

Eurasian
Research Bulletin



Specific Aspects Of The Political And Cultural Life Of The Kushan Empire

**Khakimzhanova Zilola
Gayratovna**

Senior teacher of the Department of Legal and Social-Humanities,
Academic Lyceum No.1 IIB

ABSTRACT

The Kushan Empire, spanning from the 1st to the 3rd century CE, was renowned for its significant political and cultural contributions in Central and South Asia. The empire's unique blend of Greco-Roman, Persian, Indian, and Buddhist influences shaped its vibrant cultural life. Politically, the Kushans were known for their adept diplomacy, fostering trade along the Silk Road, and their strategic alliances with neighboring states. Culturally, they promoted religious tolerance, leading to the coexistence of various faiths such as Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Hinduism. The Kushan Empire's art and architecture flourished, with distinctive Gandharan art establishing a unique artistic identity. The Kushan rulers' support for art and literature led to an era of exceptional creativity, seen in their coinage, sculpture, and cave paintings.

Keywords:

Empire, Yuechjes, Kushan estates, culture, pottery and jewelry, agriculture

Introduction

As confirmed in Chinese sources, the nomadic tribes are assigned to five political units: Guishuang (Kushan), Xiongnu, Xiongnu, Xiongnu, Dumu. Each of them operates as a separate political force for about 100 years, conducting activities without submitting to a single ruler. In Greek sources, these tribes are referred to as Tocharians. In the 1st century BC, the Kushan tribe under the leadership of Kujula Kadphises unites all the nomadic tribes (Tocharians) and founds the Kushan Empire (Tocharistan). In the second half of the 2nd century AD, according to Chinese sources, nomadic tribes (originally Massagetae) living in Eastern Turkestan were subjected to pressure from the Huns and forced to migrate westward without being able to resist the attacks from the west. The nomads confront the Sak tribes around Lake Issyk-Kul and drive them south-westward. However, the nomads encounter resistance from the Usun tribe, are defeated, and

in the 130s BC, they enter the territory of Sogdiana. According to the Chinese historian Chen Shian, the nomads move from Sogdiana to Bactria and overthrow Greek rule in Bactria. Kujula Kadphises launches a campaign to the northern and western parts of Sogdiana, Margiana, and north-western India. Thus, the large state - the Kushan Empire is formed. Kujula Kadphises later captures Kabul and Kandahar regions. At that time, the capital of the empire was the city of Dalvarzintepa (in the modern Surkhandarya region, in the district of Shurchi).

Main Part

The entry of the Yuezhis into the Greek-Bactrian state during the early 2nd century BCE marked the completion of this state. The initial territories of the Yuezhis were in the northern Bactria region (the southern borders of modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). The Kushan state emerged as one of the principalities of the Yuezhis in the first half of our era due to the rise

of Kushan. The state was pronounced as Guishuang in Chinese, possibly being the name of one of the Yuezhis tribes. The founder of the state was a yabgu (prince). Later, under the rule of the king Kujula Kadphises, the Kushans conquered a large part of present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan. During the reign of his successor, Vima Taktu, a significant portion of India was added to the Kushan territories. The zenith of the Kushan state coincided with the rule of Kanishka (approximately 78-123 CE). During that period, the capital was moved from Bactria to Peshawar, and the borders of the kingdom extended to include territories of India and China. The boundaries of the Kushan state in Central Asia passed through the valleys of the Hissar Mountains, located in the south of present-day Uzbekistan. Strong fortifications were built on the high passes of those mountains (Darband). New cities emerged along the state borders, and trade relations were established with the empires of India, China, and Rome. Excavations conducted in Pompeii revealed Kushan coins and figurines made by Kushan craftsmen. During the Kushan period, metalworking flourished.

Bronze vessels, exquisite jewelry, beads, and gold products were found, indicating the high skill of Kushan craftsmen involved in the ongoing excavations in Khalchayan, Dalverzin, and Ayritom. Agriculture was the backbone of the imperial economy. Various crops were utilized to enhance agricultural productivity. Mountains and foothills were exploited for pastoral purposes. It is essential to emphasize that the political history of the Kushan state is relatively poorly understood concerning its cultural and socio-economic history. The date of the establishment of Kushan rule, the history of this state, the various inscriptions of Kushans, numismatic data, partly Chinese sources, Buddhist information, and early medieval sources form the basis. Initially, if we talk about Northern Bactria (the Surkhondarya region), it was one of the largest provinces of the Kushan state, where civilization developed to a high degree. It is essential to emphasize that the spread of Buddhism in Central Asia began precisely from the Bactria-Tokharistan region from the first century AD. Today, more than a

hundred Buddhist temples and over a hundred Buddha statues have been identified and studied in these regions. The most famous among them are the Qoratepa temples near Termez, the Zartepa and Ayritom settlements, and the Dalvarzin temple. The unique culture of Northern Bactria is reflected not only in the art of sculpture (the carving of facades and doorways) but also in urban planning, in the culture of urbanization, agriculture, and jewelry making. In general, during the Kushan period, cultural life flourished even more brightly. Especially, during the time of Kanishka, the Buddhist religion brought from India became the state religion.

