

BUDDHIST MONUMENTS OF UZBEKISTAN

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ANNOTATION

This article is based on numerous finds of archaeologists on the territory of Uzbekistan, on which in ancient times various religious systems coexisted, one of which was Buddhism, brought here by missionaries from India. Nowadays, many monuments of Buddhism are stored and displayed at the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan. We talk about some of the most significant of them in this article. These unique monuments of material and spiritual culture have become part of history. They stand out for their high artistic merit, the rich aesthetic taste of their creators, and make it possible to speak of Uzbekistan as one of the cradles of world civilization.

Keywords. Uzbekistan, Central Asia, India, monument, cult complex, Buddhism, Buddha, Old Termez, Ayrtaam, Ayrtaam frieze, Fayaztepa, Dalverzin, Karatepa, Kuva.

АННОТАЦИЯ.

Настоящая статья на территории Узбекистана находит религиоведы на территории Узбекистана. Многие памятники буддизма хранятся и демонстрируются в Институте искусствознания Академии наук Республики Узбекистан и Государственном музее истории Узбекистана. О некоторых, из наиболее значимых из них мы и рассказываем в этой статье. Эти уникальные памятники материальной и духовной культуры, стали достоянием истории. Они выделяются высокими художественными достоинствами, богатым эстетическим вкусом своих создателей, позволяют говорить об Узбекистане, как одной из колыбелей мировой цивилизации.

Ключевые слова. Узбекистан, Средняя Азия, Индия, памятник, культовый комплекс, буддизм, Будда, Старый Термез, Айртам, Айртамский фриз, Фаязтепа, Дальверзин, Каратепа, Кува.

INTRODUCTION

The land of Uzbekistan is rich in unique archaeological finds. Here, from ancient times, the largest civilizations arose, developed and fell into decay. Foreign conquerors aspired here, attracted by rumors about rich cities, treasures accumulated by the local nobility, fertile lands. Here, along the Great Silk Road, linking East and West, merchant caravans passed. They carried with them their culture, ideology, and religious beliefs. Influencing local cultures, these

tendencies were refracted in traditional local forms, giving excellent examples of temple and secular architecture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Buddhism is one of the great religions of the East. Originating in the 6th century BC, it is professed today by the population of Sri Lanka, Burma, Laos, Thailand, China, Japan, Vietnam, Korea and a number of other Asian countries. The success of Buddhism was promoted by the ideas of human equality, the virtuous rule of monarchs, religious tolerance, and high moral precepts.

The penetration of Buddhism into Central Asia from India is usually associated with the rule of the Kushan dynasty. The powerful Kushan Empire (I-IV centuries AD) included the southern regions of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Northern India. Buddhism was the state religion of the empire. The most famous of the Kushan kings, Kanishka, professed the path of Buddha.

Monasteries were the centers of Buddhism, centers of its spread and, at the same time, a kind of universities and libraries. Well-fortified, provided with the necessary supplies, they were developed independent economic units, with their own craft workshops, hotels and other, as we would say now, infrastructure elements. The principles and system of Buddhist art were developed in the monasteries.

Early Buddhism did not know Buddha images. Buddhist iconography originated at the turn of the new era, and reflected the transition to a new stage in the development of the Buddhist tradition - the Mahayana teachings with its practice of worshipping images of Buddha. Central Asian cultural traditions played an extremely important role in its emergence. Early Buddhist art was distinguished by artistic excellence, which was greatly facilitated by the influence of Hellenistic culture. During the excavation of the monuments of Surkhandarya, archaeologists have discovered unique evidence of a high level of development of Buddhist art in the Central Asian region.

Back in the 19th century, a large number of coins, small sculptural images and other monuments associated with Buddhism were found on the right bank of the Amu Darya. Scientific research of ancient monuments has yielded truly sensational results.

In the area of the settlement of Old Termez, scientists have identified the remains of several Buddhist temple and monastic complexes, the earliest of which is the Ayrtaam sanctuary, which is now recognized as a monument of religion and culture of world significance.

The Ayrtaam cult complex was discovered during many years of excavations, conducted since the beginning of the 1930s, first by the Termez archaeological and then by the Uzbek art expeditions in the fortified part of the Ayrtaam settlement, located on an elevated steep bank of the Amu Darya, 18 kilometers east of Termez. Fragments of architectural decoration have been found in the premises uncovered by archaeologists, including eight blocks of the famous sculptural frieze, which probably framed the entrance to the sanctuary.

