
History and Development of Xinjiang

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Foreword

The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (also called Xinjiang for short), situated in the border area of northwest China and the hinterland of the Eurasian Continent, occupies an area of 1.6649 million sq km, accounting for one sixth of Chinese territory. It has a land border of 5,600 km bounded by eight countries. It was an important section of the ancient Silk Road. According to statistics, in the year 2000 Xinjiang had a population of 19.25 million, including 10.9696 million people of other ethnic groups than the Han, China's majority ethnic group. There are 47 ethnic groups in Xinjiang, mainly the Uygur, Han, Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Xibe, Tajik, Uzbek, Manchu, Daur, Tatar and Russian. It is one of China's five autonomous regions for ethnic minorities.

Since ancient times, Xinjiang has been inhabited by many ethnic groups believing in a number of religions. Since the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-24 A.D.), it has been an inseparable part of the unitary multi-ethnic Chinese nation. In the more than 50 years since the People's Republic of China was founded, the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, with

concerted and pioneering efforts, have jointly written brilliant pages in the annals of its development, construction and frontier defense, causing earth-shaking changes in the social outlook of the region.

I. Xinjiang Has Been a Multi-ethnic Region Since Ancient Times

In ancient history, many tribes and ethnic groups lived in Xinjiang. The ethnic composition of the residents of Xinjiang began to be clearly recorded in the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-220 A.D.), the main ones being the Sai (Sak), Rouzhi (or Yueh-chih), Wusun (Wusun), Qiang, Xiongnu (Hun) and Han.

The Sai as a nomadic tribe used to roam about the area from the Ili and Chuhe river in the east to the Sir (Syrdarya) River valley in the west. Under pressure from the Rouran they moved westward — some to the north bank of the Sir River, while others southward scatter in the areas of the Pamirs.

The Rouzhi roamed the vast region between the Gansu Corridor and the Tarim Basin during the Warring States Period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.) and flourished during the Qin (221 B.C.-206 B.C.) and Han dynasties. Attacked by the Xiongnu around 176 B.C., they were forced to move to the Ili River basin, from which they dislodged the Sai.

The Wusun first lived in the Gansu Corridor. In the late Qin and early Han period, attacked by the Rouzhi they yielded their allegiance to the Xiongnu. Supported by the Xiongnu

Wusun attacked the Rouzhi, and drove them out of the Ili River basin.

The Qiang originally lived along the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River. In the Spring and Autumn (770 B.C.-476 B.C.) and Warring States periods, some of them migrated westward across the Gansu Corridor and the Qilian-Kunlun mountain range, leaving their footprints in Xinjiang.

The Xiongnu entered Xinjiang mainly around 176 B.C. The Han was one of the earliest peoples to settle in Xinjiang.

In 101 B.C., the Han empire began to station garrison troops to open up wasteland and cultivation of farm crops in Luntai (Bügür), Quli and some other places. Later, it sent troops to all other parts of Xinjiang for the same purpose. All the garrison reclamations became the early settlements of the Han people after they entered Xinjiang. Since the Western Regions Frontier Command was established in 60 B.C., the inflow of Han people to Xinjiang, including officials, soldiers and merchants, had never stopped.

The period of the Wei, Jin and Southern and Northern Dynasties (220 A.D.-589 A.D.) was a period of the large-scale merging of ethnic groups in China, witnessing frequent ethnic migration across the land of China, and the entry into Xinjiang by many alien ethnic groups, such as the Rouran (Jorjan), Gaoche, Yeda and Tuyuhun.

The Rouran were descendants of the Donghu, an ancient people rising on the northern grasslands in the early fifth century. After establishing a powerful regime on the Mongolian grasslands in 402 A.D., they struggled with the Northern Wei (386-534) for dominance in the Western Regions. The nomadic Gaoche, also called the Tolos or Teli, first appeared around Lake Baikal and the basins of the Orkhon and Tura rivers. In 487, Avochilo, chief of the Puwurgur tribe of the Gaoche, and his brother Qunqi led more than 100,000 families to migrate westward, and founded the state of Gaoche to the northwest of Anterior Cheshi (the ancient city of Jiaohe near modern Turpan). The Yeda, rising in the region north of the Great Wall, moved eastward to the Tarim Basin, attacked the Rouzhi in the south and set up a regime in the late fifth century. They crossed the Pamirs, and once controlled part of southern Xinjiang.

The Tuyuhun, originating from the ancient Xianbei people, moved westward from Liaodong (the region east of the Liaohe River in northeast China) in the early fourth century, and set up their own regime after conquering the ancient Di and Qiang peoples in the regions of southern Gansu, Sichuan and Qinghai.

In the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the ancient Turk and Tubo peoples exerted important influences on the course of Xinjiang's history.

The Turks were ancient nomads active on the northwestern and northern grasslands of China from the sixth to the eighth centuries. Tümaen, a Turki leader, defeated the Rouran in 582 and set up a state centered in Mobei (the area north of the vast deserts on the Mongolian Plateau). The Turki realm later split into the eastern and western sides which continued to contend ceaselessly in their scramble for the khanate. In the middle of the eighth century, both the Eastern and Western Turki khanates disappeared, their descendants being assimilated into other ethnic groups.

The Tubo were the ancestors of the Tibetans, rising to notice on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in the late sixth century. After occupying Qinghai, they began to vie with the Tang Dynasty for control of the Western Regions. In 755, An Lushan and Shi Siming raised a rebellion in the Central Plains, and Tang troops stationed in the Western Regions were withdrawn to battle the rebels, whereupon the Tubo took the opportunity to occupy southern Xinjiang and part of northern Xinjiang.

In 840, large numbers of Uighurs (an ancient name for modern Uyghurs) entered Xinjiang. The Uighur, originally called Ouigour, sprang from the ancient tribe Teli. They were first active in the Selenga and Orkhon river basins, and later moved to the north of the Tura River. In 744, the Uighur founded a khanate in Mobei, and later dispatched

twice to help the Tang central authorities to quell the An Lushan-Shi Siming Rebellion. The Uighur Khanate collapsed in 840 because of natural disasters, internal strife and attacks from the ancient Jieqasi tribe. Consequently, most of the Uighurs migrated westward.

One of their sub-groups moved to the modern Jimsar and Turpan regions, where they founded the Gaochang Uighur Kingdom. Another sub-group moved to the Central Asian grasslands, scattered in areas from Central Asia to Kashi, and joined the Karluk and other peoples in founding the Karahan Kingdom. After that, the Tarim Basin and its surrounding areas were under the rule of the Gaochang Uighur Kingdom and the Karahan Kingdom. The local residents were merged with the Uighurs that had moved west, thus laying the foundation for the subsequent formation of the Uygur ethnic group.

In 1124, Yellicha, a member of the ruling house of the Liao Dynasty (916-1125), led his people, the Khitan tribe, westward and conquered Xinjiang, where he established the kingdom of Western Liao. In the early 13th century, Genghis Khan led an expeditionary army to Xinjiang, where he granted the territories he had conquered to his children and grandchildren. The Uighurs further assimilated a portion of the Khitans and Mongols. Oirat was the general name used for the Mongolians in Moxi (the area west of the Gobi deserts on the Mongolian Plateau) in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). The Oirat first

in scattered areas along the upper reaches of the Yenisaey River, gradually spreading to the middle reaches of the Ertix and Ili river basins. The early 17th century saw the rise of them of the Junggar, Dorbüt, Huxut and Turgut tribes. In the 1670s, the Junggar occupied the Ili River basin, becoming leader of the four tribes, and put southern Xinjiang under their control.

From the 1760s on, the government of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) sent Manchu, Xibe and Suolun (Daur) troops from northeast China to Xinjiang in order to strengthen the frontier defense of the region, and they added to the ethnic makeup of Xinjiang. Afterwards, Russians and Tatars migrated into Xinjiang. By the end of the 19th century, Xinjiang had 13 ethnic groups, namely, Uygur, Han, Kazak, Mongolian, Kirgiz, Manchu, Xibe, Tajik, Daur, Uzbek, Tatar and Russian. The Uygurs formed the majority, as they do today.

II. Diverse Religions Coexist and Spread in Xinjiang

As the main passageway and hub for economic and cultural exchanges between the East and the West in ancient times, Xinjiang has always been a region where a number of religions exist side by side. Before Islam was introduced into Xinjiang, there had already been believers in Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Manichaeism and Nestorianism. These religious faiths had spread to Xinjiang along the Silk Road and thrived together with the local primitive religions. After the introduction of Islam, the coexistence of diverse religions continued to be the order of the day in Xinjiang, to be joined later by Protestantism and Catholicism.

Before the foreign religions were introduced into Xinjiang, the ancient residents there believed in native primitive religions and the Shamanism evolved therefrom. Even today, some minority peoples in Xinjiang still adhere, to different degrees, to some of the concepts and customs characteristic of these beliefs.

Around the fourth century B.C., Zoroastrianism, or Fire Worship as

it was popularly called, which was born in ancient Persia, was introduced into Xinjiang through Central Asia. It became prevalent throughout Xinjiang during the period of the Southern and Northern Dynasties and the Sui and Tang dynasties. It was particularly popular in the Turpan area. The Gaochang state of that time set up a special organ and appointed special officials to strengthen its control over the religion. Some ethnic groups in Xinjiang that followed Islam once also believed in Zoroastrianism.

Around the first century B.C., Buddhism, born in India, was introduced into Xinjiang through Kashmir. Soon after, it became the main religion in the region thanks to efforts made by the local rulers to promote it. At its peak, Buddhist temples mushroomed in the oases around the Tarim Basin with large numbers of monks and nuns. Yutian, Shule, Qiuci and Gaochang were all centers of Buddhism. In Xinjiang, Buddhist culture reached a very high level, leaving a precious cultural heritage of statues, paintings, music, dancing, temples and sacred grottoes, greatly enriching the cultural and art treasury of China and the whole world.

