MYSTERY LAKES OF THE GOBI

The southernmost portion of the Gobi Desert is called the Alashan in Inner Mongolia. Traversed by Marco Polo in 1273 on his way to meet the Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan, he said it contained a “mystery.”

For in the hidden center of the Alashan is an area known as *Badain Jaran*, “Mystery Lakes” in Mongolian. There are some 140 of these small lakes surrounded by enormous sand dunes. The photo you see is of one of these lakes, taken in late afternoon on a windless day, with the giant dunes above reflected on the water.

We explored the Badain Jaran on our 2017 Inner Mongolia Expedition. It is just as magically and mysteriously entrancing now as it was for Polo. *(Glimpses of Our Breathtaking World #32* Photo ©Jack Wheeler*)*