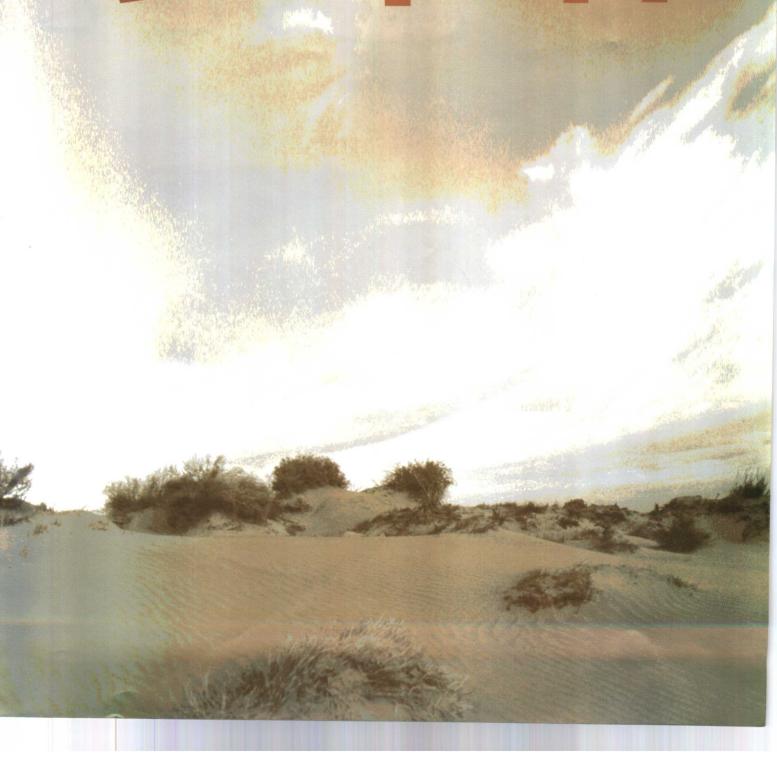
GO INTO THE SEA OF DEATH LOP NUR 世死亡之

走进死亡之海



Preface

ocated in the eastern part of Tarim Basin, Sinkiang-Uigur Autonomous Region, Lop Nor once in history was the second largest saltwater lake in China, occupying 20,000 square kilometers. Nowadays, 780 meters in altitude, the dry land of Lop Nor covers 450 square kilometers. Lop Nor received many rivers floating from Tarim Basin--Shule River in the east; Tarim River, Peacock River and Cherchen River in the west. It used to be a vigorous oasis.

Early in the 2nd century B.C, Lou-lan and Gushi people lived and thrived in Lop Nor. Since Han dynasty when Zhang Qian built a link between the Central Plains and the Western Region, Lop Nor had been serving as an important station on the Silk Road connecting Europe and Asia, as well as a junction for the exchange of eastern and western cultures. However, in the recent 1000 years, with natural and artificial influences, Lop Nor went dry. With the desert expanding, the oasis disappearing, and cities destroyed, people were obliged to move out of Lop Nor, and left an isolated desert behind them. "Many hungry ghosts are living here and hot winds are blowing here. People who are attacked by them are sure to die." "Sometimes Shrieking and crying can be heard. When you are listening, you will suddenly forget where you are. Because this is a dwelling for ghosts, many people lose their lives in Lop Nor." All these shocking historical records shroud Lop Nor with a mysterious and frightful veil.

In the 19th century, as the ruins of Lou-lan were discovered in the desert, Lop Nor became a center of world's attention. Explorers from Russia, Sweden, U.S., Japan, Britain and France thronged to Lop Nor, hoping to uncover the mystery. They unearthed numerous historical relics in Lop Nor and the Silk Road area. In the following 100 years, Lop Nor remains attractive to scholars home and abroad. The following questions have invited endless debate in academic circles until today; why Lou-lan suddenly disappeared? Why no historical records were left? Whether Lop Nor was a shifting lake or not? What caused it to shift its location?

