

SELECTED TREASURES OF TURFAN RELICS

تۇرپان

吐鲁番

文物精粹

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前言

地理環境

吐魯番地區位於新疆維吾爾自治區東部，地處吐魯番盆地內，下轄吐魯番市、鄯善縣、托克遜縣。南抵庫魯克山，與巴音郭楞蒙古自治州相鄰；北至天山分水嶺，與烏魯木齊、奇臺、吉木薩爾等市縣毗連。

吐魯番盆地是新疆東天山中較大的山間盆地，也是世界上最低的內陸盆地之一，盆地內的艾丁湖低於海平面 154 米。這裏夏季的氣溫特別高，全國絕對最高氣溫(48.1℃)就出現在這裏。盆地一年的降水量不足 16.6 毫米，而蒸發量却高達 3003.9 毫米。火焰山自西而東橫亘盆地中央，將綠洲分隔成兩部分。發源於高山上的條條河流及人工開鑿的坎兒井等流水匯入盆地，滋潤着這片綠洲，從古至今為人類提供了最基本的生存資源。

吐魯番市區鳥瞰

*A birds-eye view of
Turfan city*



遠古時期的吐魯番總體說來氣候是溫暖濕潤的。這裏曾屬於古地中海的一部分，現在的岩層裏保存有吐魯番鱉和呈現出地方性特徵的珊瑚、貝殼化石。此後的侏羅紀地層裏也有以火焰山龍命名的恐龍化石。當然最著名的當屬距今兩千萬年左右的天山副巨犀的化石，它是今天犀牛的祖先之一，是曾經生活在陸地上的最大的哺乳動物，是吐魯番博物館自然歷史陳列的鎮館之寶。

進入到人類生活時期，吐魯番的氣候在喜馬拉雅造山運動影響下變得極端的炎熱乾旱，由於獨特的地理特徵和氣候環境，使得大量在其他地區難以保存的有機質文物，如乾尸、絲毛織品、皮革製品、文書、食品等得以完整地保存下來，使當地成爲一個巨大的天然博物館。吐魯番的文物古迹在新疆乃至全國都佔有特殊的地位，是名副其實的“文物大區”。目前已被確定爲全國重點文物保護單位的有交河故城，雅爾湖石窟，交河故城溝西、溝北墓地，高昌故城，阿斯塔那古墓群，柏孜克里克石窟，洋海墓地，吐峪溝石窟，臺藏塔，蘇公塔和坎兒井等十一處。

歷史沿革

早在舊石器時代晚期，這一帶就有人類活動的痕迹。

對吐魯番盆地史前時期古代遺迹的考古研究已持續了近一個世紀，特別是通過對蘇貝希遺址及墓地、洋海墓地、交河溝北及溝西墓地的發掘研究證明，從公元前1000年中期開始，在吐魯番盆地居住着後來以“姑師（車師）”命名的古代民族，已進入鐵器時代，過着農牧結合的生活。姑師（車師）人世居吐魯番盆地，交河城及其附近一帶是他們活動的中心區域。據史書記載，至遲在公元前102年以前，姑師已經立國。有“車師前國，王治交河城，河水分流繞城下”的記載，指明交河城爲車師前國的都城。

隨着西漢王朝與匈奴鬥爭的進一步展開，漢朝的軍事力量逐漸進入車師前王國境內。在軍事打擊下，姑師分裂爲車師八國，漢朝因此暫時控制了西域的南北兩道。但直到漢與匈奴爲控制西域及絲路北道，展開了“五爭車師”的持久戰，其結果是

