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四川古代文化簡史
AN EARLY HISTORY OF SZECHWAN

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AN ANCIENT HISTORY OF SZECHWAN¹

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As we think of Szechwan, the Land of Four Rivers, what a world of associations and memories rises before our minds! We would certainly recall the poem written by Li Po 李白, one of our greatest poets of the T'ang dynasty, entitled the *Shu Tao Lan* 蜀道難 or the "Szechwan Road is Difficult". The poem has been considered to be one of the most faithful descriptions ever written of the landscape of this basin surrounded by high mountain ranges. I propose to read you a part of this famous poem as a geographical introduction to my lecture this afternoon.

O! The danger, the steepness!

The Szechwan Road is as difficult as the way to the blue heavens.

Westward, over the snow-capped mountains was a bird-track

By which one could cross and proceed to the Peak of Omei.

It is made of sky-ladders, with hanging paths over the cliffs.

Above, the soaring tips of the mountains hold back the six dragons of the sun;

Below in the ravines, the flowing waters break into whirlpools and swirl back against the current.

Yellow geese flying toward the peaks cannot pass over them;

The gibbons climb and climb, despairingly pulling themselves up higher and higher, but even their endurance fails.

How the road coils and coils through the Green Mud Pass!

With nine turns to a hundred steps, it winds round the ledges of the mountain crests.

¹ Read at a public lecture sponsored by the Chinese-American Institute of Cultural Relations, Chengtu Branch.

Clutching at Orion, passing the Well Star I look up and gasp.

I sit long with my hands pressed to my heart and groan.

It is impossible to climb the terrible road along the edges of the precipices.

Among the ancient trees, one sees only cruel, mournful black birds.

Male birds, followed by females, fly to and fro through the woods.

Once in a while, one hears a nightingale in the melancholy moonlight of the lonely mountain.

The Szechwan Road is as difficult as the way to the blue heavens!

Commentators seem to agree that this poem was written in the hope of dissuading Emperor Ming-huang 唐明皇 from fleeing to Szechwan when the T'ang capital fell during the An Lu-shan 安祿山 Rebellion, which swept across China like a storm in the 750s. It was true that the road to Szechwan was perilous and difficult, but it did not stop the T'ang Emperor from entering the province. It is more interesting to note that this region was not impenetrable even in the prehistoric and the early historic days. Szechwan has long been one of the most important centers of culture, not only in China, but also in the whole region of Eastern Asia.

Archaeological evidences have shown that Szechwan belonged to the great culture-complex that flourished in Eastern Asia during the Mesolithic and Neolithic times. More than ninety prehistoric sites in the province have been reported, some of which yielded crude stone implements of various industries. A large collection of chipped stone implements has been made by the West China Union University Museum. They resemble, both in technique and in form, those that have been found in the North China Plain. The American Museum of Natural History in New York City has hundreds of chipped-and-polished stone tools from the Yangtse Gorges, which may be taken as the Proto-neoliths of Hoabinian and Baesonian culture in Indo-China. Szechwan has also yielded thousands of polished stone implements, which are closely related to the neolithic specimens excavated not only in China Proper but also in Siberia and Manchuria to the north, and in Indo-China and the Malay Peninsula to the south. The Szechwan polished stone tools, moreover, were usually found associated with pottery, among which the red and black wares were similar to the Red Pottery of North China and the Black Pottery of Eastern China respectively.

These prehistoric stone implements and pottery have been found in different types of ancient sites. Remains on the foreshore of the rivers or small streams were by far the most common. They were camp or dwelling sites or work-shop ruins. Rockshelters and caves were occupied occasionally, but most of the caves along the Yangtse River were barren of human habitation. Sites

on the terraces in the river valley were not uncommon. In the north-western part of the region these terraces are constructed on loess deposits, better known as the Malan Terraces. Surface finds were frequently encountered along the main routes of communication, along the valley bottoms, and more especially at points of juncture of rivers, streams, or roads.