No one intends to interpret history metaphysically, and yet Lop Nor has become a sphinx. In 1980, Chinese



the head of the exploration team, was missing when he went to fetch water. The whereabouts of him remains unknown up to now, thus a new riddle arises in people's mind. In 1996, Mr. Yu Chunshun, who had devoted 8 years to adventurous exploits and had walked 84,000 kilometers all by himself, also died in Lop Nor.

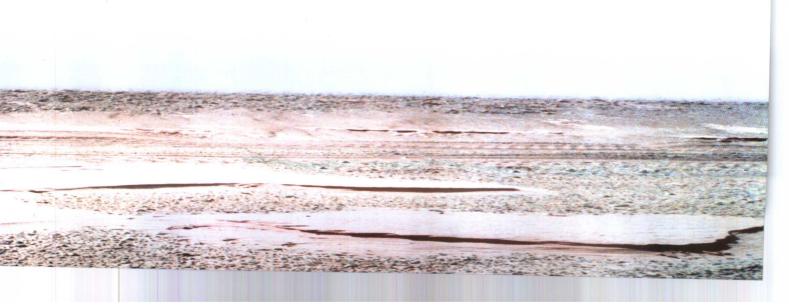
Is Lop Nor a mysterious Bermuda on land? or a terrifying sea of death?

In August 1997, hundreds of explorers set off from Yumenguan, Dunhuang. They entered Lop Nor, and stayed in the desert for 8 days, fighting against severe hardships. As one of their achievements, a large number of precious pictures were taken by them.

And this art album is a collection of these precious pictures, 200 best ones selected from over 10,000 photos, including the terrain and land-form, trees and other plants, wild animals, and ruins of ancient cities in Lop Nor. It is the crystallization of a grand project hardly accomplished by a few photographers or scientists. The album presents an exhaustive description of the landscape, the artificial scenery, and historical relics in Lop Nor. It also gives an overall and authentic reflection to Lop Nor, especially the changes taking place in the recent decade. The album provides first-hand documents reliable for the study on geology, animal ecology, biology and archeology. In the meantime, it removes the terrifying veil over Lop Nor. Although it is a forbidden zone for human beings, it is not a dwelling for ghosts.

The end of the century is an era for contemplation. Looking at the authentic pictures and reading the explanations therein, our beloved readers shall certainly agree with the following conclusion — Lop Nor is not an ordinary desert, a mere historical site or natural scenery. The history of Lop Nor, from a prosperous oasis to an isolated desert, tolls the alarm for everyone:how human beings succeeded and were defeated. Environment is significant to all lives including human beings. With enduring charms, Lop Nor serves as an old textbook. How many cities emerged in this area? What treasure was buried in the desert? These are unsolved problems for archeologists. Maybe the answer lies in Lop Nor itself.

The Compilers



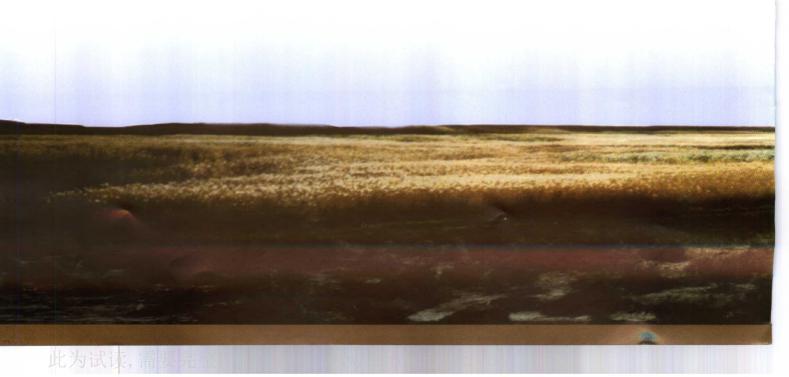


布泊地处新疆塔里木盆地的最东部,原是我国第二大咸水湖。历史上面积最大时广达2万平方公里,最后的干涸部分为450平方公里。湖面海拔780米。它同时接纳从塔里木盆地流来的众多河流,东部有疏勒河,西部有塔里木河、孔雀河、车尔臣河。罗布泊周边10万多平方公里的罗布荒漠原本是一块生机勃勃的绿洲。