Around the fifth century, Taoism was introduced into Xinjiang from

inland China by Han migrants. However, Taoism was limited mainly to the Turpan and Hami areas, where Han people were concentrated. It was not until the Qing Dynasty that Taoism became widespread throughout Xinjiang.

Around the sixth century, Manichaeism reached Xinjiang from Persia through Central Asia. In the middle of the ninth century, when the Uighur, who were believers in Manichaeism, moved westward to Xinjiang, they promoted the development of the religion in the region. They built temples, dug grottoes, translated scriptures, painted frescoes and spread the Manichaeist creed and culture in the Turpan area. Around the same time, Nestorianism, an earlier sect of Christianity, was introduced into Xinjiang, but it was not widespread in the early years. It flourished only when large numbers of the Uighur accepted it during the Yuan Dynasty (1206-1368).

In the late ninth century and the early 10th century, Islam spread to the south of Xinjiang through Central Asia. In the middle of the 10th century, the Islamic Karahan Kingdom waged a religious war against the Buddhist kingdom of Yutian, which lasted for more than 40 years. It

conquered Yutian in the early 11th century, and introduced Islam to Hotan. In the middle of the 14th century, under the coercion of the Qagatay Khanate (a vassal state created by Qagatay, the second son of Genghis Khan, in the Western Regions), Islam gradually became the main religion for the Mongolian, Uygur, Kazak, Kirgiz and Tajik peoples in that region. In the early 16th century, Islam finally became the main religion in Xinjiang, replacing Buddhism.

After that, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Nestorianism, the main religions of the Uygur and other ethnic groups, gradually went out of the picture in Xinjiang, but Buddhism and Taoism continued to make themselves felt there. Beginning in the Ming Dynasty, Tibetan Buddhism grew into a major religion on a par with Islam in Xinjiang.

In the late 17th century, Apakhoja, chief of the Aktaglik Sect of Islam, wiped out the forces of his political foe Hoja of the Karataglik Sect, by dint of Tibetan Buddhist forces, and destroyed the Yarkant Khanate (a regional regime established by Qagatay's descendants between 1514 and 1680, with modern Shache as its center). This shows how powerful Tibetan Buddhism was at that time.

Around the 18th century, Protestantism and Catholicism spread to Xinjiang, at a time when Buddhism, Taoism and Shamanism were flourishing in the region, and temples and churches of these religious faiths could be found everywhere in Xinjiang. Some Moslems even changed their faith to Christianity or other religions.

Historically, the dominance of a particular religion has kept changing from time to time in Xinjiang, but the coexistence of multiple religions following the introduction of outside religious faiths has never changed. The major religions in Xinjiang today are Islam, Buddhism (including Tibetan Buddhism), Protestantism, Catholicism and Taoism. Shamanism still has considerable influence among some ethnic groups.

III. The Administration of Xinjiang by the Successive Central Governments

The close ties between Xinjiang and the Central Plains have existed for a long time. In the early years of the Western Han Dynasty, the Western Regions were under the rule of the Xiongnu. In 138 B.C., the imperial court of the Han Dynasty sent Zhang Qian to the Western Regions as an envoy in an attempt to forge alliances which would stop raids by the Xiongnu on the dynasty's borders. In 121 B.C., a Han army inflicted a crushing defeat on the Xiongnu troops stationed along the Gansu Corridor. After that, the Han Dynasty set up the four prefectures of Wuwei, Zhangye, Jiuquan and Dunhuang in the region. In 101 B.C., the Western Han Dynasty stationed hundreds of garrison troops in Luntai and Quli, south of the Tianshan Mountains, and appointed a local "envoy commander" to command them. The title "envoy commander" was later changed to "envoy for protecting the region west of Shanshan (Qarqan)."

In 60 B.C. (the second year of the Shenjue reign period of Emperor Xuandi of the Han Dynasty), the Western Regions Frontier

Command was established. At about the same time, an internal disturbance occurred among the Xiongnu ruling clique, and Xian Shan, Prince Rizhu of the Xiongnu stationed in the Western Regions, led a cavalry of several ten thousand strong to pledge allegiance to the Han imperial court. The Western Han court appointed Zheng Ji as the Frontier Commander of the Western Regions, with his headquarters in Urli (in modern Luntai County), to administer over the whole region. The local chieftains and principal officials in all parts of the Western Regions all accepted official seals from the Western Han court. The establishment of the Western Regions Frontier Command indicated that the Western Han had begun to exercise state sovereignty over the Western Regions, and that Xinjiang had become a component part of the unitary multi-ethnic Chinese nation.

The government of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220) appointed first a Frontier Commander, and then a Governor, of the Western Regions to continue to exercise military and political administration over all parts of the western territory both north and south of the Tianshan Mountains. In 221, the kingdom of Wei (220-265) of the Three Kingdoms Period (220-

265, the other two kingdoms being Shu and Wu) inherited the Han practice, stationing a garrison commander at Gaochang (Turpan) to rule the Western Regions. Later, it also appointed a governor to administer affairs concerning the ethnic groups in the Western Regions. In the last years of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), Zhang Jun, founder of the Former Liang Regime (301-376), sent an expedition to the Western Regions, occupied the Gaochang area and established Gaochang Prefecture. The Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) set up Shanshan and Yanqi garrison commands to strengthen its administration of the Western Regions.

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the central government strengthened its rule over Xinjiang. In the last years of the sixth century, the Sui Dynasty (581-618) unified the Central Plains. When Emperor Yangdi (r. 604-618) ascended the throne, one of his first acts was to send Pei Ju, Vice-Minister of Personnel, to Zhangye and Wuwei to supervise trade with the Western Regions and investigate local conditions. In 608, troops of the Sui Dynasty occupied Yiwu (Aratürk), built a city wall there, and established the three prefectures of Shanshan (modern Ruoqiang, or

Qarkilik), Qiemo (southwest of modern Qiemo) and Yiwu (within the territory of modern Hami).

In the early seventh century, the Tang Dynasty replaced the Sui. In 630, Yiwu, together with the seven cities under its jurisdiction, changed its allegiance from the Western Turks to the Tang Dynasty, which established Western Yizhou Prefecture (later Yizhou Prefecture). In 640, Tang troops crushed a rebellion staged by the Qu ruling house (501-640) of the Gaochang Kingdom in collusion with the Turks, and established a Xizhou Prefecture in Gaochang and a Tingzhou (Bexibalik) Prefecture in Kaganbu (modern Jimsar). In the same year, the Tang court set up the Anxi Frontier Command in Gaochang. This was the first high-ranking military and administrative organ established by the Tang Dynasty in the Western Regions. Later, it was moved to Kuche, and its name was changed to the Grand Anxi Frontier Command.

After defeating the Western Turks, the Tang Dynasty unified all parts of the Western Regions, and in 702 established the Beiting Frontier Command in Tingzhou (later upgraded to Grand Beiting Frontier Command) to take charge of military and administrative affairs in the

north of the Tianshan Mountains and the east of Xinjiang, while the Grand Anxi Frontier Command supervised military and administrative affairs in the vast areas south of the Tianshan Mountains and west of the Congling Mountain Range. Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) of the Tang Dynasty established a Qixi Military Governorship to supervise both frontier commands. Qixi was one of the eight major military governorships at that time in the country.

The Tang central government instituted a system of separate administrations for the Han and the people of the other ethnic groups in the Western Regions. That is, it adopted the same administrative system of prefecture, sub-prefecture, county, township and *li* (neighborhood or village) as in the inland areas in Yizhou, Xizhou and Tingzhou, where most Han were concentrated. In addition, the equal-field system (the farmland system of the Tang Dynasty) and taxation system of payment in kind and labor were adopted, as well as the system of prefectural military commands. In the areas inhabited by other ethnic groups, the Tang rulers governed through the traditional chiefs and headmen, who were granted civil and military titles but allowed to manage local affairs according to

their own customs. At the same time, the central government stationed garrisons in Qiuci, Yutian, Shule and Suiye (or Suyab, formerly Yanqi), which were known as the “four garrison commands of Anxi.”

Internal strife in the Central Plains during the Five Dynasties period, and the Song, Liao and Jin dynasties distracted the attention of rulers of the Central Plains from the Western Regions, resulting in several local regimes existing side by side in the Western Regions. The local governments of Gaochang, Karahan and Yutian exercised a great degree of autonomy, but they all maintained close ties with the ruling dynasties in the Central Plains.

The Gaochang and Karahan were local regimes established by the Uighurs, who had moved west to the Western Regions together with other Turki-speaking tribes after the Mobei Uighur Khanate collapsed in 840. The Gaochang had the Turpan area as its center while the Karahan controlled the vast areas south of the Tianshan Mountains and Hezhong (Samarkand) in Central Asia.

The Uighur local regimes had very close relations with the ruling dynasties in the Central Plains. The ruler of the Karahan Kingdom called

himself the “Peach Stone Khan,” meaning “Chinese Khan,” to indicate that he was a Chinese subject. In 1009, after occupying Yutian, Karahan sent envoys with tribute to the emperor of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). In 1063, the Northern Song conferred upon the ruler of Karahan the title of “King of Sworn Allegiance.” In the third year after the founding of the Northern Song Dynasty, the Gaochang Uighurs sent 42 envoys bearing tribute to the Northern Song court.

Yutian was the habitat of the Sai people. In recognition of its maintaining close ties with the Central Plains, the Tang Dynasty conferred an official title on the ruling clan of Yutian, which then changed its surname from Yuchi to Li, the surname of the Tang ruling house. In 938, Emperor Gaozu of the Later Jin Dynasty sent Zhang Kuangye and Gao Juhui to Yutian as envoys to confer on Li Shengtian, Yutian’s ruler, the title of “King of the Great Treasure Yutian State.” In the early years of the Northern Song Dynasty, envoys and monks from Yutian brought tribute to the Song Dynasty court from time to time.

