

IN SEARCH OF THE BUDDHIST CITY OF SINGHAPURA THE CAPITAL OF THE SALT RANGE IN THE 7TH CENTURY AN OLD PROBLEM REINVESTIGATED

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ABSTRACT

During his journey in ancient Gandhara and Punjab (Pakistan) during 629-645 ACE, the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited the city of Singhapura which was the capital of a kingdom of the same name - and then a dependency of Kashmir. Reportedly, this city was larger than the more famous city of Taxila. In the vicinity of this city, the Chinese pilgrim visited and describes two great stone stupas, each 200 feet high, and carved balustrades. By their sides he also describes ten sacred pools full of fish and dragoons and protected with carved balustrades, a memorial pillar, an inscription, deva-temples, deserted monasteries and white-clad and sky-clad monks. During last 170 years or so, scholars have been trying to locate the exact site of the Salt Range but without much success. During 'our' recent extensive survey of the Salt Range, the author has reinvestigated this problem from a different angle and has found some solution. This issue will be discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Gandhara, Hiuen Tsang Zang, Monasteries, Singhapura, Salt Range Buddhist.

Hiuen Tsang¹ (Xuanzang), the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim of Early Tang dynasty is believed to have visited ancient Gandhara, Kashmir and Punjab in Pakistan and several other countries on east and west of these territories during 629-645 ACE². The purpose of this long arduous journey was to visit all the well-known Buddhist centers in these regions and collect manuscripts and documents pertaining to Buddhism and take them back to his home. He is said to have returned to his in China with a good number of elephants loaded with Buddhist manuscripts collected during his sojourn of 16 years. The account of his journey is available in English translations by Samuel Beal³ and Thomas Watters⁴. Towards the end of the last century Madame Tschuchiya of Japan tried to

identify the route by which Hiuen Tsang entered Pakistan from China through Pamir and then an arduous journey through Karakorum Highway⁵. A twenty cm high jade in bas-relief depicting a Buddhist pilgrim from China riding a donkey, reportedly discovered from Rokri on the Indus River near Mianwali (Punjab) (Pl.I) provides a vivid picture as to how these pilgrims looked like, what was their mode of travelling and what route they took while passing through the Salt Range in the Punjab.⁶ For a synoptic view of his itinerary and its chronology in Afghanistan, Gandhara, Kashmir, Punjab and the rest of India and his way back home via the Punjab and Gandhara one can read Cunningham⁷. According to this schedule Hiuen Tsang arrived at Singhapura⁸ from Taxila on May 25 and returned to Taxila on June 15, 631 ACE. Thus, he spent in all 22 days for travelling from Taxila to Singhapura and back to Taxila including his stay in the city of Singhapura for visiting some sacred places.

It is through Hiuen Tsang's account that we get a first historical account of the presence of Buddhism in the mountainous region of the Salt Range⁹ in the Western Punjab (Pakistan). So far archaeologists have taken his account of this region on the very face of it. Stalwarts like Alexander Cunningham¹⁰ and Aurel Stein¹¹ have tried to walk in his footprints through the Salt Range but always with uncertain identities of sites he had visited in this area. The greatest difficulty has been felt in identifying the site of Singhapura, the capital city of the kingdom of the same name. This kingdom then extended south of Taxila and beyond the left bank of the Indus¹² (*Sintu*) till it meets the River Jhelum. In the east, from the city of Jhelum, the right of this river made the eastern boundary¹³. How much this kingdom corresponded to the kingdoms of Porus of Alexander's period and of Sophytes of the Salt Range of the Indo-Greek period, we are not sure. However, there is no doubt that Singhapura is of Buddhist origin, that the name **Singhapura** means "The City of the Lion" - a name unequivocally refers to the Lord Buddha as the Lion of the Kapilavastu - his birth place and that city of this name definitely existed in the Salt Range during the 7th century.

The identity of the city of Singhapura still alludes all those who are interested in the archaeology of the Salt Range. But before going more deep into this problem let us first see what Hiuen Tsang says about this great city which was larger than the city of Taxila¹⁴ and how did he reach it:

According to our pilgrim, he left the city of Taxila and travelled south-eastward over a terrain of mountains and valleys. and reached Singhapura after traversing a distance 700 Li or about 140 English miles or 224 kilometers¹⁵. The city was spread over some 14 Li i.e. about 3 miles or 4.8 kilometers in circuit. It bordered on mountains. He further write:

"The crags and precipices which surrounds it causes it to be naturally strong. The ground is not highly cultivated, but the

*product is abundant. The climate is cold. The people are fierce and value the quality of courage....."*¹⁶.

The kingdom, whose capital he talks about, was also named as Singhapura. It was a vast kingdom¹⁷ covering an area of about 3500 Li in circuit (1200 miles or 1920 kilometers). Its border touched the banks of Sintu or the Indus River (from Kalabagh near Mianwali to Trimmu on River Jhelum near Jhang) on one side and the country – a, as some believe, Sangla Hill).

Singhapura, with its circuit of 14-15 Li, was not an ordinary city. as already stated above (footnote 12), it was larger than the city of Taxila (then at the site of present day Sirsukh) that was only 10 Li (2 miles) in circuit¹⁸ and of the same size as that of Pushkalavati (14-15 Li)¹⁹ and Chinapati²⁰ (14-15 Li), and smaller than the city of Mathura (20 Li)²¹. As against all these, Taxila city measured only 2 miles. Peshawar was the largest of the all the cities in this area. It was spread over an area of 40 Li or 8 miles in circuit²². And yet, he does not give any detail of this city - a building, a palace, a temple, a stupa, a monastery, or any of its salient feature except that it was bordered on mountains and that it had a cold climate.

As we see, mention of Singhapura by Hiuen Tsang is too generic to admit its precise location in time and space. The only helping sign to fix its location is that at the time of his visit the kingdom of Singhapura - and its capital of the same name, were dependency of Kashmir and, secondly, that

*"Not far to the south of the capital (and probably), not yet within the city proper) is s stupa built by Asoka-Raja"*²³

with a sanghrama on its side. In the same vicinity, he also mentions another stupa some 40 to 50 LI (8 to 10 miles) to the south-east of the capital. This second stupa is also attributed to have been built by Asoka-rajā. Built in stone, it was estimated to be some 200 feet high²⁴. By the side of this second stupa, there were seen ten tanks - all secretly connected with one another and on both sides of these tanks were walkways protected with balustrades in different shapes. Attached with this stupa was a Sanghrama but without a priest. As both these stupas are claimed to have been built by Asoka in the third century BCE, by implication we are assured that these were basically Buddhist establishments. By the side of the second stupa, there is also reported by our pilgrim a sacred spot and an inscription sanctified to the original teacher of the White-robed people²⁵ i.e. Svetambra Sect of the Jains.

To make this confusion more confounded, our pilgrim further emphasizes that by the side of this sacred spot there was a temple of the Devas which cannot be taken to be anything else except a 'Hindu Temple'. Here was also seen by him some sky-clad or naked followers with a little twist of hair on their heads. These were certainly not the

scantly clad Hindu *Sadhus* of our days because our pilgrim soon tries to make us believe that both the naked (sky-clad) and the white-clad worshippers identified themselves with Buddhism²⁶. If so, the sky-clad and/or the naked followers must be identified with the second sect of Jainas called Digambras. In any case, only one stupa - at the second place, Hiuen Tsang confirms the presence of the Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu creeds, whereas at the first place he identifies a second stupa with ten tanks - the former lying some 10 miles (16 Kilometers) to the south-east and the latter at some unspecified distance south of the city of Singhapura.

With this scanty and almost generic information, archaeologists during the last 171 years (1848-2019) have been struggling hard to discover the site of Singhapura, without much success.

