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A study of Takht-i-Bahi
(A Gandhāran Buddhist Site in the North West Pakistan)

Setsuko CORNISH

preface

It seems probable that from the beginning Buddhism was a proselytising movement, and that teachers spread out farther from its original homeland.

Even in the ealiest texts, there are suggestions that during the lifetime of Buddha, converts were already made from far beyond its central homeland. With the rise of states along the Ganges they felt that expansion outwardly was their consequent aim. In this process Buddhism reached into remote regions. This development was to have great significance for the particular direction Buddhism was to take in the north-west; the region of Gandhāra. (present North West Pakistan).

It must have been a gradual development, but in Gandhāra, the possible beginning of Buddhism was around the end of the fourth century BC. Through its contacts with various conquerors and their governments such as Mauryan Ashoka (c̆250 BC) and Kushano Kanishka I &II (100-200 AD) from both the east and west, Gandhāra benefitted from rich cultures, Indian, Iranian and Greek and Roman.

When Hsuan -tsuan (Genjō, Sanzō Hōshi) visited the area in 629 AD from China, he felt the decline of Buddhism as he mentioned in his diary, Daitō Seiikiki. But still he counted there more than one thousand religious establishments and most of them were Buddhist either in

Hinayana or Mahayana form. Takht-i-Bahi is one of the ruins which had been excavated and restored to the extent that one can speculate how these ancient monuments could have operated around 2nd and 7th century AD.

In this paper I tried to view this typical Gandhāran Buddhist monuments from historical aspects (not art historical) as well as structural and functional aspects.

1) Gandhāra and its history

In the Ancient Indian literature, the name Gandhāra first appeared in the Rig Veda in reference to a tribe name not a place name. It says that "the queen Romsa of King Pavia who lived at the Bank of Sind was so happy that she exclaimed to the king "I am well looked after as though I am the precious deer of the Gandhāra."."(1) This excerpt from c̃ 1200 BC is the earliest evidence of the existence of the area. The next mention of the tribe comes 200 years later from the Atharva Veda.(2) The above two records relate Gandhāra to the tribes whereas the Aitareya Brahmana (VII 34) and the Stapatha Brahmana (VIII 1.4) (c̃ 800 BC)(3) describe it as an actual place name. A king mentioned in these two pieces appears in the Maharabata as from Gandhāra. The Purana (c 200 AD), the re-editted version of the Maharabata epic stories for religious purpose has the notion of Gandhāra. It refers Gandhāra to the place where horses and shawls are produced and exported.(4)

Gandhāra also was inscribed as in letters. In the late 5th century BC the first inscription concerning Gandhāra was inscribed on the Behistan Rock in Persia.(5) Darius, the third king of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty, conquered 23 provinces and its 19th area was the region of Gandhāra. The Greek historian Herodotus's record (c̃ 450 BC) mentions the above facts by recording Gandhara as a tax area of

Darius I (521-486 BC). He also wrote that Gandhāran soldiers were in Xerxes's army of the Persian empire and fought against the Greeks.(6) The Sanskrit grammarian Panini (c̃ 3rd century BC) from Salatra (in Lahor village near Hund of the Indus bank) also mentions the name of tribes of the area including the Gandhārans.

Alexander the Great stood on the land of Gandhāra in 326 BC but the writer of his expedition only mentioned Peukelaotis (Pushkaravati) not Gandhāra. After Alexander the Great had left this area, Mauryan empire (305-190 BC) spread their power. The Greeks ceded the territory in c̃ 305 BC to the Mauryan ruler, Chandragupta (c̃ 311-287 BC), who made Taxila his capital. Chandragupta made an agreement with Seleucus I in exchange for 100 elephants as well as marriage proposal and gained a part of Greek territory in present Afghanistan, Arachosia and Gedrosia. This is the first and the last instance of which the Indian king ruled the area as far as Afghanistan. The Arthaśastra by Kautiliya(7) describes the political structure of Mauryan empire. King Bindusara had appointed his son Aśoka (272-232 BC) as the viceroy of Avanti with its capital Ujjayini when he was 18. Aśoka borrowed the idea of the rock edicts from the Achaemenian kings who had already introduced into Gandhāra which was derived from Aramaic and written from right to left. At Shahbazgarhi in the Mardan district are the fourteen Rock Edicts of Aśoka in the same script but in Prakrit which was the spoken language of the ordinary people of this region at that time. The thirteenth edict tells the names of five contemporary Greek kings who from other records have been identified as Antiochus Theos II king of Syria (d. 247 BC), Magas, king of Cyrene (d. 258 BC), Antigonus Gonatas, King of Macedonia (d. 239 BC) and Alexander, king of Epirus, who died between 262 and 358 BC. Those names(8) show that the Mauryan kings had contacts and interests in the western world.