The founder of the Yuan Dynasty, Genghis Khan, completed the political unification of the regions north and south of the Tianshan

Mountains. He first set up military and administrative organs like “Dargaq” (a Mongolian official title, meaning “garrison officer”) and “Bexibalik Secretariat” to take charge of the military and administrative affairs of the Western Regions.

After the Yuan Dynasty was proclaimed, while giving attention to socio-economic development in the Western Regions, it appointed a judicial commissioner in the Turpan region. Later, a treasury and printing house for banknotes were established there, together with a Bexibalik Command to administer the Turpan area, which was garrisoned by soldiers of the vanquished Southern Song Dynasty army, who were also there to open up wasteland. At the same time, the Yuan court sent soldiers to Hotan and Qiemo for garrison and reclamation duties, set up a foundry in Bexibalik to make farm tools, and instituted a land tax system in the Uighur areas.

In 1406, the Ming Dynasty set up a Hami Garrison Command, and appointed the heads of the leading families in Hami as officials to manage local military and administrative affairs, so as to keep the trade routes to the West open and bring the other areas of the Western Regions under its control.

The Qing government consolidated unified jurisdiction over the Western Regions. In 1757, the Qing imperial court crushed the long-standing Junggar separatist regime in the Northwest. Two years later, it quelled a rebellion launched by the Islamic Aktaglik Sect leaders Burhanidin and Hojajahan, thus consolidating its military and administrative jurisdiction over all parts of the Western Regions.

The post of Ili General was established in 1762 to exercise unified military and administrative jurisdiction over the regions both south and north of the Tianshan Mountains, with the headquarters in Huiyuan (in modern Huocheng County) and staffed with officials like supervisors, consultants, superintendents and commissioners.

In accordance with the principle of “doing what is appropriate in the light of local conditions” and “exercising administration according to local customs,” the Qing government adopted the system of prefectures and counties in the region north of the Tianshan Mountains inhabited by people of the Han and Hui ethnic groups, and maintained the local “Baeg system” (a Turki term for local officials) for the Uygurs in the Ili region and the region south of the Tianshan Mountains.

Even in the latter region, however, the central government reserved the power to make official appointments and removals with the strict separation of religion from politics. It adopted the system of “Jasak” (a Mongolian term for governor) by conferring the hereditary titles of princes and dukes on Mongolians and the Uygurs in the Hami and Turpan regions. It also recruited officials from other ethnic groups besides the Manchus.

In economic affairs, the Qing promoted the simultaneous development of farming and livestock breeding, with the emphasis on farming. It also reduced taxes and fixed quotas for financial subsidies. Xinjiang witnessed steady social and economic development under the Qing Dynasty.

Following the Opium War of 1840, Xinjiang was subject to aggression from Tsarist Russia and other powers. In 1875, Zuo Zongtang, governor-general of Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, was appointed imperial commissioner to supervise the affairs of Xinjiang.

By the end of 1877, Qing troops had recovered the areas north and south of the Tianshan Mountains which had been occupied by Yakubbae of Central Asia’s Kokand Khanate (Fergana). In February 1881, the Qing

government recovered Ili, which had been forcibly occupied by Tsarist Russia for 11 years.

In 1884, it formally established a province in the Western Regions and renamed the area as Xinjiang (meaning “old territory returned to the motherland”). The establishment of Xinjiang as a province was a significant reform, on the part of the Qing government, of the administration of Xinjiang by the previous dynasties.

From then on, the provincial governor oversaw all military and administrative affairs in Xinjiang, and the military and administrative center of Xinjiang was moved from Ili to Dihua (modern Urumqi). By 1909, under the jurisdiction of Xinjiang Province were 4 *dao* (circuit), under which were 6 prefectures, 10 *ting* (sub-circuits), 3 sub-prefectures and 21 counties or sub-counties. The administrative organization in Xinjiang was exactly the same as in the inland areas.

In the year following the Revolution of 1911, insurrectionary revolutionaries in Xinjiang set up the New Ili Grand Military Government, marking the end of the political rule of the Qing Dynasty in the Ili region. After the Republic of China was founded, it

constantly strengthened the defense of Xinjiang.

Xinjiang was peacefully liberated on September 25, 1949. As the liberation struggle gained momentum across the country and the revolutionary struggle of the people of all ethnic groups surged forward in Xinjiang, Tao Zhiyue, Garrison Commander of Xinjiang, and Burhan, Chairman of the Xinjiang Provincial Government, renounced their allegiance to the Kuomintang and welcomed in the First Army Group of the First Field Army of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), led by General Wang Zhen. The people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang greeted the founding of the People's Republic of China together with the rest of the Chinese people on October 1, 1949.

To sum up, since the Han Dynasty established the Western Regions Frontier Command in Xinjiang in 60 B.C., the Chinese central governments of all historical periods exercised military and administrative jurisdiction over Xinjiang. The jurisdiction of the central governments over the Xinjiang region was at times strong and at other times weak, depending on the stability of the period. The people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang actively safeguarded their relations

with the central governments, thus making their own contributions to the formation and consolidation of the great family of the Chinese nation.

IV. Origin of the “East Turkistan” Issue

The term “Turkistan” appeared in Arabic geographical works in the Middle Ages. It meant “the region of the Turks” and referred to the areas north of the Sir River in Central Asia and the adjoining areas to the east of the river. With the evolution of history, the modern ethnic groups in Central Asia were established one after another. By the 18th century, the geographical concept of “Turkistan” was already very vague, and almost nobody used it again in the historical records of the time.

In the early 19th century, with the growing colonial expansion of the imperialist powers into Central Asia, the geographical term “Turkistan” was revived. In 1805, Timkovsky, a Russian, used the term “Turkistan” again in a diplomatic mission’s report to describe the geographical position of Central Asia and the Tarim Basin in China’s southern Xinjiang. In view of the different histories, languages, customs and political affiliations of the two areas, he called the Tarim Basin in China’s Xinjiang situated to the east of “Turkistan” as “East Turkistan” or “Chinese Turkistan.” In the middle of the 19th century, Russia annexed the three

Central Asian khanates of Khiva, Bukhara and Kokand one after another, and set up the “Turkistan Governorship” in the Hezhong (Samarkand) area of Central Asia. Therefore, some people in the West called the Hezhong area “West Turkistan” or “Russian Turkistan,” and China’s Xinjiang region “East Turkistan.”

In the early 20th century and later, a small number of separatists and religious extremists in Xinjiang, influenced by the international trend of religious extremism and national chauvinism, politicized the unstandardized geographical term “East Turkistan,” and fabricated an “ideological and theoretical system” on the so-called “independence of East Turkistan” on the basis of the allegation cooked up by the old colonialists. They claimed that “East Turkistan” had been an independent state since ancient times, its people with its history of almost 10,000 years being “the finest nation in human history.” They incited all ethnic groups speaking Turki and believing in Islam to join hands to create a theocratic state. They denied the history of the great motherland jointly built by all the ethnic groups of China. They clamored for “opposition to all ethnic groups other than Turks” and for the “annihilation of pagans,” asserting

that China had been “the enemy of the ‘East Turkistan’ nation for 3,000 years.” After the “East Turkistan” theory came into being, separatists of all shades raised the banner of “East Turkistan” to carry out activities aimed at materializing their vain wish of establishing an “East Turkistan state.”

From the early 20th century to the late 1940s, the “East Turkistan” forces created many disturbances with the connivance and support of hostile foreign forces. In November 1933, Sabit Damolla and others founded the so-called “East Turkistan Islamic Republic” in Kashi, but it collapsed in less than three months thanks to the opposition of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. In 1944, the “Revolution of the Three Regions,” which was part of Chinese people’s democratic revolutionary movement, broke out against the Kuomintang rule (the three regions referred to Ili, Tacheng and Altay), but separatist Elihan Torae (an Uzbek from the former Soviet Union) usurped the leadership of the revolution in its early days, and founded the so-called “Republic of East Turkistan” in Yining, with himself as its “chairman.” In June 1946, Ahmatjan Kasimi and Abdukerim Abbasov, leaders of the revolution, dismissed him from

that post, and reorganized the “Republic of East Turkistan” as the Advisory Council of the Ili Subprovincial Administrative Region, dealing a fatal blow at the separatist forces.

Since the peaceful liberation of Xinjiang, the “East Turkistan” forces have never resigned themselves to their defeat. The tiny group of separatists who had fled abroad from Xinjiang collaborated with those at home, and looked for opportunities to carry out splittist and sabotage activities with the support of international anti-China forces. Especially in the 1990s, influenced by religious extremism, separatism and international terrorism, part of the “East Turkistan” forces both inside and outside China turned to splittist and sabotage activities with terrorist violence as their chief means. Some “East Turkistan” organizations openly stated that they would use terrorist and violent means to achieve their purpose of separation. The “East Turkistan” forces in China’s Xinjiang and relevant countries plotted and organized a number of bloody incidents of terror and violence, including explosions, assassinations, arsons, poisonings and assaults, seriously jeopardizing the lives, property and security of the Chinese people of various ethnic groups, and social stability in Xinjiang,

and posing a threat to the security and stability of the countries and regions concerned.

After the September 11 incident, the voices calling for an international anti-terrorist struggle and cooperation have become louder and louder. In order to get out of their predicament, the “East Turkistan” forces once again have raised the banner of “human rights,” “freedom of religion” and “interests of ethnic minorities,” and fabricated claims that “the Chinese government is using every opportunity to oppress ethnic minorities,” to mislead the public and deceive world opinion in order to escape blows dealt by the international struggle against terrorism.

V. The Economic Development of Xinjiang

After the Founding of New China

Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, the economy of Xinjiang was a natural economy, with farming and livestock breeding as the mainstay. Industry was underdeveloped, and there were no railways or up-to-the-mark factories or mines. Famines were frequent in some areas, and the people were impoverished. Xinjiang was peacefully liberated on September 25, 1949. On October 1, 1955, the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was established, opening a new page for historic development in Xinjiang. In the past half century, Xinjiang's economy and social undertakings have advanced by leaps and bounds.