These prehistoric sites are distributed in 30 different districts, which are located along five main river valleys of the province, namely Yangtse 揚子江, T'o 沱江, Min 岷江, Ta-tu 大渡河 and Ya-lung 雅礱江. No report of prehistoric sites has yet been made in the Chia-ling 嘉陵 Valley in the eastern part of the province.

The study of these prehistoric remains and the investigation of these ancient sites have revealed that the province of Szechwan was probably a wooded area during the prehistoric days, which extended from the close of the Pleistocene to the unification of China under the Chou dynasty 周, that is, from about 8,000 to 1,200 B.C., and prehistoric men played a very inconspicuous role in this territory. They were not cave dwellers, not hunters, but woodmen and agriculturalists. They arrived upon the scene probably by boat, and their activities were limited to the large river valleys. The comparative ruggedness and impenetrability of the country proved a great hinderance to their development of the land. They did not penetrate deep into the hinterland before they were overtaken by their metal-using successors, presumably the Chinese of early historic times. In other words, it would appear that the forest-clearing process begun with stone axes in prehistoric times is the process still being carried forward by the present agricultural population in the remaining wooded areas.

The prehistory of Szechwan lies largely within the Neolithic Period of Eastern Asia and comprises several stages of development. The stages are probably four, represented by four lithic industries, producing: -

- a. the chipped stone implements,
- b. the chipped-and-polished stone implements,
- c. the chipped-pecked-and-polished stone implements, and
- d. the polished stone implements.

The early stages were characterized by large chopping tools, probably used in forest-clearing. The last stage was sometimes found associated with bronze implements showing the penetration of Chinese culture, and the Chinese literary account in the *Shu Ching* 書經 or the "Book of History" seems to verify this assumption.

In the twelfth century B.C. the province of Szechwan was dominated by two states, Shu 蜀 and Pa 巴, with their capitals at or around Chengtu and Changking respectively. During the campaign which Emperor Chou Wu-wang 周武王 held against the Shang 商 people in Northern Honan in 1122 B.C., the soldiers of Shu and Pa took active part in the battle and helped to establish the

Chou dynasty. This record from the "Book of History" is perhaps the earliest account about the inhabitants of this region.

But Yang Hsiung 楊雄, who wrote the *Annals of the Kings of Shu* 蜀王本記 in the first century A.D., had a more elaborate story to tell. He says:

"The first king of Shu was Ts'an Ts'ung 蠶叢. From Ts'an Ts'ung to the fall of Shu in 316 B.C. there elapsed 34,000 years. Ts'an Ts'ung was succeeded by Pai Hu 柏藹, and Pai Hu was succeeded by Yu Fu 魚腹. These three kings reigned for several hundred years, and all of them became immortals.

"Sometime later a man descended from Heaven. His name was Tu Yu 杜宇. At about the same time a woman sprang forth from a well at Chu-t'i 朱提 (in modern I-pin). Tu Yu and this woman from I-pin became husband and wife. Tu Yu established himself as King of Shu and proclaimed himself Emperor Wang 望帝. His capital was in modern P'i-hsien 郫縣.

"When Emperor Wang had reigned for more than a hundred years, a man named Pieh Ling 陂靈 was living in the neighboring state of Ch'u 楚. After his death, his corpse was thrown into the Yangtse River. Floating upstream against the current, when it reached P'i-hsien the body returned to life; and Emperor Wang appointed the resurrected Pieh Ling as his Prime Minister.

"At that time there was a flood in the State of Shu and Emperor Wang ordered Pieh Ling to control the waters. Unexpectedly, after Pieh Ling had left for his work of flood control. Emperor Wang fell in love with Pieh Ling's wife. Embarrassed by the situation, he renounced his kingdom and gave it to Pieh Ling. It chanced that Emperor Wang abdicated just at the season when the harvest bird sings; so subsequently whenever the people of Shu heard the song of the harvest bird they were reminded of their abdicated emperor, Edward VIII of Szechwan.

"When Pieh Ling ascended the throne, he called his dynasty K'ai-ming 開明, and he was known as the Emperor K'ai-ming. After five generations of Pieh Ling's line, the title of 'Emperor' was abolished and thenceforth the ruler of Shu was called King.

