New Findings on the Silk Road:  
A Study of Some New Discovered Documents from Turfan

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This essay introduces the work the author has been involved in regarding manuscripts recently discovered at various archaeological sites in Turfan, such as Yanghai, Astana, Badam and Muna'er. The work has included the dividing, cleaning, patching, reading and naming of the new documents, many of which are related to the study of the “Silk Road.” For example, a register of the Gaochang Kingdom under the Kan family in the 9th and 10th years of the Yongkang era (474-475 A.D.) tells of escorting envoys with men and horses. This document sheds light on the contact between the Turfan Depression and such regions as Mongolia, the Tarim Basin, South Asia, and the Lower Yangtze during the latter half of the 5th century.

Another document concerns the post-station of the Tang Dynasty Jiaohe Commandery in the 10th year of the Tianbao (751), telling of envoys arriving at and leaving Turfan, while a register of the envoys from the Ningyuan Kingdom (Fergana) gives us a better understanding of the historical developments leading up to the famous battle of Talas (751). Other documents introduced in this article include the Official Register of Buddhist Monks of the Si'en Temple, Gaochang County, in the 2nd year of the Longshuo (662), a letter written home by a soldier named Hongyi in the 7th year of the Kaiyuan (719), and the calendar for the 3rd year of the Yongchun (684).