

# WESTERN CHINA

Chen Yao

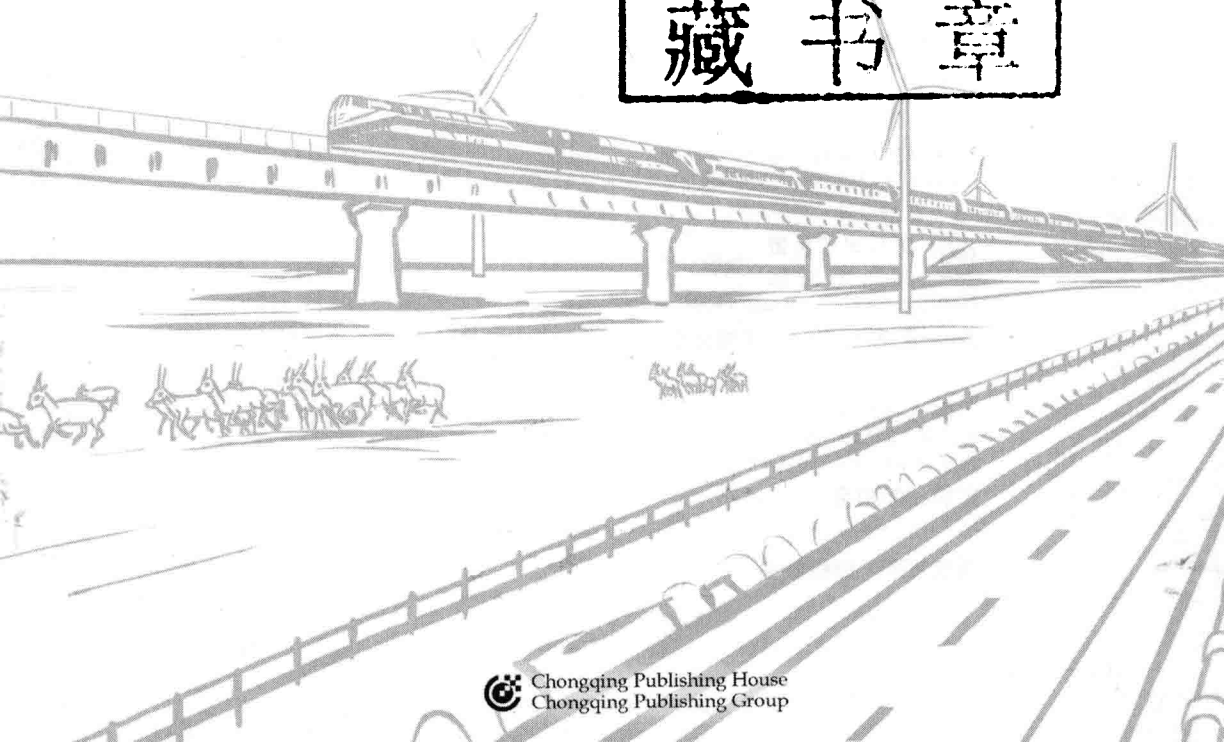


Chongqing Publishing House  
Chongqing Publishing Group

# WESTERN CHINA

Chen Yao

常州大学图书馆  
藏书章



Chongqing Publishing House  
Chongqing Publishing Group

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国大西部(英文版) / 陈耀著. —重庆: 重庆出版社,  
2010.12

ISBN 978-7-229-03102-2

I. ①中… II. ①陈… III. 西部大开发(中国)—  
概况—英文 IV. ①F127

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2010)第 209344 号

## Western China

by Chen Yao

---

Copyright © 2010 by Chongqing Publishing House  
No.205, Changjiang Erlu, Yuzhong District  
Chongqing 400016  
P.R.China

Translation by All Star (Beijing) Translation Co., Ltd.  
Edited by Zhang Bingyi  
Designed by Art Design Co., Ltd., Chongqing Publishing House

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any  
form or by any means, electronic, graphic, mechanical, photocopying,  
recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

