PAPERS COMMUNICATED

53. *On the Recent Excavations of the Han Tombs at the Ancient Lo-lang District, Korea.*

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The significance of the results of the excavations of the Han tombs in the ancient Lo-lang 樂浪 district in Northern Korea, cannot be overestimated, as contributing to the reconstruction of the Han civilization, especially at present when scientific researches are but impossible in China proper. Though archaeological exploration as well as excavation of the sites was begun already some thirty years ago, the first great discovery was made by Dr. Sekino in 1916 at a tomb of Sekiganri 石巖里 which was followed by Mr. Fujita's finds of dated lacquer vessels in 1924 and by Mr. Harada's excavation of the tomb of Wang Hsü 王盱 in 1925, all the tombs lying in the forlorn ancient cemeteries of Lo-lang prefecture, a few miles South-West of the present city of Heijô beyond the great river Daidô.

While the above-mentioned discoveries belong to the First or Meiji-Taishô period, a new period of the Shôwa Era has been opened since a few years ago, with renewed activities, by the work of the Chosen-Koseki-Kenkyû-kwai 朝鮮古蹟研究會 (Society for the Study of Korean Antiquities), and more especially since last season, under the kind auspices of the Nippon-Gakujutsu-Shinkô-kwai 日本學術振興會 (Society for Promoting Scientific Studies in Japan), with a happy expectation of fresh discoveries as well as of their fully prepared publications. Some of the more important discoveries during the past three seasons will come out in the following:—

(I) Season of 1931:—In this season 3 tombs were excavated by Messrs. Koidzumi and Sawa. The most remarkable find, however, was made from a round mound, Tomb No. 116 of Nanseiri 南井里. It contained a large wood chamber, the most completely preserved of all hitherto found. (Now on exhibition at the Heijo Museum). The chamber is partitioned into two rooms. The ante-room is the place where tomb-furniture was deposited, and the main room contained three large lacquered coffins. Each room has a side entrance to indicate that originally the interment had to be carried out horizontally from the side of the chamber, if not actually done so by the inconvenience of

the too narrow entrance. In the ante-room we can still trace faint figures of men and horses, painted in black, recalling us the well-known Shantung stone reliefs of the Han periods. Among a quantity of remains which came out of the ante-room as well as out of the burial chamber, the most surprising item was a lacquered basket with miniature painting in colour. Rows of nearly one hundred portraits are depicted with accompanying inscriptions of the names of each personage (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. A part of Lacquer-Painting on the Basket found in Tomb 115 (Nanseiri).

This basket with its wonderful skill of design, as well as its colouring has revolutionized our limited knowledge of Han painting. A red-lacquered ink-case, a lacquered scroll-case with coloured design, wooden horses and men, and a wooden tablet with the inscription of 故吏朝鮮

丞... must be mentioned also among the innumerable finds. Tomb No. 201 of Sekiganri, which had been plundered once, yielded lacquer vessels with the dates of A.D. 4 元始四年 and of A.D. 8 居攝三年.¹⁾

(II) Season of 1932:—Among 4 tombs examined by Messrs. Oba and Umehara, Tomb No. 127 of Teihakuri 貞柏里, was the most interesting. It was also a wood-chambered grave, but covered with bricks on its ceilings and, after a careful observation by Mr. Oba, revealed traces of a second burial. It is clear that this was of Wang Kuang, a clerk in employ of the Governor-General of Lolang 樂浪太守椽王光 and his wife of the Fan family 番氏. For the finds in the two coffins consist, in one coffin, of personal adornments of the kind worn by men of the period and two wooden seals, one an official and the other a private, inscribed with his name and post (Fig. 2), while

Fig. 2. Wooden Seals found in Tomb 127 (Teihakuri)
I. Official Seal. II. Private Seal.

1) Detailed report of these tombs is now in the course of publication.

the other contains remains of a skeleton of a woman about thirty years old. Moreover, various lacquer vessels which have the inscriptions of the Wang and Fan families well accord with the seals. A bronze catapult 弩機 with remaining wooden handle and the top of a writing brush 筆, &c., may be mentioned among other remains, all revealing to us the daily life of the period.

(III) Season of 1933 :—Under Prof. Fujita's superintendence, Messrs. Oba, Umehara, &c., unearthed 8 tombs in all, 3 brick-chambered ones and 5 wood-chambered. The more noteworthy were the brick tombs. One (No. 221 of Teihakuri) was single-roomed, while the others were double- (No. 219 do.) or triple-roomed (No. 227 do.). They are, however, all of the same kind of construction with brick-arched entrance, occasionally partially supported with timber beams, approached by a long sloping passage or dromos, of hardened earth, from the surface. It was rather surprising to find in one tomb (No. 227)¹⁾ that the completely preserved smallest vault has a very long brick drain (?) underground (Fig. 3), which recalls a similar equipment found in the tombs at Kôshû 公州 in the ancient Kudara or Hyakusai 百濟 Kingdom. All these tombs seemed unfortunately to have been plundered once, though they yielded more or less remains of tomb-furniture. No. 221 Tomb revealed two coffins containing bronze mirrors, lacquer vessels and pottery mortuary things just as we see in the wood-chambered tombs. The most interesting object was a bronze-pommeled short sword in a bamboo sheath. In No. 219 Tomb (here the furniture had largely disappeared) were found various lacquer vessels, an oval cup and a rectangular case, richly ornamented with coloured designs, &c., which can be counted as the finest works among those discovered in the season. In the same tomb it was noticed that some animal designs in black had been painted on the bricks at both sides of the entrance, and a few lacquer and pottery

Fig. 3. Tomb No. 227 (Teihakuri).

1) Along the entrance passage of No. 227 Tomb a jar-burial was found, which threw us very interesting but difficult problem of its date.

vessels outside of the entrance-gate; the former showing us a sort of wall paintings, the latter a certain funeral rite observed after the interment.

In one wood-chambered tomb (No. 8 of Teihakuri) were found 4 coffins, one of them containing a big bronze mirror of the Later Han style, and in another, finger-rings, jade ear-pendants, bracelets and a comma-shaped bead, curiously similar to a Japanese *magatama*. Another wood-chambered tomb (No. 17 do.) showed us an interesting construction with stepped earthen passage, coming down to the chamber which was covered with white pebbles surrounding (Fig. 4). This tomb yielded very fine lacquer vessels, such as a pair of oval cups, dated 41 B.C. 永光三年 of the Earlier Han. The other, No. 13, was the most richly furnished among those excavated last season. In the coffins, two in number, several kinds of lacquer vessels, for example a pilgrim-bottle-shaped vase, a round tray with hunting design and a bronze candelabrum and mirrors, &c., were found.

Fig. 4. Tomb No. 17 (Teihakuri).

In short, the results of the last three seasons work at Lo-lang have considerably contributed new knowledge of the remains as well as of the construction of the tombs throwing much light on the history of Han civilization. It is expected that future excavations in the immense cemeteries, as well as in the site of the buried city of Lo-lang itself, which await our scientific examination will have more and more important results. We need the combined efforts of all the scholars in Japan, of Tokyo, Kyoto, Keijo, &c., to rescue these invaluable archaeological traces which would, without their work, be destroyed at length by natural and human agencies.