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研究課題：内陸アジアにおける書写文化の急発展と諸胡の興起  
(Boom of writing and rise of "Huns" in Inner Asia)

専門分野：古代中国とイスラム化以前の中央アジアの歴史学・文献学  
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フランス国立高等研究院への留学中、ヨーロッパなどに保管される、数多くの中央アジア出土写本を調査した。2009年には、天山とタクラマカン砂漠に挟まれた古代亀茲(クチャ)の地域で現地調査を開始した。その主要な成果は、趙莉・榮新江編『亀茲石窟題記』(全三巻、2020)として出版された。並行して、自身の研究では、クチャ・カローシュティー文字の解読、各国探検隊記録の対照分析など、その他のテーマも扱い、2015年には龍谷大学で非破壊デジタル顕微鏡による手法を学んだ。広義の中央アジア史については、2021年にコレージュ・ド・フランスで講義を共同で担当し、考古学と言語資料を組み合わせて、漢籍資料が有する価値を考証した。

自眉プロジェクトでは、文献学と文化史の観点から、イスラム化以前の内陸アジアの繁栄を復元することをめざして、これまでの経験と構想を結び付けたい。

During my study at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, I started investigating numerous manuscripts discovered from this region that are presently kept in Europe and other countries. In 2009, I began to organize fieldwork around Ancient Kucha, a kingdom situated between the Tianshan mountains and the Taklamakan Desert. One of the main results of this fieldwork was published as L. Zhao and X. Rong (eds.), *Cave Inscriptions in Ancient Kucha* (3 vols. 2020). In addition, I have taken other approaches for my individual research, such as the decipherment of the "Kucha-Kharoṣṭhī" script, and the comparative analysis of expedition records. In 2015, I learnt non-destructive digital microscopy at Ryukoku University. As to the History of Central Asia in a broader sense, I helped to open a seminar at the *Collège de France* in 2021 by critically reading Chinese classics together with archaeological and linguistical data. For my Hakubi project, I will integrate my research ideas and experiences in order to reconstruct the prosperity of pre-Islamic Inner Asia from the perspectives of philology and cultural history.

### The *Hu* 胡 peoples in the eyes of Ancient Chinese: A shifting concept

In the *Shiji* 史記, namely the *Record of the Great Historian* finished around 94 BCE, the character *hu* 胡 was commonly used to indicate the "barbarians" in the north and northeast of China. For most of its attestations in this work, the character can be perceived as another name of the Xiongnu 匈奴, the nomadic confederation that threatened the Qin 秦 and Han 漢 dynasties for more than three centuries.

Since the birth of Sinology, scholars have been debating whether the Xiongnu in Chinese sources could be exactly the ancestor of Attila the Hun (? – 453) who invaded Europe. Moreover, in the 1960s, the term "Iranian Huns" was intro-

duced by numismatists to conceptualize the nomadic traits and their respective inscriptions on Central and South Asian coins such as the Kidarites, the "Alkhans", the "Nēzaks" and the Hephthalites. Although the chronology of these coins is under analysis, this issue is to be compared with a well-known phenomenon in Medieval China that the word *Hu* 胡 designated more and more often non-Chinese peoples in Northwest China, Central Asia and Iran. In the 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, *Hu* almost became another name of the Sogdians, an Iranian people based on Samarkand and expert in trade in Eurasia. There seemed to be a group of tribes united under the political identity of Xiongnu/*Hu* 胡 who departed from the foothills of the Altai in waves around 350 – 360 CE;

some crossed the Amou Daria, some crossed the Volga, and some others gradually sedentarized around Sogdiana (in the Sogdian language *xwn*) in today's Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan.

## Development of writing cultures around the Tarim Basin

Side by side with this movement, there also seemed to be a sudden growth of local writing cultures around the oasis states. To take the ones around the Tarim Basin as an example, most of the textual material found there that can be safely dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century or earlier are Chinese ones, usually on wood, although there is also a minor amount of Gāndhārī Buddhist scripture – written on palm leaf folios and birch bark scrolls – which show typical features of the Kharoṣṭhī script in Northwest India. In addition, there are huge collections of wooden and leather documents from Niya and Loulan, at the southern and eastern edges of the basin, respectively, being mainly official and civil ones written in localized Gāndhārī and a regional variant of Kharoṣṭhī. However, their exact dating is still a matter of controversy.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> century on, writing traditions around the basin became divergent. While the administrative tradition of using Gāndhārī and Kharoṣṭhī as the official language and script continued in Kucha for a longer period [Fig. 1], Brāhmī became the standard script to write native languages such as Kuchean (Tocharian B) and Khotanese. It is noteworthy that in this period, the Kucheans usually recycled paper scrolls of Chinese Buddhist texts or used blank paper when copying their Sanskrit and Kuchean literature. This reveals the crucial role of paper in the development of literacy among the oasis states, being partially a ripple effect of the trend of translating the Buddhist canon into Chinese approximately in the same period.

## Paper in Samarkand: The historical truth behind the legend ?

Nowadays, most scholars agree that papermaking was invented or improved by Cai Lun (? – c. 121 CE). Nevertheless, in order to explain its slow spread, people often repeat a story that this technology was introduced into Samarkand after the Battle of Talas. While the fame of paper industry in Samarkand is beyond all doubt, to trace it back to a few Tang 唐 prisoners in 751 CE is questionable. In fact, a series of Sogdian “Ancient Letters” found near Dunhuang 敦煌, being written around the 310s in archaic Sogdian and on paper, implies the possibility that the Sogdians and other western

peoples paid attention to this product at an early stage. In 2017 – 2018, together with Enami Kazuyuki (Emeritus Professor, Ryukoku University), I discovered cotton fibres from a few ancient paper fragments written in Chinese, Sogdian [Fig. 2] and Kharoṣṭhī in the Otani Collection [2, 3]. It implies that some oases around the Tarim Basin fabricated paper by mixing cotton rags and cotton fibres into pulp long before the Tang conquest in the 640s. As a Hakubi Researcher, I will continue to investigate this phenomenon by reflecting the concurrence/competition among various languages, scripts and writing material in Inner Asian societies during the full bloom of their pre-Islamic histories.



Fig. 1 TS 42, a decree issued by Kuchean king, written on a wooden tablet in the Kucha-Gāndhārī language and the Kucha-Kharoṣṭhī script (© BBAW/SBB - Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung). See my text edition in [1].



Fig. 2 Microscopic photograph of Otani 6117, written in an archaic type of the Sogdian script and in an early phase of the Sogdian language, with blurred Chinese text on the other side. Probably written in the late 4<sup>th</sup> century CE near Loulan (© DARC & Omiya Library of the Ryukoku University). Larger image in [3].

## References

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