The next powers are the Seleucid dynasty and the Bactrian Greeks. Antiochus III (212-204 BC) fought a battle against Euthydemus I (c̄ 230-200 BC) who had overpowered Diodotus II and he gave his daughter to Demetrius I the son of Euthydemus. By that time Mauryan empire lost control over the whole area and Demetrius I advanced to Taxila passing the Khyber pass. Eucratides I in Bactria spread his ambition to Gandhāra but his successor Heliocles I was the last Greek king of Bactria because the threat from the Saka and Kushan's advancement had been felt already at the north of Bactrian kingdom (c̄ 135 BC). Contemporary to Heliocles, Menander I was the king of Gandhāra. He is mentioned in the Milinda panha, Questions of Milinda, a Buddhist text(9) written in the form of a dialogue between Menander and Nagasena, the Buddhist monk who finally converted him. It is said that he handed over the kingdom to his son, and became a monk. The Bajaur relic casket with Kharoshthi inscription refers to the reign of Menander and mentions that some relics of Sakyamuni Buddha were said to have been installed in the casket for worship first by a prince named Viyakamitra apparently a feudatory of Menander and afterwards by a chief named Vijayamitra. King Antialcidas (115-100 BC)'s name is inscribed on the pillar at Besnagar near Bhilsa in the Madhya Pradesh in India as a Gandhāran Greek king who sent his ambassador to India. The last surviving Greek king Hermaeus was overrun (c̄ 145 BC) by invaders, the Yuezhi possibly with some Scythians. The Greeks had lost control of Bactria by c̄ 130 BC.

The Scythians (Sakas) also ruled Gandhāra for a considerable time after the end of the Greeks in this region. The important kings of this dynasty were Maues (c̄ 92 BC), Spalahores, Azes I (the founder of Vikrama calender)(10), Azilises and Azes II. They repeatedly fought against the Parthians and in the end they surrendered to be Parthian's

marcenary. Parthians became an important force as one of the consequences of fragmentation of the Achaemenid Empire after Alexander's death. Arsaces, the traditional founder of the Parthian kingdom, had been a servant of the Bactrian Greek ruler Diodotus. The state he founded gained control over a large part of modern Iran, together with some area of Iraq in the west and south Afghanistan in the east by the mid-second century BC. The Parthians spread their power eastwards in the early first century AD into north-west Pakistan. The Takht-i-Bahi inscription of King Gondophares in the Kharoshthi script is dated in the year 103 Scytho-Parthian or Vikrama era and in the year 26 of his own reign. According to Christian tradition, he was the king of India at whose court the Apostle Thomas was received shortly after the Crucifixion in 29 or 33 AD.

The Yuezhi and the Kushans had been moving into the Bactrian and Parthian areas from eastern central Asia (Mongol and Kansu area of China) as nomads and formed five states with lords as their heads. Probably the Sakas were driven out by them around 140 BC. The relationship between the Yuezhi and the Sakas is not known clearly. According to the Chinese history records ie: the Shiki (the chronicle records from emperor Huang to the emperor Wu of former Han dynasty) by Shibasen (Written between 110-90 BC), the Han jo (Chinese chronicle of the former Han dynasty) by Hanko (edited c̃ 80 AD) and Go (latter) Han jo (Chinese Chronicle of the later Han dynasty) by Fan Hua (edited 5th century AD) the messenger Chang Ken was sent by the Emperor Wu to ask for help to pacify the invaders. But they were not interested. Perhaps their attention was rather directed on expanding their territory towards the south and south west Gandharan area. One of these five states gained much power and they were called Kushans, and were located in the area between Badafshan and Chitral of North

Gandhāra. Around the end of 1st century BC they started their movement. Kujula Kadphises advanced to Gandhāra which was still under Gondophares. Kujula Kadphises died in the mid 1st century AD. Vima Kadphises, Kujula's son, stretched his expedition as far as Gujurat and Benares. In Mathura, there is the shrine to commemorate the Kushans. It is not clear when was the beginning of Kanishika's reign but his reign lasted for more than two decades and stabilized the country and brought cultural and economic prosperity. He controlled the vast area of whole northern India and north east Afghanistan and part of Turkistan from his capital Peshawar. His reign was considered to be the golden age of the ancient history of Pakistan in which tremendous progress was made in almost all areas. His contribution to the Buddhist religion was so great that it could be said that he is the second Aśoka. Kanishka and his successors' reign had continued for 98 years. In 230 AD Vasudeva II as a Gandhāran king had sent a missionary to a Chinese Emperor. The fall of the last king of the Kushans, Kanishka III corresponds to the rise of the Naga dynasty in India.

The founder of the new Sasanian empire, Ardashir I (c̄ 224-40 AD) had the intention of re-establishing the former Iranian Empire of the Achaemenids. According to Tabarc he campaigned to the east and conquered Bactria. His son Shapur I invaded the Kushan territories as far as Peshawar. They sustained their power in spite of pressure from local Indian resistance of Punjab and later from the emergence of the Gangetic Gupta dynasty for a considerable period, but the fatal blow was from the new waves of invasion by the migrant nomads Huns. The first group of the Huns were called Kidarites. They were based in the Punjab and from there they campaigned to take over both the Kabul region and part of Bactria from the Sasanians by c̄ 370s AD.

