



Oil and Water: Being Han in Xinjiang

Tom Cliff

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For decades, China's Xinjiang region has been the site of clashes between long-residing Uyghur and Han settlers. Up until now, much scholarly attention has been paid to state actions and the Uyghur's efforts to resist cultural and economic repression. This has left the other half of the puzzle—the motivations and ambitions of Han settlers themselves—sorely understudied.

With *Oil and Water*, anthropologist Tom Cliff offers the first ethnographic study of Han in Xinjiang, using in-depth vignettes, oral histories, and more than fifty original photographs to explore how and why they became the people they are now. By shifting focus to the lived experience of ordinary Han settlers, *Oil and Water* provides an entirely new perspective on Chinese nation building in the twenty-first century and demonstrates the vital role that Xinjiang Han play in national politics—not simply as Beijing's pawns, but as individuals pursuing their own survival and dreams on the frontier.

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