



OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH OF BUDDHIST SITES IN UZBEKISTAN WITH THE COOPERATION OF RISSHO UNIVERSITY (2014-2021)

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: The article discusses and discusses proposals for the study of Buddhist monuments in Uzbekistan in collaboration with RISSHO University.

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RISSHO UNIVERSITETI HAMKORLIGIDA O‘ZBEKISTONDAGI BUDDIST YODGORLIKLARINI O‘RGANISHGA UMUMIY NUQTAI (2014-2021)

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MAQOLA HAQIDA

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Annotatsiya: Maqolada RISSHO universiteti hamkorligida O‘zbekistondagi buddist yodgorliklarini o‘rganishga takliflar berilgan va muhakama qilingan.

ОБЗОР ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ БУДДИЙСКИХ ПАМЯТНИКОВ В УЗБЕКИСТАНЕ ПРИ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВЕ УНИВЕРСИТЕТА РИССХО (2014-2021 ГГ.)

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О СТАТЬЕ

Ключевые слова: Буддизм, Памятник, Япония, Узбекистан, РИССХО.

Аннотация: В статье рассматриваются и обсуждаются предложения по изучению буддийских памятников Узбекистана в

INTRODUCTION

Rissho University Uzbekistan Academic Research Group (hereafter Rissho-Uzbek Team) was engaged in the excavation of Buddhist sites in Termez from 2014 to 2019. Rissho-Uzbek team decided to conduct these research activities because Rissho University originally developed from a school that trained Buddhist monks and hope to make a scholarly contribution by uncovering the pathways through which Buddhist culture developed. This research activity resulted in the development of two sites during this period.

The first was a continuation of the research at the Karatepa, which had been conducted jointly by Pidaev, Shakirdjan, director of the Institute of Arts of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, and late Dr. Katō Kyūzō. In addition to contributing to a part of the excavation of the Northern Hill of the Karatepa, a series of activities included inviting Prof. Pidaev and late Prof. Turgunov, Bahodir, and other prominent Uzbek professor to Japan in 2018 for a lecture on Buddhist sites in Uzbekistan, and publishing a report on the results of the five-year survey in 2020.

THE MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS

From 2016 to 2019, Rissho-Uzbek team also worked on the research of the Zurmala stupa, a Buddhist site in Termez. This was taken as a joint activity with the Termez Archaeological Museum and the Termez State University. Dr. Katō supported this activity as well. With the support of the director of the Termez Archaeological Museum, the research included the examination of old photographs on the Zurmala stupa that were kept in the library of the Termez Archaeological Museum (Rissho University 2017). A drone was also used to take 3D measurements of the stupa to confirm the extent of the current damage. In collaboration with Prof. Shaydullaev, Shapulat, Termez State University and Dr. Ulmasov, Akmal of Institute of Arts, they also checked for buried structures around the site, and estimated the age of the stupa's construction by observing the soil layer around the stupa and examining excavated items.

1. Excavation of the Karatepa site (2014-2017)

Rissho-Uzbek team, together with Institute of Arts of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, conducted excavations on the west side of the Northern Hill of the Karatepa site from 2014 to 2017, and published the final research report on the excavated sections in 2020 (Rissho University 2020). This is a continuation of the excavations that the late Katō Kyūzō had been engaged in since the late 1990s (Katō and Pidaev 2002, Pidaev 2007). While the above-mentioned the Karatepa Southern Hill and Western Hill consist of multiple configurations of stupas and caves, the Northern Hill does not use caves and consists entirely of adobe brick constructions. This structure is a combination of a monastery with a large stupa (estimated to be around 15m high), which is estimated to have had cylindrical body and its top a covered like bowl, and a square base called Harmika and umbrellas on

it, and a monastery hall with an almost square monastery of less than 40 m on each side and two relatively large votive stupas around the monastery hall.

The composition itself is clearly influenced by Gandhara. Before Our Team's research, Russian and French scholars had already pointed out the possibility that the Northern Hill had been repeatedly reconstructed after the 4th century (Zeymal 1999, Fussman 2011), which was confirmed to some extent by the excavation and radiocarbon dating at Rissho University (2020).

Rissho University (2020, Chapter7), speculated on the process by which the sites had once been repeatedly renovated and enlarged in the range from the late 1st century to the 4th century. That speculation was supported by differences in floor level, wall and room construction, and the location and stratigraphy of the radiocarbon dated material. Although it is certain that there were rooms that may have been used until the 6th century (it is not possible to say for certain whether the occupants were monks or not), research of this time has not provided sufficient evidence to determine when the Northern Hill area was founded and how long it was used as a Buddhist temple.

