

# Qinghai Province, China

Tibetan, Muslim, Mongolian, Sichuan,  
and Han Chinese Cultures All in One

Presentation by Paul Pacter

[www.PaulVisits.com](http://www.PaulVisits.com)



China has 34 provincial level subdivisions:

- 23 provinces (if Taiwan is included).
- 4 very big municipalities with equal status to provinces.

Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin.

- 5 autonomous regions.

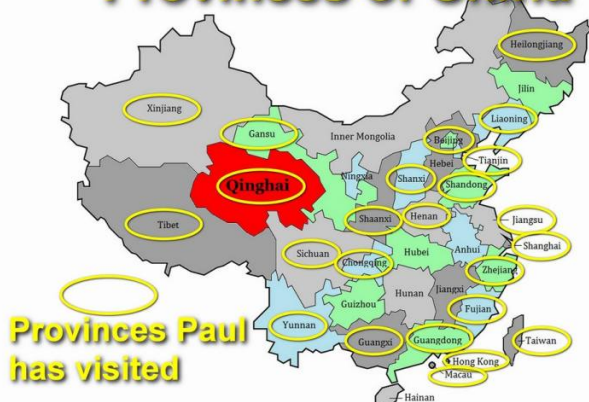
Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Xinjiang.

- 2 special administrative regions.

HK and Macao.

QINGHAI is one of the provinces.

## Provinces of China



Provinces Paul  
has visited

## Qinghai Province.

Old name (still often used): Kokonor.

Terms used to describe Qinghai:

- Remote.
- Sparsely populated.
- “China’s Siberia” due to many prison camps and nuclear dumping grounds.
- Majestic.
- Barren.

Capital: Xining.



## Qinghai – land area:

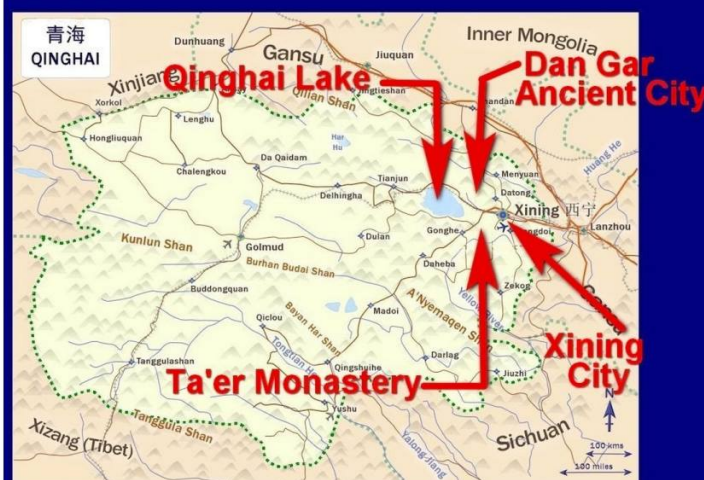
- China’s largest province (though several autonomous regions are larger)
- 280,000 sq miles
- Larger than any country in the EU!

## Comparisons:

- Florida land area: 66,000 sq miles
- Entire USA land area: 3,796,000 sq miles

Most land is mountainous or high plateaus

- Average elevation 9,900 feet



## Qinghai Population

- Only 5,900,000 people
- Lowest pop. of any China province

## Comparisons:

- China population: 1.4 billion
- US: 340 million
- Florida: 23 million

Sparseness of population second only to Tibet.

## Qinghai Ethnic Groups

### 2010 Census Data

Han Chinese 54%  
Tibetan 21%  
Hui (Muslim) 16%  
Tu (Monguor) 4%  
Mongol 2%  
Salar 2%  
Others 1%

### 2020 Census Data

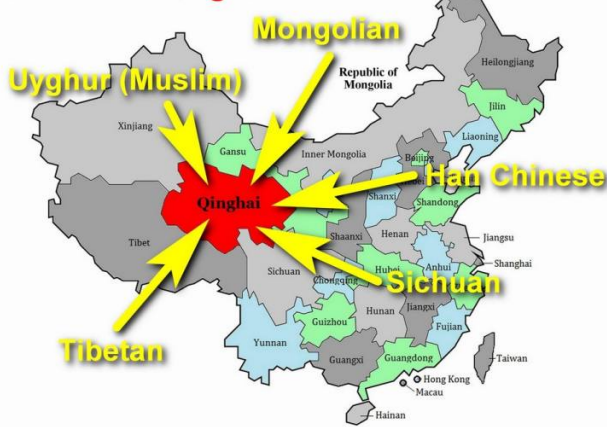
Han Chinese 51%  
Minorities 49%

% Han Chinese declined 2010-2020.

2010: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qinghai#Ethnicity>  
2020: <https://www.chinafile.com/reporting-opinion/viewpoint/how-much-does-beijing-control-ethnic-makeup-of-tibet>



## Influences on Qinghai Culture



## Qinghai Economy

### Per capita GDP 2024:

Qinghai: US\$9,347.

Beijing: \$32,038.

Shanghai: \$30,486.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Chinese\\_provincial-level\\_divisions\\_by\\_GDP\\_per\\_capita](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_provincial-level_divisions_by_GDP_per_capita)

USA: \$85,810.

### Total GDP 2024:

Qinghai: \$55 billion.  
(2nd lowest of all provinces).

China: \$18.7 trillion.

USA: \$29.2 trillion.

Florida: \$1.7 trillion.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Chinese\\_provincial-level\\_divisions\\_by\\_GDP](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Chinese_provincial-level_divisions_by_GDP)

## Religion in Qinghai

- Buddhism (both Chinese and Tibetan styles) - 82%
- Islam - 17%
- Christianity - 1%

We will visit Chinese Buddhist, Tibetan Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian houses of worship today.

## Xining Capital of Qinghai Province

### Xining

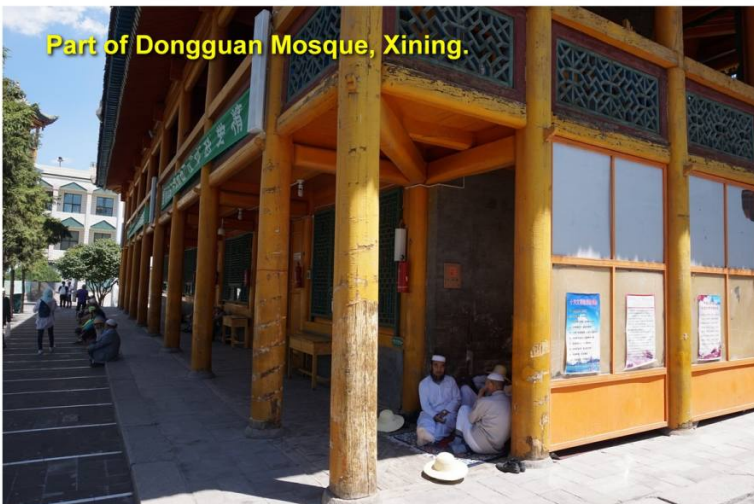
- Capital of Qinghai
- Population: 1.7 mil
- Altitude: 7,464 feet
- On Silk Road
- Commercial and religious hub for 2000 years
- Cold semi-arid climate
- 2,676 hours bright sunshine a year  
(if divide by 8 hours then 335 days)



**Dongguan Mosque**  
Main prayer hall holds 3,000.  
But Friday lunchtime often 50,000 praying in courtyard and nearby streets.



