

**RANIGAT- a Buddhist site in the eastern area of Gandhara
From reports of the excavations on the sites carried out by the
Kyoto University Scientific Missions in 1980s**

Setsuko Kuga*

Abstract

Ranigat rather has been neglected by the scholastic excavators of both Pakistan and non-Pakistan in spite of its historic importance and its solid foundations in large scale because of its isolated location in the east of Gandhara while looting on the location being thriving. But since 1980s Kyoto University carried out their surveys and excavations. This study is based on their reports with the author's own surveys at the site. It is not directly relevant to Ranigat site but an article quoted to express the author's sense of response on the archaeological research method.

The article is about the expedition performed by Ohtani Kozui in 1902.

Key words : Architectural Structure、monastery、Stupa、sculptures、Kushan

1 Preface

Ranigat is located in the mountainous area which marked the eastern end of the central plain. On the top of the one of the peaks there is a huge granitic rock¹. This has been called "Ranigat" which means "Queen's Rock" in the local language, and the ancient site was named after this rock. This is one of the largest Buddhist sites in Ghandara, covering the hilly area of 1,100 metres long from the north to the south and 650 metres long from the east to the west.

Ranigat has long been drawing people's attention. Differences between the ancient site of Ranigat and other sites in Gandhara have often been pointed out judging from the long stone wall

of cut granite, piled up firmly and neatly. Ranigat was considered as a fortress of Aornos² which had been surrendered to Alexander the Great(BC 4). Stone chambers carved into granite rock are another characteristic feature of this site. In 1883 H.H.Cole visited Ranigat and conducted the first excavation. He opened a large hole at the midst of a stupa so that a person could enter into it, searching for a relic casket. A. Stein and M.A. Foucher who visited Ranigat later pointed out the significance of the remains and reported the damage given to the site due to the reckless excavation and looting. Ranigat was within the tribal area which was beyond the jurisdiction of British Indian Government, no legitimate and

* Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare

¹ Hsuan-tsang's Si-yu-ki tells that 50li (about 17miles, 2and 3 quarters kilometers)east of north-east from Palusha, there is a lofty hill on which top a large standing blue stone is revered as the goddess Bima (wife of Siva). Could the rock be the goddess?

² Alexander Cunningham went in search of sites associated with Alexander the Great and was convinced that Ranigat was the fortress of Aornos mentioned by the Greek historians. Later 1926, Aurel Stein pointed that Pir-Sar further up to the north east of Ranigat near the Indus is Aornos

organized survey was conducted and the site was left for under disciplined and illegal excavation. Such a situation remained unchanged until recently in the 20 century. In the 1920^s the local branch office of the archaeological survey of India made a survey on Ranigat and reported that Ranigat had been damaged by collectors of antique objects.

A general survey on Ranigat was made by Kyoto University in 1962 and in 1984 they started an intensive excavation. They carried out its excavation project in three terms, in 1984, 1986, and 1989, in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan. The supplementary measurement and temporary conservational procedure of the remains were done in 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1999.

2 Structural Remains in Ranigat

The latest survey project covered its southern area which was 130 metres long from the east to the west and 230 metres long from the north to the south. This was a nucleus area of the site where many Buddhist stupas, shrines and monasteries were found. The site was divided into four areas for the convenience of the survey: the 1)East Area, the 2)West Area, the 3)South-West Area and the 4) South Area. The East, West and South-West Areas are on the plateau surrounded by a stone wall of 7 metres high which was made of cut granite. The South Area is on the lower plateau which is in the south of the walled areas.

1) East Area

The main stupa(St.1)is located at the centre of the east area. This stupa was within a stupa court, the area of which is 11.4 metres long from the east to the west and 10 metres long from the north

to the south: the western and southern borders of the court were marked by walls and the northern and eastern borders were marked by rows of shrines. The main stupa facing to the west was surrounded by 50 small votive stupas, and stone paved corridors were around them. Two rows of small votive stupas were placed along both northern and southern sides of the main stupa, and large platforms were formed onto those small stupas, on which other sets of small votive stupas were placed. One of the plinths of the main stupa, which was made in the last construction period of the stupa, was based on those platforms: this plinth was constructed above the small votive stupas around the main stupa as if it was covering those small stupas.