The second group of Huns are known as Chionites and Hepthalites, who controlled the areas until they were overpowered by yet another migrant people, the Turks. The Turks held their rule up to the arrival of Islam during the late seventh to eighth century although it was not a stable reign as the Ephthealite Huns often disturbed them. In the earlier Chinese translation of sutras (ie:Brahmanic eight thousands stanzas in prajnaparamita translated by Jiku Hōgo (239-316 AD), Maitreya becoming of Buddha sutra translated by Kumara-Jiva (350-409 AD)) Gandhavati was mentioned and later on it was called Gandhār-a. When Fa-hsien (Hokken) arrived at the area in 402 AD he called it Gandhavati but Sung-yun (Sōun) who came here in April 520 AD called it Gandhāra as well as Hsuan-tsuan (Genjō) in 625 AD. The then ruler Ephthealite is said to have called it Gopahla. It seems that Gandhāra has lost its glory and its identity in the end of the seventh century.

2) Buddhism in Gandhāra

At first sight it may seem illogical that Gandhāra became the "holy land" of Buddhism as Buddha never went there himself. However, Buddhist legends and the Jatakas were widely current theme along with orthodox Brahmanism and new unorthodox sects. It is probable that Buddhist followers even in Buddha's lifetime had felt the need to expand by converting people and went along with the Gangetic social system. Therefore, the teaching of Buddhism could have reached the Gandhāran area even before the arrival of the Mauryan empire, which is before the end of the fourth century BC. But it was particularly with the Mauryans that Buddhism showed its influence. With the intention of spreading Buddhism Aśoka sent his missionaries to Sri Lanka, and other distant lands to the west along with the distribution of edicts on which Buddhistic teachings, ethical rules as Aśokan laws,

and fragmental history was inscribed.(11) Gandhāra possesses a number of them. The Fourteen Rocks of Shahbaz Garhi Edicts in Kharoshthi script but in Prakrit which was the spoken language of the common people of this region at that time.(12) Other examples are seen in Sirkap in Taxila. According to Mahavansa and Zenkenritsu-bibasha (an eighteen fascicle commentary on the vinaya)(13) Madjantika was sent (c̄ 259 BC) to Gandhāra as a buddhist missionary by Aśoka. Was he the one who actually constructed the Aśoka edicts in Gandhāra?

The early sutras such as the Long Agama and eight thousand stanzas on Prajnaparamita started to mention Gandhāra after this event.

The stupa, and Buddhist architecture of the early period, although a monument rather than a structural edifice was also erected in Gandhāra. The main stupa in Butkara III in the Swat district, first must have been smaller in Aśoka's time but as the excavation work shows four successive outer walls each as the stupa was made larger. In the same manner, the Dharmarajika in Taxila, and the great stupa at Manikyala in Punjab were originally erected in Aśokan times and now stand as a huge mound.(14) Venerating the stupa by circumambulating on a processional passage, giving puja and adorning with flowers and other material objects became tradition. Stupa themselves had developed to meet the need of pious people.

> "The stupa in Gandhāra marks the gradual elaboration of the primitive types known at Sanchi and Bharhut. This elaboration takes the form of the all over sculptural ornamentation of base drum and hemispherical dome.
>
> Especially notable is the greater emphasis on the superstructure. Not in-frequently the Gandhāra stupas have an attenuated, tower-like appearance, whereby the height of the final tower dwarfs the

size of the base and domes; and it is highly likely that from such models the earliest pagodas of China were developped." Quoted from B. Rowland.(15)

In this connection, F. Sehrai mentions that

"The Ali Masjid Stupa in the Khyber Agency was more than forty feet high consisting of two square bases, a drum, probably originally in two storeys, and surmounted at one time by the usual superstructure of harmika and finial of tiered umbrellas. Its figural decoration does not survive today but the published photograph in the past throws light on its original architecture. The ornamentation of the facade was the combination of Indian and classical elements so universal."

Adoration of the stupa is indeed expressed in the decoration of the architecture in Gandhāra. One such example is a panel carving from Swat (BM OA 1902. 10-2-29).(16)

The Bactrian Greek king Menander (c 155-130 BC)respected Buddhist doctrine. A Pali text, Milindapanha (the questions of Menander) describes the discussion between a Buddhist sage Nagasena and the king. In the first part their karmic previous life is introduced and in the second it tells that both dialogued for three days until they formed their relative positions as teacher and disciple. The third section gives an account of how Milinda questioned contradicting points in Buddhist teachings using his ideas based on Greek philosophy. In the fourth Nagasena responds to the 304 questions put by the king using plentiful similies and metaphors. It is most interesting to see the intellectual intercourse of west and east in this form. This indicates that although Hinayana was the prevailing practice in general, concepts of Mahayana managed to infiltrate.(17)

When the Kushan king Kanishka I (c 139-52 AD) ascended the

throne Buddhism was incorporated into the arts, literature and even in the social system. He summoned the fourth Buddhist council in either Kashmir or the Punjab, which was attended by five hundred monks including Vasumitra(18). Asvaghosa(19) Nagarjuna (c 150-250 AD(20)) and Parsva. Its purpose was to settle the disputed points in Buddhism of that time. The whole body of the Buddhist sutras were thoroughly examined and voluminous commentaries on the three Pitakas were also prepared. The decisions of the council were inscribed on sheets of copper and enshrined in stupa specially built for this purpose which still await excavation.(21) Mahaprajnaparamita-sastra (Daichidoron)(22) by Nagarjuna consisting of 100 volumes was then the contemporary encyclopaedia of Buddhism. Its range is vast from high level Buddhist philosophies, Hinayanic and Mahayanic history to geography, social structures such as taxation etc. As an important member of the council Nagarjuna viewed the whole concept of Buddhism and advocated the future development of Mahayana philosophy incorporating the council's records. There is a possibility to find the mentions of monasteries ie: Shajikidherhi and Takht-i-Bahi and their activities in the part of geography and monastery. Lamotte says that important Mahayana sutras formed at the beginning of the Christian Era (Lamotte p. 381)(22)

