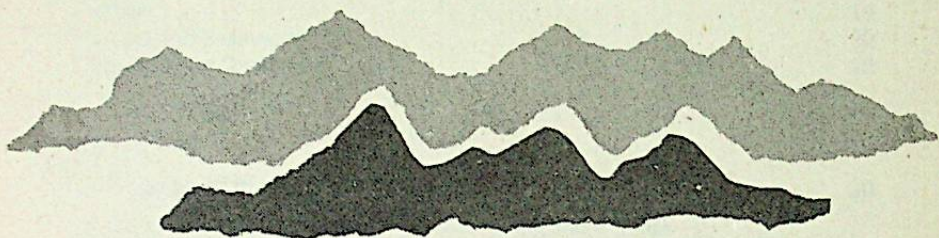


Xinjiang

the land and the people



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If you were to conduct a poll to determine the top places to visit in China, very likely Xinjiang would lead the list. However, the popularity of the region must not be attributed merely to the numerous cultural relics of the famed Silk Road, the wonderful wall paintings in its numerous grottoes, or the many ruins of ancient cities buried in the boundless Gobi Desert, nor should credit be given solely to its uniquely colorful and intoxicating multinational culture composed of over twenty of China's ethnic minorities.

Xinjiang's extraordinary landscape and climatic conditions play an equal role in explaining the region's attraction, for Xinjiang boasts China's largest grazing land and deserts, the country's lowest lying basin (below sea level), and the second highest mountain in the world. Here the temperature can go as high as forty-eight degrees centigrade in the summer and drop as low as fifty-two degrees centigrade below zero in the winter.

Xinjiang's culture and social customs deeply reflect centuries of peaceful coexistence among the area's minority ethnic groups, during which time the culture of each group has been enriched by that of the others. Tempered by extreme weather conditions, these cultures combine to form the richly colorful foreground to Xinjiang's majestic natural beauty.

This book is a comprehensive presentation of all these aspects of Xinjiang. Artists, historians and anthropologists who wish to explore the riches of this culture and natural treasure house will find it a useful handbook, as will both armchair travelers and people planning to visit Xinjiang.

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