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# The Yangtze Valley and Beyond

*An Account of Journeys in China, Chiefly in  
the Province of Sze Chuan and Among the  
Man-tze of the Somo Territory*

ISABELLA BIRD



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TIBETAN LAMAS MASKED FOR A RELIGIOUS DANCE.

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# THE YANGTZE VALLEY AND BEYOND

AN ACCOUNT OF JOURNEYS IN CHINA, CHIEFLY  
IN THE PROVINCE OF SZE CHUAN AND AMONG  
THE MAN-TZE OF THE SOMO TERRITORY

BY MRS. J. F. BISHOP

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HONORARY FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SCOTTISH GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY  
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ORIENTAL SOCIETY OF PEKING, ETC. ETC.

WITH MAP AND 116 ILLUSTRATIONS

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WITH THE AUTHOR'S PROFOUND RESPECT, AND ADMIRATION  
OF THE NOBLE AND DISINTERESTED SERVICES  
WHICH HE HAS RENDERED TO THE  
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## PREFACE

THESE journeys in China [concluding in 1897], of which the following pages are the record, were undertaken for recreation and interest solely, after some months of severe travelling in Korea. I had no intention of writing a book, and it was not till I came home, and China came very markedly to the front, and friends urged upon me that my impressions of the Yangtze Valley might be a useful contribution to popular knowledge of that much-discussed region, that I began to arrange my materials in their present form. They consist of journal letters, photographs, and notes from a brief diary.

In correcting them, and in the identification of places, not an easy matter, I have been much indebted to the late Captain Gill's *River of Golden Sand*, *The Gorges of the Yangtze*, by Mr. A. Little, three papers on "Exploration in Western China," by Mr. Colborne Baber, in the *Geographical Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, and very specially to the official reports of H.B.M.'s Consuls at the Yangtze ports. I have denied myself the pleasure of reading any of the recent literature on China, and it was only when my task was done that I glanced over some of the later chapters in *The Break Up of China*, and *China in Transformation*. For a great part of my inland journey I have been unable to find any authorities to refer to, and as regards personal observation I agree sadly with the dictum of Socrates—"The body is a hindrance to acquiring knowledge, and sight and hearing are not to be trusted."

I cannot hope to escape errors, but I have made a laborious effort to be accurate, and I trust and believe that they are not of material importance, and that in the main this volume

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## PREFACE

will be found to convey a truthful impression of the country and its people. The conflicting statements made on every subject by well-informed foreign residents in China, as elsewhere, constitute a difficulty for a traveller, and homogeneous as China is, yet with regard to very many customs, what is true in one region is not true in another. Even in the single province of SZE CHUAN there is a very marked unlikeness between one district and another in house and temple architecture, methods of transit, customs in trade, and in much else.

I have dwelt at some length on "Beaten Tracks"—*i.e.*, treaty ports and the Great River—though these have been described by many writers, for the reason that each one looks at them from a different standpoint, and helps to create a complete whole. The illustrations in this volume, with the exception of the reproductions of some Chinese drawings, and nine which friends have kindly permitted me to use, are from my own photographs. The spelling of place names needs an explanation. I have not the Chinese characters for them, and in many cases have only been able to represent by English letters the sounds as they reached my ear; but wherever possible, the transliteration given by Consul Playfair in his published list of Chinese Place Names has been adopted, and with regard to a few well-known cities the familiar but unscholarly spelling has been retained. To prevent confusion the names of provinces have been printed in capitals.

I am painfully conscious of the many demerits of this volume, but recognising the extreme importance of increasing by every means the knowledge of, and interest in, China and its people, I venture to ask for it from the public the same kindly criticism with which my former records of Asiatic travel have been received, and to hope that it may be accepted as an honest attempt to make a contribution to the data on which public opinion on China and Chinese questions must be formed.

ISABELLA L. BISHOP

*October, 1899.*

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## ERRATA.

- Page 2. Third line from bottom, for “140” read “263.”  
,, 177. Footnote, third line from bottom, after “illustration” read  
“on page 497.”  
,, 415. Eleventh line from bottom, for “*Tu-sze*” read “*Tu-tze*.”  
,, 495. Eighteenth line from top, for “88°” read “87°.”  
,, 518. Eleventh line from bottom, for “six thousand” read “8875.”