

Gansu Province



With Lanzhou as its capital, Gansu Province, which is abbreviated as "Gan" or "Long", is located in north-west China, along the upper reaches of Huang He (Yellow River). It covers an area of over 390,000 square kilometers, and has a population of 25.81 million, including such ethnic groups as Han, Hui, Dongxiang, Tibetan, Tu, Man, Mongol, Bonan, Yugur, Salar, and Kazak.

Geographical Features

Topography Mountains and highlands take up most part of Gansu, and give it an average altitude of above 1,000 meters. Most of the middle and east part of it is of special loess topography. Gobi desert can be found west to Zhangye. West to Wuyao Ling (Mts.), and between Qilian Shan (Mt.) and Beida Shan is the well known Hexi (or Gansu) Corridor where green land and Gobi Desert intermittently spread. It was the route of ancient "Silk Road". The south mountainous area is the continuation of Qin Ling. Dang He, Shule He, Hei He and Shiyang He are major rivers in the inner flowing area, while Xihan Shui, Bailong Jiang (both branches of Chang Jiang), Huang He and its branches like Tao He, Huang Shui and Jing He are major rivers in outer flowing area. Oases are found along the middle reaches of inner flow rivers.

Climate Typical temperate continental climate rules the area, bringing about frequent storms and sharp change in temperature in summer, while winter here is dry and cold. Annual

rainfall in this region is between 30~800mm. The average annual temperature here is between -1~14°C, with an average temperature in January between -14~3°C, while in July between 11~27°C.

Natural Resources

By now over 170 kinds of minerals have been found in Gansu, among which the reserves of minerals like nickel, cobalt, platinum, construction clay, and serpentine are ranked as China's No. 1. The province also has rich resources of coal, oil shale, turf and oil.

Gansu's forest acreage is around 4.83%, much lower than the average forest cover rate in China, though the proportion of shelter forest is higher than the national average. Trees here are mostly firs, pine trees, paulownia, poplar, narrow-leaved oleaster, purple willow and economic trees like walnut, orange, Chinese dates, sumach and tung trees. There are more than 650 species of wild animals and over 1,200 species of wildings living in this area, of which 950 are medicinal herbs. As the annual

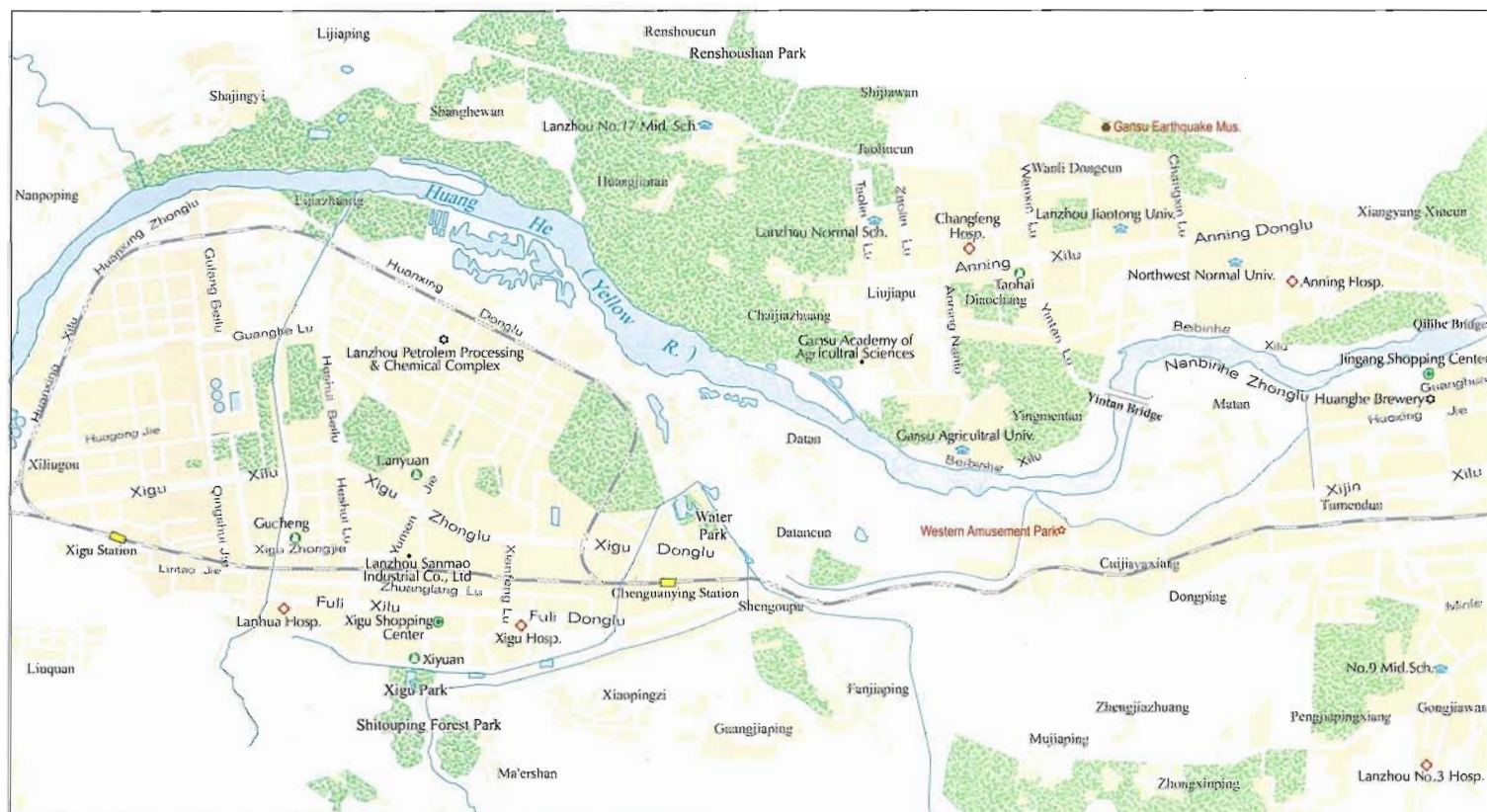
sunshine time here is between 2,900~3,300 hours, Gansu has rich solar energy resources, and solar cooker is more popular here than in most other places in China.

