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Journeys in French Indo-China (Tongking, Annam, Cochin China, Cambodia): Discussion

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After the reading of the paper the following discussion ensued :—

Mr. JOHN THOMSON: My exploration of Cambodia in 1866 is now rather ancient history, and my knowledge of this section of Eastern Asia is mainly confined to Siam, Cambodia, and Lower Cochin China. At that time I examined the principal antiquities, and made a detailed survey of Angkor Wat (properly Nakhon Wat), which enabled me to produce a ground plan of the entire building.\* I took a large number of photographs both at Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom or "Inthapatapuri," the capital of ancient Cambodia. In this city distinct evidence is found of different periods in building, sculpture, and inscriptions, some of which had been partly translated at the time, denoting a higher antiquity than that assigned to them by Mr. Curzon. This view appears to be borne out by the Chinese annals. In the "Teen-hia-kwo-le-ping-swo," there is a note (date about 140 B.C.) on Cambodia under the name Chinla, a name by which the country is identified, and may be traced in subsequent Chinese writings, where it is also noticed under the names Funan and Kanpoji. The ruins are found as far north as Korat in Siam, further south than Angkor Wat, and extending over a wide area east and west. Many of the ruins are important, and are linked together by stone causeways raised well above the autumn flood levels, and were evidently intended and used by the ancients for extensive traffic from city to city. Adjoining the causeways one finds great stone reservoirs which must have been designed for use during the dry season, when water is scarce. Some of these reservoirs have the same characteristics in the mode of building as Angkor Wat. The quarries from which the stone was obtained are 30 miles distant from Angkor Wat, and one can hardly conceive of any means by which they could have drawn the huge blocks over hilly ground to the capital. The blocks used in building Angkor Wat are so closely fitted without cement that they must have been ground together, as the line of union is hardly to be seen. The stones in all cases were first fitted together and afterwards sculptured in a most elaborate and artistic manner. One sees in Angkor Wat evidence proving how closely it was allied to the Brahmanical cult, evidence which I published at the time. For example, a vast area of the walls of the temple behind its screens of pillars, is devoted to sculptured illustrations of the incidents in the poems, the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabharata," well-known to Oriental scholars. When in Cambodia, the King of Siam sent a special envoy to request me to photograph the entire series, a request with which I was unable to comply. At that time the kodak was unknown, and one had to depend on the collodion wet process of photography. This entailed the constant presence of eight or ten porters to transport the necessary apparatus. But the process had this advantage; as each plate was taken it was at once developed, so that one could see and judge of its value. I would have shown you a series of my photographs taken in 1866, but it is now too late to detain you. My original ground-plan of Angkor Wat may be seen in the adjoining room.

Mr. ANNAN BRYCE: It has struck me, and I don't think this has hitherto been noticed by any one, that there are several points of resemblance between the ruins at Angkor and those at Pagan in Upper Burma. Pagan was for some centuries the capital of Burma, and was destroyed in 1284 by an army of Kublai Khan. There are resemblances not only in certain features of design, form, and decoration, but in the fineness of the work. It is difficult to insert a knife in the joints of some of the brickwork at Pagan, just as it appears from Mr. Thomson's account to be difficult to do so in the case of some of the stone-work at Angkor, and it is noteworthy that

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\* See Thomson's 'Straits of Malacca, Indo-China, and China.'

many of the buildings at both places must date from the same period. Some of these resemblances in style are apparent in Mr. Curzon's photographs, and in the book which I am glad to hear he is going to publish, I hope he will notice, and attempt to account for them. From a hint which Mr. Fergusson gives in his descriptions of Pagan and Angkor, it may perhaps be possible to find the link in the architecture of Kashmir, though Mr. Fergusson, who had not himself seen either Pagan or Angkor, does not appear to have thought of connecting the styles of the two places, which indeed have many points of dissimilarity as well as of resemblance.

Mr. VERNEY : I am here as the only European representative of the Siamese legation, and did not intend to speak, but I have much pleasure in thanking Mr. Curzon for the lecture he has given. The Siamese, I should like to inform you, are very proud indeed of being the owners of such ruins as we have seen represented to-night, and endeavour to preserve them intact. Until recent years, I believe, the very existence of these ruins was unknown to Europeans; we have with us one of the first of those who photographed them. I believe that Frenchmen have also taken admirable photographs and brought back good accounts of those ruins. I think we all might say how extremely obliged we are for the admirable way and graphic manner in which Mr. Curzon has told us what he saw, and I only wish that many Englishmen would follow in his footsteps, and that they may bring back not only the accounts of the ruins they saw but a great interest in these eastern countries which can do both the east and west nothing but good.

