

# Western Local Culture and Education Development of China in the History

**Li Rui**

*Yunnan Open University, Kunming 650223, China*

**ABSTRACT.** *The concept of the mid-west development proposed by the Chinese government has striking similarities compared with the history of the west development since the United States announced independence. The western part of China has higher mountains and generations of ethnic minorities; the western part of the United States is the birthplace of rough cowboy culture. There are magnificent Sierra Nevada Mountains in the western part of the United States, and the Qinghai Tibet Plateau in the western part of China. In terms of resources, Western China has more exploitable projects than the western United States. But in terms of standard of living, why is the western part of China at least fifty years behind the western part of the United States? This is a question worthy of consideration by Chinese people.*

**KEYWORDS:** *China; History; Western development*

## 1. Introduction

From the map of China's "west", the land area of China includes the northwest and southwest. The western region once relied on the central government to "give a job" to bring its economic development to a level similar to that of the east. However, after Deng Xiaoping's south tour, the subjective conditions of the planned economy's "waiting for, relying on and asking for" thoughts all led to an uneven development in the western region. In fact, there were opportunities for development in western China. Unfortunately, the internal innovation mechanism and staff enthusiasm were not mobilized. The goal of the so-called western development is to boost the economy and promote people's livelihood. The natural environment in the western region is beautiful but fragile. So, it is necessary to implement ecological environmental protection in the long run. Increasing the construction of infrastructure including roads in the western region, can improve the efficiency of resource use and the comfort of residents' lives.

## 2. The West Development is a Process

The western region is one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization, which made the people proud that the Han and Tang Dynasties were built on the Guanzhong

Plain. According to historical records, when King Mu of the Zhou Dynasty conquered a large area of the west, he led his troops to the the west from the plains. Wherever he went, the local peoples had the opportunity to know about the developed Central Plains region for the first time. The perspectives of the various ethnic groups in the areas affected by the Central Plains were broadened, and production methods were changed and improved.

The Qin Dynasty had a short history, but it had a significant influence on the development of western China. According to relevant historical records, the First Emperor of the Qin not only made changes in agricultural production mode, but also issued orders to local culture and education, and unified the division of jurisdiction area and household registration management, which promoted the development of the western social and economy to some extent. At the time of the Three Kingdoms, in order to consolidate their centralized power, the feudal rulers increased the development and utilization of Guanzhong Plain and Chengdu Plain, including large-scale cultivation of immigrants and extensive construction of water conservancy. After several generations of immigrants' farming and planting, it has opened up a new face of the local society, so it is known as the "land of abundance" which has been spread to this day. During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the famous "Silk Road" was opened up, and the camel was used to go to the Middle East, Central Asia and even the world, so that foreigners could understand the "Pearl of the East". At that time, the silk products invented by the Chinese were luxury goods for the nobles of the surrounding countries, and also gave the Chinese a chance to go out to see the world. The direct effect of the western development driven by the silk road is that its unprecedented prosperity has driven the economic development of the Middle East.<sup>[1]</sup>

The Sui and Tang Dynasties are the heyday of ancient social development in China. The territory covers most of the western region. The western economy is also influenced by the culture of the Central Plains. At the same time, it has a profound impact on the surrounding countries. The development of the western region of China follows the trend. According to historical records, Emperor Wen of Sui Dynasty sent courtiers to the western regions and other places to write a book called *An Illustrated Book of the Western Regions*, which was handed down to later generations. All the materials were collected after investigating and interviewing the envoys and businessmen of other countries. Because of its extensive content, it became the basis for making foreign policy in the Sui Dynasty. In order to encourage local and foreign economic exchanges, Emperor Yang of Sui ordered to set up post stations, and provide accommodation and security personnel along the western region. As a result of the government's policy support, the social economy of Western China has benefited, and the comprehensive national strength has also increased the international influence of the Sui Dynasty.

In the early Tang Dynasty, the western region of China developed steadily. Due to the increasing population and the urgent need for rations, the Tang Dynasty attached great importance to the cultivation of farmland in the west, and water conservancy projects were widely constructed. The research results of modern scholars show that there were hundreds of mu of wastelands in the northwest of the

Tang Dynasty. In consideration of military security, the government built the post house on the main traffic road for garrison. It can be seen that the Tang government attached great importance to the transportation in the West and facilitated the merchants and passengers on the silk road. In the next few years, more caravans will be attracted to go back and forth, and the silk road will be more smooth. The scene of the bustling trade between the Chinese caravans and foreign merchants can be seen from the cave murals.

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the continuous border wars led to the imperial court's continuous garrison in the southwest and northwest for military purposes, and paid more attention to the geographical location of the western region. During this period, the government's policy orientation was mainly two aspects: the settlement of immigrants and the national trade with the tea horse market as the main content. With a large number of wasteland being reclaimed, the land utilization rate and the production of various economic crops increased, which satisfied the people's food and clothing at that time, and promoted the growing prosperity of handicraft industry and commerce. Tea-horse trade market in history plays an important role in the history of Western China's reclamation and national history.