The difficulty in discovering the site of Singhapura has arisen out of several factors. In The first place, the Salt Range even today lacks serious and thorough explorations²⁷. In the second place, Hiuen Tsang's information is highly generic and at places self-defeating. Thirdly, despite some serious interest in the Salt Rang archaeology, as observed during the last one quarter of a century, no serious effort has so far been made to discover the city of Singhapura. And lastly, all previous attempts tried to catch the tail of the snake and not to find its head. All efforts so far have concentrated first to find the site of the Stupa of Asoka -raja at the site of ten tanks and then trace the steps back to find the site of the capital city to which the Stupa once belonged - with no sure success. Harder we attempt, more seriously it brings back to our focus certain lacunae in the account of Hiuen Tsang, as regards to his itinerary from Taxila and Singhapura from Taxila and back.

This does not mean that we should outrightly reject the account of the pious Chinese pilgrim visiting our country some 1374 years back. Instead, I strongly believe in the historicity of his account and the existence of this city within the parameters of the Salt Range. This is why, I have still not lost my hope in discovering it.

Cunningham leaves us in no doubt in understanding the text of our pilgrim in locating the city on top of a high hill 15 Li or 2.5 miles in circuit²⁸ somewhere on top of some high hill which was "on a hill which was both difficult and dangerous of access"²⁹. The place was also very cold up there³⁰. Cunningham is right that Hiuen Tsang did not appear to have taken a direct (shortest) route between Taxila and Singhapura. Such a route should have taken our pilgrim first to Giri, then to Shah Allah Ditta, then to Manikyala, Chakwal, to Kallar Kahar and finally to Singhapura somewhere in the vicinity of Choa Saidan Shah within the southern range of the Salt Rang. This route is hardly more than 85 miles as estimated by Cunningham in 1871³¹ and maximum 101 English miles/161 kilometers. But, instead, he seems to have taken a more circuitous route that, possibly, took him from Taxila first to Fateh Jang, then to Nila Dulah, Kallar Kahar and lastly to Singhapura in the vicinity of Katas and Murti. Even this longer route must have been less

than 700 Li or 140 miles as recorded by Hiuen Tsang. The shortest route via Giri -Shah Allah Ditta an Manikyala, is out of question because we know that our pilgrim visited the great stupa at Manikyala only on his way back to Taxila after concluding his visit to Singhapura.

All modern writers agree that a distance of 700 Li i.e. 140 miles/224 kilometers from Taxila to Singhapura would have landed our pilgrim in the plains of Punjab somewhere between the mountain chain of the Salt Range and the right bank of River Jhelum³². This certainly does not befit the account of Hiuen Tsang. But, if we accept the later estimate of Cunningham of the year 1871, it obliges us to limit our search within the southern-most range of the Salt Range and considerably inside the right bank of the Jhelum River. This is the reason that most of the scholars try to locate Singhapura within the triangle of Dulmial - Murti - Katas - all situated along the road between Kallar Kahar and Choa Daidan Shah within the present day District of Chakwal. (See maps Figs. 1 and 2). Now what to do with Hiuen Tsang's exaggerated claim that the distance between Taxila and Singhapura was 140 miles? This unrealistic figure of distance together with the fact that his account of the city of Singhapura is perfunctory and his stay was too short, has led some scholars to doubt if Hiuen Tsang ever visited Singhapura in person? Instead, they opine that he collected his information about this city during his long stay at Taxila from someone hailing from that area and hence he had no personal knowledge about the real distance between the two stations - namely Taxila and Singhapura. But, on the other hand, most of the other scholars believe that through an oversight our pilgrim gave the total distance for a return journey (from Taxila to Singhapura and then back to Taxila - whatever route he took) instead of giving actual distance for a single journey. from Taxila to Singhapura.

Now whether Hiuen Tsang's account of Singhapura and its two stupas, etc., is based on a hearsay or eyewitness, we are sure that, at the time of his visit in the year 631, there was somewhere in the wilderness of the Salt Range a city reputed for its connection with Buddhism through the efforts of Emperor Asoka since third century BCE. Thus, with all these reservations, therefore, we are obliged to look for the site within the northern edge of the southern-most ridge of the Salt Range that extends from Tilla Jogian near Rohtas Fort in the south-west and then near KhusFhab turns north-westwards and crosses the Indus River near Kala Bagh. Modern Motor (M-1) cuts this region somewhere between the intersections of Bhera and Kallar Kahar. Here, our search therefore, restricts us to the east of Kallar Kahar for the location of Singhapura.

Hiuen Tsang's description makes our job a little easier by providing us five landmarks, namely:

- Singhapura was situated south-east of Taxila at a distance of some 101 miles (Fig. 1).

- The capital city was located, within a mountainous region - (probably on top of a hill), was spread over a circuit of 14-15 Li that makes it look larger than the more famous city of Taxila.
- There were two stupas - both built by Asoka-rajā and both situated at some distance south and south-east of the capital city.
- In one case the Stupa was associated with a number of water tanks within an area which was well-known for its limpid water and fruit and flowers gardens.
- It was associated with some *deva*(Hindu) Temples as well as a sacred spot venerated by White-clad and Sky-clad or naked heretics (of Jaina religion).

This helps us in focusing our search on three points, namely:

- A mountainous region or a hilly country with remains of a settlement.
- A spot near the city with permanent source of water (Pools), fountains or a stream with clean water.
- Nearby the city there remains of another stupa (Buddhist or/and Jaina), some Hindu temples, and some sanctified spot marked with an inscription or a memorial column.

SOME CANDIDATES FOR THE SITE OF SINGHAPURA

When all these features are seen together within the close proximity of one another, there are a few locales in the Salt Range that can correspond to the given pointers and hence answer to our queries. These few sites are:

- Pir Jahanian³³ and Kuttanwala Mound³⁴ near Thana Bhaun,
- Aima Maira³⁵
- Burarian on the west bank of River Jhelum near Bhera Intersection and
- Girjakh near Jalalpur Sharif on western bank of River Jhelum.

But none of these sites, except perhaps Pind Jahanian, at present is associated with a site of a stupa, a temple or any other sanctified spot. Similarly, none of these, even Pind Jahanian ever had a sacred pool, or sacred tanks associated with them.

There are only four sites in this region that are known having a stupa, alone or in association with a Hindu Temple and ascetics' caves, namely:

- Murti³⁶- having a Stupa , a Hindu Temple and a series of water tanks(Pls.X - XIII),
- Katas Raj³⁷- having a stupa, several temples, a sacred pool and a few caves for practicing *sadhus*(Figs.2-3 , Pls.III-X),
- Kallu Kot³⁸- a huge settlement site with a stupa and a perennial *nullah*(Pl. XIII-XIV) and
- Nandana³⁹ - with a stupa and a Hindu Temple within a fort on top of a mountain (Pl. XV).

Among these, only at Katas Raj and Murti, we find Hindu temples built in close proximity of an earlier stupa and a sacred pool of water. Nandana, near the village of Baghanwala and Khewra Salt Mines with a Hindu temple and a stupa base (Pl. XXV), off course, is outside the limits for our search for Singhapura. Similarly, Malot⁴⁰ is renowned as the ancient capital of the Janjua tribe - old residents of the Salt Range - and has a temple within a fortified town. Once it was a strong candidate for the site of Singhapura, but it is no more considered so simply for the reason that we do not see any stupa or a Hindu temple by the side of a sacred pool further south or south-east of it as vouchsafed by Hiuen Tsang. No doubt Malot is the most important of all the Hindu temples in the Salt Range, but this solitary temple within the city walls is of a later date than the time of Hiuen Tsang. Besides, it has no sacred pool associated with the temple complex. The Kali Devi Temple at Sib-Ganga, midway between Malot and Katas, (Pl. XXIII), no doubt falls within our stipulated period (Later Guptas) and has a salubrious setting of orchard and healthy surrounding of high mountains. But there are no remains of some old city in its immediate vicinity. However, in its immediate vicinity, but above in the mountains, but above in the mountains halfway further close to Malot Temple Fort, is a small village called Warala where in 1954 in its fields, were discovered a few Buddhist sculptures of true Gandhara origin. The largest of these pieces is in the form of large stele (1.5 x 2.25 feet) depicting 18 or 19 figures. The scene on this stele was compared by Mr. Talbot with the scene on another stele from Muhammad Nari as published by James Burgess⁴¹ (Pl. XXI). The scene in all probability represented the Miracle of Sravasti (like the one from Muhammad Nari) now on display in Gandhara Gallery of Lahore Museum. This rare stele carved in Gandhara fashion initially remained on display in a specially built octagonal temple (still preserved at Sib-Ganga near the gate of the natural cave) for almost 50 years. In 1901 it was damaged by some miscreants and the damaged pieces were shifted to Lahore Museum where it was repaired and displayed - probably transferred along with other collections to India in 1948.

