CHINESE RESEARCH ON SOURCES EXCAVATED FROM TURFAN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

INTRODUCTION

Within the historical research done on Central Asia and China during the period from the 4th through the 8th century, written sources unearthed in the region known as Turfan (present day Uighur Autonomous Region of Xinjiang), especially classical Chinese documents, have rendered valuable information not found in the dynastic historiographical compilations of the period. In addition to written sources, archeological artifacts and iconographic sources such as wall paintings discovered in the region have also been important objects of study. Consequently, whenever embarking upon any study of the region's history during the period in question, ignoring this body of excavated source materials (hereafter referred to as the "Turfan collection") would result in a failure to deepen our present understanding of the subject.

The Chinese paleographs, which quantitatively dominate the Turfan collection, consist of documents and records drafted in the region, on the one hand, and Chinese classics either copied there or published elsewhere. In terms of the conditions under which the materials were obtained, the collection may be divided into two groups.

A. Sources discovered by archeological expeditions dispatched from such foreign countries as Europe and Japan from the end of the 19th century on.

B. Sources discovered by archeological survey teams organized inside China since 1959.

The research regarding the Turfan collection's Chinese paleographs was first accumulated mainly through the study of Group A, but then in 1981, when the document collection belonging to Group B, Tulufan chutu wenshu 吐魯番出土文書 (hereafter Wenshu) [Guojia Wenwuju Guwenxian Yanjiushi et al. 1981-91], began to be published, the research centered around Chinese and Japanese scholars rapidly increased quantitatively and expanded topically. In comparison to the archeological surveys that excavated Group A, which were unavoidably conducted haphazardly at related sites over very short periods of time, Group B is the result of the excavations of such sites as the Astāna-Qara = khoja cemetery far more intensely and systematically, leading to a plethora of published survey data. According to Japanese paleographer Ikeda On 池田温 [2002], the number of non-religious documents belonging to both groups greatly exceeds the far more well-known Dunhuang collection. However, it should be noted that the two collections are continuous in terms of time, the Turfan documents dating mainly from the 3rd up through 8th century, the Dunhuang documents during the 9th and 10th centuries. Therefore, while both collections broaden our historical view of the region, not being mutually synchronic means that they cannot be used in combination to deepen our understanding of that region. Regarding this point, the documents now being excavated from the Khotan region date from the 7th up through the 8th century and thus are of great benefit as reference materials for solving problems arising out of the Turfan collection.

Furthermore, with respect to the use of the Turfan documents, the difficulty in accessing them faced by researchers of the Group A discoveries, which were scattered throughout research institutes, libraries, and museums located in many countries of the world, is rapidly being overcome by ambitious efforts on the part of Japanese and Chinese scholars to publish catalogs, high-definition facsimiles, and texts of them. A large collection of texts of the Turfan and Dunhuang documents accurately revised by Ikeda [1979] is just one example of projects in East Asia promising unprecedented breakthroughs in the study of ancient Central Asia. In addition, thanks to the recent public access given to the data on a global level and rapid developments in the joint study of it, a project to create a Turfan-document database is now underway, paralleling similar efforts

geared towards the Dunhuang collection, like the International Dunhuang Project in the United Kingdom, promoting international cooperation in systematically cataloging the available documents. With respect to Group B, as will be described in more detail later on, beginning in 1990 all of its texts and photographs have been made available to the public, enabling researchers to gain almost a total grasp of exactly what documentary sources have been discovered to date, although the excavated cultural artifacts and iconography lag somewhat behind in terms of availability.

Therefore, given the present situation characterized by the rapidly continuing excavation of Chinese documents, artifacts, and iconographic materials [Rong, Li, and Meng 2008a] accompanied by vigorous research on the newest items among them in China, this article will be focused on introducing the huge body of Chinese research that has been done since 1959 [Chen G. 2010; Meng and Rong 2007], emphasizing the work done regarding the most recent discoveries.