It is also noteworthy that a large mural painting was excavated from Room 56, which was excavated in conjunction with this survey, and part of it has been made publicly available (Pidaev 2016, Pidaev 2019). The murals show the influence of Greek and Roman art, and are considered likely to be of the 3rd-4th century (Yasuda 2020).

The murals are more similar to those found at the 3rd and 5th Buddhist temple sites in Miran, Xinjiang than those found at the Fayaztepa or Dirverzine-tepe in Northern Afghanistan. The stupas at the 3rd and 5th Buddhist temple sites in Miran are almost the same diameter and height as the small stupa embedded in the large stupa on the Northern Hill of the Karatepa and the stupa at the Fayaztepa (the one at Miran is slightly higher), and both stupas were probably made before Buddha images became the main object of worship. Furthermore, the discovery of pottery fragments written in the Kharoshthi script in the vicinity of the Karatepa and numerous artifacts written in the Kharoshthi script at the site of the Buddhist temple at Miran suggest a cultural and chronological closeness.

It has been said that the Buddhist culture of Miran or the southern road area of the Tarim Basin was influenced by Gandhara. The fact that the Buddhist culture of Miran shares common characteristics with the site of Northern Bactria, namely the Surkhandarya region, is extremely important when discussing the relationship between the two.

However, as a route from Northern Bactria to the southern road area of the Tarim Basin, it is rather circuitous to go north from Termez to Samarkand via Shahrisabz through the Iron Gate, and then through the Fergana Basin to the Tarim Basin, On the other hand, it is too far to go south from Termez, cross the Hindukush Mountains to Gandhara, and then go north from there to enter the

Tarim Basin from Gilgit,too. In this regard, the fact that Kuwayama (2017) has estimated pre-Kushan hegemony Yuezhi's main region to the area along the Wakhan corridor from present-day Northern Pakistan to Northeastern Afghanistan is extremely suggestive when considering the route from Northern Bactria to the southern road area of the Tarim Basin. It may provide a significant clue to the significance of the strong similarity between the newly discovered wall paintings at the Karatepa and those at Miran.

2. Reaserch of the Zurmala stupa (2016-2021)

The Zurmala stupa is located on the suburb of the Old Termez like the Karatepa site mentioned above. Strelkov (1928-1929) mentions that Tang era's monk Xuanzang saw the stupa in Termez, and also points out the size of the adobe bricks used, the similarities with stupas in Afghanistan, Northern India, and Gandhara. He also pointed out the size of the adobe bricks used and their similarity to stupas in Afghanistan and Gandhara in Northern India.

In 1964, Pugachenkova conducted a survey (Pugachenkova 1967). She executed trial trenching in the southwestern and northwestern sections around the stupa, she identified a part of its platform and collected surface samples within a radius of 500 meters. She found that its size of the adobe bricks was similar to that of used in Bactrian era. Based on the size and shape of the adobe bricks, she inferred that the building was constructed in or near the Bactrian period and that a square platform was present. The original height was estimated to be 16 meters, and 1.2 million dried bricks were used. She also recovered limestone blocks and cornice fragments that had fallen in the vicinity and noted the presence of exterior.

Based on this research, Risho-Uzbek team, in partnership with the Termez Archaeological Museum since 2016 and Termez State University since 2018, began to investigate the Zurmala stupa, which is believed to have been built during the Kushan period. In particular, during the joint excavations conducted in 2018 and 2019, four exploratory pits were set up with the aim of finding possible building sites around the stupa. Since the stupa was broken in half, we did not rush to investigate the base of the stupa to avoid its collapse, and the exploratory pits were located at a distance from the stupa.

As a result, a total of 10 coins, including those from the Kanishka I period, as well as pottery, stone, and metal objects from the Kushan period, were excavated from the pit around the stupa. By digging down to the layer where no artifacts were found, the surface of the ground at that time could be estimated. As a result, no building remains were found in the vicinity of the stupa, but the estimation of the surface of the ground at that time may provide an important clue to the existence of the base of the stupa and to the date of its construction.