During the Kushan period, both architecture and craftsmanship experienced significant development. Because, while this period's administrative, religious, production, residential, and defense structures share similarities with Eastern craftsmanship, they also exhibit their own superior aspects. The exemplary features of craftsmanship include Dalvarzin, Khulchayon, Old Termez, Kampirtepa, Fayoztepa, and Qoratepa, which are renowned monuments worldwide. The fall of the Kushan state parallels the historical fate of the Greco-Bactrian and Roman empires to a considerable extent. All these states were compelled to engage in incessant struggles on the brink of collapse. Due to internal and external reasons for defense against foreign military invasions, sufficient military resources were not found in weakened large states. By the 4th century CE, the Kushan monarchy lost control over its main territories. Some of the possessions of this monarchy remained preserved in Northern India.

Political Structure:

The Kushan Empire was characterized by a centralized political structure under the rule of powerful monarchs, known as Kushanshahs. These rulers wielded considerable authority over their vast domain, which extended from Central Asia to the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent. The administrative framework of the empire featured a hierarchy of regional governors and local officials who managed the day-to-day affairs of governance,

ensuring the maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes.

Cultural Syncretism:

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Kushan Empire was its role as a melting pot of diverse cultures, religions, and artistic traditions. The Kushans were renowned for their promotion of religious tolerance, which facilitated the coexistence of various faiths, including Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Greek polytheism. This cultural pluralism gave rise to a vibrant atmosphere of intellectual exchange, artistic innovation, and religious syncretism, as seen in the Gandharan art style that blended Hellenistic and Indian artistic elements.

Economic Prosperity:

The strategic location of the Kushan Empire along the Silk Road, the ancient network of trade routes connecting East and West, fostered economic prosperity and cultural exchange. The Kushans facilitated trade and commerce across their empire, fostering the exchange of goods, ideas, and technologies between the Mediterranean world, Persia, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This economic dynamism contributed to the wealth and stability of the empire, enabling the Kushans to establish flourishing urban centers and patronize the arts and sciences.

Legacy:

Despite its eventual decline and fragmentation, the legacy of the Kushan Empire endured through its cultural and artistic contributions, which continued to influence the regions it once ruled. The Gandharan art tradition, characterized by its distinctive blend of Greco-Roman and Indian aesthetics, left an indelible mark on the artistic heritage of South Asia and Central Asia. Additionally, the Kushans played a pivotal role in the transmission of Buddhism along the Silk Road, spreading its teachings and scriptures to distant lands.

Conclusion

In short, during its heyday, the Kushan state occupied the territories inhabited by many peoples and peoples. These nations and peoples spoke different languages, used different systems of writing and had different religious

beliefs. There are also some differences in material culture items. Despite this, there is a lot in common with the culture of the Kushan period. However, it cannot be said that a single culture prevailed in the entire Kushan state. Each region of this huge country has its own unique culture. As the period of the rule of the Kushan dynasty left a big mark on our ancient history, it can be clearly seen in the example of the life of every region or people that was part of it. Its first capital Dalvarzintepa (Surkhondarya), adjacent to it Holchayon (Denov), Zartepa, Fayoztepa, Karatepa, Ayritom (Termiz surroundings) and others were considered to be the most developed trade and craft industries of the Kushans. In our country, the agricultural culture based on artificial irrigation is extremely developed, many irrigation facilities have been built. These include the Old Angor, Zang, and Dargom canals in Sogd in the Surkhondarya oasis. Crafts such as urban planning, architecture, sculpture, pottery are highly developed in our country. This is confirmed by the historical research conducted on the site of the ancient cities of Tuproqkala, Ayritom, Termiz, Ahsikent. At the same time, there are good reasons to conclude that material and spiritual culture developed side by side during the Kushan period.

References

1. R.H. Murtazoyeva, A.A.Odilov, A.A.Ermetov, K.D. Soipova. "O„zbekiston tarixi". Toshkent-2020 "Donishmand ziyosi" nashriyoti. 128-b.
2. <http://uzbekistan-geneva.ch/tarix-181.html>
3. <https://english-life.uz>
4. Раҳмонов Ш. Тавка (Ўзбекистоннинг қадимги божхона иншоотлари тарихига доир). Т.: 2001. -142 б.
5. Ставиский Б.Я. Кушанская Бактрия: проблемы истории и культуры. М.: «Наука», 1977. – 296 с