When all other sites have been considered and, for one reason or another, rejected, here below we will now concentrate on three sites, which, I hope, will prove conducive to the identification of the site of ancient Singhapura.

- Katas
- Murti (along with Choa Saidan Shah) and
- Sheranwali Khanqah (along with Dulmial).

1. KATASRAJ (FIGS. 1, 3, & PLS. II - IX)

Katas, is located on the north of the Salt Range some 16 miles/25 kilometers from Pind Dadan Khan, 24 kilometers from Kallar Kahar, six or seven kilometers from Murti, some 4 kilometers from Choa Saidan Shah, same distance from Dulmial and some six to seven kilometers exactly in the south of the twin round mounds formerly called

Sheranwali Khanqah but now renamed as Sheranwala Nakka close to the newly built shrine of Sheranwali Sarkar at Nakka Jaba. Murti, on the other hand is at some longer distance but in south-east of Sheranawali Khanqah (Fig. 1, Pl. XV).

Katas complex comprises a sacred pool formed by a fresh spring water, a large stupa, seven ancient Hindu temples called Satghara, some relatively new temples and *hevelis*, *baradaries* and residential, remains of a fortress or former monasteries - all built on top of different knolls surrounding the Pool - all buildings ranging from 3rd/2nd cent. BCE to the 19th century ACE. (Pls. III - VI). The water from the Sacred Pool - further augmented by rain water from the surrounding ultimately flows into a perennial stream locally called Bhatia Nallah and moves towards Murti after passing through the town of Choa Saidan Shah. As the water from Katas Pond passes by the Shrine of the local saint (Saidan Shah) it receives more from the spring (*choa*) attached (of course a later period) Shrine of a Muslim saint - and hence its name Choa Saidan Shah and thus gets further sanctified. This twice sanctified and once clear and limped water used to enter, as it still does, though now in a filthy form of sewerage nullah, into the beautifully Gandala valley, (now called Rakh Gandala) where there is the site of Murti (see below).

Kataksha, today's Katas or Katas Raj is still held sacred by the Hindus of the Subcontinent on account of its Sacred Pool formed with Shiva's tear drops fallen from heaven at the time of death of his wife Sati⁴². Well! The memory of this Sacred Pool, may go back as far back as the time of the wandering heroes of Hindu Mythology, but the earliest Hindu buildings that survive today on the site hardly go back prior to 4th-5th century ACE. The earliest site that can still be seen on this site is the extensive base of square stupa which was visited by Hiuen Tsang in 631 but it was claimed to have been built long before his visit by the Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century BCE (Figs.3.a-b & Pls.V-VIII) and hence a building of Buddhist origin. In its present shape and state of preservation, it is definitely of a later date and of more than one period⁴³. and at different times used by the followers of different religions.(Jainas and Hindus) - and this confused many scholars in the past⁴⁴ - but its earlier Buddhist connection cannot be ignored in any case. Even at the time of visit of Hiuen Tsang in the 7th century, it had already been taken over by the followers of two different sects of Jainism who were living there along with followers of Hindu religion. The earlier Buddhist monastery or monasteries already stood deserted when these were visited in 631. our Chinese pilgrim but their remains were still visible when A. Cunningham visited them in the middle of the 19th century on the hill on a part of which today stands the building of the Youth Hostel⁴⁵. When we study the remains of different structures at Katas together with its location vis-a-vis Murti there hardly remains any doubt that these two sites correspond to the two sites each with a stupa built by Asoka that were situated south and south-east of the capital city of this are then named as Singhapura or Sinhapura - i.e The City of the Lion - the name still prevalent in this are under various denominations as Sheranwali Khanqah, Sheranwala Nakka and Shreanwali Sarka.

MURTI (PLS. X - XIII).

As passingly described under *Katas* above, Ghatia Nullah passes through the town of Choa Saidan Shah and collects more fresh water from a spring (*choa*) attached with the shrine of Muslim saint of the timeand thus on account of its association with this saint both the spring, its water and the shrine associated with it get sanctified. But even before the advent of Islam, this sacred water used to run, as it indeed runs even today, though as a sewerage drain, entered into the beautiful Gandhara Valley - renamed as Rakh Gandhara, there stood on its left bank in 631 ACE a Stupa, a Hindu Temple and possibly some remains of a monastery for the mendicants, ascetics. This site is called Murti on account of numerous sculptures discovered from here in the 18th and 19th century. As Aurel Stein's two visits of this site in 1889 and 1930 have proven beyond doubt, there stood here in 631 ACE and in later periods, a Buddhist/Jaina Stupa, a Hindu Temple. From here onward, the thrice sanctified water of Ghatia Nullah enters in the plains of the Punjab and ultimately joins the water of the Jhelum river in the east. Though this once sacred clear and limpid water has turned into a sewerage drain for the town of Choa Saidan Shah, in 1930, Sir Aurel Stein saw this nullah taking the shape of several pools of pure water with numerous fish in them⁴⁶

This leaves with us only with two sites namely: **Murti** near the city Choa Saidan Shah with permanent pools which were known for their neat and clean water - and the **Katas Raj** where the pool is still sacred with the Hindus. Both still have remains of Buddhist/Jaina stupas and Hindu temples, natural cave, monasteries⁴⁷. Both areas still stand the test of time and still retain their sanctity. Between the two sites is the city of Choa Saidan Shah sanctified by the presence of a Muslim shrine of one saint "Saidan Shah". The reason for the sanctity is the Sacred Water of a Spring called Choa from whence the city got its name *Choa Saidan Shah* i.e. The Spring of Saidan Shah. General Abbott has testified that from the foundations of this Shrine he discovered some remains of pre-Muslim times from which he has assumed that either the Muslim shrine was built on the remains of some Hindu/Buddhist Temple or, at least, it was initially built with material exhumed from a nearby Buddhist or Hindu Temple⁴⁸ In ultimate analysis we find that all the three places - *Katas*, Choa Saidan Shah and Murti became sacred, in their own turn of time, to the Buddhist, Jains, Hindus and the Muslims. Whereas at Murti and Choa Saidan Shah Saints' mausoleums, one at each site, are there, at *Katas* Hindus still pay their annual visits. Whereas, it is difficult to verify existence of pre-Muslim remains under the present day shrine of Hazrat Saidan Sharif at Choa, as claimed by Captain Abbott, it is difficult to reject the opinion altogether. Being a popular religious shrine, it is not possible to dig under it or in its close proximity, but another Muslim shrine can also be seen at the site of Murti. Despite the fact that this shrine at Murti is of more recent origin, but nevertheless it has been built on the site where Aurel Stein dug up remains of

a Hindu Temple in 1931 and a large number of sculpted objects was exhumed from this site - now partly preserved in Lahore Museum⁴⁹.