According to academician G.A. Pugachenkova, the plot of the Ayrtaam frieze is connected with "Parinirvana-jataka" - the legend about the Buddha's departure to Parinirvana - "the great nirvana". The frieze depicts participants in cult processions that were held during the days of

large national festivals. These are smartly dressed girls, some of whom play the lute, flute, cymbals, drum, harp, others bear fruits, garlands and ritual vessels. The musicians are the personification of the five “great sounds” (“pancha-mahashabda”) of Indian philosophy, designed to delight the ear of Buddha with heavenly harmony. Devaputras - celestial monstrous maidens cover with flowers and refresh the path of Buddha with aromas.

The depicted bust female characters on the frieze framed by acanthus leaves convey the ethnic look taken by the sculptor from the life around him. They have a wide oval face, large eyes under semicircles of eyebrows, a short, straight nose, and a small mouth.

Their faces are serious, spiritualized. Festive clothes and jewelry are beautifully rendered - rich headdresses, earrings, necklaces, folds of heavy fabrics.

The Ayrtaf frieze is kept in the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg. Copies were made from it in 1983 for the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan. The museum also displays an original fragment of a sculptural block from Ayrtaf, donated by the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

On the territory of the sanctuary, at a depth of 1.5 meters from the surface of the earth, in 1979, researchers discovered a significant fragment of a high relief depicting male and female characters.

The message about the find, made by famous scientists B.A.Turgunov, V.A.Livshits and E.V.Rtveladze, was published on the pages of the journal “Social Sciences of Uzbekistan”.

The high relief is carved from white limestone. The obverse depicts a man and a woman standing on a rectangular plinth. Only the lower part of the female figure has survived.

The woman is depicted in long robes draped over the body. Her crossed bare feet are adorned with bracelets that feature an eight-petal rosette pattern. Only bare feet have survived from the male figure. A partially preserved six-line inscription is carved into the upper part of the pedestal. A thorough study of the remains of dilapidated letters, carried out by V.A.Livshits and E.V.Rtveladze, made it possible to read individual words located on areas of the pedestal heavily damaged by erosion and partially reconstruct an inscription dated to the beginning or middle of the 2nd century AD.

In the interpretation of scientists, the inscription is associated with the recreation of a malizo (a fenced-off complex of structures) by a certain Shodia (who is probably depicted in high relief with his wife) in the fourth year of the reign of the Kushan king Huvishka, and the inscription itself was performed by Mirza. The inscription is made in Bactrian or Kushan-Bactrian script, which arose on the basis of the Greek alphabet to fix the local Bactrian language (one of the official languages of the Kushan Empire).

The discovery and subsequent reading of the Ayrtaf inscription became a significant contribution to the study of the Kushan era. This is one of the first Bactrian monumental inscriptions in Central Asia, which is of paramount importance for understanding the history of the creation of the Ayrtaf cult complex. The specialists received new essential data for further research of the Bactrian language and writing.

The Ayrtaf sculpture is another confirmation of the high level and originality of the artistic culture of Bactria of the Kushan period, in which local artistic traditions played a decisive role.

The cave-ground cult complex Karatepa is no less important for understanding the history of early Buddhist art and the synthesis of cultural traditions in the Central Asian region.

This largest Buddhist monument in southern Uzbekistan was located in the suburbs of Termez, under the protection of the outer city wall. Its activities spanned several centuries - from the 1st to the 4th centuries AD, and the archaeological material found here makes Karatepa one of the outstanding monuments of the Kushan period.

Excavations of Karatepa have been carried out since the end of the 1920s, but regular research began much later - in 1961 by an expedition led by B. Stavisky.

Archaeologists have investigated ground structures and caves, which were the cells of monks and constituted an integral part of the Buddhist monastic complexes of that era.

During the work, magnificent examples of architecture, sculpture and painting were discovered. Subject compositions, made mainly of white limestone in the 3rd-4th centuries AD, are distinguished by lively expressiveness and figurative depth, individuality and originality.

A touching little elephant is placed in a round medallion on a stone frieze. The image is associated with the legend of the miraculous conception of Buddha by his mother, wife of the Shakya king (one of the peoples inhabiting the Indian territories bordering Nepal) Maya. The master's observation noted a fragment of a clay sculpture, which is an almost completely preserved female head, made in life size and painted with dark pink ocher. Apparently, this is an image of a donatissa (monstrance).