"Sometime later King Hui of Ch'in 秦惠王, a state occupying the Wei Valley 渭水 in modern Shensi, was planning an invasion of the State of Shu. He was discouraged because the mountains between Shensi and Szechwan were steep and precipitous, and it was difficult to advance troops across them. Finally he thought of a strategy. He ordered craftsmen to chisel five huge stone cows. When the cows were completed, the king of Ch'in ordered them to be moved to a place near the border of his territory, and behind each cow he had placed a lump of pure gold. Then he enticed the people of Shu by saying 'These are sacred cows. Their dung is of pure gold.' This moved the greedy heart of the king of Shu, and he sent five strong warriors and a hundred thousand troops to move the stone cows across the boundary into his own

kingdom. Labor was conscripted, and the roads were widened to allow passage of the huge stone figures. In this way the king of Shu prepared roads for invasion of enemy troops; and before long King Hui of Ch'in ordered his great general Chang Yi 張儀 and his army to follow the road over which the stone cows had been transported, and attacked Shu. The Shu armies were defeated and the State of Shu became extinct, and its lands came under the control of Ch'in."

This account is obviously a fairy-tale. However, the contact between these two neighboring states dates back to 474 B.C., when Shu sent gifts to the State of Ch'in. Although Shu and Ch'in undoubtedly had had earlier communications between them, we can say for sure that in the fifth century B.C. relations existed between these two large countries on the north and the south sides of the Ch'in-ling mountains 秦嶺.

Early in the 4th century B.C. Shu invaded Ch'in and occupied part of Ch'in's territory. Later, Ch'in sent an expedition against Shu and recovered the occupied lands.

Although the military strength of Shu was exceedingly great in the fourth century, she could not easily break through the forces of Ch'in on the north. Therefore she turned eastward and attacked Ch'u, also a state occupying roughly the areas of modern Hunan, Hupei, southern Anhui, and western Kiangsu, in the middle Yangtse Valley. In 374 B.C. Shu sent an expedition eastward to attack Ch'u and occupied Ch'u's territory around modern I-Ch'ang.

Pa and Ch'u both occupied the Yangtse Valley, and their rulers were of the same clan. Consequently they had early communication and intermarriages, and they often united their armies in battle.

However, their relations were not always amicable. In 673 B.C. Pa attacked Ch'u and defeated her. In 609 B.C. they united in defeating Yung 庸, a small state that occupied the region to the north of Pa. About 134 years later, in 475 B.C., the Pa army again marched into Ch'u and captured a part of its territory. In the third century B.C. the Kingdom of Pa had some internal trouble, and General Man Tzu 蔓子 went to Ch'u asking for troops. It was agreed that after peace was restored Pa would cede three cities. It had not occurred to Ch'u that Man Tze would change his mind. But Man Tzu faced the envoy saying, "Take my head as an expression of gratitude to your king if you will, but the cities I cannot give you." Thereupon he drew his sword and slashed his throat. When the envoy returned from Pa with General Man's head and reported to the King of Ch'u, the king was alarmed and horrified. Sighing he said, "If I had courtiers like Man Tzu, what need would I have of cities!" Then, using ceremonial rites appropriate for the highest ministers of his land, he buried the head. At the same time the State of Pa, using similar rites, buried his body.

The State of Ch'in and the State of Ch'u were not the only neighbors of Pa and Shu. These two Szechwan States were neighbors to numerous small states or tribes that scattered across the whole region of South-western China. They were notably the Jung 戎 to the north-west, the Jan-p'ang 冉駹 to the west, the Ch'ung 邛 and the Tso 笮 to the south-west, and the Po 僂 and the Yeh-lang 夜郎 to the south. With the great man-power of these tribes and the rich resources of the region under their control, Shu and Pa were always great rivals of Ch'in to the north and of Ch'u to the east. Besides, Shu and Pa were great rivals among themselves.

