

A SOGDIAN COLONY IN INNER MONGOLIA

BY

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The men of Sogdiana, says the *New T'ang History*, "have gone wherever profit is to be found".¹⁾ Pre-eminently traders, but also carriers of arts and crafts and of new religions, they travelled and settled not only along the trade routes of Central Asia but also deep in the interior of China and among the nomads of the steppes. Much of this, for instance their important civilizing influence among the Uigurs, is already known. What does not seem to be known at all in the west, and only very imperfectly among Far Eastern scholars²⁾, is the part they played among the Northern Turks who preceded the Uigurs. Later these partially Turkicized Sogdians formed a colony on the northern Chinese frontier whose unexpected and fascinating story I propose to tell.

When the Turks (T'u-chüeh) abruptly appeared at the middle of the sixth century, destroyed the power of the Jou-jan, and went on with the co-operation of the Persians to wipe out the

1) 利所在無不至, *HTS* 221B.1.a.

2) In 1923 T. Haneda 羽田 pointed out some of the most important evidence of Sogdian presence and influence among the Northern Turks (*Shinagaku* 3, 1923, pp. 319-333). Kuwabara 桑原 in his article *Zui-Tō jidai ni Shina ni raijū shita s.rikijin ni tsuite* (*Shinagaku ronsō* in honour of T. Naitō 内藤, Tōkyō, 1926, pp. 565-660) and Hsiang Ta 向達 in *T'ang-tai Ch'ang-an yü hsi-yü wen-ming*, Peking, 1933, have contributed further items. Ch'en Yin-k'o 陳寅恪 has independently discussed the matter in *T'ang-tai cheng-chih shih shu-lun kao*, Chungking 1944 and Shanghai 1947.

Hephthalite kingdom further south, they became overlords of Sogdiana. Sogdian merchant interests soon persuaded the Turkish *qaghan* of the importance of the silk trade and a Sogdian, Maniach, was in charge of embassies in this connection from the Turkish ruler to Persia and to Byzantium. Chavannes has already pointed this out and in addition has provided evidence from Byzantine sources of faint Christian influences exerted, presumably by Sogdians, on Turkish soldiers serving in Sogdiana. ¹⁾ But Sogdian association with the Turks went far beyond such quite external relations between the subject people and its conquerors. We find evidence in fact that what must have been considerable numbers of them lived at the court of the *qaghan*, not of the Western Turks who controlled Sogdiana, but of the Northern Turks in present Mongolia.

Some achieved positions of great influence. An early example is found in the story of An Sui-chia 安遂迦 who lived at the court of Tu-lan 都濫 Qaghan, one of the rival chiefs of the Northern Turks at the end of the sixth century, and became the paramour of his Chinese consort. This lady was a princess of the Ch'en dynasty. After Sui put an end to Ch'en, she and her lover conspired with a Chinese émigré against the new regime. In 592 a Sui ambassador who was visiting the *qaghan* revealed to Tu-lan his wife's guilty conduct. An Sui-chia and the Chinese émigré were handed over to the Chinese for execution. ²⁾

There can be no doubt that An Sui-chia was a Sogdian. He is called a 'hu-jen' 胡人 and from about this time the word *hu* 'barbarian' becomes specialized to mean the Iranian peoples of Central Asia, or even specifically the Sogdians, as opposed to

1) E. Chavannes, *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turks) occidentaux*, St. Petersburg, 1903, pp. 234-235 and 245.

2) *TCTC* 178, K'ai-huang 13/7/-; *Sui-shu* 51 (biography of Chang-sun Sheng). Sui-chia was anciently pronounced zwi-ka.