早在公元前2世纪前,就有楼兰人和姑师人在这里生息繁衍。汉代张骞通西域之后,罗布泊作为横贯欧亚的"丝绸之路"的交通要道,更成为人类东西方文明的交会之地。然而,近1000年来,由于自然的和人为的因素,湖泊干涸、沙漠扩大、绿洲荒弃、人口迁徙、古城毁灭,罗布泊成了人迹罕至的荒漠。"沙河中多有饿鬼、热风,遇者皆死,无一生还。""时闻歌啸,或闻号哭,视听之间,况然不知所至。由此屡有丧者,盖鬼蜮之所致也。"这些耸人听闻的历史记载,给罗布泊蒙上了一层层神秘而恐怖的面纱。

19世纪,由于在罗布荒漠中发现了楼兰古国遗址,罗布泊一下子成为全世界关注的焦点。俄国、瑞典、美国、日本、英国、法国等国的探险家相继前来考察,试图揭开罗布泊的奥秘,并在此地以及整个丝绸之路沿线发现了大量的文物古迹。此后100多年来,罗布泊一直是中外学者的研究课题,特别是围绕这样两个问题学术界一直争论不休,至今悬而未决:文明昌盛的楼兰国为什么会突然消失,而历史上竟然没有任何记载?罗布泊到底是不是游移湖,它的迁移是什么原因造成的?

没有谁刻意用玄学去解释历史,但是罗布泊却总是给世人制造悬念。1980年,中国科学家从地质、地貌、土壤、植物、动物、化学、历史地理等多学科对罗布泊进行了



考察史上最系统、最全面的考察,初步揭开了罗布泊的奥秘,但是考察队长彭加木却在此次考察中因找水失踪了,至今没有下落,人们因此对罗布泊产生了新的谜团。1996年,孤身徒步走中国8.4万公里,具有8年探险经验的壮士余纯顺最终在罗布荒漠遇难。

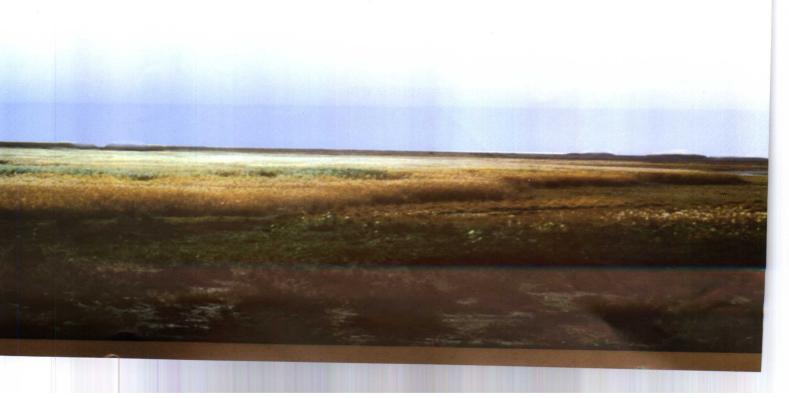
罗布泊真是一个神秘的陆地"百慕大",一片恐怖的死亡之海吗?

