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BUDDHIST CAVE TEMPLES: FROM CHINA TO ELLORA

BY

A. D. BRANKSTON

(With twenty-three illustrations)

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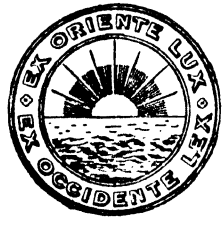

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A.R.R.

BUDDHIST CAVE TEMPLES: FROM CHINA TO ELLORA

(Some Notes Made on Visiting Ellora, Aurangabad and Ajanta in India, Yun Kang and Lung-mên in China, August to November, 1936, and Angkor in 1938.)

By A. D. Brankston

In Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in India*, 1898 edition, one may read of Ellora, Ajanta, and Aurangabad and the necessary arrangements to reach those places, relays of horses and servants being necessary. Today, however, H.E.H. the Nizam's Government has made it possible, by the construction of excellent roads, rest houses, and the appointment of well-informed and courteous assistants, for anyone to make this journey in comfort. One may leave Bombay by train at ten o'clock in the evening and arrive at seven the next morning in Aurangabad, whence one travels by road to Ellora.

It was on such a fine morning that we arrived in Aurangabad. In August one may expect rain and heat with a resulting high humidity. Since there was no choice of season in this instance, it was in August that we went. However, the morning was cool and bright, the plain with cornfields and tufted trees looked fresh and clean in the pale rosy sunlight. We drove between banyan and yellow-flowered tamarisk trees, through villages and past bullock carts towards the hills.

Soon, from higher ground, we saw that, separated from the more distant hills, there stood a fortress which seemed to belong more to phantasy than reality. This was Daulatabad.* Approaching nearer, three lines of walls and towers became distinguishable among the trees. Within the second wall a tall delicate minaret stood out against the massive rock and citadel. This marvellous place adds wonder to the Ellora road and stimulates excitement for the caves.

Then, climbing steeply to a plateau about 600 feet above the plain, we drove on through Khuldabad, where Aurangzeb lies buried, past other stone-built tombs of Moslem saints to Roza.

The bungalows at Roza are built on the edge of this plateau of terraced basalt and overlook the plain which stretches map-like to the north and west. The caves are cut into the hillside below the bungalows and a little to the north. The caves may be divided into three groups, and are numbered in sequence from south to north. The first, probably the earliest, are Buddhist and numbered one to twelve. The second, which were probably

* Daulatabad is described in detail in Murray's handbook.

started at the same period as the latter Buddhist caves, are Brahman and numbered thirteen to twenty-nine. The third group is Jain and numbered thirty to thirty-four; these are probably the latest. By walking northwards one follows both the numbers, in ascending order, and at the same time the approximate chronology.

The Buddhist caves must impress their reverence upon all but the most hardened Philistine. The serene contemplative spirit of the men who carved them still lingers in the caves; the columns and the sculptures express it. The tradition of peace between man, beast, and bird seems to have remained untouched here through the centuries. Brilliant green parrots, red-backed swallows, doves, peacocks, many other birds and squirrels use their shade, while cattle graze among the Flame of the Forest trees below the caves.

One finds parrots and squirrels also in the Brahman caves, but no spirit of quietness. On entering cave 14 one becomes aware of a more fearful spirit in the men who made them. The Hindu gods are superhuman beings with human desires and passions. In early Buddhist sculpture we find fear nowhere expressed, and action seldom; but the dance of Siva over the destruction of the world is majestic and awe-inspiring. For although Siva destroys only to recreate, the sculptures better express destruction.

The Jain caves again express meditation and even more asceticism than the Buddhist. Gomata is shown standing naked with a creeper entwined about his limbs, nor do the stings of scorpions disturb him in his trance.

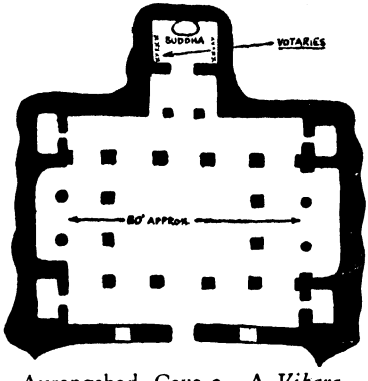
The Buddhist caves in general follow two principles of design. The *vihara* or monastery consists of a large rectangular hall supported by rows of pillars. Along the side walls often smaller cells are cut and in the centre of the back wall there is a shrine for the Buddha image, guardians and attendants. Often there is a verandah with windows, sculpture, and carved pillars. The *vihara* is varied by the addition of side-chapels, more or less sculpture and carving on the pillars.

The *chaitya* or cathedral was used only for prayer and is the most sacred of the caves. In its earliest form (perhaps second century B.C.) it consisted of a hall, rounded at one end, enclosing an undecorated *stupa*. Later, the Buddha image was placed in front of the *stupa*. Its form no doubt follows that of wooden buildings which may be seen illustrated on the reliefs at Sanci, the roof is almost invariably arched and the stone is cut in ribs to represent the rafters.

