

Ningxia

The Yellow River drainage area is regarded as the cradle of Chinese civilization, with traces of human activities appeared in the Old Stone Age 30,000 years ago. After Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified China, he dispatched troops there to open up wasteland and build the famous Qin Great Wall and Qin Qu (Qin trench).

In 765, crown prince Li Heng ascended the throne in Lingwu, Ningxia, known in history as Tang Suzong. During the period between 1038 and 1227, Dangxiang

people established Daxia Kingdom, occupying today's Ningxia and Gansu. The kingdom was called Xixia in history with capital in Prefecture of Xingqing, today's Ningxia capital Yinchuan.

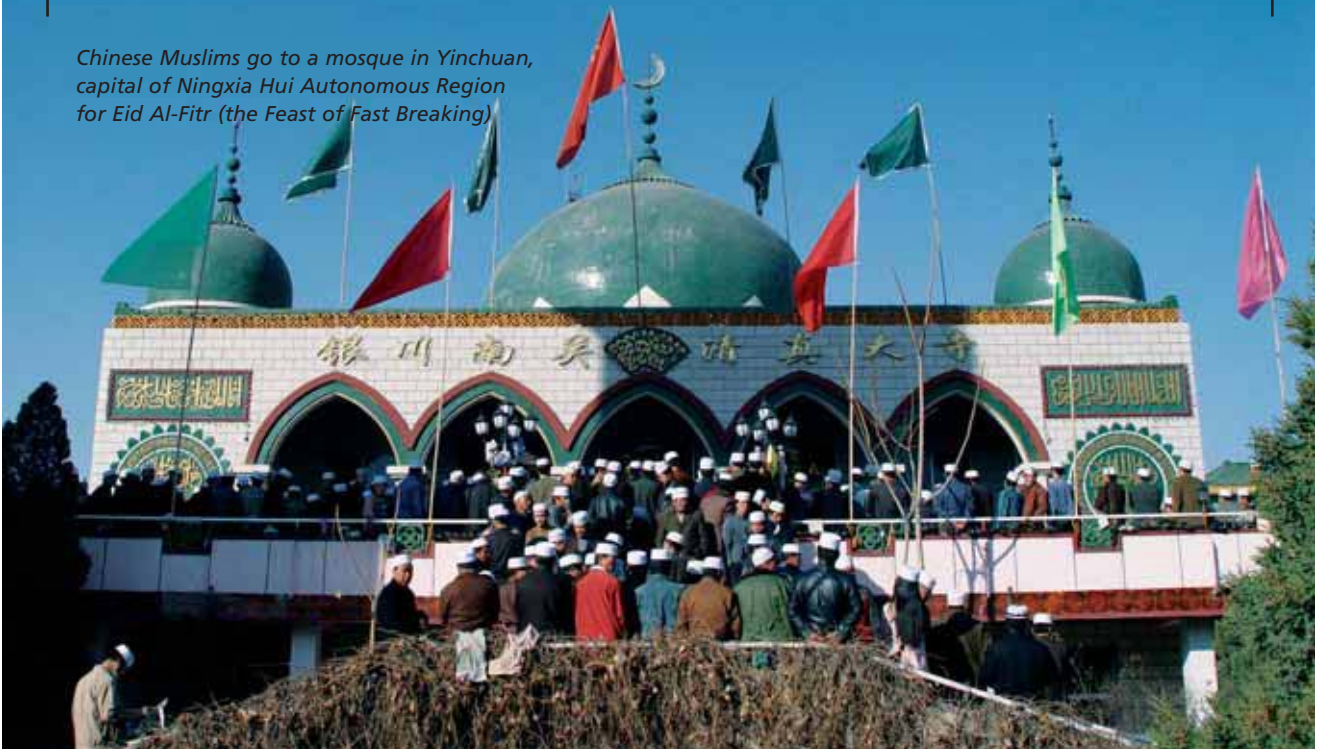
During Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368), the Central Government set up a province there, and later formally named it Ningxia. In 1929, it was called Ningxia Province and on October 25, 1958, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region was established.

Basic Facts

Area: 66,000 square km
 Capital: Yinchuan
 Nationalities: Han, Hui and Manchu
 Population: 5.6 million

Neighbor provinces: Shaanxi and Gansu provinces and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region

Chinese Muslims go to a mosque in Yinchuan, capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region for Eid Al-Fitr (the Feast of Fast Breaking)





By the harvest of *Lycium chinense*(fruit of Chinese wolfberry)
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The working women peasants © WANG GUANGZHUANG



Sightseeing in the Shahu sceney zone, a famous ecological
tourismus zone © ZHANG BO



The children of peasants are ready to go to the class.
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Cultural Relics in Ningxia

Since ancient times, Yuanzhou (Guyuan) was a strategic point for defending the Central Shanxi Plain as well as for the mingling and assembling of the Central Plain culture with the Western Regions (a Han Dynasty term for the area west of Yumen Pass, including what is now Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia) and nomadic cultures. The northern section of the ancient Silk Road went through the region and it was a strategic military communication pivot.