Well, when it is established that the two stupas as described by Hiuen Tsang are no other than the sites of Murti and the Katas Raj of today, then the only question that remains to be answered is: which way we should look for the site of ancient Singhapura, the capital city with which were attached these stupas and temples. If our assumption is accepted, and there appears to be no reason to assume it otherwise, the only direction in which we should look for the site of this lost and forgotten city is north of Katas and north-west of Murti. The two stupa sites of Hiuen Tsang as discussed above, i.e. Murti and the Katas Raj - are situated at a distance of about 3 miles of each other and almost in a straight line from east to west respectively.

Stein specially mentions the existence of two large pools of considerable depths as far back as 1931⁵⁰. Shaded by a succession of local cliffs of sandstone to a height of about 3000 feet ASL, with a fruit garden and dense jungle growth on the site in the valley between the two high cliffs, this is "perhaps the best example of hill scenery that the district contains"⁵¹.

This place, now named as *Rakh Gandala*, is now a veritable fruit garden where growing plenty 'loquats', apricot, peaches, plums, almonds, 'mulberry and grapes, off course with large number *kikar* trees with large painful thorns. These cover the entire space of the valley including what remains of the ancient site of Murti, perched high on a masonry basement higher above the left bank of Ghatia Nala.⁵²

Stein's description of the site leaves us in no doubt as to the fact that in this valley there was a stupa - most probably in its last phase a Jaina one⁵³, and some remains of a Hindu Temple situated to the east and north of the stupa mound⁵⁴. Although, today all the remains of this temple have vanished, but in 1931, Stein saw that:

"A solid mass of a coarse masonry and debris rising to the height of 12 feet above the bottom of the trenches (ghost walls) showed that the floor of the temple was covered with rough building stones and fragments of carefully cut slabs of red sandstone some bearing marks of relief decoration. Everything pointed to a richly ornamental Hindu shrine having been up-heaved and extensively quarried"⁵⁵.

Stein also opines that this temple too was approached from the east through a staircase. This is the case with temples at Malot and Katas. The sculptural material exhumed from Murti, and received in Lahore Museum (Pls. XIII.a-c), leaves us in no doubt that the majority of the pieces had originally belonged to a Hindu Temple rather than a stupa⁵⁶.

In the past there have been expressed some serious reservations as regards Hiuen Tsang's account of his visit of Singhapura - the kingdom and the city. Thomas Watters, for example was the first to express his doubts in this matter. His opinion was that his

account was not that of an eye-witness. Instead it was based on a hearsay of someone whom our pilgrim met at Taxila⁵⁷. Aurel Stein, on the other hand, finds no fault with his account of Singhapura. According to him, every word of Hiuen Tsang's, as regards Singhapura, was based on personal observation of the pilgrim. He writes:

"From my acquaintance of the Salt Range, acquired in the course of several extensive tours in the years gone by, I may safely assert that it would be difficult, if not impossible to find in any part of that area a scene so closely fitting the pilgrim's account in all details"⁵⁸.

DULMIAL (XII). S.)

With this strong belief in Hiuen Tsang's account, Stein naturally looked northward from Murti and Katas for a location of the city of Singhapura. He rejected Cunningham's identification of Kotera at Katas as Singhapura. Instead, he puts his weight in favour of a new site called Dulmial - a well-known village some 3 miles north-west of Katas and hence I quote his words⁵⁹

"Taking into account the recorded distance and bearing from Murti, I am led to believe it far more probable that the large village of Dulmial, some 3 miles north west of Katas, marks the site of the town of Singhapura".

This identification has never been challenged. But, seen on face of it, it was Stein's opinion only, he never offered any concrete proof in support of his selection. His only evidence is based on a few coins belonging to a period of much earlier date than the times of Hiuen Tsang⁶⁰. Actually, he purchased these coins at Katas and was told these have been found at Dulmial. But, as a matter of fact, Stein seems never to have visited Dulmial himself.

SHERANWALI KHANQAH/SHERANWALA NAKKA/SHERANWALI SARKAR

In 1994, when I made a thorough survey of this region, I did the same mistake. I could not visit Dulmial myself and, instead, I relied on the report of my Assistant and the earlier claim of a stalwart like Aurel Stein. Somehow, I was never satisfied with Stein's identification nor those other places identified too by Cunningham. In April, 2019, I revisited this area with a special purpose of visiting Dulmial and to recheck Aurel Stein's identification of it as the site of Singhapura. It was a shock to learn and see that there is no ancient mound within the present town of Dulmial or within its immediate vicinity. Besides, in the small local private Museum⁶¹ I could not locate a single artifact having been found from Dulmial. The owner of Dulmial Museum also assured us that this village or the country in its immediate vicinity has never revealed any ancient remains or any antiquity. Thus, it seems that Stein was deceived by the seller of Greek and Indo-Scythian coins as having been discovered from Dulmial. He did not even bother to visit

Dulmial, which was only about 5 kilometers away from Katas where he purchased those coins on which he made such a big claim.

Startled with this situation, I and my Team⁶² started exploring the area around, particularly in an area called Jaba Nakka that extended east of Dulmial up to Katas. Here at a distance of some three kilometers, may be more, we spotted a newly built shrine with a fresh water pump and a Cyprus tree. The new shrine has been namedas Sheranwali Sarkar - the Shrine of the Lion Saint (Pl. XXII). Next to this shrine are two circular mounds - one larger than the other, each surmounted by a large *Jand* tree and each tree having multiple graves underneath. I had no difficulty in recognizing them as Sheranwali Khanqah as mentioned in my Report of 1994 (**Antiquity of the Salt Range**) under the heading of Dulmial⁶³The old site has now lent its name to the new shrine nearby Shrine of the Lions. But, more recently, it has been renamed as *Sheranwala Nakka* i.e. The Halting Point of Lions. It is also known as *Sangi* - meaning 'the Companion' as well as 'Made of Stone'⁶⁴. Actually, in 1994, a grave with a lion statue (then called *Sheranwali Khanqah* i.e. Shrine of the Lions), it was registered (without any explanation) under the name of Dulmial. The two mounds are exactly the same as seen in 1994 but, now, the graves on these mounds have been gravely damaged (Pls. XVIII-XXI)-andthis has been done probably for destroying the sanctity of the site too. And, perhaps for this reason, the site has been partially renamed as *Sheranwala Nakka* - the Halting Place of Lions and thus the sanctity is shifted to the new nearby shrine i.e. Sheranwali Sarkar - or The Shrine of the Saint of Lions (Pl. XXII). The old site (Pls.XVII) is exactly east of Dulmial and north of Katas at a distance of some 5 kilometers from the latter(Fig. 1, Pl. XV).

The site can be reached partly by a metalled and partly by a narrow gravel from Katas.Both the mounds are still intact and are littered with pottery of non-descript types - plain but painted red and polished These are located in an area of low hills surrounded by mountains at some distance in the north, whereas on the south side the landscape gently slopes towards the site of Katas. The temples of Katas are visible from the top of the two mounds of *Sheranwali Khanqah* in a clear weather day

There are six graves on the larger of the two mounds - each garve placed on a rectangular platform. But the main grave, however, is much larger than others. It is placed on a huge platform built with blocks of local stone. It was on top of this grave that in 1994 there was placed a stone statue of headless lion in crouching position (Pl.XX). This statue is no more there today. Instead, it has been gravely disturbed and plundered along with other neighboring graves. - probably as an act to de-sanctify the old shrine The main one was the worst affected. Here, through a deep trench on one side, grave of the old Saint was found tunneled some 10 feet deep alongside the grave and underneath it (Pl. XXI). When was this done? Who did it? And, what 'treasure' did the plunderer find there? There was no one available in immediate vicinity to explain to us. Graves on the second mound were also found similarly treated. Apparently, there was no follower to

protest. Instead, as already mentioned above, the local people have built a new shrine close by in the lower plain and have it renamed, in reminiscence of the past, as *Sheranwali Sarkar* - the Lord or Saint of the Lion(Pl. XXII).

