian examples—and standing 1 ft. apart with three cross-bars, surmounted by a coping 8 in. high; but it stood on a moulded basement about 3 ft. 9 in. in height, thus raising the whole to about 8 ft. 3 in. high. Except a little carving on the jambs of the entrance, the whole is perfectly plain.

To us these are the most interesting of the remains of the ancient city, but to a Buddhist the greatest and most sacred of the vestiges of the past is the celebrated Bo-tree. This was long revered and worshipped even amidst the desolation in which it stood, and has been worshipped on this spot for more than 2000 years; and thus, if not the oldest, is certainly among the most ancient of the idols that still command the adoration of mankind.

1 Smither’s ‘Anurâdhapura,’ pp. 59-60 and plates 58, 59; and Spence Hardy, ‘Eastern Monachism,’ pp. 200-201.
2 Fah Hian, chap. 36.
3 “The doorway is fine, and the temple is unique in many respects.”—Cave’s ‘Ruined Cities of Ceylon,’ p. 63.
4 ‘Second Archeological Survey Report,’ pp. 3, 4. A small fragment of Buddhist railing had also been found here in 1873.—Smither’s ‘Anurâdhapura,’ p. 50 and plate 44.
When Asoka, according to tradition, sent his son Mahinda and his daughter Sangamitta, to introduce Buddhism into Ceylon, one of the most precious things which they brought was a branch of the celebrated tree which still grows at Bodhgaya\(^1\) (Woodcut No. 19). The branch, so says the legend, spontaneously severed itself from the parent stem, and planted itself in a golden vase prepared for its reception. According to the prophecy, it was to be “always green, never growing nor decaying,” and certainly present appearances would go far to confirm such an assertion, for, notwithstanding its age, it is small, and does not seem to increase. Its being evergreen is only a characteristic of its species, the *Ficus religiosa*; our acquaintance with it, however, must extend over a longer series of years than it yet does, before we can speak with certainty as to its stationary qualities. Its branches, however, are already propped up to preserve them.

136. View of the Sacred Bo-tree, Anurâdhapura. (From Sir E. Tennent’s ‘Ceylon.’)

It grows from the top of a small pyramid, which rises in three terraces, each about 12 ft. in height, in the centre of a large square enclosure popularly known as “Udamaluwa,” but by the priests called Mahâ-Vihâra. But though the place is large, sacred, and adorned with stairs of some pretension, none of the architectural features which at present surround it are such as to require notice in a work like the present.

\(^1\) Singularly enough, the natives of Bihâr ascribe the planting of their Bo-tree to Dutthagâmâni, the pious king of Ceylon.—Buchanan Hamilton’s ‘Statistics of Bihâr,’ Montgomery Martin’s edition, vol. i. p. 76.
POLONNARUWA.\(^1\)

Although very much more modern in date, and consequently less pure in style, the ruins at Polonnaruwa are scarcely less interesting than those of the northern capital to which it succeeded. They form a link between the ancient and modern styles at a time when the Buddhists had ceased to exist, or at least to build, on the continent of India, and, when properly illustrated, will enable us to speak with confidence of much that we find beyond the Ganges. Much of what we know of these ruins is due to the publications of Sir Emerson Tennent,\(^2\) which, though most valuable contributions, were far from exhausting the subject. According to this authority, the principal ruins extend in a line nearly north and south for about a mile and a half from the palace to the Gal Vihāra, and comprise two dāgabas, besides a number of smaller edifices. The greater part seems to have been erected during the reign of Parākrama Bāhu I., 1153-86, though, as the city became the capital of the kingdom in the 9th century, it is probable that investigation may yet reveal some of earlier date; while, as it was not finally deserted till 1293, some of them may also be more modern.

If not the oldest, certainly the most interesting group at Polonnaruwa is that of the rock-cut sculptures known as the Gal Vihāra. They are not rock-cut temples in the sense in which the term is understood in India, being neither residences nor chaitya halls. On the left, on the face of the rock, is a figure of Buddha, seated in the usual cross-legged conventional attitude, 15 ft. in height, and backed by a throne of exceeding richness: perhaps the most elaborate specimen of its class known to exist anywhere. Next to this is a cell, with two pillars in front, on the back wall of which is another seated figure of Buddha, but certainly of a more modern aspect than that last described. Beyond this is a figure standing in the open air, now supposed to represent Ananda—the cousin of Buddha;\(^3\)

---

\(^1\) In inscriptions the city is called Pulastipura and Kalinapura, and its modern name is Topāwa or Topāwa. As, however, that here given is the only one by which it is known in English literature, it is retained.