First published in 2010

Printed in Chongqing, P.R.China  
ISBN 978-7-229-03102-2



重庆出版集团 出版  
重庆出版社

重庆长江二路 205 号 邮政编码: 400016 <http://www.cqph.com>

重庆出版集团艺术设计有限公司制版

---

开本: 787 mm × 1 092 mm 1/16 印张: 12  
2010 年 12 月第 1 版 2010 年 12 月第 1 次印刷  
ISBN 978-7-229-03102-2  
定价: 89.00 元

---

版权所有 侵权必究

# Contents



<b>Foreword</b>	1
<b>Chapter I Overview of Western China</b>	6
1.1 Human Culture in Western China	7
1.2 Natural Resources in Western China	13
1.3 Tourism in Western China	19
<b>Chapter II The Development of Western China</b>	28
2.1 Historical Review: Development of Western China during the Three-Line Construction Period	28
2.2 The Development of Western China: A National Strategy Facing the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century	32
2.3 Narrowing the Gaps between Eastern and Western China: A Great Move to Achieve Coordinated Regional Development	67
2.4 Comparison and Implications of the Development of Western China and the “Pastoral” Westward Movement in the United States	109
<b>Chapter III Harmonious Progresses Made in Western China</b>	124
3.1 Social Stability in Western Regions	124
3.2 National Unity in Western China	131
3.3 Economic Prosperity in Western China	136
3.4 Cultural Development in Western China	160
3.5 Basic Experience in the Decade of the Development of Western China	164
<b>Chapter IV Prospects of the Development of Western China</b>	173
4.1 Enhancing the Endogenous Growth Momentum of Western China	173
4.2 Strategic Deployment of the Development of Western China in the Decade to Come	181

## Foreword

Western China is characterized by a vast territory, rich resources, backward development, great market potentials and an important strategic position. The Central Government of China has been vigorously supporting the development of Western China, constantly increasing its investments in the capital construction in and intensifying its financial transfer payments to the Western areas. After the construction during the *First Five-Year Plan* period, the Three-Line Construction period and the reform and opening up, great achievements have been made in the economic and social development of Western China. However, due to natural, historic and social reasons, the economic development in Western China is still relatively backward comparing with those developed areas in Eastern China. Since the reform and opening up till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the economic aggregate had grown by 7.8 times in the Eastern, but only 5.7 times in the Western; of the 12 provinces and municipalities in Western China, 9 have been faced with the problem of income falling short of expenditures in local finance<sup>①</sup>. Population in Western China more or less equals the total of the 5 provinces and municipalities in the coastal areas of Eastern China, namely Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Shandong. However, GDP in Western China fails to account for even 40% of the total of those above-mentioned 5 provinces and municipalities. Most of the over 30 million people not having enough to eat or wear in China are distributed in Western China. Therefore, it is urgent for Western China to accelerate reform and opening up and speed up its pace of modern construction. It is urgently needed to solve the problem of imbalanced social and economic development between Eastern and Western China.

The launch of the Western Development Strategy in China, which was a major decision made by the Communist Party of China and the Chinese government at the turn of the centuries, is a vivid and concrete practice of thoroughly

---

<sup>①</sup> *Records of the Concerns of the CPC Central Committee about the Development of Western China: To Create a Better Future for Western China* [N], *People's Daily* from <http://www.people.com.cn>, July 5, 2010.

implementing the Two Overall Situations<sup>①</sup> strategic idea proposed by Mr. Deng Xiaoping, the important thought of Three Represents and the Scientific Outlook on Development, it is also an enrichment and development of the socialism with Chinese characteristics and an important component of the overall situation of reform, opening up and the socialist modernization.

At the turn of the centuries, the magnificent Western Development was launched officially.

In June 1999, Jiang Zemin, the current Secretary-General of the CPC Central Committee, pointed out that conditions had been in place and the time had come to accelerate the development of the central and western regions, China must lose no time to expedite the development of central and west regions, and to intensify, in particular, the efforts on studying large-scale development of Western China. From then on, the development must be viewed with more attention as a major strategic mission of both the Party and the country.