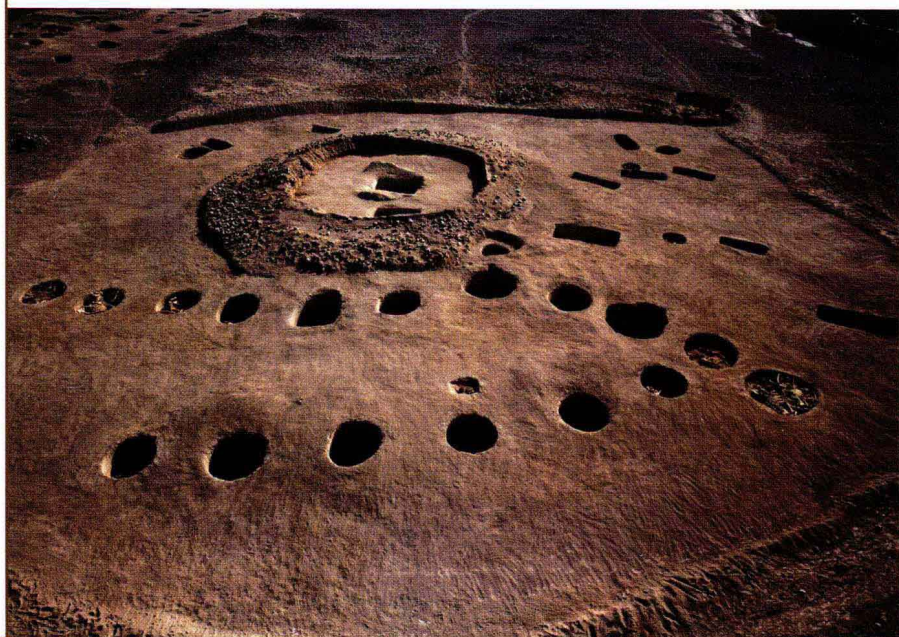
漢朝開始在吐魯番駐軍屯田，標誌着吐魯番已在西漢王朝的直接管屬之下。

西漢末年、新莽時期，西域大地變亂，社會動蕩。東漢直到明帝永平十六年（公元73年），政權日趨鞏固，在班超、班勇父子的努力下，西域又重歸漢朝。

公元4世紀初，晉王朝崩頹，中原大地戰亂頻繁，士民避難河西、西域，大批漢族移民由河西走廊遷至高昌，不僅改變了吐魯番地區的民族構成，還使得當地經濟、文化有了空前的發展。

車師王陵

King's Graves of the
Cheshi Kingdom



吐魯番盆地雖然不大，但却在一個很長的歷史時期並存着兩個政權，即高昌郡和車師國。

前涼建興十五年（公元327年）始置高昌郡，約在北魏太平真君十一年（公元450年），高昌郡獨立成為高昌國並滅掉車師國。

高昌國經歷了闐、張、馬、麴四個王朝，直到唐貞觀十四年（公元640年），李世民命侯君集伐高昌，改置高昌為西州，置安西都護府於交河城。

唐末，西州陷於吐蕃。隨後回鶻首領僕固俊自北庭取西州，立國於高昌城，史稱高昌(西州)回鶻。

12世紀初，高昌回鶻王畢勒哥歸附於建立西遼的耶律大石。蒙古興起後，高昌回鶻擺脫了西遼的統治，於公元1209年臣附成吉思汗。到了14世紀，元朝的西北番王改宗伊斯蘭教，對仍信仰佛教的高昌地區展開聖戰，高昌國滅亡，伴隨着這一地區宗教文化的交替，高昌、交河城被徹底廢棄了。公元1414年明朝使者陳誠出使西域時，所見到的高昌、交河城已是成為廢棄的荒城。

從這些梗概的歷史記錄可以看出：從公元前2世紀以前，直到公元14世紀，吐魯番作為西域東部一個重要的政治、軍事中心，從最早的车師王都，到高昌郡、高昌國和唐西州，以至高昌回鶻王國時期，至少活躍達一千五百餘年，為後人留下了諸如高昌故城、交河故城等震撼世界的文化遺產，成為人們憑吊絲綢之路昔日輝煌的不朽見證。

文物古迹

一、史前時期

考古研究證明，從距今四萬年前的舊石器時代晚期開始，吐魯番就已有人類出現。當時，這裏的人們是以狩獵和採集為主要生活來源，採用的是一種稱之為細石器工藝的技術來生產狩獵用的石鏃和剥取獸皮、切割獸肉的石刀刃。

到了青銅時代，這裏的考古文化顯示出游牧與農耕的雙重社會性格。當時生活在盆地的人們，夏季在周圍涼爽的高山上放牧，冬季把牛羊趕下山，生活在較為溫暖的盆地裏面。有一小部分人夏季仍留在炎熱的盆地裏，從事農業和園藝業生產。從出土的農作物品種看，當時這裏既種植從西亞傳入的大麥、小麥、青稞、葡萄，也種植從中原傳來的粟。

這裏所出彩陶上的倒三角紋是吐魯番盆地青銅時代到初鐵器時代古代先民獨具特色的紋飾，也就是後來姑師（車師）人祖先的紋飾。此外，其他的出土文物也都顯示出多來源的文化背景。如馬具就帶有歐亞草原游牧文化的特徵；葡萄藤是國內目前發現的最早的葡萄藤標本，將吐魯番葡萄種植的歷史至少從張騫通西域的西漢向前推移約三四百年。而銅鐵複合馬具、複合弓、箜篌、皮製的馬鎧等，既是揭示吐魯番盆地從史前時期到西漢早期社會發展的實物歷史書，也是這裏從青銅時代到初鐵器時代的轉折點，還是探討中亞地區綠洲農業和其周邊游牧業關係的最佳研究標本，以及證明前絲綢之路存在的一個重要物證。

上述材料說明在史前時期，吐魯番盆地就成為歐亞大陸諸多文明交匯的十字路口。位於南俄草原的塞人帶來了先進的騎馬文明；位於南西伯利亞—阿勒泰山地區的古代文明帶來了黃金和奇異的動物紋飾；西亞的文明則帶來了大麥、小麥和海貝等珍寶；而華夏文明則通過河西走廊帶來了粟和絲綢，在洋海墓地就出土有西漢以前的絲綢織物，其繅絲的技法和織法與內地的完全不同，似乎是本地的產品，如成定論，那麼，吐魯番地區存在絲綢工藝的歷史將推進到西漢張騫鑿空西域之前。