Part of Dongguan Mosque, Xining.



Fried dough snacks at shop in Muslim neighbourhood near Dongguan Mosque







Honey shop in Muslim neighbourhood around Dongguan Mosque

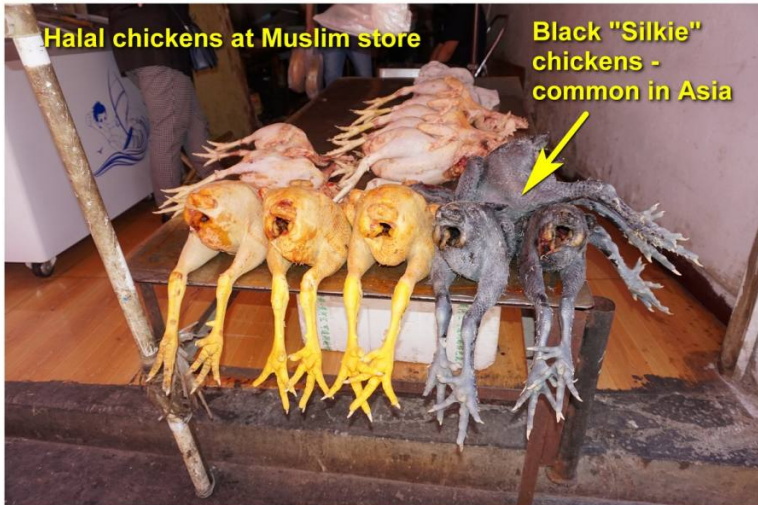
Moon Cakes



Shop in Muslim neighbourhood near Dongguan Mosque

Tea

Chinese Wolfberries, also called Goji



Halal chickens at Muslim store

Black "Silkie" chickens - common in Asia



Muslim naan bread

White flour, salt, yeast, yoghurt, sesame



Naan bread is baked on the walls of a wood oven

Lid on.  
Oven reaches 800 degrees F.  
Bread cooks in under 90 seconds.



Government school for Muslim girls



Muslim Clothing Store in Xining  
Notice the Arabic writing



Muslim neighbourhood - Xining



Sunflowers for sale in Xining - 12 to 18 inches diameter!



Yak Butter on sale in Xining  
Twice the fat content of cow's milk  
Used in tea, mixed with barley as snack



Sheep tripe and chickens

She is browning the chickens with a blowtorch



Dandan Noodles - Sichuan dish  
Spicy sauce (chili and pepper),  
preserved vegetables,  
minced pork, and scallions  
served over noodles.



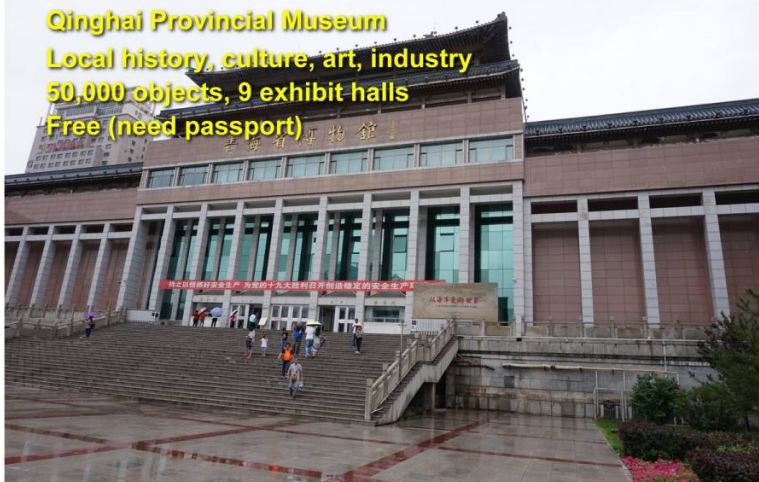
Sichuan chicken with chillies and mushrooms



Ribs with soya beans and chillies  
in casserole



Qinghai Provincial Museum  
Local history, culture, art, industry  
50,000 objects, 9 exhibit halls  
Free (need passport)



Like many Chinese museums,  
begins with some political indoctrination





Wonderful collection of Tibetan Buddhist Thangkas  
Paintings on cloth (cotton or silk)  
Religious teachings



Qinghai Provincial Museum - Thangka



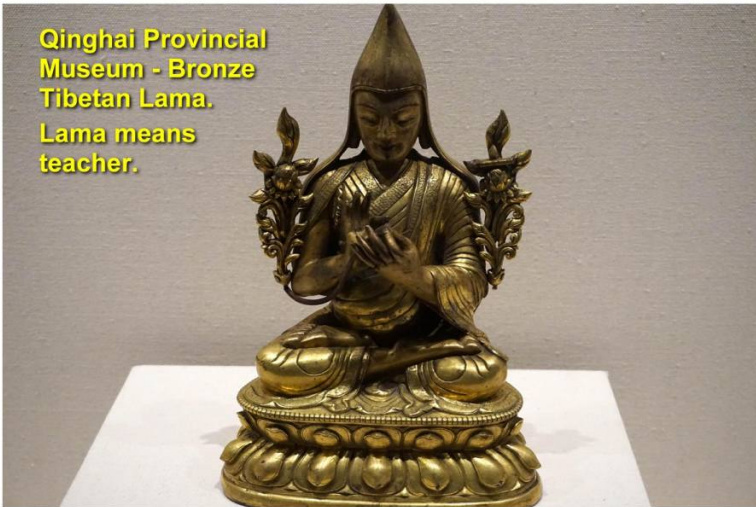
A few of the thangkas at Qinghai Provincial Museum  
17th to 19th centuries



Large collection of  
bronzes, porcelains,  
paintings, etc.  
Many signs have  
English descriptions.



Qinghai Provincial  
Museum - Bronze  
Tibetan Lama.  
Lama means  
teacher.