Fast growth of the economy. The GDP of Xinjiang was 148.548 billion yuan in 2001. Taking price rises into account, this was 42.9 times that of 1952, and an annual growth rate of 8.0%. The per-capita GDP rose from 166 yuan in 1952 to 7,913 yuan in 2001. The autonomous region's revenues amounted to 17.807 billion yuan in 2001, or 102.9 times the 1955 figure of 173 million yuan. Xinjiang's industrial structure has been

constantly adjusted and optimized. Primary, secondary and tertiary industries accounted for 19.4%, 42.4% and 38.2% of the GDP in 2001, respectively. Compared with 1955, the proportion of primary industry dropped by 35 percentage points, that of secondary industry rose by 16.3 percentage points, and that of tertiary industry rose by 18.7 percentage points.

The overall production capacity of agriculture has risen notably. After 50-plus years of development and construction, and especially since the reform and opening policies were introduced, a complete farmland irrigation network in Xinjiang has been preliminarily formed, and the level of modern farm equipment has risen. By 2001, the total power output of farm machinery came to 8,808,500 kw, the net quantity of chemical fertilizers used for farming was 832,900 tons, and rural power consumption totaled 2.545 billion kwh. Meanwhile, the total sown area was 3,404,120 ha, double the 1955 figure. The total output of food grains, cotton and sugar beet was 7.96 million tons, 1.57 million tons and 4.55 million tons, respectively, or 5.4 times, 62.5 times and 4,551.2 times the figures for 1955, respectively. Turpan grapes, Korla pears and

Hami melons, which have long been famous Xinjiang products, sell well on both foreign and domestic markets.

Specialty horticulture and crop planting have leapfrogged in the past few years. Livestock breeding is being promoted with the use of the latest findings in agricultural science and technology. At the end of 2001, the region had 46.0378 million head of livestock, 2.8 times the number in 1955. In addition, Xinjiang has become the largest producer of commodity cotton, hops and tomato sauce, and one of the major livestock breeding and beet-sugar producing centers in China.

Industrial strength rising rapidly. There were only 363 industrial enterprises in Xinjiang, with an annual output value of 98 million yuan, when New China was founded. In 2001, there were 6,287 industrial enterprises at and above the township level, with an added value of 45 billion yuan, and the output of major industrial products has all increased by large margins. In 2001, Xinjiang produced 19.4695 million tons of crude oil, 28.1961 million tons of raw coal, 302,700 tons of cotton yarn and 19.762 billion kwh of electricity — 591.78 times, 43.68 times, 81.8 times and 359.3 times the 1955 figures, respectively. It also produced

419,800 tons of refined sugar, 1.3183 million tons of steel, 9.8129 million tons of cement and 729,000 tons of chemical fertilizer.

The region's industrial strength has greatly increased and the technological level has notably risen. A modern industrial system of considerable size complete with all necessary departments has taken shape, with the intensive processing of farm and sideline products as its leading industrial sector, backed up by the oil, petrochemicals, steel, coal, electric power, textile, building materials, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food processing and light industries.

Notable achievements made in water conservancy. On the basis of “oasis ecology and irrigated farmland,” Xinjiang has carried out large-scale farm water conservancy construction. The multi-purpose project to harness the Tarim River has, on four occasions, diverted 1.05 billion cu m of water from Bosten Lake to the lower reaches of the river. A number of modern, large-scale water conservancy projects represented by Kizil Reservoir and the Ulug Ata key water control project in Hotan and large numbers of trunk and branch canals, as well as seepage control projects have been built, thus rapidly increasing the amount of water diverted, the

capacity of the reservoirs and the well-irrigated area in the whole region. By 2000, there were 485 reservoirs with a total holding capacity of well over 6.716 billion cu m — 162 times and 200 times the 1949 figures, respectively. The total area of irrigated fields has been expanded to 3.388 million ha. The flood control dykes and dams built in the period totaled 5,129 km — 17.7 times the 1949 figure of 289 km.

Swift expansion of communications and transportation. Draught animals were the chief means of transport in Xinjiang prior to the founding of New China. There was almost no modern transport. In the more than 50 years since then, Xinjiang has witnessed a drastic change in the communications and transport industry. The Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway reached Urumqi at the end of 1962, bringing railway transport to the region for the first time. The 476-km-long western section of the Southern Xinjiang Railway, from Turpan to Korla, was opened to traffic in 1984. A stretch of 460 km was added to the western section of the Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway in 1990, reaching the Alatav Pass from Urumqi, thus completing the second Eurasian continental bridge. In 1994, the Lanzhou-Xinjiang Railway was double-tracked and opened to traffic.

In 1999, the 975-km section of the Southern Xinjiang Railway was completed, extending from Korla to Kashi, and opened to traffic. By 2001, operating railway lines totaled 3,010.4 km.

In 1949, Xinjiang had only several crudely built highways, with a total length of a mere 3,361 km, but by 2001, the region's highways had been extended to 80,900 km, including 428 km of expressways, 230 km of Grade 1 highways and 5,558 km of Grade 2 highways. The highway running through the Taklimakan Desert is a long-distance graded highway, the first one in the world built on shifting sands. Now, a highway network covers the whole region, with Urumqi as the center and seven national highways as the backbone linking the region with Gansu and Qinghai provinces to the east, the adjoining countries in Central and West Asia to the west and Tibet to the south. The network is also connected with the region's 68 provincial highways. Buses now run to all cities, prefectures, counties and townships in the region.

Xinjiang has 11 airports, both newly built and enlarged, with international air routes connecting Urumqi with Alma-Ata, Tashkent, Moscow and Islamabad, as well as chartered flights to Hong Kong. In all, there are 92

air lines radiating from Urumqi to 65 cities in other parts of the country and abroad and to 12 prefectures and cities within the autonomous region. The total length of the air routes is 161,800 km.

The development of telecommunications facilities in Xinjiang has kept pace with the national network. Xinjiang has built digital microwave trunk circuits linking Urumqi with Ili through Kuytun and Bole, linking Kuytun with Altay through Karamay, and from Turpan to Hotan through Korla, Aksu and Kashi. Digital microwave communications link the southern and northern parts of the region, and optical cable trunk lines link Urumqi with Xi'an, Lanzhou, Yining, Korgas checkpoint, Turpan, Korla, Ruoqiang and Mangya. A DDD telephone network now links all the cities and counties in Xinjiang with all other parts of China, and the region's telephone subscribers have reached the grand total of 2.626 million. The local data communications network and multi-media communications network have developed rapidly, and an ATM wide-band network covers all prefectures and cities. The construction of an IP-based citywide LAN has been started. A mobile phone network with a capacity of 2.924 million users is now in place to

cover the whole region.

Rapid growth of foreign trade. Xinjiang's foreign trade is conducted in multiple flexible ways, including spot trade, border trade, processing with materials supplied by customers, compensation trade, and tourism. By 2001, Xinjiang had trade relations with 119 countries and regions. Nearly 1,000 commodity items in 22 categories were on the export list. Among them, 10 export commodities earned more than US\$ 10 million each. The total value of Xinjiang's exports and imports amounted to US\$ 1.77 billion in that year. The export product mix has been constantly improved, from primary bulk products with low added value to electromechanical and precision instruments with high added value. Now, manufactured goods account for 67% of Xinjiang's exports.

As one of the important autonomous regions (provinces) carrying out the government strategy of opening China's border areas to the outside world, Xinjiang has gradually formed an omnidirectional, multi-level and wide-range opening pattern by expanding the links with foreign countries and China's various provinces along the borders, bridges (Eurasian continental bridges) and trunk communication lines to become China's

frontline in opening to the West.

Boom in tourism. With wonderful and rare natural scenery and colorful ethnic customs, Xinjiang has greatly expanded its tourism sector. In 2001, the region hosted 273,000 international tourists, and earned US\$ 98.56 million in foreign exchange. It also hosted 8.393 million domestic tourists, and earned 7.18 billion yuan. The region's capacity for accommodating tourists has greatly expanded in recent years. In 2001, there were 250 hotels for foreign tourists, including 173 star-rated hotels. The tourist trade has become a new economic growth point for economic development in Xinjiang.

VI. Progress in Education, Science and Technology, Culture and Health Work

During the half century or more since the founding of New China, all social undertakings in Xinjiang have undergone historic changes.

Education developing steadily. Compared with that of 1949, in the year of 2001, the number of primary schools in the region increased from 1,335 to 6,221, middle schools from 9 to 1,929, polytechnic schools from 11 to 99, and regular institutions of higher learning from 1 to 21. The number of students currently registered at local institutions of higher learning has increased from 400 to 110,000, and 185,000 students have graduated from regular institutions of higher learning. The number of students currently registered at polytechnic schools has increased from 2,000 to 97,300. Elementary education has been continuously improved, and nine-year compulsory education has been realized in 65 counties (cities, districts). Adult education of various types has made steady progress. A multi-level, multi-form occupational training system has by and large been in place. The ratio of the educated population of the region has grown remarkably.

The proportion of illiteracy among the young and middle-aged has dropped to less than 2%.

Progress in science and technology. The overall strength of science and technology has increased tremendously. The region has established a research and development system, a technology popularization system, and a sci-tech administration and service system with relatively complete and supplementary disciplines, relatively rational distribution and distinctive local characteristics; trained a crop of sci-tech specialists with high academic achievements; created a sci-tech contingent made up of people of various ethnic groups and highly capable of research, development, experimentation, popularization and management; and built a number of laboratory centers and experimental bases characteristic of the sci-tech advantages of Xinjiang. The accelerated industrialization and commercialization of sci-tech research findings have changed Xinjiang's traditional ways of agricultural production and operation, and notable achievements have been made in protective plant cultivation, irrigation technology and strain improvement. The technological transformation of industrial enterprises has enhanced both their economic efficiency and

market competitiveness. Science and technology are playing an important role in the development of the regional economy and social progress.