\(^2\) 'Christianity in Ceylon,' Murray, 1850; 'An Account of the Island of Ceylon,' 2 vols., Longmans, 1859. Mr. Lawton’s and Captain Hogg’s photographs added considerably to the precision but not to the extent of our knowledge. Mr. Smith’s volume on Anurādhapura is by far the most important addition yet made to the architecture of Ceylon. Mr. Bell’s ‘Progress Reports’ are a mine of information, but require to be digested and arranged with fuller and better architectural illustrations. As yet the survey of Polonnaruwa is not published, but Mr. Bell has very kindly supplied me with a proof of his ‘Annual Report’ for 1903, which, with three preceding, is devoted chiefly to the remains at that place.

\(^3\) This is a modern local designation: except perhaps in China, Ananda scarcely appears in Buddhist iconography.
and still further to the right another of Buddha, lying down in the conventional attitude of his attaining Nirvāṇa. This figure is 46 ft. long, while the standing one is only 23 ft. high. These Nirvāṇa figures are rare in India, but there is one in the most modern cave at Ajantā, No. 26, 23 ft. 3 in. long (Woodcut No. 29 on page 101), and others in the latest caves at Nāsik and Salsette. None of these, however, so far as I know, ever attained in India such dimensions as this.

Not far south of the Gal Vihāra stands one of the principal religious groups of the city, consisting first of the Jetawanārāma Temple, built of brick, 170 ft. long by 70 ft. wide, with walls 12 ft. in thickness covered with chunam, and still about 70 ft. high. It was divided into two halls; the inner or shrine being wider than the outer or eastern one, and containing an erect statue of Buddha built of brick, 58 ft. in height, much injured. The entrance is flanked by two polygonal turrets, on the bases of which were dwārpaḷas or yakshas in high relief, and the highly carved stone steps at the entrance were each 20 ft. long. On the north side of it is the Kiri Dāgaba—about 70 ft. in diameter and nearly 100 ft. in height—with two smaller topes, standing on raised platforms; the whole space, measuring 577 ft. by 500 ft., was apparently at one time entirely filled with objects of religious adoration. The whole certainly belongs to the age of Parākrama Bāhu I. It was, however, built of brick, and plastered, which gives it an appearance of inferiority even beyond what is due to the inferior style of that age.

Next in importance to this is the Rankot Dāgaba, about 500 yards south of the Jetawanārāma, 186 ft. in diameter, and of about the same in height. This, though only half that of some of those in the older capital, is still larger than any known to exist on the continent of India. It is ascribed to Kīrtī Nissanka Malla, a Kalinga prince, at the end of the 12th century, and is in fair preservation. Its base is surrounded, like those in Burma, by eight small brick shrines—two at each of the cardinal points—having conical roofs, and between each pair is an āsana, or seat for a Dhyānī Buddha.

At some five furlongs south from this stands the Sāt Mahal Prāsāda (Woodcut No. 137), which is one of the most interesting buildings of the place, as it is one of the most perfect representations existing of the seven-storeyed temples of Assyria.

---

1 There are two colossal statues of Buddha, one at Sāseruwa, in the North-Western Province, 39 ft. 3 in. high, the other at a place called Aukana, to the east of the Kalāwāwa tank, in the North Central Province, 39 ft. high. They are extremely similar to one another, and—except in dimensions and position of the arms—to that at the Gal Vihāra. — "Sessional papers," xl., 1904, pp. 6 and 12. A descriptive inventory of the monuments of Ceylon is a great desideratum.
It is also interesting as affording a hint as to the appearance of the five or nine-storeyed monasteries mentioned in a previous page (239). This one, however, never was a residence, nor does it simulate one, like the raths at Māmallapuram or other buildings in the Dravidian style, which will be described in a subsequent chapter. Its base is 28 ft. 6 in. square, each storey diminishes in size and height—the uppermost being ruined—but the total height is still 53 ft. Statues of stucco, in high relief, ornamented each storey; and there is a flight of steps, but it reaches only to the top of the first storey.¹ The style of this peculiar tower suggests a comparison with those structures known in Cambodia as "Prasats," from which it seems to be copied; and about the time when this one was erected by Nissanka Malla at the end of the 12th century, Ceylon was in pretty close intercourse with Cambodia.²

