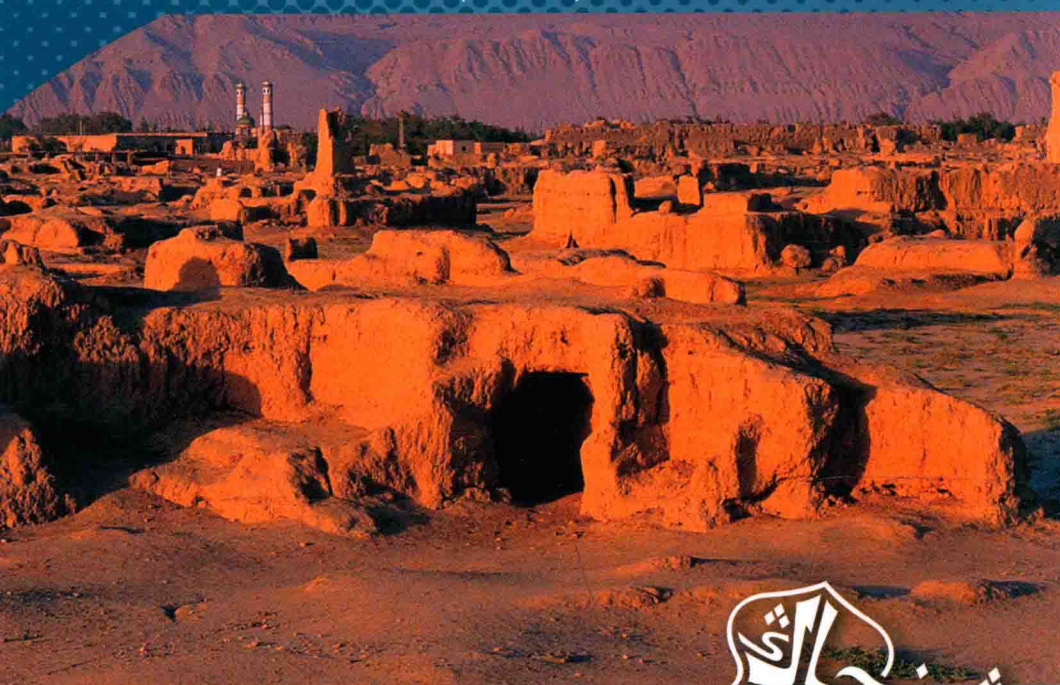


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THE HISTORY OF XINJIANG

TIAN WEIJIANG



China Intercontinental Press

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Foreword

Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (hereinafter referred to as Xinjiang) is located in the Northwest of China with a borderline of more than 5,600 kilometers and an area of 1.6649 million square kilometers, which accounts for 1/6 of China's land area. Neighboring eight countries, Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, it is an important passage on ancient Silk Road.

With thousands of years of history, Xinjiang has been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious region since ancient times. Since the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC to 25 AD), Xinjiang has been an inseparable part of this unitary multi-ethnic country of China.

As one of the five autonomous regions in China, Xinjiang now has 55 ethnic compositions, including Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Mongolia, Tajik, Xibe, Manchu, Uzbek, Russian, Daur, Tatar, etc. By the end of 2013, the total population of Xinjiang was about 22.643 million, among which the ethnic minority population accounts for about 61%.

Xinjiang, a charming place! Here are numerous scenic spots and historical sites, legendary history stories, splendid ethnic culture, impressive ethnic customs as well as diverse religious affiliation. Xinjiang, the heart of Eurasia! Here are unique natural conditions, a wide variety of terrain as well as majestic natural scenery. Xinjiang, an abundant place! Here are rich mineral resources, herds of cattle and sheep, grain

and cotton all over fields as well as seasonal fragrance of melon and fruit...

We publish the “Charming Xinjiang” Series to make this ancient, vibrant and modern place known by more readers at home and abroad. The Series include ten volumes and introduce Xinjiang in terms of ten aspects respectively. We hope this series can take you on a tour of “Charming Xinjiang”.

