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Cultural Exchange on the Ancient Steppe Route: Some Observations on Pazyryk Heritage

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According to many scholars, people who supported the Pazyryk culture—which spread along the Altai mountains of Central Asia in the seventh to third centuries B. C.—were Europeoid and they spoke the Persian language. Some scholars say the inhabitants of this part of the Soviet Union's Mongolian People's Republic and western China's Xinjiang province belonged to the Saka, mentioned in the Persian sources.

This culture is important because it made cultural exchanges over a wide area of Eurasia in those times.

The culture of the Pazyryk period was brought to light by excavations of the great kurgans, or frozen tombs, at Pazyryk, Tuyakhta, Bashadar, Katanda and Shibe by W. W. Radlow, M. P. Gryaznov, Sergei I. Rudenko and S. V. Kiselev. Objects from the kurgans are now part of the important art collections of the Hermitage Museum; some of them have been exhibited in many countries, including Japan. A Rudenko article on the kurgans was introduced to Japan by the late Umehara Suezumi in 1935. In 1971 professors Egami Namio and Kato Kyuzo translated his book, *The Gold-Guarding Griffins*, into Japanese. One of his important books, *Kul'tura naseleniya Gornogo Altaya v skifskoe vremya* [1953] was translated into English under the title *Frozen Tombs of Siberia* [J. M. DENT and SONS LTD, LONDON 1970]. Many scholars other than those in the U.S.S.R. of course wrote about them. For example, Karl Jettmar spent 60 pages on the subject in the chapter, "Graves of the Scythian Era in the Altai," in his book, *Art of the Steppes* [Jettmar 1967].

There are recent surveys of the Pazyryk culture. The book, *Graves of Ulandryk* by Vladimir Dmitrievich Kubalev [KURGANY ULANDRYKA 1987], is the most remarkable one. It is significant that he investigated the common people among the kurgans in contrast to previous studies that dealt only with the great kurgans. Kubalev's study thus brought to light the entire culture of Pazyryk.

For a long time, I wanted to visit these places we know only by books and finds. Dr. A. P. Derevyanko, director of the Institute of the History, Philology and Philosophy in Novosibirsk, cordially invited me to visit there.

1. HIGH ALTAI IN SCYTHIAN ERA AND THE CULTURE OF THE PAZYRYK PERIOD

During the seventh to first century B. C., inhabitants of the vast steppe—from Hungary in the West, to the Ordos plateau in the East—who had been settled into grazing and farming, changed to a nomadic life. Because of this, contacts were made between tribes and goods were continually exchanged. Then as the nomads gathered around castles, they began to stratify. This era is called Scythian, for the sake of convenience, employing the name of a leading tribe of the time.

The High Altai area of southern Siberia is suited to cattle-breeding in several ways and was thus developed during the Scythian era. Bones of horses, sheep and cows, as well as cheese in which flavor still remains, are found in many Kurgans of the High Altai—they were offerings for the dead. Today's nomads of Altai, Kazakh and Kirgiz make cheese by mixing the milk of a sheep, a goat, a cow and a yak, the same as was done in ancient days. They also use Scythian-style vessels for cooking meat, and clay pots with small rims or wooden and leather pots of various shapes for preserving foods.

The High Altai culture of the Scythian era divides into three periods: Maiemir (seventh-fifth centuries B. C.), Pazyryk (fifth-third centuries B. C.) and Shibe (second-first centuries B. C.).

“The ancient culture in the earth” refers to the second period, named after the village Pazyryk, where in 1929 Russian archaeologist Sergei Rudenko and his team first did excavations beside the Bolshoi Uragan River of the High Altai. Later on, M. Gryaznov and S. Kiselev participated in the excavation of the kurgans in Bashadar and Tuyakhta. Recently V. Kubalev from Novosibirsk investigated kurgans of common people of the same period of the Ulandryk. When similar cultures were discovered in east Kazakhstan (eastern part of the Republic of Kazakh), Tuba and Mongolia, it became clear that the culture of Pazyryk style had spread far beyond the High Altai.

Through carbon dating, the fifth kurgan is set at 2240 years ago and the second kurgan at 2350 years ago, plus or minus 50 years in each case.

The main characteristic of Pazyryk and similar kurgans is that water seeped into the tombs after their completion and goods that normally would have decayed were at least partially frozen and so preserved. Precious goods like gold seem to have been stolen soon after burial. It is significant, however, that wood, leather, felt and textiles remained, and it can be said that their value is as great as that of the golden goods from the tomb of Tutankhamen in Egypt.

The Pazyryk kurgans are not situated in areas of permafrost. Yet the interiors were frozen for centuries. It is said that this happened because stones were piled up high on the surface of the kurgans. As an example, take the fifth Pazyryk kurgan, with its diameter of 42 meters and its height of four meters. On some parts of it, stones were piled as high as two meters. Such stones protected the earth from solar heat, slowing down defrosting of the kurgans' interiors in summer. Then, in

winter, air flowed freely between stones, freezing the interior more quickly than the surface of the earth. As a result, optimum condition for freezing the water inside the kurgans was established.

