

## **An Introduction to the Photo Collection of Rev. Carter D. Holton**

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In the early year of 2005, as I took the advantage of the winter vacation after having taught a full semester in Shanghai Normal University, I came to the Harvard-Yenching Institute in Cambridge for three-month program as a visiting scholar for a research project on Ma Dexin, a Yunnanese Hui Muslim cleric and scholar living in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. My research orientation was a comparative study between Islam and Confucianism in China with an approach of the civilization dialogue. However, I could not expect that it would have changed my research direction and my research career in my home university afterwards. That change was followed by the online images of nearly 1000 pieces of the historical photos at Harvard-Yenching Library. These photos were taken by Rev. Claude L. Pickens who was a missionary spent his life in Central China for the period of the 1927 to 1950 in the Republic.

It was very cold and snowy weather in the New England in that winter season, and I often went to the basement of Harvard-Yenching Library to look up of the collection of the Muslims in China left by Rev. Claude Pickens. While I was searching and studying the photo albums of Gansu, Ningxia and other areas in China donated by Rev. Pickens in 1984, Dr. Raymond Lum who was charged of the western books of the library sent a message to me and wanted me to visit his office if I had spare time. I thought that it could be something about the new materials collected by Rev. Pickens concerning the Muslims in China. With the desiring to gain something else I went into his office. He brought out a package of several rolls of the photo negatives which were in sized of 135mm used by the old-brand of Lycra camera made by Germany. Dr. Lum told me that these photo films were the copies left by Rev. Carter D. Holton, after he passed away, his family donated them to the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University. In order to identify these contents of the photos, he allowed me to use the film reader to look at them.

These copied negatives have no written notes except for the labeling roll numbers marked by the donator or the photographer who took them, and their contents largely related with the Tibetan Buddhism and Islam, for example, the Tibetan Lama temples and the mosques in Islam, the religious rituals, religious believers, culture and education, social economy etc. My first inquiring was that where did Rev. Holton do the missionary in Northwest China? Dr. Lum informed me that it was Qinghai. By the helps from Renata Kalnins, a research librarian at Andover-Harvard Theological Library, I got knowledge that the denomination to which Rev. Carter Holton belonged was Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA). From this clue I learned the facts that Rev. Holton did missionary work among the Salars in the area of Xunhua (Shunhua) during the period of the 1920s and 1930s. Late on he went to Hezhou (Hechow, Linxia today) continuing his missionary work in the center of Islam in China with a popular title “Small Mecca in China”. After I had read one piece by one piece briefly from these rolls of films, I informed Dr. Lum that the photo contents

were the social and cultural lives of the ethnic minorities living in the border region of Qinghai Province and Gansu Province such as Tibetans, Salars, Huis, Dongxiang and other nationalities as well as the Hans. They were the very important primary materials for the research of the religious culture and the ethnic minority societies in the region of Eastern Qinghai and Southwestern Gansu in the period of the Republic of China. Dr. Lum required me to write a brief statement in English on the content of the film negatives, therefore, I wrote a short illustration of the photo collection left by Rev. Holton, and another short note on the value of Rev. Claude Pickens Collection on Muslims in China. Dr. Lum told me that he would use these statements to apply some fund to digitalize these negatives. So this is the first time I knew in detail of the photo collection of Rev. Carter D. Holton. However, I did not see any other materials left by Rev. C. Holton. The understanding in depth to the photo collection of Rev. Holton was taken place in the summer of 2007 while I spent two months at the Harvard-Yenching Institute for a research project of Conception of *Shahid* (martyrdom) in the history of Islam in China, while I continued to search any information and materials on Rev. Carter Holton, and finally that summer drove me to decide to study the lives of the Christian missionary Carter D. Holton and his wife, Lora N. Holton, who had always been accompanying him in the missionary work in Northwest China, and to study the visible materials they left.

With the intense in study of the Holtons' missionary experiences in Northwest China, I think it necessary to write notes, some kind of annotation, or at least to give the captions of these photos. Hence, I proposed to Harvard University to fund a project for this annotation work. Fortunately, I was awarded the funds once more for two months in 2011 from the Harvard-Yenching Institute, so I used my winter vacations came to Harvard-Yenching Library for the sorting out work and annotate in English over these 5100 more photos taken by Rev. Holton in Northwest China based on my reading the certain articles written by Rev. Carter Holton and his missionary colleagues in Tibetan-Gansu region published on *Mission Alliance Weekly Magazine*. Meanwhile and afterwards I used my summer vacations traveling to the region of Gansu and Qinghai, following the journey route trailed by Rev. Carter Holton, and interviewed the elderly over the age of 80 years old to identify the contents of these photos by their oral comments, and recorded the important clues for the historical investigation. Funded by "Religious Studies Project of the Specific Program in High Level" sponsored by Shanghai Municipal Educational Committee in 2012, I again went to the Harvard-Yenching Institute during my two months' winter vacation for this research work and primarily completed the task of sorting, cataloguing and annotating the 5100 more photos in the Holton Photo Collection, and submitted this result to the section of the special collections of the Harvard-Yenching Library. Of course, to explain the sceneries and the contents of these images focused by a German Leica camera 70 and 80 years ago also combined with the materials based on the Chinese local gazetteers and *the Alliance Weekly* it would certainly occur many errors or mistakes. However, with the time going on, if there is more material on the Holtons being

explored out, the commentaries and annotations of these photos done by me could be continually revised and corrected in future. During February and March in year of 2014 and year of 2015 before I retired from my position of Professor of Islamic studies at Shanghai Normal University, I used a fund allocated by Prof. Chen Weiping, former dean of College of Philosophy, Shanghai Normal University, came to the Harvard-Yenching Institute for two times and revised the notes of the photo collection of Rev. Holton on the basis of my fieldwork in Qinghai and Gansu since 2007. I submitted this revised version of the notes to the Harvard-Yenching Institute and returned back to Shanghai in March of 2015.