The rivalry between the two Szechwan states became acute in the fourth century B.C. It chanced that the King of Shu enfeoffed his younger brother at Han-chung 漢中 (in Southern Shensi) and gave him the title of Marquis of Tsu 苴. Although Shu and Pa were enemies, this brother of the King of Shu made a secret alliance with his brother's enemy, the King of Pa. Quite naturally the King of Shu was enraged that his brother should have an alliance with his enemy, and he sent an army against him. The Marquis of Tsu fled from Han-chung to Pa and asked for help against the invasion of his brother's army. On behalf of his ally the King of Pa asked the King of Ch'in to assist in preventing the invasion by the Shu army.

As the request arrived in Ch'in, King Hui of Ch'in was in conference, already planning his long-thought-of invasion of Shu. One of his generals, Ssu-ma Ts'o 司馬錯, who overheard the request of Pa, saw in this a long-awaited opportunity. He spoke up and said, "Although the State of Shu is very rich, it suffers from internal unrest and disorder. If we can conquer Shu, her cloth, silk, gold, and silver will be enough to supply our military needs. Furthermore, the water-ways of Shu afford direct communication with the State of Ch'u in the middle Yangtse Valley. If, having conquered Shu, we can make an alliance with Pa and sail to Ch'u by boat down the great river, the State of Ch'u will be also ours."

When the King of Ch'in heard this he was delighted, and he ordered Ssu-ma Ts'o and Chang Yi, two of his best men with armies, to help the Marquis of Tsu. The Ch'in armies pushed across the famous Stone Cow Road over the Ch'in-ling mountains. They succeeded not only in defeating the great armies of Shu, but also in annexing their allies, the States of Pa and Tsu. Then the planned Chinese colonization and development of this outlying province began.

The so-called Stone Cow Road over the Ch'in-ling Mountains was not the only route of communication between Szechwan and the outside world. The water-way of the Yangtse was navigable from prehistoric days. It was not only the main route of communication between the Pa-Shu region and the lower Yangtse, but also the highway from the Middle Yangtse to the Kingdom of Tien 滇, occupying the region of modern Yunnan.

In the later part of the fourth century B.C., King Wei of Ch'u 楚威王 sent General Chuang Ch'iao 莊騫 to lead his troops up the river to subdue the States of Pa and Shu and the region lying on the south of the river. The armies proceeded as far as the State of Tien, a country stretching three hundred *li*, with surrounding fertile plains which stretched several thousand *li*. General Chuang Ch'iao impressed the people there with his military might, and put the region under the domain of Ch'u. But, when he was planning to come back to report on his mission, it came to pass that the Ch'in armies had captured Shu and Pa and were invading Ch'u. The homeward route was blocked up. So Chuang Ch'iao returned with his men, proclaimed himself the King of Tien, and ruled over it.

The River Yangtse was not the only way for the people of Szechwan to reach the sea. The communication across Kweichow, Kwangsi and Kwangtung to the South China Sea was open for trade and commerce centuries before the Christian era. In the year 135 B.C. the State of Tung-yüeh 東越, which occupied the modern provinces of Chekiang and Fukien, revolted against the Han Emperor. In planning to suppress this rebellion General Wang Hui 王恢 sent T'ang Mêng 唐蒙 to Nan-yüeh 南越, a neighboring state of Tung-yüeh occupying modern Kwangtung, to investigate the situation there. While staying in this southern state the people of Nan-yüeh offered T'ang Mêng a relish of betel pepper from Shu as this meal. The delegate inquired whence this relish came. The native replied that it came from Yeh-lang, a state occupying modern Kweichow and a part of Kwangsi. The River Ts'ang-ko 牂牁, which had its course across this state, was several *li* in width and flowed into their country by the city of P'an-yu 番禺, which was modern Canton.

When T'ang Mêng, the Han delegate, returned to the Capital, he made inquiries from Shu traders, and they replied: "The relish of betel pepper is only produced in Shu. People used to bring this product out privately to trade with Yeh-lang. Yeh-lang is a country on the bank of the River Ts'ang-ko, which is more than a hundred strides in width and is navigable. With her material riches Nan-yüeh has subdued Yeh-lang. But actually it is impossible for Nan-yüeh to keep Yeh-lang as her tributary state."