Culture of the Frozen Tombs—

Horses and Harness

In Scythian era of the High Altai, horses were buried in tombs regardless of age, sex or social status of the person buried. Horses were taller than 150 centimeters and wonderful geldings for riding. The number of horses in a tomb varied from seven buried with a single person to 22 for two persons.

In Arzyan barrow in Tuva (excavated from 1971 to 1974), estimated to be about 200 years older than Pazyryk tombs, there were altogether more than 160 horses. It is also known from bones piled up around the tomb of Arzyan that more than 300 horses were eaten by mourners. In tombs at Altai, only riding horses and their harness were found, the exception being the fifth Pazyryk tomb in which four drag-horses were buried along with riding horses. It is particularly interesting to note that saddles were found. Saddles were not used by ancient Greeks, Assyrians or Persians. It is said that the saddle was invented by nomads of ancient Eurasia.

The saddles in the tombs were made of two leather cushions stitched together, each of which was shaped like a pea pod, and stuffed with deer hair or rare grasses. Another cushion went under each saddle and a thin cloth of felt covered it.

All the harness found in Altai was richly decorated.

Designs of wild or imaginary animals attacking ungulates, or hoofed animals, decorated the felt pieces that cover saddles. However, wooden carved decorations attached to the harness are assumed to have been made particularly for funerals. Decorations for daily use were made of copper or bronze.

Vehicles

Two-wheeled and four-wheeled carts also were found in the tombs. The two-wheeled cart has a couple of rods 10 centimeters in diameter that are linked with two thick timbers four meters long. The rods are inserted into wheels made from large larch trunks. The wheels are 30 to 47 centimeters in diameter and 35 to 40 centimeters in thickness.

Wheels of the four-wheeled cart from the fifth Pazyryk kurgan have a spoke, a hub and a flange, and the diameter is 150 centimeters. The pedestal is sustained by carved short sticks and a roof is attached on thin sticks. Because the body is fixed on the rods, the cart has to make a big circle to change directions. Material is all birch wood joined with wooden nails or tenons. No metal was used anywhere.

The High Altai has sharp slopes and forests. What was the use of this type of cart in such a hilly country? Rudenko says "it is an indication the people in the area had relationships with remote places." I, however, support the view that the cart was used for funerals within a limited area. Greek historian Herodotus wrote in the fifth century B. C. that when a Scythian king died "his whole body was

covered with wax, the stomach was opened and the inside of the body emptied. The cavity was stuffed with crushed galingale seeds, spices, parsley seeds and aniseed, and the stomach was stitched together." Then his body was placed on a cart and carried around among the tribes under his control. The carts from Pazyryk kurgans just may be that kind of funeral carriage.

It is noteworthy that the shabrack found with the carts is covered with remarkably embroidered Chinese silk. Birds are the motif for the design, which includes a male pheasant on a tree, a smaller female pheasant on a flat surface between trees and a legendary phoenix flying over it all.

It is interesting that Rudenko presumes that the cart was a gift from China when a Chinese princess was married to a lord of Altai. E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko did demonstrate that the silk was brought from somewhere around Chang Sha (長沙) in China in his article, "Pazyryk and Western Meridional Path" in *Countries and Peoples of the East* [LUBO-LESNICHENKO 1987].

Hemp

In most of the frozen tombs of Altai, a bundle of several sticks tied together was found, under which was a rectangular vessel. The vessel was stuffed with stones that showed traces of burning and partially carbonated hemp seeds. In one of the tombs, there were hemp seeds in a flat-bottomed leather box, which was tied to six sticks. The tent with six legs was covered with leather, upon which the design of a lion-shaped griffin attacking a big deer was embroidered. These finds indicate that the habit of taking hemp or hashish was widespread among men and women of the Scythian era.

It is said there were three types of dwellings for the High Altai people in Scythian times: a temporary hut covered by birch bark, a felt yurt or portable tent and a fixed log house. Burial chambers in the frozen tombs had double or single walls of log, possibly copied from real houses. Ceilings were dressed with logs, floors were made of planks and walls were covered with felt or pile carpet. The size of a real house, conjecturing from the carpet in the Pazyryk kurgan, probably was 6.5 by 4.5 meters. The furniture found was a little low table and a wooden pillow, possibly for use as a stool. For lighting, animal or vegetable oil was burned on a stone plate.