In July 2017 I received a letter from Mrs. Maggie Hale and Mr. Mingtao Zhao, both work for the Dept. of Digital Sources Service of Widener Library of Harvard University which informed me that they would like to upload my work on the photo notes of the Rev. Holton's collection to the databank of the visible sources of Harvard University. They also wish me to work out the caption titles for the photo collections of the Carter Holton. Given there is kind of inaccurate among the notes and annotation which I had made during the period of 2011 to 2015, moreover, it is a considerable tough job to work out the captions for all more than 5100 pieces of the photos in the Holton's collection, I suggested to Mrs. Hale and Mr. Zhao that I wish to come to Harvard University again for a thoroughly revision and completion of the caption titles for the photo collection before they upload my work to the Harvard University's website. For this aim I proposed to the Harvard-Yenching Institute for a grant for the library research. My application to this grant was approved in October 2017 and I came to Cambridge in the middle of February 2018. Nevertheless, through three months' hard working I have revised the notes for this photo collection several times, and have completed the caption titles for all 5100 more pieces of the photos. Add up these jobs, I have transferred the notes or annotation of this photo collection from word documental formation into Microsoft Access Database Formation. Now, finally I am released from this intense work which has occupied my whole mind for whole three months, even before that longer than ten years' time for this research project.

Concerning the contents of the more than 5100 pieces of the photos in the Holton's Photo Collection numbered 10001 to 15101 (the actual number is bigger than 15101 because some numbers have more than one images), there are only less than 200 pieces of the photos having some brief notes hand-written by Rev. Carter Holton when he was alive. The remained more than 4900 pieces of the photos have no comments and notes at all. So majority photos in which you cannot find any clues of date, place, and concrete content information such as figure, event, background etc. Hence, the ambiguity or the unclearance was existed in the early stage of the photo research. Dr. Raymond Lum once told me that some American scholar did a primary survey to these negatives of the photo collection, and gave out a general hint for the Carter Holton's photo collection. However, such a hint also is too ambiguity and too general that they could not be treated as the authentic notes or comments. For example, concerning the location, most of the photos

were marked as “Gansu and Qinghai”, and the date was marked as “1927-1941”. Some information provided was rather misleading, for example, the photos on the Tu people in Qinghai were regarded as the Dongxiang Muslim people in Gansu. Anyhow, the blankness of most of the photos in noting, commenting and explanation make the work to supply a photo notes and annotation based on the evident or academic investigation is an extremely difficult task for any scholars who will tackle this job of giving explanation and comments. I decided to start making photo notes from the existing materials available first. I read the brief scraps written by Rev. Carter Holton over nearly 200 photos, and also read the articles of *the Christian Mission Weekly Magazine*’s all issues which are related with Rev. Carter D. Holton and Lora N. Holton. After reading all materials which I had collected from the Weekly Magazine of C&MA (Christian and Mission Alliance) and other sources, I composed a bio-note of Rev. Carter D. Holton in 2012, and sent it to Mrs. Lora Jean Heurlin, the young daughter of the Holtons for comments and suggestion. In a few weeks, Mrs. Lora J. Heurlin replied me with her suggestion and advice for a revising.

After that I extensively read more issues of the Weekly Magazine of *Christian & Mission Alliance* which related with the missionary colleagues of Rev. Carter Holton and Mrs. Lora Holton such as Rev. Calven Snyder and his wife Pheobe Snyder, Rev. Charles Notson and his wife Elizabeth Notson, Rev. Marion Griebenow and his wife Blanche Griebenow, Rev. William Ruhl and his wife, Rev. Thomas Mosley and his wife, Rev. Edwin Carlson and his wife, Rev. Albert Fesmire and his wife, Rev. Robert Ekvall and his wife, and other missionaries who worked in the missionary stations of Tibetan-Gansu border region not only in *Christian & Mission Alliance*, but also about Lanzhou station and Xining station of the China Inland Church. So I read and collect more articles and information related with Rev. Carter Holton and his life.

Before that, namely in the early Spring of 2009 when I was a guest professor in Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, USA I found a few hours’ visible documentary video taken by Rev. Carter Holton on the website of the Himalaya Mountain Project in Cambridge University, Britain, in it there were contents showing Salar Muslims and mosques, Hui Islam, Dongxiang Muslims, Tibetan Lama Buddhism, Lama monasteries and Tibetan Buddhist rituals, Tu Lama Buddhism and monastery, the Taoism in Gansu and the Han Chinese religions in Qinghai and Gansu border areas. The academic website of the Himalaya Mountain Project has a voice recording on the video explained and commented by Rev. Charles Notson, a good friend and missionary colleague of Rev. Carter Holton. I reported this video film taken by Rev. Holton to the Harvard-Yenching Institute as well as Mrs. Lora Jean Heurlin. After the Harvard-Yenching Institute got contacts with Cambridge University, it was known that this video record was donated by Myrtle Ruth [Holton] Dillon, the elder daughter of Rev. Carter Holton, to Cambridge University. Myrtle Ruth was born in Hechow (Hezhou or Linxia today) in 1927, four years older than her young sister Lora Jean Heurlin. After she grew up, she joined Christian Salvation Army organization and went to Japan for missionary work in the early of 1950. After having stayed in Japan for

two dozen years she retired and returned to the America. Two daughters of the Holtons have their own big families, as they grew to the old age (Myrtle passed away in February 2016, and Lora Jean is 87 years old now and she is not in good health after a medical operation on her heart as to my knowledge; later on I was informed on August 3 that Mrs. Lora Jean Heurlin passed away on June 21, 2018 in Colorado State), they live far away each other, and not often keep contacts. Although they were born in Northwest China, they left Qinghai and Gansu when they were in childhood and went to Yantai (Chefoo in the Republic) of Shandong to study in the church school of the Inland China Church. Before the breaking out of the Pearl Port Attack, they were enforced coming back to the America for studies, and have never return to China afterward. Therefore, they could not have a profound understand and the memory to the missionary lives of their parents in the region of Qinghai and Gansu, Northwest China. The author once went to Colorado Springs City, Colorado State, especially to meet Lora Jean Heurlin for a short visit in 2012, and found that she just knew something about her childhood life in Shunhua (Xunhua) and some recalling for her parents' life in China, no other materials or oral narrative could be recorded because as the Communist Army was approaching to Hezhou (Linxia) in August 1949, Rev. Carter Holton and Lora Holton left their home in Hezhou so hurry that they could only carry two luggage with them and boarded on a plane by Sweden which tried specially for evacuating the western missionaries in the last flight in Lanzhou, Gansu Province before the Communist China was founded. Probably all the notes, diary, correspondence, and other materials were lost in this unexpected hasty retreat from Hezhou (Hechow) that time. All these disadvantages conduce to the vast difficult for us in studying these photos and working over the photo notes.