August 2014

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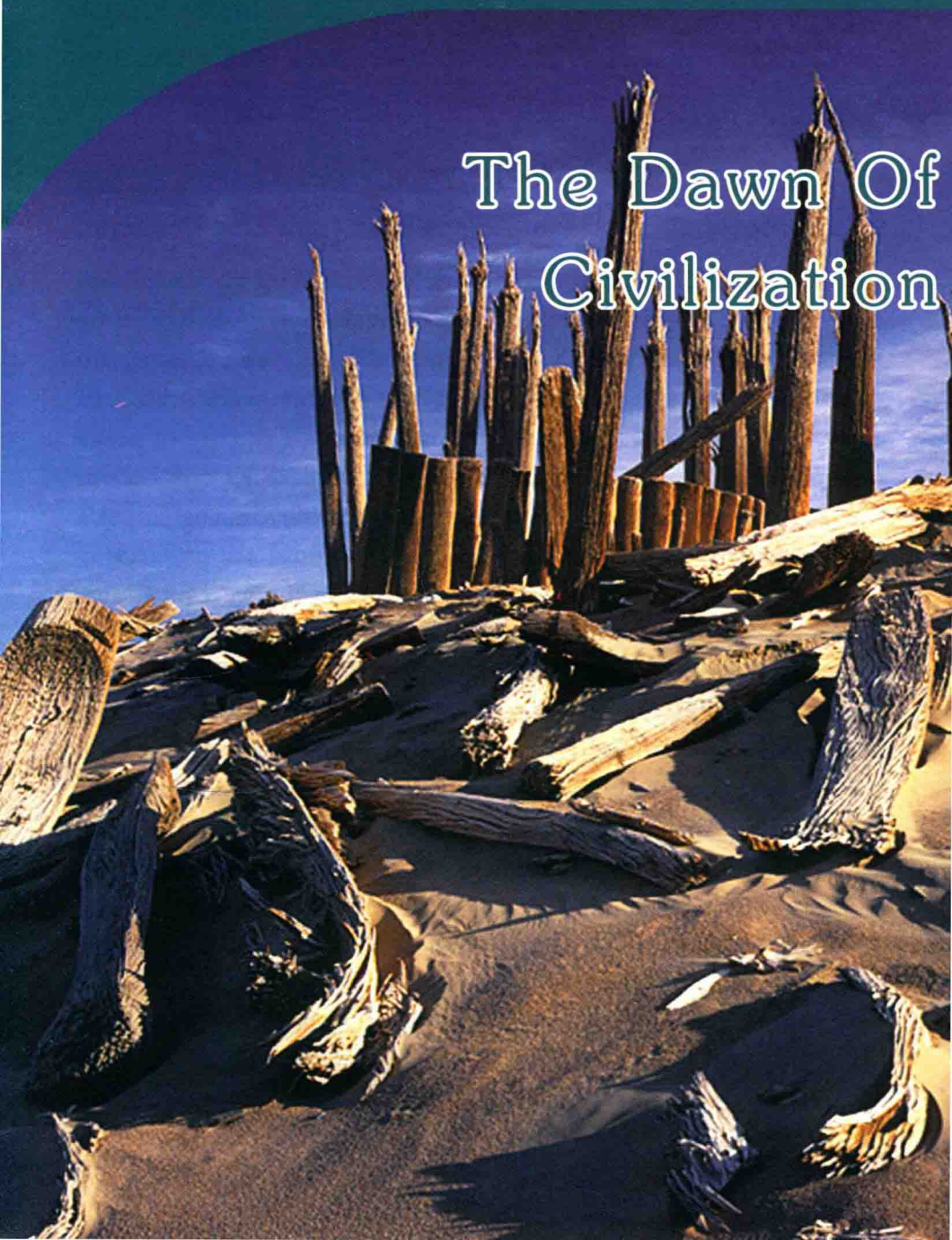
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THE HISTORY OF
XINJIANG

The Dawn Of Civilization



Located in the northwest frontier in China, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region has been the pivot of land transport for the economic and cultural exchanges between China and the west. Owing to its special geographical and natural environmental factors, Xinjiang had been the major area for human activities and dwelling long before. The constant emergence of prehistoric cultural relics through archaeological findings can be the best material evidences for the regional characteristics manifested on the prehistoric cultures.

“Three Mountains and Two Valleys” and Their Environment

If we say that the historical cultural contents need to be exhibited on a suitable stage, then the geographical environment can be the huge stage. The overall arrangement of the stage, to a certain extent, determines the contents and effects of the performing arts. A well-known Chinese geographer once said: “The type of stage determines the type of drama”. To this end, we need to look back at the geographical and environmental situations of Xinjiang to get a profound understanding of its history.