By the end of 2001, the number of professional and technical personnel in the enterprises and institutions of the whole region reached 385,100.

During the 50-odd years since the founding of New China, Xinjiang has achieved 7,102 significant sci-tech findings, of which 201 have won national awards. The technical popularization of Xinjiang's merino sheep has attained the advanced level in China, while the region's technology of desert highway construction is in the forefront of the world.

Culture and art prospering. Before the founding of New China, there was not a single professional theatrical troupe, artistic research organization or art school in Xinjiang. By 2001, there were altogether 89 theatrical troupes, 107 art research and creation units and an abundance of art schools. The Uygur, Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz, Mongolian, Tajik and Xibe ethnic minorities now all have their own professional theatrical troupes and have produced a galaxy of outstanding artists. Before the founding of New China, Xinjiang had no public library or museum to speak of. Today, it boasts 81 public libraries and 23 museums. In recent years, radio and

television have advanced in seven-league boots. Currently, there are 41 radio transmission and relay stations, and 826 television transmission and relay stations. Radio reaches 91.3% of Xinjiang's population, and 90.93% have access to television. Literary and artistic creation is flourishing. *The Rainbow of the Tianshan Mountains*, *Pioneers of Muqam* and a spate of other outstanding artworks have won national awards. The full-length song-and-dance ensemble *Bravo Xinjiang* has caused a great stir throughout the country. A number of literary and artistic works with strong ethnic characteristics have been well received nationwide and even abroad. The genres and number of titles of books, newspapers and magazines have doubled or redoubled. The number of newspapers increased from 4 in 1952 to 98 in 2001, of which 43 were published in local ethnic-minority languages.

Health work improving rapidly. In 1949, Xinjiang had only 54 medical centers, with 696 hospital beds in total. For every ten thousand people there were on average only 1.6 hospital beds and 0.19 doctor. Besides, health organizations were all concentrated in a few cities or towns.

But in 2001, there were 7,309 health organizations of various types, of

which 1,357 were hospitals of various types. There were 11 hospitals at the level of Grade III or above, and a total of 71,000 hospital beds. On average, for every ten thousand people there were 35.1 hospital beds.

In addition, there were 97,500 professional medical workers, of whom 33,600 were of ethnic-minority origin. The average number of doctors per thousand people, the average number of beds in town and township clinics per thousand rural people, and the number of medical workers in towns and townships were all above the national average levels.

A three-tier medi-care and disease-prevention network at the levels of county, township and village has been preliminarily formed in the agricultural and pastoral areas. Today, all the 85 counties (cities) of the region have hospitals, sanitation and anti-epidemic stations, and health centers for women and children. Each township has a hospital, and each village a clinic. No longer is there a shortage of doctors and medicine, or neglected patients in the agricultural and pastoral areas.

The medical treatment level has been greatly enhanced. Major hospitals at the regional or prefectural level are equipped with modern medical instruments, and the medical branches they can offer for disease treatment

have grown more complete. Many difficult and complicated illnesses can be treated within the region, which has 207 sanitation and anti-epidemic stations, and 17 prevention and control centers (stations) specializing in the treatment of endemic diseases.

Endemic and contagious diseases that afflicted people of all ethnic groups in the past have been basically wiped out. The immunization ratio, based on regional, county (city) and township (town) plans, has reached 85%, and the incidence of infectious diseases has been markedly lowered.

Under the care of the central government, the region has carried out programs to improve water quality and prevent diseases on a large scale, and made great achievements in these fields. The population benefited by the improvement of water quality has topped 8.5 million, of whom the population enjoying piped water has reached 8.1 million.

Special attention has also been paid to the work concerning the health of women and children. In the rural areas, the ratio of adoption of modern midwifery has reached 70% or more. The ratio of women giving birth in hospitals has reached around 50%. The coverage rate of pregnant and lying-in women under systematic health protection has reached 90% in

urban areas and 50% in rural areas, and that of children under systematic health protection 70% in urban areas and 30% in rural areas.

VII. The People's Living Standards and Quality of Life Have Been Enhanced

As the economy and various social undertakings improve, the living standard of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang is improving year by year.

The income of both urban and rural residents is continuously growing. In 2001, the average net income per capita in the rural areas of Xinjiang was 1,710.44 yuan, which was more than what was needed for food and clothing. The average annual salary of an urban employee was 10,278 yuan. Urban residents, as a whole, led comfortable lives.

The consumption structure of local residents is improving steadily. In Xinjiang, the Engel's coefficient (the food consumption ratio) is dropping year by year. Among rural residents, the Engel's coefficient was as high as 60.8% in 1978, but dropped to 50.4% in 2001. With regard to urban residents, the Engel's coefficient was 57.3% in 1978, but dropped to 35.5% in 2001.

The number of durable consumer goods owned by local residents is

increasing rapidly. In 2001, every hundred rural households owned, on average, 122.3 bicycles, 93.3 television sets, 22.13 washing machines and 53.1 tape-recorders, which, compared with the figures for 1985, represented increases of 78.4%, 830%, 950% and 610%, respectively. In 2001, every hundred urban households owned, on average, 107.39 color television sets, 84.47 refrigerators, 94.69 washing machines and 41 cameras, which, compared with the figures for 1985, showed increases of 190%, 700%, 76.7% and 330%, respectively. Besides, they also owned 42.96 video CD players, 18.59 video cassette-recorders, 17.33 hi-fi sets and 15.89 mobile phones. With regard to housing, the living space per capita in rural areas was 18.04 sq m in 2001, which was a 2.3-fold increase over that of 1981. The living space per capita in urban areas was 15.54 sq m in 2001, which was an increase of 2.6 times compared to 1981.

The quality of life of local residents has been noticeably improved. The popularization rate of education and the educational level have been raised. The coverage of radio and television is wide. Cultural and sports activities with mass participation are varied and colorful. Much improvement has been made in medi-care and health work. People of all

ethnic groups in both urban and rural areas are leading well-off and stable lives. Life expectancy in Xinjiang has been extended to 71.12 years. The demography of Xinjiang shows the features of low rate of birth, low rate of death and low rate of increase. Xinjiang was cited as one of the four longevity areas in the world by the International Society of Natural Medication in 1985. The number of centenarians per million of Xinjiang's population ranks first in the country.

VIII.Upholding Equality and Unity Among Ethnic Groups, and Freedom of Religious Belief

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government, to ensure equality and unity among ethnic groups and achieve their common development, has formulated a series of ethnic and religious policies on the basis of the actual situations of the various ethnic groups and religions, and these policies have been continuously enriched and improved in practice. Xinjiang, as one of the areas practicing regional autonomy for ethnic minorities in China, has fully implemented the ethnic and religious policies laid down by the central government, safeguarded the fundamental interests of the people of all ethnic groups, and formed, developed and consolidated a new type of relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among ethnic groups.

Safeguarding equality among ethnic groups and promoting their unity. It is stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China as follows: "All ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China are equal. The state protects the lawful rights and interests of the ethnic minorities

and upholds and develops a relationship of equality, unity and mutual assistance among all of China's ethnic groups. Discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited; any act which undermines the unity of the ethnic groups or instigates division is prohibited.”

The Constitution ensures that citizens of all ethnic groups enjoy all the rights of equality prescribed by the Constitution and the law. Citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of ethnic status, race, sex or religious belief; freedom of the person and the personal dignity of citizens of all ethnic groups are inviolable; all ethnic groups have the right to enjoy freedom of religious belief; citizens of all ethnic groups have the right to receive education; and all ethnic groups have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. The government has adopted various special policies and measures to ensure that all the rights of equality for all ethnic groups as prescribed by the Constitution and the law are effectively implemented and protected in social life and government behavior.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the local

government of Xinjiang promulgated an administrative order to abolish appellations and names of places containing meanings insulting to ethnic minorities. For instance, the place name of “Dihua” was changed to “Urumqi,” and that of “Zhenxi” to “Barkol.” Some appellations, though not implying insults, were also changed at the wish of the given ethnic minority. For instance, the name “Dahur” was changed to “Daur” in 1958, in accordance with the wish of the Daur people.

In order to further consolidate and develop the great unity among ethnic groups, since 1983, the government of the region has launched an “educational month of unity among ethnic groups” throughout the whole region every year. In a lively and up-to-date form, the publicity and educational event is carried out in a concentrated, extensive and profound manner, to promote the concepts of equality, unity and progress as the primary principles in the relationships between ethnic groups, and make mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual learning, mutual support and mutual understanding social norms to be routinely followed by people of all ethnic groups.

Ethnic minorities’ right to autonomy is protected by laws and

regulations. According to the Constitution, regional autonomy is practiced in areas where people of ethnic minorities live in compact communities. This is one of the basic political systems of China. The Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is an ethnic autonomous area with the Uygur people as its principal body. Within the territory of the autonomous region, there also exist other areas where other ethnic minorities live in compact communities. There, corresponding ethnic autonomous areas have also been established. Currently, the whole region has 5 autonomous prefectures for 4 ethnic groups — Kazak, Hui, Kirgiz and Mongolian; 6 autonomous counties for 5 ethnic groups — Kazak, Hui, Mongolian, Tajik and Xibe; and 43 ethnic townships.

According to the provisions of China's Constitution and the "Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy," ethnic autonomous areas enjoy extensive autonomy. While exercising the functions and powers of local state organs, they shall have the power of legislation; the power to flexibly carry out or decide not to carry out decisions from higher-level state organs that are not suited to the actual conditions of the ethnic autonomous areas; the power to develop their own economy; the power to manage their own

financial affairs; the power to train and use ethnic-minority cadres; and the power to develop education and ethnic cultures. The People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and its standing committee have adopted various regulations and resolutions which fit the characteristics and meet the requirements of Xinjiang based on the power accorded to it by the "Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy" and Xinjiang's actual conditions, thus protecting the right to autonomy granted to ethnic autonomous areas by the law. By the end of 2000, the people's congress of the autonomous region and its standing committee had altogether enacted 119 local laws and 71 statutory resolutions and decisions, approved 31 local laws, 3 separate regulations formulated by local people's congresses and 173 administrative rules and regulations formulated by the government of the autonomous region.