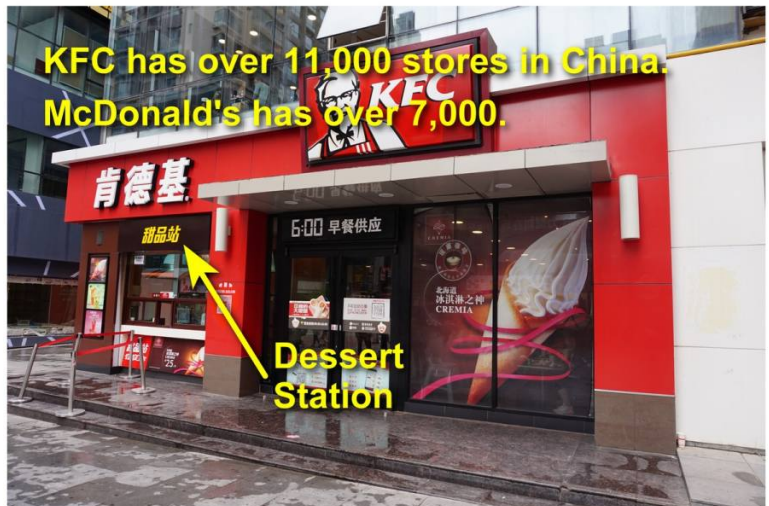
A large exhibition devoted to the Silk Road



A lot of pottery 3,000 to 5,000 years old.  
This one is estimated to be 5,000 years old.



KFC has over 11,000 stores in China.  
McDonald's has over 7,000.





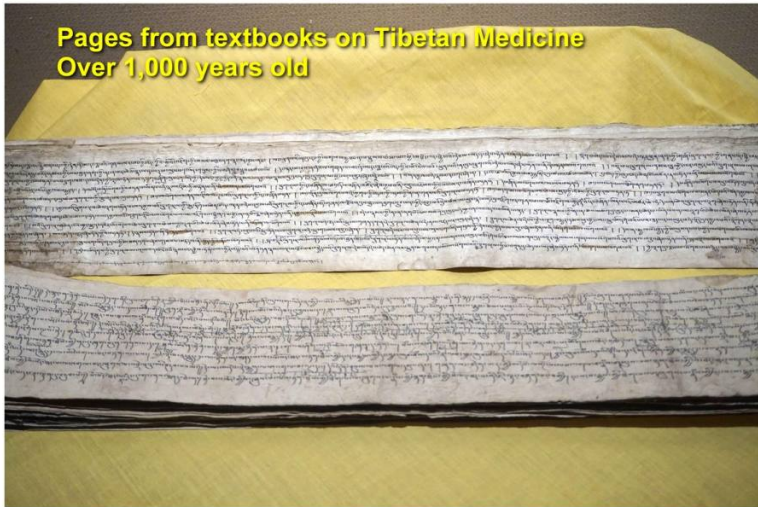


Xining shopfront  
Translation of Chinese characters:  
"Hundred Benefit"



Tibetan Medicine Museum - Xining  
Also called Museum of Tibetan Culture

Designed like a Tibetan temple



Pages from textbooks on Tibetan Medicine  
Over 1,000 years old



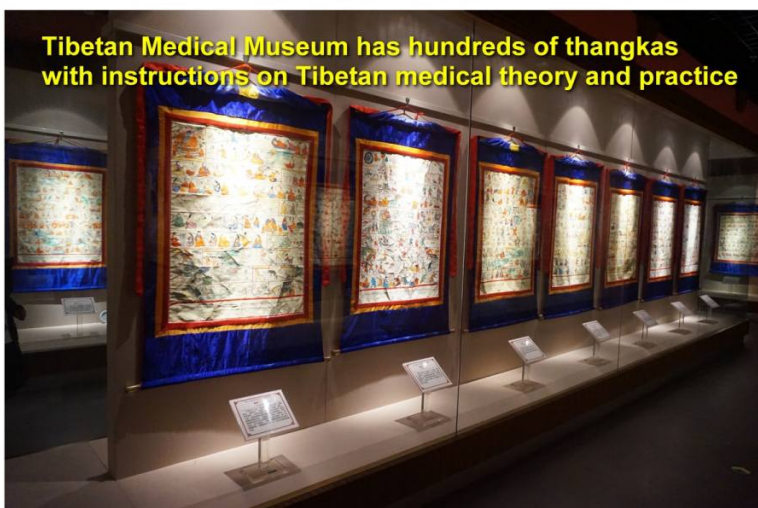
Tibetan Medical Museum - Surgeon's case 19th c



Tibetan Medical Museum - old medical drawings



Photos of hospitals of Tibetan medicine in China



Tibetan Medical Museum has hundreds of thangkas  
with instructions on Tibetan medical theory and practice



Tibetan Medical Museum  
Thangka explaining circulatory system





**Tibetan Medical Museum thangka**  
Late 17th c



**Tibet Medical Museum**  
**Thangka about Urinalysis**



**Tibetan Medical Museum**  
**Exhibit about the**  
**Tibetan calendar**



**The Great Thangka**  
618 metres long (2,027 feet) - world's longest  
Hand painted by 400 artists  
Took 4 years, completed 1997  
Stories of Tibetan history, religion, culture,  
medicine, arts



**The Great Thangka on display in Korea 2001**

2001年《彩绘大观》第二次在韩国釜山的展厅



**Detail from The Great Thangka**  
**Tibetan Medical Museum**



**Tibetan Medical Museum - The Great Thangka**



**Immaculate Conception RC Church**  
**Near entrance to Beishan Xi - North Temple**





Immaculate Conception RC Church -- Xining



North Mountain Temple  
Also called Bei [north] Shan [mountain] temple  
Also called Tulou Temple

Built during the Northern Wei Dynasty 386-534 AD.



Beishan Temple is 5 miles from Xining city center  
It is Taoist

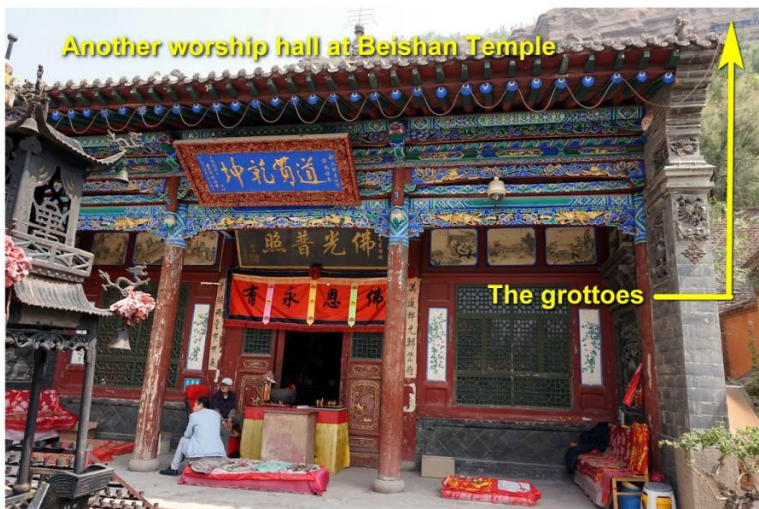
Temple Gate  
Guardian  
holding a  
thunderbolt