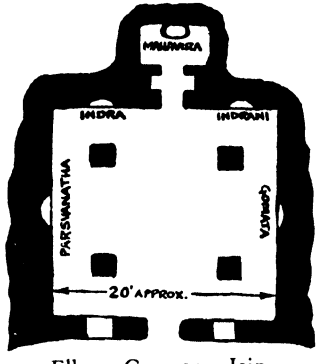
The dating of these caves is a problem which seems to have been avoided for many good reasons. Cave 2 appears to

be early, perhaps sixth century A.D., yet it contains unfinished side-chapels. Dr. Burgess' suggestion that these were added later is probably correct. Therefore, the other caves may also contain additions, so that it is unlikely that any of the caves could be judged, in its entirety, as representative of any one period. Also, the labour of cutting the caves was immense, and in many cases may have covered a period of more than one hundred years.

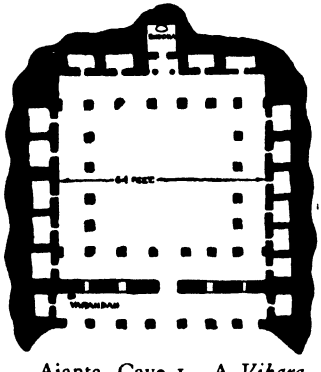
It would be almost impossible to judge the age of any of these



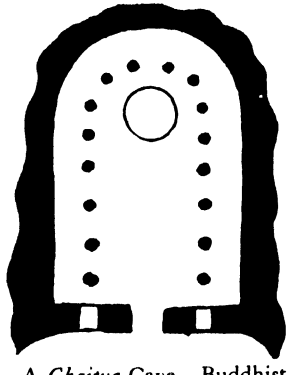
Aurangabad, Cave 3. A *Vihara*. (Not to scale.)



Ellora, Cave 34. Jain.



Ajanta, Cave 1. A *Vihara*. (Not to scale.)



A *Chaitya* Cave. Buddhist.

caves without comparison with those at Ajanta and Aurangabad. At Ajanta a sequence of styles may be traced from the first century B.C. to the late seventh or early eighth century A.D. Since these groups of caves lie within seventy miles of one another, it is not unreasonable to suppose that one group was influenced by the others and that definite styles and motives in sculpture were contemporary with one another. It probably would not be going

too far to assume that even the same sculptors were employed, but there is no need for that.

At Ellora there is no cave, judged by its sculpture alone, which, in the opinion of the writer, could be placed earlier than 600 A.D. It is reasonable to suppose that a *chaitya* would be one of the first caves to be cut, and since cave 10 (see Fig. 3) is the only *chaitya* at Ellora it is probably one of the earliest. The style of the sculpture seems to confirm this assumption.

The plan of this cave definitely follows that of No. 19 (see Fig. 11) at Ajanta, which, in agreement with Coomarswamy and Kramrisch, may be assigned to the sixth century. At Ajanta the Buddha, in the style of the Gupta period, stands in a gossamer-fine wind-blown robe. But neither in No. 10 nor in any other cave at Ellora is the typical Gupta Buddha to be found. The Buddha and *chauri* bearers appear to be more nearly related to those in the late seventh-century caves. It would seem that this cave may be imitative of cave 19 at Ajanta, planned on a larger scale. Therefore, it would be safe to assume that it cannot be earlier than about 600 A.D.

Cave 3 at Ellora appears to be related to cave 7 at Aurangabad and cave 4 at Ajanta. In each of these caves there is a representation of the merciful Avalokitesvara. Around a central standing figure of the Bodhisattva are eight scenes which illustrate the delivery of pilgrims from fire, the sword, captivity, a storm at sea, lions, cobras, enraged elephants, and Kali, the Goddess of Death. The style of sculpture is very similar in these three groups, but only at Aurangabad is the condition good enough to distinguish each detail; there the boat clearly has sails similar to those of a Chinese junk. It therefore may be that the pilgrims represented were from China.

Hsuan Tsang visited this part of India in about the year 640 A.D., but he travelled by land in both directions, entering via Tun Huang and the route north of the Hindu Kush, and returning to China across the Himalayas. I Ching made a pilgrimage between 671 and 695 A.D. and travelled by sea. Of the Indian pilgrims who visited China there were Gunavarman of Kashmir in 431 A.D., Bodhidharma in *circa* 529-536 A.D. and Paramartha of Magadha in 545 A.D. Of these it is most probable that the pilgrim represented is I Ching.

These caves cannot be widely separated in date, probably they were cut late in the seventh century. The style of headdress worn by Avalokitesvara is interesting. It is probably one of the earlier representations of the *Jata* headdress in its developed form; this consists of fine plaits, bound together, rising steeply from the forehead to a crest from which they curl backwards and downwards. In Brahmanical sculptures the *Jata* headdress was adopted

for Siva. Perhaps it was intended to represent the river Ganges flowing from Siva's hair.

Avalokitesvara is shown at this period holding a long-stemmed lotus at the left side and with the right hand either raised in *abahya mudra* (courage), or holding a fly-whisk. In the *Jata* headdress there is usually a small image of Amitabha, his spiritual father. This style was widely adopted in China for Avalokitesvara, who later became the Goddess Kuan-yin, and, without the Amitabha image, for other Bodhisattvas.