二、歷史時期

隨着西漢勢力的進入，張騫鑿空西域，橫貫歐亞大陸的絲綢之路就此誕生，而吐魯番則是絲路上的一個重要的交通樞紐和文化交匯中心。東方的華夏文明，北方草原的遊牧文明，歐洲的希臘、羅馬文明，西亞的波斯、阿拉伯文明，南亞的印度文明，均在此交流薈萃。古代世界的幾大宗教，如祆教、佛教、道教、摩尼教、景教和伊斯蘭教都曾在這裏傳播。而傳播文明的媒介——文字，在這裏就殘存有十六種古文字之多。這些來自東西方的文明在此互相交流、互相吸收、互相融合，對古代吐魯番地區經濟、文化的發展，曾起過積極的作用。

吐峪溝石窟位於鄯善縣吐峪溝鄉，開鑿於火焰山中的吐峪溝河谷兩側的絕壁上，即唐代以前的“丁谷窟寺”，大約始鑿於前涼設置高昌郡時期，直至回鶻高昌後期仍在續鑿。絕大部分洞窟已經塌毀，現存四十六個洞窟。這裏出土了中國最早的寫經實物：西晉元康六年（公元296年）高僧竺法護譯寫的《諸佛要集經》，是中國早期佛教洞窟中具有重要地位的一處。