One of the halls at Beishan Temple

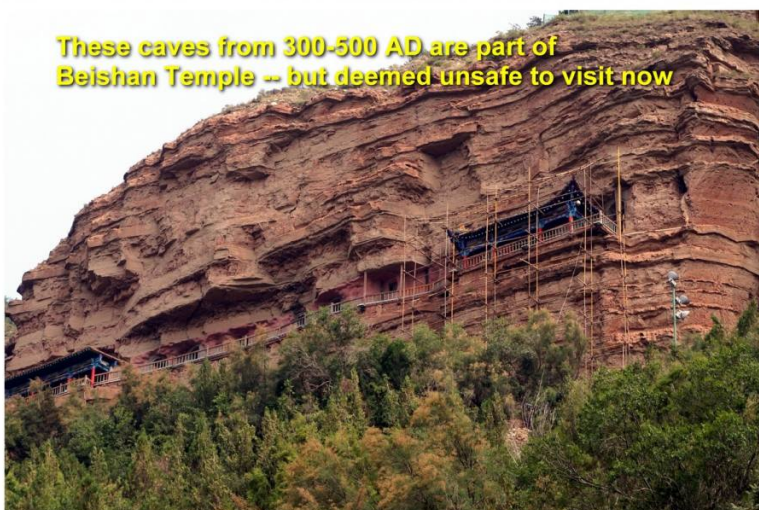


Taoist priest - dozing



Another worship hall at Beishan Temple

The grottoes



These caves from 300-500 AD are part of  
Beishan Temple -- but deemed unsafe to visit now



Do not climb these steps.  
The caves are not safe.  
There are 99 caves with frescoes.

山洪、泥石流灾害易发区域

请勿从此登山!

灾害类型: 山洪、泥石流、滑坡

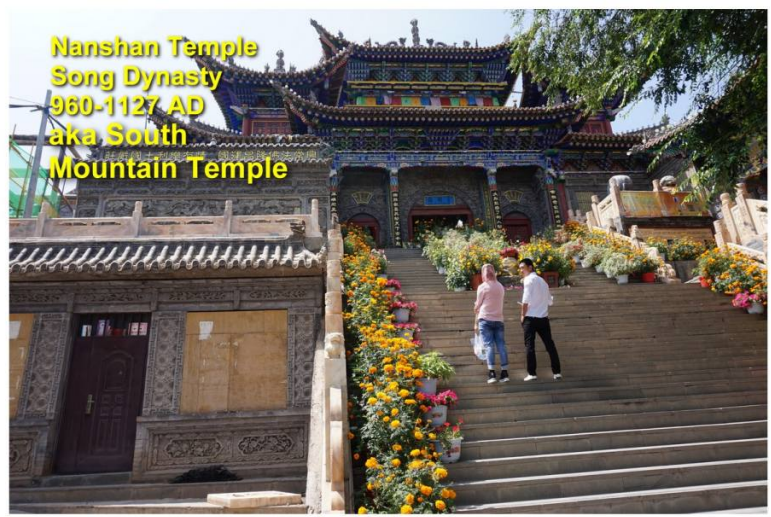
防汛警示

朝阳街道办事处应急值班电话: 0971-5113139  
区防汛指挥组值班电话: 0971-5131555  
朝阳街道办事处





Beishan Temple  
North Mountain Temple  
Xining



Nanshan Temple  
Song Dynasty  
960-1127 AD  
aka South  
Mountain Temple



Nanshan Temple - Xining

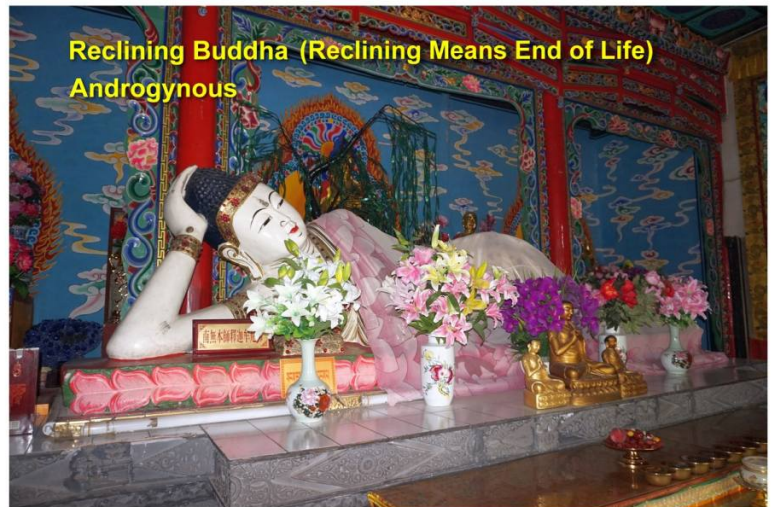
Statue of Guanyin  
Goddess of Mercy



Guanyin - Goddess of Mercy  
Notice multiple arms to help people



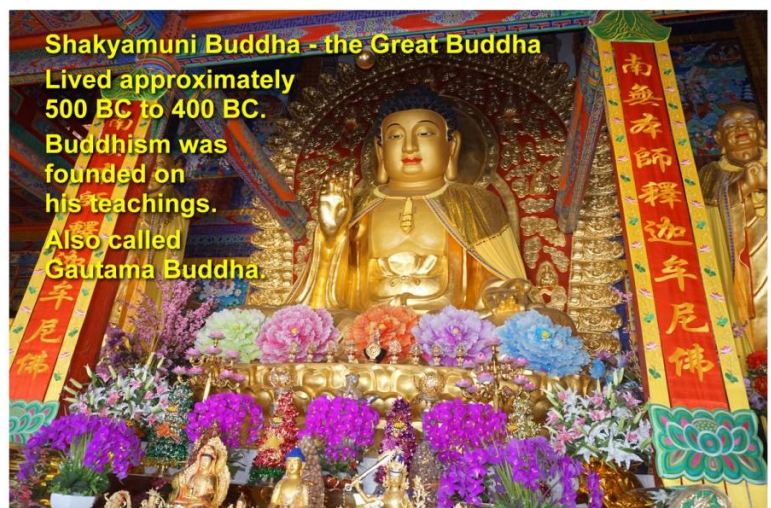
God of the Earth  
Di Jiong Huang



Reclining Buddha (Reclining Means End of Life)  
Androgynous



Great views of Xining city from Nanshan Temple



Shakyamuni Buddha - the Great Buddha  
Lived approximately  
500 BC to 400 BC.  
Buddhism was  
founded on  
his teachings.  
Also called  
Gautama Buddha.