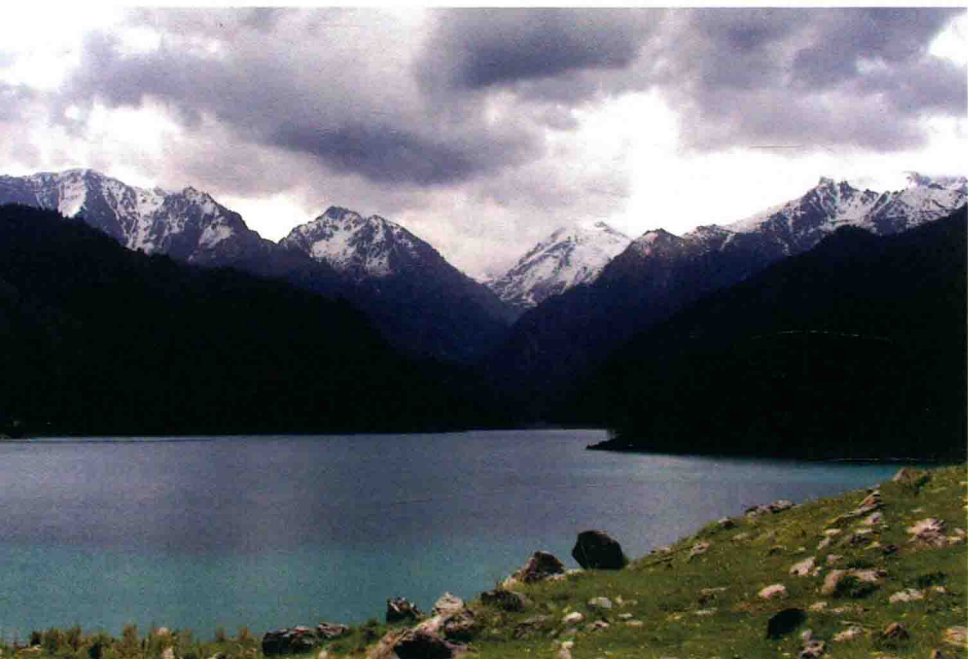
Located at the back-land of Eurasia and in the west of China, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region is the farthest province away from the sea in China. Being arid and having less rainfall is the basic natural characteristic of Xinjiang. Nevertheless, Xinjiang in the geological time was quite contrary to that. Ages ago, namely from the Sinian Period of 2.5 billion years ago to the Early Jurassic Period of 195 million years ago, Xinjiang was a mighty ocean with a boundless expanse of blue water and it lasted until the Tertiary of 67 million years ago. By the end of the Paleogene, after having undergone repeated alternations of sea and land, the sea finally faded from the entire land of Xinjiang under the influence of the early Orogeny of the Himalaya Mountains. In and around the end of the Pliocene of 12 million years from now, the violent upheavals of Mt. Tianshan, Montes Altai and Kunlun Mountains, the formation of the two large cutoff basins shaped the



Urumqi South Mountain Banfangou Grand Canyon

basic landform profile of today's Xinjiang, called as "Three Mountains and Two Valleys". The so-called "Three Mountains" refer to the Montes Altai, Mt.Tianshan and Kunlun Mountains distributing in Xinjiang from north to south. And the "Two Valleys" mean the Junggar Basin and the Tarim Basin pressed between the three mountains. To the west of the "Three Mountains and Two Valleys" is the towering Pamirs. It winds its way from north to south, like a colored ribbon connecting the Montes Altai, Mt.Tianshan and Kunlun Mountains together.

The geography and landform characteristics of the "Three Mountains and Two Valleys" play a very important role in the formation of its special natural environment and unique social-economic pattern. Surrounded by three mountains on three sides, Xinjiang formed a natural sealing geographical unit, with an open at the west of Junggar Basin in the west of Montes Altai. The cold and wet air currents from the Arctic Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean can enter from this gap from time to time and bring water vapor to form rainfall, resulting comparatively moist climate. However, most parts of regions are surrendered by the high mountains which block the moist air currents of the East Asian monsoon and Southwest monsoon out, leaving Xinjiang to be the most special inland arid region of China. But unlike the Sahara in Africa without high mountains, glaciers or oases or