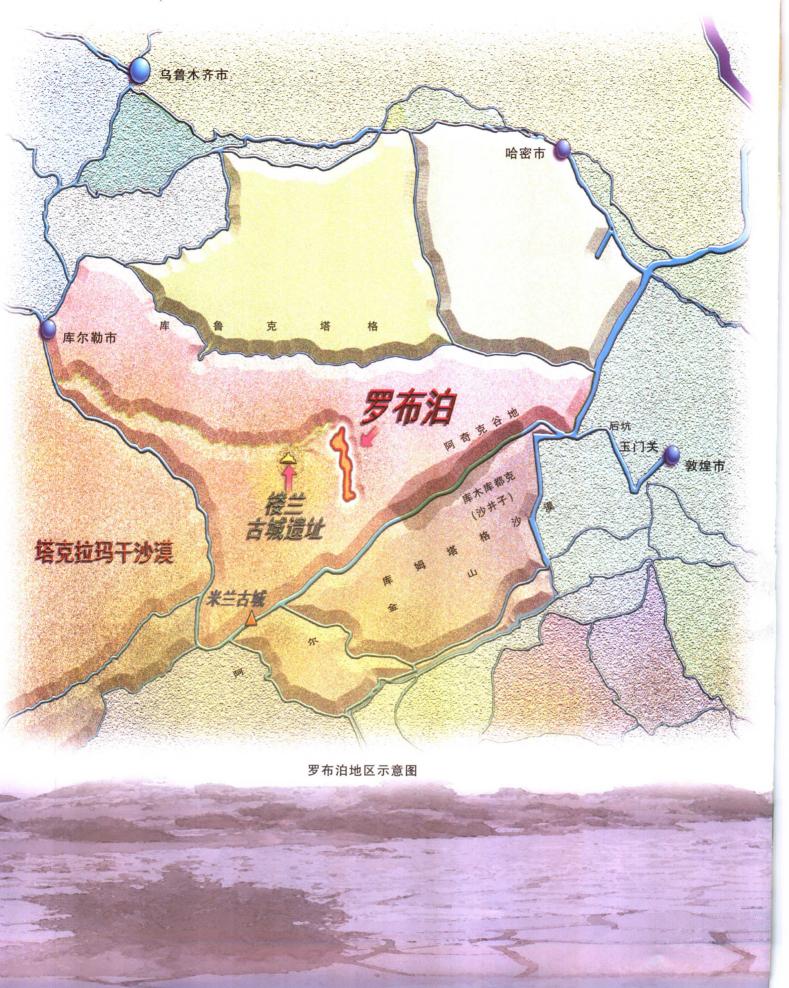
1997年10月,百名探险爱好者从敦煌玉门关出发,徒步走进罗布泊,历经艰险,在荒漠拍摄了大量珍贵的照片。

这部画册从上万张纪实照片中精选了 200 余幅,几乎囊括了罗布泊地区所有的地形地貌、树木植物、野生动物、古城遗址等,这是靠少数摄影家或少数科学家的力量难以做到的。画册详尽地描述了罗布荒漠的自然风貌、人文景观和历史遗迹,全面真实地反映了罗布泊的现状,特别是近十几年罗布泊的变迁,为地质、地理、动物、植物、考古等多学科的科学考察和研究提供了翔实的第一手资料。同时,它揭开了千百年来笼罩在罗布泊头上的恐怖的面纱:罗布泊固然是生命禁区,但也并非是一片鬼蜮之地。

世纪末是人类反思的年代,读者随着我们的解说跟踪真实的图片,神游其境,一定会产生这样的共鸣:罗布泊不是一般的荒漠和名胜古迹,更不是单纯意义上的自然景观。它从繁茂绿洲演变为死寂荒漠的历史,足以警示世人:人类是如何成功又是如何败北的,环境保护关系到包括人类在内的所有生命的生死和存亡。罗布泊称得上是一部魅力无穷的千年古书,这座丰厚的产床上到底诞生过多少古城?风沙肆虐的沙漠里至今还埋藏着多少宝藏?这是一个尚待考古学家去发现的未知,打开人类文化之谜的钥匙可能就在罗布泊。