Thereupon T'ang Mêng proposed to attack the Yüeh people through their back yard. He memorialized the throne saying: "We have learned confidentially that one could obtain more than one hundred thousand of the best soldiers in Yeh-lang. From there we could sail down the River Ts'ang-ko and take the Yüeh people by surprise. This is a remarkably good way of subduing them."

Although this Han delegate did not live to carry out his program, yet he rendered valuable service by widening the road that led from the

Yangtse in Szechwan to the bank of the Ts'ang-ko, which was the Upper Pearl River in Kwangsi.

The mountainous region to the south-west of the States of Pa and Shu was more rugged and impenetrable than the Red Basin of Szechwan. This wild territory was inhabited by numerous independent tribes; some of them were pretty wild. But this rough area did not become a barrier to Szechwan's communications with the outside world even in the early historic days. In the year 122 B.C. Chang Ch'ien 張騫, the well-known Chinese Envoy who travelled over the countries in Central Asia, returned from his mission to Bactria. When he was there, he reported, he saw Shu cloths and bamboo canes from Ch'iuung, a small state lying to the south-west of Shu. He had sent people to inquire whence these products came. The natives had replied that these products came from Shên-tu 犍, a country on their south-east, which was possibly several thousand *li* from the Shu trading post. Some had heard that there was a country named Shên-tu about two thousand *li* west of Ch'iuung. Commentators seem to agree that this remote country of Shên-tu was India.

Chang Ch'ien, therefore, proposed to the emperor that exploration parties be sent out to find the route between Shu and the Kingdom of Shên-tu. By so doing, he said, Bactria would be brought nearer to China.

The envoy's proposal was approved by the Han Emperor. Several exploration parties were sent forth separately to this south-western region and proceeded westward to find the Kingdom of India. Unfortunately, owing to some unexplained reasons, none of the explorers tracked over the Himalayan Ranges and reached their destiny. Whether the road to India was through Tibet and across the Himalaya Mountains, or was from Yunnan through Burma, or was by sea from Canton, remains a mystery down to the present time. It seems safe to assume that some Szechwan merchants had reached the Indian Ocean across some mountainous paths in the south-western wilderness in the early historic days.

Now let us return to the conquest and colonization of Szechwan by the Chinese since the fourth century B.C. The process was slow, and took more than one and a half centuries. It engaged five of the most capable figures of their times, namely Chang Yi, the prime contriver of the conquest; Ssu-ma Ts'o, the military executioner of the program; Chang Jo 張若, the political administrator; Li Ping 李冰, the great irrigation engineer; and Wen Wong 文翁, the famous educationist.

By the end of the fourth century B.C., the Ch'in state had already decided on her plan for a military conquest of the whole of feudal China. Chang Yi, one of the greatest generals, statesmen, and diplomats of Ch'in, was the contriver of the whole program. He could not move the Ch'in armies eastward without the control of Shu and Pa, her back-yard, which could furnish not only the

source of supply of grain and man-power, but also a station and a highway for her advance into the Yangtse Valley. The strategy was also approved by General Ssu-ma Ts'o, one of the best soldiers of the Ch'in army.

In 316 B.C., when Pa asked the Ch'in armies to help her ally, the Marquis of Tsu, Chang Yi and Ssu-ma Ts'o seized this long-awaited opportunity and sent their troops into Szechwan. Under the master command of General Ssu-ma, the great armies of Shu were defeated in a few decisive battles, and the state was finally completely conquered and made into a Ch'in province. The royal line of the K'ai-ming dynasty, traditionally established by Pieh-ling, came to an end after 12 reigns. In order to carry out their ambitious program, Chang Yi built the city of Chengtu, which was the first city Szechwan had ever seen. It had a wall of 12 *li* in length and 70 feet in height. Unfortunately, not a single trace of this important architecture has survived till the present day.