交河故城

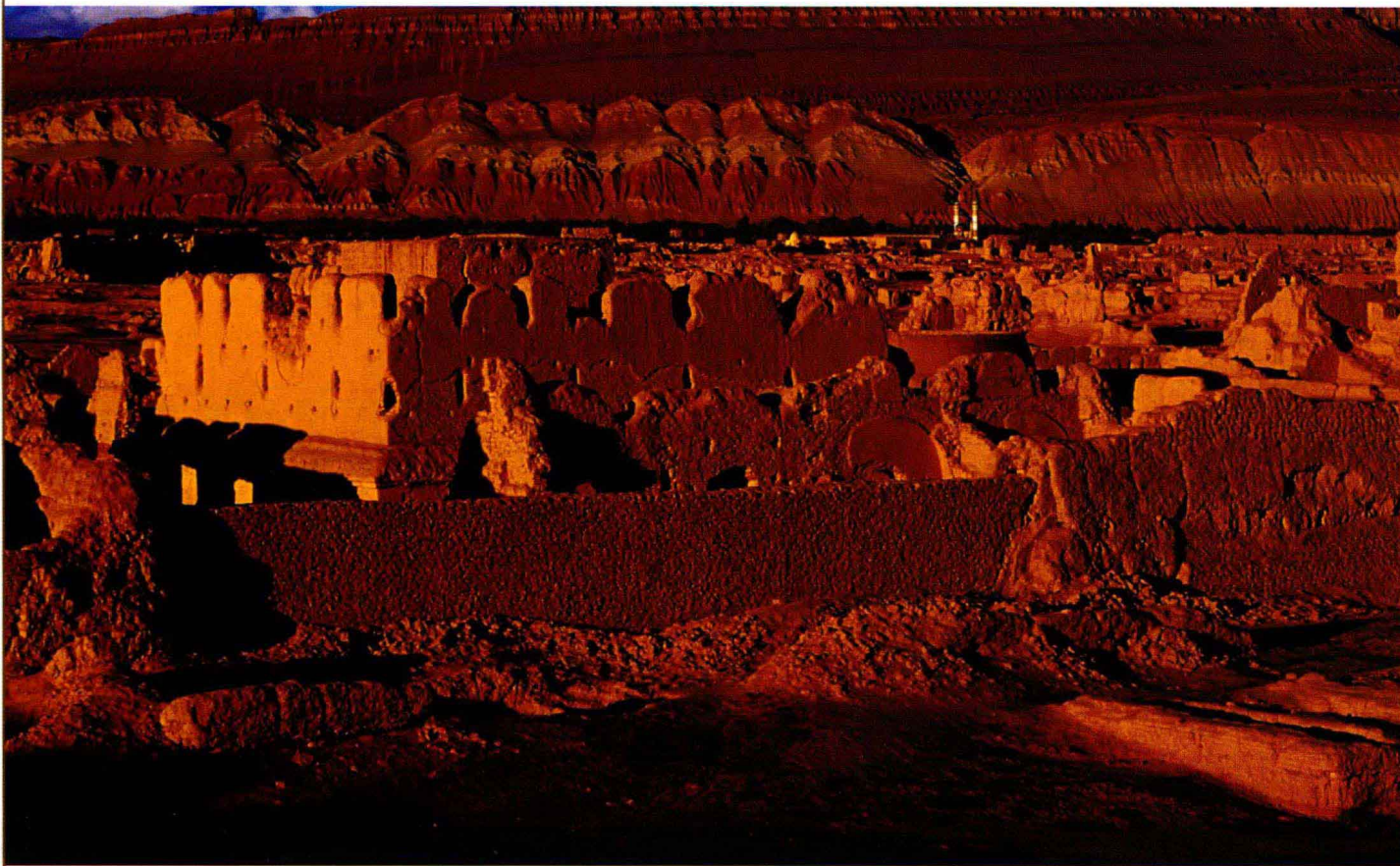
Jiaohe Ancient City



柏孜克里克石窟鑿建在火焰山木頭溝谷的西側懸崖上，大約始建於公元5世紀的麴氏高昌時期，時稱“寧戎窟寺”，回鶻高昌時期改建成王室貴族的寺院，直至公元14世紀的元朝仍在續鑿。絕大部分洞窟已遭毀壞，現存八十三個洞窟，但却保留下來許多珍貴壁畫，如關於密教、摩尼教的內容都具有極高的學術及觀賞價值。從20世紀80年代初發掘的文書看，這裏曾經還是摩尼教東方教區的一個中心所在。柏孜克里克石窟清理出的文書和碑刻，以回鶻文較多，也有漢文、梵文、婆羅米文、粟特文、突厥文、西夏文等。內容有契約、佛經、摩尼經、詩歌、史籍抄本等；有手寫本，也有木刻印本，是研究高昌佛教和回鶻歷史等極有價值的資料。其中一件用粟特文書寫的摩尼教經籍，長達3米，內有彩色插圖，為不可多得的摩尼教文物珍品。

交河故城坐落在吐魯番城西約10公里的雅爾乃孜溝谷的島狀臺地上。崖壁峭立，河水分流繞城下，形勢險要。早在漢代就已是車師前部王的治所。雖經歲月更迭，交河城却一直沿用到公元15世紀，而屹立至今。城中央有一條縱貫南北的中心大道，通向全城最宏大的建築——大佛寺。城內東側北部，寺院集中，殘塔林立，在寺院區東北角有一尊金剛寶座式佛塔，四隅有一百座小塔構成圍繞大塔的塔林，是我國地面上現存最早的金剛寶座式佛塔。故城東側，大小院落鱗次櫛比；中部高地上為官署遺迹；北端為墓葬區。與故城的北側、西側隔溝相望，有溝北、溝西墓地，為交河故城一帶居民從車師國到高昌國，最後結束於唐西州時期的墓地。在故城的西北方向，隔溝相望，還有雅爾湖石窟，為唐代的“西谷寺”遺迹，保存有非常珍貴的突厥文題記。

高昌故城
Gaochang Ancient City



高昌故城位於吐魯番市東南 40 公里的火焰山南麓的沖擊平原上。該城在兩漢時期為中央王朝的軍事壁壘，魏晉時情況不明，十六國的前涼時期為高昌郡治，北魏中期為高昌國都，唐滅高昌後為西州治所，回鶻高昌時期為國都，稱為亦都護城，元朝毀於宗教戰爭。該城略呈方形，周長 5 公里，城牆有三重，均用夯土築成。宮城在北面，南面為內城，外城殘存一大型寺院建築。

阿斯塔那及哈拉和卓墓葬群，位於高昌故城北面，面積 10 平方公里以上。為晉唐時期高昌城及其附近居民的家族墓地。當時的人們時興聚族而葬，每個家族在這裏都修建有自己的塋院，家族的人去世後按輩分埋葬在一起，形成了綿延五六公里的墓葬區。僅解放後就清理了四百多座墓葬，由於氣候乾燥，所謂的吐魯番文獻，特別是紙質文書，大都在這裏出土，堪稱是歷史檔案庫。這裏出土的文書，最早的寫成於西晉泰始九年（公元 273 年），最晚止於唐大曆十三年（公元 778 年），前後達五百年之久。文書中有契約、籍賬、官府文書、私人信札、經籍寫本、隨葬衣物疏等，內容涉及政治、軍事、經濟、思想、文化等各個方面。大自典章制度、重大歷史事件和歷史人物的活動，小到純屬私人生活瑣事，為研究吐魯番、西域，乃至中古中國的這段歷史，提供了直接生動的資料，有的還涉及當時的國際交往，故有吐魯番的地下博物館之稱。

臺藏塔南距高昌故城約 1 公里，為高昌國至唐代的佛教建築，形制為方形。塔高 20 米，塔東面與北面均有佛教洞龕。西面塔壁中有洞，貫穿牆壁，南壁已毀。由於距高昌故城較近，又是佛教建築，出土有唐代的曆書，充分反映了當時高昌地區佛教的興盛。

