

Investigations and research on the Tocharian manuscripts and wall inscriptions currently preserved in the Kucha region

Rong Xinjiang
Peking University

Since the Institute of the Kizil Grottoes was promoted to the Xinjiang Kucha Research Academy, the Center for Research on Ancient Chinese History (Peking University) and the Institute for Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions (School of Chinese Classics, Renmin University of China) have directed collaboratively with the Academy in the investigation and the study of the textual materials presently kept in the region of Ancient Kucha. As one of the organizers of this project, I would like to make a brief summary of its first phase.

The scope of our investigation include the grottoes located in Kizil, Ishäk, Kumtura, Kizil-Qargha, Simsim, Mazar-bach, Subashi and other sites, especially the inscriptions and manuscripts found there. Several essential historical issues such as the geography and the transportation system of Ancient Kucha are also our main concerns.

Since 2010, our collaborative project has produced fruitful results. Important works include a general survey of most inscriptions and graffiti in Tocharian and other languages in the aforementioned sites, an investigation and research of the wooden tablets and tallies kept in the Xinjiang Kucha Research Academy, and a preliminary study on the wall inscriptions surviving in the grottoes of Ishäk, Kizil-Qargha, and Kizil. Through this project, we hope to provide new prospects to the general study of the history and languages of Ancient Kucha.