编者





前言

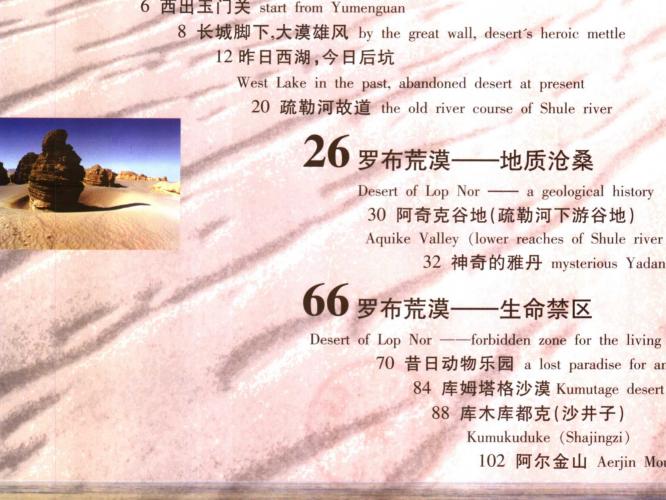


Desert of Lop Nor -a key junction of the Silk Road

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"丝绸之路",最初是指从中国古代的长安出发,经由西域、帕米尔高原一直通往古罗马帝国边境的一条陆上通道。因为中国盛产的丝绸曾是这条古代中西陆路交通线上贩运的最大宗物品,这条线路便被人们形象地称为"丝绸之路"。

丝绸之路自西汉武帝时期正式开通后,一度成为中西方经济文化交流的 重要通道。

古丝绸之路出敦煌之后,可分成南路、中路、北路三路:

南路从阳关(今敦煌西南)进入罗布荒漠,贴近罗布泊的南岸西行,再沿着塔克拉玛干大沙漠南缘,经鄯善(今若羌东)、且末(今且末西南)、精绝(今民丰北)、于弥(今于田东)、于阗(今和田南)、皮山(今皮山一带)、莎车(今莎车)等地,然后越过帕米尔高原,经大月氏(今阿姆河流域中部)再向西,抵安息(今伊朗)。

中路出玉门关(今敦煌西北)进入罗布荒漠,贴近罗布泊北岸西行,过楼兰,经车师前王庭(今吐鲁番西)向西南过焉耆(今焉耆)、乌垒(今轮台东)、龟兹(今库车东)、姑墨(今温宿)、疏勒(今喀什)越过帕米尔高原,到大宛(今乌兹别克斯坦费尔干纳)再通往安息(今伊朗)。

北路出玉门关西北行,经伊吾(今哈密西)、蒲类海(今巴里坤湖)、车师后王庭(今准噶尔盆地东南)向西渡伊犁河、楚河过碎叶(今吉尔吉斯斯坦托克马克附近)再向西北沿咸海和里海北边抵东罗马帝国的君士坦丁堡。

其中南路和中路又是丝绸之路的主路, 所以, 罗布泊被视为丝绸之路的



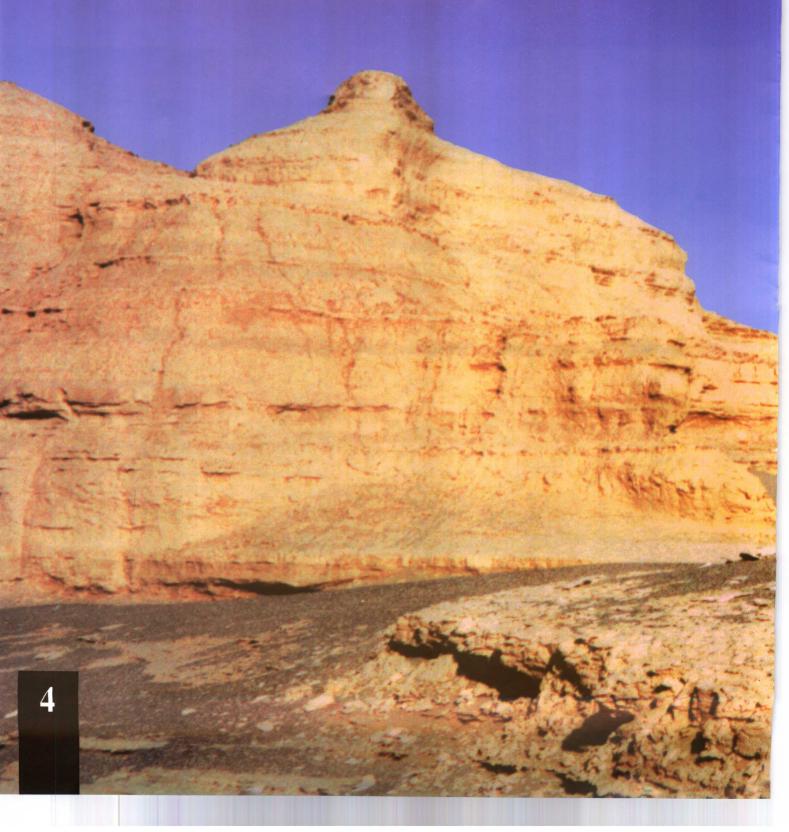
咽喉和门户。在这条路上,汉代,仅来往使者"一辈大者数百,少者百余人"。 "一岁中使多者十余,少者五、六辈。"(《史记·大宛列传》)至唐朝,"伊吾之 右,波斯以东,职贡不绝,商旅相继"(《册府元龟》)。繁华之景,可见一斑。