In 2000, in one of the wall niches that surrounded the ground courtyard, a clay sculpture of Buddha was discovered sitting in the dhyana asana position. Next to the niche were painted clay sculptural images of the donor and donatissa, made at a high artistic level. The well-preserved obverse of another clay sculpture of Buddha is expressive.

Karatepa also gave the researchers samples of polychrome wall painting. Thus, graceful images of Buddha with donors (IV century) once adorned the western side of the platform on which the stupa stood. In addition to sculptural and pictorial images of people and animals, plant motifs are used in the design of the premises: acanthus leaves made of clay, painted in blue and reddish-pink colors.

Among the Karatepe finds, attention is drawn to the ceramic lids of reliquaries decorated with carved images of lotus flowers, as well as fragments of ceramics with inscriptions in the letters of kharoshti and brahmi. They were found in one of the premises, which researchers define as a fire sanctuary. The finds of new samples of inscriptions testify to the existence of developed writing systems on the territory of Kushan Bactria.

There were also found ceramic vessels - a bowl, two jugs, plates, which may have been used in ritual ceremonies; beads and a ring of the 5th - 6th centuries, made of semi-precious stones and glass paste. They were discovered during the clearing of one of the caves, which served as a crypt. The items found were included in the burial inventory.

Unique finds are coins of the Kushan and Hephtalite kings and Termez rulers of the 1st - 4th centuries. The finds of Karatepa are now kept in the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

In 2003, the exhibition "Karatepa - Buddhist Center of Central Asia" was held at the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan. It presented about 60 items of material and spiritual

culture, obtained during excavations at the monument in 1998-2003 by a joint Uzbek-Japanese archaeological expedition led by the famous Uzbek archaeologist Sh.Pidaev and the authoritative Japanese researcher, Professor K. Kato. As you know, during the period of independence between Uzbekistan and Japan, strong ties were established in various fields, including in the field of archaeological research. The agreement on scientific cooperation concluded between the SOCA University in Tokyo and the Institute of Art History in Tashkent is vivid evidence of the deep interest that Japanese scientists show to UzISSE research.

RESULTS

Along with other monuments currently stored at the Institute of Art Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, finds from Karatep were also demonstrated at the exhibition “Buddhist Heritage of Uzbekistan” dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Japan, and held in 2012 at the Gallery of Fine Arts of Uzbekistan (Tashkent city).

One of the most famous and perfect examples of early Buddhist art found in Uzbekistan is a limestone bas-relief depicting Buddha and two disciples.

The “Triad” was found during excavations of the temple-monastery complex of Fayaztepa near Termez (the complex is dated to the 1st-2nd centuries AD), conducted by a scientist-archaeologist, senior researcher at the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences, later - by an employee of the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan, L. I. Albaum.

The name of the monument - Fayaztepa (“Fayaz Hill”) was invented by the scientist himself, in honor of the person who brought a small statuette that he found on the hill.

The “Triad”, stored and exhibited today in the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan, is recognized as one of the best sculptural images of Buddha not only in Central Asia, but in all Kushan art. It presents the story of Buddha's enlightenment. Buddha is imprinted under the Bodhi tree (tree of knowledge), the branches of which form a halo above his head. He sits in a meditative posture and his face is filled with calm strength and dignity. The folds of the monastic sangiti cape smoothly flow around the body, not hiding its lines.

Nearby, on both sides of the Buddha, are depicted two standing monks - his disciples. Once the bas-relief was painted and gilded, but time washed away the colors, and the image even benefited from this: the noble whiteness of the stone emphasizes the uncluttered perfection of the sculpture, amazingly matching the small columns under the arch into which the composition is inscribed.

In addition to the “Triad”, numerous fragments of temple sculpture, painting on clay plaster, details of architectural decor, fragments of ceramic vessels with black ink inscriptions, lamps, coins were found on the monument, which made it possible to date the complex. One of the restored fragments depicts the Bactrians - worshipers of the Buddha.

Above the heads of the men, traces of explanatory inscriptions, filled with the local Bactrian script, have been preserved. The drawing was done very carefully, with great artistic skill. All these items have also entered the museum fund.

In Buddhism, a whole system of symbolic images was created that clarify the meaning of the Buddha's teachings and visually tell about his life. The most common in early Buddhism is the image of a wheel or shining circle, symbolizing the Buddha and his teachings.

The images of a bull, lion, elephant, horse, which reproduce the virtues and dignity inherent in the Buddha and his teachings, carried a symbolic meaning. The image of the sacred bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained Enlightenment, is also included in the range of images of Buddhist iconography. The find of the sculptural group on Fayaztepa, this magnificent monument of culture and art, has gained worldwide fame. A plaster copy of the "Triad", as well as some other items from Fayaztepa were exhibited at international exhibitions in Japan.