In January 2000, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council jointly issued *Notice on Forwarding "Some Preliminary Ideas the of the State Development Planning Commission Concerning the Implementation of the Strategy for the Western Development"*, a programmatic document which guided the Development of Western China. In the same October, the State Council issued *Notice of the State Council on Several Policies and Measures Concerning the Implementation of the Development of Western China*. Since 2000, Western China has embarked on a new development process. Preferential state policies on investments were further given to Western China; entrepreneurs entered the land to start up new businesses; all walks of life in the west regions were enthusiastic; and supports came from all over the country, marking the grand beginning of the undertaking.

In March 2001, the Fourth Plenary Session of the Ninth National People's Congress adopted *The Outline of the Tenth Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development*, a document which made concrete deployment of the Western Development Strategy. It set forth, in clear-cut terms, that we need to begin work in areas along major transportation routes, such as the Eurasian Continental Bridge, the Yangtze River, and the routes in the southwestern part of the country leading to the sea. Major cities connected by such lines should serve as

---

① Mr. Deng Xiaoping, the great architect of China's reform and opening up, clearly proposed the strategic idea of Two Overall Situations respectively in 1988 and 1992. The first "overall situation" refers to the faster development of the coastal area in Eastern China by accelerating its opening up, the central and western regions must cooperate with the Eastern in the process; the other "overall situation" refers to the development of the central and western regions by the late 20th century when the country becomes moderately prosperous, more efforts should be made to support the central and western regions, and the coastal area must also cooperate for this development.

economic centers and play leading roles in the development of their adjacent areas. We should particularly foster the economic zones along the Tongguan-Lanzhou-Urumqi Railway, the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, and the Nanning-Guiyang-Kunming Railway (referred to as “two zones and one administrative district”), to promote development of the surrounding areas and push forward the Development of Western China in a phased and focused way.<sup>①</sup>

In December 2006, the *Eleventh Five-Year Plan on the Development of Western China* was deliberated and adopted in principle at the executive meeting of the State Council, which was meant to achieve a sound and rapid economic development of Western China, constantly improve the living standards of the people, make new breakthroughs in the construction of infrastructures and the eco-environment, help key areas and industries develop to a new level, make new achievements in education, health and other public services, and take a solid step in constructing a harmonious socialist society. It also proposed the development idea of setting up key economic zones, such as Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Zone, Guanzhong-Tianshui Economic Zone and Beibu Gulf Economic Zone (Guangxi Province).

In May 2010, Hu Jintao, the General-Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, chaired the meeting of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee to study on the overall idea and policies on and measures for the in-depth implementation of the Western Development Strategy. It was stressed at the meeting that the past 10 years witnessed the fastest economic development of Western China, the greatest changes in the urban and rural areas and the most tangible benefits for the general public in Western China; and that the past 10 years also witnessed the greatest contributions made by Western China to the state. For the special and important strategic position of western regions, special policy supports should be rendered to them. In the same July, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council held a Western Development Working Conference in Beijing, at which the achievements and experience gained in the first decade of the Development of Western China were summarized, and the goals and objects of the Development of Western China in the next decade were deployed. It was pointed out at the conference that the in-depth implementation of the Western Development Strategy was an important task to achieve the ambitious goal of constructing an affluent society in a comprehensive way, a task which was significant to the welfare of all ethnic groups in China, the reform and opening up,

---

<sup>①</sup> *The Western Development*, available at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-11/02/content\\_3719691.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/ziliao/2005-11/02/content_3719691.htm).

the socialist modernization as a whole, the long-term peace and stability of the state and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation; that the decade to come was a key period for China to build a well-off society in an all-round manner, also a key period for China to further promote the Development of Western China; that the Party and the Chinese people must put the overall national interests above all else, deeply understand the importance and urgency to further implement the Western Development Strategy, strive to deepen the cause of the Development of Western China, and make greater contributions to achieving the goal of building a well-off society in an all-round manner and realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

The overall strategic objective of the Development of Western China is: by the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century when China has basically achieved modernization, the relative backwardness of western regions should be changed fundamentally and a new Western China with a prosperous economy, social progresses, a peaceful environment, national unity, beautiful landscapes and rich people will be built after the painstaking efforts of several generations. According to the plan, the 5 decades of the Development of Western China can be divided into 3 stages:

**(1) The foundation-laying stage:** lasting from 2001 to 2010 with focuses on economic restructuring, infrastructures construction such as eco-environment, education of science and technology, establishing and perfecting the market system, and cultivating growth sectors with local characteristics to preliminarily improve the investment environment in Western China, contain ecological and environmental degradation, bring the economic operation in Western China to a virtuous circle and to raise the economic growth rate in Western China to the national average level. By now the objectives and tasks in this stage have been accomplished successfully; infrastructure and the eco-environment construction have witnessed dramatic breakthroughs; the economic growth has reached 2 digits (with an average annual growth rate of 11.6%), a level higher than the national average over the same period.

**(2) The accelerated development stage:** lasting from 2011 to 2030. Based on the achievements made in such fields as infrastructure improvements, strategic restructuring and system construction at the previous stage, Western Development will enter the sprint phase. The established foundation will be further consolidated; the industries with local characteristics will be cultured; and the industrialized, market-oriented and ecological economy as well as the layout of professional areas will be upgraded in a comprehensive way, so as to make a leap in economic growth.

**(3) The comprehensive modernization period:** lasting from 2031 to



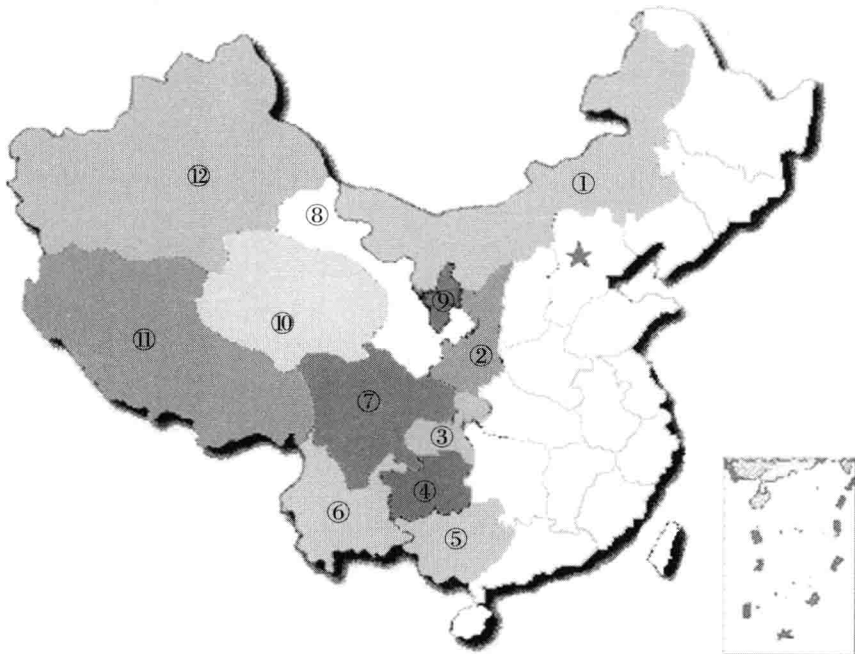
2050. Some areas taking the lead in economic development will become stronger and integrate into the domestic and foreign modern economic systems for self-development, based on which efforts will be made to accelerate the development of remote mountainous areas and backward farming and pastoral areas, universally improve the production and living standards of the local people in Western China, and narrow the development gap in a comprehensive way.

Guided by the scientific outlook on development, Western China starts a new round of development drive at a new starting point and advances bravely to achieve the goal of building a well-off society in China and achieving coordinated regional development in an all-round manner.

# Chapter I

## Overview of Western China

Western China covers an area of 6.85 million square kilometers across 12 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government of China) including Chongqing, Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Guangxi, accounting for 71% of China's total land area. Local population is approximately 360 million, accounting for 28% of the total population of mainland China. The population of ethnic groups in western regions accounts for about 75% of that around China. Though striding across 28 latitudes from south to north and 37 longitudes from east to west, Western China situates far away from the ocean. It



Sketch map of Western China

- ①Inner Mongolia ②Shaanxi ③Chongqing ④Guizhou ⑤Guangxi ⑥Yunnan  
⑦Sichuan ⑧Gansu ⑨Ningxia ⑩Qinghai ⑪Tibet ⑫Xinjiang

has complicated natural conditions, a diversified humanity history, and obvious advantages in natural resources, human resources and humane tourist resources.