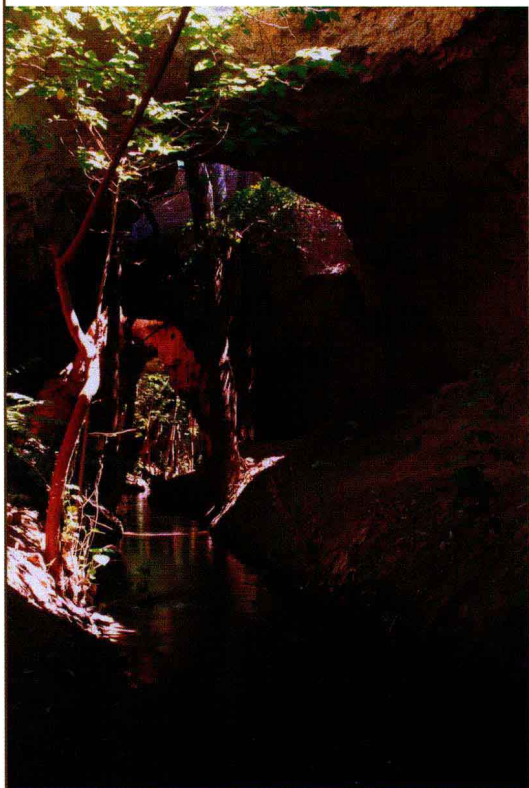
坎兒井

The Karez

蘇公塔亦稱額敏塔，位於吐魯番市東南 3 公里，是清代吐魯番郡王額敏和卓的磚質紀念塔，建於公元 1776 年。塔高 37 米，塔身呈圓柱形，塔基直徑 10 米，自下而上逐漸收縮。塔外用青灰色磚砌疊出波紋、菱格、豎式條紋、團花等各種幾何圖案，顯得樸素而莊嚴。塔內可沿螺旋狀排列的階梯登臨塔頂。塔上端還砌出窗櫺。塔下豎立着一塊漢文、維文合璧的石碑。

坎兒井與萬里長城、京杭大運河並稱為中國古代三大工程。吐魯番的坎兒井總數近千條，全長約 5000 公里。坎兒井的結構，大體上是由豎井、地下渠道、地面渠道和“滌壩”（小型蓄水池）四部分組成，吐魯番盆地北部的天山山脈，春夏時節有大量雪水和雨水流下山谷，潛入戈壁灘下。人們利用山坡的坡度，巧妙地創造了坎兒井，將地層中的潛流通過長長的地下井渠，引出地面灌溉農田。坎兒井並不因炎熱、狂風而使水分大量蒸發或渠道淤塞，因而流量穩定，保證了吐魯番綠洲的灌溉農業。

吐魯番博物館由主館和巨犀陳列館兩部分組成，現有藏品五千餘件，是目前新疆地州市中規模最大的博物館。優越的自然條件，眾多的遺址和墓葬，把一些其他地區無法保留下來的文物，如紙文書、絲毛織品、泥塑、木雕、食品等遺物珍藏到了今天，



使吐魯番博物館的陳列獨具特點。所陳列的史前巨犀、絲綢、毛紡織品、皮革製品、兵器、乾尸、各種文字的文書等都較完好地保存到現在。小麥、青稞等農作物，葡萄、棉花等經濟作物，是支持吐魯番古代社會經濟的重要生產事業。精巧的點心、餃子展現了古代吐魯番人們的生活畫面，也是自然科學史研究中不可多得的珍貴標本。