Although, at present we have very scanty information about this site. But still, I am tempted to relate to, if not to identify it with the lost site of Singhapura - the city of the legendry *Singha/Sinha*(Lion)i.e. Buddha which was Hiuen Tsang's capital city of the Kingdom of the same name. In this connection the following points may help us in reaching some decision, as I do.

- The site of *Sheranwali Khanqah* is exactly in the north of the site of Katas Raj - the presumed site of the 200 feet high Stupa built by Asoka Raja. Murti, the presumed site of the second stupa of the same period and size is also exactly in a south-easterly direction from this point. This is how Hiuen Tsang has described the three locations which he visited in the kingdom of Singhapura.
- This site was previously known as *Sheranwali Khanqah* i.e. The Shrine of Lions which is only a Muslim version of the name of Singhapura i.e. the city of the Lion - word 'Shrine' replacing the word 'city' - as the in the former Gandhara the words '*Devi* (goddess) *Hariti*' was changed into '*Bibi* (lady) *Hariti*' and her worship continued after the coming of Muslims in that region.
- Even the new name "*Sheranwala Nakka*" (The Halting Station of the Lions) is only an extension of the old name. It may also means the place where Lions come, stay and pay their homage to the Saint. Even the new shrine that is being developed after plundering the old one, has been named as *Sheranwali Sarkar* i.e. Lord of the Lions. But in all essentials, the site retains its association with '*sher*' i.e. lion which is a local version of *sinha/ singha of Buddhism. The throne of the Buddha is always known as Sinhasana i.e. Lion Throne.*
- In local parlance the site is also known as *Sangi* which may mean 'made of stone'. But '*sangi*' also means 'a companion'. In this latter sense it may remind us the Prakrit word '*Sangha*' - 'a Buddhist Community' or the compound word '*Sangharama*' i.e. Buddhist monastery. In our contexts, the latter meaning i.e. *Sangi* should be taken as *Sanghi or Sangha* i.e. Buddhist Monk which seems more appropriate if the site turns out to be that of a Stupa, or if it has any connection with *Singhapura*.
- Both the mounds are circular in plan and domical in section like a Buddhist stupa of early period (from Asoka. onward) like Manikyala Tope and Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila in our own region).

- A small pond near the smaller of the two mounds, collects rain water and ensures drinking water both for the grazing as well as wild animals as well as the pious visitors in this otherwise waterless tract.
- Notwithstanding a lot of bushes and bush woods, each mound is dominated by an umbrella-like large trees of Jand. Trees of this size are quite rare in this region. Even here one solitary tree stands on top of each mound like a watchman who take care of the graves underneath it and provide shade to the visitors. These trees remind us the huge *bunyan* or *pipal* (Bo Tree) or the tree of Wisdom) usually associated with the Buddha. Growth of such solitary trees are often ascribed to be the miracle of the saint buried underneath. However, we are not sure how old these trees are? Are these trees there ever since the times of Asoka or the time when these stupas - if stupas these are, were built? We are not sure unless some botanical studies are made on the spot. Pending such studies, our illusion to associate these trees and the circular mounds (of former stupas) on top of which they grow, may be considered as provisional.
- Thus, although beliefs have been altered, rituals have been changed, visible structures have been transformed to suit new beliefs and rituals and vocabulary has also altered considerably - *Sher* has taken the place of *Sinha* - both meaning Lion and *Sangha* has given way to *Sangi* both meaning companion and *Tope* (stupa) has been replaced with *Khanqah*- *both actually being burial places of some saintly personality*. but still the locale and spot has stayed where it was for more than two thousand years. Although no lion roams in this wilderness today, but the memory of the Buddhist Lion i.e. the Buddha still haunts the memory of local people in different forms and beliefs but around this very space and reminds us that at sometime in the past, this land seems to have been the home of Buddhism and somewhere around this point the city of Singhapura or Sinhapura.
- Thus, keeping in view the above points, we are justified in identifying the sites of Sheranwali Khanqah, the Katas Raj and the Murti as the sites of the city of Singhapura and the two sacred sites each having a Buddhist/Jaina Stupa, Hindu Temples and sacred pools of water respectively as described by Hiuen Tsang in 631 ACE.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1.
Map showing
location of
Singhapura/
Sheranwali
Khanqah vis-vise
Taxila, Malot, Sb-
Ganga, Katas and
Murt.

(Not to the scale)

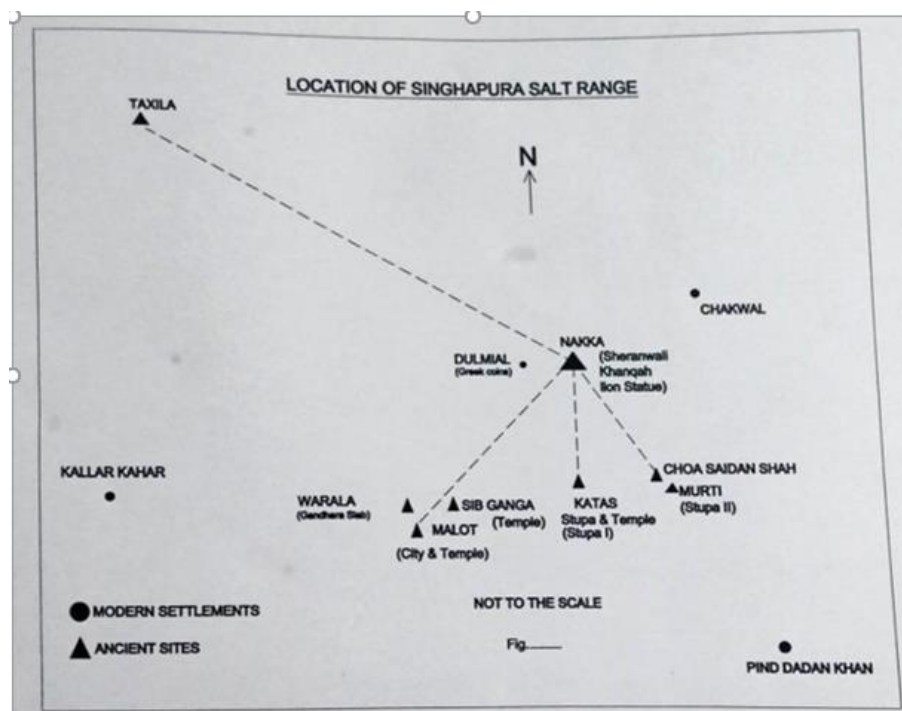
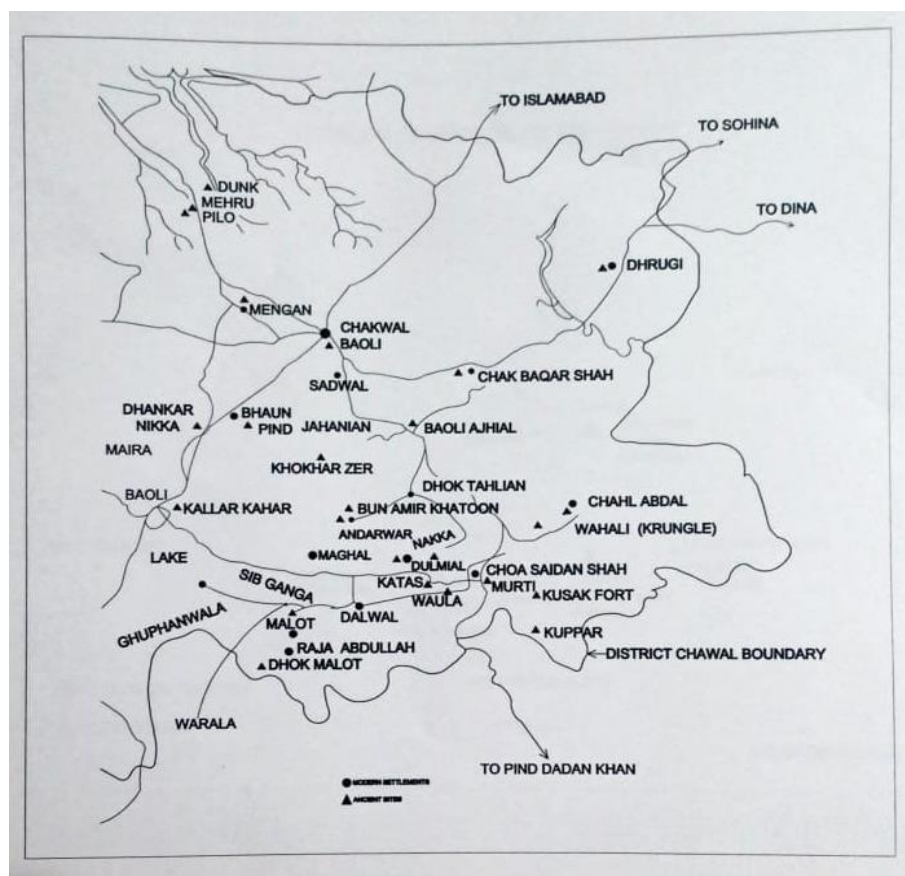