The origin of this headdress is obscure. The Gandhara and Mathura Buddhas are shown with a coil of hair on the *ushnisha* (the protuberance of the head of a Buddha), but this is more than one stage removed from the *Jata* headdress. In cave 11 at Yun Kang in Northern Shansi, there is an example of an earlier or intermediate form of this headdress. In this cave there is an inscription which refers to the opening ceremony of the caves and is dated the seventh year of T'ai Ho in the Northern Wei Dynasty, 483 A.D. Also at Yun Kang in cave 3 (sixth century A.D.) there is a highly developed form which closely resembles some of the Indian examples.

In China during the T'ang Dynasty this headdress is almost universal for Bodhisattva images. It is worn by the colossal attendant figures in the Feng Hsien Ssu cave at Lung-mên in Honan, and on the figures, now removed, from T'ien Lung Shan in Central Shansi.

In the shrines of caves 4 and 5 the rarest flowers of sculpture at Ellora are to be found. There is a gentleness about them, not to be found elsewhere, which compels one to return awhile and linger there. It is the tenderness of an art in maturity with no trace of decadence. The style of the sculpture on the verandah of cave 4 resembles that of cave 3 and must be near to it in date, that is, late in the seventh century (see Figs. 1 and 2).

Cave 12 is perhaps the most ambitious of the *viharas*; it has three stories, of which the top is the most interesting. Here there is fine sculpture, better planned than elsewhere. It is an art in full maturity, the iconography has become standardized and, if one wished to be very critical, it could be said that it is beginning to become mechanical. The cave is divided into five cross-aisles by four rows of eight pillars. Cut into the back wall there is a rectangular recess which leads to an inner shrine. On each side of the shrine door there stands a *dvarapala* with folded arms, and around the walls of the recess are carved seated female figures. In the main cave against the back wall, on each side of the recess, is carved a row of seven Buddhas, probably the earth-born, seated in meditation. These fourteen figures are almost identical with one another. Each cross-aisle contains a Buddha at each end. The

central or third cross-aisle has at each end a Buddha (perhaps Maitreya, the Buddha to come) seated with feet on the ground (see Fig. 12). The second and fourth cross-aisles have at their ends Buddhas seated cross-legged in *padmasana*. Thus the figures are in pairs which vary only slightly. All these figures are supported on lion thrones, *sinhasana*.

It may be gathered that while the sculpture is still in many respects excellent, there is a certain over-emphasis on balance, and

Ellora, late Seventh Century. The Jata Headdress, *a*.

Yun Kang, Sixth Century. The Jata Headdress, *b*.

T'ien Lung Shan, late Seventh Century. The Jata Headdress, *c*.

lack of originality. This, therefore, must be one of the last Buddhist caves to be cut, probably in the eighth century.

Although this paper is concerned with Buddhist sculpture it would be impossible to leave Ellora without mentioning the Khalasa or Rang Mahl, dedicated to Siva. It is marvellous both for its sculpture and a feat of engineering. It is more a building than a cave; a large courtyard has been quarried out of the hillside leaving a mass of original rock in the centre. This mass of rock has been carved into a building which stands on a base 160 feet long and 110 feet wide, and whose spire rises 96 feet above the

FIG. 1.—ELLORA, CAVE 4: THE INNER SHRINE.
Late seventh century.

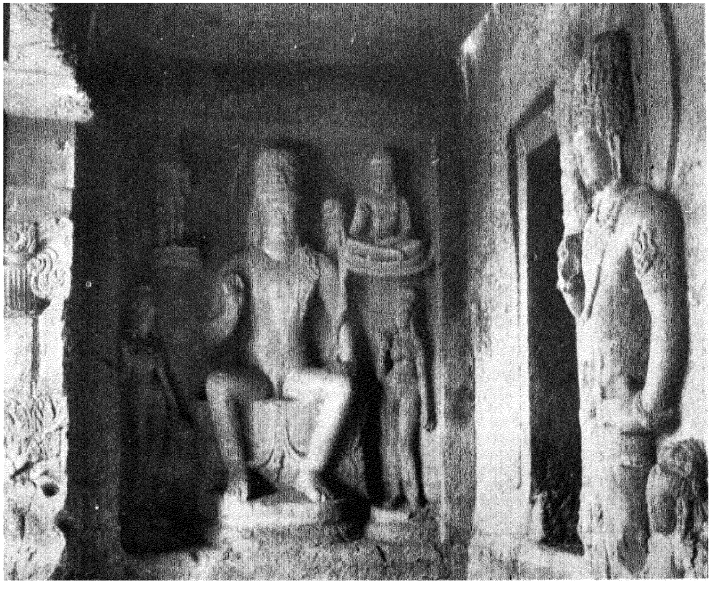


FIG. 2.—ELLORA, CAVE 4: THE VERANDAH, SHOWING AVALOKITESVARA.
Late seventh century.

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To face p. 496

FIG. 3. ELLORA, CAVE 10: A *CHAITYA*—THE BUDDHA IMAGE AND *STUPA*.
Seventh century, A.D.