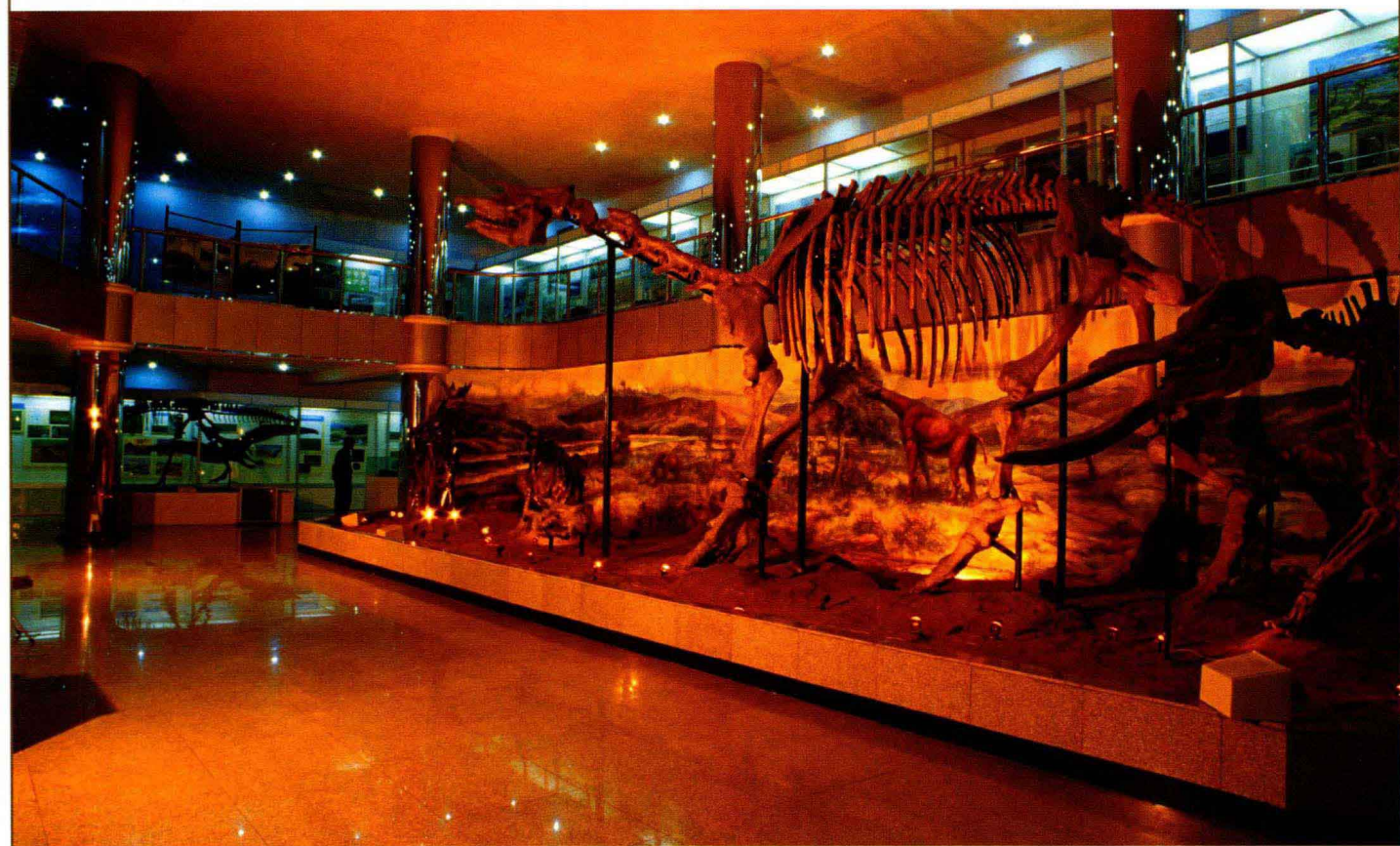
這些國內乃至全世界少見的文物珍品，對人類學、考古學等人文學科和生態環境演變等自然科學的研究，特別是對新疆歷史以及東西方文化交流史的研究有着重要的科學價值。

吐魯番地區這些豐富的文化遺產，古代精美的藝術品早在 19 世紀末就被外國的一些“探險隊”盜掘、毀壞並走私出境，流散在英國、法國、德國、俄國、瑞典、土耳其、韓國、日本、美國、印度等國，在異國的土地上經過百年的培育，吐魯番學逐漸成長為一門和敦煌學齊名的國際顯學，並且造就出許多國際一流的大家來。但是，面對這些遠在異國他鄉的吐魯番文物和自己這個多災多難的祖國，在解放以前從事吐魯番學研究祇能是一個可望而不可及的幻想，如同敦煌學一樣，吐魯番學成為我國學者們的一段傷心史，研究的主動權掌握在外國學者手中。

自從 20 世紀 50 年代，特別是 80 年代以來，經過新中國幾代學者筆路藍縷的潛心研究，吐魯番學的基礎構建已發生了質的變化，研究的主動權又逐漸回到了國人的手中。進入 21 世紀，隨着國家對吐魯番文物保護、研究工作力度的加強，必將有大量新的材料出現，吐魯番學的研究又將迎來一個新的高潮，將會有更多、更精美的文物展現在世人面前。

巨犀化石

Paraceratherium Fossil



Preface

Geographic Environment

The Turfan Region lies in the east of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and is situated in the Turfan Basin, consisting of Turfan City, Shanshan County and Tuokexun County. To the south, it reaches the Kuluke Mountain and is adjacent to the Bayinguolin District of the Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture; to the north, it extends to the watershed of the Celestial Mountains and is next to Urumchi, Qitai and Jimusal.

The Turfan Basin is one of the largest basins in the middle section of the Celestial Mountains and is the lowest inland basin in the world. The Ayding Lake in the basin is 154 meters below sea level. The summer temperature here is very high, with a national record of the highest temperature of 48.1 degrees centigrade. The annual precipitation of the basin is no more than 16.6 millimeters, but the annual evaporation is as high as 3,003.9 millimeters. The Flaming Mountain runs across it in the middle and divides it into two parts. Several rivers from high mountains and some man-ditched karez all gather in the basin, nourishing the oasis, providing basic living resources for human beings from ancient times to the present.