Figure 2
Map showing
archaeological sites
around Katas,
Murti and
Singhapura/
Sheranwali Khan.



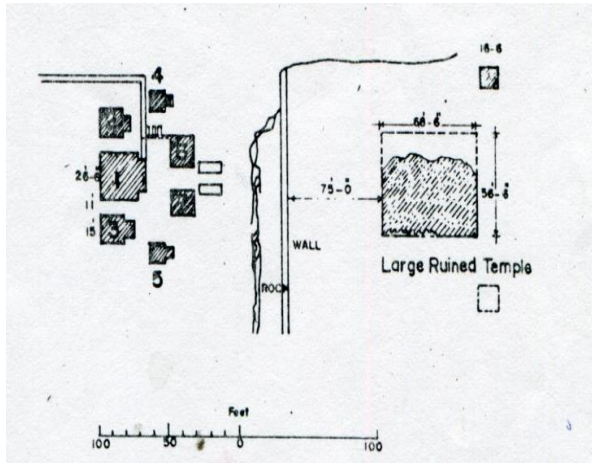


Figure 3 .Katas Raj. Plans of Buddhist/Jaian Stupa (right) mistaken as Temple, and Satghara Temples(left) as drawn by Alexander (CSR II, p.190).

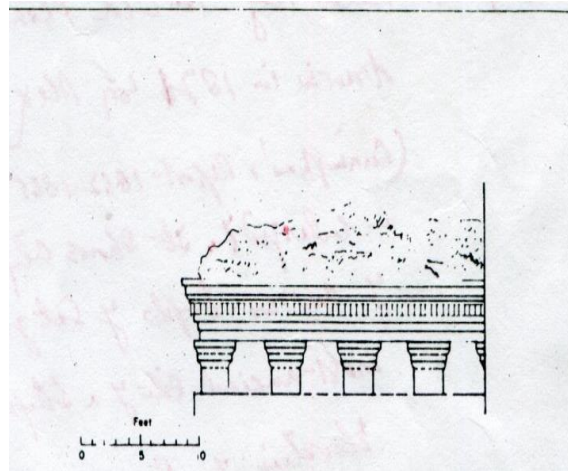


Figure. . Side Elevation of the Stupa as drawn by A. Alexander Cunningham (CSR II, p. 190)



Pl. Rokri, Mianwali. A jade carving, 18 cm high, discovered in 1901. It shows a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim travelling on a donkey Rokri is a Buddhist Stupa site on the north-western borders of the Salt Range.



Pl. II. Salt Range. Typical Landscape near Kallar Kahar



Pl.III Katas Raj. General View of the site showing the Sacred Pool and a Pavilion (*Baradari*) in the foreground.

Pl.IV. Katas Raj. General View from the Roadside on the east.





Pl. V. Katas Raj. Another panoramic View of the site with a mansion (*Haveli*) designated as Museum on the left foreground and the remains of the Stupa after excavation and renovation of 2011



Pl. VI. Katas Raj. General View of the site from the south as seen from the Yoth Hostel. The remains of the Stupa after excavations in 2011 in the foreground with Temples and Haveli in the background.

Pl. VII. Katas Raj. Remains of the Stupa after excavations in 2011.





Pl. VIII. Katas Raj. Remains of the Stupa with the basement wall partly restored, though not so perfectly, after 2011.(Also see Fig. 4)



Pl.IX.a.



IX.b.



Pl. IX.C

Pl. IX (a,b,c) . Three sculptured pieces claimed to have been discovered from Kata- a and b seen in Dulmial Museum and C see in Islamabad Muse



Pl. X. Murti Site in RakhGandala near Choa Saidan Shah. What remains of the ancient site is now mostly buried under the thick jungle growth and fruit Garden



Pl. XI. Murti. Protection Notice Board fixed in 1929 by the then Archaeological Survey of India in 1929 guarded the site as far back as 1994 when this photo was taken. It is no more there.



Pl.XII. Part of the former Stupa site, excavated in 1889, as seen in April 2019.



Pl. XIII.a



Pl. XIII.b



Pl.XIII.c

Pl. XIII.(a, b, c). Murti. Three sculptures from the site of Temple excavated by Aurel Stein in 1929. A large number of these sculpted pieces, all carved in Murti red sandstone, were excavated in 1889 and 1929 and were transported to Lahore Museum.



Pl. XIV (a-b). Dulmial Village. Mistakenly identified as the site of Ancient Singhapura by Aurel Stein. As a matter of fact there is no ancient site in or around this village. The only fame of this village is this 12 pounder gun called Alfred Broom which was brought to this village in 1925 as described in the label shown in Pl. XIV.b.



Pl.XV. Katas Raj as seen from NakkaJaba. Seen from the roof top of a house near NakkaJaba the temples of Katas are easily visible in the distant south



Pl. XVI. NakkaJaba. Twin Round Mound called Sheranwali Khanqah now renamed as Sheranwala Nakka.



Pl. XVII. NakkaJaba. Larger of the two circular mounds formerly known as Sheranwali Khanqah Now Sheranwala Nakka.



Pl. XVIII. NakkaJaba. The smaller of the two mounds with squarish graves formerly known as Sheranwali Khanqah. The solitary tree covering the main garve and a water reservoir as seen in the background are quite significant



Pl. XIX. NakkaJaba. The graves on the two round mounds are in the form stone platforms almost square in plan.



Pl. XX. NakkaJaba. Headkess Statue placed on the grave known as Sheranwali Khanqah. Photographed in 1994



Pl. XXI. NakkaJaba. Thegarve of Sheranwali Khanqah has been recently vandalized. The Lion that once was placed on top of it has disappeared and the grave has been dug up by running a deep tunnel by its side and then under it. Photographed in April 2019.



Pl. XXII. NakkaJaba. New Shrine in the making. It is called Sheranwali SarkarPhotographed in April 20.



a. Sid View



b. Front View

Pl. XXIII. Kallu Kot. Two views of the staircase attached with a stupa in a settlement site.



Pl. XXIV.a

Kallu Kot Stupa



Pl. Pl. XXIV. b.

Pl. XXIV (a-b). Kallu Kot. Fragments of stone sculptures of human and animal figures exhumed by treasure hunters in 1994. Now in Kallar Kahar Museum.



Pl. XXV. A



XXV.b

pl.