## 1. 1 Human Culture in Western China

Western China covers a vast territory and diversified nationalities. In generations of historical changes, Western China has bred a culture of great splendor. Being localized, diversified and original, the human culture in Western China is an important component of the Chinese culture.

Since the ancient times, both Northwestern China and Southwestern China have had close contacts with the central plain area in China. Since the Western Han Dynasty (206BC ~ AD25), western regions have come into the view of the Chinese history. In the Tang Dynasty (AD618 ~ 907), the geographical concept of western regions further expanded to include the hinterland of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau, the northern grasslands and the vast Turkestan, even cross the Pamirs along the Silk Road. A number of princesses in the Han Dynasty (206BC ~ AD220) and the Tang Dynasty were married to princes in Usun, Tu Yu Hun, Qidan, Turkic, Ouigour, Nan Zhao, etc., further closing the contacts between the magic western culture and that in the central plain area. In history, a series of local authorities of national nature or chieftain powers of sachem nature were once established in succession. Due to their uniqueness in such fields as politics, economy and culture, a variety of nationalities were formed while they were creating their own history.

Of the 55 identified ethnic groups in China, nearly 50 of them have been living in today's western regions. Besides the 5 autonomous regions (Tibet Autonomous Region, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region), other provinces and cities have a large ethnic population and a number of ethnic autonomous regions. Take Qinghai Province for example, local ethnic population accounts for 45.5% of its total population and the area of ethnic regions accounts for 98% of its total land area. Of the 25 minorities having been living in Yunnan Province for generations, over 10 live only in Yunnan today. The aggregation of ethnic groups has determined the unique folk customs and colorful ethnic culture in Western China.

From the perspective of the types of regional culture, two types of cultural traditions have been formed in Western China. One is the Western China loess culture based on the Loess Plateau and the area where Han people live. As the profound soil for the growth and development of the ancient Chinese culture, it

embodies a number of the elements of Chinese humanism spirit. Located in the Loess Plateau, the Qinling Mountains-Longshan Mountain area strides from Hexi Corridor to the Taihang Mountains west to north, and is adjacent to the Inner Mongolia Plateau in the north and Qinling Mountains in the South. The ancient Yellow River passes through this region. The fertile central Shaanxi Plain and the Loess Plateau have become the cradle of the ancient Chinese culture and one of the birthplaces of the Chinese civilization. The other is the multi-layered culture of ethnic groups based on the area where ethnic groups live. It is mainly the multi-layered religious culture. Take Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region for example, it is a multi-religious area distributed with Islam, Lamaism (Tibetan Buddhism), Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, the Eastern Orthodox Church and Shamanism, of which Islam is the religious belief of over 10 ethnic groups, including Uygur, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Tajik, Ozbek, Tatar, Salar, Dongxiang and Baoan nationalities. Islam is influential in the social life of Xinjiang locals. Currently, there are more than 23,000 Islamic mosques and other sites for religious activities, such as Lama Temple and the Catholic Church, around Xinjiang, fully meeting the religious demands of the religious people in each ethnic group. Major religious organizations in Xinjiang include Islamic Association, Xinjiang Islam Institute of Scripture and the Buddhist Association. Both traditional religious cultures have had a glorious history in their development, contributed to shape the Chinese culture, and today they are both facing the trend of globalization and the exchanges and conflicts among the world's multiple civilizations.

