



THE ISSUES OF STUDYING AND PRESERVING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS OF THE KUSHAN PERIOD IN THE OLD TERMIZ

Abduraxmonov Azamat Ostanuqulovich

Termiz state university independent researcher, Termez

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the history and description of the related archaeological monuments of Karatepe and Fayoztepe, located in the territory of Old Termiz, as well as quotes from the conclusions of the scientific research of well-known archaeologists are presented. The issues of conservation and preservation of these monuments were discussed.

In 1937-1938, the study of the culture of the Kushan period in the Surkhan oasis began with the activities of the Termiz archaeological complex expedition under the leadership of M.E. Masson. The main goal of the expedition was to study the history of the origin of the Kushon state, the reasons for the emergence of Buddhism in Central Asia [Masson, 1940. B.8].

The Kushon period monuments located in the oasis were studied in relation to each other by the expedition. For this purpose, other areas besides Old Termiz, the major center of culture of the Kushon era, were studied. As a result of scientific research conducted in the area of old Termiz, it was determined that the period of prosperity of ancient Termiz coincided with the era of the Kushons. In Kushon settlements along the right bank of the Amudarya, one can find high-quality items common to almost all of them.

The members of the expedition found coins of the Kushon era in the center of Old Termiz, that is, in the lower cultural layer of the ruins of the palace of Termiz Shahs of the 9th-12th centuries. It should be noted that iron objects were found from the Kushon period cultural layer of Old Termiz. In the 1st and 3rd centuries BC, Termiz proved the development of metalworking. The main raw material for these iron products is the iron ores found in the Kohitang mountains, which were transported to Old Termiz.

One of the most important findings of the expedition is the achievements of the Kushan period in the field of irrigation facilities. It is well known from historical sources that Surkhan oasis was divided into Sherabad, Boysun, Bandikhon, Jarkurgan, and Termiz irrigation regions during the Kushan period. The ancient canals and ditches along the Surkhan lowland show that they were dug about 2.5-2 thousand years ago and were widely used to irrigate the fields [Masson, 1940. B.5].

Although an irrigation system was established in the oasis during the Greco-Bactrian period, its development undoubtedly dates back to the Kushon period. Archaeological



researches conducted in Fayoztepa, Karatepa in Old Termiz show that water supply in Buddhist temples was provided by water pipes.

Some sources also state that the single water system connecting the monuments of Karatepa and Fayoztepa may be connected through ceramic pipes [Tursunov, 2004. P.72].

Karatepa - a complex of cave Buddhist temples located in the northeastern part of Old Termiz, was first opened in 1926-28 by the expedition of the State Museum of the Culture of Oriental Peoples in Moscow. In 1937, M.E. Masson and E.G. Pchelina, in the 1960s, archaeologist B.Ya. Archaeological research was carried out by the Staviskys.

The total land area of the monument is more than 8 hectares, and there were more than 15 cave complexes on the southern hill. The complex of the Farbi hill was not more than 5. The eastern part of the northern hill was occupied by a complex located on the surface of the ground, and the western part was built on the surface of the ground by a temple.

Research conducted at the Karatepa Buddhist temple shows that the purification ponds near the Buddha stupa were also supplied with water through pipes. The fact that Karatenpaing developed a water network during the Kushon period is also confirmed by the coins dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD found in archaeological excavations in its territory. Moreover, the discovery of Vasudeva's coin shows that life flourished in Karatepa even in the 3rd century AD.

Kushon era monuments (Qoratepa, Fayoztepa, Zurmala) found in the area of old Termiz may have been supplied by a single water network. Especially the Karatepa Buddhist temple was given special attention during the Kushon period.

The Buddhist temple at Karatepa is called "Khadevakavihara" in Kushon language. In his opinion, this word means that the temple was built according to the instructions of the Kushan ruler, and the Buddhist temples built at that time in Old Termiz, including Fayoztepa, Zurmala, and the Buddhist temple on the north-eastern side of Old Termiz, which have not been preserved, had a special privilege [Stavisky, 1987. B. 42].

It is surprising that the Buddhist temple in Karatepa was not built on the basis of a well-thought-out plan and the size of the rooms is different. Only in terms of size, the palace temple with a large porch has a central square, and the temple may have been intended not only for the monks from the Buddhist temple, but also for the people living in the city and its surroundings.

According to many archaeologists, there were separate temple caves for women in Karatepa. They try to justify this idea with the help of several examples. For example, a Buddha statue was found in the center of the palace of the main temple in Fayoztepa, with women depicted on both sides. A similar scene can be observed in the complex on the south side of Karatepa.

In 2003, the archaeological research conducted by the joint Uzbek-Japanese expedition in Karatepa provides new information. For example, as a result of research, it was found that the architecture and construction style of the temple located in the northern part of Karatepa is a high example of Bactrian architectural art based on the idea of Buddhism [Pidaev, Kato, 2004. P.157].

At the same time, local residents introduced a unique innovation in the construction of Buddhist temples, that is, the upper part of the temple rooms was built in the form of a dome.



The project of the construction of room domes was delivered to the ceremony. Also, the examples of artistic culture found in the temple testify to the high skill of our generations.

The sculptors and painters who worked at Karatepa were well aware of the achievements of the Hellenistic world and Gandhara Buddhist art and used it skillfully in their work.