Pl. XXV (a-b). Nandana. Temple of Hindu Shahiya Period (a) and Stupa of earlier period (b).



Pl. XXVI. BhirAimaMera. Square Well with inscription I three pieces.



Pl. XXVII. a.



Pl.XXVII.b.

Pl. XXVII.(a-b). Sib-Ganga .Temple of Kali Devi. a.: Shows severally damaged side. B: Better preserved



Pl. XXVIII Warala Stele. A stone slab carved with scene similar to the one in this stele was discovered in 1850 in the fields outside Warala village midway between Sib-Ganga and Malot.



XXIX. Malot Temple (left foreground) and Temple gate (right background)

NOTES

¹. In English, this name also written as Hwen Thsang, Hieun Tsang, Hiuen-tsang, Hsuan-Tsang, Yuwan Chang, Xuanzang, etc. I have adopted here as Hiuen Tsang.

². Hiuen Tsang is the last of the three Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who came to visit Buddhist territories in what is today Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. The earliest one was Sung Yun (502 ACE), followed by Fa-Hian (399-413 ACE) and the last one was Hiuen Tsang who spent 16 years in these lands during 629-645 ACE. In 631 ACE he visited the Salt Range in the Punjab. This paper is a critical appreciation of this visit of Hiuen Tsang.

³. Samuel Beal, SI-Yu-Kid. Buddhist Records of the Western World. Translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (AD 629- 645). 2 Vols. in One. Kegan Paul, Tranch Trubner and Co. London, 1914. Republished by Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi.

⁴. Thomas Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India (629-645 AD), Edited after his death by T.W Rhys Davids and S.W. Bushell. 2 Vols. Royal Asiatic Society, London. 1904

⁵. H. Tschuchiya, "Ancient Route between Gandhara and China in Pamir". Memoir No.2 of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Islamabad 1998, pp. 119-136.

⁶. Saifur Rahman Dar, Historical Routes through Gandhara (Pakistan) 200 BC - 200 AD. Published by the National College of Arts, Lahore, 2006, pp. 128 & 204, Fig. 35.

⁷. Alexander Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India, London, 1871, pp. viii-xiii and Appendix A, pp. 563-570.

⁸. Singhapura is also written as Sinhapura and Simhapura - all meaning the same i.e. the City of the Lion - the lion here stands for Prince Siddhartha - the Sakyamuni or the Lion of the clan of Sakya who ultimately becomes the Buddha.

⁹. As we learn from Hiuen Tsang, Buddhism in the Salt Range came in the third century BCE by Emperor Asoka who constructed several stupas in this region. However, by the time he visited this region in 631 ACE Buddhism was already in a decadent stage and already been taken over by the followers of Jainism and Hinduism. Beside this solitary reference, very little is known as to when, how and to what extent Buddhism was introduced and practised in the Salt Range. Even today, there are only four or five sites where Buddhist relics - mainly stupas, have been reported (See Fig. 3 & Pls.V-VIII, X-XIII, XVI-XVII and XXIII-XXVI). Beside this, we have piece-meal information of Kharoshthi, Brahmi and other pre-Islamic period inscriptions from three different sites in the Salt Range including Son Valley such as Bhira Aima Mera (Pl. XXII and Cunningham, Report Vol. V, 1875, pp. 93-94, Pl. XXVIII), Son Sakesar (Helmut Humbach, "Fragments of a Sanskrit Stone Inscription from Sakesar". In: Pakistan Archaeology, No. 5, 1968, pp.284-287) and Khura inscription near Naushehra, Son Valley (District Gazetteer of Khushab).

¹⁰. Cunningham, 1871 pp. 124-129 and Cunningham, "Katas or Kataksha". In Four Reports made during 1862-63-64-65, Archaeological Survey of India, Vol. II, Reprinted Varanasi, 1972. pp.188-192.

¹¹. Aurel Stein, "Simhapura Revisited". In: Archaeological Reconnaissance in North-western India and South-eastern Iran. Macmillan and Co. Limited, London, 1937, pp.45-66.

- ¹². Some scholars opine that River *Sintu* may be taken as Soan River instead of the Indus.
- ¹³. To be more precise it touched River Indus on the north-west, the kingdom of Taxila on the north-east and the kingdom of Takka Desha i.e. the Central Punjab in the south east.
- ¹⁴. According to our pilgrim, Taxila was only 10 *Li* in circuit whereas Singhapura was 14-15 *Li* in circuit. The only other city equal to Singhapura was Chinapati (Amritsar) and the only other city larger than it was Purushapura (Peshawar) that was 40 *Li* in circuit (See Beal, op. cit., Vol. II, op. cit. p. p. 179, 184, 207, and 150 respectively. Please benoted that it is customary with Hieun Tsang to describe cities and countries in terms of "circuits" and not in lengths and breadths.
- ¹⁵. I have adopted here 5 *Li* equal to 1 English mile and 5 miles equal to 8 kilometers. The distance of 700 *Li* between Taxila and Singhapura, on face of it, seems to be exaggerated. By any route that our pilgrim might have travelled, a distance of 700 *Li* starting from Taxila might have taken our pilgrim much beyond the mountainous country of the Salt Range and landed him in the plains of Central Punjab and certainly beyond the River Jhelum.). The actual distance is hardly 80 miles (400 *Li*) from Taxila. The only way to reconcile with the statement is if we presume that Hieun Tsang has measured this distance as from Taxila to Singhapura and then back to Taxila, as he actually did. Instead of moving from Singhapura further east into the plains of the he returned to Taxila for his onward journey to *Urusa* (modern Hazara) to Kashmir, etc. We will return to this further below.
- ¹⁶. Beal II, p. 185.
- ¹⁷ It touched River Indus on the north-west, the kingdom of Taxila on the north-east and the kingdom of Takka-desha i.e. the Central Punjab in the south-east state.
- ¹⁸. Beal II, p. 179.
- ¹⁹. Thoamas Watters, I, p. 214.
- ²⁰. Beal II, p.207.
- ²¹. Beal II, p. 212
- ²². Beal II, p. 150.
- ²³.Beal, p. 185.
- ²⁴. Is not this strange that according to Hieun Tsang, every second or third stupa in these lands was claimed to have been built by Asoka-raj and it was always 200 feet high?
- ²⁵. Thomas Watters II, p. 148. This refers to Svetembra Sect of the Jaina religion.
- ²⁶. Beal II, p. 186.
- ²⁷ Beside some sporadic explorations with limited goals in mind by Sir Alexander Cunningham (Ancient Geography o f India, London, 1871, pp. 124-127; Survey Report for the Years 1862-63-64-65, Vol. II, Reprint Delhi 1972, pp.188-191; Report for the Year 1872-73 Calcutta, 1875, pp. 79-95 and A Tour in Punjab, 1878-79, Reprint Varanasi 1970, pp. 24-34) and Aurel Stein in 1930 (Archaeological Reconnaissance in North-Western India and South-Eastern Iran, London, 1937, pp. 45-69) the first all-purpose and al-period exploration was conducted in 1994.by the author.

²⁸. Cunningham always regarded 6 Li = 1 English mile whereas most others regard 5 Li = 1 English mile. I have adopted the latter. The relevant passage reads: "14 or 15 Li in circuit rested on hills and was a natural fortress"

²⁹. Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Report, Vol. II, 1862-63-64-65. p. 191 and Ibid. Archaeological Survey Report for the year 1872-73, Vol. V, p. 85. Thomas Watters (Vol I, p. 250), on the other hand, translates the relevant passage as: "14 - 15 Li in circuit rested on a hill and was a natural fortress".

³⁰. Cunningham's Archaeological Survey Report, for the year 1872-73, Vol. V, p. 85.

³¹. Cunningham, Ancient Geography of India, 1871, p. 125.