"A magnificent stupa" referred by Chinese pilgrimages in Shahjik-i-Dherhi "unrivaled in size and splendour" was built by Kanishka on the outskirts of Peshawar. Excavations in 19th and the beginning of 20th century by British archaeologists revealed the famous Kanishka casket of relics. Mahayana Buddhism in Gandhāra expresses its significant presence in the numbers of Boddhisatva sculptures together with Maitreya holding a brahmanical water bottle and Vajrapani grasping a vajra.

There is numismatic evidence in the coin design of Kanishka inscribed "Bodo" (Buddha) on the reverse side.(23) The death of Kanishka resulted in Budhhism's gradual decline in the region. Buddhism did not regain its glory as successive kings did not give as much patronage as Kanishka I did and the constant invasions of the Sassanian rulers of Iran disturbed the peace of Gandhāra. The cult of Zoroastrianism was brought with them and could have contributed the downfall of Buddhism in this area. The worst blow came when in the fifth century the Huns invaded from Central Asia destroying Gandhāran life and pillaging their religious establishments. A large number of people took refuge in the hilly regions of Malakand, Bajaur, Swat and Bunner where Buddhism was still a living religion in one form or another and which lingered on till the seventh and eighth century AD. This is attested by the Buddha and Bodhisattva images carved on the rocks in these valleys.(24)

Tucci describes the conditionn of Buddhism in Swat in this way.

"Then between the 6th and 7th centuries there befell some calamities probably floods, which impoverished the country and caused the decay of the Buddhist centres and monuments. The aboriginal cults took the upperhand and pervaded Buddhism: the tendency towards magic, for which the country was famous, increased. The Diamond-Vehicle (Vajrayana), the last form of Buddhism acquired a great vogue; we have reason to argue that many Vajrayanic books were written in Swat. This form of Buddhism was prevalent in the country when Padmasambhava, a great Buddhist Tantric thaumaturge, was invited to Tibet to assist the king of Tibet in the foundation of the great temple of Samye (8th cent. AD).

Thus Swat became a kind of holy land for the Tibetans eager to go

on a pilgrimage to a country where one of the most revered masters of this lore was born."(25)

Gandhāra's role in the development of Buddhism is clearly vital and there is much room for further research in this area.

3) Takht-i-Bahi and its environment

Takht-i-Bahi is located at about 30 miles north east of Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier of Pakistan. It is in the Mardan district. To get there from Peshawar it is best to go through Charsada Pushkalavati (the lotus city), the earliest Gandhāran capital in the Hastnagar (meaning eight cities) area, 18 miles to the north-east of Peshawar. Near the bridge over the river Jinde at Charsada village are the two mounds of the Bala Hissar and Shaikhan Dheri on the west side of the road. Shaikhan Dheri was the second city of Pushkalavati, built originally on the chess-board pattern by Menander (c̃ 135 BC). From Charsada, a road in the north-east, the Charsada-Mardan road leads to Takht-i-Bahi. About six miles from Charsada, at Sardheri there is a site excavated by a Belgian in the thirties. Mardan district is the land of the Yusufzai Pathans and it encompasses important Buddhist sites such as Takht-i-Bahi, Jamal Garhi, Shahbaz Garhi, Tareli, Mekha Sanda, Hund, Sanghao and Sahri Bahlol.

Travelling in the Yusufzai plain, during his archaeological explorations in 1872-73, Cunningham wrote:

"... it was thickly populated in ancient times and when those cities were existing, the country must have had been more plentifully supplied with water. Babur the Mughal Emperor had hunted rhinoceros in the area of Swabi in the Mardan district. The people started cutting down the trees and never planted them again. Thus the entire area became dry barren and unproduc-

tive....."

But when the upper Swat Canal was opened in 1914 during the British period, it again brought greenery to the Mardan district. The Kalpani stream rising in the Mora range south of Swat enters practically due south collecting tributaries till it falls into the Kabul river near Nowshera. Cunningham further writes:

> "I conclude, therefore, that before the Muhammadan conquest the waters of all these streams to the north of the Paja ridge were collected during the floods by strong embankments, and afterwards carefully distributed by irrigating channels over the thirsty plains to the south of Takht-i-Bahi and Jamal Garhi."