Agriculture

Grain farming is the major agriculture developed in Gansu, with wheat, corn, millet, broomcorn, highland barley and potato as its major crops. Oil plant, beet, cotton, medicinal herbs, hemp, tobacco, vegetables and fruits are also grown in this region. Oases along Hexi Corridor are the major production base of commodity grain. Cotton is grown in Anxi; highland barley and potato are planted in southwest part; while broomcorn and millet are grown in the east. Fruits are mainly grown in areas around Lanzhou. Gannan Gaoyun (Plt.) is a major pasturing area raising yak, cow, pig, horse, sheep and camels, of which horse and sheep here are of quality strains. Sheep skin, leather and casing for sausages are important local products.

Industry

Nonferrous metal metallurgy, oil exploitation and refinement, production of petrochemicals and relative machineries, wool weaving, pharmacy, power engineering, and nuclear industry are supporting industries of Gansu. The output of nickel, aluminium and copper here play important roles in China's economy. Oil refining and petrochemical industry developed in areas around Lanzhou is quite prosperous. Jiayuguan is the largest production base of steel in northwest China. Liujiaxia and Yanguoxia hydropower stations as well as Jiuquan Space Launching Center are well





known.

■ Transportation

Railway main stems like Lanzhou-Lianyungang, Baotou-Lanzhou, Lanzhou-Xining and Lanzhou-Urumqi railways center round Lanzhou.

Highway Centered round Lanzhou, national highways as well as provincial highways connect every city and county in the province. Express highways connecting Lanzhou with Baiyin, Hami and Baoji are in use.

Airway Lanzhou Airport provides flight courses to inner-province destinations like Jiayuguan, Dunhuang, Tianshui as well as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and 30 other major cities in China.

■ Places of Interest

Gansu province was the place where the main traffic line in ancient time between China and western countries—the famous Silk Road—

passed through. With rich cultural resources, the province has many places of interest and historical monuments.

