

# **Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān and their relationships with Gandhāran traditions**

Shumpei Iwai





# **The Global Connections of Gandhāran Art**

**Proceedings of the Third International  
Workshop of the Gandhāra Connections Project,  
University of Oxford, 18th-19th March, 2019**

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ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD  
Summertown Pavilion  
18-24 Middle Way  
Summertown  
Oxford OX2 7LG

[www.archaeopress.com](http://www.archaeopress.com)

ISBN 978-1-78969-695-0  
ISBN 978-1-78969-696-7 (e-Pdf)

DOI: 10.32028/9781789696950  
[www.doi.org/10.32028/9781789696950](http://www.doi.org/10.32028/9781789696950)

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Gandhāran 'Atlas' figure in schist; c. second century AD. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, inv. M.71.73.136 (Photo: LACMA Public Domain image.)



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# Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān and their relationships with Gandhāran traditions

Shumpei Iwai

## Introduction

Buddhism was introduced into the Tukhāristān region<sup>1</sup> from Gandhāra around the first century AD. Thereafter, many Buddhist temples were constructed in the region and were prosperous until around the eighth century. Although it has actually been recognized that Tukhāristān Buddhism was formed under the influence of Gandhāran Buddhism, we can also find several original elements in architectural plans and Buddhist art of Tukhāristān. In addition, many studies have proposed that the temples in Tukhāristān tentatively declined in the latter half of the fourth century and became active again at the later fifth century or sixth century at the latest. In this paper, I shall firstly survey architectural plans and excavated finds from these ancient Buddhist sites in Tukhāristān, mainly belonging to the first to fourth centuries, in order to consider the early relationship with Gandhāran Buddhism. Then, I shall try to examine the hypothesis of the decline of Buddhism in Tukhāristān and to elucidate the reasons for the decline, if indeed this occurred.

## Buddhist sites in northern Tukhāristān

This paper will concentrate on the sites dated to the first to fourth centuries to compare them with Gandhāran traditions (Figure 1). Since it is unfortunately very difficult to determine the detailed chronology of each Buddhist site, it is necessary to put these sites into this broad time span. I should like to concentrate on the sites where relatively scientific excavations have been carried out.<sup>2</sup>

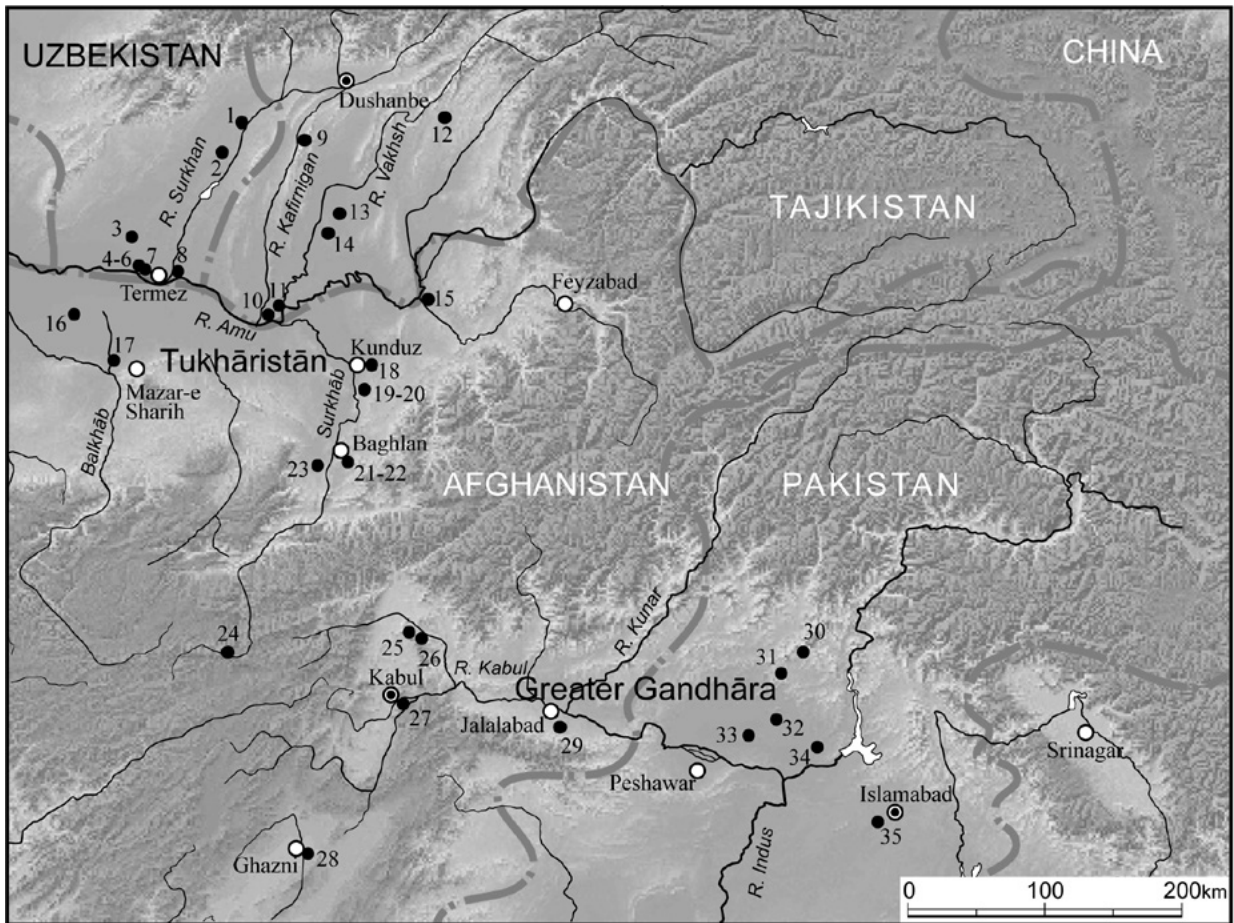
## *Kara Tepa*

Kara Tepa is a very famous temple complex existing from the first century AD at Termez in Uzbekistan (Ставиский 1964; 1969; 1972; 1975; 1982; 1996). We can date the life of the sites by investigating excavated pottery and coins. There are two types of temple plan at the site. One is a plan consisting of caves and open-air buildings, which researchers call a ‘complex’. These complexes are concentrated especially at the southern part of the site. Another is an open-air temple with a large *stūpa* with a rectangular base and a rectangular monastery with a courtyard, which is very similar to Buddhist temples in Gandhāra (Figure 2).

Firstly, we will examine the complex type. One of the characteristics of these caves is that they usually have a rectangular room surrounded by corridors perhaps intended for circumambulation (Figure 3). At the same time, we can find an open-air building with the same plan around the caves. In fact, there are many buildings with this plan in Tukhāristān and the Xinjiang Uyghur region in China, but it is relatively rare in Gandhāra, as we shall see later.

<sup>1</sup> Tukhāristān is an old name for the area including the north-east of Afghanistan and the south of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Although this area was called ‘Bactria’, now we know that it had already been called ‘Tukhāristān’ in the Kaniṣka period at the latest (Sims-Williams 2015). We therefore use ‘Tukhāristān’ in this article.

<sup>2</sup> I have not dealt with the following sites: Zurmala Stūpa, a small shrine and a *stūpa* of Zar Tepa, and a newly discovered Buddhist temple at Chinghis Tepa. It is necessary to gather information about these sites and include them in future for more detailed analysis.