Clothes

Men's shirts were made of a white thin cloth woven by kender fibers (Trachomitum and Aposynum). In his above-mentioned article Lubo-Lesnichenko says it is the same material as the cloth from Shu that Chjyan Tsyang saw at Dasya (Bactria) during his journey to the west in 140 to 130 B. C. [LUBO-LESNICHENKO 1987: 244-247]. Trousers were made of worked leather and caftans were made of felt. Footwear were long boots of soft leather without a hard leather sole, and long felt stockings were worn with them. Men wore a felt hat with earflaps as well as a leather belt.

For women there were caftans made of squirrel skin, wonderfully decorated. An apron made of sable fur and an embroidered fur cap were found. Two pair of long leather boots were found; one is decorated on the sole with beads and pyrite crystals, suggesting that they sat cross-legged to show off the soles. Heads of men and women were more or less shaven, giving credibility to Herodotus' claim that they were bald-headed from birth. Some women had braided hair, extended by horsetail hair. Bronze mirrors were used.

Tattooing

Tattooing done on a male body while it was still living clearly survived in barrow 2. It is almost an art object, signifying the male's power as well as being his talisman. Designs were tattooed differently for muscles that move and for those that do not move, such as those of the back or the shin, as well as differently for the upper body or the lower body. A. Surazaskov says designs for the upper body relate to the celestial world while those for the lower body belong to the earth and the underworld.

Motifs of the tattooing are varied, with a majority showing a deer with a tiger's tail or a griffin's beak, an imaginary tiger or goat with wings, or a fish. These animals are running or twisted in half so that when a man moved his arm it would put the animals into motion. Tattooing was done by needle pricks as soot mixed with oil was applied.

Weapons found were short bows and arrows, daggers, Scythian short swords (resembling a Persian sword) and battle axes. Arrowheads for hunting were made of bones while those for battles were of metal.

Mummified Corpses

All the corpses buried in the great kurgans were mummified. There was generally a single corpse in a chamber. If there were two coffins in a chamber, a man and a woman usually were placed in separate coffins, although there were some cases in which a man and a woman were put in the same coffin.

The wooden coffin was a hollowed-out birch trunk, one meter in diameter and four to five meters long. Deer were carved on the outside of the coffin, or it was decorated with leather cut-outs in the shapes of hens or deer.

The technique of mummification is that the abdomen was opened, and the entrails were taken out. Often the cavity was stuffed with all kinds of vegetables before the body was sewn together again. The skull was perforated for removal of the brain. Muscular material was removed and replaced by horse hair.

Interpretation of Motifs

When A. S. Surazakov tried to interpret the motifs in the frozen tombs, he noted that in many motifs a circle denoted the sun and a semicircle the moon. It has been observed that among various tribes in central Eurasia a circle denotes the sun. This motif is also found in the Tagar culture (seventh century B. C.—first

century A. D.) of the neighboring Minusinsk basin. In Pazyryk culture, when showing the celestial sphere, the animal motifs indicated the celestial as well as mythological beings.

The next motif is the cross, also a symbol of the sun. The cross and the half-moon are combined on the saddle cover of kurgan 11 at Pazyryk. A cross is sometimes indicated by a design of a flower with four petals, four buds or four sprouts. In the center of the shabrack from kurgan 5 at Pazyryk, the sun is designated by a cross in a circle. The cross is red and the field on which it is painted is blue, denoting "the sun in the blue sky".

Motifs of a goddess and a horseman decorate the felt carpet of kurgan 5 at Pazyryk. Because the tree with a flower, held by the goddess, is a tree of life, the motif indicates that the goddess is giving life. When the sun and the goddess of an abundant harvest are depicted, it portrays the idea that the goddess produces all things and the sun cultivates them.

The revolving sun is indicated by four griffins heads forming a circle. Another griffin with horns carries the sun with his claws.

Wooden horse headgear from barrow 1 at Tuyakhta shows the same motif of a griffin carrying the sun.

An idea in Indo-Iranian mythology shows four white horses pulling a sun chariot. Another idea has the sun chariot pulled by a bird. Surazakov therefore presumed that the population of Pazyryk was the Saka tribe, which was of Indo-Iranian origin.

A motif the shape of a comma also denotes the sun and the moon, and it shows that things with it are connected to the celestial sphere. It is the motif on the saddle cover from the barrow 2 at Bashadar that shows this most clearly. It was originally a design of an eagle's head that later became stylized. Archaeologist N. Chlenova points out that the motifs in the Minusinsk basin of the Tagar period included the Minusinsk style as well as the High Altai style and that the former tended to change into geometrical patterns while the latter changed into curved-line patterns.

Among the Indo-Iranians, the sun is depicted by a bird motif.