Chang Yi was not satisfied with the conquest of the State of Shu. Ssu-ma Ts'o's armies marched into the country of Marquis Tsu as well as the State of Pa. The whole territory of Szechwan was incorporated in the same year into the Ch'in domain and became three provinces.

Several years after the conquest of Shu and Pa, which had given Ch'in control of most of the rich areas of modern Szechwan, General Chang Yi went to Ch'u. While there he spoke to the king saying: "Ch'in occupies and controls the rich areas of Shu and Pa. Ch'in is now able to transport rice by boat, and easily move armies down stream. On a single boat it is possible to carry 50 soldiers. Boats travelling downstream go rapidly, and in a day they can travel 300 *li*. Although it is quite a distance by river from Shu to Ch'u, yet travel is easy, and in less than ten days it is possible to enter the domain of Ch'u."

By these words, Chang Yi threatened the conquest of Ch'u and warned the King of Ch'u of his dangerous position. In 480 B.C., Ch'in sent an expedition of 100,000 troops raised and trained by General Ssu-ma Ts'o in Szechwan against Ch'u. The expedition travelled in a flotilla of 10,000 boats and carried 6,000,000 bushels of rice. It traveled down the Yangtse River and easily conquered the western area of Ch'u. This led to the military unification of China under the Emperor of Ch'in.

In the centuries that followed, the region of Szechwan never failed to furnish supplies of grain and man-power to any ambitious leader. It is well-known that the first emperor of the Han dynasty took his refuge in this region, before he succeeded in establishing the dynasty. His armies were supplied with a fleet of 10,000 boats, which carried Szechwan grain down the Yangtse. His position was greatly strengthened by the shock troops raised in Szechwan. In his campaign against Hsiang Yu 項羽, his greatest rival, people living along the Chia-ling River served as Han vanguards. These people were noted for songs and dances in which they indulged as they went into battle, and this gained fame in later generations as the "Dances of Pa guerillas." Because the Han

emperor controlled the valuable hinterland of Szechwan behind his line, he was able to accomplish general unification of China, just as the Ch'in people previously had done.

The political pacification of Shu and Pa was achieved under a capable young administrator named Chang Jo. It was the policy of Ch'in at first to return the political power to the native princes, but they revolted and proved a great handicap for the carrying out of the conqueror's program. Chang Jo was sent to the province in 314 B.C., two years after the conquest of this region by General Ssu-ma Ts'o. Chang Jo stayed as the governor of the province for over half a century. Under his wise administration, tens of thousands of Ch'in families systematically migrated into this south-western region, and they helped the governor to subdue most of the minor rebellions.

We have no way of knowing how large the population of Szechwan was in ancient times. Besides the 10,000 families transferred from Ch'in to colonize this region by Governor Chang Jo, many criminals and their families and retainers were exiled into this south-western province. After Ch'in completed the conquest of all the feudal states, the newly established dynasty enforced migration to Szechwan of many persons from the other conquered states. As a result, the population increased rapidly at that time, late in the third century B. C.

The earliest population statistics were for the year 2 A.D. The figures for the districts within modern Szechwan were around 4,000,000 persons. Although the total is less than one-tenth of the present population of Szechwan of 50,000,000 persons, yet, when it is compared with populations in China at that time, the population of the Szechwan area is fairly large; for the population of the entire country at that time was only 60,000,000 individuals, which is only one-eighth of the present population.

At that time Chengtu-hsien was second in size only to the imperial capital of Ch'ang-an (near modern Sian). Chengtu in the first century had a population of about 380,000, which is not much smaller than the present city. We can readily imagine how prosperous Chengtu was in the first century.

Governor Chang Jo stayed at Chengtu. For other districts he built walled cities, large granaries, and other public buildings. He also introduced a new system of civil service, of public markets, and village administration, based mostly on Ch'in systems. But the economic development of the province was perfected by the succeeding governor, Li Ping. The wealth of Szechwan was gradually developed and the agricultural, industrial, and commercial enterprises reached their height in the two centuries that followed. This also accounted for the rapid increase of the Szechwan population at that time.