- |                      |                    |                     |                     |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Khalchayan        | 2. Dal'verzin Tepe | 3. Zar Tepe         | 4. Fayaz Tepe       |
| 5. Kara Tepe         | 6. Chinghis Tepe   | 7. Zurmala          | 8. Airtam           |
| 9. Kala-i Kafirnigan | 10. Usstur Mullo   | 11. Takht-i Sanguin | 12. Khisht Tepe     |
| 13. Ajina Tepe       | 14. Kafir Kala     | 15. Ai Khanum       | 16. Diliberjin Tepe |
| 17. Balkh            | 18. Tepe Ahingaran | 19. Durman Tepe     | 20. Chaqalaq Tepe   |
| 21. Lili Tepe        | 22. Cham Qala      | 23. Surkh Kotal     | 24. Bamiyan         |
| 25. Begram           | 26. Shotorak       | 27. Tepe Maranjan   | 28. Tapa Sardar     |
| 29. Hadda            | 30. Butkara I      | 31. Gumbat          | 32. Thareli         |
| 33. Takht-i Bahi     | 34. Ranigat        | 35. Taxila          |                     |

Figure 1. Map of Gandhāra and Tukhāristān. (Map: author.)

In the later fourth century, a broad area of the southern part including the complexes was used as burial sites, suggesting that the temples had gone into decline. We can secure the period by some vessels from the burials which have small stamps and polish-line decorations over red slip (Figure 4). Coexistence of both stamps and polish-lines appears frequently around the fourth century and a type of carinated shallow bowl (Figures 4.11, 4.12) appears from the late fourth century onward (Сычева 1975). These facts indicate that the pottery assemblage from the graves of Kara Tepe belongs to around the late fourth century. We can confirm these trends on pottery with the excavations of Durman Tepe and Chaqalaq Tepe near Kunduz, and also with an excavation of Dal'verzin Tepe Citadel (Kuwayama 1975;

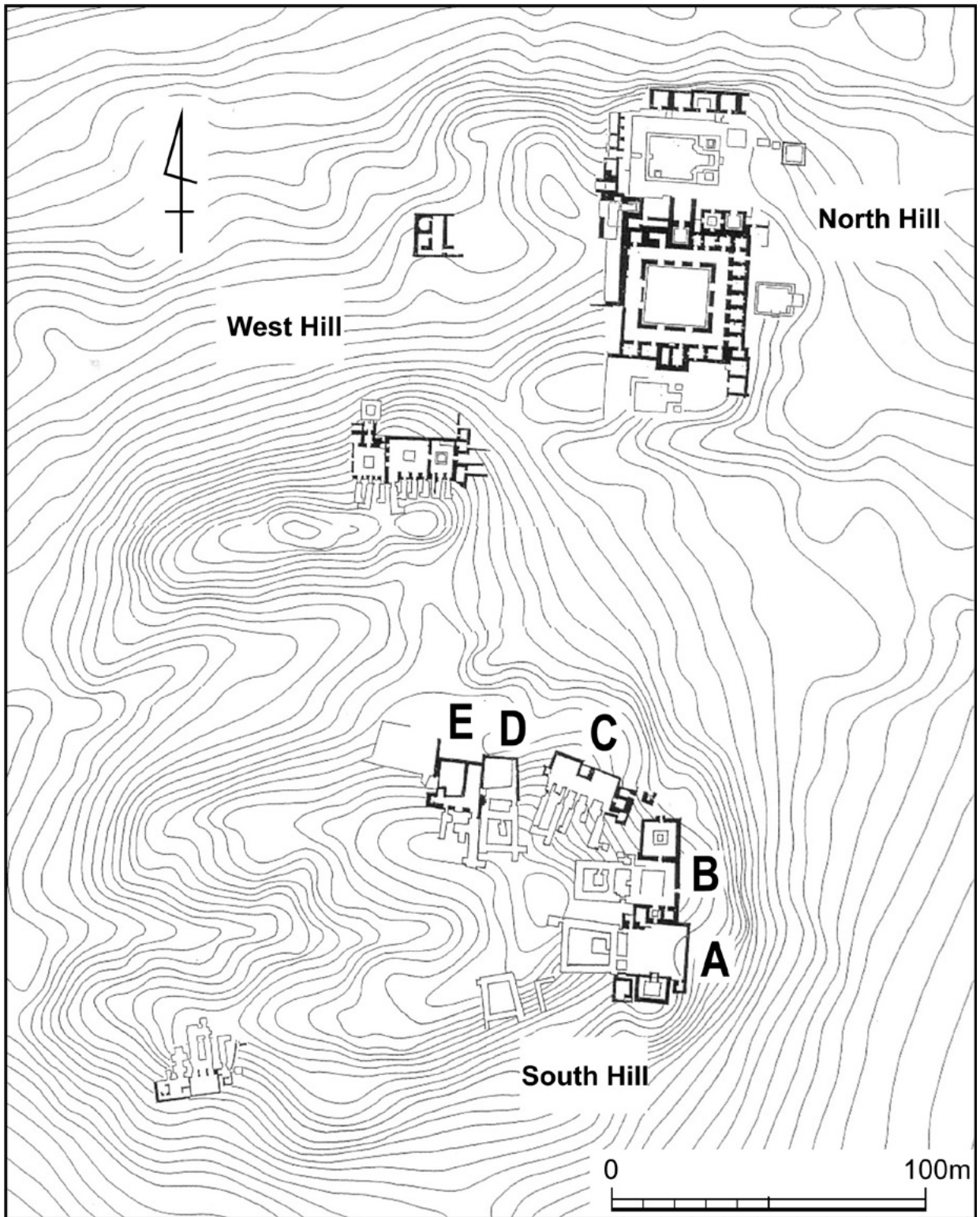


Figure 2. Topographical map of Kara Tepa. (Map: after Ikeda 2018: figure on p. 13.)

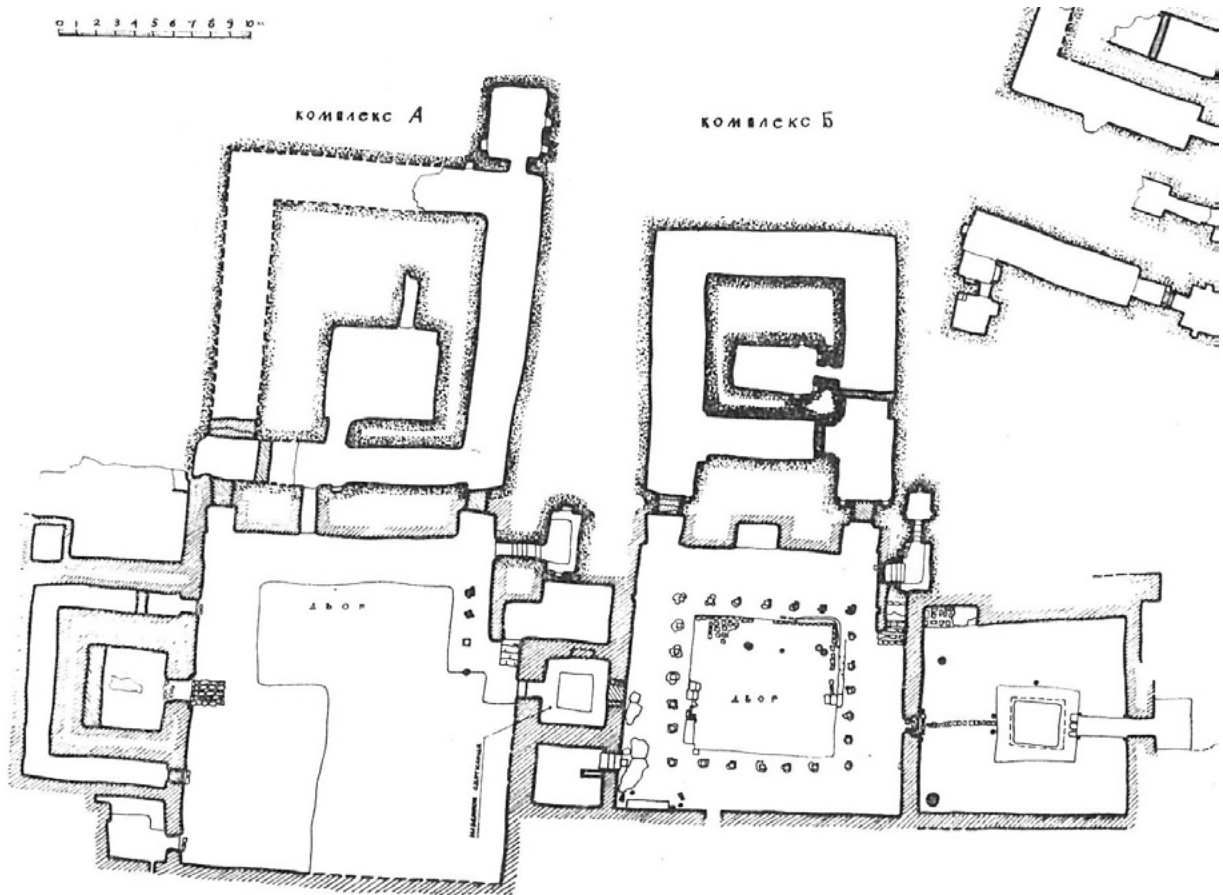


Figure 3. Complex A and B at Kara Tepa. (Plan: after Ставиский 1975: pl. 2.)