The coffin with lid found in barrow 2 at Bashadar is carved with reliefs of a procession of tigers, and beneath the mouth or legs of tiger, are elks with twisted bodies and rams in sitting position, showing their obedience, and boars inscribed in sitting positions. Surazakov presumes that the man in the coffin was a powerful chief and that the relief denotes his triumph during his lifetime. That is, the elks, boars and rams are all totems of the tribe. The elk tribe confronted the tiger (the chief) twice by itself and once together with the ram tribe. In fights with the tiger, the ram tribe joined the elk tribe once and the boar tribe twice. The boar tribe and the ram tribe faced the tiger together. All of the tribes, however, were defeated by the tiger.

Interchange of Cultures

The High Altai people had cultural exchanges as well as trade with various

countries. They imported bronze mirrors, silk and textiles from China, woolen textiles and carpets from Iran, treasures and beads from Central Asia and Egypt, cowries from the Indian coast and hemp seeds from West Asia. According to Lubo-Lesnichenko, a Qin (秦) type (戰國式) mirror found in the Altai was made in an area like as Chang sha or Zhao zhou (詔州) during the period of warring principedoms.

A pile carpet made in West Asia and found in the Altai kurgan is the oldest in the world and is brilliantly constructed. There are 360,000 knots in one square meter. A skilled craftsman of today would take at least a year and a half to complete this type of carpet. The central portion, 1.83 meters by 2 meters, is covered with geometrical patterns, with the motif of stylized roses, and griffins, horses, deer and human figures are woven into successive borders. The colors used are red, blue, green and yellow; various combinations of these colors enforce the pattern. Although Rudenko said the fabrics—in which there is a design of a woman standing in front of an altar—originated in West Asia, K. Jettmar mentions that:

“Imported goods from the area of Achaemenid culture, on the other hand, can be identified only by the subjects depicted on the textiles. Women are shown standing in prayer before a sacrificial altar, the form of which recurs on the reliefs at Persepolis as well as on cylinder seals” [JETTMAR 1967: 136].

2. A SURVEY OF ULANDRYK KURGANS

The Ulandryk kurgans are located in southeastern High Altai, the fountainhead of the Chuya River, in a plateau about 2,000 meters high. In 1968, 1969, 1972 to 1975 and 1980 to 1981, a survey there was led by V. D. Kubalev, who belongs to the Soviet Academy of Science, Siberia branch, Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy. Forty-two barrows belonging to eight kurgan groups were excavated. Among them, seven barrows were completely frozen and preserved in the same condition as when their occupants were buried.

First, I should like to summarize the funeral institution, according to Kubalev's report.

The Ulandryk kurgan groups, like the Pazyryk groups, are the stone-pile type; stones were brought from neighboring hills and rivers. Stones of most kurgans were exposed, only a few were covered with bushes. The kurgans can be classified as large, medium and small. Only one kurgan (Tashanta I) belongs to the large group, consisting of earth and stones laid 25 meters in diameter and one meter high. Kurgans in the medium group are eight to 15 meters in diameter (average size, 10 meters) and 0.3 to 0.6 meters high. Those in the small group are 1.8 to 6.5 meters in diameter (average, 3.5 meters) and 0.2 to 0.3 meters high. Of the 42 barrows, 29 (71 percent) belong to the medium group and 12 (29 percent) to the small group. In many cases, on the surface of the piled stones, there was evidence

of burning fire, bones of animals apparently offered in sacrifice and fragments of earthenware.

In seven barrows out of 42, there were two to 20 stone pillars (balbaly) standing straight. West of a kurgan, 25 to 30 meters, there were enclosures 2.5 to 4 meters in diameter and constructed with eight pieces of stone. Some kurgans had two or three such enclosures. They were religious facilities obviously closely connected to the kurgans. Kubalev describes it as a characteristic of the Pazyryk culture [KUBALEV 1987: 12]. Inside of the stone enclosure, he says, a ritual of sending the dead took place.

Under the laid earth, a rectangular grave with perpendicular walls, facing the four cardinal directions, was dug. The longer side of the walls ran east to west. The deepest grave is three meters. The measurements of 71 percent of the kurgans are 3.2 meters by 2.6 meters by 2.4 meters. The body was placed straight up in what is assumed to be a primary burial. In barrow 8 of the first kurgan group at Ulandryk, a body without head stood on its feet. Most of the bodies were buried with the head extended upright. Although two barrows out of 42 were covered with logs or planks on the earth level, the rest of them were covered with dirt and stones.

A characteristic of the burials of the Altai people in the Scythian period, as mentioned before, is that horses were buried together with humans. However, occasionally a body was buried without horses. It apparently was related to the social position, age or sex of the person buried. In nine out of 10 barrows of children, there was no horse. There were four barrows that did not contain a horse, although they showed other characteristics of the Pazyryk culture. In seven barrows, horses were buried with a woman. There were 40 horses in 23 barrows; 83 percent of these barrows had one or two horses. Four barrows (17 percent) had three horses each. Because these barrows are located centrally, it is assumed the chiefs were buried in them. The horses were killed by a blow of an ax to the back of the head, and they were buried in the northern half of a barrow. Their legs were tucked under the belly, and the head was placed toward the east. They were 4- to 6-year-old "Mongolian horses". Inside the graves at Ulandryk, 38 barrows had a chamber surrounded by logs; three had a hollowed wooden coffin inside the chamber and one had a sarcophagus. The average size of the log chambers is 220 by 150 centimeters and the depth is 50 to 100 centimeters. Most of them consist of three logs layered. The ceilings were covered by logs with bark still on them. Kubalev assumed that the chambers reflected their actual homes.

