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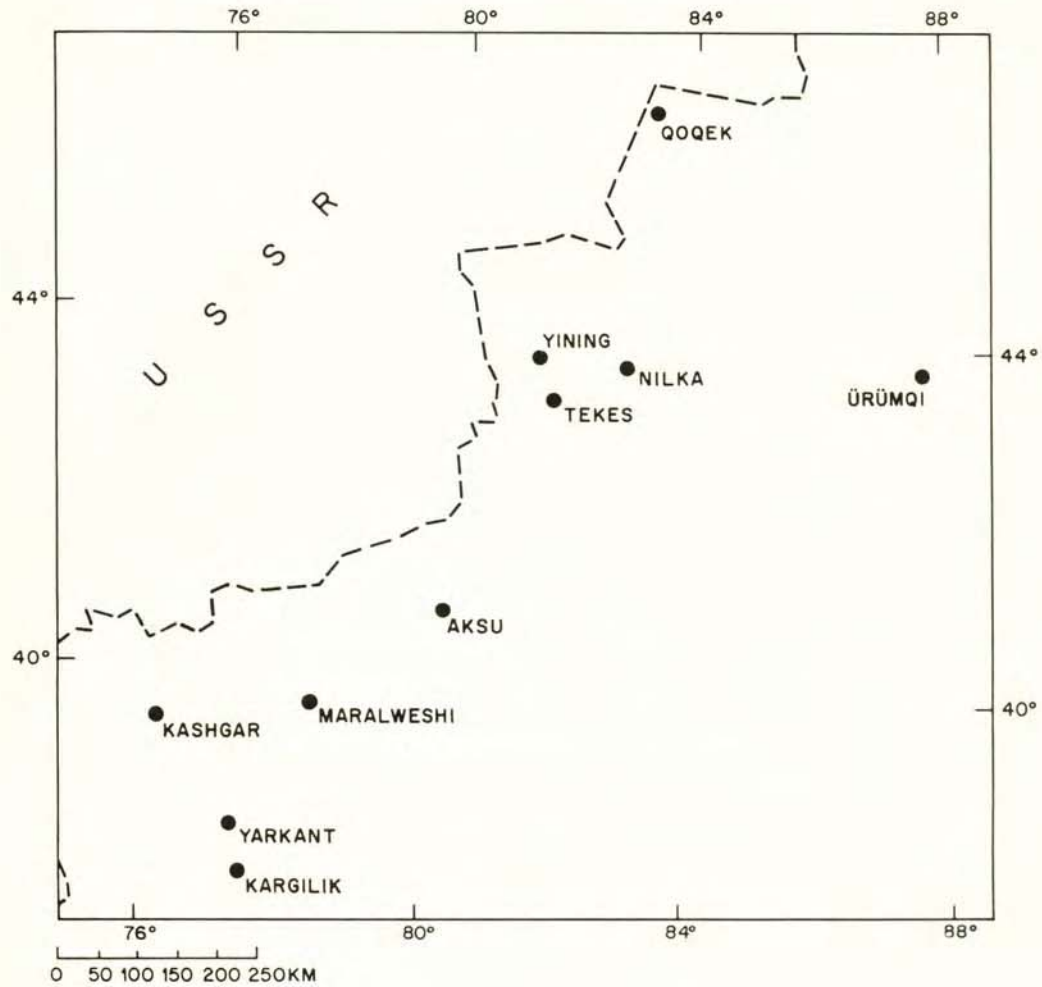
Uzbek

Size and Location

The Uzbeks 乌孜别克 are one of China's smaller nationalities whose numbers have decreased in recent years. While most Uzbeks live in Soviet Central Asia, only about 13,500 of them lived in Xinjiang in 1957.¹ Their numbers dwindled even further, to 12,453 by 1982.² More than 85 percent of the Xinjiang Uzbeks live in cities, especially in Yining. Others are found in Qoqek (Tacheng), Kashgar, Ürümqi, Yarkant, and Kargilik (Yecheng) (see Map 5). The Uzbeks do not have any autonomous areas.

History³

The origins of the Uzbeks reach back to the fourteenth century when they were a part of the khanate of the Golden Horde, known as the White Horde. Located northeast of the Aral Sea, the White Horde khanate's many tribes were engaged in farming and herding. When in the fifteenth century the Golden Horde broke up, some tribes of the White Horde khanate moved to the drainage area of the Chu River and later were called Kazaks. Those who remained in the original area were called Uzbek and they formed the Uzbek federation. Around 1500 a portion of the nomadic herding population of this federation moved south into the Central Asian farming region and occupied the cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent, and Urgench. There they began to intermingle with the local population who spoke a Turkic language and were engaged in agriculture.



