

**A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT OF
TRANSLATION AND ANNOTATION IN UIGHUR'S
LANGUAGE FOR MATERIALS ABOUT CENTRAL ASIA
(BROAD SENSE) SELECTED FROM THE HISTORY OF
TWENTY-FOUR DYNASTY**

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1. About Preparation for the Project

Rich materials involving the Central Asia (the region including the Mongolian Plateau, the Gansu Corridor, Qinghai, Xinjiang, the basin of Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the southern part of Kazakhstan Grasslands, the northeast Iran, the north part of Afghanistan as well as the northwest part of Pakistan) were collected in the Chinese ancient books - the History of Twenty-four Dynasties, which also are reliable data to study the historical, political, economic, cultural, geographical, national as well as the local conditions and social customs within this area.

In his *The Brief History of Turkstan*, published in 1922, renowned Russian historian Bartold said, "All we have known about Central Asia from 2 B.C.E to 7 C.E are nearly dependent with the Chinese historical data."

In the *Introduction to History and Civilization Research of Central Asia*, published in 1966, another famous French historian Hambes also mentioned, "The foundation of Central Asian historical research would be lost without the sinological research". "The Chinese documents over the past 2000 years are so essential and valuable that only through the Chinese historical data we can know what happened during the history in Central Asia more accurate."

Therefore, in December 1980, on a manuscript symposium on "The History of the Uighur Nationality" called by the Xinjiang History Institute, all the attending scholars believed that in order to study northwest China, especially histories of nationalities in Xinjiang, to fully show the role played in the process of our unified multinational country's formation, development and consolidation by them, to inspire various nationalities' sense of pride for their motherland and their own history, to encourage scholars both local and abroad to study on the Central Asia (two rivers basins mentioned above), it is definitely significant to compile the data relating to the materials about Central Asia selected from the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories, translate them into Uighur's language, annotate them essentially and publish them. Thus, Central Asia, Western Asia, and Turkic peoples in other areas could refer to and make use of these materials. On the symposium, it was suggested this project be undertaken by Xinjiang University.

A research group, which aimed at compiling the data about Central Asia in the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories and translating them into Uyghur's language, was founded in June 1981 by Xinjiang University's Scientific Research Office and experts inside and outside the university started this work.

After Central Asian Cultural Research Institute was established in 1985, the group was absorbed into it, and renamed the Center of Research on Ancient Books.

In that year, this project was set up officially by the National University Committee of the work for Reorganizing and research Ancient Books, which is an institute belongs to the Ministry of Education, and was subsidized by it.

2. About the Progress of the Project

This project, responsible mainly by Professor Chen Shiming, was undertaken by the Center of Research on Ancient Books in Xinjiang University.

The group are made up of 5 research fellows from the Center of Research on Ancient Books and 10 researchers out of the Center with the high-level titles. And its work can be understood by five procedures including to compile historical data, to translate it in Uighur's language, to annotate, and to examine, to edit and check the all above, each procedure goes on with a strict rules and regulations formed on the time.

Of edition of translating the historical data about the Central Asia in the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories into Uighur and annotating them - *Records of Grand Historian* (in 1989), *Book of Han* (in 1994), *Book of Later Han* (in 1997), *Annal of Three Kingdoms*, *Book of Jin*, *Book of Song*" (in 2001), *History of Northern Dynasties* (in 2002) and Translation and Annotation of Historical Data about Central Asia for Southern and Northern Dynasties (in 2004) have already been published by Xinjiang People's Press. *Translation and Annotation of Historical Data related to Central Asia of Tang Five Dynasties* (in 2004) will soon be published, *Translation and Annotation of Historical Data related to Central Asia of Song Dynasty and Yuan Dynasty* and *Translation and Annotation of Historical Data related to Central Asia of Ming Dynasty* are being speeded up for annotation, and they will be published in 2009.

This task is a quite hard job, which involves not only various languages in two major language families (Sino-Tibetan language family and Altai language family) and many challenging linguistics issues, but also many aspects of *History about China* and foreign countries.