Iwai 2003). Furthermore, according to reports of Kara Tepa by V. Staviskii and his colleagues, the latest coins excavated with these pottery forms in the burials were the copper coins of the type of Warahran Kushan-shah. Moreover, G. Fussman indicates that many of the potsherds with inscriptions, most of which were written in Kharoṣṭhī, could be dated as late as the fourth century by the style of calligraphy (Fussman 2011). These data show that Kara Tepa temporally declined as a group of Buddhist sites at the end of the fourth century.

On the northern side of the site, the Uzbek-Japanese joint team excavated a new open-air temple with a Gandhāra-style plan, as already mentioned (Figure 5). A large main *stūpa* is surrounded by small shrines, which is a typical plan of Buddhist temples in Gandhāra (Kato & Pidaev 2002; Fussman 2011; Пидяев 2016; Ikegami 2017; 2018; Iwamoto 2019). Excavators found a small, round-based, core-*stūpa* on the inside of the main *stūpa*. This fact indicates that the north temple was constructed in the relatively early period of Kara Tepa, the same as the complexes in the south part. However, some rooms of the rectangular monastery have squinches at the upper corners (Fussman 2011), suggesting that some parts of this north temple were constructed after the fifth or sixth century when Buddhism in Tukhāristān became active again. This continuity (or revival) of the site as Buddhist temples after the fifth century is corroborated by the fact that some inscriptions on potsherds can be dated to the fifth to seventh centuries by the style of calligraphy (Fussman 2011, vol. 1: 104-105).

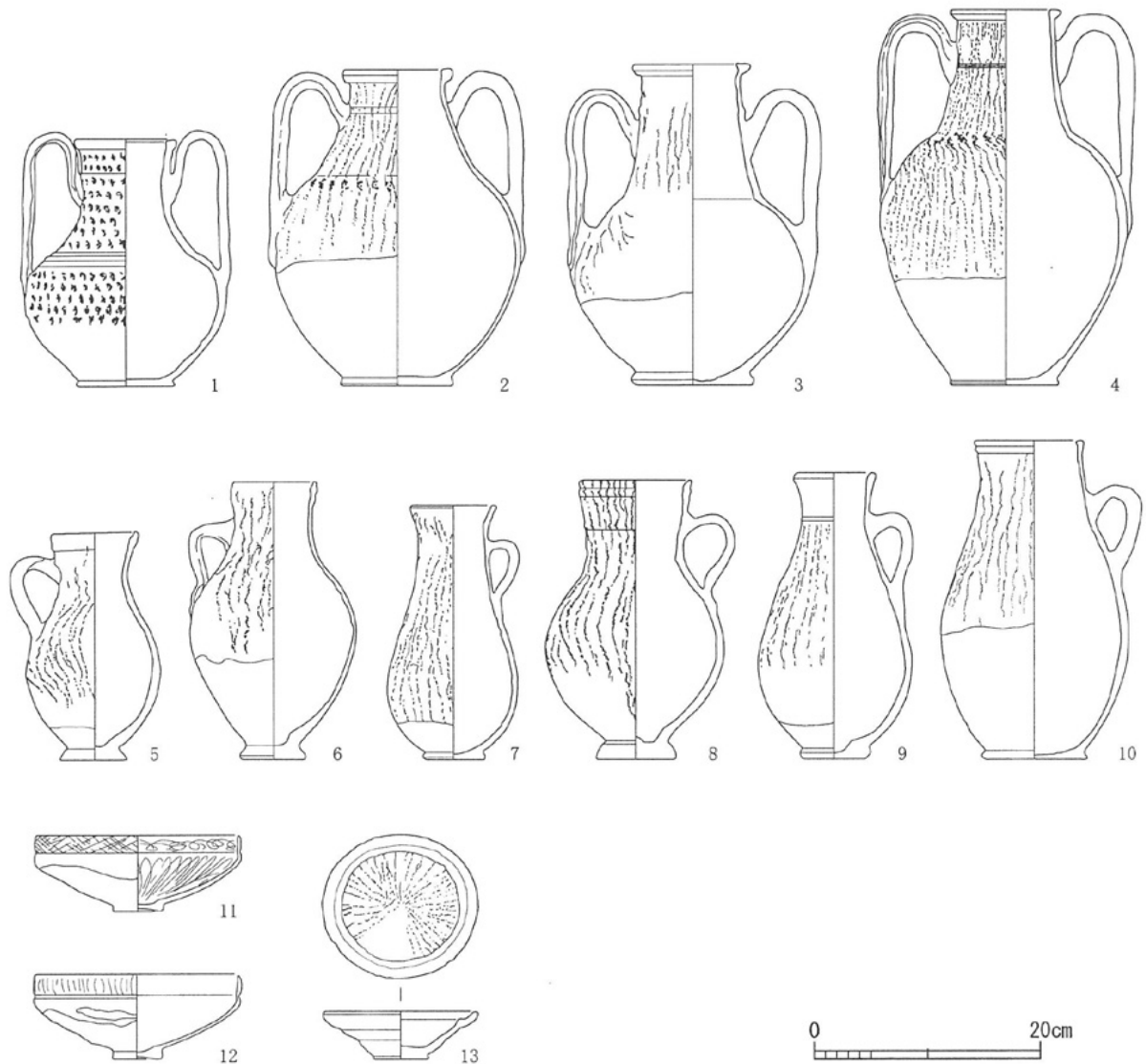


Figure 4. Pottery assemblage from a grave in Complex A at Kara Tepa. (Tracing after Смавуский 1975: pl. 36-38.)

We will now turn to the Buddhist art of Kara Tepa. Buddhist sculptures from Tukhāristān are mostly made of limestone or clay, and sculptures from Kara Tepa are not exceptions. But when we pay attention to their details, such as wrinkles on the robes, and individual motifs on the reliefs, we see that they are generally based on Gandhāran sculptures. For example, the expression of the relief of the Buddha's life-story, 'Maya's dream' (Figure 6), entirely depends on the Gandhāran tradition. On the other hand, features such as turned up, almond-shaped eyes and generally awkward, frontal expressions are often referred to as Graeco-Iranian or Oxus style, which actually appears to be different from Gandhāran style proper.<sup>3</sup> As regards the so-called Oxus style (Figure 7), we can find one of the direct ancestors in the clay sculptures of the Khalchayan site (Figure 8) dated to around the first century BC. (Пугаченкова 1966).<sup>4</sup> From these examples, it is possible to say that the Gandhāran tradition and the local cultures co-existed in Kara Tepa.

<sup>3</sup> These expressions sometimes look very similar to the sculptures from the Swat region. This point may be interesting, although not enough preparatory research has been carried out to analyse it here.

<sup>4</sup> The characteristic style of trousers is also very important. We can find many donors in such style with Central Asian costumes in Buddhist sculptures, as we will mention later.