In two chambers, there was a wooden pedestal upon which a coffin was placed. The pedestal at Tashyanta I was rectangular (220 by 107 centimeters) and made of three planks, sustained by the four hollowed legs that were 38 to 41 centimeters high. That barrow is assumed to be for someone of extremely high status. In some of the barrows, kuril tea leaves were found under the body. On the northern side, there was food in a wooden vessel at the bottom of the barrow.

The size of each hollowed wooden coffin was 130 by 51 by 41 centimeters, and a

child was buried in each. The coffins were made of larch wood and all three were covered with lids. A gap between each lid and coffin was covered with larch bark, more of which was found in each chamber. Larch trees were brought by horse or bull from the Yustyd River, which is five to 10 kilometers away from the burial ground [KUBALEV 1987: 23].

The size of the sarcophagus is 165 by 95 by 40 centimeters, and it is made of seven slates of schist. The person in it possibly was of a different tribe.

The Constitution of the Buried

Among 60 people buried in the 42 barrows in the Ulandryk, 65 percent were women and children and 35 percent were men. Most of the men were buried alone with horses, short swords, battle axes, bows and arrows in a quiver and light shields made of small staves. Some had deep scars in their skulls. In some cases another person's skull—perhaps that of an enemy—was buried along with the primary person.

K. Jettmar points out that the weapons were amazingly standardized, and correspond fairly closely to those we came across among the Poutic Scythians [JETTMAR 1967: 127]. Headgear of the buried had applique of animals and birds, and gold-covered pendants. Whether male, female or child, they had a wooden headband, a necklace, a bronze mirror and its wooden model, a comb in a small bag and many kinds of amulets. They wore an earring made of thin silver, bronze or gold in one ear.

In a woman's barrow, there was only one horse buried but other things were the same as in a man's barrow. A characteristic of women's barrows was that black mineral stuff was found under the skulls. It is assumed that it was used for dyeing hair [KUBALEV 1987: 26].

In nine kurgans (21 percent), two people were buried. In four of those, either two men or two women were buried. In five kurgans a man and a woman were buried, both laid on the right side, with legs bent and heads pointed to the east. Other things were the same as in the barrows with single occupants. Although there is no evidence that a woman was forced to die (if it were so, there is no way to prove it), there also is no way of denying that a man and a woman were buried at the same time. The fact that horses were killed to be buried with humans offers evidence that women could have been killed in the same way. Further, the burial chambers are so small that it is difficult to believe that two persons were buried in them at different times. There also is the consideration that the barrows were frozen in the first winter after construction. Kubalev presumes these were the tombs of clan chiefs and their wives. If that is a fact, it can mean only that the wife or concubine was killed.

In other barrows, three or more bodies were buried: two men and a woman, two women and a man, and two women and two babies.

The remains of 17 children were found. Seven of them were buried singly in separate barrows, two were together in two barrows and the others were buried

together in one barrow. On the whole, the scale of things in the children's barrows was rather small. It is characteristic that most of the materials in them were miniature wooden models. In one of these barrows, a saddled horse was found.

There were two symbolic barrows, which were the same as other barrows but without human skeletons. In Ulandryk, there were two such barrows and one of them was symbolic of a child.

Accompanying Grave Goods

Because of being frozen, wood, leather or textiles that would normally disintegrate survived. Kubalev put such goods into five categories: harness, vessels, equipment for working, weapons, and clothes and ornaments.

First the harness: About two-thirds of the 40 horses buried in 23 kurgans were in harness. There were 28 bronze or iron snuffles of the type that spread throughout inland Asia during the first millennium B. C. The oldest one was discovered in the Arjan kurgan (eighth to seventh centuries B. C.). At the beginning of the fifth century B. C., an iron snuffle that was an imitation of a bronze one appeared. They existed together throughout the Pazyryk culture; the iron ones completely replaced the bronze ones during the third to first centuries B. C. Bits were all made of wood. At both ends of most of the S shapes, figures of heads of griffin or rapacious birds were carved in the Pazyryk way. Kubalev says this type appeared in Altai during the sixth to fifth centuries B. C. This is the same type as the one found in barrow 3 at Pazyryk. Although a number of wooden decorations of harness were found, they will not be discussed here.

