



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 Volum

Isabella Lucy Bird

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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1900 edition. Excerpt: ...women, each carrying a heavy burden on the back, wound slowly up the hill to a point where it was reinforced by a similarly burdened company from our village, and the united force was met by a large body of lamas, including our muleteer, in their sacred vestments, chanting Sanskrit prayers. The burdens under which the people bent were the Buddhist scriptures, which, when complete, weigh 90 lbs., and to carry this sacred load is regarded as an acceptable act of merit. Before the prolonged service ceased there was " a sound of abundance of rain," the wind rose, the rain fell in torrents, and the soil of disintegrated granite imbibed it as if it never could be satisfied. Mia-ko is a noisy and cheerful village, and after Tibetan fashion very religious. There is a low building on the hillside containing a number of revolving prayer-cylinders, ranged round it at a convenient height. Round this in the early morning the villagers go in procession turning the cylinders. With brief intervals all day long in my host's family temple one or another repeated prayers in a monotone. On the roofs are tall poles, each surmounted by a trident, or a ball and crescent, or bearing narrow white prayer-flags of their own length. Groups of poles with similar flags are erected in memory of the dead, whose ashes often rest below in small cinerary urns. It is "merit" to make clay medallions, with which portions of these ashes are frequently mixed, and to stamp them with Sakyamuni's image, or to finger the clay deftly into models of chod-tens. We had any number of these jovial, laughing, frolicking people on the roof at night, men and women on terms of equality. They drink chang, a turbid barley beer, as the Tibetans do. We were detained for some days at Mia-ko. The...

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