Map 5. Uzbek

However, many of the tribes belonging to the Uzbek federation retained their original place names as their tribal names.

The Uzbeks' connection with Xinjiang also reaches back to the Yuan dynasty when they first arrived in Xinjiang as traders on the so-called Silk Road. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Uzbeks arriving from Bukhara, Samarkand, and other places made Yarkant their transfer point where they traded in silk, tea, porcelain, hides and other goods. Some Uzbeks traveled even farther east to Aksu, Turpan, and Suzhou (the modern Jiuquan in Gansu province). At the same time some Uzbeks began to settle down in several cities of Southern Xinjiang. A second wave of Uzbeks arrived in Xinjiang after the 1750s when China, after having put down the Jungars, entered into diplomatic relations with Kokand. Uzbeks went to Kashgar, Yarkant, Aksu, and several other cities in the South and even to some cities in Northern Xinjiang. Uzbek migration continued until the present century. Besides merchants, there was now also an increasing number of Uzbek farmers, craftsmen, and intellectuals who came to Xinjiang to settle.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the great majority of Uzbeks in Xinjiang were still engaged in trading. Some formed trading companies which transported goods in huge caravans, consisting of hundreds of camels, horses, and mules, across the Tianshan mountains. Thereafter, with the rapidly increasing influence of Russian commerce, many Uzbeks changed to local trade, but a few continued to make a living in international trade. In fact, by teaming up with foreign companies and financed by foreign banks, they became quite prosperous through the transportation of goods between Xinjiang and Russia, India, and Afghanistan. By contrast, the poorer Uzbek merchants quit their businesses and went into handicrafts or into farming where they hired themselves out as laborers.

Language and Literature⁴

The Uzbek language belongs to the Turkic group of the Altaic family of languages, and its phonology and morphology are closest to those of the Uigur language. Its lexicon has been derived from three major sources. The earliest is the Farsi language of Persia, which was already spoken in the Uzbek region at the time this nationality was being formed. For centuries thereafter Uzbek intellectuals in the cities spoke Farsi, another fact accounting for the large number of Farsi loan words in the Uzbek language. The second source was Arabic which came into the language with the eastward expansion of Islam, and Arabic loan words found primary application in representing religious terminology. Lastly, during the twentieth century Chinese—and across the frontier, Russian—loan words have been added to Uzbek, and their numbers have been rapidly increasing.

Chapter 5

The Uzbek language includes eight vowels, as follows:

<u>a</u> as in <u>ant/a</u> 'many'	<u>o</u> as in <u>orqa</u> 'back'
<u>ε</u> as in <u>kerεk</u> 'necessary'	<u>u</u> as in <u>qunduz</u> 'beaver'
<u>e</u> as in <u>er</u> 'earth'	<u>o</u> as in <u>kol</u> 'lake'
<u>i</u> as in <u>bi/i</u> k 'cradle'	<u>y</u> as in <u>gyzel</u> 'beautiful'

The consonants are as follows:

<u>b</u> as in <u>bart/a</u> 'all, the whole'	<u>ŋ</u> as in <u>miŋ</u> 'thousand'
<u>w</u> as in <u>awwal</u> 'first'	<u>j</u> as in <u>kejin</u> 'later, afterwards'
<u>g</u> as in <u>gor</u> 'grave' (noun)	<u>p</u> as in <u>qop</u> 'sack, bag'
<u>ɣ</u> as in <u>oɣar</u> 'heavy'	<u>t</u> as in <u>tot-</u> 'to taste'
<u>l</u> as in <u>millat</u> 'nation'	<u>s</u> as in <u>maxsus</u> 'special, particular'
<u>n</u> as in <u>nersε</u> 'thing'	<u>f</u> as in <u>pa/f/a</u> 'fly, gnat'
<u>m</u> as in <u>hakim</u> 'scholar, physician'	<u>k</u> as in <u>kok</u> 'blue, green'
<u>dz</u> as in <u>dzuda</u> 'very'	<u>q</u> as in <u>quruq</u> 'dry, thin, cold'
<u>d</u> as in <u>odam</u> 'man, person'	<u>tʃ</u> as in <u>tʃirk</u> 'circus'
<u>r</u> as in <u>kerεk</u> 'necessary'	<u>x</u> as in <u>xona</u> 'room'
<u>z</u> as in <u>koz</u> 'eye'	<u>h</u> as in <u>mahalla</u> 'quarter (of a city)'
<u>ʒ</u> as in <u>aʒdod</u> 'ancestors'	<u>f</u> as in <u>fars</u> 'Persian'

Like all other Turkic languages, Uzbek has vowel harmony and agglutination, but there are many exceptions to both rules. Stress is generally on the last syllable of a word but there, too, are many exceptions. In longer words, one also finds secondary and even tertiary stresses.