A large fragment of wall painting (60x80 cm), once broken into pieces, has been restored. It depicts Bactrians-adherents, worshipers of the Buddha. Today it can be seen in the exposition of the Museum of History. Sculpture and painting discovered at Fayaztepa are recognized as some of the most ancient in the history of Buddhism. The high-relief image of a Buddhist monk made of marly limestone, column bases, cornices of cult monuments, exhibited in the Museum of History (in originals, as well as photographs and sketches), also give an idea of Buddhism.

Considering the important historical significance of the monument for the study of the Buddhist era, the Ministry of Culture and Sports of the Republic of Uzbekistan, UNESCO and the Japanese Trust Fund allocated a grant for the restoration and conservation of the object.

Upon completion of these works, carried out from 2004 to 2006, the Fayaztepa Buddhist temple complex turned into an open-air museum and reopened its doors to visitors.

Monuments of Buddhist art on the territory of the Surkhandarya region, which is the focus of a unique Buddhist culture, were also discovered during excavations at the settlements of Dalverzintepa (III - II centuries BC - VI - VIII centuries AD), Khalchayan (IV century BC - IV century AD, VI - VIII centuries AD) and some other monuments.

The Dalverzintepa settlement is located in the Shurchinsky district of the Surkhandarya region. As scientists assume, one of the significant cities of the powerful Kushan Empire was located here, possibly the first capital of the Kushan kingdom. The finds of world significance are Buddhist sculptures discovered during excavations.

From 1983 to 1987, more than 30 magnificent sculptures of Buddhist characters were found in a Buddhist temple opened by the archeologist B. Turgunov in the center of the settlement of Dalverzintepa. Among them there are 7 sculptures of Buddha, 6 sculptures of bodhisattvas, two of which reach a height of about 2.5 m. These are fragments of sculptures of the 1st - 4th centuries: "Sitting Buddha", "Standing Buddha", "Head of Buddha", "Statue of a donor". They are made in clay and plaster, sometimes with layers of silk in shells over a reed frame. The heads of the most popular characters in Mahayana Buddhism - the bodhisattvas are represented in the set.

They are distinguished by the softness of relief sculpting, the contrast of shadow transitions in the plasticity of the heads, the classic impeccability of the features, and the sweetness of rounded young faces. All images are distinguished by a unique individuality. Also found were ceramic incense burners, ritual vessels used in religious ceremonies. Excavations at the monument continue to this day, today they are carried out jointly with Japanese scientists.

In 1988, the Silk Road Leads to Nara World Exhibition opened in Nara, the ancient capital of Japan. It also presented exhibits from Central Asia - three Buddhist sculptures from the settlement of Dalverzintepa. This exhibition played an important role in establishing contacts between archaeologists of Japan and Uzbekistan.

In January 1989, an agreement was signed between the Institute of Art History and Soka University in Tokyo to conduct joint archaeological excavations at the Buddhist temple of Dalverzintepa. Thanks to the agreement, many scientists from the Institute of Art History visited Japan on scientific trips, on one-year and half-year internships at the institutes of archeology and restoration. In turn, Japanese scientists come to Uzbekistan to participate in the excavation of the outstanding archaeological sites of Central Asia, Dalverzintepa and Karatepa.

A cultural program was organized for Japanese colleagues, who, in addition to working on the excavations, had the opportunity to see other monuments of archeology and architecture, admire the wonderful nature of Surkhandarya, and feel the hospitality of its inhabitants.

The 1988 exhibition marked the beginning of a number of exhibitions, where unique findings of UzIske were demonstrated: in Zurich, Stuttgart, Paris, Kuala Lumpur, Washington. Repeatedly traveled to accompany the exhibits to these countries and B.A. Turgunov.

I met and talked with archaeologists, museum workers, gave lectures to students and specialists in archeology, architecture, everyday life and culture of Uzbeks, and the nature of our country.

I visited Japan alone nine times, wrote a book in Uzbek "The Japanese. Who are they?" B.A.Turgunov is the holder of the diploma №1 "Honorary Foreign Professor" of the Institute of Art Studies of Kyuju Kato.

