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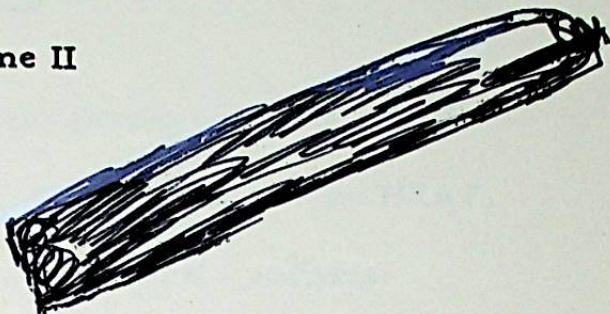
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A REGIONAL HANDBOOK

ON

NORTHWEST CHINA

Volume II



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PREFACE

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HRAF-21	Chicago-14.....	<u>Cambodia</u>
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HRAF-23	Chicago-19.....	<u>Laos</u>
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Vol. 2

A REGIONAL HANDBOOK

ON

NORTHWEST CHINA

Washington (State) University, Far Eastern and
Russian Institute.

compiled by

The Far Eastern and Russian Institute

University of Washington, Seattle

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Seattle, Washington

1956

PREFACE

The present handbook is one in a series of regional handbooks which the Far Eastern and Russian Institute of the University of Washington compiled under a contract with the Human Relations Area Files. It is designed as a supplement to the General Handbook on China, compiled by the Institute under the same contract; it describes and analyzes regional peculiarities and developments in China's great Northwest. Reference is therefore made to this General Handbook for all topics discussed in the present volume; the coverage of the General Handbook is not duplicated here, and the presentation of problems and events of the Northwest presumes familiarity with the overall setting, discussed in the General Handbook. Reference is also made to the preface of the General Handbook, in which the circumstances of this compilation and the working methods of the team of contributors are set forth. The outline of the regional handbooks follows the prescribed format. Sections, however, have been treated more briefly or left out altogether, when little or no regional deviation from the general pattern was discernible.

Research conducted at the Far Eastern and Russian Institute of the University of Washington has for some years been guided by the concept of regionalism. A regional approach to the problems of Chinese economy, social structure, and political power has permitted the use of a much wider range of material and has added a new dimension to its analysis. The work on the Human Relations Area Files Handbooks provided the opportunity to expand this research experience into an attempt to cover the regions of China as rounded and to a degree self-contained units. It has to be stressed, though, that this attempt should be regarded as an experiment rather than a solution, since much more work and thought is needed to establish the essence and the functions of any one region of China. To begin with, the question of what constitutes a region is far from being satisfactorily answered. The Human Relations Area Files handbooks took, mainly for fortuitous reasons, the administrative areas established in early Communist times as regional units. As far as the regions go that were dealt with at Seattle, that is to say the Northeast, the Northwest, and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, this choice turned out to be at least a workable assumption.

In the case of China's Northwest, the delimitation of the region and the circumference of its characteristic features can almost be called traditional. Ever since the "Movement to Develop the Northwest" (k'ai-fa Hsi-pei) was launched in

the early thirties (see particularly: Tai Chi-t'ao, Hsi-pei. Nanking.1931), this part of China attracted growing attention as one of the greatest hopes for her future. To be sure, the provinces covered by the concept have not always been the same in the series of surveys engendered by this movement; particularly, the province of Suiyuan, now part of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has been frequently included. (For a discussion of the question of geographical extent see: Wang Chin-fu, Hsi-pei chih ti-wen yü jen-wen. Shanghai 1935, and Ch'en Cheng-hsiang, Hsi-pei ch'u-yü ti-li, Chung-king 1945) A more sober approach has however already then identified the Northwest geographically in the manner of the present handbook: it was meant to include what were then the provinces of Shensi, Kansu, Chinghai, Ninghsia, and Sinkiang. (see Hsu Hsu, Hsi-pei chien-she lun. Shanghai 1944)

This more or less generally accepted definition of the geographical area has set a challenging but highly difficult task for the compilers of the present handbook. The degree of diversity within the region, which includes the cradle of Chinese civilization as well as the most remote outpost of the Chinese colonial empire, called for a breadth of coverage which at times tended to strain the unity of presentation to the bursting point. The fact, on the other hand, that the region has been considered a unit by observers as well as inhabitants, necessitated analyzing interrelationships of the different segments of Northwestern society. Every possible type of relation in every field of human life presented itself here as if in a test-tube. What could be done within the framework of this handbook is again only a beginning. If pursued, this analysis could lead to a typology of group relations.

The present compilation owes much to the spirit of teamwork which prevailed in our handbook project. This team included the contributors to the other handbooks. All the names mentioned on the title-pages and in the prefaces of the General Handbook and the other Regional Handbooks deserved to be repeated here. Editorial work on most of the sociological and political sections was done by Beatrice Miller, and on all the economic sections by Dorothy Schroeter. Charts and tables were designed by Florence Cochran.

October 1956

Hellmut Wilhelm

	Page
Attitudes and Reactions of the People Edna Coffin, Udo Posch, Martin Yang	410
2. POLITICAL	
Constitutional System Wen-djang Chu	436
Structure of Government Wen-djang Chu	463
Political Dynamics J. P. Lo	483
Public Order and Safety Wen-djang Chu	532
Foreign Relations Franz Michael	547
Subversive Potentialities Edith Lagawier, Udo Posch	568
Propaganda Wen-djang Chu	579
Biographies of Key Personalities J. P. Lo, Udo Posch, Richard Yang	597
3. ECONOMIC	
Agriculture and Animal Husbandry Ramon Mayers	635
Industry Perry Chang	667
Trade Perry Chang	677
Communications Paul Hsu	691

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

1. SOCIOLOGICAL

Page

General Character of the Society
Udo Posch

1

Historical Setting

George Cheney, J. P. Lo, Udo Posch

24

Geographical Background

Chang Yin-t'ang, Channing Rwen Kao

81

Ethnic Groups

Udo Posch

138

Languages

Kun Chang, Udo Posch

161

Social Structure

Beatrice Miller, Udo Posch, Martin Yang

183

Family

Edna Coffin

213

Social Values and Patterns of Living

Frances Wang

231

Artistic and Intellectual Expression

Edna Coffin

278

Education

Wen-djang Chu, Udo Posch

300

Religion

Edna Coffin, Beatrice Miller, Udo Posch, Martin Yang

324

VOLUME II

Public Information

Wen-djang Chu

364

Labor

Perry Chang, Udo Posch

380

Health and Sanitation

Edna Coffin, Beatrice Miller

386

Public Welfare

Edna Coffin

401

PUBLIC INFORMATION

- I. Newspapers
- II. Periodicals
- III. Publishers and Distributors
- IV. Books and Pamphlets
- V. Radio
- VI. Movies and Lantern Slides
- VII. Organization