When solving every problem, completing every section of translations, making every annotation, and even translating each personal name (of national minority), geographic name (in national minority area), and formal name, a

vast amount of historical data were consulted, and much efforts was made. For example, there exist some words such as personal names, geographic names, formal names, conferred titles, appellations, proper names in data related to Central Asia in the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories, which were transliterated from various languages of the Altai language family. The pronunciation structure and significance for most of those words transliterated are not understood because of great changes in pronunciation between ancient and modern times. It would be difficult to understand for readers if transliterated words were transliterated into Uighur according to their pronunciation. And the accuracy of this work would also be reduced if by doing so. Therefore, on the basis of the actual pronunciation as well as the phonetics knowledge of ancient Chinese and the ancient minority nationalities' languages, the pronunciation' s structure of these words were made clear as possible as necessary, and the words were returned to original words after their significances were ascertained. For instance, “左鹿蠡王”(Zuoluliwang) was return to *sol qolqan*(assistant minister), “昆莫(弥)” (Kunmo) to *kynbeg* or *kynbij* (king of Wusun), “冒顿”(Modu)to *batur*, “骨都侯”(Guduhou) to *kutbeg* (Chieftain of kut), “居次”(Juci) to *qiz*(girl). For another example, formal names, the names of peerage, conferred titles are innumerable and extremely complicated in data related to Central Asia in the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories. They change quite frequently .All those mentioned above made it difficult to translate, examine and edit.

According to the duties or the actual situation then, we translate, examine and edit each formal name and conferred titles by referring to a great quantity of materials instead of standardizing them. For example, “太尉”(Taiwei) in the period of Han Jing Di was translated into *baS leSker beSi*(Commander in chief), “大司马”(Da Sima) in the period of Han Wu Di also into *baS leSker beSi*(Commander in chief), “司徒”(Situ) in the period of Han Cheng Di into *aqartix begi* (Secretary of Education), while“司徒”(Si Tu)in the period of Han Ai Di into *baS w; zir*(*Prime minister*).

3. About the Attention from Academy Circles at Home and Abroad

From its outset, the work was paid widespread attention of academic circles at home and abroad. Experts from different countries spoke highly of its each achievement got at all stages of research . For example, in 1995, the project was introduced in detail by celebration book “Glory Ten Years” wrote by National University Committee of the work for Reorganizing and research Ancient Books. When coming to XinJiang in 1996, Fu Xuancong, the General Secretary of the Group for National Ancient Books Reorganization and Publication Arrangement, asked about the progress of project concretely.He thought this project played a leading role in reorganizing and studying the relevant data in the Twenty-four Dynastic Histories for other minority nationality, and he also introduced this project in detail on “Work Bulletin of Ancient Books Reorganization and Publication”. In

1997, Keyoumu Bawudong, the original deputy Secretary of Autonomous Region CPC listened to the report on the project given by Professor Chen Shiming, the project director, and he aided this project financially. moreover, more than 80 experts participated in a large-scale learning discussion on this project called by Xinjiang University in 1989, where they spoke highly of its academic value and its social significance.

Xinjiang University Party Committee's secretary Wang Tong and Xinjiang University's president An Nepal also spoke highly of the project at a meeting of whole staff in June 2001 and in June 2007. They said its achievements had a good influence at home and abroad. In addition, Yaxar, Turkish ambassador to China and professor Pulati, the head of Orientalism Department of Ankara University had an informal discussion with the main members of project group in Beijing on summer in 1987. He encouraged them to do the work well. Professor Tang Yi, the Director of National Research Institute of Taiwan Political University held the project was a pioneering undertaking in expanding the Chinese national culture, and its beneficence was boundless when visiting Xinjiang University in 1994.

The Professor Semih, an expert on Turkish Philology of German Bangber University, commented that it was a great job to translate partial historical data in Twenty-four Dynastic Histories into Turkic. Their research was more systematic and more reliable than the Edouard Chavannes, when receiving "Records of Grand Historian" and "Book of Han" in 1995. Dr. Tarrypof, the Director of Uyghur Research Institute of Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences, also expressed the intention of working together when coming to Xinjiang University. "People's Daily", Xinjiang Daily, Xinjiang Economics, the Central People's Broadcasting Station, the Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station and the Xinjiang Television Station also reported progress of the project more than one time. The fourth issue of Continental bridge 2002, a Russian magazine, also introduced this project in detail to different countries in Eastern European and Central Asia. The research results of the project at all stages had won Excellent Books Prize of Philosophy and social sciences in 15 Provinces, cities and autonomous Rregion in the Northern China, or Excellent Achievement Prize of the Xinjiang 's Philosophy and social sciences. They have been on the shelves or spread in Japan, German, Russian, Turkish and more Central Asian countries.