With the personal insistence and endeavoring pursuing I have undertaken historical investigations over the photo contents in Gansu and Qinghai since 2005. I have been to Qinghai and Gansu almost every summer, and sometimes, twice every year for my field investigation during last decade. I went to Jeizi Village where was the first settlement of Salar Muslims who migrated from Samarkand in Central Asia to Xunhua (Shunhua), the Up Reach of the Yellow River, and I visit the Town Gate Mosque of Jishi Town, the Xunhua County Site, from there I got known Han Haimin, a Salar manager of the local branch of Haier Electric Applies Company for sale services in Xunhua, through him I was acquired with the former landlord's family Mr. Chen (86 years old that time, he was one of the relatives of the landlord Chen, who rented a house to Rev. Holton and his wife) in Cao Tan Ba Village, and later Landlord Wang Fuchen (who was executed by the new regime after 1949) and his relatives Wang Dekui, and other Salar Muslim villagers whose parents had met and known Rev. Holton and his family. Through the connection and by introduction I had interviews with several elderly Salar Muslims whose age over 70 years old, the oldest one was over 86 years old. While I took interviews with them I also showed them the photos printed into papers to them and searched their comments, therefore, I took notes from their recalling. With one clue to another clue I have visited various counties such as

Xunhua, Hualong, Huangzhong, Tongren, Guide, Huangnan, Ping'an, Huzhu counties and Xining City in Qinghai, and Linxia City (Hechow, or Hezhou), Linxia, Lintan (Taochow), Hezuo (Hetsou), Zhuoni, Lintao (Titao), Minxian (Minchow), Xiahe, Jishishan, Zhangxian, Dongxiang, Guanghe, Hezheng (Ninghe), Lanzhou City, Pingliang City of Gansu Province. I tried to just follow the routes and traveling journey taken by Rev. Carter Holton in his 27 years' missionary careers. During these travels and interviews with Muslim elderly I tried to visit many mosques and Lama monasteries, Taoist temples and Han Chinese Buddhist temples as much as possible. Since I am a scholar of Islamic studies, so I feel confident and convenient for my research on Salar, Hui, Dongxiang, Bao'an Muslims and Qargan (Tibetan Muslims) as well as their Islam. However, I have been not so much assurance for the contents of Tibetan Lama Buddhism in the photo collection of Rev. Carter Holton, which has about 3000 pieces of the photos relate with this subject. So I keep trying to do my best in the researching for the part of Tibetan Lama Buddhism in the Holton's photo collection, and read some books and materials on Tibetan Buddhism and have also been searching the helps and assistance even guidance from the Tibetan scholars. Fortunately, I have met several generous and good-hearted Tibetan scholars who offered great assistance to my research work.

In the first part of August, 2012 of my fieldwork, I met Prof. Wang Zhouta, a Tibetan scholar working at Center of the Ethnic Minorities in the Frontiers of Northwest China, Lanzhou University. I showed the photos concerning the Tibetan Buddhism in the Holton's collection to him. Prof. Zhouta gave comments over the photos numbered almost two thousand pieces of the photos in the Holton's collection. We spent eight hours in his home in Lanzhou to discuss the contents of the photos relating with Tibetan Buddhism in Qinghai and Gansu. While he gave comments I would try hard to take notes down on the paper. I also showed a few hundred pieces of the photos to Dr. Zongka who studied in Indiana University of USA, a professor researching Tibetan Buddhism and culture at Lanzhou University, he also gave his suggestion, particularly, Ta'er Monastery in Qinghai Province and Labrang Monastery in Gansu Province.

As I did research work in the office of the Harvard-Yenching Institute in February 2014, I met Dr. Kim Soojin who was a scholar on Chinese arts in a university in South Korea and I got known her several years ago since both of us were visiting scholars at the Harvard-Yenching Institute, so we talked the natures of our research projects. While I mentioned the contents of the Tibetan Buddhism among the 3000 pieces' photos in the Rev. Holton Collection, she told me that her husband Mr. Hanung Kim was a doctoral student on a Tibetan Buddhism in Harvard University, his doctoral dissertation was about the history of Youning Temple, one of the Tu's Tibetan Lama Buddhist monasteries. So we made an appointment with her husband to talk these photos. Her husband visited the region in Qinghai and Sichuan many times, and even did the fieldworks in Aba and Ganzi areas, lived there for quite long time. As I showed the photos to him, he informed me about the temples and the Tibetan Buddhist rituals in the contents of the photos, and confirmed to me

that some of them were about Younging Temple in Huzhu County, Qinghai Province. Younging Temple was the largest Tibetan Buddhist temple celebrated by the Tu people in Buddhist festivals and ritual ceremonies. I was so pleased for this rectification.

In the three summers of the years between 2013 to 2015 I had been in Lanzhou in my fieldwork of the historical investigation, and asked Mr. Songji Cairang, the Tibetan researcher of Institute of Ethnological Studies in Gansu Province, also the vice chairman of Gansu Association of the Fine Arts for helps, he once took advanced studies as a visiting scholar at the Fine Arts College of Shanghai Normal University, therefore, we were the school mates in some senses. After he watched the photos concerning on the Tibetan Lama Buddhist culture and religious activities, he rectified them one by one to comment over these photos have the contents of the Tibetan Buddhism. Several times I spent longer than a half day in his home to identify the location and which groups of Tibetan tribes, monasteries and other related subjects on Tibetan Buddhism.

Dr. Niu Hong, the formal professor at College of History, Northwest China's Nationality University, a Tibetan scholar was invited to take the professorship of religious studies in Department of Philosophy, Shanghai Normal University as a professional leading scholar at the beginning of 2016. So we become colleagues. I talked with him on the number and contents of the photos related with Tibetan Buddhism in the Rev. Holton's photo collection. I also showed these photos to him. In the early year of 2014, I took the advantage of my winter vacation and came to the Harvard-Yenching Institute sponsored by myself during that time I met a female Tibetan doctoral student who was a visiting scholar of HYI for one year. Her name is Zhou Mao, doctoral candidate in Southwest University of Ethnology in Chongqing, Sichuan Province. I also showed her some of the Holton's photo collection. Since her hometown is in Hezuo, so she gave some comments over the photos related with Tibetan Monastery in Hezuo, Southern Gansu District. They in different ways have contributed to the identifying the contents of the photo collection of Rev. Carter Holton.