The unique historical background and social life in Western China have formed unique circles of regional cultures, such as the Loess Plateau cultural circle centered with the Yellow River Basin, the Islamic cultural circle in Northwestern China, the northern grassland cultural circle, the West Region cultural circle cored with the regions north and south of the Tianshan Mountains, the Tibetan cultural circle on the Tibetan Plateau, the Ba-Shu cultural circle across the Yangtze River Valley and Sichuan Basin, as well as the Yunnan-Guizhou cultural circle located in Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. All these cultural circles have their own distinct characteristics or styles. The Loess Plateau culture is ancient and simple; the Islamic culture is full of exotic flavors; the northern plateau culture is an outburst of enthusiasm; the West Region culture shows the beauty of integration of the Eastern culture and the Western culture; the Tibetan culture is solemn and mysterious; the Ba-Shu culture is antique; and the Yunnan-Guizhou culture is full of the joy of humanity. All of these diversified cultural patterns are closely connected to the way of life, ideas, customs, religions, arts, history and living environment of each ethnic group.

The human culture in Western China is distinctive for its regionalism, ethnicity and diversity. First of all, Western China boasts complicated geographical features: the northwest region has a vast territory with a sparse population, the culture bred by which is simple, yet extensive; the southwest region is covered by mountains and rivers and has an intense population, its culture is delicate and sentimental; the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is cold, high in altitude, solemn and quiet, so its culture reveals mysteries and temptation. Some of the ethnic cultures in Western China, including language, religious belief, natural worship, myths, legends, stories, songs, dances, shows, dresses, architecture, crafts, customs, etiquette, survival philosophy and the way of life and production, are similar or identical in different ethnic groups, others are quite different. Even within the same nationality, various tribes or residences are different in many aspects, the ethnic culture is, therefore, more diversified and colorful.

The ethnic culture in Western China is an integration of multiple cultures. By absorbing and transforming a great number of external cultural factors to its own components, ethnic culture becomes more vigorous. In history, there were once three important channels that passed through Western China: one was the ancient Silk Road that passed through the Great Northwest and extended to the region bordering the Mediterranean in Europe; another was the ancient road from the central plain area to Tibet that ran through the Loess Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the Tang Dynasty; and the last one was the Ancient Tea Route that passed through the Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau and the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to reach Nepal, India and countries more distant. The three channels not only facilitated the trade and communication among peoples, but also disseminated culture. The Han culture in the central plain area was introduced to Western China constantly, while the Mediterranean culture, the ancient Arabic culture, Central Asian culture gathered here, too. Buddhism, Islam and Christianity began to develop in Western China since then. Of which, the most unique cultural phenomenon was the localization of the Buddhism in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, from which the Tibetan Buddhism was born.

With its strong local flavor and primitiveness that have not been deliberately carved, ethnic culture in Western China has been well preserved and active in the spiritual and material life of local people for long. The old town of Lijiang in Yunnan Province, one of the world's cultural heritages, is home to tens of thousands of people; the over thousand-year-old great epic *King Gesar* is now still on everybody's lips in Tibet; the ancient songs, dances and clothes are still expressing the longing for life in a simple way—the dissemination and expansion of the modern civilization have failed to take this ancient culture away from the

people. Instead, it has been passed down one generation after another with an extraordinary splendor. The primitive features of the western culture are strongly humane and emotional, which is just the most charming thing of the human culture in Western China.

Since Zhang Qian (164 ~ 114BC) connected the central plain area with the Western Regions, commercial exchanges between China and Central Asia and Europe had been increased rapidly. Through the Silk Road running through Asia to Europe, the Chinese thread, silk, damask, satin and thin silk were constantly exported to Central Asia and Europe. Therefore, Greeks and the Romans called China “Serice” and the Chinese people “Seres”. The so-called “Serice” means “silk”. The opening up of the Silk Road greatly promoted the economic and cultural exchanges between the East and the West and played an active role in the prosperity of the Han Dynasty. The Silk Road is still an important road of communications between the East and the West, playing a great role in promoting the economic and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries today.