In the pre-historic age, Turfan was generally warm and humid. This place used to be part of the old Mediterranean, which can be proved by the fossils of Turfan cods and corals and shells discovered in the terranes at the present time. Dinosaur fossils named after Turfan saurus were also found in the terrane of Jurassic period. But among all, the most famous is the fossil of a giant Tianshan indricotherium dated 20 billion years ago which is a landmark treasure in the line of natural history display of the Turfan Museum. Indricotherium was the largest terrestrial mammal ever existed and was the ancestor of present rhinoceros.

When human activities appeared, the climate of Turfan started to become extremely hot and arid because of the influence of the formation of the Himalayan Mountain. Thanks to its unique geographic features and climate, a large amount of organic relics that can hardly be preserved in other places, like desiccated corpses, silk and wool textile, leather products, documents and food, have been kept in a relatively complete state, which makes Turfan a great natural museum. The cultural relics and old sites of Turfan are of particular importance nationwide, and Turfan is a real "big area of cultural relics". Till now, there have been 11 places that are recognized as "National Key Preservation Unit", including Jiaohe Old City, Yal Lake Grotto, Gouxu (west of the ditch) and Goubai (north of the ditch) Cemeteries in Jiaohe Old City, Gaochang Old City, Astana ancient tombs, Bozikelike Grotto, Yanghai Cemetery, Tuyugou Grotto, Taizang Pagoda, Sugong Tower and Karez.

Evolution of History

There were traces of human activities in this area as early as the late Palaeolithic Age.

The archeological research on pre-historic remains in the Turfan Basin has been continued for almost a

century. Especially through the excavations and researches of Subeshi Site and Cemetery, Yanghai Cemetery, Jiaohe Goubei and Gouxu Cemetery, it is proved that by the middle period of 1,000 BC, the ancient inhabitants of the Turfan Basin (later named Gushi or Cheshi) had entered the Iron Age, leading a combined life of agriculture and husbandry. The Gushi people lived in the Turfan Basin from generation to generation, with Jiaohe City and the adjacent areas as their social center. According to some historical documents, before 102 BC at the latest, Gushi had established a kingdom. As reported in the ancient document that “in the early kingdom of Cheshi, the King ruled Jiaohe City, branches of a river surrounding the city”, it clearly indicated that Jiaohe City was the capital city of the early Cheshi Kingdom.

With the development of the conflicts between Western Han Dynasty and the Huns, the military force of Han Dynasty gradually entered the territory of the early Cheshi Kingdom. Upon military attacks, Gushi was divided into 8 kingdoms of Cheshi, and Han Dynasty therefore obtained the control of the southern and northern routes of the west region for the time being. This condition continued until the long wars of “five fights for Cheshi” between Han Dynasty and the Huns over the control of the west region and the northern route of the silk road. As a result, Han Dynasty started to station soldiers at Turfan to open up wasteland along the frontiers. This represents the fact that Turfan at that time was already under direct jurisdiction of Western Han Dynasty.

In the late years of Western Han, i.e. the Xinmang period, the west region was in turmoil and turbulence. In Eastern Han Dynasty, the imperial regime didn't become stable and powerful until the 16th year of Emperor Yongping's reign (AD 73), and the west region reunited with the Han Dynasty due to the contributions of the father and son, Ban Chao and Ban Yong.

In the early 4th century, Jin Dynasty collapsed and the inner land fell into disaster of wars. As a result,



吐峪溝

Tuyugou

many people moved to Gansu and the west region to be away from wars, and a large amount of immigrants of Han nationality shifted to Gaochang through the Gansu Corridor, which not only changed the ethnic constitution of the Turfan region, but also brought on major economic and cultural development of the region.

Though the Turfan Basin is not a big area, there was quite a long period when two regimes co-existed over the place, i.e. Gaochang Prefecture and Cheshi Kingdom.

Gaochang Prefecture was first established in the 15th year of Emperor Jianxing's reign of the Former Liang Dynasty, and around the 11th year of Emperor Taipingzhen's reign of the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 450), Gaochang Prefecture claimed independence and established Gaochang Kingdom, then suppressed Cheshi Kingdom.

Gaochang Kingdom experienced four dynasties of Kan, Zhang, Ma and Qu. Until the 14th year of Emperor Zhenguan's reign of the Tang Dynasty (AD 640), by order of Li Shimin, Hou Junji conquered Gaochang and converted Gaochang into Xizhou, setting up the Anxi (Western Peace) Protectorate at Jiaohe City.

At the end of Tang Dynasty, Xizhou was conquered by Tubo. Later on, the Uyghur leader Pu Gujun took Xizhou from Beiting, then established a kingdom in Gaochang City, which was referred to as Gaochang (Xizhou) Uyghur in history.