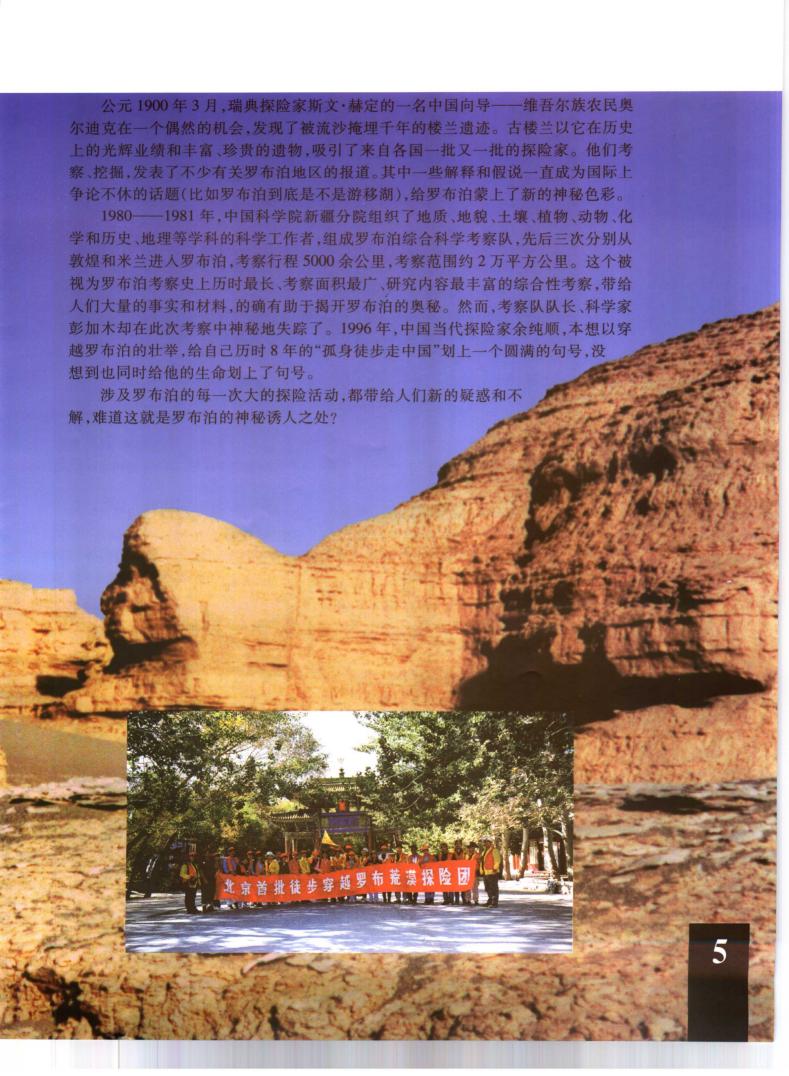
这里,曾经流淌着一个变幻莫测的中国第二大内陆湖——罗布泊。中国先秦时期的《山海经》,最早记载了罗布泊的位置: "……不周之山,北望诸毗之山,临彼岳崇之山,东望泑泽,河水所潜也。"(《山海经卷二·西山经》)指明罗布泊(泑泽)在葱岭(不周之山,今帕米尔高原)之东。

