

III.

REMARKS ON SOME CLAY DAGOBAS, BEARING SANSKRIT STAMPS OBTAINED IN CEYLON. By A. OSWALD BRODIE, Esq., F.R.S.A., Scot.

I have the pleasure to present to the Society specimens of miniature dagobas obtained by me in Ceylon, and which, in general appearance, resemble those dug up by Major Kittoe at Benares, among the ruins of the great Boodhist temple at Sarnath. They are chiefly interesting from containing on the inner side of the base a Sanscrit legend, stamped in rather high relief. A dagoba (otherwise called cheitya or thoopæ) is simply a bell-shaped shrine containing relics of Boodhoo. They are found of all sizes, from that of the diminutive models on the table to those of the great structures at Rangoon, Anooradhapoorā, &c., which are from two to four hundred feet in height, and yet (so far at least as the Ceylon ones are concerned) of solid brick-work throughout, with the exception of a small cell. The specimens now exhibited were kindly obtained for me by Philip Braybrooke, Esq., of the Ceylon Civil Service, who mentioned that they were dug up in heaps at a deserted rock-cave temple between Badulla and Kattregam; that some have evidently been exposed to fire, while the majority have been merely sun-dried; that none of the priests or other natives know anything about their origin or purpose; and that they had been obtained in other parts of the island, he believed in the district of Colombo. Mr Mitford, another civilian, writing from Ratnapoorā, stated that the people there knew these objects by description, believed that they were used as money, and thought that they were only found in Ouva and the other parts of the island inhabited by the Veddos or aboriginal wild men of Ceylon. Col. Sykes, in the *Journal of R. A. S.*, Part I., 1854, suggests that these dagobas were votive offerings from persons cured of some malady—and such is, I think, the general opinion; it appears to me, however, quite as probable that they were mementoes purchased and carried home by pilgrims who visited the temples at which they are now found, serving much the same purpose as the scallop or the palm-leaf of the crusader, or the peculiar turban worn by the Mohammedan who has wor-

shipped at Mecca. I have myself seen very rude paintings on cloth, representing the sacred Bo tree, at Anooradhapoor, the Thooporamo dagoba there, and the great temple at Dambool, disposed of in this way to pilgrims. A slight examination of the specimens shows that the base was first modelled (apparently in the hand) and then dried in the sun, after which the upper portion was joined to it, attaching itself chiefly by the edges. One specimen shows that this upper part, when applied, was so soft that it took off an impression of the stamp. These little cheityas vary considerably in contour, but agree in this, that they are much less produced than the one figured by Col. Sykes. Possibly some member of the Society may be able to ascertain whether these, like those of India, bear the Boodhist formula :—

- “ All things proceed from some cause.”
- “ This cause has been declared by me, Tathagáta” (Boodhoo).
- “ All things will cease to exist.”
- “ This is what is declared by the Maha Samana” (Boodhoo).
- “ No vice is to be committed.”
- “ Every virtue is to be practised.”
- “ The mind must be brought under entire subjection.”
- “ This is the commandment of Boodhoo”—

or something to this effect, for the dogma appears under several forms. I can only regret that the specimens exhibited are so travel-worn. Having written for others, I may, on a future occasion, be able to present some in which the letters shall be more illegible.

Since writing the above, a friend has placed in my hands (with permission to exhibit them here) some of the identical dagobas found by the late Major Kittoe. It will be observed that these are proportionally more slender than those from Ceylon; that they have been carefully baked, and that the stamp occupies but a small portion of the base, being, in fact, impressed on a small button of clay, which, after being dried, was imbedded in the mass of the dagoba. One specimen proves that the work was at times so carelessly performed, that the stamp occupied a vertical and not a horizontal position.