

dead. What was miles and miles of cemetery land has now been turned into the model sections of the town, where huge residences are being put up and where the Officers' Moral Endeavor Association Building is located.

The disinterment of the graves has been wholly responsible for the influx of old pottery and antiques into the treaty ports and settlements of late. Genuine Ming pottery, which formerly commanded the price of hundreds of dollars, may now be obtained for a few.

The Soldiers' Memorial, the Provincial Agriculture Institute which gave us fresh eggs and cream for breakfast, and the "Clear Cloud" temple provided the inspiration for trips into the country nearby.

Time today takes on an ever-increasing importance. Though travel from Nanchang to Shanghai has been facilitated considerably, railway officials promise us even wider and better travel in the new lines projected for the future.

A Tour of Szechuan

(Contributed)

VACATIONS are mainly for mental relaxation, but an ideal vacation is one that not only affords the holiday-seeker a restful cure from the wear and tear of city life but also adds a little to his fundamental knowledge of his own country. The typical Shanghailander on a vacation tour includes in his itinerary Tsingtao, Kuling, Mokanshan, Pootoo, Huang Shan and other famous coastal resorts, and, having visited one or more of these places, has satisfied his desire for a change of atmosphere. However, what he actually does is to surround himself with the same friends and the same luxuries, putting them into a different setting.

For a holiday which offers new diversions to the pleasure-seeker, I can give no better suggestion than "go West." For sheer beauty of scenery no place in China can surpass Szechuan and Sikong. In former times a journey to Chungking, the gateway to Szechuan, required no less than three months, that is to say, barring accidents and bandits, if one could arrive there at all, for travelling on junks through the swirling rapids of the Yangtze River was hazardous. However, since the introduction of steamship navigation on the Yangtze-kiang, sailing on these waters has been made safe and accessible to the tourist of ordinary means. Much credit is due to the Chinese-owned and operated Ming Sung Industrial Company which operates a large fleet of steamers especially constructed for the comfort and convenience of the traveller. With two weeks' time at one's disposal a trip can be made through the Gorges and back at a cost no greater than a trip to Tsingtao would entail.

The awe-inspiring beauty of the Yangtze Gorges has been so often described and quoted that it is not necessary to dwell upon it here. Arriving at Chungking, the largest city in West China with a population of over 600,000, one finds a city built on a high bluff, which is ascended by stone steps or by sedan chair. In contrast to the upper half of the city, where new models of automobiles occasionally mingle with rickshas, the lower section is a maze of steps which twist and turn and apparently lead nowhere.

A feeling of happiness and security has pervaded the air since the arrival of the Nanking troops in Szechuan. One of the first things that General Chiang Kai-shek did was to abolish the special taxes that had been the curse of travellers in the interior for many years. It was not long ago that a traveller going from Shanghai

to Chungking, Kiating or Chengtu had to undergo a series of some twenty odd inspections and meet almost an equal number of Szechuan Special Inland Tax Bureaux, which were *likin* stations in disguise. These inspections would begin at Hankow with the Chinese Maritime Customs, continue at Ichang with the Bandit or Communist Suppression Bureau and all points west with the Opium Suppression Bureau, Salt Gabelle and Navigation Bureau. Then, just as one would close one's trunks with a sigh of relief and a "thank goodness, it's all over!" the Inland Tax Bureau inspectors would appear on the scene. Under the revised laws, a party of inspectors representing the various organizations and bureaux will board a boat at Ichang and inspect the baggages while the boat puffs through the rapids. The tax, though amounting in the end to the same, represents all the other taxes, and the erstwhile nightmare would end there.

The trip from Chungking to Chengtu, the capital of Szechuan, which in former times meant a ten days' arduous journey overland by sedan chair, may now be made in two days by bus or two hours by airplane. A city with a historical background and a culture which many have described as almost as old as that of the old Peking itself, Chengtu is one of the most fascinating spots to the traveller. A remarkable sight to be seen about the city is the irrigation system, which is one of the most efficient and scientific systems in the world although its origin dates back some 1,000 years. A great attraction to tourists is the annual flower show and fair which takes place in the spring.

Not many miles north of Chengtu is Kwanshien, where the wild and rugged mountain scenery enhanced by deep jungle valleys begins. A short stay here will enable one to see how the raw material essential to the manufacture of perfume is obtained. If so inclined, one may even take out a gun and go after the musk deer.

General Chiang, realizing the importance and the need of transportation and communication facilities in Central China, has pushed on the construction of roads with vigor. From Chungking one may now travel over the newly-completed road to Kweiyang. The highway from Chengtu to Kansu is almost ready for traffic, and while the surveying work on the Chengtu-Kangting (Tachienlu) highway has been completed, the actual construction is to begin in the near future. Eventually the network of roads

will make it possible for the Shanghai motorist to journey all the way to Sikong by automobile.

A still better way to see the grandiose beauty of Szechuan is to resume the tour by water from Chungking, following the Yangtze as far as it is navigable, passing the city of Luchow, famous for its wine; Kiakiang, well known for its bamboo products; and thence to Suifu, where the steam navigation on the Yangtze ends. Continuing by junk or by small launch on the Min Kiang to Kiating, a city famous for its silk, wax and salt industries, a huge Buddha, 200 feet in height, looms into view. Measurements recently made by a missionary in Kiating revealed this statue carved out of solid red sandstone to be 196 feet from top to bottom, the nose alone being 8 feet long. For more than twelve centuries it has been standing there at the confluence of the Min and Tung Rivers, gazing across the waters at Mount Omei, 25 miles away.

The most famous and certainly the most beautiful of all the sacred mountains in China, Omei is visited from year to year by Chinese Buddhists and is fast becoming a favorite resort with summer visitors. Recently it was the scene of a gathering for the special training of several thousands of military officers personally conducted by General Chiang. From the summit of Omei one may see on a clear day the gigantic range of snow-covered ranges of Tibet, 100 miles away. Speechless at the beauty and mysticism of this breath-taking sight one cannot help wondering what romance lies beyond those mountains.

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