Tibetan Buddhist worship items



Mojia Street area has many traditional restaurants and shops and underground markets



Shop selling dried seafood and fruits

and dried yak meat



Fresh made noodles  
Soft, not dried



No refrigeration -- despite 80° F temperatures  
(same in Hong Kong markets)



Fresh-made  
Tibetan yoghurt

and dried yak meat

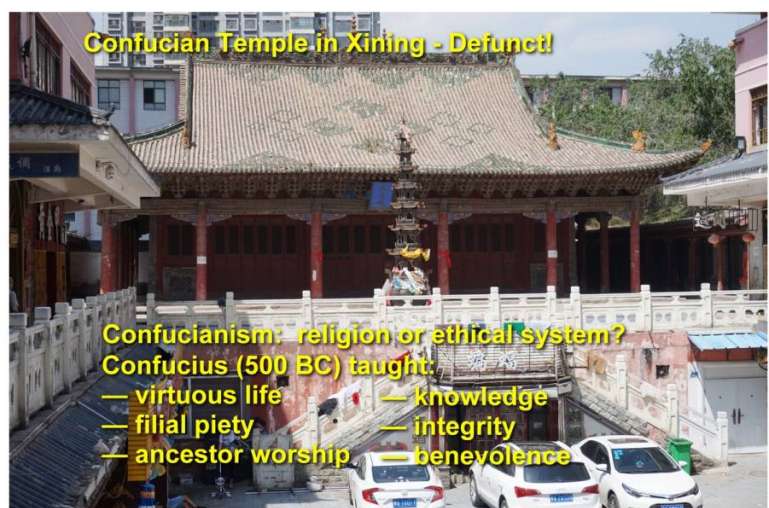


Mazhong Restaurant on Mojia Street  
Sort of a giant Tibetan food court



You buy a prepaid "credit card" and then go around and choose your food. They refund unused amounts.









Dafo Tibetan Buddhist Temple  
Xining



Dafo Temple - Xining

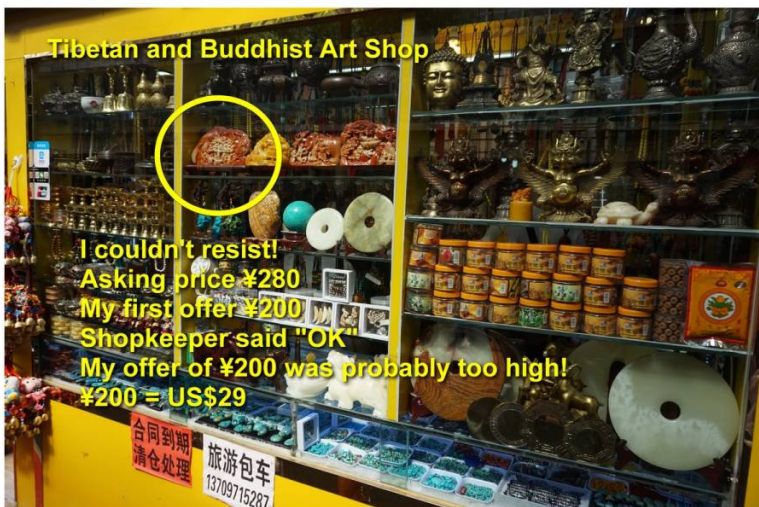


Dafo Tibetan Buddhist Temple - Xining

Model of the Potala Palace (temple and  
museum and former Dalai Lama  
residence) in Lhasa, Tibet



Shuijing Lane Market  
Elderly demonstrating for "consumer rights"



Tibetan and Buddhist Art Shop

I couldn't resist!  
Asking price ¥280  
My first offer ¥200  
Shopkeeper said "OK"  
My offer of ¥200 was probably too high!  
¥200 = US\$29



My purchase



Shuijing Lane Market  
Non-Halal butcher

Pig trotters



Shuijing Lane Market

Walnuts      Wolfberries      Black  
Wolfberries      Raisins

Price is per catty (Chinese unit of  
weight). But:  
In Hong Kong 1 catty = 605 grams  
In Japan, Taiwan 1 catty = 600 grams  
In China 1 catty = 500 grams





Potato bread with chili



The time has come for me to ask...  
Does anyone know what these are?



Prawns (shrimps)  
Not sure where these come  
from since Qinghai is  
way inland and remote



Cordyceps  
Worms covered  
with a fungus.  
Medicinal --  
make into soup.

Small cordyceps  
are ¥80 for 1 gram.  
Larger ones ¥300  
for 1 gram

1 ounce = 28.4 grams.  
¥300 = US\$45 for 1 gram.  
 $US\$45 \times 28.4 = US\$1,278$   
per ounce!  
For worms!

"Cordyceps is  
valued for its  
activity in  
restoring energy,  
promoting  
longevity, and  
improving quality  
of life."

"Well-controlled  
clinical trials are  
lacking."



Shuijing Lane Market



Mojia Agricultural Products Market (underground)

Winter Melon

A kind of  
pumpkin



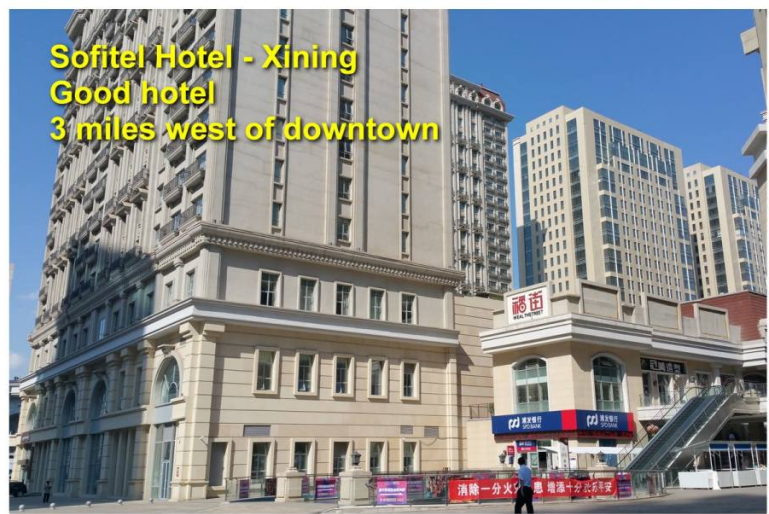
Mojia Agricultural Products Market



Mojia Agricultural Products Market

Silver Scabbardfish  
(I think)