³². It is for this reason that M. Vivien de St. Martin, as quoted by A. Cunningham (Ancient Geography of India, op. cit., p. 24) placed the site of Singhapura at Sanghoi at or near the modern city of Jhelum which place is certainly outside the limits of the Salt Range.

³³. Saifur Rahman Dar, Antiquities of the Salt Range, Lahore, 1999, p. 107

³⁴ Cunningham reported a stupa on this site but it had disappeared even before his visit. (See: Cunningham, Report Vol. V, for the Year 1872-73, p. 93). From this site, Cunningham obtained 250 coins which included two Indus Greek coins of king Heliocles and Antialcidas and 89 coins of the Indo-Scythian kings.

³⁵. Cunningham, CSR Vol. V, p. 93.

³⁶. Stein 1937, pp. 45-66

³⁷. Stein 1937, pp. 45-66.

³⁸ Saifur Rahman Dar, Antiquities of the Salt Range, Lahore, 1999, pp. 73-75

³⁹ Stein op. cit., 1937, pp. 36-44, plans 3-4, figs. 5-7.

⁴⁰ Cunningham in his first attempt report in 1863, was tempted to identify Malot with Singhapura (CSR II, P. 192 and CSR V, 1872, p. 85) However, while writing his Ancient Geography of India (1871, p. 124) he put his weight in favour of Katas to be the site of Singhapura.

⁴¹. J. Burgess, Buddhist Art in India, London, 1901, p. 130, fig. 82.

⁴². The tear drops that thus fell from the eyes of Siva in heaven on the earth caused to form two ponds one each at Katas (*Kataksha* - tear drops) in the Salt Range and Pushkar at Ajmer Sharif (Cunningham, Report II, p. 188).

⁴³. All Asoka period stupas in Pakistan (Manikyala Stupa, Dharmarajika Stupa at Taxila, But Kara Stupa at Saidu Sharif, etc for example) are always found as built on round plan. The Stupa base at Katas. as seen today is certainly is built on square plan and hence, in its present shape, is certainly of somewhat later date. As very little serious work has so far been done on this site, we are not sure this site was excavated for the first time in 1916 (?) by Daya Ram Sharma and second time in 2011 by Mr. Fatah Khan of the Punjab Directorate of Archaeology. In the former case only a brief summary is available in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India or The Year 1916 -17(?). As regards the excavations of 2011, no report - typed or printed is available in the office record.

⁴⁴. Cunningham identifies the base of this stupa as ruins of a large temple (Cunningham, Report Vol. II for 1862-63-64, p.191, Pl. LXVII, (our Fig.3.a-b) on the basis of a 3 feet high sculpture of Hindu deity Vishnu with three heads and four arms discovered from top of this mound. Cunningham, actually, saw this statue fixed on the facade of the new temple of the 19th century dedicated to Rama Chandra. According to Cunningham, base of this stupa or temple measured 68.5 x 56.5 feet (Cunningham Report II, p. 199).

⁴⁵. Cunningham, op. cit, p. 191. He identifies this as the site of the city of Katas with a circuit of two miles.

⁴⁶. Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-western India and South-eastern Iran. London, 1937, pp.53.

⁴⁷. All the removable material from the site of Murti as exhumed in 1889 and 1931 was removed and deposited in Lahore Museum. In 1948 this material was divided between Pakistan and India - the latter portion is now a day housed in the Government Art Gallery and Museum, Chandigarh (India). Remains of a stupa and a Hindu temple are now almost extinct on the site. Even the Protection Notice Board that was still intact in 1994 has now disappeared from the site. The remains of the stupa and Hindu Temples, at Murti are, however now buried under dense jungle growth and the nullah nearby still flows but its water is now mixed with the solid waste from the town of Chao Saidan Shah. It stinks badly. The pool at the Katas Raj which still acts as source of water at Murti, still holds fresh water and its ancient sanctity.

⁴⁸. Captain James Abbott, "Remains of Greek Sculpture in the Salt Range and Potowar". In: Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal for, p. 131 - 135.

⁴⁹. Aurel Stein, Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-western India and South-eastern Iran. London, 1937, pp. 52-58, Pls. 16-20. Due to the extreme vandalism of the site of Murti including digging of Aurel Stein in 1931 and present thick jungle growth of Rakh Gandala, it has become very difficult to read the site. With ease and comfort (Plates. X - XIII). But thanks to the vivid description of its remains by Sir Aurel Stein in 1889 and 1931 we are left with no doubt that this site was situated at the left bank of a perennial stream (Ghatia Nala) that originated at Katas, passed through the modern settlement of Choa Saidan Shah and flows through the Gandala Valley and finally joins the water of Jhelum River in the East.

⁵⁰. Aurel Stein, Archaeological Reconnaissances in North-western India and South-eastern Iran. London, 1937. 53, fig. 18. This was in 1931. Off course, the stream today has turned into a solid waste drain from the nearby town.

⁵¹. Ibid., p. 53.

⁵². In 1994, at my request, the Deputy Commissioner, Chakwal has got the entire site cleared of jungle growth at the time of visit of our team. Now once again the site has been swallowed up by jungle growth that makes it very difficult to make a scientific study of the site.

⁵³. Stein, 1937, p.54.

⁵⁴ Stein, 1937, p.54, fig 17.

⁵⁵ Stein, 1937, pp.54-55.

⁵⁶. Stein has opined that none of the sculpted material belonged to Hindu or Jaina religion. (See: Stein, 1937, pp.55)

⁵⁷ Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India. London, 1904, Vol. I, 251-252. He also opines that the Chinese word translated as 'inscription' is not correct. Instead, he prefers to translate it as 'memorial'. Thus he reads the line as: " there is now a memorial of the event set up".

⁵⁸. Stein, 1937, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁹. Stein, 1937, p. 57, fn. 16.

⁶⁰. In 1889, Stein claims to have purchased at Katas a rare copper of the Indo-Greek Queen Agathocleia, a coin of Indus-Greek king Strato and some coins of Indo-Scythian as well as Gupta kings. (See: Stein, op. cit, 1937, p. 57, fn. 16).

⁶¹ This is a small single-room museum now located inside an abandoned Sui Gas Supply Station outside the village of Dulmial on the main road between Kallar Kahar and Katas. It belongs to one Malik Riaz Ahmad, an old-time resident of Dulmial, and the founder of the Salt Range Archaeological Heritage Society, Dulmial. The Museum displays mainly family memorabilia, numerous fossils collected from the area, a few terracotta heads and a marble head of a Jaina leader (which the owner claims to have discovered at Katas), some British period coins, etc. But strangely enough, there is no coins from Dulmial. The Museum was formerly located inside Dulmial Village.

⁶². Two volunteers namely Ms. Tayyaba Gul from the Lahore Walled City Authority and Mr. Ahtesham Aziz Chaudhry from Lahore Museum.

⁶³. Saifur Rahman Dar, *Antiquities of the Salt Range*, Lahore, 1999, See Dulmial p.59-60.

⁶⁴. Malik Riaz Ahmad of Dulmial in his booklet entitled: *Katas Raj - Salt Range Historical Relics* (Dulmial, 2013, p. 10) has published two photographs of this mound i.e. Nakka Mound near Jaba Sangigraves each surmounted by, taken in 1971. These show two is photograph. Curiously enough, the author has identified these as graves of the Greeks. The author was probably influenced by the statement of Aurel Stein who has claimed to have purchased two Greek coins from Dulmial (or from some other site nearby) in 1889. Such a site probably can be identified with our present site at Nakka Sheranwala. But during our two visits of this site (in 1994 and 2019), no other antiquity except potsherds could be picked up from this sites. It may be noted here that in 1994, we saw only one of the statues of lion on one of the graves (See Pl. XVI). In April 2019, even this statue was found missing. Instead the grave was found gravely pilfered and tunneled underneath.