PAPERS COMMUNICATED

65. *Excavation of the Mud-Castle at Lo-lang.*

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Lo-lang in Chôsen is one of the four "chüns" (provinces) instituted by the Emperor Wu-ti of the Han dynasty of China in the 3rd year of the Yüan-feng era (108 B.C.). Inquiry into the antiquities of the place, first undertaken by Japanese archaeologists over a score of years ago, has in recent years been making a rapid progress thanks to the support of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkôkwai (Foundation for the Promotion of Scientific and Industrial Research of Japan). Investigators' effort has hitherto been devoted to the excavation of ancient tombs at Lo-lang, through which indeed a large mass of most valuable material for the study of Han civilization has been brought to light. But in addition to the tombs ascertained that there exist the relics of a "dojô" (mud-walled castle or a mud-castle) at the place. The Foundation above referred to, thinking its excavation imperative recently expressed its wish for the immediate undertaking of the task. In accordance with this wish the present writer, with the aid of several other scholars, set about the excavation work on April 9th this year, and continued it for three weeks, making as a result some discoveries of supreme value and importance.

The "dojô" in question, or rather its ruins, lie some 6 km. from Heijô, on the left bank of the River Dai-dôkô, occupying a corner of the tract of land which is studded with ancient tombs of the Lo-lang period. Having the area of about 0.8 km. square, the place is now for the most part turned into farms. And in some portion there exist the ruins of Mud walls, which are traditionally believed to have once fenced round the mud-castle. Even before the excavation, therefore, it was inferred from the large number of tiles and other such objects unearthed there that on this site there may have been standing in ancient days some buildings connected with the Lo-lang Government.

The excavation of this spring has brought to light; first, a foot-road leading to a building. About 38 m. long and 8 m. broad, it is paved up with bricks except its margin on either side which is covered with marble. Next in order the ruins of the building itself, the size of 10 m. by 8 m., has been unearthed. Along one of its walls still standing there still remains an "ondoru" (Korean heater) built of bricks. Close by the heater is found a chimney made of stone and bricks.

Out of remains of this building have been found out numerous objects of various descriptions such as a bronze "t'ing" (three-footed vessel), iron arrowheads, "wu-shu" coins, crystal and glass beads, earthen vessels, tiles, etc. Besides these, the most valuable find of all has been made in two pieces of "feng-ni" 封泥 or clay used for sealing letters.

Seals are stamped on them, which read respectively "T'i-hsi-ch'ang-yin" 提奚長印 (Seal of Head of T'i-hsi District) and "Pu-êrh-tso-wei" 不而左尉 (Tso-wei officer of Pu-êrh District). They are then the seals of Government officials of the two districts "T'i-hsi" and "Pu-êrh." Now, when we turn to Chinese history, we find that a district called "T'i-hsi" existed both in the period of Earlier Han and that of Later Han, whereas the existence of Pu-êrh District was exclusively limited to the Earlier Han period. Hence it seems to follow that the newly excavated house belongs to the Earlier Han period, so its date is, at any rate, not later than 25 A.D.

Feng-ni stamped with
the seal of four
characters 不而左尉

Excavated Ruins of a Building.

It may be said that such a discovery of architectural remains as old as Earlier Han is exceedingly remarkable. Since in China itself not one piece of architecture indubitably belonging to the Han period has never yet been brought to light, the new discovery of such a one in Chôsen cannot be overestimated.

To what use the house was put is indeed yet to be ascertained, but a vast number of tiles with the lettering "Lo-lang-li-kuan" 樂浪禮官 unearthed in its surroundings induce us to suppose that this was the house of "Li-kuan" or the Government office in charge of ceremony.

All this is the fruit of the present excavation work which has just been set afoot, so that when it is continued this autumn, and carried out on a more extensive scale, it will bring, we trust, a far more rich harvest.