After the Autumn Semester of 2016, although I was retired from my teaching position and the professorship of Islamic studies, I remained committing to teach two or three courses every week in the university. So I occasionally met Dr. Xing Haiyan, a Tu scholar on Anthropological studies from Northwest China's Nationality University, now is an associated professor in College of Law and Politics, Shanghai Normal University. Dr. Xing also does teaching and researching in Ethnology. I presented the photos of the Tu people in Minhe and Huzhu counties in Qinghai Province from the photo collection of the Holton to her for any comments, since she comes from a Tu family in Qinghai, and she gave some very authentic suggestions on the Tu people and its culture in the photo collection of Rev. Holton, therefore, she has filled the gap or vacuum in researching the Tu culture and Younging Temple in the Republic.

Therefore, it is impossible for me to complete this long term project of annotating and commenting the more than 5100 pieces of the photos taken by Rev. Holton eighty years ago without the very kindly assistance from the numberless people both China and USA

including above mentioned scholars, friends and people. I will give them full list as my knowledge to express my gratitude to them in the part of the acknowledgement in this introduction late on.

The vast quantity of the photo collection left by Rev. Carter Holton is not only the real historical witness to the social cultural life of the Tibetan-Gansu region in the period of 1928 to 1949, but also do provide an authentic material or archive to the factual interaction among the ethnic groups such as Tibetans, Qiang, Tu, Mongols, Salar, Hui, Dongxiang, Qargan, Bao'an, and Han Chinese. Furthermore, this photo collection supplies the true comprehensive pictures on religious life among Tibetan Lama Buddhism, Han Chinese Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity and other folk level religious dimension in the Republic period (1927-1949). The great value of this collection lies on the plain fact that the Tibetan-Gansu region is almost the most central part of the inner Asia, so isolated from other parts of the world by the deserts, mountains, deep valleys, rapid rivers, and natural barriers which blocking people's way to explore it; It also situates in the time that wars, ethnic confrontations, political turmoil and various social forces competed each other, hence prevented people accessing the region and giving the facts and reports to the outside, Rev. Holton's photos provide the people and later generations in this world the data in a unbelievable way to show the history of this isolated region, therefore, present us the research and studying stuff which is always short of the basic and authentic materials for academics and archive recording. Even for the geographic and topographic study the photos taken by Rev. Carter Holton in nearly one century ago supply us a scenery landscape in this region which was so valuable that some of them were published by the *National Geography Magazine*. Rev. Carter Holton dedicated an important part of his life for the missionary course in the spiritual searching for our civilization, he has also harnessed us with such a unique method in recording the social and cultural visible life in a functionary role for the wonderful treasure like a historical museum. Thus, Rev. Carter Holton and his missionary colleagues in a generation of the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century set a very good example for us and for the later generations in life model in senses of recording the history and culture in the Tibetan-Gansu region.

In a brief survey, any readers are able to find a general catalogue of the photo collection of Rev. Carter Holton: nearly 3000 pieces of the photos reflect Tibetan Lama Buddhism, its Lama monasteries, religious activities, rituals and its believers with their variety of clothes, jewelries, living styles, therefore, belonging to the different tribes and sects in Lama Buddhism; nearly 1000 pieces of the photos show the contents of Islam which including Salar Islam, Hui Islam, Dongxiang Islam, Bao'an Islam and Qargan Islam which were further divided into different factions of the Muslims in Sufi orders, suborders, and Ikhwani groups, Salafiyya group, Qadim group etc. and their mosques and Qubbas (tombs); about several hundred pieces of the photos relate with Taoism and Han Chinese Buddhism which on the basis of Taoist temples and Buddhist temples as well as their believers such as Han Chinese, their ritual and practices in the folk religious traditions else; about a few hundred



pieces of the photos link with Christian missionary life both Western foreign missionaries who include the Americans, British, Canadians, Scandinavians etc., their preaching activities among the Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities in Tibetan-Gansu region and Chinese Christians, their faith and practices in Christianity; There were respectively a few dozens of the photos connect with Tu people and Qiang people, their clothing style and jewelries, their lives in Qinghai and Sichuan provinces. Although majority of the photos in the Holton's collection are the Tibetan-Gansu region in geographically, there are quite considerable number of the photos were taken in Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, Xi'an, Kaifeng, Luoyang, Songpan and some places in the areas of Maozhou and Guanxian, namely, today's Chengdu Plain in Sichuan Province. It is very interesting that there are several pieces of the photos taken in Japan, Hong Kong, and at least a few dozen pieces of the photos are in the United States of America including Washington State, California State. In the range of time, we are able to analyze that most of the photos were taken in the period of 1930 to the first half of 1934, the remaining part of the photos in the Holton's collection is in the period of 1937 to the middle of 1943. Maybe there are some pieces of the photos shot in the period of late 1947 to the middle of 1949. We are wondering why in this period (from late 1947 to the time before Hezhou was taken by the People Liberation Army in August 1949) Rev. Carter Holton did not use his camera to explore the social life in Hezhou (Linxia) society so frequently as he did in the 1930s.