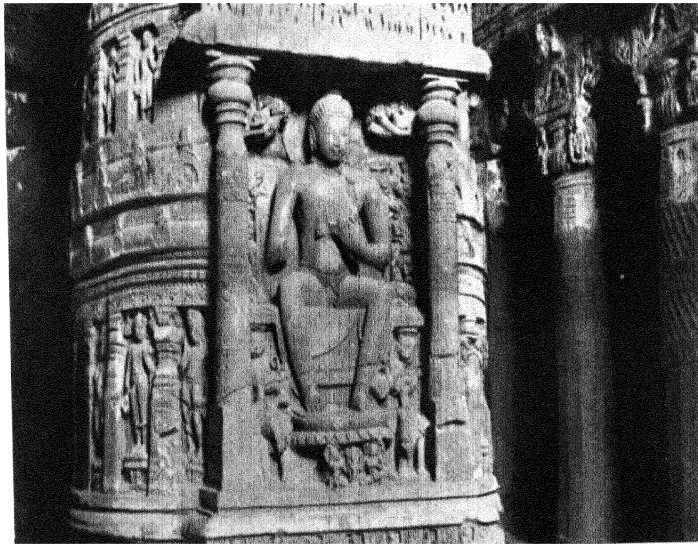

FIG. 4.—AJANTA, CAVE 26: THE BUDDHA IMAGE AND *STUPA*.
Sixth century, A.D.

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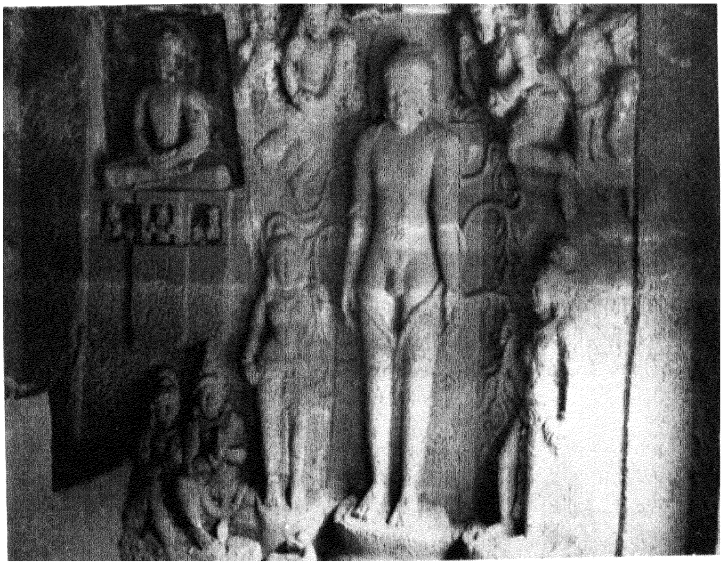

FIG. 5.—ELLORA, CAVE 31: GOMATA.

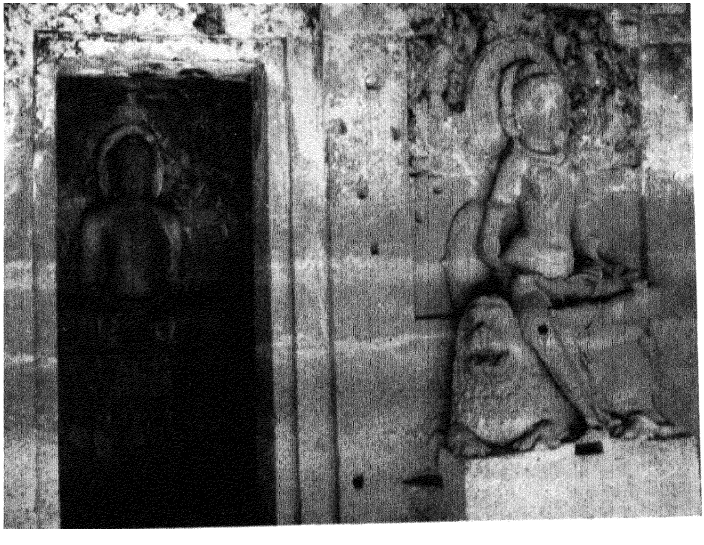

FIG. 6.—ELLORA, CAVE 31: MAHAVIRA AND INDRANI.

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FIG. 8.—AJANTA, CAVE I: CAPITALS.
Circa 600 A.D.

FIG. 10.—DOOR LINTEL AT BANTAI SREI, ANGKOR.
Ninth century.

FIG. 7.—AURANGABAD, CAVE I: CAPITALS.
Circa 600 A.D.

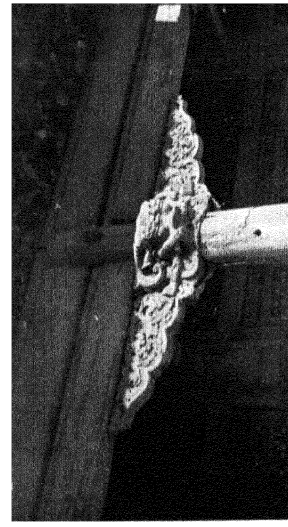

FIG. 9.—PEIPING: WOODEN CAPITAL IN THE YELLOW TEMPLE.

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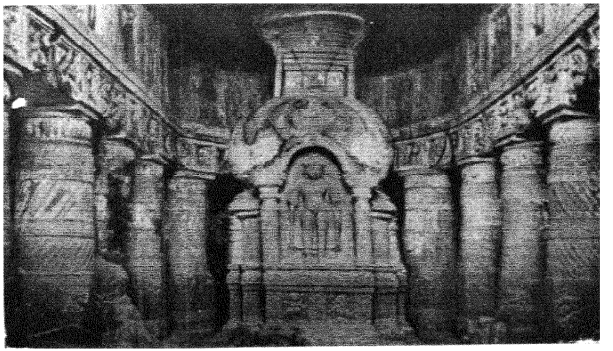

FIG. 11.
AJANTA, CAVE 19:
A *CHAITYA*. THE
STUPA AND STAND-
ING BUDDHA.