Chief leaders of ethnic autonomous areas are citizens of the ethnic group or groups exercising regional autonomy in the area concerned. As stipulated by the Constitution, the head of an autonomous region, autonomous prefecture or autonomous county shall be a citizen of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy in the area concerned; and

the other members of the people's governments of these regions, prefectures and counties shall include members of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy as well as members of other ethnic minorities.

In order to thoroughly safeguard regional ethnic autonomy and the various rights of the ethnic minorities, Xinjiang places great importance on creating study and training opportunities for ethnic-minority cadres, sending large numbers of ethnic-minority cadres to study in colleges and universities in inland provinces, running schools and training classes for ethnic-minority cadres at various levels in Xinjiang, and thus training and fostering a large body of administrative and professional ethnic-minority cadres for work in political, economic, cultural and other spheres.

In 1950, there were only 3,000 ethnic-minority cadres in Xinjiang. In 1955, when the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was established, there were 46,000 ethnic-minority cadres. Today, there are as many as 348,000, accounting for 51.8% of the total number of cadres in the autonomous region. Meanwhile, the number of women ethnic-minority cadres has exceeded 46% of the total number of women cadres in the whole region.

Ethnic minorities enjoy full representation rights in people's congresses at all levels. In order to thoroughly protect the rights of the ethnic minorities, the proportions of the ethnic-minority deputies to people's congresses at all levels are all approximately four percentage points higher than the proportions of the ethnic-minority populations in the total populations of the relevant areas in Xinjiang in the corresponding periods. The proportions of ethnic-minority deputies in the total number of Xinjiang's deputies to the National People's Congress of all previous terms have all exceeded 63% — all higher than the proportions of such ethnic populations in the region's total population in the corresponding periods.

Ethnic minorities' freedom and right to use and develop their own spoken and written languages are fully respected and protected. The government of the autonomous region promulgated, respectively in 1988 and 1993, the “Provisional Regulations of Administration for the Use of Ethnic Languages in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region” and the “Regulations for Work Concerning Spoken and Written Languages in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,” which further enshrine in legal

form the freedom and right of ethnic minorities to use and develop their own spoken and written languages. Whether in the fields of judicature, administration, education, etc., or in political and social life, the spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities are broadly used.

Government organs of the autonomous region simultaneously use two or more spoken and written languages in handling public affairs. Government organs of autonomous prefectures and counties also simultaneously use the spoken and written languages of the ethnic group exercising regional autonomy in handling public affairs. Ethnic minorities have the right to use their own spoken and written languages in election and litigation. Spoken and written languages of ethnic minorities are widely used in journalism, publications, radio, film and television. The Xinjiang People's Broadcasting Station uses five languages, namely, Uyghur, Han, Kazak, Mongolian and Kirgiz, while the Xinjiang Television Station uses the Uyghur, Han and Kazak languages. The Uyghur, Han, Kazak, Kirgiz, Mongolian and Xibe have newspapers, books and magazines available to them in their own languages.

Ethnic minorities' folkways and customs are fully respected. Ethnic

minorities' folkways and customs are closely related to people's production and life, as well as religious beliefs. To respect ethnic minorities' folkways and customs, the central and regional people's governments have promulgated a number of regulations. To guarantee the supply of special food needed by ethnic minorities, Muslims in particular, the people's government has promulgated regulations and taken a sequence of specific measures, for instance by requiring large and medium-sized cities and small towns with sizable Muslim populations to have a definite number of Muslim restaurants.

At the communication hubs and in units with Muslim employees, Muslim canteens or Muslim catering must be provided. Beef and mutton supplied to Muslims must be slaughtered and processed according to Islamic customs, and must be separately stored, transported and sold. On their respective traditional festivals, such as the Kurban Festival and Fast-breaking Festival, all ethnic minorities may enjoy statutory holidays and be supplied with special festive food. Ethnic minorities which traditionally practice inhumation are exempt from the government requirement of cremation, and are allotted special land for cemeteries.

There are no restrictions whatever on folkways and customs of a religious nature, such as wedding or funeral ceremonies, circumcision and giving religious names.

Ethnic minorities' educational level is continuously rising. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, to change the extremely backward situation in education among the ethnic minorities, a whole array of measures have been adopted.

The development of education among ethnic minorities has been regarded as one of the priorities of educational work. Focus and priority of arrangement and support have been given to the education of ethnic minorities in terms of development program, fund input, and teacher training.

To change the backward educational situation of the ethnic minorities in pastoral areas, huge amounts of funds have been spent on establishing boarding schools; grants are available for particularly poor students in boarding schools, middle schools, polytechnic schools, colleges and universities. In 2002, for instance, free textbooks with a value of 12 million yuan and grants totaling 30 million yuan were given to such

boarding schools. Secondary and primary school students covered by the compulsory education period in the three prefectures of Hotan, Kashi and Aksu and the Kirgiz Autonomous Prefecture of Kizilsu in southern Xinjiang, where ethnic minorities live in compact communities, enjoy free education.

The compulsory education period is extended so as to enable ethnic-minority students to receive 9 to 12 years of compulsory education. Tuition and fees and expenditures for textbooks are waived for primary and middle school students of ethnic-minority origins in some border and poor counties.

A total of 5,882 primary and middle schools serve ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, accounting for 69% of the total number of primary and middle schools in the region. At the same time, many schools practice a mixed enrolment of students of ethnic-minority and Han origins.

Today, the whole region has formed an educational system for ethnic minorities which is rational in structure, multi-level and developing in a coordinated way. By the end of 2001, the enrolment rate of school-age children had reached 97.41% for primary schools and 82.02% for junior

middle schools. At the college entrance examination, a preferential policy is implemented, whereby the entrance mark has been specially lowered for ethnic-minority students according to the actual circumstances of the students' sources.

Ethnic minorities' traditional culture is protected and flourishing. The people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang have created a long-standing, varied and colorful traditional culture, making a unique contribution to the cultural development of the Chinese nation.

The government of the autonomous region has, in a planned way, organized specialists for work involving the collecting, editing, translating and publishing of the cultural heritage of ethnic minorities and the protection of their famous historical monuments, scenic spots, rare cultural relics and other important items of historical and cultural heritage. Since 1984, the regional office in charge of the collection and publishing of ethnic minorities' ancient books has collected more than 5,000 titles of such works, edited and published more than 100 titles. Two colossal works, *Kutadgu Bilig (Wisdom of Fortune and Joy)* and *A Comprehensive Turki Dictionary*, of the Karahan Kingdom period in the 11th century,

which had been on the verge of being lost, were translated into Uygur language and published, and then translated into the Han language and published in the 1980s with the support of the government and the long-term concerted efforts of specialists of various ethnic groups.

Tremendous achievements have been made in collecting, editing, translating and researching the *Janger* of the Mongolians and the *Manas* of the Kirgiz, two of China's three important epics of ethnic minorities. The *Twelve Muqams* opera, a classical musical treasure of the Uygur people, which was also on the way out before the founding of New China, has long been an artistic form on the top of the list for rescue by the local government of Xinjiang, which has mobilized efforts for collecting and editing works of this genre.

Half a century ago, only two or three elderly musicians could sing it completely. But now it is widely sung, following the establishment of the Muqam Art Troupe and Muqam Research Office in Xinjiang. Traditional local sports with a long history are flourishing. Items like "picking up a sheep while riding a galloping horse," horse racing, wrestling and archery are again becoming popular among the local people. The *Darwaz* (Uygur

tightrope walking at high altitude) is now widely known both at home and abroad.

Implementing a more liberal childbirth policy for ethnic minorities than for the Han people. Based on the state family planning policy, the People's Congress of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has, according to the region's actual circumstances, formulated the "Provisional Regulations for Family Planning of Ethnic Minorities in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region" to implement a more liberal childbirth policy for ethnic minorities than for the Han people and promote the growth of the population of ethnic minorities, which enables the natural population growth of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang to increase at a higher rate than that of the local Han people. In 2001, the natural population growth of ethnic minorities was 13.04‰, whereas that of the Han was 8.25‰. The first national census, conducted in 1953, showed that the combined population of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang was 4.54 million. When the fifth national census was conducted, in 2000, the figure had risen to 10.9696 million.

Freedom of religious belief is respected and protected. Most people

belonging to ethnic minorities in Xinjiang hold one religious belief or another. In the case of certain ethnic minorities, religions are followed on a mass scale. For instance the Uygur, Kazak and Hui believe in Islam, and the Mongolian, Xibe and Daur believe in Buddhism. The right to freedom of religious belief for various ethnic groups is fully respected, and all normal religious activities are protected by law. Now, there are more than 24,000 venues for religious activities in Xinjiang, of which 23,753 are Islamic mosques. There are 26,800 clerical persons, of whom 26,500 are of the Islamic faith. Every year, the government allocates specialized funds for the maintenance and repair of the key mosques, monasteries and churches. In 1999 alone, 7.6 million yuan was allocated by the central government for the reconstruction of the Yanghang Mosque in Urumqi, the Baytulla Mosque in Yining and the Jamae Mosque in Hotan.

Religious personages enjoy full rights to participate in the deliberation and administration of state affairs. Currently, more than 1,800 religious personages in Xinjiang have been elected to posts in people's congresses and committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at all levels, of whom 1 is in the

National People's Congress, 4 in the National Committee of the CPPCC, 21 in the people's congress of the autonomous region, and 27 in the Regional Committee of the CPPCC. They take the initiative in participating in deliberation and administration of state affairs on behalf of religious believers, and in exercising supervision over the government in respect to the implementation of the policy of freedom of religious belief. To ensure the normal handling of religious affairs by religious personages, the government grants stipends to those who are in financial difficulties.