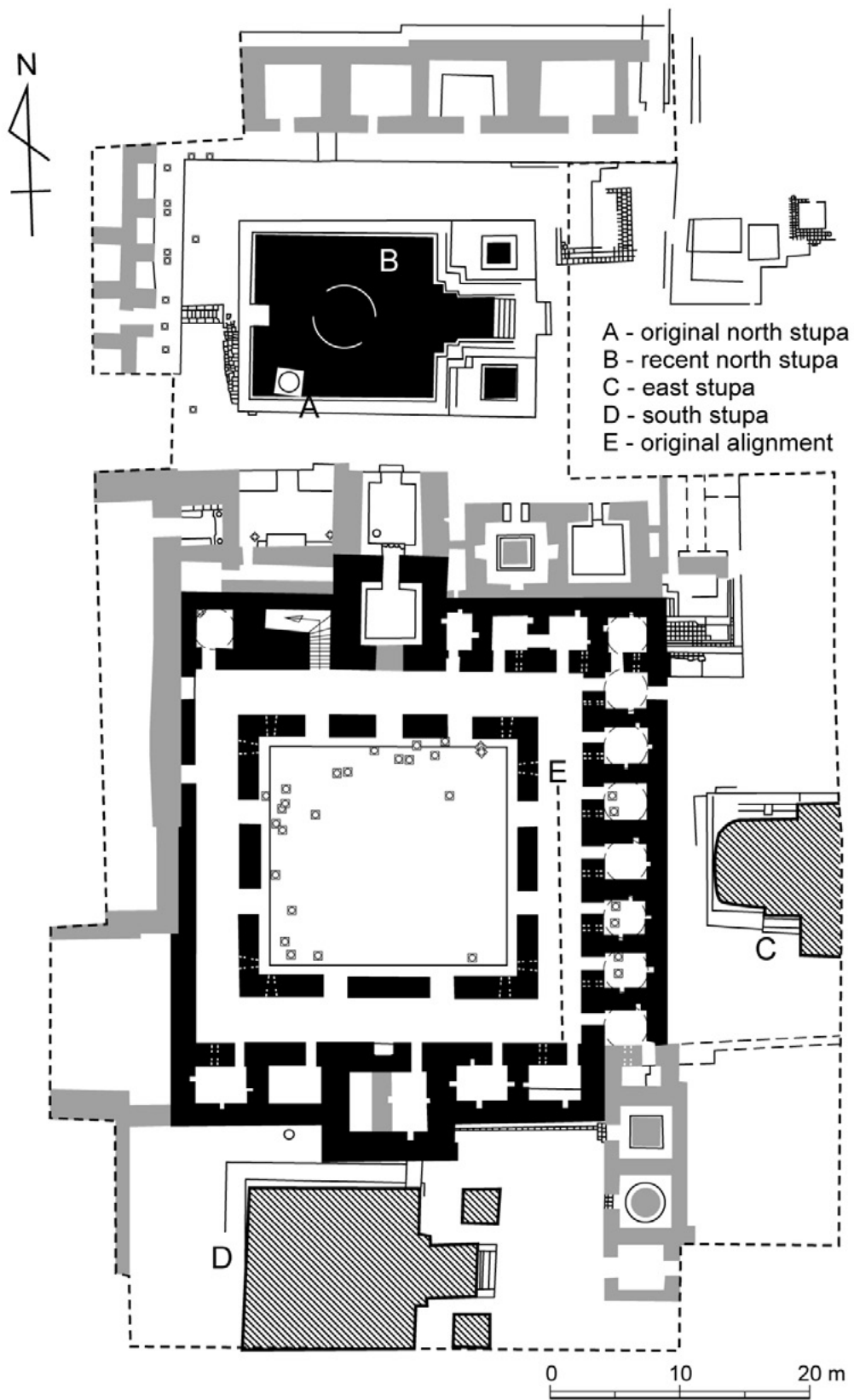


Figure 5. Plan of the north temple of Kara Tapa. (Plan: author, after Fussman 2011: pl. 18.)



Figure 6. Relief depicting 'Maya's dream' from Kara Tapa. (Photo: after Kato and Pidaev 2002: fig. 6. Courtesy of Toho Shoten.)

Next, we will examine the mural paintings from Kara Tapa. Recently, an Uzbek team found precious examples of Buddhist murals at a small shrine located on the west side of the large *stūpa* of the north temple (Пидаев 2016) (Figure 9). We can see a characteristic technique to emphasize light and shadow, especially around the figures' eyes. It is difficult to compare them to the Gandhāran tradition because there are not so many earlier examples of mural paintings in Gandhāran art. On the other hand, these murals are apparently similar to the famous murals from Mīrān in China. Some art-historians have pointed out that the expression of the eyes and the use of vivid red colour in these paintings resemble each other (Yasuda 2018). In this way, the murals from Kara Tapa will be important



Figure 7. Deva from Kara Tapa. (Photo: after Kato and Pidaev 2002: fig. 11. Courtesy of Toho Shoten.)



Figure 8. Donor wearing trousers from Khalchayan. Tashkent, Fine Arts Research Institute. (Photo: author.)



Figure 9. Mural paintings from the north temple of Kara Tapa. (After Пудачев 2016. Courtesy of III. Пудачев.)

material for investigating the relationship among Gandhāra, Tukhāristān, and the Xinjiang Uyghur region. However, it is difficult to assert the date of the murals because the relationship between the large *stūpa* and the small shrine with the murals is not so clear. Since the room does not have a gateway on the *stūpa* side, it is possible that the room was associated with undiscovered structures located on the more western side. Excavators actually found some traces of structures on the west side of the room, and we should judge the relationship carefully.

### Fayaz Tapa

Fayaz Tapa is a Buddhist temple located only 1 km from Kara Tapa. The Temple has a plan in Gandhāran style which consists of a main *stūpa* and a rectangular building which might have served as a monastery, small shrines, and an assemblage hall, although we cannot know the actual function of each building (Figure 10). The site was recently restored and reconstructed by the UNESCO Mission. Pottery inscriptions from the site were reported by Fussman, and he concluded that all the potsherds with inscriptions are datable to the first to fourth century from the style of calligraphy, except for just one piece dated to the

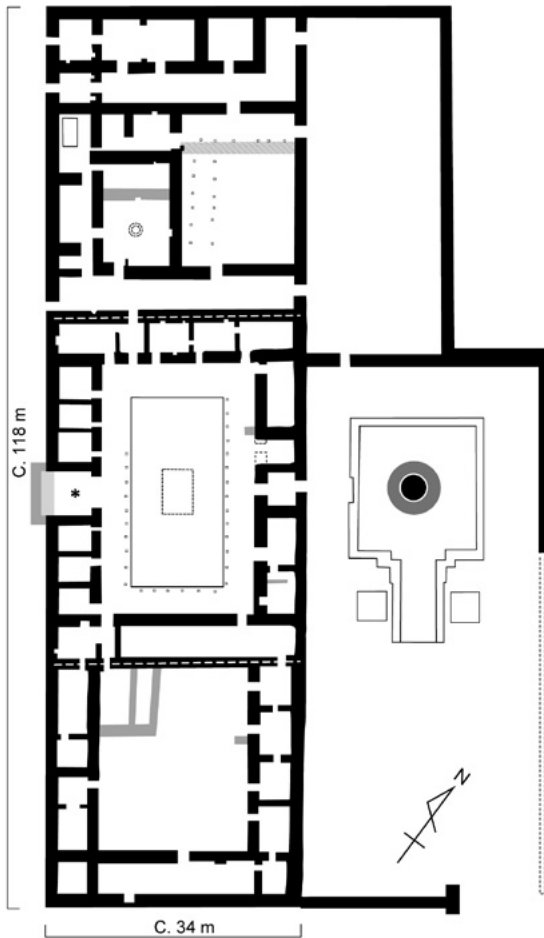


Figure 10. Plan of Fayaz Tepa.  
(Plan: author, after Fussman 2011: pl. 21.)