Among the governors of Szechwan, none was better-known than Governor Li Ping, who was one of the greatest engineers that China has ever produced. He was appointed to the position in 250 B.C., and devoted all his time and

energy to the improvement of the economic and agricultural condition of the province. The water resources of Szechwan were a definite source of wealth, and an aid to the economic development of the region in Ch'in and Han times. The Min, the T'o, the Chia-ling, and the Yangtse supplied adequate water resources for transportation and economic enterprise. Before Ch'in conquered Shu, the people of Shu had not attempted to exploit their water resources. Before the conquest, however, in 361 B.C., Ch'in sent water control experts to Shu to conduct the course of the Ch'ing-i River 青衣水 to the Yangtse River. This was the first effort in Central Szechwan to exploit the water resources, but this was nothing in comparison with the great project completed by Governor Li Ping. He redirected the waters of the Min River and opened the two rivers near Chengtu, providing irrigation for more than 1,000,000 *mou* of rice lands. He also supervised construction of a dam at Chia-ting 嘉定, in order to decrease the current. After the completion of these two great works of water control, boat travel in Szechwan was easy and irrigation was convenient. When the water was low, the dam was opened; when the water was high, the dam was closed. The amount of water flow could be controlled according to need, and there never was a famine year. The great and perfect irrigation system has made the province into a granary of the empire. For more than two thousand years this irrigation system gave perfect service, and to-day the water of the Min River is still gliding across the great Chengtu Plain to bear witness to the wonderful achievement of Governor Li Ping in this hinterland.

The richness of the Chengtu Plain brought prosperity to every field. It is well known that in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries B. C. metalurgy was developed and the weaving industry was well established in Szechwan. Gold, silver, iron, steel, and a kind of stone used in refining iron were among the important resources of this land. Silk and wool were abundant. The province was proud of being able to produce blankets of the hair of bear and fox, and to make clothes with the hides of these animals.

In the beginning of the Han dynasty, in the second century B.C., the imperial government controlled the iron mining of four cities, among which three were located in Szechwan, at Ch'ung-lai 邛崃, at P'eng-hsien 彭縣 and at Chia-chiang 夾江. The other city was Mien-hsien in Shensi. The imperial government also had its superintendents of industry stationed at Chengtu and Kuang-han, on the Chengtu Plain; its Superintendent of Lumber at Hsi-K'ang 西康, formerly western Szechwan, and the Superintendents of Orange Cultivation at Yün-yang 雲陽 and Fêng-chih 奉節 in eastern Szechwan.

Besides the products controlled by the imperial government, there were many other products that were not controlled by the government and could be freely exploited. Among these were silver, copper, and jade. We are all familiar with the story about Teng T'ung 鄧通, who was a favourite eunuch in Emperor Wen's 漢文帝 palace. Teng T'ung had his fortune told one day, and the fortune-teller

predicted that the eunuch would die of poverty and starvation. Thereupon the emperor bestowed upon him a copper mine in Szechwan, and gave him permission to mint coins privately, ensuring his possession of adequate funds to avoid poverty and death from starvation.

Millionaires were common in Szechwan at that time. Among them the Cho 卓 family was the best known. Father Cho Wang-sun 卓王孫 was originally a native of Chao 趙, in modern Shansi. When Ch'in conquered his country, many of his compatriots were ordered to migrate to western Szechwan. Pushing wheelbarrows, Father Cho and his wife accompanied other emigrants on this westward trek. All the others, fearing to travel so far away, bribed the military guards to let them stop off at places closer to home. Only the Cho family reached their destination. Father Cho was a blacksmith. When they arrived at the modern Ch'ung-lai and saw iron produced, they were delighted, and stopped there. They engaged in iron casting, and developed their natural ability. They prospered, and before long Ch'ung-lai became a great industrial center, attracting workers not only from other parts of Szechwan, but also from Yunnan. Their family had around 1,000 servants, and their extravagance resembled that of the royal family.