Photo:
Archæological Dept.,
Hyderabad.

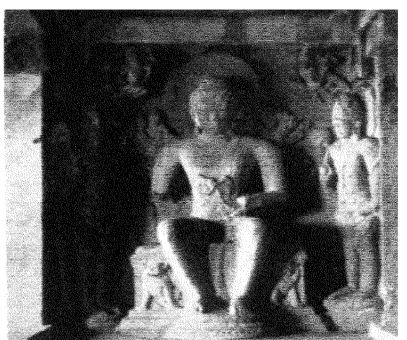

FIG. 12.—ELLORA, CAVE 12: SEATED BUDDHA.

FIG. 11A.—A SQUIRREL AT AJANTA.

PLATE V.

FIG. 13.—YUN-KANG, CAVE II.

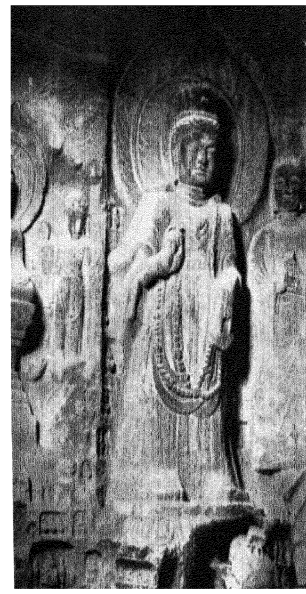

FIG. 14.—LUNG-MÊN, PIN YANG CAVE: BODHISATTVA.

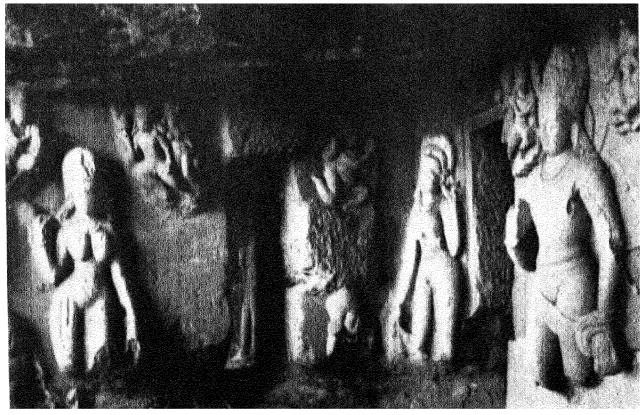

FIG. 15.—AURANGABAD, CAVE 8: GUARDIANS AND ATTENDANTS.

Late seventh or eighth century.

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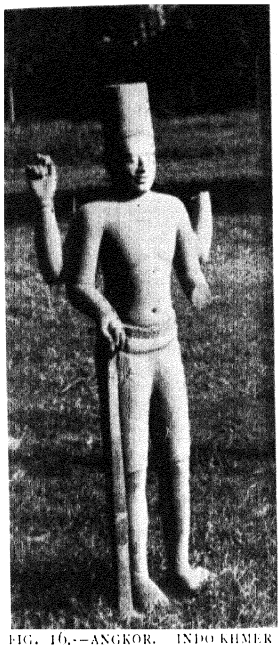

FIG. 16.—ANGKOR. INDO KHMER STYLE.
Ninth century.

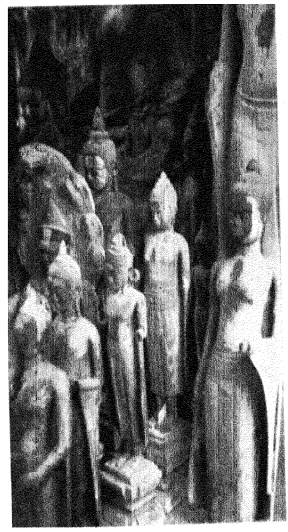

FIG. 17.—ANGKOR. A GROUP OF FIGURES IN ANGKOR WAT.
Eleventh and twelfth centuries.

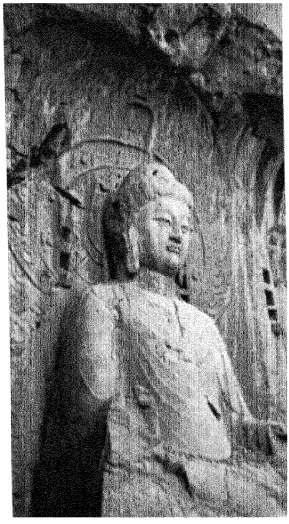

FIG. 18.—LUNG-MÊN, THE COLOSSAL BUDDHA.

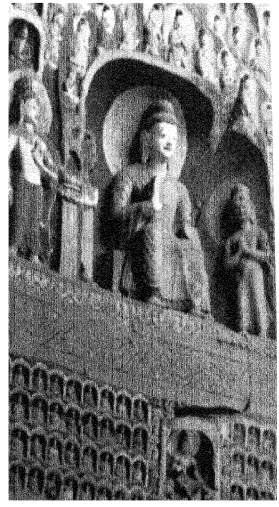

FIG. 19.—YUN-KANG. BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS.