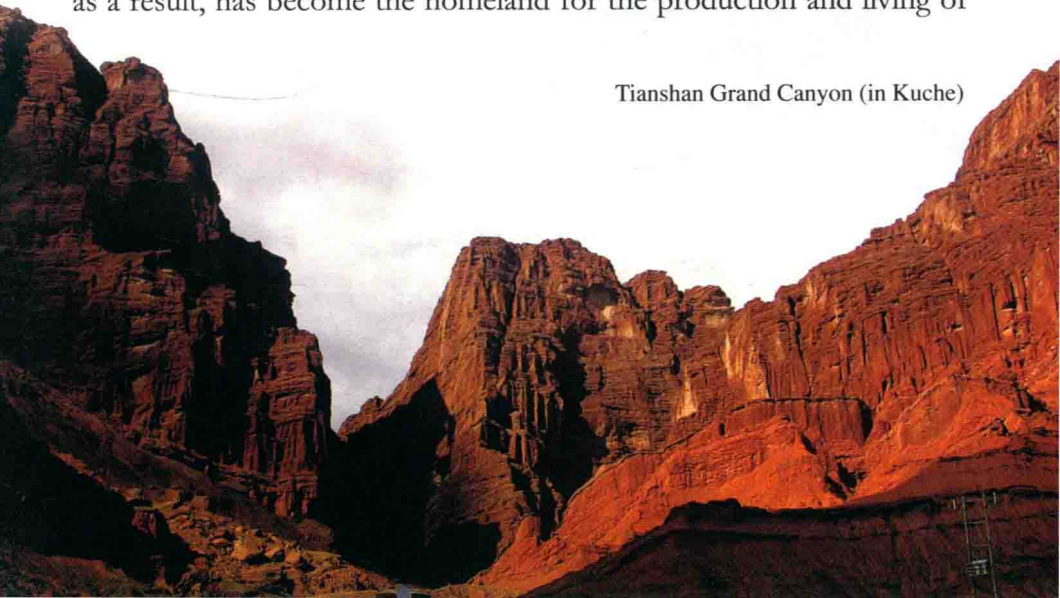
Tianshan Tianchi

the desert zone in Australia, the star-studded glaciers and rivers on the mountains all around Xinjiang Region perennially pour the melted ice and snow water into the two large basins, forming exuberant oases and grasslands in the arid desert. These oases and grasslands provide the basic conditions for the living beings and humans and turn this region into one of the birthplaces of human civilization.

In this enclosed geographical unit, the towering Tangshan Mountains span across the central part of Xinjiang from east to west; Junggar and Tarim Basins are situated respectively in the north and south ends. This geomorphologic characteristic brought significant difference to the climate of the south and north of Xinjiang. The north Xinjiang finds much more annual rainfall than the south Xinjiang while in winter the latter is much warmer than the former. The special geographical factors of natural environment also cast different economic structures between the north and south of

Xinjiang in the long development course, with the north featuring on animal husbandry and the south on agriculture. Moreover, they largely influenced the production and living modes of the people in the two places as well as their cultural patterns and ideology. In the periods of Wei and Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties, a Buddhist monk named Song Yun from the Central China passed Xinjiang on his way to fetch Buddhist scriptures from India. When he arrived at Qupantuo Guo (today's Tashiku'ergan) in the Pamirs, Song Yun engaged in a talk with the local residents on the natural sceneries and cultural differences between the two places. Inadvertently, he mentioned that the farmer in the Central China mainly relied on rainfalls to arrange their own farming, which, immediately caused ridicules of the local residents. They questioned how people could depend on rainfalls for their farming, which in turn largely amazed Song Yun. Different living conditions led to the differences of cultural concepts. For people who had lived on the Pamir for ages, they were dependent on the river water melted from ice and snow to irrigate agriculture; but for farmers in the Central China, they were dependent on rain it falls to be engaged in agricultural production. Due to the factors of geographical environment and climate, Xinjiang, being farthest from sea in China, is labeled with the inland arid regions. The oasis irrigated by the melted snow and ice, as a result, has become the homeland for the production and living of

Tianshan Grand Canyon (in Kuche)



people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang.

One thing needs to be mentioned: Xinjiang is encircled by mountains from all three sides of south, north and west, leaving only the east open to connect with the Central China regions. This terrain characteristic, consequently, makes Xinjiang incline to the east naturally in its contacts and communications with the outside world throughout their human history. This terrain nature played a key role in the frequent contacts between Xinjiang and the inland, also enabling Xinjiang to be part of the unitary multi-ethnic after the Qin and Han dynasties in the Chinese history. Geographical condition and natural environment factors, evidently, play a very important position in the long history of human formation and development process. Spacious wildness and seas of desert, high and meandering mountains, and extreme drought climate environment have brought many unfavorable factors for Xinjiang's social development, at the meantime; they have created many favorable conditions for human survival as well. For example, in the long history, especially before the extensive access of maritime traffic in China, the land passage from the Central China to all the parts of the west went through the world known "Silk Road" through Xinjiang, in which the desert and oases served as important transport hubs. In the process of social practice, people of all ethnic groups have created many forms of material as well as spiritual civilizations, which largely enriched the treasure house of Chinese civilization.