These aspects of this stupa court indicate that the main stupa had been enlarged. In relation to the enlargement of the main stupa, the discovery of the core stupa should be mentioned, The survey in 1984 proved that the latest plinth was constructed above the small votive stupas, the plural staircases in front of the stupa were not made at the same period, and the enlargement project was conducted on quite a large scale. It was assumed that the process of extension work should be clarified by the examining the inside of the main stupa, and the core stupa for enlargement should be found. There was a large hole on the back of the main stupa due to a looting, and it seemed possible to examine the inner structure of the main stupa through that hole without giving serious damage to the remains, by taking off stones which were covering that hole.

During the excavation in 1986, a small stupa of a good condition, which was used as a core for the extension work, was discovered and it was named "core stupa". Eight coins, which may have

been dedicated to the stupa during the enlargement, were discovered on the surface of the molding of the core stupa. These coins, which are most likely copper coins of King Vima Kadphises of the Early Kushan Era, are very important findings indicating the periods when the core stupa was constructed and enlarged.

In front of the main stupa court, the west wall was extended northward to the north gate. Between the north gate and the street in the south a series of base stones were found at regular intervals. Judging from those base stones it is assumed that the main street was covered with an arcade. The trenches were dug by the western side of the front wall of the main stupa court (west trench) and by the southern side of the south wall (south trench). From the west trench, a stone structure constructed before the stupa court was excavated, and quite a few pieces of earthenware were found in the soil which had been carried for the construction. Both of the finds are important clarifying the order of the strata. In the south trench many pieces of earthenware were excavated from the strata which was approximately 7 meters above the original ground level. As a result of the excavation it was found that the main stupa court and other late structures in the east area were constructed on the artificial plateau formed on the steep slope of the south east side of the area where many granite stones and rocks had been scattered.

Structural remains in the east area, which is a rather large and complicated area, can be divided into four groups according to the chronological order of the construction as follows.

1. The structural remains constructed before the main stupa court (before the Ranigat Temple)

2. The core stupa and a series of small votive stupas constructed on the plastered floor over the artificially leveled ground of granite
3. Enlarged main stupa and the structure constructed on the large platforms on the plinths of votive stupas
4. Structures constructed on the stone floors of corridors, such as votive stupas along the north corridor

The process of the construction and the architectural style of the main stupa court as well as the development of the stone masonry technique were clarified based on this chronological classification.

2) West Area

The west area is on the plateau which is about 6 meters high, 70 metres long from the northern end to the southern end and 25 metres long from the eastern end to the western end. This area is in the west side of the east area. The eastern border of this area is marked by a stone wall, the southern border is marked by the outer wall of the assembly hall, which has not been surveyed yet, and the northern border is marked by the outer wall of a shrine. During the excavation in 1989, structural remains including stupas, shrines and stone chambers which had been built during the final construction period of this section were found. The nucleus of the remains in the west area is the big stupa which was located almost at the centre of the area. Other stupas were built around it, and a stone paved corridor was surrounding these stupas. Shrines and a stone chamber were built outside of this corridor.

The big stupa is considered as the oldest stupa in the west area. A staircase was attached to its

square plinth which was 12 metres on each side. Three or four small votive stupas were placed at each of the four sides of the big stupa and additional groups of middle size stupas, whose plinths were between 4 and 6 metres long on each side. Three or four small votive plinths were between 4 and 6 metres long on each side were placed at the northern and the southern sides. Mouldings with a core made of green schist were attached to both tops and bottoms of all those stupas, and a cylindrical drum was attached on each plinth with plaster.

Most of stupas of this area had been looted, and domes and drums of them had been damaged seriously, but a relic casket made of green schist was found in a small chamber, surrounded by thin stone plates, within a drum part of a small stupa in the south of the big stupa.

3) South-West Area

The south-west area is about 80 metres south-west of the main stupa court of the east area. Judging from the masonry technique and the process of development in the temple area, it is assumed that the structural remains of this area as well as the shrines of south east of the east area were from relatively late period. The process of extension works of Ranigat Temple is well reflected in the remains of this area.