Figure 11. Seated Buddha from Fayaz Tepa. Tashkent, State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. (Photo: author.)

early fifth century (Fussman 2011). The greater part of them are written in Kharoṣṭhī characters, which means that the Buddhism practised in Fayaz Tepa was strongly influenced by Gandhāran Buddhism, the same as Kara Tepa. In this way, we can assume that Fayaz Tepa also declined as a Buddhist temple around the end of the fourth century. The fact that the site was reused for burials after the fifth century (Альбаум 1974; Мкртычев 2013) would corroborate this hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

We can find such Gandhāran influence in the sculptures from the site, especially from a room located at the centre of the presumed monastery (indicated by an asterisk \* in Figure 10). The famous seated Buddha statue from the room also exhibits strong influence from Gandhāran art in the shape of the niche, the handling of the robe, and the Buddha's wavy hair (Figure 11). In contrast, the up-turned, almond-shaped eyes of two monks are very similar to those of sculptures from Kara Tepa.

Mural paintings were also found in the same room. The style of some of the murals looks different from that of Kara Tepa. Fortunately, we have some new examples of murals from Fayaz Tepa, which have never been reported so far (Figure 12). Although they have been stored in the Institute of Archaeology of Samarkand for a long time without any conservation treatment, a conservation project has been launched by an Uzbek-Japanese joint team led by E. Kageyama and preliminary results have been reported (Kageyama et. al 2017; 2018; 2019). The murals have many similarities with those excavated before in this room. At the same time, we can see some features in common with the newly discovered

<sup>5</sup> Some scholars once advocated that the *stūpa* of Fayaz Tepa had been rebuilt in a cross-shape in the sixth to seventh century, and the site had become active again in this period. However, recent investigation revealed that there were no traces of renovation of the *stūpa* (Lo Muzio 2012; Мкртычев 2013).

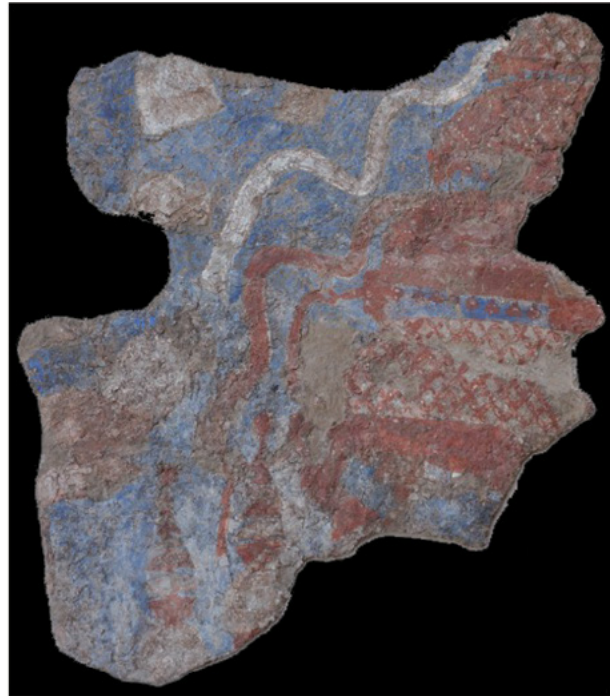


Figure 12. Newly discovered mural paintings from Fayaz Tepa. Tashkent, Institute of Archaeology of Uzbekistan. (Photo: after Kageyama and Reutova 2018: figs. 5, 7. Courtesy of E. Kageyama.)

murals from Kara Tepa, like the technique of emphasizing light and shadow around the eyes. Moreover, parts of a mural depicting a large *stūpa* and two small *stūpas* are important. They enable us to know the structure of *chattrāvalis* on the top of the stupa and ornaments which adorn the *stūpa*.



Figure 13. Mural painting of two donors from Fayaz Tepa. Tashkent, State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. (Photo: author.)



Figure 14. Mural painting of a donor with ram's horns. Tashkent, State Museum of History of Uzbekistan. (Photo: author.)

A famous mural of royal donors with Central Asian costume is also being restored by the team. While we can see its replica at the State Museum of History of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, nobody had seen the genuine mural. However, it became clear that the majority of the murals were being kept in the Institute of Archaeology in Samarkand. A close attention to details of the mural shows that there are some differences between the genuine mural and the replica and its drawing. We should use this new information for investigating the murals from the site.

The date of the murals is very problematic. The Bactrian inscription 'φαρρ' which was written at the upper part of a donor depicted at the inner wall of the entrance of the abovementioned room (Figure 13) might be evidence for dating the mural to around the second century, from its palaeographical style.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, Lo Muzio has supposed that the murals of the site could be dated to the fourth century because a technique used in their painting had been influenced by Sasanian art (Lo Muzio 2012). The variety of the styles in the murals may indicate that each was painted in a different period. In particular, a mural of donors excavated from the outside of the room, one of whom wears a head-cover surmounted by ram's horns, looks to have been painted in a rather different style (Figure 14). Ram's horns remind us of some headdresses of Kushano-Sasanian or Kidarite rulers (Lo Muzio 2012: 200-201) and might date the mural to the fourth century.<sup>7</sup> In any case, there is no contradiction with the dating of the site to the late fourth century, whichever hypothesis we adopt for dating the paintings.

<sup>6</sup> Professor Yutaka Yoshida, pers. comm.

<sup>7</sup> Most researchers regard the donor with ram's horns as a female (Grenet 2010; Lo Muzio 2012; Kageyama & Reutova 2017). However, if the ram's horns actually relate to a ruler's headdress, we cannot rule out the possibility that this donor was the ruler himself. In the Gandhāra Connections workshop of March 2019, Dr Joe Cribb kindly indicated, from the numismatic point of view, that the Kidarite ruler Peroz ('Varahran' in the inscription on his Kushano-Sasanian-style gold coin) is depicted with a headdress surmounted by ram's horns.

## Airtam

Airtam was also located on the north bank of Amu-darya, but entirely disappeared after construction work. The site consists of a rectangular base of small *stūpas*<sup>8</sup> and a shrine (Figure 15). It is rare to set a base and a large shrine side by side like this. In addition, G. Pugachenkova (1991/92: 27, 33) indicated that there were traces of a rectangular monastery at the north side and other Buddhist constructions, including a *stūpa* with a rectangular base, at the east side of the main structures. If the monastery was actually attached, Airtam also had a plan in Gandhāran style. Here, we should pay attention to the plan of the shrine. A rectangular room and a front chamber are surrounded by a corridor, the same as the caves and open-air buildings in Kara Tepe. It is certain that the main object of worship was not a Buddhist statue but a *stūpa*, because excavators found some pieces of *chattrāvāli* in the main room of this shrine. Pugachenkova reported the existence of a building of the same plan from the lower stratigraphic layer of this site. It is therefore possible to assume that this type of plan is a kind of traditional one in this area. Actually, we can find many earlier and contemporary examples in Tukhāristān at Takht-i Sanguin (Litvinskii & Pichikian 1994), Surkh Kotal (Schlumberger et. al 1983), Diliberjin Tepe near Balkh (Кругликова 1986), and so on. For example, at Surkh Kotal, a main shrine and another two subsequently added shrines have the same plan, that is, a rectangular room with double enclosure wall. Many researchers point out that this characteristic plan of shrine originated from a Zoroastrian fire-temple in Iran, or more traditional religious buildings in the west Asian region (Yamamoto 1979; Pugachenkova 1991/92; Rhie 2002; Кызласов 2006; Ball 2016). If so, it might suggest that Buddhists in Tukhāristān had adopted a local religious tradition into Buddhist architecture.