这里,曾经活跃着一个人口众多、商旅云集的繁华名城——楼兰。公元前 126年,张骞第一次出使西域归来,在向汉武帝刘彻的上书中,第一次报道了位于罗布泊地区的楼兰国:"楼兰、姑师邑有城郭,临盐泽。"(《史记·大宛列传》)

公元4世纪以后,盛极一时的楼兰悄然无声地退出了历史舞台;繁华兴盛的丝绸古道也逐渐被黄沙湮没;罗布泊和楼兰,被无边无际的茫茫流沙,蜿蜒起伏的风蚀沟堑,遍布湖盆的尖硬盐壳紧紧地包裹、封锁起来,成了一片神秘恐怖的鬼蜮之地。东晋僧人法显赴印度取经途经此地,在笔记中描述道:"沙河中多有饿鬼、热风,遇者皆死,无一生还。上无飞鸟,下无走兽,遍望极目,欲求度外,则莫所拟,唯以死人枯骨为标识耳。"唐代僧人玄奘去印度取经返程时介绍说:"动行人大流沙,沙则流漫,聚散随风,人行无迹,遂多迷路,四远茫茫,莫知所指,是往来者聚遗骸以记之。乏水草,多热风,风起则人兽昏迷,因以成病。时闻歌啸,或闻号哭,视听之间,况然不知所至。由此屡有丧者,盖鬼蜮之所致也。"1229年,意大利旅行家马可·波罗到此也心惊胆战,他说:这片沙漠是许多罪恶与幽灵出没的场地,它戏弄往来的旅客,使他们产生一种幻觉,陷入毁灭的深渊。

世纪末的 1997年 10 月, 百名探险者从敦煌玉门关 出发,徒步走进罗布泊。





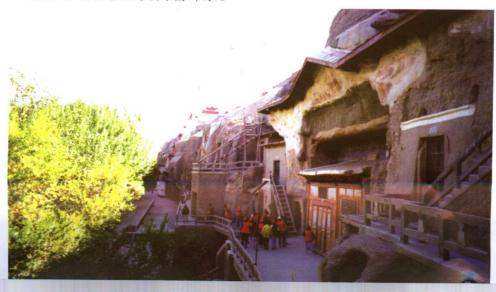
提罗布泊首先得提及敦煌,因为在中国历史上,敦煌是进入罗布泊、踏上"丝绸之路"的起点,也是走出罗布泊、结束丝路行程的终点。以敦煌为界,出此向西,便是西域,包括葱岭内外附属于中央政权的诸小国以及中亚和欧洲的一些国家。丝绸之路在新疆境内的三条路线,都是以敦煌为出发点,东来西往的商旅都要经过敦煌。从内地去西域的商旅来到敦煌稍事停留,储备粮草,做进入罗布泊、横越塔克拉玛干大沙漠的准备;从西域来的商旅,经过艰苦的沙漠长途旅行之后,来到这里也略事休整,再继续东进,去往长安。可以想见,古代敦煌街头,人群熙熙攘攘,驼铃叮叮当当,其中也不乏高鼻深目、卷发翘须的欧亚各国人。特殊的地理位置决定了敦煌的特殊地位:既是最为重要的边疆军事战略要地、中西陆路交通最为重要的桥梁和纽带;更是中国政治、经济、军事、文化艺术全方位的大特区。史书称之为"一大都会"。