Compared with the east area and the south area, structural remains in the south-west area specially vary. This is because, owing to natural topology, construction works were carried out in three separate areas which were located in a line from the higher ground to the lower ground. The first group of remains is located on the highest ground which is at the same altitude as the central area of the east area stupa, the south-west shrine, small

shrines and small stupas. The second group of remains is at the foot of the staircase which is connected to the site of the first group. The second group includes the remains of the south-west monastery a corridor in the north of the monastery, and a tunnel.

The third group is located at the lowest ground and this group consists of a tunnel, a staircase, a small chamber connected to the staircase, several utensils including a cistern and a jar made of stucco mixed with other materials. These three groups thus present different characteristics. The first group at the highest altitude provided stupas and shrines and it used to offer a public space, while the second group had facilities for monks and the third group at the lowest level had facilities for the maintenance of temples. These three groups of facilities with different functions were systematically connected by staircases and slopes which was running through the Tunnel to the Corridor.

These three groups of structures present a fortress-like appearance with their walls and the south wall of west area which stands high in the north of this area. In regard of the plane arrangement of the remains of this area the axes of almost all the structural remains, including the south-west stupa, the south-west shrine and a corridor, are set almost on the axis of the coordinates, with an exception of the south-west monastery whose axis tilts slightly to the east. The south-west stupa and the south-west shrine are not only facing to the same direction but also east and west side-lines of the lowest plinth of the stupa fall on the extended lines of the eastern and western walls of the shrine: which proves that those two buildings were constructed with a detailed planning.

4) South Area

The south area lies on a plateau on a low ridge which extends toward south from the east area. Gigantic rocks in the north-east part, south-east part, and south-west part of this area are forming a border of the south area on the plateau. Cave rooms and cave monasteries dug into those rocks had their entrances facing to the courtyard on the plateau. In front of those entrances a group of monasteries were located on the plateau. Those monasteries can be classified into three groups: a group of three caves in the north-west part, and two other groups of caves in the north and south parts which are separated by a narrow street. The site of a kitchen which was carved on a rock bed in the south of the southern group of monasteries is noteworthy, too. Judging from the fact that these rooms have thinner walls compared with those of shrines and other monasteries of other areas and another fact that iron slugs and fragments of stone sculptures were excavated from this area., it is assumed that this south area was a living quarter for those who were serving in the temples.

3 Finds

Due to the undisciplined excavations and lootings with weather wearing causes much of the remains was deteriorated to a large extent. But there are still some interesting finds.

Sculptures

In regard of materials of sculptures, stone accounts for 90 percent, stucco accounts for less than 10 per cent, and terracotta even less. It is conceivable that both independent statues and architectural decorations of Ranigat were made during the period when the stone carving style of

Gandhara had been established.

Stone sculptures are classified into independent statues and reliefs, and reliefs can be further classified into friezes of images, friezes with patterns, and architectural decorations.

The materials of these stone carvings as well as other carvings from other sites in Gandhara are green schist. Among independent stone statues, images of standing Buddha are largest in number. The number of seated statues of Buddha is the second largest: among them preaching images of seated Buddha with uncovered right shoulder are notable. The number of standing statues of Bodhisattva is the third largest, and the number of its seated statues, and its cross-legged, seated statues follow in this order. Among them many life-size and even larger statues are included. The noteworthy finds of independent statues are fragments from the lower part of a life size image of a man which presumably represents King Kushan. Some fragments from legs and a seat with inscriptions, both of which are believed to be from the same statue, were also excavated. This statue is in the same category as the image of King Kushan excavated from Sullf Kotal in Afganistan and the image of King Kanishka excavated from Mathura in India,

In regard of Narrative reliefs of Buddhist legends, the amount of excavated fragments of them are not much. In most cases those narrative reliefs had a fixed pattern of expression, which indicates that most of them were made after a style of reliefs depicting legends had been established in Gandhara. It should be noted that several reliefs of "Prince Siddhartha's Four Outings" are among the finds.

It appears that architectural objects were not major targets of looters, and thus a wide variety

of objects were discovered during the survey. A joint-type balustrade is especially notable. Many stone tablets of small balustrade type have been excavated from several ancient sites, but a joint-type balustrade which consists of vertical pillars, crossbars joining pillar to pillar, and coping stones that run along the tops of the pillars is a rare object.