It is a common saying that Szechwan girls are sentimental, and enjoy love-making and romance. This generalization dates back to the days of the Cho family. Daughter Cho Wen-chun 卓文君 was as beautiful as a peach, and she fell in love with a handsome young man named Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju 司馬相如. But he was poor, and Father Cho would not give his consent to their marriage. At last the daughter decided to elope with her lover and live in poverty. Father Cho was enraged and disowned her. After his friends had successfully urged him to reconsider his attitude toward his daughter, he gave her one hundred servants and one million cash. Thus the poor Ssu-ma Hsiang-ju was able to devote all his energy to literary achievement. He became later on one of the greatest poets and scholars that Szechwan has ever produced.

Side by side with the development of various industries was the rapid growth of foreign trade. In the two centuries before the Christian era, Szechwan might be called the centre of the world. Szechwan rice brought relief to many a famine district. Szechwan copper coins enjoyed a nation-wide circulation. On the Yangtse River, Szechwan salt was shipped to supply the provinces in the east. Silk fabrics and brocades of Chengtu were the fashion of the day. Its gold and silver articles were the pride of the imperial court. Its beautiful lacquer work went as far as Korea and became the treasures of Korean Han Tombs. Through the waterways of Kweichow and Kwangsi, the great seaport of Canton received Szechwan betel pepper relish, a delicacy highly admired in south China. And over the treacherous mountain paths of Yunnan and Burma, the Shu linen and cloth and walking-sticks reached India and went from there to Bactria in Central Asia.

The culture of Szechwan reached its highest peak in the second century B.C. It seems that Szechwan had an independent culture of its own before the Ch'in conquest. The enforced migrations from other parts of China under the administration of Governor Chang Jo were so large that possibly the colonizers outnumbered the native people. These immigrants naturally brought with them the culture of central and north China, and before long its culture was rooted in Szechwan, and showed its influence on the lives of the people. This movement received a fresh stimulation when Wên Wong was governor of the province.

This famous administrator and educationist was a native of modern Anhui. As soon as he assumed his new position in Szechwan, he gave his earnest and keen attention to the promotion of education. At first he selected unimportant but capable civil servants from throughout his territory, and sent them to the capital at Chang-an, where they studied under imperial scholars or read and practised law. When they had finished their studies, they returned to Szechwan and were given better positions than they had held before they went away. They were gradually promoted, and some even reached high positions in the imperial administration.

Wên Wong also sent the boys and girls to school, one of which is said to have occupied the ground where the present Temple of Confucius stands inside the Old South Gate in Chengtu. Indeed he had set the field for the budding of great men of letters in this outlying region, many of whom are ranked among the greatest that China has ever produced.

When Emperor Wu 漢武帝 observed how well Wên Wong was doing, he ordered that every province of his empire should imitate Wên Wong and establish schools. When Wên Wong died, the people of Shu built a temple as a memorial, just as they had done for Governor Li Ping, who had led the way in effective exploitation of water resources. Even down to the present, whenever good officials of Szechwan are mentioned, Wên Wong and Li Ping are always remembered.

In the centuries that have followed, this south-western province of Szechwan has always been a center of Chinese economic development and cultural achievement, though not much known to the outside world. To-day, as a result of the Japanese invasion, Szechwan history seems to be repeating itself. Thousands and thousands of people have migrated into this region before our own eyes. For six years they have been coming from all parts of occupied China, not only with the modern velocity of steamships, automobiles, and tri-motored planes, but also with the slow ancient pace of sedan chairs, river junks, and wheel-barrow. People of all ranks—peasants and officials, artisans and professors, rich and poor, old grandmothers and babies tied to the back—joined in this tide sweeping back into the estuaries of this ancient province. They have rediscovered the potentiality

of this hinterland of old. They have found the grandeur of the river gorges and the power of the mountain ranges—a landscape which is a constant inspiration to art and literature. They have also found that the richness of its resources and the difficulties of its roads are still providing a great stronghold in which China shall stand through her most perilous days.