Banging legs with rubber hammers  
Circulation



Tofu with a few chilies



Muslim Restaurant

Yak broth

Yak meat



Sliced noodle and fungus soup



Muslim Restaurant - Chicken with dough dumplings



Muslim Restaurant - Lamb skewers (kebabs)  
Seasoned with cumin and pepper



Robot waitress in a restaurant

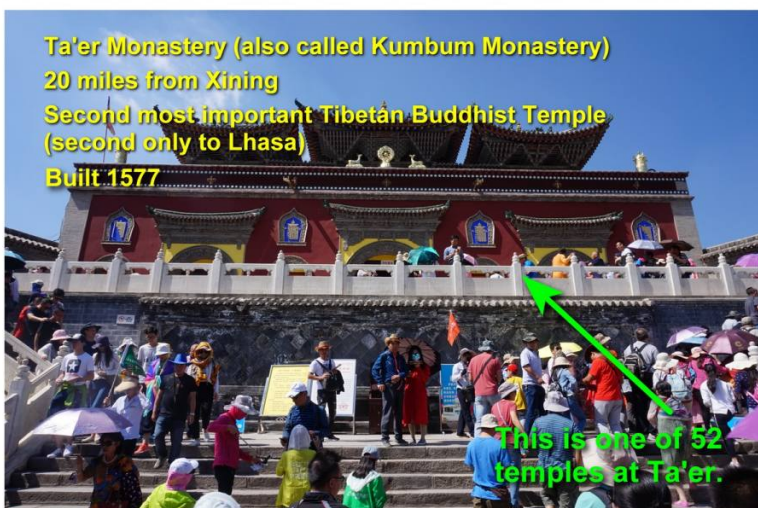
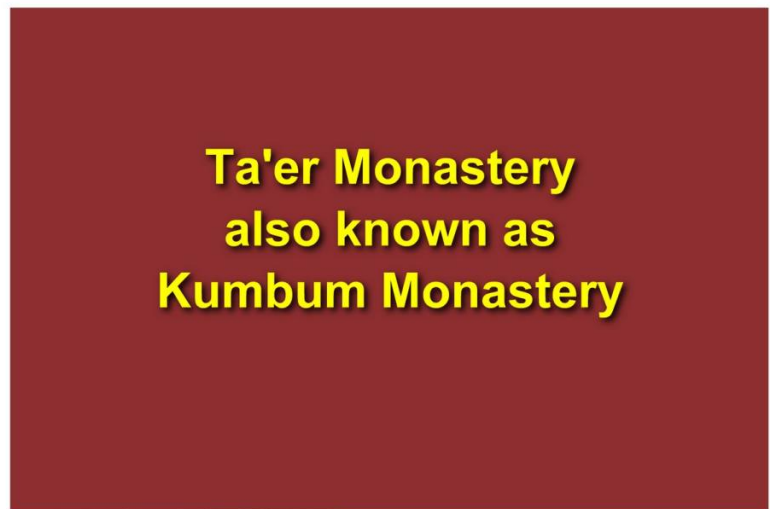
Notice Tibetan custom  
of sitting on couches  
rather than chairs.

Track



Hualian Supermarket - Xining







### Tibetan Style Temple

- Rectangular
- Flat roof
- Gold roof, often metal
- Many windows - let in sunlight
- Faces south - let in sunlight



### Chinese Style Temple

- Square
- Gabled roof, never flat
- Sweeping curvature at corners of roof
- Tile roof
- No windows
- Back faces higher land



### Stupas at Ta'er Temple

Contain ashes of famous monks



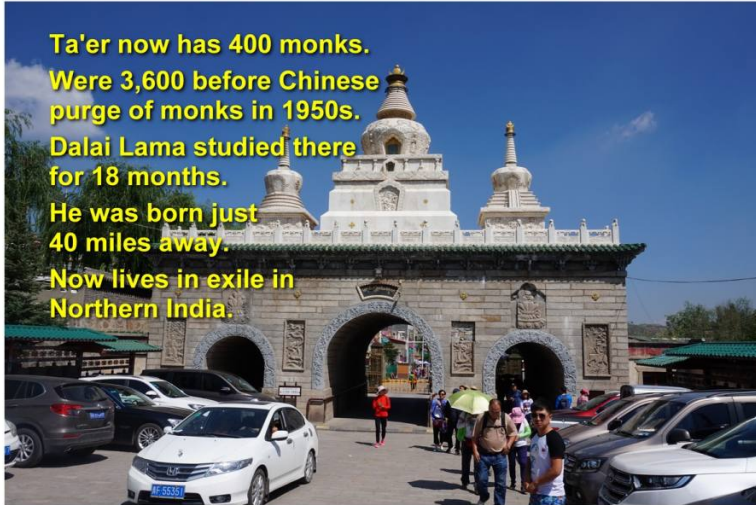
Ta'er now has 400 monks.

Were 3,600 before Chinese purge of monks in 1950s.

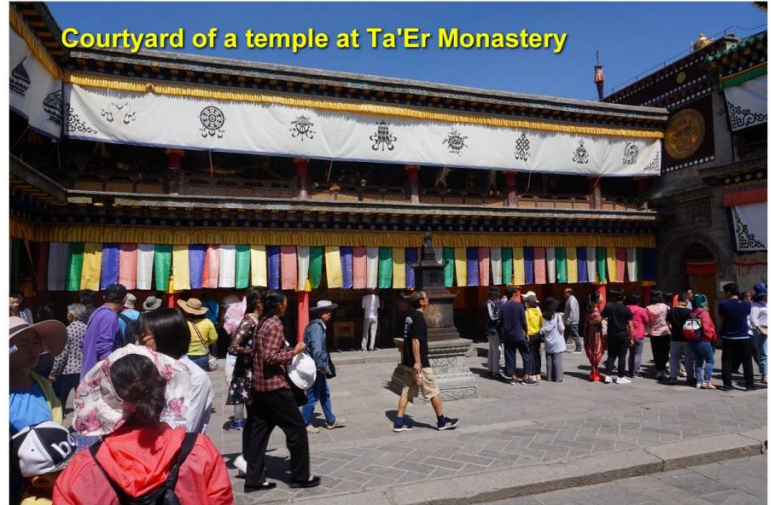
Dalai Lama studied there for 18 months.

He was born just 40 miles away.

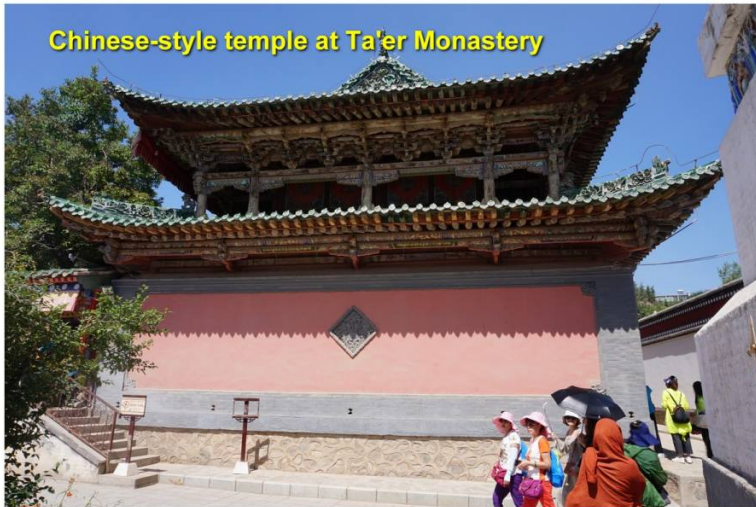
Now lives in exile in Northern India.