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PLATE VIII.

FIG. 20.—ANGKOR THOM. THE BAYON. UNFINISHED RELIEF OF AN ARMY WITH ELEPHANTS.
Probably late twelfth century.

FIG. 21.—ANGKOR THOM. THE BAYON. DESIGNS COPIED FROM CHINESE FIGURED SILK.

FIG. 22.—ANGKOR WAT. CAPTIVE PIGMIES OF NEGRETTO TYPE.

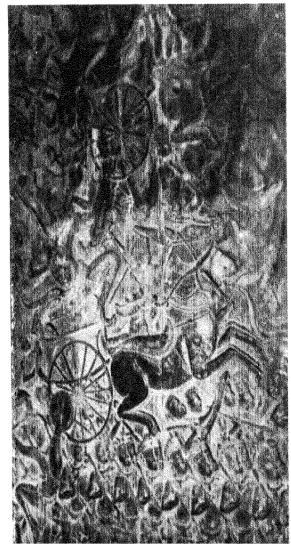

FIG. 23.—ANGKOR WAT. THE WAR-CHARIOTS AND SOLDIERS.

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courtyard which surrounds it. As architecture, the whole is rather too crowded in composition to be appreciated in its entirety. Many individual pieces of sculpture are very lovely, but the whole gives one the impression more of a colossal task than a spontaneous work of art conceived by one mind. The paintings in this cave are considered to be of the eighth century, so that work was probably started in cutting the cave in the seventh century, at the latest.

If one leaves the Khalasa with its dynamic sculpture and, missing the other Hindu caves, enters one of the Jain group, with figures in static trance, one becomes aware at once of the great difference between these religions. These caves are considered to be later in date than the others, and are probably of the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries; there appears to be little precise evidence of dates.

The plan of the caves differs slightly from the Buddhist and Hindu. In the central shrine Mahavira sits in *padmasana* with his right hand placed in his lap over his left (see Fig. 6). He is entirely naked. On his left, under a mango tree, Queen Indrani sits on a lion, and on his right, under a banyan tree, Indra, the King, sits on an elephant. (The lion and the elephant are used in China as thrones for the bodhisattvas Manjusri and Samantabhadra). On the same side as Indrani, Gomata stands with a creeper entwined about his limbs and his hair in curls upon his shoulders (see Fig. 5). On the same side as Indra, facing Gomata, there stands Parsvanatha, with the seven-hooded *naga* in place of the circular halo of Gomata.

These figures are wonderfully expressive of a state of trance rather than meditation. There is a calmness of sleep about them which is deeper even than that expressed in the Buddhist sculptures.

At Aurangabad the caves are cut into a hillside of the same type of rock and formation as Ellora and Ajanta, a porphyritic basalt. Here there are two groups of caves, distant about one mile from each other. Numbers 1 and 5 form the Western Group and are nearest to the road; these, from their style, appear to be earlier than the Eastern Group, which is numbered 6 to 8. Yet, there are unfinished caves in both groups. It may be that the western site was found, for some reason, to be unsuitable and so abandoned. The entrance of the *chaitya* cave 4, probably one of the earliest of the group, is ruined by a fall of rock; perhaps this occurred while the caves were still in use and so led to their abandonment. After removal to the second site, caves 6 and 7 were completed and No. 8 was not yet finished at the decline of Buddhism in the eighth century.

Caves 1 and 3 are probably contemporary with 1, 2, and 21 at Ajanta, which by their paintings and sculptures are judged to be late fifth to early sixth century. It may be seen that the ground plans of cave 3 Aurangabad and cave 1 Ajanta are very similar; in addition to this the decorations correspond very closely (Figs. 7 and 8). The same fat little *yakshas* adorn the pillars, the ogre masks below the capitals are almost identical and are not unlike some forms of the Chinese *t'ao t'ieh*, which, however, is seldom seen in Chinese Buddhist sculpture. The example from China (Fig. 9) which is illustrated here is from the Yellow Temple in Peiping and probably not earlier than the eighteenth century, but it is known that the influence of Indian builders and sculptors came to China together with Buddhism at a very much earlier date.

Of cave 1 only the verandah pillars and part of the verandah are complete. Cave 3, one may assume by its completeness, is of slightly earlier date, although very similar in style. The shrine of this cave is most remarkable. Through the shrine door one sees the seated Buddha dimly lit by the daylight which filters through the cave. Entering the shrine, one is at first shut in on either side by darkness. Then, when the pupils of the eyes have become more dilated, five figures emerge on each side of the Buddha. They kneel against the side walls facing the Buddha with hands clasped in adoration. The sculpture is extraordinarily good and the figures are of a most unusual appearance. They differ considerably from those of Buddhist significance and may represent foreigners, perhaps Persians, making their pilgrimage to Buddha. Their hair is crimped in ringlets and they resemble some of the figures in the Ajanta frescoes.

Similar figures may be seen in cave 6 at Aurangabad and caves 1, 2, and 17 at Ajanta with certain variations in grouping. In cave 6 at Aurangabad on Buddha's right are five male and on the left five female figures. In cave 1 at Ajanta the figures are placed (with two deer in addition) in front of the Buddha and on each side of the Wheel of the Law, symbolizing the turning of the Wheel of the Law in the Deer Park at Benares. In cave 2 there are only two standing figures and one deer, and in cave 17 there are two standing figures and two deer on each side of the Wheel of the Law. So there cannot be any significance in their numbers. Of all these, the figures in cave 3 at Aurangabad are the finest.

