



Vestiges of Buddhism in Micronesia

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symbols are themselves, too, each marked with a disk, connecting their cosmological import with the sun and moon as rulers of the heavens.

The symbolic forms of the two principles beneath the sun's disk on No. 2. strike the eye, at once, as identical with the so-called arrow-head and wedge of which the various characters of the cuneiform inscriptions, in all their varieties, are made up. It seems evident that the application of these forms to the expression of thought in historical and other monuments had a sacred origin.

It would be rash to hazard any conjecture as to the absolute age of these cylinders. But, while the design No. 2. is evidently more primitive than No. 1., the presence of the sun's disk upon the latter, whereby it differs, as is believed, from all the discovered slabs of Nineveh, on which the other parts of the same scene are represented, would seem to show that both cylinders express the idea intended to be conveyed by such representations, in an earlier form than the slabs.

E. E. S.

IV. VESTIGES OF BUDDHISM IN MICRONESIA.

IN Horatio Hale's *Ethnography and Philology*, Philad. 1846, p. 78, is the following notice concerning Tobi, or Lord North's Island, which forms the southwestern extremity of the Micronesian range.

"According to the native traditions, a personage, by name *Pita-kāt* (or Peeter Kart), of copper colour like themselves, came many years ago from the island of Ternate (one of the Moluccas), and gave them their religion, and such simple arts as they possessed. It is probably to him that we are to attribute some peculiarities in their mode of worship, such as their temple with rude images to represent the divinity. In the centre, suspended from the roof, is a sort of altar, into which they suppose their deity comes to hold converse with the priest. The temple is called *vère yaris*, or spirit-house."

There is evidently in this statement an allusion to Buddhism, although the author seems not to have been aware of it, and although the facts themselves are greatly corrupted.

Pita-kāt, instead of being the name of a missionary, is the name of the sacred books of the Buddhists, which are called *Tri-pittaka* or *Bedagat*. The *vère yaris* are the *vihāras*, or cloisters, of the Buddhist monks. Both of these terms occur abundantly in the *Memoir on the History of Buddhism* in the first volume of this Journal.

This vestige of Buddhism in Micronesia is the more important, as this portion of the Pacific Ocean is now visited by missionaries and intelligent navigators.

J. W. G.