An earthenware vessel was found near each body at Ulandryk. It was made by piling up tapes, pasting clay over them, drying it and polishing it. The surface is red, because the temperature of firing was low, but parts of fragments look blackish. Similar ones were found in Khakas, Tuva and Mongolia. Because the ones at Ulandryk are especially close in style to the earthenware of Mongolia, it is not clear that they went from west to east or vice versa.

Equipment for Working and/or Fighting

Work equipment was made of bronze, iron, wood and bone. Forty-four knives were found; 10 were bronze cast and the rest were iron cast. The shorter ones were 10 to 12 centimeters and the longer ones were 17 to 18 centimeters.

Armory included short swords and their models, wooden sheaths, battle axes, bow and arrow cases, arrows, shields and leather belts. Short swords were found only in men's barrows; 10 of them were bronze, five were iron, and two were wooden models. Kubalev divides them into six types, saying some bronze swords were just models for burying rituals. He says there are so many different types because the Ulandryk kurgans were constructed over such a long period—between the sixth and the first centuries B. C.

Thirteen out of 17 wooden sheaths for swords were well preserved. They are of two types, and all are painted red. One is simply two boards put together and

either carried in a leather bag or wrapped in leather. On both sides of the upper end and the middle of the other sheath there are wings with holes for leather straps that tie a sword to the right thigh. The latter style seems to have derived from the former, and it is assumed that the two coexisted for quite a long time. The second type was occasionally found in other kurgans in the Altai and Tuva, and it does seem to be rather widely spread over Eurasia. Some researchers have noted the similarity between it and sheaths found in tombs in Oglakhty and Kokel of southern Siberia, in tombs at Sarmatia on the lower Volga and the carved sheath from the sarcophagi of Antiochos I in Nimrud-dagh. Much later, in the fourth century A. D., a sheath of the same type was incised on a silver plate in Sasanian dynasty of Persia.

“However, it is most interesting that the wooden sheath found in the Tillya-Tepe tombs of the northern part of Afghanistan is surprisingly analogous,” Kubalev said in his report. That sheath was gold-foiled. Kubalev assumes that the typical Saka-type sheath, with wings only on the top, became shorter and wider with wings in the middle of the sheath during the sixth to fifth centuries B. C. The prototype was the Saka’s of that time. This type spread throughout Sarmatia and Scythia as well as among Iranian-speaking people. According to Kubalev, the sheath with two pairs of wings (Kubalev called it the Iran-Altai type) was made not only in Altai, but also in Mongolia, Tuva and the southeast area of Kazakhstan, and from these areas it had spread to the east and west by the end of the first millennium B. C.

Twelve battle axes were found in the 10 kurgans at Ulandryk. Horses buried there were killed with them and a man in the seventh kurgan (Ulandryk II) had his skull cracked by one. Skulls cracked by battle axes were discovered in many parts of Altai, Mongolia and Tuva.

Bows, consisting of a few laths glued together, were 105 to 110 centimeters long. When strung, they became 80 to 90 centimeters long. The arrows were 75 to 80 centimeters long, and their shafts were painted red. Arrowheads were made of bone, wood or bronze and most had three or four wings. The shafts are inserted into the heads. Altogether 26 arrowheads were found. Kubalev points out that this was the period when the material for arrowheads changed from bone to iron. Thirteen quivers were discovered. They were leather sacks 70 to 80 centimeters long and 10 to 15 centimeters wide and narrower at the bottom. Shields were 82 centimeters long and 36 centimeters wide, composed of 40 to 45 sticks 0.5 to 0.6 centimeters in diameter with pieces of leather threaded through them. There was only one example of a body lying on a shield.

Rectangular-shaped belt ornaments of wood were found. Two were in each of five barrows and there was one in each of seven barrows. Kubalev noted that the belt ornaments from Ulandryk were imitations of ones with open work found in Ordos and Zabaikal region. He said they all were influenced by the Hunn culture via the Mongolian steppe [KUBALEV 1987: 78]. Ancient Altai weapons, made for lightly equipped horsemen of Darkhan and Salkhit in Mongolia, were developed in

close connection with armies of neighboring tribes; they were especially influenced by the Scythia—Saka. After having examined the weapons, Kubalev wrote that “they had connections with proto-Hunn people in Mongolia as well as various tribes in Tuva and Minusinsk basin” [KUBALEV 1987: 83–84]. Belt ornaments similar to those of Ulandryk and plates of leather belts were found near the barrows. Having compared the material newly found to the ones we knew before, it became clear that there was no basic difference between weapons found in the great kurgans of high-ranking nomads and those found in kurgans of ordinary nomads. This means the inhabitants of Altai belonged to the same ethnic group, and the two groups had the same type of weapons in the late-Scythian period.