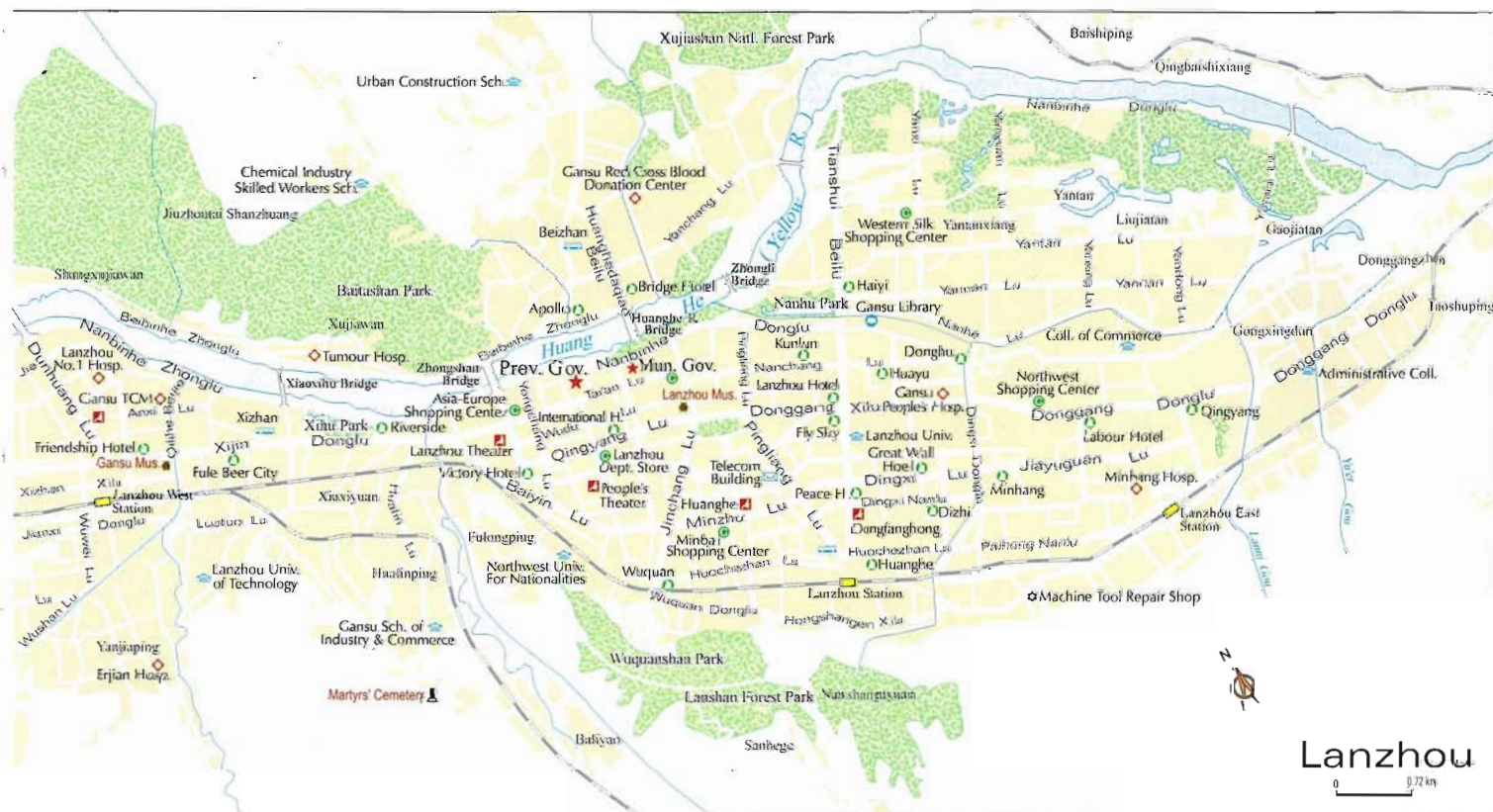
Mogao Caves southeast to Dunhuang is a world renowned art treasury listed in the World Heritage by UNESCO. The completion of this project lasted for more than 1,000 years. The total number of grottoes here is 492, in which there are over 3,000 sculptures and 45,000 square meters of murals exhibiting scriptures, the biography and stories of the Buddha, and other Buddhist historical records. Mt. Maiji is located 50 kilometers from Tianshui. Grottoes here are one of China's four most famous grottoes. There are 194 grottoes, more than 7,200 statues found, of which more than 1,000 are taller than 1m. Labuleng Monastery built in early Qing Dynasty is located in Xiahe County. It is one of the six great monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism in China. Jiayuguan Pass is the western terminus of the famous Great Wall. Cleft between Qilian Shan and Mazong Shan,

the whole structure is magnificently designed. As this was an important strategic point on the Silk Road, the pass was built with high towers providing distant views in all directions. Other tourist attractions are: Confucian Temple, and Haizang Temple in Wuwei, Dafo Temple in Zhangye, Nanguo Temple and Fuxi Temple in Tianshui, as well as many others.

■ Local Products

Moonlight cups produced in Jiuquan have been legendary wine cups in China. Inkstone, water pipe, lacquer carving, pebble carving, and gourd carving are traditional local handicrafts. Angelica produced in Minxian County is of first class. Melon, pear, Chinese date, apple, melon seeds and Jew's-ear are well known local agricultural products. Local flavours like noodles, beef pancake, and preserved ham are liked by many.

Jiayuguan Pass



Lanzhou