In front of it lies a splendid stone table 26 ft. 10 in. long, 4 ft. 7 in. broad, and from 16 to 26 in. thick. It is known as the Galpota or stone book, and bears a long inscription

¹ Cave's 'Ruined Cities of Ceylon,' p. 134; Mr. Bell's 'Report for 1903.'
² Compare illustrations of Prasats in Lajonquière, 'Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments du Cambodge,' tome i. pp. xx., xxii., 199, 201, 218; Aymonier, 'Le Cambodge,' tome ii. p. 427, etc.; 'Mahâwansa,' ch. 76, vv. 21, 22.
THE WATA-DÅGE (From a Photograph, 1907)  (To face page 246, Vol. I)
recording the acts and virtues of King Kirti Nissanka Malla (1187-1196). The carving on its border represents a double row of hansas or sacred geese—always a favourite subject of the Buddhist sculptors. At each end of this stone is engraved a representation of Sridevi with her two elephants with their water-pots (Woodcut No. 3).

Beside the Sāt Mahal Prasāda is the Wata-Dá-ge, a circular building, which, so far as is at present known, is all but unique. It is a circular enclosure, open to the sky, 58 ft. 2 in. in diameter, and surrounded by a wall 14 ft. high, once decorated with paintings (Plate No. III.). Inside were found the remains of a small brick dāgaba and broken figures of Buddhas at the cardinal points, as also the broken shafts of pillars of two circles that had surrounded the dāgaba. Round the outer circumference of the wall is a narrow passage, enclosed by a highly ornamental screen about 3 ft. high, adorned with a range of thirty-two slender pillar shafts, 6 ft. in height with highly carved capitals, like those of the outermost circle at the Thūpārāma dāgaba (Woodcut No. 130). Below this is a richly carved stylobate, about 4 ft. 6 in. high, standing on a circular platform 120 ft. in diameter, about 20 ft. broad and 4 ft. 6 in. above the ground level. The principal entrance is from the north side, but at the other cardinal points also are flights of steps leading up to the enclosure, more elaborate than any others that have yet been discovered in Ceylon. They all have highly carved thresholds or moonstones to start from. Their risers are each adorned with twelve figures of dwarfs, and their side pieces, or jambs, are of exceptional richness, and each has a pair of Nāga-headed dvārpāls at the sides of its steps. Altogether this is one of the most interesting buildings in Ceylon, as well as one of the richest in sculptural decorations.

Close to the Wata-Dá-ge, on its south-west side, is the Thūpārāma temple, a large, oblong brick structure, built by Parākkrama Bahu I., the walls of which are full 5 ft. in thickness (Plate No. IV.). The principal entrance is on the east side and a smaller one on the north, and it has four narrow windows divided by round Mullions. The temple consists of a vestibule and inner hall, vaulted in the Hindū method by corbelling inwards the successive layers of brick. Over this is a low, square tower. Round the base of the building runs a low dado of lions somewhat boldly worked in stucco.

---

1 They occur also on Aroka's pillars in the earliest known sculptures in India (Woodcut No. 6).
2 This is probably the Dalada Maligawa, erected by Parākkrama Bahu in the second half of the 12th century. — Mahawansa,' ch. 73 and 78.
3 Mr. Bell mentions the ruins of a very similar "Circular Relic-shrine" at Medirigiriya, 20 miles north of Polonnaruwa. — Smither's 'Anuradhapura,' p. 12.
Besides these, there are at Polonnaruwa several of those groups of pillars, without roofs or walls, which we tried to describe in speaking of Anurâdhapura. One, called the Audience Hall, seems to be very similar to those of the northern capital; a vihâra, the so-called Heta-Dâ-ge, close to the Sât Mahal Prâsâda, is more extensive, and has been profusely ornamented; but no mere description is of much use, and till we see the plans and more details it is needless speculating on what they may or may not have been.