Sahri Bahlol, two and a half miles (Tissot: The site of Sahri-Bahlol in Gandhāra) to the south-east of Takht-i-Bahi on the Mardan Malakan Road, was a strongly walled town.(28) On the surrounding plain, up to a distance of 2 miles from the main mound, a number of smaller mounds are known to cover Buddhist stupas and monasteries. Wheeler says:

> "The building had perished in flames and had subsequently remained untouched until modern times; for a line of stone Boddhisattvas, $4_{1/2}$ feet high, remained in position on either side of the approach — it may be that the white Huns in the latter part of the fifth century AD set fire to the monastery — but no direct evidence as to the date either of construction or of destruction is recorded.(29)

This site particularly interests me because of its proximity to Takht-i-Bahi and its sculptures, both in stone and in stucco, in high level of excellence, could show the particular resemblance to the ones of Takht-i-Bahi.

Takht-i-Bahi is situated at the peak and the three spurs of northern side of Bahi (means reservoir, Cunningham) hill which is the western

end of the Pajah ridge. Cunningham explains the formation of the site:

> "— The ruins of Bahi occupy the centre spur and two other shorter spurs to the east of it, as well as the main ridge, including the highest peak at the south west corner of the square, to which alone the name of Takht or "seat" properly belongs. The religious buildings which are by far the most interesting portion of the ruins are nearly all confined to the three shorter spurs or ridges, the mass of the buildings along apparently private dwellings, from one to three and even four storeys in height."

The excavations reveal that the main entrance to the monastic enclosure is from the south probably leading to a pass from the foot of the hills at the south side. This is a resonable access from the southern routes. The Buddhist pilgrims who came from the direction of Peshawar, Charsada, Hund, Shahbaz Garhi and Sahri Bahlol used this entrance to the Monastery while on their way to Uddiyana (the garden) i. e. Swat. The present access to the monastery from the north was used by the pilgrims from Bajaur, Dir, Chitral, Swat and Malakand who entered the plains of the Mardan district on their onward journey to Taxila and the other important cities of Gandhāra.

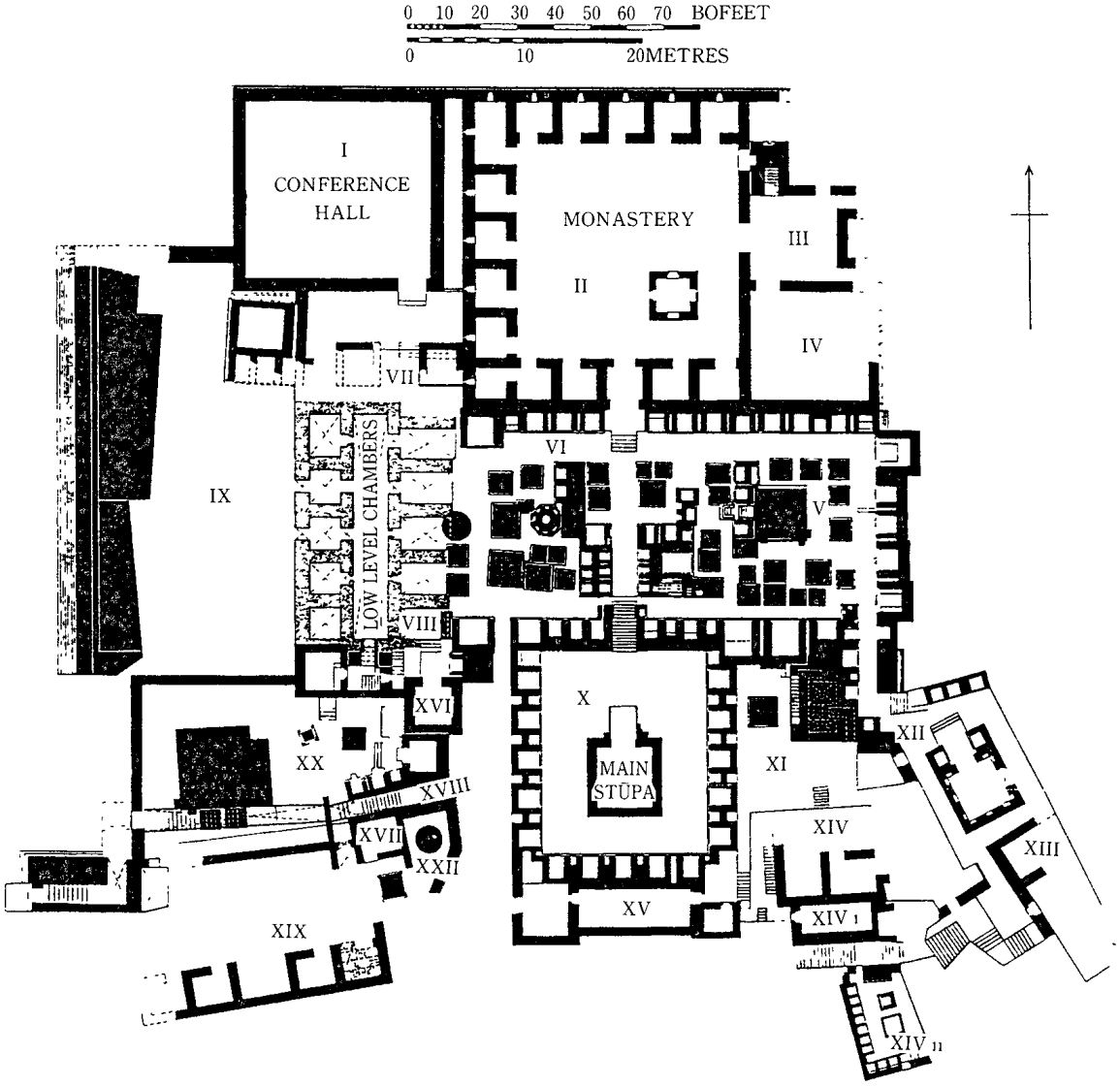
Excavation records on the site are as follows.