Along the Silk Road, there were once diversified ancient West Region cultures. Xinjiang, a hub on the ancient Silk Road, was once a place for the communications and gathering of the Western culture and the Eastern culture. The ancient Chinese civilization, the ancient Greek culture, the Roman culture, the ancient Indian culture, the Persian culture and the Arabic culture all gathered here and integrated with one another in the ancient times, forming the Chinese local culture featured by polygeny, coexistence and multidimensional-development among the local ethnic groups. The formation of the multi-layered cultural layout in Xinjiang has witnessed historical progresses. Seen from the perspective of the differences in the way of production and natural environment, the ancient West Region culture may be divided into the oasis farming culture in the south, the prairie nomads culture in the north and the culture of the station troops; from the perspectives of cultural structure, there are the cultures of peoples under the Indo-European language family, the Altaic language family and the Chinese-Tibetan language family; as for religion dissemination, Shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Islam, Manichaeism and Christianity co-exist and accommodate one another. Regarding cultural patterns, there are folk music and dance, written literature, oral folk songs and stories, as well as colorful folk cultures.

Of all regions in Western China, Xi'an in Shaanxi Province is known for its long history and rich and unique cultural resources. Located at the junction area of Central China and Western China economic regions, Xi'an is a portal and transport hub for provinces in Northwestern China to reach Southwestern China, the central plain area and Eastern China. As the largest center city along Longhai-Lanzhou-

Xinjiang Railway, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Eurasia Land Bridge, it holds an important strategic position that connects Western China with Eastern China in the overall economic layout of the country. The long history and rich cultural deposits have made Xi'an head of the 6 ancient capitals, one of the world's four greatest ancient cities, and a famous city of tourism. After the foundation of PRC in 1949, Xi'an quickly developed into an important industrial base, especially an industrial base for national defense, scientific, technological research and base and base of higher education.

Located in Xi'an, the Mausoleum of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty is one of the world's largest and most unique emperor's tombs with the richest connotations. The Terracotta Warriors are treasures of the world's human culture comparable to the Pyramids in ancient Egypt and the sculptures in ancient Greece. The excavation itself is the most magnificent archaeological achievement in China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They fully demonstrate the wonderful artistic talents of the Chinese people living 2,000 years ago and provide extremely precious materials for further studies on the military, political, economic, cultural, scientific and artistic situation of the Qin Dynasty in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B. C. The Terracotta Warriors were made with the theme in real life, their delicate and bright means of artistic expression, and their varied expressions and gestures of the Terracotta Warriors show distinct personalities and strong characteristics of the times. They not only present the peak of the clay arts, add to the credits of the splendid ancient culture of the Chinese nation, but also write a glorious page in the book of world history. On June 15, 2009, after an interval of 24 years, the 3<sup>rd</sup> time large-scale excavation of the Terracotta Warriors began.

Dunhuang Grottoes, located at the west end of Hexi Corridor in Gansu Province, is the most famous historical and cultural heritage in Western China. Famous around the world for its beautiful murals and statues and composed of Mogao Grottoes in Dunhuang, West Thousand-Buddha Caves, Yulin Grottoes, East Thousand-Buddha Caves and the grottoes in Subei Mongolian Autonomous County, Dunhuang Grottoes are called the most valuable cultural discovery in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Louvre in the East. Initially built in the Pre-Qin Period during the Sixteen Kingdoms Period (the mid-fourth century) and rebuilt in the Sixteen Kingdoms Period, the Northern Dynasties (AD386 ~ 581), the Sui Dynasty, the Tang Dynasty, the Five Dynasties, the West Xia Dynasty and the Yuan Dynasty, it has become very large. Currently, there are 735 caves, 45,000 square meters of murals and 2,415 clay-based painted sculptures in Dunhuang Grottoes, making it the world's largest existing sacred site of Buddhism arts with the richest contents. Located on the bluff at the east foot of the Singing Sand Mountain 25 kilometers