Polonnaruwa likewise possesses another point of interest of considerable importance, though hardly germane to our present subject. Among its ruins are several buildings in the Dravidian style of architecture: one of these, miscalled the Daladâ Maligâwa, is really a Saiva temple, erected probably by Nissanka Malla, about A.D. 1190. It is built of granite and, except the roof and outer mandapa, is in fair preservation. Another building, though called the Vishnu Dewala, was also dedicated to the worship of Siva, as is testified by the presence of the bull alongside of it, and also apparently on its roof (Plate No. V.). It is the lowest and flattest of those buildings I have yet met with, and whilst in general style and carving resembling the preceding, it is more like a direct literal copy from a constructive vihâra than even the raths at Mâmallapuram (Woodcut No. 185, p. 329). This may arise either from its being a copy of an actual vihâra existing at the time it was built, or to its being very old. Those at Mâmallapuram, even if older than this one, may have gone through certain stages towards their present conventional forms before they were cut in the rock.

It is unfortunate for the history of architecture in Ceylon that the oldest and finest of her rock-cut temples—as those, for instance, at Dambulla—are only natural caverns, slightly improved by art; and those mentioned above, as the Isurumuniya at Anurâdhapura, and Gal Vihâra rock temple at Polonnaruwa, with a recumbent figure of Buddha entering Nirvâna hewn on the rock, besides being comparatively modern, have little architecture about them, and that little by

---

1 'Indian Antiquary,' vol. ii. p. 247; Mr. Bell's Annual Report, 1900, p. 9.
2 The proof of Mr. Bell's Annual Report, 1903, contains a description of this vihâra, but no plan or section is there given.
3 Nissanka Malla was of a Kalinga family, and would naturally incline to the Hindû style of architecture. There are remains also of a group of Hindû temples, chiefly of brick, but too much ruined to be of architectural importance.
4 The Editor is indebted to Lord Stanmore, G.C.M.G., Mr. James G. Smither, F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. H. C. F. Bell, Archaeological Commissioner in Ceylon, for much valued assistance in the revision of this chapter.
no means of a good class. Generally speaking, what architecture these Sinhalese caves do possess is developed on applied façades of masonry, never of the same age as the caves themselves, and generally more remarkable for grotesqueness than beauty. Besides, the form of these caves being accidental, they want that interest which attaches so strongly to those of India, as illustrating the religious forms and ceremonies of the early Buddhists. Indeed, their only point of interest seems to consist in their being still used for the celebration of the same rites to which they were originally dedicated 2000 years ago.

There are some interesting ancient bridges, formed on upright stone pillars, over which stone lintels are placed, and on these other stone beams, about 5½ feet in length from one lintel to another, to form the road; but these have no architectural features worth attention.¹

CONCLUSION.

Although the above sketch cannot pretend to be anything like a complete and exhaustive treatise on the subject, it may probably be accepted, as far as it goes, as a fairly correct and intelligible description of Buddhist architecture in India. We certainly know the beginning of the style, and as certainly its end. The succession of the buildings hardly admits of doubt, and their dates are generally ascertained within narrow limits of error. Much has been done, during the last fifty years, to delineate the numerous examples of Buddhist architecture known in India, and all that is most essential to complete the history is now available for the purpose. It is hardly probable that anything will be now discovered in India which will materially alter the views put forward in the preceding pages. Another discovery like that at Bharaut may reward the industry of explorers; but even that, though it has given breadth and precision to our enquiries, and added so much to our stores of knowledge, has altered little that was known before. It is difficult, however, to form an opinion on the chances of any such discoveries being now made.

But even such a sketch as that contained in the preceding pages is sufficient to prove that it is almost impossible to overrate the importance of architecture and its associated arts in elucidating and giving precision to our knowledge of Buddhist history and mythology, from the time when it

¹ 'Third Archaeological Report,' p. 7.
became the religion of the state till it perished in so far as
India was concerned. In the rails at Bodh-Gayâ and Bharaut,
we have a complete picture of Buddhism as it existed during
the great Mauryan dynasty (B.C. 320 to B.C. 180). At Sâncî
and the western caves we have as complete a representation
of the form it took from the 2nd century before our era to the
3rd after it. At Amarâvatî, and from the Gandhâra monasteries,
we learn what modifications had been introduced between our
era and the 3rd century; and from the Ajantâ and later caves
we trace its history downward through its period of decay till
it faded away altogether.

During the first half of this thousand years we have no
contemporary records except those written in stone, and during
the latter we have no books we can depend upon; but the
architecture, with its sculptures and paintings, remain, and
bear the indelible impress of the thoughts, the feelings, and
the aspirations of those who executed them, and supply us
with a vast amount of exact knowledge on the subject which
is not attainable by any other means now known to us.