1. OVERVIEW OF EXCAVATION ACTIVITIES

Beginning with the discovery of paleographic artifacts, while the Magao 莫高 Caves of Dunhuang may be the most well-known site in the region, as previously mentioned, in terms of non-religious documents, the Turfan collection is quantitatively superior, although more fragmented than its Dunhuang counterpart. In the background to the differences that exist between the two collections lies the fact that the excavation of the many tombs and temple ruins in Turfan continues today, as opposed to the shut down of activities in Dunhuang. It is only natural that artifacts unearthed in Turfan has captured the interest of Chinese archeologists since the last century. That interest, as represented by the research published in China up to 1980, has been summarized and periodized by Chen Guocan 陳国燦 [2010:40–51] into the following stages:

- I. 1900–1927: Encounter and Recognition
- II. 1928–1958: Inquiry and Expanded Recognition
- III. 1959-1980: Autonomous Excavation and Research

Stage III of this acceptable scheme, marking excavation and research centered in China of course corresponds to the role being played by our Group B in the survey and study of the Turfan documents and also the beginning of Chen's own participation in the study of that group. In more concrete terms, the excavation activities corresponding to Stage III can be

① 1959–1975	Astāna-Qara = khoja Cemeteries
	Ancient City of Jiaohe 交河 (1968)
② 1979–1986	Astāna Cemetery (1979, 1986)
	Bezeklik Caves (1980)
	Toyuk Caves (1981)
③ 1997; 2001–2006	Astāna Tombs (2004, 2006)
	Ancient City of Jiaohe (2002)
	Badamu 巴達木 Cemetery (2004)
	Yanghai 洋海 Cemetery (1997, 2006)
	Muna'er 木納爾 Cemetery (2004)
	Taicang 台蔵 Pagoda (2005)
	Turfan Document Survey and Collection Project (2006)
	鄯善県 Shanshan 鄯善 Prefecture (2001)

The documents found at the Astāna-Qara = khoja Cemeteries during period ① have been published in Wenshu, and facsimiles can be found in [Zhongguo Wenwu Yanjiusuo et al. 1992–96]. Those discovered at the Jiaohe site during period ① and all the digs during period ② are recorded in [Liu 1997]. The reader should be warned that the facsimiles appearing in this publication are of too poor quality to facilitate use as paleographical research sources. Incidentally, a portion of the Sogdian documents and Uighur documents unearthed in the Bezeklik Caves have also been published in [Liu 2000], a work intended to read and interpret correspondence written by Manichean residents of the area, which are important sources for learning about the everyday situation of Manicheanism in Central Asia. Despite the work's obvious important contribution to Asian studies throughout the world, it contains only an inaccurate Chinese translation of the original English and Japanese portions written by Yoshida Yutaka 吉田豊 and Moriyasu Takao 森安孝夫, who deciphered the documents. We look forward to the publication of their original labors.

Facsimiles of the huge number of documents discovered during the 21st century phase of period 3 were quickly published in [Rong, Li, and Meng 2008b], in contrast to the almost 20 years that transpired before the period 1 documents saw the light of day. As a matter of fact, recent disclosure of new sources is now so fast in coming that the investigation and

analysis work required is, ironically, no longer able to keep pace. We are also witnessing a change in attitude towards publishing as quickly as possible and thus keeping important sources from languishing unbeknownst in the files of a limited number of research institutes and researchers. Moreover, the improvement that has occurred in the accuracy of recorded documents and the quality of photography reflects well the recent deepening of interest in Turfan paleography among Chinese scholars.

2. NEW RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

Since the appearance in 1959 of Chen's third and last autonomous stage of development in China's Turfan archeological community, the Chinese research literature published on both documents and other cultural properties has increased significantly, and in response to such lively scholarly activity, the Dunhuang and Turfan Association of China was formed in 1985. Then after the turn of the century, the research took off once again along with the huge discoveries of new artifacts. The attached bibliography represents only a small portion of the overwhelming amount of research now available.