As far as the quality and the skill of the photo taking in this photo collection, although Rev. Carter Holton was an amateur in the photography, and I am definitely not a specialist in photo producing, however, while I showed these photos to some people in China who know the professional skill and art quality of the photography, they informed me that they were quite good in quality and were very skillful. In their words from the comments: some of them are extremely good quality from shooting angle, position, focus, framing, and direction, overview, level, light and exposure etc. Han Haiming, a Salar Muslim business manager told me after I showed some of the photos in the collection to him for his comments in my fieldwork, said that the photographer had very good skill and he [Rev. Holton] had covered good position as he took the shots in his camera in the landscape scenery. The photographer's level in photography is so high even that in that period and that region no other photos could match with them in quality and vision. Some of them were indeed the masterpieces in the photography reflecting the cultural and social life in that region. Remarkably, the photographic skill of Rev. Carter Holton is able to reach to the professional and specialist's level from the contents of the photos in his photo collection. After having worked over the photo collection for last three months in this research project I would like give a brief summary concerning the characteristics in historical and cultural features of the photos taken by Rev. Carter Holton as following:

- 1, the grave variety and diversity in religion, culture and ethnicity for the Tibetan-Gansu region. Almost every major religion in China could be found in these photos: they are the mainstream religion in China society such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and folk

religions; However, you also could find some religions are marginal in Mainland China, here they belong to the mainstreams in this region: such as Tibetan Lama Buddhism and Islam; There is a religion newly introduced into, and absolutely marginalized both in China and in the Tibetan-Gansu region: Christianity with a few small denominations such as China Inland Church, Christian & Mission Alliance, Scandinavian Mission Alliance, Pentecostal Church and even Catholic Church. All these religions abovementioned are even divided into farther small factions and sects such as the Yellow Sect and the Red Sect in Tibetan Lama Buddhism; different Sufi orders and suborders in Sufi mystical factions and the traditional group and the new movements such as Qadim, Ikhwani and Salafiyya in Islam; and the different denominations and sects in Christianity so on. The believers who are affiliated into these religious factions and sects are usually organized into different ethnic groups such as Tibetans, Tu, Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, Bao'an, Mongol, Han, Qiang, Kazak, Qargan etc. These groups in religion and ethnicity show their vast diversity in cultural dimension as their way of living: clothing style, jewelries, linguistic, living habits and customs just as reflected in the photo collection. Nevertheless, the photo collection of Rev. Carter Holton exactly tells us the great diverseness of the religious, ethnic and cultural characters concentrated in this crescent-like sized region on the borders of Tibet, China's Eastern Turkistan, the Mongolian Plain, the Yellow Loess Plain and Sichuan Basin.

2, the very floating characteristics reflect in the trans-cultural, cross-economic and intermarriage etc. social contacting zone of this Tibetan-Gansu border region. Lot of the photos show the different channels in commercial trade, economic links, traffic communication, and social ties which have penetrated or overlapped in all classes, all social organizations and all ethnic kinships and all ecological and productive environments. You can find the contacts between inland China and the borderland, between nomadic economy and agricultural economy, between the urban areas and the rural areas, between Muslims and non-Muslims, between the central governmental and local authorities, between ethnic minorities and Han Chinese majority, between the military troop and the civilian groups, between different religious groups and between different ethnic groups. Therefore, the floating trends connect, bridge, combine, intermingle and melt the sharp diverse entities and make them contact and relate, as a result they have formulated into a body of the Tibetan-Gansu region in which is co-existence with so greatly various ethno-religious landscape in a borderland of Northwest China, the very poor, remote and isolated region.

3, the tension has once mounted in this very diverse and complicated mosaic border region in that particular time. Dozen photos in the Holton's photo collection have recorded the phenomenon that the religious and ethnic confrontation indeed took place in that period of war and political disorder, and China was plunged into semi-like anarchic society after the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty and the Republic was not firmly established. First we witness the bloodsheds occurred between Tibetan tribe's military troop and the Muslim Hui army led by Ma Zhongying, a Hui Muslim warlord: the ruin and the destroyed Tibetan Lama monasteries, mosques, towns, villages, residences. Second we can find the photos

that the wrecks of the Christian Church which was sabotaged by the Tibetans and Muslims both were very hostile to the western Christian missionaries. Third a few pieces of the photos in the collection show the tension between the Hui Muslim warlords and the Tibetans as the former ruled Tibetan-Gansu region in the most part of the Republic, the latter felt they were the repressed in their homeland. The fourth we also discover the severe clashes between Han Chinese represented by the Central government and Muslim warlord forces during the power struggle for the regional hegemony in the 1920s and the 1930s. Although the photos have not directly told us the distorted relations among Han Chinese, Muslims and Tibetans, some pictures truly inform us indirectly the complexity in their intertwined relationship, the competition among them in social, economic, military and political spheres.

4, the Tibetan-Gansu region is heavily relying on or relating with the greater environment, namely, the external forces from the surroundings. In spite of very isolated and remoteness, poorly communicated with and from other centers of the civilizations the Tibetan-Gansu always situated in the contact zone influenced, impacted, even determined by the forces from the outside: the Chinese government, the western countries, particularly the Britain and the United States of America, the Japanese military forces which had occupied almost a half of China, the Soviet Union, all these external forces through political controlling, military interfere, commercial trade, missionary preaching, social relation and cultural contacts in different degrees have changed, shaped and transformed the local environment in this Tibetan-Gansu region. Therefore, the local peoples often as the recipient have to accept the enforced impaction or imposed or the exercised influence from the outside in their interaction with them.

5, the dynamic relation between the periphery and the central also cultivates the local survival strategy in a political unstable situation and period. In geographic term, if we consider from the angles of the big powers in the world, particularly, from the profound civilization pattern, the Tibetan-Gansu region is a periphery one in any senses. Truly it locates in a very marginalized place considered from geo-political point of view: so far away from the main world political centers: from the national capital of China, from Moscow, from the main European powers, from Tokyo, from New Delhi, from Tehran, from Istanbul and from Mecca etc. main political and cultural centers. However, the Tibetan-Gansu region could be a socio-cultural corridor or a contact zone among the different patterns of the civilizations in our planet. Even in such as a peripheral place of the Tibetan-Gansu region, the local peoples and societies have developed their very efficient tactics and strategy in dealing with their powerful neighbors, and tackling with the strong rivals and adversaries in their own communication: hospitality, friendship and tolerant, understanding. So many pieces of the photos taken by Rev. Carter Holton expose the contents that the people from the different ethnic groups in the region were very warm hearted toward the outsiders such as the American Christian missionaries who held a different faith and brought in a very odd culture which was so differentiating with their

cultures and customs. However, with the symbol of smile and friendly exchange, with the means of hospitality and enthusiasm they had been avoid of the conflict and hostile, and their open-mindedness and kindness have brought them the beneficence for this frankly communication between the periphery and the centrality. This local philosophy toward the outside has made them survival but sometimes affliction also in the drastic social and political changes in the period.

