XIAN
ANCIENT CAPITAL OF CHINA (Qin & Tang Dynasties) & Start of the Silk Road
- As a Trade Route – Bell Tower 西安钟楼
- As a Road of Religion – Big Goose Pagoda 大雁塔

JIAYUGUAN FORT (1372) 嘉峪關
WESTERN END OF GREAT WALL OF CHINA
- “Strongest Fort Under Heaven”

DUNHUANG 燉煌
ANCIENT GROTTOES AND BUDDHIST ART
- Dunhuang-ology

TURPAN
ANCIENT BUDDHIST CITIES AND SITES
- Geochang Ruins, Jiaohoe Ruins, Bezik Grottoes & Flaming Mountain
- Today – The land of the Uygur people and Islam

URUMUCHI
MODERN CAPITAL OF XINGJIANG PROVINCE (Western China)
- Tien Shan (The Heavenly Mountains)
- Urumqi (“Good Pasture”)

KASHGAR 喀什
ANCIENT KINGDOM OF KASHGARIA
- Ancient crossroad of the Silk Route (China’s Western border)
- World’s oldest continuous trade bazaar (The Sunday Bazaar)

GREAT TRAVELERS WHO FOLLOWED THIS ROUTE, EXPERIENCING THE SAME NATURAL WONDERS

- 138 B.C. (Han Dynasty) Zang Qain 张骞 sent by the emperor with 99 men to explore the western regions
- 399 (Eastern Jin Dynasty) Fa Xian 法顯 went to India (the first Chinese monk to make the round trip).
- 629 (Tang Dynasty) Xuán Zàng 玄奘 travelled on a 16-year journey to India and back to study Buddhism, surviving countless perils of rivers, mountains, and dangers. Featured in “Journey to the West”
- 1269 (Yuan Dynasty) Marco Polo, the Christian merchant, travelled from the Venetian Republic in Europe on a 24-year 15,000 mile return journey to China.
- The Monkey King of the legendary fiction “Journey to the West” 西遊記 (written in Ming Dynasty)