The Eastern Group of caves is most remarkable for No. 7, which contains the group of Avalokitesvara and the pilgrims, already discussed in comparison with No. 3 of Ellora and No. 4 at Ajanta. Cave 8 (see Fig. 15) was started (probably in the eighth century) on a more ambitious plan than any of

the others but was never finished. One is impressed by the abruptness with which the work appears to have stopped. It may have been that the monks laid down their tools at dusk and fled overnight.

At Ajanta the caves are even more beautifully situated than those at Ellora and Aurangabad. They are cut into the bank of a deep gorge on the bend of a river. The rock at all three groups of caves is of a similar porphyritic basalt, in which one may pick out the turquoise, red, and brown coloured fragments, from which the pigments for the frescoes were made.

It has been stated that the caves at Ellora and Aurangabad could not be judged without comparison with Ajanta, where a longer and more complete sequence may be studied. The sculpture at Ajanta is as varied as it is impressive and it would be no mean task to date each of the caves, if this were possible at all. Yet, it is possible to select, with some reasonable hope of accuracy, a number of caves which illustrate representative types of consecutive periods.

The caves are numbered in ascending order as one advances up the gorge and the oldest caves are to be found in the central section.

The *vihara* cave 12 is probably one of the earliest at Ajanta. There is no sculpture in this cave and at a first glance the arches appear to be Islamic. But the style of these arches dates back to the second century B.C. at least, and may be seen illustrated on the pillar reliefs at Sanci.

Cave 10, a *chaitya*, was perhaps contemporary with cave 12 and is notable for the simplicity of design and the plainness of its *stupa* or *dagoba*. The painting around the lower walls of this cave is dim and partly destroyed, but in what may still be seen the line is exquisite. Higher up between the arched rafters are painted Buddhas in red outline in a stronger and more calligraphic style than the more famous frescoes of caves 1 and 2.

The next in the series for purpose of illustration is also a *chaitya* cave, No. 19, to which reference has already been made. The Buddha, in Gupta style, stands in front of the *stupa*, which is decorated with restraint in low relief (Fig. 11).

Cave 17 may be of the late fifth century. It is the earliest in which the style of sculpture approaches that of Ellora and Aurangabad. The shrine of this cave contains a Buddha seated cross-legged with a standing *chauri* bearer on each side. Also on each side there is a sort of sea monster and an *apsara* which appears to be almost too plump to fly. In front of the Buddha are carved the Wheel of the Law, deer, and standing votaries already described. The pillars in this cave are not so lavishly decorated as those of the later caves and there are Buddhas in the pure

Gupta style which are not seen at Aurangabad. Also there are fat, pot-bellied *yaḳsha* figures which survive without much variation until the seventh century.

Next in order, and probably of late fifth and early sixth centuries, are caves 1 and 2. These are *viharas* and closely resemble No. 1 and No. 3 at Aurangabad (compare verandah pillars and capitals). There is little sculpture except in the shrines, which have been described. The glory of these caves is in the painting which adorns the walls. Here one pauses, step by step, trying by lamplight to burn the line and colours into the mind. Cave 26 (Fig. 4) is a *chaitya* of about the same date, but is decorated profusely with sculpture and contains little painting. It was probably after this model that cave 10 at Ellora was designed. Here, however, the Buddha seated in front of the *stupa* is still definitely of the Gupta type, while the figure on Buddha's right-hand side wears the *Jata* headdress which becomes so common in the seventh century. This is perhaps the transition period between the Gupta style at Ajanta and the later seventh-century style at Ellora.

It is unnecessary to describe further the caves at Yun-kang and Lung-mên, since there have already appeared at least three works which describe them at length and are well illustrated with photographs. However, if one consults these before visiting the caves, one may look in vain for some of the finer heads and even whole figures which one sees illustrated. Many, no doubt, are among the unidentified pieces in Western and Japanese collections and museums, others perhaps were destroyed in the attempt to remove them, for the rock at Yun-kang is in many places fissured and friable. This destruction is in China considered to be the work of foreigners, but could never have been possible had it not been for an apathy on the part of the Chinese for sculpture in stone. Foreigners certainly created a demand for such pieces in their admiration for them, Chinese dealers took advantage of that demand and enabled the foreigners to take some of the finest specimens home with them.

Today the average Chinese realises that his country has lost something, but seldom takes the trouble to find out exactly what it is. When foreigners wish to visit caves therefore, it is often suspected (not unreasonably) that some mischief may be afoot; however, the traditional respect paid to scholars in China usually makes it possible to overcome these difficulties and others.

The surest way to safeguard the caves would be to imitate the splendid example set by the Hyderabad Government: to encourage foreigners and Chinese to visit and to take an interest in the sculptures, and to provide custodians for them. At present there

are few who care to travel such a distance with the possibility of being disappointed at the end of the journey; for sometimes there are "too many bandits" and the foreigner is "protected" by soldiers until the next train arrives to take him away.