### Courtyard of a temple at Ta'Er Monastery



### Chinese-style temple at Ta'er Monastery



### Tibetan-style temple at Ta'er Monastery

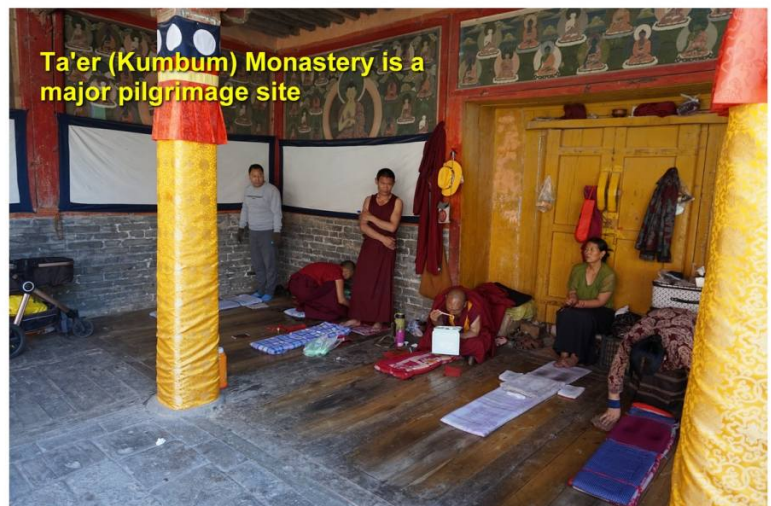


### The Great Hall of Meditation at Ta'er

1577



Ta'er (Kumbum) Monastery is a major pilgrimage site





Prayer mats inside the Great Hall of Meditation



Inside the Great Hall of Meditation at Ta'er (Kumbum)  
Many sacred scriptures, carvings, sculptures, thangkhas, etc

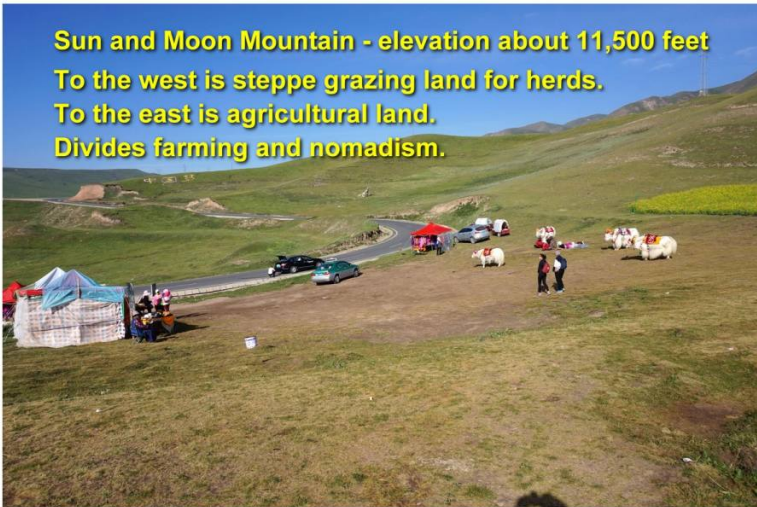


Watermelons are very cheap in China  
- maybe US\$1. Huge sunflowers sold  
everywhere in Qinghai. ← Ta'er

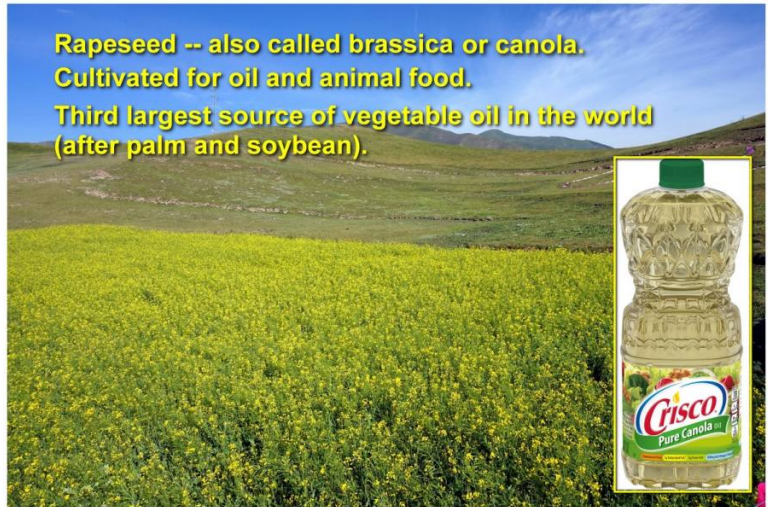


## Qinghai Lake Sun and Moon Mountain and Dan Gar Ancient City

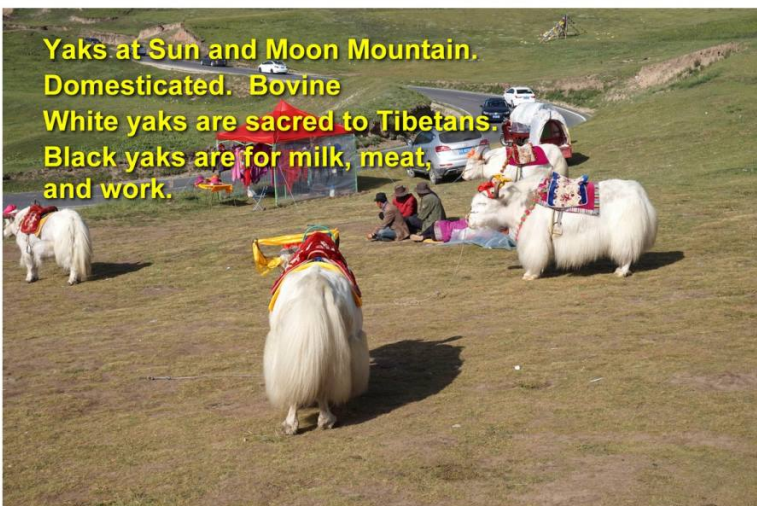
Sun and Moon Mountain - elevation about 11,500 feet  
To the west is steppe grazing land for herds.  
To the east is agricultural land.  
Divides farming and nomadism.



Rapeseed -- also called brassica or canola.  
Cultivated for oil and animal food.  
Third largest source of vegetable oil in the world  
(after palm and soybean).



Yaks at Sun and Moon Mountain.  
Domesticated. Bovine  
White yaks are sacred to Tibetans.  
Black yaks are for milk, meat,  
and work.