From the site, a famous limestone sculptural frieze of musicians was excavated (Figure 16). Although their turned-up eyes and somewhat awkward expression are very similar to the sculptures from Kara Tepe, we can find some elements shared with the Gandhāran tradition. For example, the rendering of a drum played by one musician is almost the same as that on Gandhāran reliefs. We know one more famous limestone sculpture which represents a pair of deities like Shiva and Pārvatī, with a Bactrian inscription carved on the base (Figure 17). It is said to have been excavated near the northern surrounding wall of the site. This motif is clearly Indian or Gandhāran style, rather than Graeco-Iranian or Oxus style. In the light of these friezes of musicians

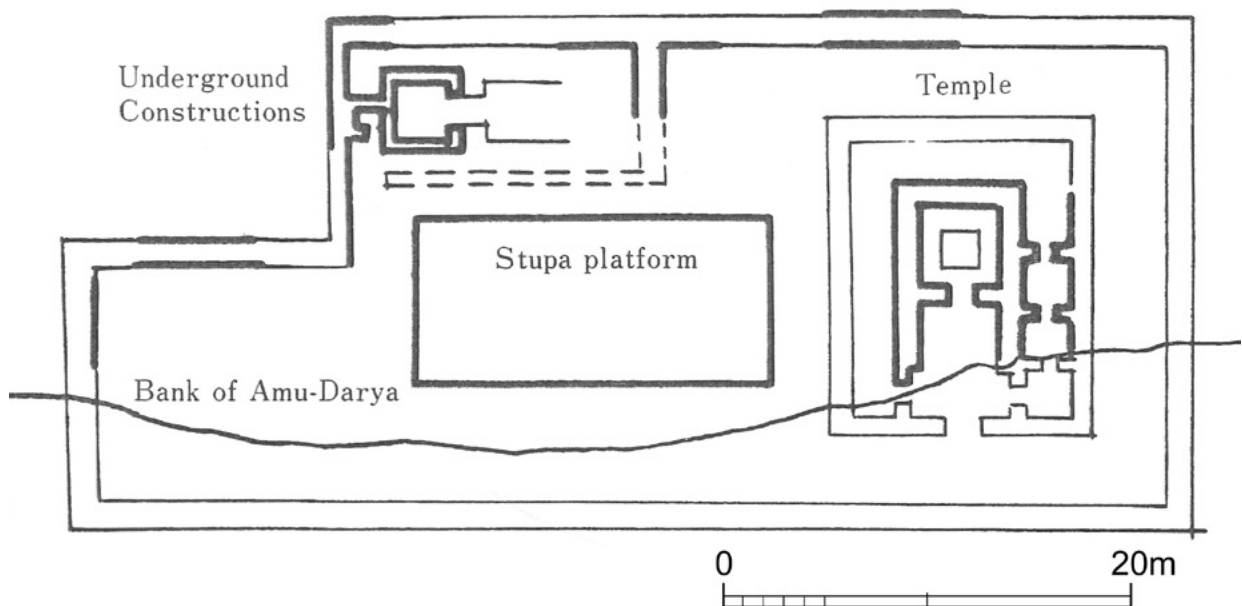


Figure 15. Plan of Airtam. (Image after Pugachenkova 1991/92.)

<sup>8</sup> Pugachenkova indicated that this base was for a statue with Bactrian inscription, or for small *stūpas* (1991/92: 32).



Figure 16. Sculptural frieze of musicians from Airtam. Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum.  
(Photo: after Field & Prostov 1942: fig. 2, via <www.archive.org>.)



Figure 17. Limestone sculpture of a pair of deities from Airtam. Tashkent, State Museum of History of Uzbekistan.  
(Photo: author.)

and the Greek characters of the Bactrian inscription, the temple might have functioned during the Kushan period. Regarding the latter, Pugachenkova (1991/92) wrote that the inscription mentions the foundation of this temple at year 4 of 'Hubishka'. Now, however, we cannot accept the reading easily because N. Sims-Williams has written that it was unduly speculative in its readings, and that the Airtam inscription was poorly preserved and did not seem to offer usable historical data (Sims-Williams 2012).

### Ushtur Mullo

Ushtur Mullo is located on the East bank of Kafirnigan-darya, south Tajikistan. Unfortunately, we do not have enough information about the site. K. Kato introduces it in his comprehensive study of Central Asian Buddhist sites and writes that it has a square-based *stūpa* and a probable rectangular monastery with a courtyard (Kato 1997). And at the northern side of the monastery, a room with double enclosure wall was set up (Figure 18).

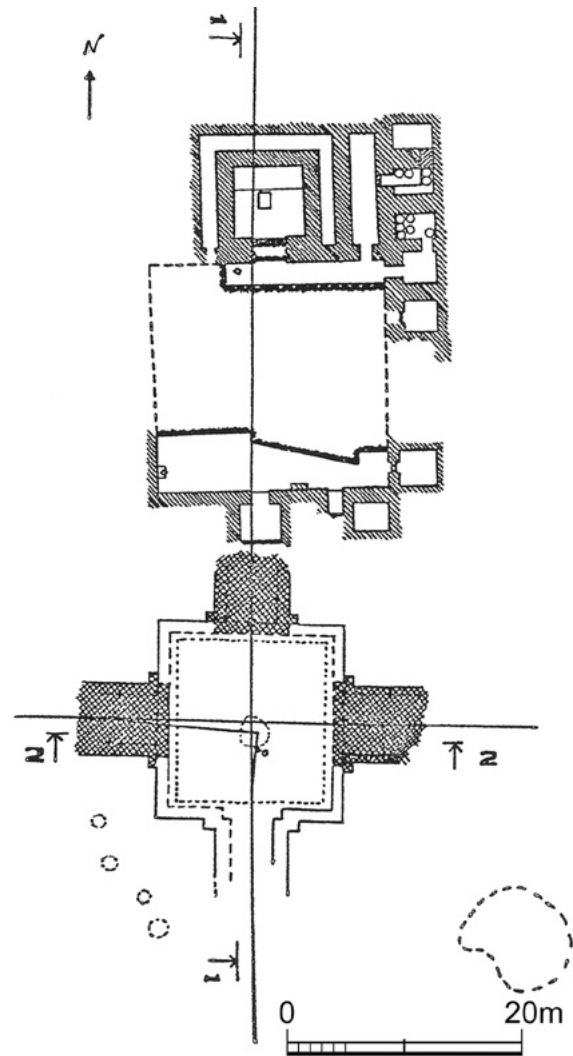


Figure 18. Plan of Ushtur Mullo.  
(Plan: after Kato 1997: fig. 2-63.)

### Dal'verzin Tepa

Dal'verzin Tepa is an important ancient settlement located on the west bank of Surkhan-darya, about 100 km north of Termez (Пугаченкова и др. 1978). There were two Buddhist temples. One was in the suburbs of the *shahristan* (the first temple), and another was in the *shahristan* (the second temple). Both temples were active in the Kushan period, and as for the second temple, it had gone into decline at the end of the fourth century, which can be determined by the stratigraphic data of the pottery and Carbon-14 dating. Samples of the floor of the second Buddhist temple indicate AD 320-410 (76.4%) according to this dating (Soka University 2012). Regarding the first temple, it is highly possible that it stopped functioning earlier than the second temple, judging from the pottery.

Although excavators found a square *stupa*-base in the first temple, the whole plan was not revealed (Пугаченкова и др. 1978: 90-97). Around the base many clay figures were found, the style of which is similar to those of Khalchayan sculptures. This fact supposes that these sculptures were influenced directly by the Graeco-Iranian tradition of this region. We need to note that some donors are wearing Central Asian costume like trousers, which is one of major traditional features of the region (Figure 19). On the other hand, some of the sculptures from the second Buddhist temple (Figure 20) have many Gandhāran elements, like the spiral shaped curls of hair and various ornaments of a bodhisattva, including a turban (Soka University 1996; 2012). We can assume from the difference that there were two routes of influence on the Buddhist art of Tukhāristān. One is the Graeco-Iranian (local) tradition of the region and another is the Gandhāran tradition. The difference of the styles between the first temple and the second temple possibly shows that the Gandhāran tradition of Buddhist art became gradually stronger in Tukhāristān.