Incidentally, the post-excavation survey of artifacts at the Karatepa site mentioned above was restricted to the immediate aftermath of the excavation, so we were unable to confirm any portraits

or inscriptions on the coins in sufficiently. However, during the excavation of the area around the Zurmala stupa, such observation and recording were freely permitted. It was very useful to be able to fully observe the artifacts and to confirm the layers, and as a result, we were able to determine that the base layer (natural ground) at the time the stupa was built was around -230 to -240 cm below the present surface of the ground. In addition, a coin (Kanishka I bronze coin, front: standing image of Kanishka, back: standing image of Milo: Mitra) was excavated from a layer very close to the base layer. Radiocarbon analysis of about 10 carbides in the layer containing the artifacts indicated that they were calibrated to date from the late 1st to the early 2nd century. The radiocarbon analysis of about 10 carbides in the inclosure layer of the stupa indicated the date of construction of the base of the stupa. The stupa has large cracks and is on the verge of collapse, so conservation measures should be taken. Please see Rissho University (2021) for the details.

3. Chronology of the Kushan Dynasty and Future Prospects: In Conclusion

At the turn of the 21st century, a new chronology of the Kushan dynasty was proposed. It is based on new clues to date the Kanishka I period, and it is a revision of the conventional theory of the reign period of every Kushan kings. The new clue is the Yavanajataka, which is said to have been compiled in India based on Greek astronomical and astrological texts, and which has attracted attention as evidence of the introduction of Greek astronomy and astrology to India around the 2nd century. Falk, Harry found in it an description that contrasted the Kushan period with the Saka year then in use in India, which he estimated the beginning of the Kanishka I period as 127 AD (Falk 2001, Falk 2015). Based on this theory, Jongeward and Cribb (2015) presented a new relationship between the royal lineage and the reign date as follows.

- 1) Kujula Kadphises、丘就卻、50—90
- 2) Vima Takhtu、Soter Megas、閻膏珍、90—113
- 3) Vima Kadphises、113—127
- 4) Kanishka I、迦膩色迦、127-151
- 5) Huvishka、151—190
- 6) Vasudeva、波調、190—230
- 7) Kanishka II、230—247
- 8) Vāsishka、247—267
- 9) Kanishka III、267—270

However, this theory is still in the verification stage and has not been confirmed. It is important to compare and correct the chronology and regional differences among the different sites using a common scale as much as possible. Regional and time differences in the transmission of cultural styles must also be taken into account. In the case of the Northern Bactrian sites, it will be

essential to find the same standard among sites and correct the chronology of nearby sites through more precise dating of pottery as shown in Iwai (2003) and by confirming the stratigraphic position of coins. Even if I rely on this theory, I think that the construction of the Zurmala stupa can be regarded as Kanishka I's era. Please also refer to the review of research history of Buddhist archaeological sites in Bactrian area by Japanese researchers (Iwamoto 2022).

In Japan, the achievements of the late Dr. Katō Kyūzō are well known when it comes to research of Buddhist sites in Uzbekistan. Dr. Katō made the existence of Buddhist monuments in Uzbekistan widely known in Japan through numerous publications and exhibitions around the 2000s. Dr. Katō was also known as one of the driving forces behind the "Silk Road" boom that ignited after the 1970s, as well as a survivor of the tragic Siberian internment during World War II. Moreover, in his relatively late years, he confessed that he was born on the Korean Peninsula, making him widely known among Koreans living in Japan. In this way, his life embodied the turbulent history of Eurasia in the 20th century, and such an existence is hard to find elsewhere. In the future, while honoring Dr. Katō's achievements, it is important to promote the ruins themselves as a tourist resource with their own appeal.

CONCLUSION

Basically, on cultural heritage, the judgment of the nation or people who own the cultural heritage site should be respected. Therefore, a Japanese scholar, who is only a foreigner, cannot make a definitive statement. However, Japan is one of the countries where Buddhism still lives and breathes in daily life. Japan's Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties emphasizes not only the protection of cultural properties but also the preservation of all information about them as records, based on academic research and scientific methods of preservation. From this perspective, it seems natural that the Buddhist sites in Termez should be preserved as the same.

In other words, since it is a historical fact that Buddhism has ceased to exist in this area, there is no need to restore the greatness and solemnity of the past in real. It is desirable to preserve the weathered atmosphere of the site to some extent, but to take scientific measures to protect the site from further disintegration and weathering. We have already made some civil engineering considerations to scientifically augment the site and properly preserve it. Please see Rissho University (2021) for the details. This information is available in Japanese and Russian.

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