Symbolizing just how invigorated the research effort has become, two periodicals bearing the name Turfan in their titles have been published: Dunhuang Tulufan Yanjiu 敦煌吐魯番研究 (Journal of Dunhuang and Turfan studies) from 1996, Vol. 10 of which was a special issue entitled "Studies on Newly Discovered Turfan Documents," and Tulufanxue Yanjiu 吐魯番学研究 (Turfanology) from 2000. The latter was the first time that an issue dealt exclusively with Turfan, both in name and contents. Tulufanxue Yanjiu is published in the Turfan region, but during their early years, it were allowed to circulate only inside Xinjiang Province and were forbidden from being taken out of the country. It was only in 2008, on the occasion of the formation of Academica Turfanica, that it was allowed to be ordered and freely circulate internationally. In the background to general circulation lay a positive effort to disseminate its outstanding research finding throughout the world. Paralleling the publication of this journal is the convening of four international conferences in 2001, 2005, 2008, and 2010, respectively, and the proceedings of the 2nd and 3rd conferences have been published [Xinjiang Tulufan Diqu Wenwuju 2006; Xinjiang Tulufanxue Yanjiuyuan 2010]. Other periodicals publishing a great amount of research based on excavated Turfan documents and other cultural properties include Xiyu Wenshi 西域文史 (Literature and history of the Western Regions) published by Xinjiang

Normal University's Center for the Study of Literature and History of the Western Regions, Xiyu Lishi Yuyan Yanjiu 西域歷史語言研究 (Historical and philological studies of China's Western Regions) published by Renmin University's Institute for the Historical and Philological Study of China's Western Regions, and Tang Yanjiu 唐研究 (Journal of Tang period studies) published by Beijing University's Center for the Study of Ancient Chinese History. The articles appearing in these journals have also been compiled into two collections of research [Rong, Li, and Meng 2010; Meng, Rong, and Li 2011], providing scholars in China and elsewhere a handy reference work for grasping recent Chinese language research findings on Turfan.

3. CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF TURFAN STUDIES IN CHINA

One very attractive aspect of studying archeological artifacts is the opportunity to uncover political, social, economic, and cultural conditions in a far more vivid manner than what can be learned from compiled historiographical sources. Similarly, the study of both excavated paleographs and other cultural properties has resulted in a great amount of research successes concerning such conditions in Turfan and its surrounding regions. The history of 4th through 8th century Turfan as revealed in the available paleography can be divided in three distinct periods in terms of dynastic change.

II I ate /Ith Harly 5th (The political regime of Kanshuang 闞爽, governor of Gaochang 高昌
II. Late 5th–Early 7th C.	The rise and fall of the Kingdom of Gaochang
IIII Late /th_Mid-Xth (Governance under the Tang Dynasty provincial offices of Xizhou 西州

The major research done in China that supports this periodization may be summarized as follows.

Period I

The most noteworthy work on this period of time has been done by Li Xiao 李肖. In his introduction and research on the wall paintings in Tomb No. 408 at the Astāna Cemetery, which was excavated in 2004 [Tulufan

Diqu Wenwuju 2004], and in Tomb No. 605, excavated in 2006 [Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Bowuquan 2007], Li was able to demonstrate clearly how the Turfan people of the time viewed the afterlife. Li also showed that both tombs were constructed around 375 CE, during the Former Liang Kingdom's governance over Gaochang. What is most noteworthy is that the Turfanian conceptualization of the underworld cannot be characterized solely as "Chinese" in nature. While it goes without saying that the residents of Turfan comprised not only people of Han origin, but also a varied number of other ethnic origins, Li's research leads to the possibility that Sogdian people from the west were beginning to settle in Turfan during that time. In his fresh and very persuasive view of the tomb's wall painting, Shirasu Jōshin 白須净真 [2011] has raised the question of exactly what the painting is attempting to depict, including the meaning of the "barbarian" (huren 胡人)-like human figure appearing in the upper portion and the ethnic identity of the tomb's inhabitant.