Clothes and Daily Goods

In many kurgans of Ulandryk, fragments of woolen textiles and linen, leather sewn with tendon thread and other remains of clothing material were found. It is assumed that the textiles, often dyed in red, were used for undergarments and that the leather, with fur inside or outside, was used for outer garments. Pieces of clothes made of sable fur indicate a connection with the Pazyryk kurgans. From ancient times sable garments were precious among nomads, and we can assume that they were an indication of wealth. It is well known that sable clothes were found in Katanda barrows.

From the second barrow, Kenotaf (Ulandryk I burial ground), a short leather coat for children (50 centimeters in length), a pair of soft long boots and a wrap-around type of cloth hat were discovered. The short coat opened in the front and it was stitched so carefully with tendon thread that a seam almost did not show. Because the coat was ill-preserved, cutting was indiscernible. Lengthwise seams were seen and stitches were 0.8 centimeters apart. A garment found in Pazyryk was also sewn in the same way.

The garment from the Ulandryk kurgans was decorated with an applique of a cock motif made of thin leather, just like those in the second barrow at Pazyryk. The cock had his head turned back and it was put on a 4 by 4 centimeter piece. Trousers were not found. In the great kurgans at Pazyryk, a rubakha (shirt), a caftan, a half-coat, footwear and headgear were found, but there were no trousers. Kubalev presumes that trousers were not put on the dead to keep them from coming back to harm people in this world.

The leather boots for children (37 centimeters long) found at Ulandryk were the same type as those found in the second barrow at Bashadar. The headgear for men was made in the same way as the cap found in the second barrow of Pazyryk. An applique cut from the birch bark was found, and its motif was that of a lion head biting the head of fish, the oldest motif in the Pazyryk culture. Some gold remained partially on the applique. Many gold-foiled decorated wooden plates were found stitched on clothes and headgear.

3. RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE PAZYRYK CULTURE

The inhabitants of the Pazyryk culture believed that spirits do not die with a body. We assume that their beliefs were connected inseparably with their ancestor worship.

It is evident that the ancestor worshiped was a chief of clan or big family because his kurgan was bigger than others and located at the beginning or center of a row of kurgans. Although accompanying grave goods were abundant and diverse in variety, they showed the same characteristics as those from the smaller kurgans. The row of kurgans was always situated along a river like actual nomadic hamlets. Even in present-day Mongolia and Kazakh, the order of a row of Ultras is strictly adhered to within a tribe.

For nomads, building their ancestors' tombs meant maintaining the pastureland in which they are located for their descendants. From the time of the Afanashevo culture to the Turkic period, High Altai tombs have always been located in vast and rich pastureland near a river. The practice is related to obtaining pasture in winter, which was a matter of life and death for nomads. The rows of balbaly (stone pillars) built on the east side of kurgans were also related to obtaining pasturelands. *Tamga*, an indication of a clan's possession, was inscribed on one of the balbalys. The inscription is quite similar to those found in Khoresm somewhat later. Balbalys were built until the Turkic period or even later. It is interesting that one of the elements of cultural inheritance is the tradition of building a stone pillar in which a spirit of the deceased dwells. Kubalev assumes there is a relationship between the stone pillars and posts to which horses are tied. Therefore I assume the stone pillars may have been provided for tying the horses of the deceased.

Kuril tea bushes were found in most of the Ulandryk kurgans. They were used as a ceiling covering in the burial chambers of the great kurgans excavated by Rudenko in Pazyryk. They are short, gregarious plants that bear yellow flowers plentifully in spring. In ancient times, they were believed to have a magical power against evil. Among the Siberian shamans, the juniper tree also was considered sacred.

The kuril tea bushes found in kurgans had been cut in spring, so Kubalev assumed there was a possibility that burials were done in the spring. Chinese documents say, however, that in later Turkic times people who died in spring and summer were buried in autumn, and those who died in autumn and winter were buried in spring. It is possible that such a custom already existed in Pazyryk. It is also noteworthy that the ancient people of Ulandryk practiced the symbolic burial called Kenotaf, which means burying clothes and vessels for foods without a body. In the second kurgan at Ulandrykl, the Kenotaf burial seemed to be an attempt to cure a child's illness because the clothes found there were those of a child.

Hair was also important in burial. Black hair dyes were found along with combs, which seemed to have had a magical power for both men and women. For

women, a wooden case containing a rope of plaited hair was always buried. A bag containing black and red paint, extracted teeth, hair and nails was found around the waist of a body. At the end of a body, there were necklaces with a wooden head of snow leopard and a wolf, and bronze mirrors. Most of them were models for burial ceremony. Ornaments were decorated in an animal style, which indicates that animal styles were used for commoners as well as rulers.

For men, real horses as well as models of weapons were buried. Model weapons were bows and arrows, short swords and battle axes. Some of the ax heads were broken or blades and handles were disconnected, and blades of short swords could not be unsheathed—all evidence that the weapons were made especially for the burial ceremony. Here was found the first Central Asian example of a soldier lying on a wooden shield in a kurgan from the Scythian period. In an adjoining kurgan, other skulls were found, which might indicate the soldier's distinguished service during a war.