Protecting the legal rights and interests of religious organizations in accordance with the law. Since 1982, a total of 88 religious organizations have been reinstated or established in the autonomous region, of which 1 Islamic association and 1 Buddhist association are at the regional level; 13 Islamic associations, 3 Buddhist associations and 1 Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of the Protestant Churches are at the prefectural (prefectural-class city) level; 65 Islamic associations, 2 Buddhist associations and 2 Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committees of the Protestant Churches are at the county (county-class city) level. All

religious bodies independently carry out religious activities within the scope prescribed by law. All religious bodies play an important role in training, fostering, educating and administering their clergy and establishing and running religious schools, as well as in international religious exchanges.

In order to ensure the normal operation of religious activities, Xinjiang has established an Islamic college specializing in training senior clergymen. Islamic bodies in prefectures and prefectural-level cities have opened Islamic classes to train clergymen in accordance with actual needs. To enhance religious personages' level of learning, train a contingent of high-caliber religious personages, and establish a three-tiered (regional, prefectural and county) training system, the government has allocated funds to train in-service clerical persons in rotation, and organized investigative tours for religious personages so as to broaden their vistas and enrich their knowledge.

Religious personages are guaranteed access to scriptures and other religious publications. A number of Islamic classics and religious books and magazines, including the Koran, *Selected Works of Waez* and *A New*

Collection of Waez's Speeches, as well as the religious classics of Buddhism, Christianity and other religions in various editions and in the Uygur, Kazak and Han languages have been translated, published and distributed in Xinjiang. *China's Muslims*, a journal in the Uygur and Han languages, is widely read. For religious believers' convenience, stores specializing in selling religious publications have been set up in various parts of Xinjiang with government endorsement.

Normal religious activities are protected by law. The government of the autonomous region has formulated and promulgated the "Provisional Regulations for the Administration of Religious Activity Venues in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region" and other regulations in accordance with the Constitution and the law. Religious believers carry out normal religious activities in line with the canons and rituals of their respective faiths, under the protection of the law. In recent years, the reincarnation of Living Buddhas has been successfully completed; tens of thousands of Muslims have made pilgrimages to Mecca as their living standards have improved; and students of Muslim colleges have taken part with great success in competitions for recitation of the Koran held both at home and

abroad.

IX. Establishment, Development and Role of the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

The Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps (XPCC), established in 1954, assumes the duties of cultivating and guarding the frontier areas entrusted to it by the state. It is a special social organization, which handles its own administrative and judicial affairs within the reclamation areas under its administration, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the state and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and with economic planning directly supervised by the state. It is subordinated to the dual leadership of the central government and the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. Also known as the China Xinjian Group, the XPCC has 14 divisions (reclamation areas), 174 regimental agricultural and stockbreeding farms, 4,391 industrial, construction, transport and commercial enterprises, and well-run social undertakings covering scientific research, education, culture, health, sports, finance and insurance, as well as judiciary organs. The total population of the XPCC is 2,453,600, including 933,000 workers.

The XPCC was established against a special historical background. In

1949, Xinjiang was peacefully liberated. To consolidate border defense, accelerate Xinjiang's development, and reduce the economic burden on local governments and the local people of all ethnic groups, the People's Liberation Army units stationed in Xinjiang focused their efforts on production and construction, starting large-scale production and construction projects. By 1954, after making arduous pioneering and enterprising efforts, 34 farms and eight pastures had been constructed, with a total cultivated area of 77,200 ha. The farming and stockbreeding products gathered not only provided for the logistic needs of the troops stationed in Xinjiang, but the PLA units had also set up a number of modern industrial, mining and commercial enterprises, as well as schools, hospitals and other institutions.

In October 1954, the Central People's Government ordered most of the PLA units in Xinjiang to be transferred to local civilian work by the unit, and be separated from the setups of national defense forces to form a production and construction corps, whose missions were to carry out both production and militia duties, and cultivate and guard border areas.

Starting from May 1956, the XPCC was subordinated to the dual leadership of the Ministry of State Farms and Land Reclamation and the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

China has a centuries-old tradition of developing and protecting its border areas by stationing troops to cultivate and guard the frontier areas. According to historical records, all the dynasties in Chinese history adopted the practice of stationing troops to cultivate and guard frontier areas as an important state policy for developing border areas and consolidating frontier defense. The beginning of this practice by the central authorities on a massive scale in Xinjiang can be traced back to the Western Han Dynasty, to be subsequently carried on from generation to generation. This policy had played an important historical role in uniting the nation, consolidating frontier defense and promoting social and economic development in Xinjiang. The decision of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China in 1954 to establish the Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps represented a continuation and development of this historical experience in the new historical conditions.

The XPCC grew in strength through arduous pioneering efforts. Since its founding, the XPCC has taken it upon itself to reclaim land, guard the border areas and work for the well-being of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. It has followed the line of combining the efforts of workers, farmers, merchants, students and soldiers; overall development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, sideline production and fisheries; and comprehensive operation of industry, communications, commerce, construction and services.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, following the principle of “not competing for benefits with the local people,” the XPCC built water conservancy works and reclaimed wasteland along the edges of the Taklimakan and Gurbantünggüt deserts to the north and south of the Tianshan Mountains, respectively, and along the borders where the natural environment was adverse. Now they have built up ecologically sound economic networks of oases, with contiguous fields, crisscrossing canals, ubiquitous forest belts and radiating roads. Starting by processing agricultural and sideline products, the XPCC developed modern industry and gradually formed a multi-sector industrial system with light and textile industries as the main

part and supplemented by iron and steel, coal, building materials, electricity, chemicals and machinery industries. With these projects in full swing, the XPCC saw its education, science and technology, culture and other undertakings follow suit. By the end of 1966, all the XPCC's undertakings had developed to a rather high level.

The XPCC was dissolved in 1975, but in December 1981 the central government decided to revive it. Then the XPCC started its pioneering work once again, entering a new era of construction and development. By 2001, the XPCC had built a maze of irrigation works, sandbreaks and forest belts, rigged up a green barrier totaling several thousand km in length, created new oases with a total area of 1.064 million ha, brought into existence a number of new towns such as Shihezi and Wujiaqu, and reaped a GDP that accounted for 13.2% of the autonomous region's total.

The XPCC has played an important role in maintaining the development of Xinjiang. In the past several decades, while paying taxes to local governments as required by the law, the XPCC's regimental agricultural and stockbreeding farms and industrial, transportation, construction and commercial enterprises have adhered to their aim of

serving the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and actively aided the construction of local areas. Each year, they send batches of technicians to adjacent counties, townships and villages to give training courses in growing crops and operating and repairing farm machinery, and to spread advanced technologies. Since 1964, they have pooled funds each year to aid the local areas in planning and construction, and offered medical aid to people of all ethnic groups, as well as help in many other aspects. To support industrial development in Xinjiang, the XPCC has transferred gratis a batch of large, well-developed industrial, transportation, construction and commercial enterprises to the local areas, making great contributions to the modernization efforts of Xinjiang.

As an important force for stability in Xinjiang and for consolidating frontier defense, the XPCC adheres to the principle of attaching equal importance to production and militia duties. It has set up in frontier areas a “four-in-one” system of joint defense that links the PLA, the Armed Police, the XPCC and the ordinary people, playing an irreplaceable special role in the past five decades in smashing and resisting internal and external separatists’ attempts at sabotage and infiltration, and in

maintaining the stability and safety of the borders of the motherland.

During the process of cultivating and guarding the border areas, the XPCC has established a close relationship with local governments. The XPCC conscientiously accepts the leadership of the People's Government of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, abides by the laws and regulations of the government, respects the customs and religious beliefs of ethnic minorities, strives to do practical things in the interest of the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and endeavors to develop a blending type of economy. In this way, the XPCC has forged flesh-and-blood ties with people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, and attained the aim of joint frontier defense, sharing of resources, mutual complementarity and common prosperity.

The development of the XPCC in turn has continuously received aid and support from governments at all levels in the autonomous region, and from people of all ethnic groups. In its initial period of land reclamation, people of all ethnic groups provided the XPCC with guides, production tools and other forms of aid, while local governments allocated large plots of state-owned wasteland and pastureland, mines and natural forests,

which laid the foundation for the development of the XPCC. Many of the policies formulated by the autonomous regional people's government since the reform and opening-up have been expressly suitable for the XPCC and have thus gone a long way toward promoting the harmonious development between the XPCC and local economies.

During its long years of development, the XPCC has become a mosaic of people from 37 ethnic groups, including the Han, Uygur, Kazak, Hui and Mongolian. In the reclamation areas live Muslims, Buddhists, Protestants and Catholics. The population of Muslims is over 250,000. Carrying out the central government's policies toward ethnic groups and religions in an all-round way, the XPCC handles religious affairs in accordance with the law, and has become a large, united, multi-ethnic family.

The development of the XPCC in the past five decades has played a very important role in accelerating the economic development of Xinjiang, promoting unity among ethnic groups, maintaining social stability, consolidating border defense, and shoring up the unification of the motherland.

X. State Support for the Development of Xinjiang

Since the founding of New China in 1949, according to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the central government has made it a basic state policy to help ethnic minorities-inhabited border areas with their political, economic and cultural development, and to lead all the ethnic groups of China onto the road to common prosperity.

Increased investment in fixed assets in Xinjiang. In the 10 five-year plans of the central government, infrastructure construction projects, projects involving basic agricultural development and modern industrial construction projects in Xinjiang have always been listed as key state projects. A whole slue of preferential and special policies have been adopted to ensure the smooth implementation of these plans. During the half century or more since the founding of New China, with energetic state support, investment and construction have been proceeding in a big way in Xinjiang.