There is also the research of You Ziyong 游自勇 [2007] concerning the world of the afterlife, shedding light on an entombed document of the subsumption of Gaochang under the rule of the Northern Liang Kingdom (433), in the form of a legal petition prepared for submission at the deceased's anticipated trial in the world of the afterlife. This extremely rare document contains the name "The Great King Yanluo 塩羅, Lord of Impartiality," which is none other than the ancient Indian god Yamarāja. Up until this discovery, the appearance in China of Yanluo as the judicial authority of the world of the dead could not be verified until the Tang Period, but it seems that the figure was already firmly ensconced in Turfanian culture at a much earlier time. The appellation, Lord of Impartiality, is also applied to the judge of the dead in the Manicheanism introduced into Chinese society by the Sogds. However, with the discovery of this document, Yanluo-related beliefs that spread and became deep-rooted throughout the Tang Empire no longer need to be attributed to Manichean influence. The idea of being subject to a judicial trial after death, which is not an indigenous Chinese (Han) concept, most likely was introduced together with Buddhism through a western route; therefore, it is no surprise that Yanluo beliefs would settle relatively early in Turfan, which is located on the easternmost edge of Central Asia. It is in this way that such newly discovered tombs and documents reconfirm Turfan's position on the periphery where Han and Western Asian cultures crossed paths.

Period II

Although late 5th century documents concerning the Kingdom of Gaochang existed prior to the Chinese excavation of Turfan, the work done at the Yanghai Cemetery in 1997 and 2006 produced some very interesting artifacts. The research published by Rong Xinjiang 栄新江 [2007d] introduces a ledger from the time Gaochang was ruled by the Kan 闞 family, recording the foreign emissaries welcomed by that family from such places as the Mongol nomadic state of Juan-juan 柔然 and the Southern Dynasty states and the names of the Gaochang oases and subjects who presented each emissary with men and domestic animals. The latter half of the 5th century marked a time of relatively friendly relations between the Hephthalite people and Juan-juan; and it was at the end of that century that the Northern Wei Dynasty initiated a policy of rapid expansion in both the eastern and western directions. This is why the ledger in question is such an important source to view the Mongol-Han international political situation in Central Asia just prior to that time. There is also evidence of Turfan functioning as an important point of articulation in eastern Eurasian international relations.

The Yanghai site has also produced many new documents from Gaochang under the rule of the Qu 麹 family at the beginning of the 6th century, but let us turn instead to the inscribed bricks unearthed from many sites, using the example of the tombs at the Ancient City of Jiaohe site. According to the research published by Zhang Mingxin 張銘心 [2007], many epitaphs were excavated from the mausoleum of the Kang 康 clan. One very interesting brick contains the phrase, "Kang Yexiang 康 業相, the *shangjiang* 商将 of the residents of Jiaohe Prefecture." If *shangjiang* were to be a reference to the Sogds, the term *sartpaw* 薩宝, meaning merchant leader, immediately comes to mind.

Since in Turfan the term sart- 薩簿 was one variation of 薩宝, there is a distinct possibility that 商将 represents the Chinese equivalent. The discovery of the Kang family tomb clearly shows that the Sogd settlement of Turfan proceeded rapidly in other locations beside Qara = khoja.

Period III

What is probably the most noteworthy research topic related to this period is the existence of a Sogdian document (A) and related Chinese documents (B) discovered at the Badamu Cemetery site in 2004. While (A) is written in Sogdian, an official Chinese seal has been affixed to it, indicating that the document was issued by the Tang Dynasty bureaucracy.

From the analysis of the seal, we know that the document was sent from the government offices of Jinmanzhou 金満州, which was designated as a *jimizhoufu* 羈縻州府, a specially administered border province established north of Mt. Tianshan to keep ethnic groups under surveillance, to the government offices of Xizhou 西州 [Tulufan Diqu Wenwuju 2006:40–41; Yoshida 2007:49–52]. Although such a special administrative unit was located east of Mt. Tianshan, this is the first instance we know of in which the Tang Dynasty allowed its official documents to be drafted in a language other than Chinese. This revelation alone has very significant implications about how we understand the Tang Dynasty state.