1852; Takht-i-Bahi was partially explored by Liieutenants Lumsden and Stokes when they inspected Jamalgarhi.

1869-70; General Maclagan sent Sappers to the Takht-i-Bahi and a large number of sculptures were deposited in the Lahore Museum.

1871; Sergeant Wilcher excavated.

1907; Dr. D. B. Spooner (Curator, Peshawar Museum and Superintendent, Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle) carried out the work scientifically for the first



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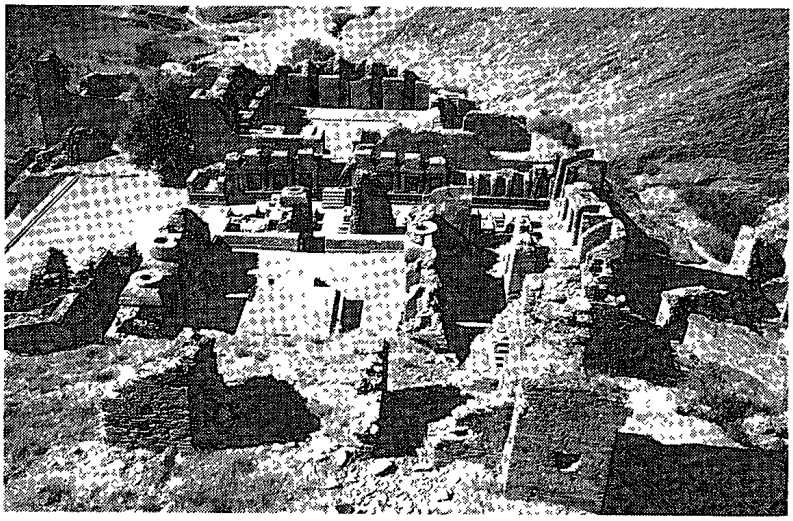

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time.

1908-11; Dr. DB. Spooner continued.

1910-11; Mr. H. Hargreaves, Curator of Peshawar Museum excavated the site.

1912-13; Mr. H. Hargreaves resumed.

Since 1987 until now various researches have been carried out by both Pakistan (Peshawar University) and Japanese (Kyōto University) archaeologists.

The conservation of the site had been carried out from 1907 to 1929 and a large number of sculptures were recovered and stored in various museums and institutions.(30)

When I visited the site in this summer 1995 the keeper of the site told me that Prof. Tanaka of Kyoto University has had been visiting the site particularly the western block and was making preliminary surveys since 1993. They seem to be waiting to get permissions from the Pakinstan Government.

A probable chronology based on the structural remains and the general lay-out of the site, as summarised by Serhai is as follows:

First period; It starts from the first century BC to second AD. The earliest phase belongs to the time of Gondophares, the Parthian ruler whose inscription was supposed to have come from Takht-i-Bahi. It includes the reign of Kanishka. Concerning the structures, the court of Many Stupas, the Monastery and its kitchen and refectory.

Second period; The period from the third century to fourth century AD. Which covers the reign of the later Kushan rulers. Kanishka III had issued two types of coins i. e. Shiva and bull on the reverse and the king standing on the obverse and another had the goddess Ardochso seated on the reverse. The second type was common in Gandhāra. Kashmir was included in his territory but probably Mathura was not.

Vasudeva II succeeded after the thirty years of his reign and ruled for about twenty years. In this period the main Stupa and the Assembly Hall might have been established.

Third period; The period from the fourth century to fifth century AD. Kushano Sasanian Kidar, who was originally a vassal of the Sasanian emperor Shapur II ruled Gandhara, Punjab and Kashmir until the arrival of the Huns in the fifth century AD. The court of Three Stupas could be counted in this period.

Fourth period; Starting from the sixth century to seventh century AD. And covers the post Hun period. We place in this period the low level chambers and its open courtyard in the west.

There are few numismatic finds in Takht-i-Bahi. However, there is one coin excavated in the time of the Hargreave Excavation 1910-11.(31)

Apollodotus I (Indo-Greek ruler c̃ 175 BC) coin is recorded. On my visit to the site in August 1993 the following coins were shown as from Takht-i-Bahi by the keeper of the site. J. Cribb (numismatic section British Museum) gave the dates, year one of Kanishka as AD 100.

Indo-Scythian		Azes (Zeus)	c̃ BC 57-10
Indo-Parthian		? (Zeus)	c̃ AD 50-60
Kushan	Vima Kadphises	(Siva)	c̃ AD 80-100
	Kanishka I	(Nama)	c̃ AD 100-128
	Huvishka	(Mao)	c̃ AD 128-164
	Vasudeva I	(Siva)	c̃ AD 164-200

I hope to research further into the coinage if Takht-i-Bahi.