For more than thirty years, the former school building and a household plot in the village of Dalverzintepa, thanks to the scientists of the Institute of Art Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, have turned into one of the most comfortable archaeological bases. All conditions for life and scientific research are provided here. The museum, created next to the base at the secondary school No.43 of the Shurchinsky region, is one of the most famous school local history museums in the Surkhandarya region. It is constantly visited by schoolchildren, students, tourists, scientists, representatives of foreign embassies.

On the eastern outskirts of the regional center of the Fergana region - Kuva, there is a medieval settlement. Once it was a large, prosperous city, known from written sources of the 8th - 10th centuries. Kuva was located on the ancient caravan route that connected the Fergana Valley with Kashgar. Nowadays, this section of the Great Silk Road almost exactly repeats the modern route Margilan - Andijan.

Kuva was once the second largest city in the region after Ahsiket. The end of its prosperity was put by the Mongol invasion at the beginning of the 13th century, which interrupted the history of many cities in Central Asia.

In the 1950s, a Buddhist temple of the 7th-8th centuries was discovered and explored in Kuva. In its ruins were found jewelry, household ceramics, coins, which made it possible to date the time of the functioning of the sanctuary, and, most importantly, numerous fragments of painted clay sculptures of deities of the Buddhist pantheon, made with great expressiveness.

The sculptures were badly damaged by fire, shattered into many parts, but, recreated by the painstaking work of specialists, they make a strong impression on the modern viewer. All statues are made of clay mixed with a large amount of adobe. The technique of multilayer molding with repeated subsequent drying contributed to the greater strength and durability of the brittle material.

The heads of the statues were molded and modeled separately, from the same clay mixed with adobe, then fixed on a pin protruding from the body, and finally finished off with it. The decoration consisted in the fact that the statue was covered with a thin layer of plastic clay, on which the artist worked out the details - eyes, eyelids, mouth, ornaments.

Among the sculptures found, the most interesting are the images of the Dharmapalas - the defenders of the faith. With their frightening appearance, they were called upon to scare away evil forces and dark passions, to arouse believers' aversion to sin and temptations. Some of them can be seen today in the exposition of the State Museum of the History of Uzbekistan.

The head of the goddess Sri-devi, painted black, is expressive. This goddess is usually depicted as an angry woman with many frightening symbols (necklace and a crown of skulls), accompanied by the dakini companions Makaravaktra (with the face of a sea monster) and Simhavaktra (with the face of a lion). Many hymns are dedicated to Sri Devi, in which she is glorified as a powerful and just zealot of the faith.

On the head, exhibited in the museum (not fully preserved), one can clearly see angrily shifted thin eyebrows and a crown of three skulls on the hair raised upwards. One of the sculpted heads found near Sri Devi, known as Manjushri's head, was also apparently surmounted by skulls, which left oval impressions on the raised hair. Manjushri is a bodhisattva who personifies esoteric knowledge leading to enlightenment, and, at the same time, is also the protector of faith.

The head of the demon Mara is unusually realistic - the embodiment of all the temptations that once tempted Buddha. Wildly bulging eyes, a crooked mouth with crooked teeth, frozen in a caustic grin, are so expressive that they even make a frightening impression. The finds of Kuva reflect the range of ideas associated with Tantrayana, a late version of Buddhism, which is characterized by a numerous, complex pantheon and a desire to convey complex philosophical concepts in visual images. The temple in Kuva - the northernmost border of the penetration of Buddhism into the territory of Central Asia and one of the latest in its existence - is also convincing evidence of the diversity of teachings and beliefs that have peacefully coexisted in our region since ancient times.

CONCLUSION

The monuments that have become museum exhibits are a vivid evidence of the highly developed artistic traditions of local peoples, the mutual influence of cultures. They once again confirmed: the civilizations that flourished in the ancient period on the land of Uzbekistan made such a vivid contribution to the development of world culture that it is difficult to overestimate it.

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In the fall of 1972, a bas-relief image of Buddha and two monks was found on Fayaztepa. The group is carved from a single piece of marly limestone. The height of the bas-relief is 75 cm, the figure of the Buddha is 45 cm, monarch – 37 sm. The monument is known under the name "Triad". Dated to the 1st-3rd centuries AD.



L.I. Albaum cleaning the "Triada" sculptural group. 1st-3rd centuries Fayaztepa. Bodhisattva. 1st-2nd centuries Fayaztepa. Old Termez.



Bodhisattva. 1st-P centuries Fayaztepa. Old Termez.



Excavations of the Buddhist temple Karatepa.



The head of the Buddhist goddess Sri Devi. Fragment of sculpture. Kuva. Fergana region. VII century