The PRESIDENT : Mr. Curzon has described his paper as dull. Whatever else it was I do not think that any of you will have found it that. I myself, when I heard that he was going to address us, knew that the paper would be extremely instructive, but I also knew that Mr. Curzon held very severe views indeed about the inexpediency of introducing anything that might at all detract from the strictly scientific character of our proceedings. However, the fact that he should have given us not only a very informing but a very amusing address only proves that as he is strong he is also merciful, and I am convinced that you will all desire that I give him your most hearty thanks.

The Hon. GEORGE CURZON : It is very true that I confessed a strong and scrupulous regard for the scientific character of our proceedings and our papers. As a matter of fact, the paper, as it will appear in the *Journal*, is scientific to the point of intolerable dullness, and it was merely the stimulus of this charming audience that tempted me to some of those concessions that have ruffled the scientific soul of our president. One word only in answer to the observations made as to the resemblance of these ruins to those of a temple in Burma. I thank Mr. Bryce for having mentioned this, as I consider it extremely worthy of study, and if he can supply me with photographs of them I shall be obliged, as they well deserve examination before one forms conclusions about the ruins at Angkor. With regard to what Mr. Thomson has said, I have only to reply that the transport of great blocks of stone by people at remote periods has to me never been a matter of much surprise. It merely requires a bank of sand, rollers, a pulley, rope, and the application of manual labour, to transport and elevate a block of stone half the size of this theatre. The people who erected these buildings had an unlimited supply of manual labour, and four or five thousand men would accomplish as well, though not with the same economy of labour, what is now done by a 200-300 HP. engine. As regards the extent of the site, I did not mean to say that the whole of the ruins were comprised within a space of 20 miles, because I have seen them at Kwin-hon in Annam that is over a stretch of country 400 miles broad. As any student of the question

would know, I was speaking of the ruins of the capital, not confined to the main temple, but including a group of buildings as extensive as London. As regards date, Mr. Thomson doubts my inference, for it was not more than an inference. The earliest inscription dates from about 600 A.D., and there are several inscriptions of about 890 A.D. on the later buildings, whose character is not such as to lead one to believe that there can be more than two hundred years between them and the main body of the earlier remains. In the days when Mr. Thomson was there not one inscription had been deciphered at all. I am obliged to Mr. Verney for the kind part he took in the discussion, and I hope that under the care of the Government with which he is connected in this country, these ruins may be preserved; but while these ruins are so well looked after the Siamese Government does not meet its responsibilities with regard to the others, and I should like Mr. Verney to write a despatch to that Government, urging it to extend the same care to the other ruins.

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NOTE ON MAP OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA AND SIAM.—The map to illustrate the paper by the Hon. G. N. Curzon has been reduced from the last edition of M. Pavie's map. As the question of the boundaries is still under discussion none but those which have previously been definitely settled are shown on the map, such for instance those between Cochin China and Cambodia, and China and Tongking. The topography differs considerably from that shown in the maps previously published. This is especially shown on the east side of Mekong as well as in the course of that river itself. The present map also contains a large amount of detail in districts previously left nearly blank.

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## THE ZOUTPANSBERG GOLDFIELDS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC.\*

By FRED. JEPPE.

THE district of Zoutpansberg embraces an area of about 25,000 square miles. It forms the northern portion and about one-fifth of the whole of the South African Republic. Of this large territory, exceeding the area of Holland and Belgium put together, the proclaimed goldfields cover about 3564 square miles.

The district is bounded on the south by the Olifants River, on the east by the Portuguese possessions, limited by the Lebombo Range, on the north by the Limpopo, on the north-west by the Magalakwin or Nyl River, and a line from this river to Yzerberg, thence along the mountain range to the Inkumpi or Zebedeli's River, and down this river to its junction with the Olifants. The district is divided into two portions, the Western or Highveld, and the Eastern or Low Country; in the latter the principal goldfields are found. Two great mountain

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\* Map, p. 288.