southeast of downtown Dunhuang City, Gansu Province, Mogao Grottoes were initially built in AD 366 and enlarged and rebuilt repeatedly in the following years till the Yuan Dynasty (1206 ~ 1368). There had been over 1,000 grottoes by the Tang Dynasty. After generations of damages and collapses, Dunhuang Grottoes now have only 492 grottoes and preserve over 2,400 painted sculptures from ancient generations, more than 45,000 square meters of murals and 5 wooden grottoes built in the Tang and the Song dynasties. The murals, themed with Buddhist images, Buddhist stories, relics and myths, are beautiful and vivid. The sculptures, painted and made of clay, are vividly molded, true to life. Apart from the Buddhism-related themes, there are the images of the providers of the grottoes, life and production scenarios such as hunting, fishing, wedding and funeral arrangements, acrobatics, songs and dances, travel, etc. All of the sculptures, grottoes and murals constitute the intact Dunhuang art. Since the trips of imperial envoy Zhang Qian to the Western Regions, Dunhuang had become a transport hub before gradually developing into a place where the Indian Gandhara culture, the Greek culture and the central plain culture converged. Dunhuang Grottoes have systematically preserved the development order of the Buddhist sculptures from the Sixteen Kingdoms (304 ~ 439) period to the Yuan Dynasty. Coupled with Dunhuang murals and Dunhuang cultural relics, Dunhuang Grottoes have become an independent discipline around the world—Dunhuang studies. Therefore, Dunhuang Grottoes are not only the treasury of the Chinese arts, but also the crystallization of the entire human civilization.

Located in the upper reaches of the Yellow River, Ningxia has an ancient history and effulgent culture. In particular, the West Xia Dynasty (1038 ~ 1227) established by the Tangut people in the northwestern regions had left a lot of mysteries for later generations to solve. When China entered the age of civilization, Ningxia was a place for ethnic groups to live a nomadic life. After he united the country, Qin Shi Huang, the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty, moved local people living in central Shaanxi Plain to Ningxia to defend from the invasion of Xiong Nu, an ancient nationality in China. With years of development, Ningxia became Xin Qin Zhong (a newly-developed wasteland in the territory of the Qin Dynasty). During the Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern dynasties, Ningxia was ravaged by while constantly restoring and developing among wars. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century, a new power was set up in the northwestern territory of the North Song Dynasty—the West Xia Kingdom. Established by the Tangut people, it existed in history for 189 years and created a unique ethnic culture. In addition, Ningxia has plenty of the remains of the Great Wall and the world-renowned rock paintings in Helan Mountains. Ningxia had been an important frontier fortress till the Warring States



(403 ~ 221BC). The Qin, the Han, the Sui and the Ming dynasties had all once built the Great Wall in Ningxia. On the land of Ningxia that covers only 60-plus thousands square kilometers, a total length of more than 1,500 kilometers of the Great Wall had been built by successive dynasties, making it a Museum of the Great Wall. As for the rock paintings in Helan Mountains, they are a kind of rock engraving art left by the ancient nomadic tribes once active in the Mountains. With the geographical distribution spanning hundreds of miles and the history extending thousands of years, these rock paintings vividly depict a great number of scenes, such as animals, hunting, grazing, fighting, dancing, working and sexual intercourse, representing the life of the nomadic tribes in the Helan Mountains for the past thousands of years. After their discovery in 1983, these rock paintings have aroused the attention of the international cultural circles.

The ethnic culture in Western China has profound deposits, rich contents, distinct local characteristics, integrated natural and human components, diversified forms and unique charms. It not only provides treasury for such disciplines as cultural anthropology, religious anthropology, ethnology, folklore, ecology culture, etc., but also rich materials for the development of the cultural industry. How to establish brands and industries in the in-depth development and exploration of the valuable ethnic culture in Western China and promote them all over China and abroad has become an important component in the in-depth implementation of the Western Development strategy.

## 1.2 Natural Resources in Western China

Western China is a fertile land. On this land that covers an area of 6.85 million square kilometers across 12 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, there are 360 million people living here. Natural resources in Western China play a decisive role around China. Data has shown that of the 159 mineral resources with proved reserves, 143 were discovered in Western China. Of the listed 35 major minerals in Western China, those whose proved reserves account for over 90% of the national total include rare-earth, mercury, titanium, platinum family metals, magnesium, potassium and asbestos, etc.; those whose proved reserves account for over 60% ~ 80% of the national total include zinc, antimony, barium and natural gas, etc.; and those whose proved reserves account for over 50% of the national total include lead, cobalt, antimony, phosphorus and coal, etc. In terms of the potential value of the industrial reserves of the 45 major minerals, that of those discovered in Western China accounts for 48.3% of the national total; in terms of the proved reserves of