4) The Structure of Takht-i-Bahi

To get to the northern entrance one needs to climb about 50 feet

through winding pass.

The monastic complex is consisted of the following compartments. Apart from small alterations amongst lines the descriptions on the site depend on "A Guide to Takht-i-Bahi" by Fidaullah Sehrai.

1) The court of Many Stupas V, VI

From the entrance gate to the western end of the courtyard of the Court of Many Stupas 116 feet long from east to west and 50 feet broad from north to south, you would have turned to the right and east to enter the court itself is a mass of little stupas surrounded on three sides by lofty chapels, and bisected from north to south by a paved passage running between little stupas and miniature shrines and connecting courts of the Monastery and the Main Stupa both of which lie at higher levels than the Court of Many Stupa itself. 35 votive stupas on the square plinths with the exception of the two which have circular podiums are surrounded in the east, north and south by lofty walls of 25 to 30 feet in the height retaining 30 tall chapels of various sizes which face the court. Seven of these domes on the northern side were restored.

2) The Monastery II

The monastic quadrangle is 62 feet squre inside with 15 cells arranged on three sides for the accomodation of the monks. The two corner cells in the north and south are somewhat longer than the others. Each cell contains a ventilator and from one to three inches inside to keep oil lamps, books and other articles of the monks.

In the south-east quarter of the square there is a tank for water which Cunningham thought was probably filled by drainage from the roofs of the cells. It is possible that the monks used to bring water in

the pots from the spring down below to fill this tank. Near the middle of the blank wall on the eastern side there is a door leading into a small court 20 feet square which was the kitchen of the monastery. To the north this has two doors, one leading to the upper storey of the monastery by a flight of nine steps and the other to the outside of the building. To the south there is a single door leading into a court 32 feet by 30 which was the refectory attached to the kitchen.

3) The Main Stupa X

Ascending 15 steps to the south from the court of many stupas, there is the court of the Main Stupa, which now quite ruined. Round this courtyard on three sides rise a number of chapels, originally five on a side, but two of the chapels retained their original roofing while a third had the lower of its two domes and the collar partly preserved. Cunningham describes on his visit 1872 and 73 as follows*

> "The stupa stands in the midst of an oblong court $56_{1/2}$ by $45_{1/2}$ feet. The basement of the stupa is a square of $20_{1/2}$ feet diminishing in three stages to $15_{1/2}$ feet, at a height of $8_{1/2}$ feet from the ground. The middle stage is only 9 inches high, but the lower stage is 3 feet 4 inches high with 6 pilasters on the side, and upper stage is 3 feet high with 10 pilasters on the side, and the upper stage is 3 feet 4 inches high with 6 pilasters on the side. To the north immediately in front of the entrance to the court there is a flight of steps leading to the top of the basement, to enable the pious to perambulate the stupa itself. The actual body of the stupa could not therefore have been more than 12 feet in diameter and about 20 feet in height, or with its basement not more than 30 feet."

The court is surrounded by 16 large and 15 small chapels which are alternately arranged on the three sides of east, west and south.

4) The Conference Hall I

Outside the monastery on the west there is a long narrow passage, only 5 feet in width and 50 in length. It separates the monastery from a large courtyard which is 50 feet square inside. It has only one entrance in the south and is surrounded by lofty walls, 30 feet high. There are no trace of any other openings in the walls nor of any seats or smaller buildings on the ground inside. The outer walls of this courtyard rise directly from the hill side (about 50 feet high) on the north and west. Cunningham has identified this courtyard as the place set apart for general meetings of the Fraternity.

5) The Low-Level Chambers VIII

To the south of the Assembly Hall are the Low-Level Chambers. The exploration of this portion of the site and excavation of 1910 by Hargreaves proved that the so-called underground chambers were not so in reality. They were "low-level" chambers and not truly subterranean. They were constructed later than the retaining wall of the Court of Many Stupas but not bonded with that wall. The entrances to the chambers were the two doorways leading from the newly excavated courtyard on the west and the entrance from the stairs on the south which leads to the central passage. They seemed to be used for meditaiton.

6) The Courtyard IX

Its eastern half is 78 feet long, western half 100 feet long and breadth 60 feet. It is bounded on the north partly by a wall of a double storeyed building and partly by a wall of another wall rising abruptly from the hill side; on the east by the western back wall of the Low-Level Chambers, on the south by the retaining wall of the Court of

Three Stupas. The court might have been used for relaxation for the monks of the Low-Level Chambers.

7) The Court of Three Stupas XX

To the south of the Low-Level Chambers lies the Court of Three Stupas. It is bounded on the north by the high retaining wall which forms the southern boundary of the courtyard lying to the west of the Low-Level Chambers. The wall masonary is not quite diaper type. It looks the type between the rubble masonary. To the west is a damaged revetment while on the east are two structures forming the western boundary of the passage lying between the Main Stupa Court and the one under discussion. On the south lies the open passage and a high wall 40 feet tall. Beneath the court yard in a westerly direction runs the covered stair-case. An arched gateway in the southern wall gives access to the court. The greater part of the western half of the court occupied by a large stupa 21 feet square, larger than the Main Stupa at this site. The base is almost complete but the frieze, except on the south, is entirely destroyed.