出敦煌市,西行约80公里,有一座百米见方的城堡残垣,它就是著名的玉门关。因西域商人将玉石珠宝输入长安时均从此经过,故称玉门关。

身临关下,脱口而出的是那感伤悲凉的诗句: "羌笛何须怨杨柳,春风不度玉门关。" (唐·王之涣) 然而,时光倒流 2000 年,玉门关可谓风光无限。

那时候中国的政治、经济、军事、文化中心在西部,这里既是边防要塞,又是通商口岸。玉门关就是国门,关隘日夜重兵把守,戒备森严。东来西往的商旅使臣,都要在此接受严格的检查方可过关。从汉末一直到五代,出国有"过所"之制。所谓"过所",相当于今天的护照或通行证。唐代高僧玄奘去印度取经,因未持有"过所",险些丧命于关下。国门下一批批使者、商旅,携带着丝绸、玉石,伴随着驼铃声进进出出。

这是著名的敦煌莫高窟外景。



当年的玉门关不是孤零零的这么一座城关,而是有好几重关隘遥相呼应。史料记载,玄奘西出玉门关后,又艰难地经过五峰才到达伊吾国(今新疆哈密县)。 五峰是玉门关外所设的五座戍镇,每峰相距百里,皆有重兵把守。

蹉跎岁月,无论是"朝贡不绝""使臣相望于道"式的繁荣,还是刀光剑影的厮杀,一切都已成为过眼烟云。

雄浑的关隘早已面目全非, 仅剩下这 9 米多高的断壁残垣, 在茫茫砂石岗上耸立着, 像个威武的战士, 继续扼守在通往西域的咽喉上。

向西极目远眺,似断似连的汉长城依稀可见,绵亘不断的峰峦默默肃立,干涸的疏勒河畔杂生的红柳岁岁枯荣。大漠纵深处便是罗布荒漠———度使者僧徒相望于道、商旅仕宦不绝于途的丝绸古道。

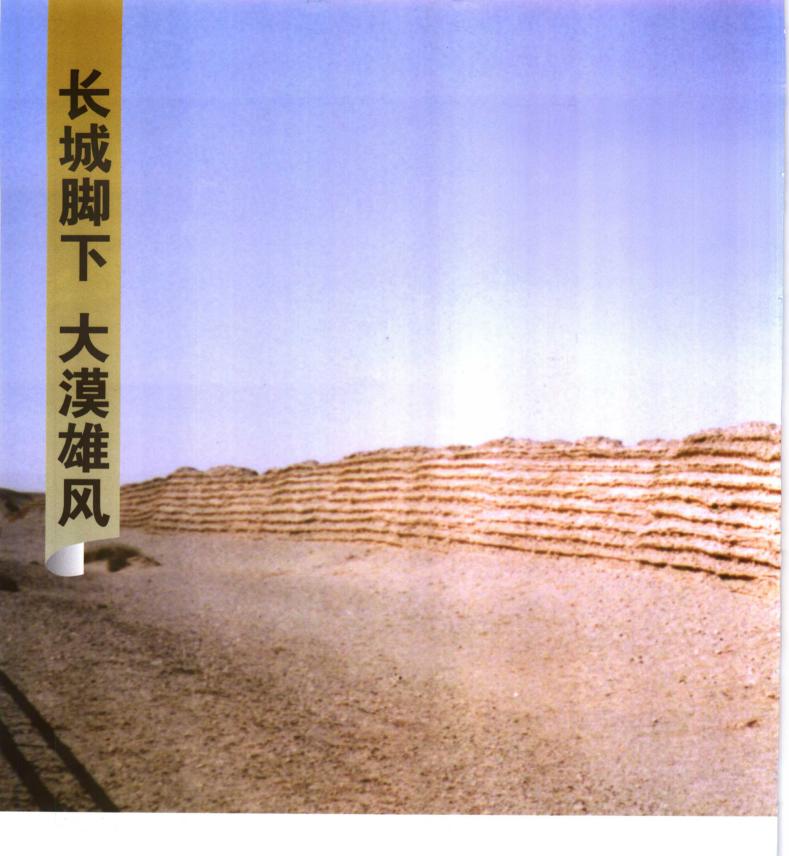




这个缺口兴许就是城门。



城墙宽约3米,东南角有条斜坡, 由此可登上城墙。



8

此为试读, 需要