Figure 19: Donor wearing trousers from the first temple of Dal'verzin Tepa. Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Fine Arts Research Institute. (Photo: author)

### Buddhist sites in southern Tukhāristān

Next, we will examine Buddhist sculptures from the south of Amu-darya (southern Tukhāristān). Several sculptures made of limestone have been found especially around Kunduz and Baghlan, although we only know for certain a few Buddhist temples there which belong to the Kushan period. This fact makes it difficult to know the date of the sculptures precisely from an archaeological point of view, while most art historians have thought that they were sculpted before the latter half of the fourth century by comparison with Gandhāran sculptures. Such limestone sculptures were excavated from Akhonzada Tepe (Tepe Ahingaran), Lili Tepe, Cham Qala and so on (Fischer 1958; Mizuno 1962). As we can see, a seated Maitreya with a small water bottle in his left hand totally depends on the Gandhāran tradition (Figure 21). Reliefs representing the Buddha's life-story (the Great Departure, farewell of Kanthaka, and so on)



Figure 20: Bodhisattva from the second temple of Dal'verz'in Tepe. Fine Arts Research Institute, Uzbekistan. (Photo: author)

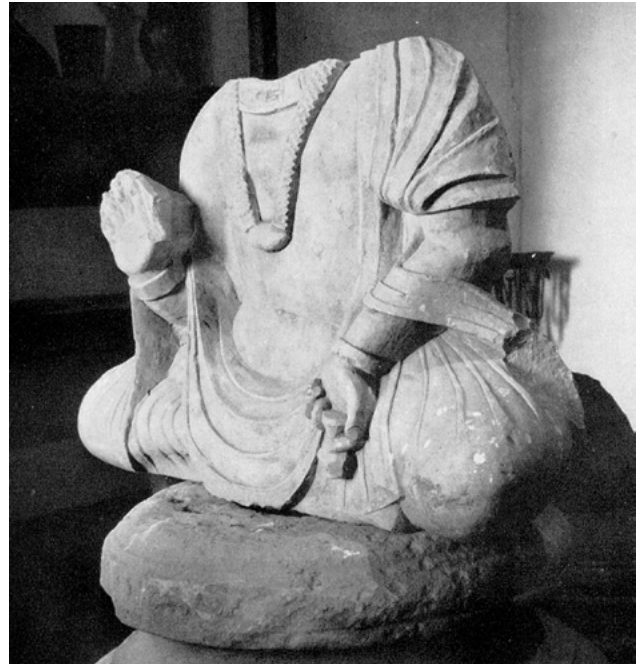


Figure 21. Seated Bodhisattva from Akhonzada Tepe (Tepe Ahingaran). (Photo: after Mizuno 1962: fig. 125.)

are also under the strong influence of a Gandhāran expressive scheme (Figure 22). On the other hand, we can sometimes find donors in Central Asian costume in these reliefs, who are certainly similar to those from northern Tukhāristān.

A French team found a probable Buddhist site which is only 2 km east from Surkh Kotal in Baghlan (Schlumberger et. al 1983). There remained a rectangular platform surrounded by foundation stones of a pillar (Figure 23). On the platform, they found a wall-like structure constructed in sun-dried bricks and the foot of a huge clay figure. This situation clearly indicates that the structure was not a *stūpa*-base. In addition, the side face of the platform was covered elaborately by rectangular limestone ashlar, and from there, many limestone reliefs were excavated, which appear to have Gandhāran-style Buddhist



Figure 22. Relief depicting the Buddha's life-story from Akhonzada Tepe (Tepe Ahingaran). (Photo: after Mizuno 1962: fig. 123.)

motives (Figure 24). Excavators dated this site from the later second to the later third centuries. Recently, a very similar platform covered by limestone was also excavated at Tepe Zargaran in Balkh (Bernard 2006). This is possibly a base of a *stupa*, because excavators found a reliquary cell at almost the centre of the platform. If these sites are really Buddhist temples, we should study more about the relationship of Buddhist cultures between the north and the south of Amu-darya because the plan and construction materials are totally different.

### Characteristics of Buddhist sites in Tukhāristān

To sum up the main points about the characteristics of Buddhist sites in Tukhāristān we have seen thus far, we can say the following.

First of all, it is certain that some Buddhist temples exist in Tukhāristān from the Kushan period at the latest, and they were basically under the influence of Gandhāran Buddhism. We can find the evidence from various points of view. The rectangular *stupa*-base and a rectangular monastery with a courtyard, for example, must have been introduced from Gandhāra, because they are thought to have been developed there first (Kuwayama 1978; Behrendt 2003).<sup>9</sup> Gandhāran style in Buddhist art and the use of Kharoṣṭhī characters in Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān also suggest a strong influence from Gandhāra.

On the other hand, there remain some local traditions in Buddhist art and architecture in Tukhāristān. For example, donors in Central Asian costume and the up-turned, almond-shaped eyes of statues and reliefs seem to be the local features inherited from the Hellenistic period in the region (Mkrtychev 2007). We have already mentioned that rectangular shrines with double enclosure walls might have a relationship with the local religious tradition associated with a kind of Zoroastrianism. Moreover, some of these traditions probably influenced Gandhāran temples and art. Regarding the donors in Central Asian costume, they frequently appear in Kāpīśī-style reliefs. Many researchers suppose that this must be a representation of Kushan people because they originated from Central Asia. If so, it is possible to



Figure 23. Base of a probable Buddhist site near Surkh Kotal. (Photo: after Schlumberger et. al 1983: pl. 47.128.)



Figure 24. Relief of a turban, from a probable Buddhist site near Surkh Kotal. (Photo: after Schlumberger et. al 1983: pl. 66. 213.)

<sup>9</sup> Regarding the rectangular monastery with a courtyard, J. Shaw pointed out a possibility that earlier prototypical examples of this kind of monastery had existed in central India in around the second century BC (Shaw 2009: 123-124).

