

GREEK SCULPTURE THE MOTHER OF BUDDHIST ART.

BY THE EDITOR.

A GLAMOR of antiquity generally rests upon the monuments of ancient India, and we cannot doubt that Indian civilization reaches back to the first millennium before Christ, and that in the days of Buddha it had attained a height which made possible one of the most remarkable of the world's religious movements—the establishment of a faith that discarded all the pagan features of primitive idolatry and superstition and formulated a moral code which even



HEADS FROM GANDHARA.

to-day can scarcely be regarded as antiquated. Nevertheless Indian antiquities are much younger than they are popularly supposed to be, and neither manuscripts nor monuments of the Brahmans and Buddhists date back earlier than the fourth century B. C. No doubt they include more ancient traditions, and we do not hesitate to acknowledge that the Buddhist books incorporate sayings of the Buddha which are genuine and may be the very words of the

ALL CREATION LAMENTING BUDDHA'S FINAL ENTRY INTO NIRVANA.





THE BUDDHA OF GANDHARA.

founder of the Dharma; but the Mahabharata, for instance, the national epic of India, in the shape in which it now lies before us, though resting on primitive traditions, has been influenced by Greek thought, and the traces of the Iliad and Odyssey are noticeable in its verses.



DETAIL OF THE APOLLO BELVEDERE.

What plastic art may have existed in India before the third century B. C. is not known, and if there was any the work must have been executed in perishable material, for nothing has been preserved. The first specimens of Indian art are of Greek origin, and are found in the Gandhara districts which were overrun by

Greek adventurers after the time of Alexander the Great. At home Greek art entered a state of decadence, but here the artists were inspired with new thoughts, and though in technique they were inferior to their brethren at Athens and Rhodes and other centers of Greek sculpture, they made a start toward a new development which was destined to sweep over the whole of Asia and produce that peculiar kind of sculpture which found a new typical expression in Chinese and Japanese art. Even before this significant connection of Asiatic art with the last traces of Greek vitality had been known, connoisseurs of Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan sculpture called attention to the fact that in contrast to other subjects of Oriental art, the Buddha always bore Western features. The reason for this is now obvious, for it is natural that on account of the reverence in which the Buddha figure was held the conservatism of tradition would require that the original type of this most sacred figure should have been preserved more faithfully than in other cases.

It is now commonly agreed that the figure of Buddha was modeled after the prototype of Apollo, and the abnormalities which mark the character of Buddha according to Indian traditions, have been so softened as not to be offensive to the more cultivated Greek taste. So especially the bump of intelligence on the top of Buddha's head, which would appear ugly to a refined artist, has been changed into a top knot of his hair which happened to be fashionable in those days in Athens and is quite obvious in the Apollo Belvedere.

A specially remarkable evidence of the Greek character of Buddhist art is a statue found among the Buddhist Gandhara sculptures at Peshawar, now in the museum at Calcutta, which in want of a better name is commonly called the Buddhist Athene. That the statue is Greek in origin and type is evidenced by the name Yavanis, which the Hindus have popularly given to all statues of this type. Yavani is the Indian pronunciation of the name Ionian by which all people of Hellenic origin are denoted.

A comparison with Athene statues and bas-reliefs plainly indicates that the Buddhist sculptors were either Greek themselves or had learned their lessons from Greek masters. The figure of Athene in bas-relief here reproduced is of an unknown authorship, and apparently dates back to the best times of Greek art. It must have served as a stele to a tomb, for the attitude is characterized by a pensive solemnity which is not overawed by the problem of death but dwells on it in earnest contemplation.

Our frontispiece is known as the Athene of Peace which next



THE BUDDHIST ATHENE.

to the Venus of Milo is one of the best treasures of the Louvre. The absence of all armor is obviously intentional. Only the helmet is left and the head of Medusa for unequivocal identification.

The technique of Gandhara art is apparently below that of the best Greek workmanship, but it is animated by a new spirit of



TYPICAL ATHENE STATUES.

promise which can not be traced in the contemporaneous post-Hellenic period.

The field of early Buddhist art is still but little touched by systematic investigation perhaps because Calcutta where the Gandhara relics are kept lies so far from the centers of European learning that they have as yet received little attention.

A peculiar instance which will be of common interest to almost



ATHENE ON A STELE.

all archæologists on account of its connection with Christian art is the Buddhist lamb-bearer, which has been found in Gandhara and bears a remarkable similarity to the Good Shepherd representing Christ in the same attitude. Both found their common prototypes in ancient Greek sculpture. Typical illustrations of the Greek and Christian lamb-bearer in comparison to the analogous Buddhist figure have been published in the *Portfolio of Buddhist Art*, Plate 6 (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company).



GIGANTOMACHY FROM THE PERGAMON TEMPLE.

A favorite subject for Greek artists was the representation of the struggle of Zeus against the monsters and giants of the deep who in the Pergamon Zeus temple are sculptured as wild men ending in serpent tails. It is scarcely possible that the same idea should have originated independently in Gandhara, and the similarity of the design, including even such a detail as its use upon a staircase, is too great to be accidental.

Eastern Asia has undoubtedly developed a civilization of its own. Its religions, its arts, its literature and philosophy are typically

Asiatic, and we know positively that many of the parallels that may be traced have originated in an independent development. The same psychical laws under similar conditions produced the same effects in different countries, and yet we sometimes discover historical connections where we least expect them. Gandhara was a center from



A BUDDHIST GIGANTOMACHY OF GANDHARA.

which Greek methods spread over the whole of Eastern Asia, and their influence has been the more far-reaching since religious conservatism preserved some important traces of the Buddha type which was held in special sanctity.