In Pazyryk culture, where several horses were sometimes buried in a single tomb, only one horse was in harness. It is assumed that the others were "relief horses" for the long journey of the deceased.

The kurgan groups at Ulandryk belong to the Pazyryk and Shibe periods of the Pazyryk culture in the fifth to the first centuries B. C. Kubalev divided the culture into three periods: the Pazyryk (fifth—fourth century B. C.); the change from the Pazyryk to the Shibe (third—second century B. C.); the Shibe (second—first century B. C.).

CONCLUSION

With the excavation of the Pazyryk frozen tombs in Ulagan region of High Altai, begun by Sergei I. Rudenko and M. P. Gryaznov in 1929, the extracted goods became known to the world and soon after they were introduced to the Japanese by the late professor Umehara Suezi. In 1947, after World War II, Rudenko with his wife restarted an excavation of the Pazyryk kurgan group, and he also surveyed the Scythian kurgan groups in Altai in 1949 and 1954. The results were reported in many articles and two books.

Although all the kurgan groups excavated by Rudenko were large scale and those of chieftains, unfortunately all the tombs had been rifled soon after burial. The Ulandryk kurgan group excavated by young archaeologists like V. D. Kubalev of U.S.S.R. were not of such large scale, but each of them was frozen and not rifled at all. Yet in three elements—harness, weapons and animal style—the so-called Scythian kurgans showed the same characteristics as the great kurgans in Pazyryk. As a result of long-term studies on these two groups, along with related remains, various things about the tribes and cultures of inland Asia in Scythian times became fairly clear. An outline of the findings follows:

- 1) Although the relationships between the Pazyryk and the preceding cultures are still open to question, A. S. Surazakov of Cornoaltaisk cited these three

connections: a) with Afanashevo culture, b) with the culture that left the stone circles (Kereksur) and c) with Mongun-taiga culture (Tuva). That is to say, there is a close relationship between the East and Pazyryk culture. We should remark that in the High Altai, remains of the Andronovo culture—characteristic in Kazakhstan as well as in west Siberia—were lacking or limited.

2) Kubalev made clear the use of goods Rudenko had excavated but could not identify. One such item found by Rudenko in the second kurgan at Pazyryk was a wooden deer employed as a hairpin for women; the other was a wooden griffin with a deer's head in its mouth, which was part of a man's hat.

3) Inhabitants of Pazyryk culture belonged to the so-called Saka, and they were basically a Europeoid part of the Indo-Iranian groups that had lived over a wide area from west to central and inland Asia since the first half of the first millennium B. C. They established the Pazyryk culture by synthesizing the transmitted culture, the native culture and the eastern culture. The process reminds us of the establishment of the Gandhara culture in later times in West Asia. The main elements of the Pazyryk culture were Iranian in origin; for example, the similarity of the wooden sheath from the third kurgan at Ulandryk and the golden sheath from Tillya-Tepe indicates the same origin. Also the similarity of the *Tamga* in Khoresm and in Altai indicates an exchange between cultures, although they were so far apart in time as well as in distance. A wooden ring-shaped headgear (diadem) found in the Ulandryk kurgan suggests relationships with West Asia.

4) Because the Pazyryk culture was frozen intact until the present time, I consider it to be a "tinned" culture, which had its origin in Saka and which spread to Central Asia.

5) It has been known that cultural exchange existed between Pazyryk and China or Central Asia. Recent studies have made it clear, however, that Pazyryk culture was not only in Altai but also in west Siberia. For example, it is reported that fragments of Chinese mirrors of the former Han and coins were found (in 1978 by N. V. Polosymak) at the Makarovo tomb group in the Baraba steppe of west Siberia and that an Egyptian god was found in kurgans of the Tyumeni region. About the trade routes with China, the article by E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko [Lubo-Lesnichenko 1987], is extremely suggestive.

6) Pazyryk culture disappeared from Altai in the first century B. C. Where have they gone? They may have joined the nomad group of Saka origin who participated in the collapse of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom. A part of their culture, however, was passed on to the culture of Turks (Tu jue) in the early medieval period.

7) There is a view that the inhabitants of the Pazyryk culture and the Yüeh-Chih, found in Chinese documents, are identical. Rudenko and K. Enoki hold this view. Although it is clear that the people of Pazyryk culture and the Arjan kurgan belong to the Saka, I doubt that the Pazyryk people were the Yüeh-Chih because the latter mainly inhabited in the Gansu region.

8) At the time, as Herodotus wrote, trade was carried on with the western Scythians by "seven translators." Therefore, I tend to believe they also traded with the Iranian world in the southwest, and with Central Asia, as well as with China and Mongolia.

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