The Qin Great Wall in the Warring States Period built in 306-251 BC is the oldest defense work of Central

Plain dynasties against its bordering states Xirong, Yiqu and Xubian. The mountain passes and wall barriers in the Han, Wei, Tang and Song dynasties extending all over the mountains, rivers and valleys are proof of the Central Plain dynasties establishing prefectures and counties for opening up and enterprising; the cutting of Mount Sumeru and the remains of temples are reflections of the prosperous economy and culture after the opening of the Silk Road; the building of ancient Yuanzhou City and the establishment of horse-breeding officials are portrayal of the history of the steady development of the area since the Tang, Song, Yuan and Ming dynasties.

Lingzhou and Xingqing (Yinchuan), known for brisk trade exchanges between farming and nomadic nationalities, and several nationalities who mingled together, was the fortress base for guarding Heshuo City. The remains of wall blockades, beacon mounds, ancient ferries, ditches and a vast stretch of Han and Tang tombs scattered on high mounds, river banks and mountain passes are historic witnesses of the Central Plain dynasties' opening up wasteland on border areas and the establishment of prefectures and counties to receive and settle ancient minority groups in the Western Regions. The grand and peculiar Western Xia mausoleums, various Buddhist pagodas and many architectural remains are miniatures of the Dangxiang noble Yi Yuanhao reclaiming wasteland and holding sway over a region, supporting themselves and making themselves strong, expanding Buddhism and commanding Western Xia. The Ming Great Wall meandering on both banks of the Yellow River, crisscrossing ravines and channels, and temples for worship by various religious sects are the real portrayal of harmonious coexistence of the peaceful life and work of the Han, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Manchu and other nationalities, and the development of their respective culture and customs.

Following the rapid development of Ningxia's archaeological undertakings in the past dozen years, the long

negligible and forgotten history and cultural remains submerged underground have been unveiled. Systematic investigations by cultural relics departments in the autonomous region have discovered 1,693 registered cultural remains to date, of which 1,155 are ancient remains, 104 ancient architectures, 109 grotto tablet inscriptions and cliff paintings, 237 ancient tombs and large graves, 56 modern and contemporary historical residences and 21 ancient fossil centers. Over 34,000 articles of various kinds of cultural relics have been scientifically excavated, rescued and collected, of which metal, jade, stone and pottery ware, paintings and other arts and handicrafts, stone statues, Confucius classics, documents and other excellent articles have been gathered and collected in the autonomous region's museum. These art treasures can not only enrich the cultural and art treasure trove of the Chinese nationality but also provide detailed material for studying the history of border ethnic nationalities, the Silk Road, Buddhist culture, the Western Xia regime, and modern and contemporary northwestern ethnic nationality relations.

Yinchuan City

Yinchuan, also known as the Phoenix City, is the capital of Ningxia. Legend has it that once upon a time seven phoenix sisters, on a sightseeing journey, discovered an

Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region makes progress in its fight against desertification

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oasis after a long and tiring flight over a desert. Fascinated by the inviting scenery, the youngest phoenix decided to stay. She bid farewell to her sisters and landed on the oasis with her face toward the Yellow River and tail toward the Helan Mountain. Stretching her wings, she was turned into a beautiful city--Yinchuan.

The Great Wall

The ancient Great Wall is one of the world's wonders. The Great Wall in Ningxia was initially built in Qin Dynasty (306 - 251 B.C.), a total about 200 kilometers. Then Sui, Song and Ming dynasties had continued the building of the Great Wall. The part of the Great Wall in the Northeast of Yinchuan built around 1522 has been the favorite of many geological scientists. There were two shifts in this 3.5 km long Great Wall. One part moved 1.54 meters clockwise, and the other shifted 0.95 meters vertically. Scientists guessed that the movements were due to an earthquake in 1739, but they could not explain why the other ancient buildings near the Great Wall were not destroyed.

Checking Desertification

Sapetou is a city located in the South of the Geliteng Dessert, the fourth largest desert in China. The depth of the sand layer is between 70 and 100 meters. Some

experts called it the ancestor of desserts or the king of sands. There are about 300 sand storms a year in the region, which cause the sand hills marching toward the green land. The Zhongwei people, lead by a group of scientists, found a way to grow plants in the dessert. Now they have created a 45 km long and 0.5 km wide green corridor to protect the railroad and the city. And finally the movement of the sand hills is under control.

Hui Scarves

Traditionally, Hui girls start wearing scarves around nine years old. Hui women use different colors to distinguish the age or generation of women. Girls and brides usually wear green color scarves. Middle-aged women and women with children wear black color scarves. Old women or women who have grand children use white scarves.

Helan CLiff Arts

Ningxia is rich in cultural relics. The Helan arts are famous ancient carvings and paintings on the rocks and cliffs in the Helan Mountain area. The earliest carvings can be traced back to the Chunqiu Period (770-476 B.C.). There are more than 1,000 pieces of art works and they are the records of the natural phenomena, the history and distinctive local features over the last 2,000 years.

Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region is now accelerating developing infrastructure. It is a county highway winding through the mountain. XINHUA AGENCY

Medlar is one of the most major agricultural produce for Ningxia

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