Archaeological, anthropological and numismatic objects found in Karatepa greatly enrich the previous ideas about this temple, that is, for the first time, the discovery of bones of people buried around the temple was really a novelty.

Fayoztepa Buddhist Temple is a Buddhist temple complex dating back to the 1st-3rd centuries AD in the north of Old Termiz. Buddhists called their monks "Bhikshu" and temples where monks live and study "Vihara". The monument of Fayoztepa was studied in 1968-1976 by the antiquarian L. I. Albaum.

The monument consists of three parts, i.e. in the central part - a temple, in the north - west of it is a monastery, and in the south - east of it, buildings of economic importance have been identified. The total area of the complex is about 1,500 square meters.

One of the main parts of the structure of the temple is the stupa, which is not located in the middle of the courtyard, as in other temples, but outside it, around the holy shrine.

Stupa is the main shrine of the temple. Originally, stupas housed the belongings of the Buddha and his closest saints. Buddha statues are located in the shrine of the temple, and the walls of the shrine are decorated with colorful murals. Buddha statues four meters high are placed under the walls. Most of the statues are painted red and then gold water is applied over them. On the southern wall of the shrine is an image of Buddha in red clothes. Two people wearing long clothes are depicted on both sides of it. One of them is bowing to the Buddha. On the eastern wall of the shrine there are also pictures of people. On a 60x80 centimeter piece of plaster, an image of two men facing the Buddha was found. Both figures depict the Bactrian devotees of the Buddha in the adoration position. In this room there are many pieces of sculpture made of ganch. Most of the sculptures are made of clay mixed with straw and then covered with ganch. The head, legs and arms of the statues are cast in special molds and then glued to the body [Albaum, 1990 B.21].

Among the sculptures of Fayoztepa, the head of Buddha made of ganch is noteworthy. According to Academician B. Ya. Stavisky, such a treatment of the Buddha was the first to be found in a monument of the Kushon period. A triad, a unique work of art made of solid marl stone, was found opposite the door of this shrine. In the center of the triad sits the Buddha wrapped in a silk mantua under an arch and the branches of the sacred bodhi tree. Two monks standing next to him are depicted praying to him. Coins of the Kushan kings Kanishka and Vasudeva were also found in the shrine.

In the north-west part of the courtyard of the synagogue, there is a small pond designed for performing religious rituals, built from fragments of marl stone in the form of a trapezium, and a hole is made in its bottom for draining water. The hole is made in the form of a lion's head with wide open jaws. Clean water is stored in such ponds. It was believed that when Buddhist monks circled around the pond and recited the Buddha's sutras, the water would become divine water. Currently, this pool is kept in the entrance hall of the Termiz Archaeological Museum.



To the south-east of the synagogue is its farm. It is connected with the temple through three doors. Fifteen rooms were opened in the farm part of the synagogue, in most of them remains of furnaces were found. The walls of the complex were restored with straw, raw bricks were used for the repair of the sori - benches and walls in the rooms. All rooms are plastered with straw, only two rooms are plastered with ganch. It is assumed that these two rooms were the shrines of the household part of the temple. Remains of ovens and thick piles of ash were found in two rooms. During the excavation of the rooms with ovens, many animal bones, khum, bowls, ceramic goblet fragments were found. All vessels, except khums, were made on a pottery wheel and covered with light-red angob. The ceramic surface is decorated with juniper leaf, disc-shaped patterns. It was also a tradition to put Buddha's footprints on pottery. Among the ceramics, there are many lamps and ceramic pots. After the completion of the archaeological research conducted by the academician L. I. Albaum in 1976, information about the Fayoztepa monument was known only to a narrow circle of historians and archaeologists. Because very few articles were published by the author of the study about the temple, and the temple was not conserved at the time of excavation, and it gradually began to erode under snow and rain over the years.

The total area of the old Termiz monument is 500 hectares. The head of the Termezskoy archaeological complex expedition (TAKE) M.E. Studied by Masson [Albaum, 1990 B.18].

International archaeological excavations were conducted in these monuments during the years of independence. Uzbekistan-France Bactria, Uzbekistan-Japan Karatepa, Tokharistan, Czech Republic, Spain, Russia are also conducting scientific cooperation with archaeologists. Important parts of the site were reburied to protect the structures excavated from the Karatepa complex, and in the 2000s, the upper part of the central stupa was covered with a metal structure for conservation purposes.

In 2004-2006, conservation and partial repair works were carried out by the UNESCO representative office in the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Japanese trust fund. This project was the first among the archaeological monuments in Uzbekistan. As a result, the monument was turned into an open-air museum, and the building of the scientific center for the study of Buddhism was completed.

In 2008, the Fayoztepa Buddhist temple complex and the building of the Buddhist history and culture study center were opened.

In conclusion, it should be noted that there are about 150 archaeological monuments of the Kushan period in the territory of our region, and the following issues should be paid attention to in the preservation and museumization of these monuments:

- study of mechanical properties and man-made effects on the durability of monuments;
- constant monitoring of humidity and prevention of erosion;
- protection from biological hazards;
- it will be necessary to use world experience in preserving their original appearance and wide use of monuments for tourist purposes in museumization.

The perfect preservation of the monuments in all respects makes it possible to bring international investments to the oasis and serves as the main tool for the development of the infrastructure of the monuments.



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