Turning to (B), which are also official Turfan Chinese documents found in 2006, the detailed research done by [Rong, Li, and Meng 2008b] has revealed that they contain a number of items in a discussion during the Longshuo 龍朔 era (661–663) concerning the repatriation of the Qarluqs to their homeland. Furthermore we find that 1) the name of that homeland is "Jinshan" 金山, 2) the problem was directly handled by the government offices of Anbei 安北, and 3) their findings were sent to the Xinzhou government offices. What is particularly interesting here is that we now have a clue as to where the administrative headquarters of Anbei were located during the Lonshuo era.

The Turfan documents dating back to the Tang Dynasty administration of Xizhou have contributed a great deal to our concrete, practical knowledge of Tang Dynasty institutions, including contents of the Buddhist priesthood registry revealed by documents unearthed at the Badamu Cemetery site. Although the conventional historiographical compilations indicate that the Tang Dynasty did have a system of registering ordained Buddhist priests, they tell us nothing about what the resulting registries actually looked like. This is why the discovery of an actual priesthood registry in Turfan is so important to the study of the history of Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, one Zhang Yanxiang 張延相, who is recorded in the registers, seems at first glance to be merely the father of a priest; however, a comparison with other records identifies him as also a *shamen* 沙 門 (*śramana*) member of the priesthood under the rule of the Qu family. During the time the Tang Dynasty operated its government headquarters in Xizhou, one task was to round up persons who had unceremoniously donned frocks and assumed Buddhist names in order to restrict Buddhist clerical activities to only those who were state-certified. The Turfan register indicates that in the case of the Zhang family, only the son was statecertified. As in all other areas of historical research, the recent wave of interest in the study of social history directed at the practices and traditions of everyday life is beginning to infiltrate Turfan studies, as well [Lin

2008].

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the 21st century has witnessed the continuing discovery of new paleographic and material artifacts at excavation sites in the Turfan region, and it is the Chinese scholarly community which has now taken the lead in furthering the historical study of 4th through 8th century Central Asia and China based on those discoveries. However, we should also mention that there is a tendency among Chinese historians of Turfan to concentrate their research on the periods of Han control over the region. Although it is a fact that the Chinese documents excavated from Turfan are far more numerous than those of other languages, even the archeological exhibitions held in Xinjiang Province itself tend to be centered upon the periods of Han control.

Furthermore, while not exclusively a Chinese problem *per se*, it is truly unfortunate that although there is a common recognition concerning the importance of the science of paleo-diplomatic analysis, there still exists neither a shared methodology nor commonly held conclusions. In order to make the best use of excavated documents in the study of history, no one would disagree that the most important initial task is to transform them into practical historical source materials, which implies that the stage of merely examining contents of what they record must come to an end, as soon as we firmly establish an analytical methodology for the science of paleo-diplomatics.

This is not to ignore the surveys and investigations conducted by such scholars as Fujieda Akira 藤枝晃, Pan Jixing 潘吉星, and Jean-Pierre Drége. These three "codicologists" are involved in building the fundamentals of a science of paleo-diplomatics that can analyze even the paper and ink used to draft the documents. In his comments on the warnings issued by Fujieda about the existence of forgeries, Ikeda On [2003] has stated regarding the value of the Dunhuang collection that we are now at a point where it has become necessary to accumulate objective data from the manuscripts themselves and establish criteria that will form a science of paleo-diplomatics.

On another front, as the study of Turfan and Dunhuang rapidly develops as an internationally open joint venture, we observe in the Chinese scholarly community a very alert reaction to such tendencies towards globalization and integration of the research effort. Finally, regarding the question of who will continue this enormous and time-consuming task

in the future, of course, the "more the merrier" is our best case scenario. In this respect human-resource rich China seems to be far more fortunate than Japan, where universities are the locus of research, resulting in specialists strapped for time and waning enrollment of younger scientists. In these terms alone, China will have to become the center of Turfan studies in the future.

—Originally written in Japanese

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INDIVIDUAL AND JOINT RESEARCH

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