Zuo Zongtang, who once made great contributions in the Midwest, had in-depth and practical talks with Russian officials during his tenure in Shaanxi and Gansu, with the aim of expanding trade between the western region of China and the Russian border. During his ten years in office, Zuo Zongtang's important achievement was to open up the wasteland. The implementation of the military garrison made the agricultural production in the northwest recover quickly and became the "reserve bank" of military grain at that time. Zuo Zongtang also set up the first Textile Bureau in Lanzhou, using machines instead of manual production to improve productivity. The arrival of the machine age plays an important role in the adjustment of economic structure in the West.

### **3. The Historical Experience of the Development of the Western United States**

China and the United States both have developed cities in the East. Shanghai and New York have stronger comprehensive strength in their respective countries. New York, Washington and other areas in the eastern part of the United States are firstly developed by European immigrants who boarded the United States mainland, especially the New England area on the Atlantic coast is relatively close to Europe. At that time, the economy was developed. As early as the Republic of China, Shanghai has become China's financial center. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, especially since Deng Xiaoping advocated opening up to the outside world, the government actively formulated policies and took the lead in attracting investment and providing support policies in the eastern coastal areas. As a result, the economic development of the eastern coastal areas is rapid and the economic power is strengthened. In general, at the beginning of their respective development, the economic development of the east and the west is quite different, and the economic growth rate of the eastern coastal areas is significantly higher than that of the West.

#### **4. Enlightenment from American Experience to China**

##### ***4.1 Land Development and Utilization Policies Adapted to Local Conditions***

Because the United States has a different national and political system, the Constitution stipulates that land is privatized. In this way, individuals or enterprises are encouraged to actively develop backward areas by donating land. China, as a socialist country, implements public land ownership and needs to formulate various preferential policies to increase the enthusiasm of local governments or enterprises for the development of the western region.<sup>[2]</sup> The government should review the situation and step up its reform efforts to use new ideas and methods to promote economic development.

##### ***4.2 Laws and Regulations on Western Development***

China wants to ensure the smooth development of the western development, and it is necessary to innovate according to the actual situation after learning from it. Although China and the United States have different national systems, laws and regulations, they can still take the best of them and learn from the past lessons to rebuild the rules for the development of western China.<sup>[3]</sup> Relevant people in China called for the legal system to be improved as soon as possible to prevent the emergence of illegal immigration problems such as those encountered by the United States in the borders of western China with Southeast Asia and South Asia.

##### ***4.3 Pay Attention to the Leading Effect of High-Tech Industry Demonstration***

As early as the founding of the People's Republic of China, the Chinese government developed a large number of heavy industry and military industrial enterprises in the west. The original intention began with national security considerations to lay a solid foundation for the industrial foundation. However, since the end of World War II, the world has been developing domestic demand in a peaceful way, not taking advantage of the opportunity of military to civilian transformation as the American government at that time, and actively developing high-tech industries such as silicon valley. Due to the failure of government policies to be formulated in time, the current situation of slow economic growth and inadequate industrial structure adjustment in Western China. In the current process of implementing the western development, the governments in the western region should formulate policies, vigorously participate in investment attraction, and use professional human resources to reconstruct or transform the economy. According to local conditions, we should concentrate on the development of high-tech industry and make it a leading demonstration benchmark.

#### **5. Conclusion**

The vast territory of western China makes it imperative to boost economic strategy. It is one of the characteristics of global economic integration. China's western development should follow the trend of the times, and learn from the United States' experience in creating a "Silicon Valley" in its western development.<sup>[4]</sup> The convening of scientific and technological talents, giving priority to the development of the information industry, will enable China's central and western cities to gather advanced scientific and technological forces and embark on a road of stable and rapid development as soon as possible. As long as we pay attention to the successful experience of "Making foreign things serve China", and the government and other relevant functional departments formulate a development strategy that follows the trend, the grand dream of China's western development will surely come true soon.

### References

- [1] Zhao Mingji (2000). Enlightenment from the development of the American West to China. *Research on Shandong Economic Strategy*, no.5, pp.25-36.
- [2] Ding Zhongming (2000). Basic experience and enlightenment of the development of foreign less developed areas. *World Economy and Politics*, no.11, pp.14-15.
- [3] Xu Jingwan (2003). Experience and inspiration from the development of the western United States. *Journal of Chongqing Three-Gorges University*, no.3, pp.25-26.
- [4] Liang Jing (2012). Analysis on the disadvantages of late development that restrict the economic development of the western region. *China Securities Futures*, no.4, pp.25-26.