Coins and Kharoshthi Inscriptions

A total number of ninety-five were discovered during the three terms of excavations. The oldest ones were King Azes copper coins were the Saka-Parthia Era, while the latest ones were the coins which from the Ephtalite Era. Most of the excavated coins were those from the Kushan Era. Noteworthy finds are as follow.

Eight copper coins of Vima Kadphises in the early Kushan Era were found in a moulding of the Core Stupa. Fourteen copper coins inserted into holes on the paved surface of the West corridor were found in the stupa court in the east area during the survey in 1984. Among those pavement coins, copper coins of King Vasdeva are the largest in number. This type of pavement coins were found in the West Area, too, during the survey in 1989.

In regard of ancient inscriptions, more than 100 pieces were found: some of which were engraved on stones and others were on earthenware. Letters used for those inscriptions were all Kharoshthi letters, and the language used was Prakrit of north-west India. Among the inscriptions on stone frames, the name of the King Vasudeva could be identified. This engraved name of the king as well as the excavated coins was important in assuming the function and a period of construction of the Ranigat Temple.

Earthenware

One of the obstacles which make it difficult to provide a chronology of art objects from Gandhara is the fact that the examination of objects through a systematic survey had not been conducted and thus there was no established criteria for chronological sequence. First of all, the chronology of earthenware, which should be the basis of chronological sequence of objects, has not been provided sufficiently. It is because excavations in Gandhara had long been focusing solely on the collection of sculptures, and even these days excavations of respective strata are seldom conducted. Although M. Wheeler's survey at Charsada and survey projects of the Peshawar University have made successful results, it is difficult to conduct excavations at respective strata especially in temple sites including the sites where the Kyoto University conducted the survey.

Owing to undisciplined excavations in the past ancient sites were seriously damaged. Ranigat suffers the same. However, many important pieces of earthenware were discovered from the soil which had been carried to a temple site for the purpose of land development. Many pieces of earthenware were excavated especially from the west and south trenches in the east area.

Major earthenware excavated in Ranigat are jar type pottery, small bowl-type pottery, and large-bowl type pottery. Examining these finds as well as those which had been found from the land surface during the preliminary survey in 1983, the chronology of earthenware was provided. By examining the pottery excavated from respective strata in the west trench and pottery from Thareli, Mekhasanda, Charsada, and Damkot, the transition of pottery styles could be traced in

detail. Eight terms in chronological sequence were determined according to the transitions seen in the styles of jar-type pottery and lamp-type pottery. Furthermore, by studying the relevant finds including coins, the chronology of Ranigat itself was acquired: the first stage of the first period should be sometime later than the late 1st century A.D., and the latest end of the sixth stage which is the last period of this Buddhist Temple should be in the 6th century A.D.

4 Conclusion

The excavated areas which are covered in this study are only the central core areas. Although they are essential to bring up the chronological aspect of the site, the further horizon of surveys are expected. The old path in the valley which you could look down from the west monastery area seems to be leading to that huge standing stone. They say that some locals still go there for prayers. Environmental aspects of the monastery will be further looked in.

Ranigat is now in the process of being reconstructed (to a certain stage) by Japan-UNESCO team aiming at being a good model of site management, scientific approach for preservation, organized documentation, education on awareness about cultural property and welfare for the local people who are the prime care takers of the sites. We hope that we can see some good results in the project.

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ガンダーラ古代仏教東部地域史蹟ラニガト遺跡の研究

久 我 篁 子

要 旨

ラニガト遺跡は、その歴史的重要性や遺構の規模が広大であるにも拘らず、地理的にはガンダーラ内でも東に孤立した遠隔地にあるため、従来の学術発掘にはパキスタン学界も外国勢も本格的には手をつけなかった。但し盗掘は長年行われてきている。漸く1880年代に至り京都大学が調査研究発掘を開始した。

この小稿は同大の発掘資料に基き、著者自身の現地調査を加味したものである。また小稿ラニガト寺跡と直接は関連づけられないが、ガンダーラ寺院研究のメソッドとして現地踏査を第一義にする筆者の共感を呼んだ、日本人考古学踏査隊の歴史的快挙(1902)について記したものを付記する。(末尾新聞記事)

キーワード： 建築構造、僧院、仏塔、彫刻、クシャン朝