6, Tibetan-Gansu region is a cultural treasure and also a natural, and socio-humanity museum in our academic researching today. A large number of the photos in the Holton's photo collection depict the cultural life of many ethnic groups who have lived in the place for many generations. Their richness in displaying such a kaleidoscope way not only in physical dimension but also in spiritual dimension to report the real and concrete life in this frontier region both for China and for the world. Since Rev. Carter Holton was a Christian missionary, he hence used his camera to focus on the religious contexts in his photography. The majority pictures in his photo collection are the contents relating with religious buildings, religious rituals, religious customs which cover clothes, ornaments, arts, sport and dance. Even today, we could say bravely that average Chinese in the inland China has little knowledge of this region, its people and its humanity sciences, not to say the people from outside China. Thus, the photo collection left by Rev. Carter Holton truly endows us a cultural wealth and a great treasure in a form of virtual museum as a discipline of socio-humanity which including the fields of religiosity, ethnology, anthropology, histology, sociology and folklore tradition. His contribution has far surpassed his role as a Christian missionary. The value of his photo collection is so self-evident and remarkable in the world academy as well as in China.

The acknowledgment.

More than ninety years ago Rev. Carter Holton and his wife who were missionaries from Christian & Mission Alliance traveled across the Pacific Ocean and came to China, then trodden over the countless mountains, grassland, valleys and rivers, and arrived in the basin of the Upper branch of the Yellow River and the Huang River in the region covering parts of Qinghai and Gansu to fulfill their western faith's spreading on the Silk Road but in a reverse direction. They perhaps did never expect what they recorded by their camera and video-camera on the social cultural life including religious rituals, economic production, market trade, folklore, the different architectures of rural and urban, art style, clan structure and natural landscape inhabited by the various ethnic groups with their unique living styles in the region would be the important visible materials in studying and researching the Qinghai-Gansu frontier areas in Northwest China's Republic period for the scholars and intellectuals in future generations.

Due to the wars, natural disasters, political turmoil and the traffic block, plus to the lack of the cultural communication and modern equipment, facilities, there were very little historical materials existed on the local people's economy, culture, education and life customs in their region's society. Especially in the period of the Republic, because of the

complex in the relationship of politics, military, social and ethnics, religion, the people from outside had almost no understanding in the history of the various ethnic minorities such as Tibetan, Hui, Salar, Dongxiang, Bao'an, Tu, Qiang, Qargan as well as the Han. Rev. Carter Holton had lived at Cao Tan Ba Village, outside of Jishi Town in Xunhua County and Linxia (Hechow or Hezhou) as a missionary for almost 27 years. During this period, he purchased camera, films and other equipment with the money he saved from his minimum salary sent from the United States, and undertook lot of trips in the region of the mountains, grassland, valleys, rivers of Qinghai, Gansu provinces and other parts of China for long time, therefore, he took more than 5100 photos concerning the frontier people's social life and cultural customs in China, especially the northwestern China. These photos are the valuable, primary resource for us to study the ethnic minorities' society and life in Tibetan-Gansu region in the period of the Republic, also they are the reliable images, memories, and historical proofs. Thus, we must thank with our heart-felt gratitude to the Holtons and their family, the missionaries of C&MA of America. It is impossible to complete this annotation and notes of this photo collection without the missionary experiences and the simple and primary labor endured by Rev. Carter Holton in the basin of the Yellow River and Huang River about eighty years ago. Meanwhile, we also extend our deep gratefulness to the Harvard-Yenching Institute and Harvard-Yenching Library which have offered the writer the generous grants and the copyright of these photo images in the Holton Photo Collection to do this important research project. We thank many people who have helped and participated so enthusiastically in composing and revising these notes and the introduction, we also extend our thanks to those who have provided any assistance and information to the writer's research and investigation, they including:

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who made efforts to preserve the historical photos donated by the families of the Christian missionaries. The writer particularly thanks to late Lora Jean Heurlin, the young daughter of the Holtons, who gave many advices in writing over the note draft for this photo collection. Our grateful is also to Mrs. Maggie Hale, and Mr. Mingtao Zhao in Digital Resource Service of Harvard University, who have assisted in many ways concerning the work of digitizing these photos in the Holton's collection. Thanks ought to give Renata Kalmins from Library of Harvard Divinity School. Thanks due to Dr. Kim Soojin, a Korean visiting scholar of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and her husband Hanung Kim, another Korean doctor in Harvard University. Thanks to the retired professor Madeleine Fletcher, the widow of late Prof. Joseph Fletcher of Harvard University, she generously helped the writer to stay at her house for several nights as he could not find a place for accommodation in his traveling to Cambridge once time. Thanks to the headquarter of Christian & Missionary Alliance in Colorado Springs, Colorado which allowed the writer to look at and read *the Alliance Weekly Magazine* and other archive materials. Great thanks should give to Dr. Ruohong Li, Mrs. Susan Scott, Miss. Francesca Coppola, Lindsay Strogatz, James Flahert; also to the former vice director of YHI Peter Kelley and retired staff Elaine Witham. Thanks to the staffs and librarians of Harvard-Yenching Library, they include Sharon Yang, Xiaohu Ma. The great appreciation is due to Prof. Gerhard Bowering of Yale University, who has written recommendation letter for writer's grant application; to Prof. William Chittick and Prof. Sachiko Murata from New York State University, Prof. Donald Leslie from Australian National University, all of them wrote the support letters for the writer's grant application. Prof. Thomas Radice from Southern Connecticut State University has offered helps in the writer's application procession. Thanks also are due to Prof. Tu Weiming, the former director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute who encouraged the writer's grant application for the visiting scholarship in Harvard University in 2005.