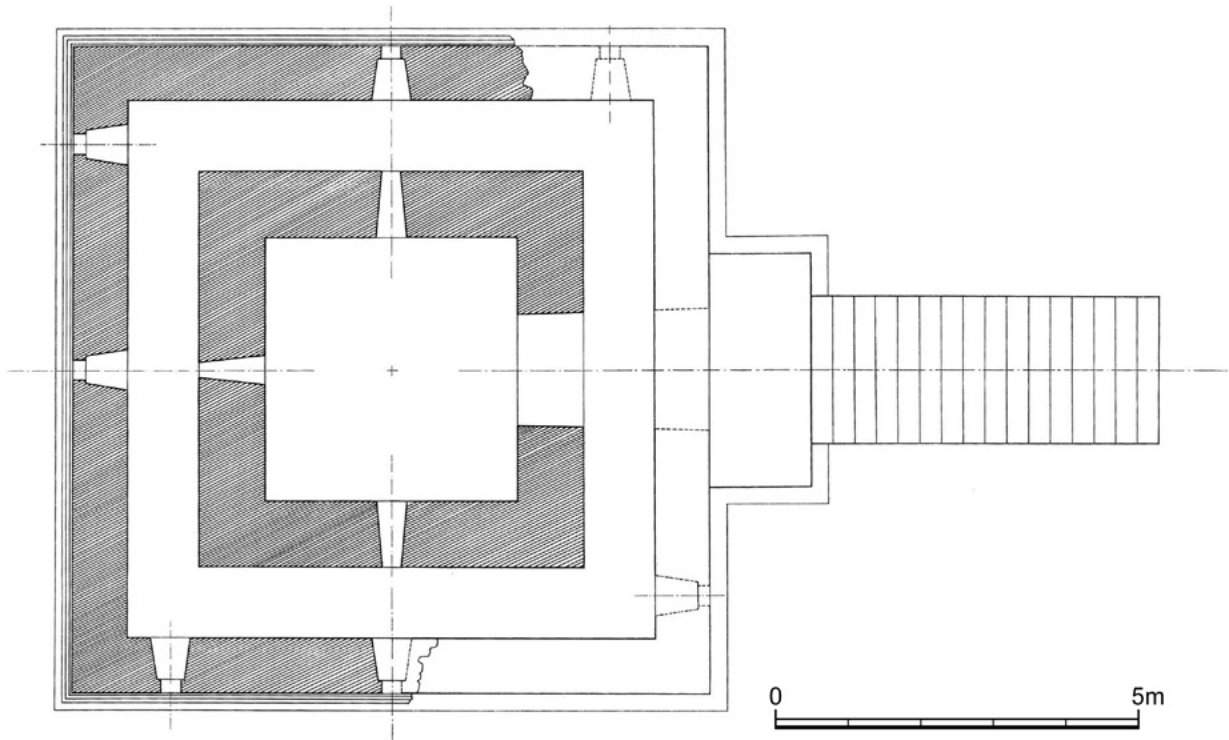


Figure 25. Plan of a shrine at Gumbat. (Photo: after Faccenna and Spagnesi 2014: fig. 485, courtesy of ISMEO Italian Archaeological Mission in Pakistan.)

assume that this costume might be one of the influences which Tukhāristān art gave to the Gandhāran tradition.

The rectangular shrine with double enclosure wall would be one more example, although we cannot find many shrines of this type in Gandhāra. At Taxila, Building H of the Dharmarājikā complex is a shrine of this type (Marshall 1951: pl. 45; Behrendt 2003: fig. 1). We could date the building to around the first century AD because it was constructed in the so-called diaper masonry. Jaṇḍiāl C is an earlier example constructed in rubble masonry (Behrendt 2003: fig. 14), which has a main room and a front room with surrounding corridor. In Swat, we also have a few examples. Especially in Butkara I, the so-called Great Building has this kind of plan and appears to occupy an important place in the temple (Faccenna 1980, part 1: pl. 6; Behrendt 2003: fig. 97). This building was first constructed in almost the same period as Building H of Dharmarājikā, according to Behrendt (2003: 100). A small shrine at Gumbat also has exactly the same plan (Faccenna & Spagnesi 2014) (Figure 25). The construction of this shrine could be dated back to the later first century AD by carbon-14 dating (Olivieri & Filigenzi 2018: 80), and it is almost same time as Building H of Dharmarājikā and the Great Building of Butkara I.

These examples might be a result of influence from the Tukhāristān region, or more simply, might be a reflection of the Iranian traditions which had been rooted before the Kushan period in both Tukhāristān and Greater Gandhāra. Although it is difficult to decide which one is correct, early examples no doubt exist in Tukhāristān and this tradition continues to exist until around the eighth century. Furthermore, the rectangular shrine with double enclosure wall also appears in the Xinjiang Uyghur region (Rhie 1999; 2002). We can find many examples of this type belonging to the third to fourth centuries onward. If we take them into consideration, it is clear that there was a strong relationship between Tukhāristān and the Xinjiang Uyghur region too.

### **The temporal decline of Buddhism in Tukhāristān**

As we have already mentioned, most Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān stopped their operation in the latter half of the fourth century. Afterwards, some of them became active again (like Kara Tepa) and new temples were built after the later fifth or sixth century (like Ajina Tepa) (Литвинский и Зеймаль 1971).<sup>10</sup> This phenomenon used to be regarded as a result of a 'social crisis' in the whole Tukhāristān region caused mainly by the invasion of nomads from the north (la Vaissière 2004: 94-95). Researchers of the former Soviet Union had especially emphasized that the collapse of urban sites and emergence of small castles which they call 'Zamok' or 'Gorodishiche' concentrated on the late fourth to the early fifth centuries, and that this was the social crisis associated with a transition from Antiquity (Slavery) to Middle Ages (Feudalism) (Седов 1987: 114-116; Аннаев 1988: 8, 49-51; Брыкина (ред.) 1999: 5). However, with regard to the decline of Buddhism, we need to pursue more concrete reasons, because the decline of Buddhism in Tukhāristān looks like a temporary phenomenon.<sup>11</sup> Of course, the situation was complicated and there was a combination of reasons.

### **Sasanian intervention in Buddhism**

From recent studies, we know that the Sasanians temporarily established direct control over southern Tukhāristān in the later fourth century although it was not to be very long-term (Sims-Williams 2008: 92-93; Cribb 2010: 111-112). In this respect, we might be able to suppose simply that the Sasanian intervention in Buddhism caused the decline because Shapur II was said to be intolerant towards foreign religions. On the other hand, we should pay attention to the fact that there are no archaeological data suggesting any violent destruction of temples in Kara Tepa and Fayaz Tepa (Fussman 2011: vol. 1, 25; vol. 2, 261-262; Мкртычев 2013: 123). Thus, it would be more reasonable to suppose that the Sasanians did not have a positive relationship with Buddhism, rather than to regard them as its active devastator.

### **The disappearance of a political group which connects the north and the south of the Hindukush**

This second reason might be more important for investigating the historical situation of the region. Now we know from a numismatic perspective that Sasanians soon lost hegemony in the south of the Hindukush (Aram & Pfisterer 2010; Cribb 2010). Although the relationship among Sasanians, Kushano-Sasanians, Kidarites, and Alkhan Huns is complicated and opinions on this subject vary among researchers,<sup>12</sup> they all agree to a certain extent that there was social turmoil caused by the invasion of nomads from the north in the late fourth century. Therefore, it is highly possible that such a confused situation led to a temporary interruption of main roads between Tukhāristān and Gandhāra. If Buddhism in Tukhāristān strongly relied on that of Gandhāra, as already mentioned, it must have been a great loss for Tukhāristān's Buddhists that they could not accept Gandhāran monks and ideas. It meant that the influence of Gandhāran Buddhism was not reaching Tukhāristān.

Afterwards, Buddhist temples in Tukhāristān became active again around the later fifth or sixth century. This may be closely related to the unification of both sides of the Hindukush by the Hephthalites and Alkhan Huns (Aram & Pfisterer 2010). On the other hand, a clay sealing with a Bactrian inscription from Swat implies another possibility (Rahman et. al 2006; Grenet 2010). The sealing bears the portrait of a king who is very similar to Kidarite kings on their coins, and the inscription identifies him as 'Hun king',

<sup>10</sup> The Bamiyan site, located at a contact point between Tukhāristān and Gandhāra, is one of these newly constructed Buddhist temples.

<sup>11</sup> The collapse of cities and the emergence of small castles does not seem to be concentrated in a short span of time when we carefully investigate pottery from the sites. F. Grenet pointed out that the social crisis was quickly followed by a new phase of urbanization, especially in Sogdiana (Grenet 2002: 203).

<sup>12</sup> There is a big difference among historians particularly concerning the date of Kidarites in Tukhāristān (Enoki 1969-70; Grenet 2002; La Vaissière 2004) and numismatists (Aram & Pfisterer 2010; Cribb 1990; 2010).

‘great Kushan king’, and ‘ruler of Samarkand’. If the king really belonged to the Kidarites, both sides of the Hindukush might have been reconnected more quickly by them. In this case, the temporal decline of Buddhism in Tukhāristān must be shorter than previously believed.

## Conclusions

As we have seen, Tukhāristān Buddhism was basically under the influence of Gandhāran Buddhism. But we can also find local traditions in Buddhist art and architecture in Tukhāristān, some of which influenced Gandhāran temples and art. Although this evidence proves the tight connection between Tukhāristān and Gandhāra, Tukhāristān Buddhism may have been in trouble in respect to the acquisition of new information and trained monks when the connection was interrupted. It is very difficult to study the relationship between political groups and Buddhist sites from an archaeological point of view, and in the future we will need to gather further information to reach more specific conclusions.

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After completing this article, I learned of the following report. This is a very important recent achievement and I should like to include the results in future work.

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