In the early 12th century, the Uyghur King of Gaochang, Bi Lege, submitted to the authority of Yelu

交河星韵



Dashi who established the Western Liao Dynasty. When the Mongolian rose, Gaochang Uyghur got rid of the rule of the Western Liao and submitted to Genghis Khan in 1209. In the 14th century, the north-western prefects converted to Islam and started a jihad against Gaochang which had belief in Buddha. Gaochang Kingdom perished. With the change of religious cultures, Gaochang and Jiaohe City were completely desolate. In 1414, when the ambassador Chen Cheng of Qing Dynasty was on his diplomatic mission to the west region, the Gaochang and Jiaohe City he saw was in ruins.

From this outline of history we can conclude that from before the 2nd century BC to AD 14th century, Turfan, as an important political and military center, evolved from the initial Cheshi Kingdom to Gaochang Prefecture, Gaochang Kingdom, Xizhou of the Tang Dynasty, and to the Gaochang Uyghur Kingdom period, had remained active at the historical stage for at least 1,500 years, leaving behind an invaluable world cultural heritage like Gaochang Old City and Jiaohe Old City which served as an immortal proof to remind us of the prosperous past of the silk road.

Cultural Relics and Sites

I. Pre-historic Period

Archeological researches demonstrate that about 40,000 years ago, in the late palaeolithic age, human already existed in Turfan. The inhabitants at that time generally lived on hunting and collecting, using microlithic skills to produce tools like stone arrow-heads for hunting and stone blades for peeling animal hide and cutting meat.

In the Bronze Age, the archeological culture of Turfan represents the double social characteristics of nomadic and farming life. At that time, in summer, the inhabitants of the basin herded in the cool mountains around, while in winter, they drove the flocks and herds down the mountains and lived in the warmer basin. A small group of people remained in the hot basin in summer, engaged in farming and gardening. Judging from the unearthed crop varieties, they grew the crops introduced from West Asia such as barley, wheat, Qingke (black corn) and grapes, and also grew millet brought from inner land.

The upside-down triangle pattern on the painted pottery unearthed here is a unique design pattern of the ancient inhabitants in Turfan Basin during the period from Bronze Age to early Iron Age, which is later used by the ancestors of Cheshi people. In addition, other unearthed relics also reflect a multi-origin cultural background. For example, harnesses represent the feature of Eurasian nomadic culture; grapevines are the earliest specimens among those found in China, which may backdate the planting history of grapes to 300-400 years earlier than the Western Han period when Zhang Qian traveled through the west region; and those historical objects revealing the social development of the Turfan Basin from pre-historic period to early Western Han period like bronze-iron compound harnesses and bows, harps and leather horse loricae, ect. are the indications of the turning point between Bronze Age and early Iron Age, which are also the most ideal research samples for studying the relationship between the Middle Asia oasis agriculture and the surrounding nomadic society, and a vital proof of the existence of the early silk road.

The above illustrated that even in pre-historic period, Turfan Basin had already been a crossroad of various Eurasian civilizations. The Saikes from southern Russian prairie introduced advanced riding civilization; the ancient civilization of southern Siberia – Altay Mountain area brought in gold and amazing animal design patterns; west Asia civilization contributed barley, wheat, seashell and other treasures; while the Chinese civilization brought in millet and silk through Gansu Corridor. There were

silk fabrics dated before Western Han Dynasty unearthed from Yanghai Cemetery, the filature skill and technique of which are totally different from those made in the inner land, therefore it should be made in Turfan. If this conclusion can be confirmed, the silk history of Turfan can be traced back to the time before Western Han Dynasty when Zhang Qian opened up a channel to the west region.

II. Historical Period

With the entry of the force of Western Han Dynasty, Zhang Qian opened up a channel to the west region. As a result, the Silk Road running across the whole Eurasia began to emerge, and Turfan was an important traffic midpoint and a cultural exchange center on the Silk Road. The oriental Chinese civilization, the nomadic civilization of the northern prairie, the European Greek and Roman civilizations, the West Asia Persian and Arabic civilizations, and the southern Asia Indian civilization all gathered here and communicated with each other. The major religions of the ancient world like Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Manicheism, Nestorianism and Islam, all had prevailed here once. And characters, the medium of cultural communications, remained in a good variety of 16 types. Civilizations from the east and the west met here, communicating with each other, learning from each other, and mingling with each other, which greatly advanced the development of economy and culture in Turfan Region.

The Tuyugou Grotto is located in Tuyugou Village, Shanshan Gounty. The grotto was excavated in the cliff on both sides of Tuyugou valley in the Flaming Mountain, which was called Dinggu Grotto Temple before Tang Dynasty. The grotto was initiated in the Former Liang period when the Gaochang Prefecture was established, and the construction continued until the late Uyghur Gaochang period. Most caverns already collapsed, only 46 remained till now. This is the site where the earliest Buddhist written objects in China were excavated: the Collection of Major Sutras' Digestion by hierarch Zhufa Huyi in

臺藏塔

Taizang Pagoda