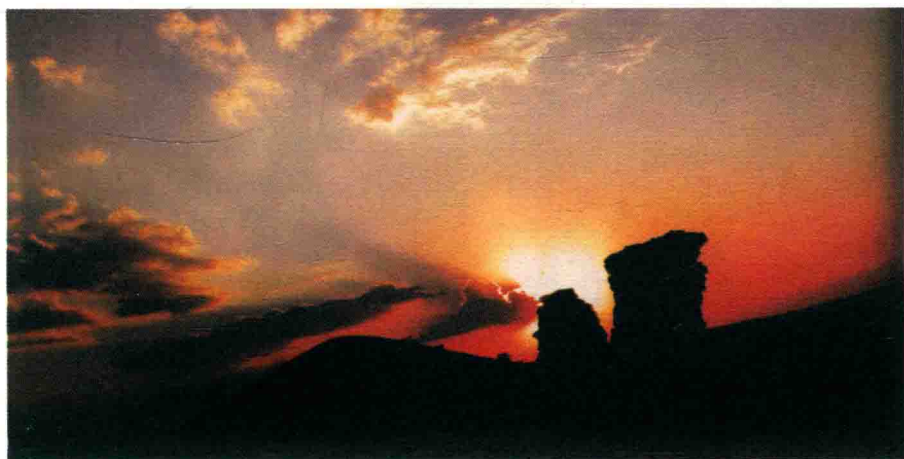
Owing to the natural environment and the special humanity conditions resulted therefrom, Xinjiang was able to witness the rich and colorful, soul-stirring events in the development of human history.

Beginning with the Stone of "Hoxtolgay"

The period before the written records history was called the "Prehistoric Era", before which saw the human development for 2 to 3 million years. Prehistoric Era mainly includes three stages such as the Stone Age, Bronze Stage and Early Iron Age.

In archaeology, the initial human history is called as “the Stone Age”. As the symbol of the primitive society, the Stone Age roughly refers to a period from 2 or 3 million years ago to 3000 BC and is divided into 3 stages of the Old, Middle and New Stone Ages. The existing archaeological discovery about the Old Stone Age in Xinjiang Region mainly refers to a group of stoneware collected from the earth surface. The relic sites mainly include the Hoboksar County, Hoxtolgay Camel Stone, the Gouxitai in Jiaohe Old Town of Turpan Depression, the Jirigale in the Tashikurgan Valley and the colored cliff painting of Montes Altai.

In 2004, in the both sides of the platform of the Hoxtolgay Camel Stone, China and foreign archaeological workers found a stretch of region scattered with chipped stone tools on the surface, covering a distribution area of 20 square kilometers. The stone tools collected on the ground includes the chopping tools, scrapers, thin blade axes and pickaxes, among which there is a kind of gallet called the Levallois stones and the long and standard stone foliages being very popular in Europe. All of them have the vivid technical characteristics of the middle and late period of the Old Stone Age and share the same style



Outdoor scene of Hoxtolgay Camel Stone Site



Stoneware collected at Hoxtolgay Camel Stone in Hoboksar, supposed to be in the late period of Paleolithic Period.



Stone artifact collected at Loulan Site

and features of the stoneware unearthed from the Shuidonggou Site of Ningxia. The site was named for a relatively striking “camel” shape Yardang landform. The Hoxtolgay Camel Stone Palaeolithic Site has been the oldest human activity location discovered in Xinjiang up to now.

At the depth about 15 meters in Gouxitai in Jiaohe Old Town of Turpan City, the archaeological workers also collected one stone pickaxe and one gallet with the similar shapes of the stoneware unearthed from the Hoxtolgay Camel Stone Palaeolithic Site. In addition, at the Jirigale in the river vally of Tashikurgan, people also found the pile landform of human using fire and the chipped stone tools. In light of the feature analysis on the Paleolithic remains successively discovered by people, traces of human activities were seen in Xinjiang Region as early as the late period of the Old Stone Age about 10 thousand years ago. During the early stage, the people of the northern Xinjiang mainly engaged in activities of hunting and gathering.

The New Stone Age of Xinjiang was also called as the “microlithic culture”, because the local people generally employed a kind of indirect chipping method to make stone tools such as stone arrowheads, stone knives and engraving tools, which were all characterized by the thin and small shapes and some of them were represented by the fine stone leaves, dating back around 4,000 years ago. The microlithic remains could be found everywhere from north to south of the Mt.Tianshan, typically on



Tripod Bronze fu unearthed at Nilka County