White yak proudly displayed by its owner.





**Tibetan Buddhist flags and prayer wheels on Sun and Moon Mountain**



Hard to see in the photo, but each flag has Buddhist scripture written on it.

**Tibetan Buddhist flags with scriptures**



**Museum of Tibetan Culture at Sun and Moon Mountain**



**Museum of Tibetan Culture at Sun and Moon Mountain**



**Prayer Wheels**



**Camel for tourists to ride**



Dromedary camels (Middle East and Africa) have one hump. Bactrian camels (found only in Northwest China and Mongolia) have two humps.



**Peak of Sun and Moon Mountain - 11,500 feet**



**Qinghai Lake - largest lake in China**  
**Salt water**  
**Surface 1,700 sq miles – about the size of Delaware**  
**Sacred to Tibetan Buddhists**



**Qinghai Lake**  
**Surrounded by rolling grasslands**  
**Area is populated by ethnic Tibetans**  
**Tibetan name translates to "Blue Sea Lake"**



**Tourist boat on Qinghai Lake**



**Qinghai Lake is over 11,000 feet in altitude** 如有损坏一律照价赔偿



**Rapeseed field**

**Sign says "Memories of Qinghai Lake"**



**Driving in China! Drivers create 3 lanes out of 1.**  
**At about 50 mph.**



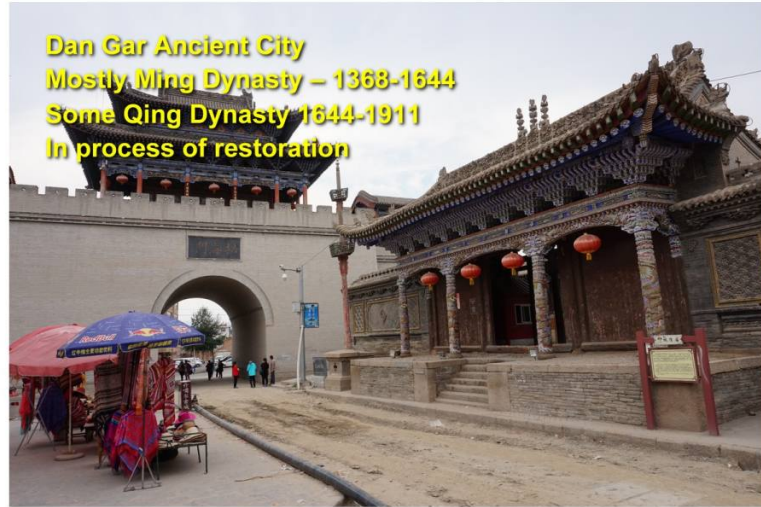
**Most taxis have slip-covers on the seats.**  
**Completely blocking the rear seat belts!**







**Yak herd near the road**



**Dan Gar Ancient City**  
**Mostly Ming Dynasty – 1368-1644**  
**Some Qing Dynasty 1644-1911**  
**In process of restoration**



**Dan Gar Ancient City**  
**25 miles from Xining**  
**Main street**

**How Chinese tourists should behave (next slide)**

**Dan Gar established late 1300s**  
**Strategic position on southern Silk Road**



- **Don't spit**
- **Don't litter**
- **Smoke only in designated areas**
- **No cutting in line**
- **Don't pick flowers or fruits**
- **No carving or graffiti**
- **Don't climb on relics**
- **Don't steal public property**
- **Don't sneeze in the face of others**
- **Show courtesy**
- **Say no to feudal superstitious activities**
- **Say no to pornography, gambling, drugs**

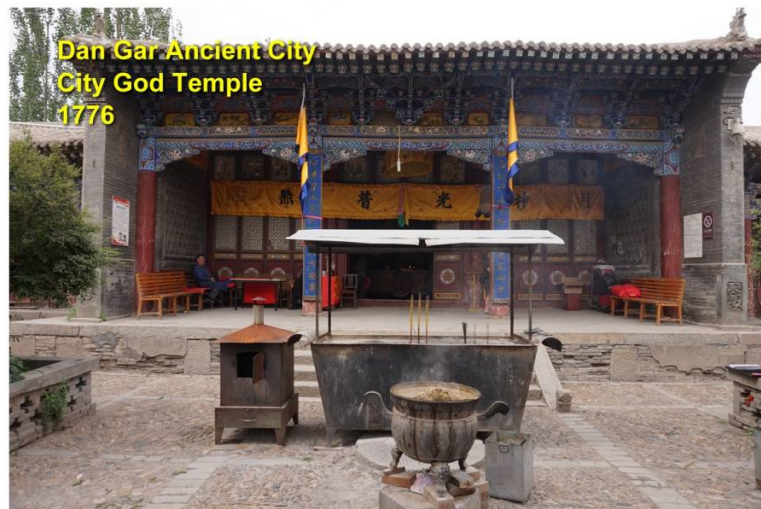
The cultivation of a congenial and harmonious travel environment benefits every tourist. It is our burden to be a tourist with refined manners. So please observe the following tourism etiquette rules.

1. Keep the environment clean and tidy. Don't spit about or spit out chewing gum. Don't drop litter. Don't smoke except in designated areas.
2. Observe public order. Don't yell or shout out loud. Always join a public queue for good order. Don't walk abreast on a sidewalk. Don't talk loudly in public.
3. Preserve the ecological environment. Stay off public lawns, and refrain from picking flowers or fruits. Don't chase, catch, or throw stones at animals or feed them irresponsibly.
4. Protect historical sites and cultural relics. Don't inscribe anything or scrawl graffiti on them. Don't touch or climb on top of ancient relics, and heed the restrictions when taking photos with them.
5. Be careful with the use of public facilities. Don't smear or break objects in hotel rooms. Don't vandalize or damage public facilities. Don't attempt to make off with public belongings. Conserve water and electricity by using them efficiently. And respect the local religious customs.
6. Be respectful to the people around you. Don't try to snapshoot pictures with foreign friends without their permission. Don't sneeze into the face of others. Don't occupy public facilities for too long. Eaten the work of service staff. And respect the local religious customs.
7. Show courtesy to others. Be considerate towards the aged, the infirm, the disabled and the disabled and give priority to them. Be courteous to the female by following the rule "lady first". Never use vulgar language.
8. Take part in healthy entertainments. Say no to feudal superstitious activities. Stay away from pornography, gambling and drugs.

THE CENTRAL CONTENTS NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION



**Entrance gate to Chenghuang Temple**  
**Also called City God Temple**  
**Built 1776 (early Qing)**



**Dan Gar Ancient City**  
**City God Temple**  
**1776**



**City God Temple Altar - Dan Gar**



**Murals at Chenghuang Temple (City God Temple)**  
**Dan Gar Ancient City**