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月 (a Hui, 65 years old while he was interviewed), Mr. Ayoubu阿尤布 (93 years old as he was interviewed, he was a Madrasa student in Qijia Mosque when he was young), Xiao Shoushan肖寿山 (Hui, 100 years old when he was interviewed in 2011), Akhund Ma Zhenbang马振邦 (the grandson in the 13<sup>th</sup> generation of the founder of Hafiyya Order, 85 years old as he was interviewed), Ma Chonghai马崇海 (a Hui antique dealer, 54 years old); Ma Linyun马林云 (Hui, 75 years old as he was interviewed), Ma Junzhang马俊章 (Hui, 81 years old when he was interviewed), Ma Yongqing马永清 (Hui, 77 years old when he was interviewed), Shi Jinyong史金勇 (Han, the journalist of *Linxia Ethnic Daily*, 65 years old as he was interviewed); Shi Yage石雅各, a Christian pastor in Church of Linxia, Han, 62 years old when he was interviewed), Shi Joseph石约瑟 (Presbyter of Linxia Church, Han, 67 years old as he was interviewed), Wan Lianwa完莲娃 (a Christian lady who met the Holtons, Han Chinese, 85 years old when she was interviewed in 2013), Liu Yan刘岩 and Li Shuzhen李淑珍, they were the Christians in Linxia Church and were 60 years old when they were interviewed in 2013), Li Xueming李学明 (a Han, 50 years old as he was interviewed), Yan Paul闫保罗 (Christian in Linxia, 48 years old in 2013), Chen Jitang陈继汤 (Christian in Linxia and met the Holtons, 86 years old in 2013). Gou Mudi苟慕迪, Presbyter of Lintao Church; Wang Zhirong王治荣, Christian of Lintao Church, 83 years old in 2013; Wang Xinglong王新隆 (Han, Christian in Lintao, 61 years old in 2013); Zhou Wenhao周文浩, Pastor of Minxian Church, a Han, 74 years old in 2013; He Nianzhong何念忠, Presbyter of Minxian Church, 84 years old who met several American missionaries as he was young, interviewed in 2013; Jing Shengkui景生魁, a Han writer in Minxian, 72 years old in 2013, Mr. Mao毛, a Hui merchant in Minxian, 52 years old in 2013.

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## **Bio-Notes of Rev. Carter D. Holton**

By Dr. Wang Jianping

Rev. Carter D. Holton was a missionary of Christian & Mission Alliance in the United States and he worked in and dedicated to the region of Northwest China inhabited by the Salar, Dongxiang, Hui, Tibetans, Tu and Han peoples for 27 years. Although he and his wife Lora Newberry Holton spent a long time in Gansu-Tibetan frontier area in which various ethnic minorities lived, almost gained no substantial result in the missionary work, however, by the communication of cross-faith and cross-culture, they left the primary recording materials of many ethnic minorities' religious cultures in the region of Gansu and Qinghai in the Republic period: more than 5000 pieces of the photos, two-hours video recording. Rev. Carter Holton was eventually also a botanist, photographer, linguist and medical worker. Most of his life time was spent on the course of the cultural and botanic gardening technic exchanges between China and the United States of America, even he made important contribution to the historical records in religiosity and ethnology.

Rev. Carter Holton (his Chinese name was Hai Yingguang海映光 when he worked as missionary in China) and his wife (Chinese name was Hai Mude海慕德) came to Gansu-Tibetan border area in China respectively in 1923 and were forced to leave Linxia of Gansu in China in 1949. It is evidently that they dedicated their most beautiful time in their life to the missionary work in the area of Gansu-Qinghai frontier, especially to the missionary work among the Muslims in China. The all historical materials they left were donated by their young daughter Mrs. Lora Jean Heurlin to the Harvard-Yenching Library in the early of the 1990s after they had passed away in the 1970s and 1980s. This rich historical photos and videos recorded by Rev. Carter Holton were raised to the attention in the academics in the beginning of the 21st century, and the Harvard-Yenching Library therefore scanned them into the electric images and invited Dr. Wang Jianping (author) to compose the annotative notes based on the content of this dispatch of the historical photos. The author while he sorted out the materials went to the region of Gansu and Qinghai provinces for the historical investigation almost continually in his summer vacations for five years. He looked for and found the several old men who even met Rev. Holton, made the interview notes. Through fieldwork the author realized that Rev. Holton was not only the first missionary of C&MA from the America doing missionary work among the Salar Muslims but also he was truly a botanist, linguist, photographer and medical worker. He contributed greatly to the cultural exchanges between China and America. Unfortunately, his achievement has not been well known among the academic circles both in China and in the United States. This is the motivation of the author as a scholar of Islamic studies to write the bio-notes of Rev. Carter Holton, and he thinks that the Chinese scholars in religious studies should know Rev. Holton and understand him. This chronicle of Rev. Holton is completed on the basis of having read large quantity materials of West China Mission of

C&MA in its periodical of *The Alliance Weekly*, a magazine of C&MA in the United States, and have interviewing several elderly, from which to catalogue and select for the essences and relative data. The author received the assistance and some proofreading from the young daughter of the Holtons, Mrs. Lora Jean Heurlin (that time she was in the ages between 81 and 84 years old) when he composed and revised this bio-notes, at the same time he gained the sincerely support from Dr. James Cheng, the director of Harvard-Yenching Library and late Dr. Raymond Lum, the librarian of Harvard-Yenching Library, hereby their helps are acknowledged in this chronicle.

1901. Carter D. Holton<sup>1</sup> was born at a family in Chetek Town, Wisconsin, USA.

1908. Attended the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) Church and the Sunday School in Everett Town, Washington State until leaving that school in 1922. Influenced by the education in the Bible school in his childhood, he determined to dedicate his life to Jesus Christ, to the missionary course, especially, the oversea missionary work.

1906-1919. Attended Everett Town's Washington public school; graduated from Everett High School in 1919.

1921-1922. Attended and studied at Simpson Bible Institute, Seattle, Washington, where he met his future wife, Lora Newberry, also a student, the daughter of Dean of Simpson Bible Institute. Carter Holton was very active in the school. He was very pure in faith, enthusiastically participated in the church events. He was one of the youth leaders at the Seventh Rally of the Young Peoples Association of the North Pacific District of the C&MA in the Oak Lake Church, Seattle, Washington. He led a testimony meeting as a theological student and preached using the three R's: Reckon, Rest, and Rejoice. His ministry was well received and appreciated by the students and teachers. He also preached at other occasions along with his classmates at SBI (Simpson Bible Institute) to other people.

1922-1923. In order to prepare for missionary service in future he attended the Missionary Training Institute at Nyack, New York City along with his fiancée, Lora Newberry; and they studied there.

March 1922, Joe Kirk especially came to Nyack Institute in New York traveling from Simpson Bible Institute, Seattle, Washington to preach Christianity. Carter Holton once studied at SBI accompanied Joe Kirk in this visit, they preached the mission work to the young students.