It is perhaps unfair to criticize China in the midst of her political troubles; there are Chinese scholars who are working towards these ends with as great enthusiasm as any foreigner. Until the Japanese are curbed or satisfied it is unlikely that the caves will receive any attentions of the right sort.

The Angkor group of temples in Cambodia is, geographically at least, midway between the Indian caves and Yun-kang and Lung-mên in North China. However, this seems to be one of the only certainties known of the ruins.

The stone temples and palaces at Angkor are believed to have been built between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Although there is both Indian and Chinese influence to be seen, the Indian predominates, and so, as we might expect, the iconography is more Hinduistic than Buddhist.

Perhaps the most interesting problem which these ruins present is the identity of their builders, the Khmers. The reliefs around and in Angkor Wat give us a clear picture of a thriving and highly developed civilization. Here, across the southern border of China, lived a people skilled in architecture and sculpture, textiles, weapons (apparently of bronze or steel), and, most remarkable of all, in horse-riding and charioteering. All of these arts had been known and practised in China for many centuries. China herself at this time was at one of the peaks of artistic achievement. Ceramics, bronzes, jade carving and painting were highly refined and so profuse that they were available to all and buried with the dead. Yet in the Angkor region we find hardly a shard of pottery that can compare with the Chinese wares; bronze and jade are almost unknown.

We must therefore assume either that such things were unknown to the Khmers or that the climate, white ants and the invading Thais destroyed or removed them all.

It is known that the aboriginal inhabitants of Cambodia, Siam and Malaya were pigmies of negretto type, some of which survive today in Northern Malaya. The Khmers were of Sino-Tibetan or Central Asian origin and probably migrated southwards in waves occupying the Menam and Meking deltas in the first few centuries of the Christian era.

The Wei Tartars, who dominated North China in the fifth and sixth centuries, were also of Central Asian origin. They were Buddhists, but at the same time warlike, riders of horses and chariots and nomadic in habit. They were absorbed by the Chinese

and, within a few centuries, left no memorial except the very beautiful sculptures at Lung-mên and Yun-kang.

The Chinese, as a whole, are not lovers of sculpture; every impetus in the carving of stone and representation of the human form has come with an alien invasion. The origin of the Shangs is still obscure; they carved in stone and jade with wonderful feeling for mass and rhythm; after their conquest by the Chons, who were probably indigenous to China, in the twelfth century B.C. the art of sculpture practically died out until the arrival of the Wei Tartars, who brought a wealth of Buddhist motifs from Central Asia.

The Himalayas and the Kun Lun Mountains run roughly parallel. In the plateau which lies between these ranges the Menam, the Mekong and the Yellow rivers rise. It forms a natural gate from Central Asia into North and South China, Cambodia and Malaya. It might be expected that migrations would divide in this area; some would go east along the Yellow river into China and others southwards into Cambodia, Siam and Burma. Therefore it would not be surprising to find in Cambodia traces of art motifs and habits which came originally from the same Central Asian sources as some of those of China. At the same time we must not forget that Cambodia bordered upon China and many influences must have passed directly across the frontier, which probably was not clearly defined.

In the galleries around Angkor Wat are carved reliefs depicting scenes from the Ramayana and of battles with the aboriginal pigmies which are probably historical. The captured pigmies are driven in shackles or carried, bound by the legs, to the most unpleasant tortures. They are pinned on spikes, stretched and carved in pieces. In the battles are clearly shown chariots and horsemen with well-made armour. The use of horses and chariots may be a survival from Central Asia, for although these people migrated along the rivers, it seems probable that they brought their horses from Central Asia. Around the windows, both at Angkor Wat and at the Bayon, are carved in slight relief medallion patterns of phœnixes and flowers, probably copied from Chinese figured silks which must have come direct to Cambodia from China, probably in exchange for tribute.

Although it is clear that there is some Chinese and Central Asian influence at Angkor, these only add interest to the Indian motifs in decoration and architecture. For the sculptures are more Hinduistic than Buddhist and the design of the buildings is purely Indian.

So we see at Angkor the monuments of a Central Asian nomadic people who brought to Cambodia some of their own customs and art motifs. By their superior physique and weapons they en-

slaved the aboriginal pigmies and formed a powerful kingdom between India and China. They may have heard of, or even practised, Buddhism before their arrival in Cambodia. Then, meeting with Indian settlers, monks and traders with a variant of that religion, the races mingled under a cult of Hinduistic Buddhism. Added to these influences are probably stray motifs from China and the powerful softening influence of the soil and climate. The Khmers were reduced to degeneracy by the thirteenth century when they were overrun by the Thais, another migration of Central Asian origin.

The whole is a flux of influences, religious and cultural, crowded with interesting little problems which give scope to the imagination and are clustered around the central problem of the mysterious Khmers.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Apsara, an attendant spirit.
Chaitya, a chapel.
Chauri, a fly-whisk.
Dagoba, a domed *stupa*.
Dvarapala, a guardian.
Jata, headdress worn by an ascetic.
Naga, serpent.
Padmasana, seated on a lotus.
Sinhasana, seated on a lion.
Stupa, a tower, or solid dome, erected over a sacred relic.
T'ao t'ieh, ogre mask used in Chinese decoration.
Usnisa, the protuberance on the head of a Buddha.
Vihara, monastery.
Yaksha, an earth spirit or deity.

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