The Uzbeks of Xinjiang have been using the Uigur Arabic alphabet which all Uzbeks used until 1930 (Table 6). At that time, the Soviet government introduced a new script of thirty-four letters based on the Latin alphabet, with subsequent modifications.⁵ It was the official script for Uzbeks in Soviet Central Asia until 1940. Since then, a Cyrillic alphabet with additional symbols to represent Uzbek sounds not found in Russian has been in use there.

The most popular form of literature among the Uzbeks of Xinjiang is the humorous tale, especially the countless stories about Nasreddin afandi. Some believe that he was a contemporary of Timur (1336?-1405), but there can be no question that this man, real or fictitious, later became the comic hero and defender of the common man whose exploits have been told and retold not only among Uzbeks, but also Kazaks who call him Hoja Nasir, and the Uigurs who know him as Nasirdin äpändi.⁶

Table 6
UZBEK SCRIPT⁷[illegible]

A = Isolated form
D = Final position
B = Initial position
E = IPA transcription
C = Medial position

Society⁸

Only a handful of Uzbeks are engaged in herding in a few locations in Northern Xinjiang, such as Mori, Qitai, Tekes, Nilka, Ili and Qoqek. In all instances they live there intermingled with Kazaks. Other small groups of Uzbeks are farmers in such Southern districts as Kashgar, Yarkant (Shache), Maralweshi (Bachu) and Aksu. By far the greatest majority of Uzbeks are city dwellers. Because of historical reasons (see above), most of them live in Yarkant where at one time they dominated the silk weaving industry. Later their commercial activity shifted to various types of cottage industries, such as hats, embroidered seams, and bedspreads.

Most Uzbek houses have flat roofs and thick adobe walls, very similar to those used by Uigurs, but in a few locations one can find houses with round pointed roofs, called awa.

Because the relatively few Uzbeks are spread over a wide region they have traditionally intermarried with Uigurs and Tatars. Weddings are typically performed at the bride's parents' home during daytime, and at night the celebrations shift to the groom's parents' home. On the second day the new couple moves into its own new home. At funerals mourners wear white sashes around their waists, and women also wear a white veil suspended from their hats. The mourning period lasts one week, and on the fortieth, seventieth, and hundredth day after a person's death, a memorial service is held which in the past was conducted by the local ahung, a Muslim priest.

In dress and food the Uzbeks are virtually indistinguishable from the Uigurs. One minor difference lies in the hat. Whereas Uigurs and others usually wear a square hat, many Uzbeks wear a round hat made of black velvet. Women also often wear a kerchief fastened under the hat and suspended in back. The traditional dress for men is the ton, a long robe without buttons, tied around the waist by an embroidered belt. Women wear the køynäk, which is a dress without a belt, and a sleeveless jacket over it (see Illustration 10). Footwear consists mostly of leather dress shoes, and some women can be seen wearing aytek, embroidered cloth shoes.

As among other nationalities in Xinjiang, the Uzbek diet still shows the influence of Islam, especially in the ban on pork and alcoholic drinks and fasting during the Ramadan period. Most younger people, however, no longer feel bound by these restrictions. The Uzbek food staples consist of mutton, beef and horse meat, and the most common drink is milk tea. A favorite dish is kardak which consists of steamed meat with potatoes. On festive occasions, especially when guests are invited, narın is served which is made of flour, sliced meat, onions, buttermilk, and pepper.

Uzbek



Illus. 10. Uzbek Clothes



Illus. 11. Playing the Dutar

Chapter 5

Religion⁹

The Uzbeks belong to Islam, and their largest mosques are located in Kashgar, Shache, Yining, and Qitai. Some mosques operated medrese in which the clergy instructed Uzbek children. With the advent of public schooling, however, all medrese have been shut down.

Notes

¹Jiankuang, v. 3, 35.

²Minzu yanjiu 23 (1983), 81.

³Historical information is based on Zhongguo, 241-243.

⁴Details on the Uzbek language are mostly from Sjoberg.

⁵Waterson, xvi.

⁶See the first entry in the bibliography and Laude-Cirtautas, 70-71. Other Uzbek stories are translated in Xinjiang and Zuopin xuan. See also the brief sketch of Uzbek literature by Benzing.

⁷See note 7 in the Uigur chapter.

⁸Zhongguo, 243-245.

⁹Zhongguo, 243-244.