8) The wall of Colossi XIX

To the south of the Court of Three Stupas is a wall 17 feet 8 inches in height, which extends from the arched doorway some 40 feet to the west. The purpose of this wall was for supporting six colossal standing buddha figures and the pent roof which, projecting to the edge of the platform, sheltered them from the effects of the weather.

9) The Secular Buildings

The secular quarter is on both sides of the monastery complex east and west on lower ridges. On the visit to Takht-i-Bahi in January 1873,

Cunningham writes;

> "The great number of private dwellings which are still standing on the hill of Takht-i-Bahi, show that the place must once have been of some consequence.
>
> Most of the houses are two-storeyed, the access to the upper storey being in variably on the outside. In some cases the steps were mere projecting stones inserted at intervals in the outside wall;but in most instances there was a substantial flight of steps, supported on a pointed arch of overlapping stones."

Further excavation work will reveal very interesting aspects of people's life in Takht-i-Bahi.

10) Sculptures

One of my projects is to relocate the sculptures on the site. According to the location numbers from I (conference hall) to XXIII (the southern most chapel on the hill) on the plan. I am going to slot in appropriate sculptures. The list contains the ones I could have an access either in photographs or in reality at present. (The list is not attached on this paper) Look at a map in p. 15

Conclusion

The work above is a mere collection of information as background knowledge. Further research has to be done and analysis and discussions will follow. At the moment I am looking at the question from Chinese monks' records.

Notes

1. Gandhāra Francine Tissot, Librairie d'Amerique et d'Orient 1985 translation in Japanese by K. Maeda 1993 Tokyo Shoseki Veda (1.126-7) p. 9
2. Ibid., p. 230 It says the Gandhāri tribe inhabited near the south bank of Kabul river where meets the Indus
3. Brahmana Aitareya Brahmana, Ed. & Tr. Martin Haug, Bombay 1863, Satapatha Brahmana, Ed. A. Weberm London 1885
4. The Purana 18 chapters written after the Mahabarata. The author is said to be Viyasa or his son Padashala. Chapter 4, Vayu Purana (99) states this. T. 230
5. Behistun Rock Inscription 6, also in Herodotos III, 91, Strabo XV. 1.26 Darius's inscriptions seen in Persepolis, Susa and Nagsh-i Rustam
6. Herodotos (VII. 66) Father of History J. N. Linton
   The famous history of Herodotus translated into English B. R. Anno 158 T. 231. There are many other translations in more recent years
7. The Arthasastra of Kutilya, J. Jolly and R. Schmidt Lahore 1923-4
8. A Guide to Takht-i-Bahi F. Sehrai 1990 p. 5
9. The Questions of King Milinda trl. T. W. Rhys Davids
   SBE vols. XXXV, XXXVI 1890 trl. I. B. Horner
   SBB no. 20, 23 1963-64
10. The Azes Era and the Indravarma Casket A. D. H. Bivar
    (relevant reading for Vikrama Era) South Asian Archaeology 1979
11. The Crossroads of Asia E. Errington and J. Cribb
    The spread of Buddhism and of Indian culture p. 11
12. Gandhara F. Tissot p. 259
13. Ibid., p. 336
14. The Crossroads of Asia Errington and Cribb p. 45
15. The art and Architecture of India B. Rowland 1953 p. 294
16. The Crossroads of Asia Errington and Cribb p. 172
17. The Buddhist Dictionary Shunju publications p. 76
    (mainly for sutras) 1989
18. Ibid., Samayabhedoparacanacakra by Vasumitra p. 115

19. Ibid., Buddhacarita by Asvagosha p. 71
20. Buddhist Dictionary in English Daitoo Shuppansha 1984
    One of the chief philosophers of Mahayana school and the founder of the Madhyamika school. p. 245
21. A Guide to Takht-i-Bahi p. 11
22. Buddhist Dictionary in English p. 128
23. The Crossroads of Asia p. 199
    Once anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha became acceptable and replaced the iconic symbols previously used to indicate his personal presence, they became one of the primary cult images of Buddhism.
24. Buddhist Shrines in Swat M. Ashraf Kahn 1993
25. (Ed) Stupa, Art Architecture and Symbolism 1988
26. A Guide to Takht-i-Bahi p. 46
27. Archaeological Survey of India Report V 1872-3 Calcutta 1875
28. Bulletin of the Asia Institute
    Iranian Studies in Honour of A. D. H. Bivar new series Vol. 7 1993 edited by C. A. Bromberg
    E:Errington: 'In search of Pa-lu-sha' p. 62
    — The presence of a modern village on the mound prevents excavation, but it was examined by Bellew and Cunningham in the period 1860-1872, when resettlement was only just beginning.
    They record that the main part of the mound was enclosed within an oblong fortified wall with a gateway in each face, and measured 1, 200 and 600 feet/365 and 183meters in extension.
29. Five Thousands Years of Pakistan 1950
30. Peshawar Lahore, Karachi Museums and Peshawar University Archaeology Dept. in Pakistan.
    The British Museum in U.K.
31. ASIAR Excavation at Takht-i-Bahi 1910-11 H. Hargreaves (Calcutta 1914)

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