From 1950 to 2001, investment in fixed assets there added up to 501.515 billion yuan. That included 266.223 billion yuan from the central

government, accounting for 53.1% of such investment in the corresponding period. Over 90,000 projects have been completed and put into operation, including 178 large and medium-sized projects, and a batch of projects having a vital bearing on the economic development of Xinjiang. All these have laid a firm foundation for the autonomous region's sustained economic growth.

Sizable financial support for Xinjiang. Preliminary statistics show that from 1955, when the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region was founded, till 2000, the financial subsidies Xinjiang received from the central government totaled 87.741 billion yuan. Especially since 1996, with the increase of the central government's financial strength and the implementation of the great western development strategy, the regular financial subsidies Xinjiang receives from the central government have increased year by year: 5.907 billion yuan in 1996, 6.838 billion yuan in 1997, 8.012 billion yuan in 1998, 9.4 billion yuan in 1999, 11.902 billion yuan in 2000, and 18.382 billion yuan in 2001. The central government has also increased its fund input and support of other forms through all kinds of special financial transfer payment as well as financial transfer

payment under the preferential policy for ethnic minorities.

Support for the government of the autonomous region in actively using loans from international financial organizations and foreign governments. By the end of 2001, with support from and arrangement by the central government, Xinjiang had completed or was in the process of undertaking 22 projects with loans from the World Bank, and the total investment had reached US\$ 1.79895 billion, or 14.93128 billion yuan RMB according to the current exchange rate. Three Sino-foreign joint ventures have obtained approval to use US\$ 5.524 million in loans from the Asian Development Bank. Loans totaling US\$ 410.67 million from Canada and several other countries and their governmental financial organizations have been used in 68 projects in Xinjiang, some of which have been completed. Loans from international organizations and foreign governments, which have been made full use of, have played an important and positive role in Xinjiang's economic development.

Benefiting Xinjiang by exploiting petroleum and natural gas. Xinjiang is rich in petroleum and natural gas resources. Since the founding of New China, to promote Xinjiang's economic development, the central

government has adhered to the policy of large-scale prospecting for, exploitation of and investment in petroleum and natural gas resources in Xinjiang, so as to bring benefits to people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang. To realize the strategic plan of building Xinjiang into China's largest petrochemical industry base, the central government had increased investment in prospecting for and exploiting petroleum and natural gas in Xinjiang year by year, in spite of the fact that the domestic and international prices of petroleum and natural gas had dropped, and the cost of prospecting for and exploiting petroleum and natural gas was high. The investment in this respect was 18.196 billion yuan in 1995, and 29.223 billion yuan in 2000. An investment to the tune of well over 120 billion yuan is planned for the project of "transporting western natural gas eastward," which, with Xinjiang as the main source, is already well on the way.

The rapid development of the petroleum, natural gas and petrochemical industry has met the demand of Xinjiang's economic development for energy and petrochemicals. It has also given strong impetus to the development of the machine-building, transportation,

telecommunications, construction, electricity, water conservancy, food, textiles, chemicals, plastics, rubber and pharmaceuticals industries, as well as agriculture; stimulated the growth of service trades; and produced a great impact on the formation and improvement of Xinjiang's regional economic structure. As a result, there has been a great increase in the numbers of people employed.

Since 1994, with the operation of the Tarim Oilfield, the annual increase of employment in the Mongolian Autonomous Prefecture of Bayingolin alone has exceeded 18%. Meanwhile, the process of urbanization has revved up. New oil-producing cities have mushroomed on the barren sands of the Gobi Desert, such as Karamay, Dushanzi (Maytag), Fudong and Zepu (Poskam). The modernization drive is going ahead apace in such cities as Urumqi, Korla, Fukang and Luntai. Local economic development has been effectively supported. The large oilfields in Xinjiang, such as Karamay, Tuha and Tarim, and major petrochemical enterprises in Zepu, Dushanzi, Urumqi and Karamay, fully using their human resources and financial and technological advantages, have aided local enterprises and invested in local construction. The Desert Petroleum Highway, which runs

from north to south across the Taklimakan Desert, was built with an investment of 785 million yuan from the Tarim Oilfield.

The development of the petroleum, natural gas and petrochemical industries in Xinjiang has boosted Xinjiang's revenues considerably. The project of "transporting western natural gas eastward" alone will increase Xinjiang's yearly revenue by over one billion yuan, making a great contribution to promoting the development of various undertakings in the autonomous region.

Making preferential policies to promote Xinjiang's development. Since the founding of New China, and especially since the reform and opening-up started some 20 years ago, the central government has drawn up economic development and other policies tilted in favor of Xinjiang. Relevant regulations on the strategy of opening up the border areas have been promulgated, providing eight preferential policies for enlarging the opening-up of the western areas, including Xinjiang.

The central government also encourages the construction of grain and cotton production bases in Xinjiang, the building of shelter-forests in northern, northeastern and northwestern China, and the construction of

desertification control projects. The central government requires that preferential policies for aiding economic development in the impoverished areas be carried out; border highways be built and supportive highway facilities at border checkpoints improved; comprehensive control of the ecosystem and water resources of the Tarim River be accelerated, with priority given to Xinjiang when arranging projects for exploiting resources and infrastructure construction; standard transfer payment system be adopted for the central budget, to gradually strengthen financial support and increase the proportion of state policy-based loans, loans from international financial organizations and those from foreign governments.

In 2001, the central government promulgated the “Notice of Opinions on the Implementation of Some Policies and Measures for the Great Development of China’s West,” which provided 68 concrete preferential policies in 18 aspects. According to these provisions, the government of the autonomous region formulated and promulgated the “Suggestions of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region on Issues Concerning the Preferential Tax Policy in the Great Development of China’s West,”

providing 10 concrete preferential tax policies to attract domestic and international enterprises, as well as farmers and herdsmen to participate in investing in and operating projects concerning Xinjiang's social infrastructure, eco-environmental protection, high-tech industry and industries with special potentials and local characteristics.

Dispatching and training first-class professional and technical personnel for Xinjiang. Since the founding of New China, considering Xinjiang's remoteness, backwardness and shortage of high-caliber personnel, the state has assigned, transferred or encouraged over 800,000 intellectuals and professional and technical personnel from inland regions to work in Xinjiang. Large numbers of university graduates, scientists, technicians and highly-trained professionals have been assigned to Xinjiang. Working in such fields as industry, agriculture, education, culture, scientific research, medical care and health, such people have made outstanding contributions to the modernization of Xinjiang.

Since 1989, with arrangements made by the central government, more than 80 institutions of higher learning in the hinterland have extended their support to Xinjiang by enrolling from among Xinjiang's ethnic

minorities 10,000 university and junior college students, 640 post-graduate students for specific posts or work units, 860 teachers and education administration personnel, and 1,400 business administration personnel, as well as sending a number of ethnic-minority visiting scholars abroad for further studies. Since 2000, the 12 better-developed cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dalian, Qingdao, Ningbo, Suzhou and Wuxi have run special Xinjiang classes in their key provincial-level senior high schools, with an annual enrolment of 1,540 ethnic-minority students who enjoy local government subsidies.

Xinjiang has received strong support from other provinces, autonomous regions and centrally administered municipalities around China. During the past few decades, other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have provided immense amounts of aid for Xinjiang in terms of technology and skilled people. Considering the backwardness of the industrial enterprises in Xinjiang, the central government has moved some enterprises and factories from more developed areas along the southeast coast to Xinjiang, transferred

engineers and technicians from the inland areas to newly established key enterprises in Xinjiang, and sent large numbers of specially picked ethnic-minority workers from Xinjiang to study and practice in advanced enterprises in the inland areas, resulting in the growth of a big contingent of leading engineers and technicians for Xinjiang in a very short period of time.

Since the introduction of the policies of reform and opening-up and with the gradual establishment of a socialist market economic system, economic and technological cooperation and exchanges, and the interflow of highly qualified personnel between Xinjiang and other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have kept expanding. A new market-oriented pattern of aiding Xinjiang's economic and social development has shaped up, with capital investment as the bond, "material and human resources interflow" as the characteristic, and mutual complementarity as the principle.

In recent years, in particular, in conformity with the requirements of the central government, over 20 better-developed provinces and municipalities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Guangdong, Shandong and

Zhejiang, have paired up with and provided aid for various prefectures and cities in Xinjiang in relevant fields, with fruitful results.

Conclusion

With leadership and support by the central government, and through over 50 years of arduous efforts by the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, the autonomous region has made historic and outstanding achievements in its economic and social development. However, as Xinjiang is located in China's northwest border, with rough natural conditions and a weak economic foundation, it is still faced with many difficulties in developing its public undertakings, such as education, culture and medical care and health. And there is still the onerous task of raising the living standard of the people of all ethnic groups. It is the common wish of the people of all the ethnic groups in Xinjiang, as well as the strategic plan of the central government, to speed up Xinjiang's development.

In 1999, the central government made an important decision to implement the great western development strategy, which provides a rare historical opportunity for Xinjiang's development. The autonomous region has drawn up its 10th Five-Year Plan and a development plan for the period up to 2010, in accordance with the state's general plan on implementing this strategy. According to this plan, by 2005 the GDP of the entire region

should reach 210 billion yuan (calculated on the prices in 2000), with an annual growth rate of 9% and the GDP per capita of over 10,000 yuan; the investment in fixed assets should reach 420 billion yuan; the annual growth of urban residents' disposable income per capita should reach around 7% and farmers' net income per capita should increase by 150 yuan each year; the average housing floorage per capita of urban residents should reach 23 sq m, and the living environment, housing quality and hygienic conditions of rural residents should be greatly improved. It is planned that, by 2010, the autonomous region's GDP should be at least double that of 2000, and the people should be much better off.

The prospects for Xinjiang's economic and social development are bright. With the support of the central government and other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, the people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, through arduous efforts, will build their autonomous region into an even more beautiful and prosperous place.