In the summer vacation, 1922, Carter Holton and other two students who once studied at SBI took advantage of the summer holidays and went to the surroundings of Everett Town of the North Pacific District for the missionary work. He was awarded as "excellent performance" by the Church.

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<sup>1</sup> His Chinese name was mistaken as He Peidao 何佩道 in a book published by a Hong Kong Press. The author checked in the archives kept in C &MA headquarter of USA, Colorado Springs, CO. found that He Peidao was the name of Miss Anna Haupberg, a female missionary from America who worked in Longxi County, Gansu, China in the period of the Republic. From the sources of the local gazetteers and interviews from the old people who had met Rev. Holton, Carter D. Holton's Chinese name should be Hai Yingguang.

In 1923 at the Congress Band Rally organized by Nyack Institute he represented China giving a comparison of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism. He held that “the threefold cord of bondage-systems in the name of religion, holding the oldest nation of the world in the grip of darkness and sin, but where the glorious gospel of the grace of God is winning its way into many hearts and homes”.<sup>2</sup>

On November 29, 1923 he sailed across the ocean for China by ship, stopping shortly in Japan where he observed the devastation there from the Great Kato Earthquake which took place on September 1, 1923. After his ship arrived in Shanghai, he took a boat to Hankou, then he boarded a train for one night’s journey northward, stopping at the end of the rail line where there was no road available, spent 26 days by mules with luggage to his first station in Western China. He studied the Chinese language at the Bible School in Lintao (Titao that time), Gansu (Kansu) for about two years. He paved a solid foundation for future missionary work as he gripped the humanity and ethnological knowledge in Northwest China.

1923-1925. His fiancée, Lora Newberry, traveled separately to Gansu, endured the same hardship in the journey, and also studied the Chinese language in the missionary station in Southern Gansu for two years.

August, 1924. Carter Holton and Lora Newberry attended the C&MA Gansu-Tibetan Border Missionary Annual Conference in Titao (Lintao), Gansu, China.

June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1925. Mr. Carter Holton and Miss Lora Newberry were united in marriage in Lintao (Titao), Gansu, China. The oversea ministry of West China Mission of C&MA held the ritual of Wedding Witness for this new couple.

1925. Carter and Lora Holton attended the Annual Conference of the C&MA Gansu-Tibetan Border missionaries in Hezhou (Hechow, today’s Linxia), Gansu.

1925. The Holtons were the first missionaries appointed by the Christian and Missionary Alliance to the Muslim field in Gansu (that time it covered Haidong Prefecture in Qinghai Province). They studied the Turkic language with a Turkish-speaking teacher, had a large vocabulary and translated about a thousand sentences into the Salar dialect. They wrote them down and processed into the memory cards and practiced them, held dialogue and imitating in conversation based on these Turkic vocabulary and sentences.

The latter part of 1925, the Holtons rented a house in Xunhua (Shunhua), Qinghai and began their work among the Salar Muslims in that region.

August 14-22, 1926. Mr. Holton attended the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Lintan (Taozhou in that time) Old City, Gansu.

April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1927. Carter and Lora Holton’s first child, Myrtle Ruth Holton was born in the Borden Memorial Hospital of Inland China Mission in Hezhou (Linxia), Gansu, China. Rev. George Harris and his wife of Inland China Mission were also in Hezhou, however, according to the recalling from Mrs. Harris, the Holtons had the warm-heart and be ready extend their hands to help others. Even Mrs. Holton herself was in pregnant but she took

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<sup>2</sup> “Congress of Bands Rally”, *The Alliance Weekly*, March 31, 1923, p. 78.

care of Mrs. Harris as she saw the Harris family in difficulties.

May, 1927. The American and British consulates told their nationals to leave Gansu due to dangerous political unrest. The Holtons left hastily with their one-month-old baby girl. They floated down the Yellow River on goatskin rafters for twenty-four days, along with others who were fleeing. During the journey from Lanzhou to Baotou they suffered dangerous trail and met the blackmail from the local bandits and finally escaped away from the chaotic areas.

1927. Unable to return to Gansu, the Holtons with baby Myrtle went from China to Japan, then later on to the United States where they lived in Seattle, Washington.

1927-1928. Carter and Lora Holton attended Seattle Pacific College, in Seattle, Washington where they completed their college requirements and both earned a BS degree upon graduating.

September 4, 1928 Mr. Carter Holton was ordained to the ministry at the annual Pacific Northwest District Conference of the C&MA in Seattle, Washington; he chaired the evening prayer in New Castle Town, Washington. Mrs. Lora Holton swore to dedicate her life to the course of God at the closing session of the Annual of the Pacific Northwest District Conference of the C&MA on September 6 of the same year.

1928. The Holton family returned to Gansu, staying in Linxia (Hezhou that time) and found the people suffering so greatly from warfare, famine and pestilence. Mr. Holton and his wife distributed food for the famine relief and gave medical help and encouragement to the suffering people and reduced their hardship.

1929. In Hezhou (Hochow), Carter Holton contracted typhoid fever from the disaster's victims due to his active participation in distributing the charity food, and his condition was severe. Mrs. Carter, who was six months pregnant, was unfortunately infected while taking care of her husband. At the critical moment of their lives, the couple had already written a will entrusting Chinese Christians to temporarily take care of their young daughter. Chinese Christians in Hezhou were very sad, and prepared buying wood to make two coffins for their funeral service. However, they prayed for Pastor Holton and his wife for healing. Gradually, the bodies of Carter Holton and his wife miraculously recovered. Unfortunately, their premature son ultimately died. ("West China," *The Alliance Weekly*, August 24, 1929, 556; Myrtle Dillon, *My Life and Testimony* (2016), 16.)

1929-1930. The Holtons' family was anxious to get on to Xunhua for the missionary work but due to the Muslim rebellion in Gansu and Qinghai provinces, they were blocked on the way of home back and temporarily stayed in Labrang Temple (Xiahe County, Gansu). Their family stayed with the neighborhood with the family of Rev. Marion Griebenow who did the missionary work there. They preached the gospel among the Tibetans and the Hui people. The Holtons learned the Tibetan language by taking this advantage.

1930. The Holtons returned to Xunhua for missionary work. It was a most difficult time of turmoil launched by the Muslims, and they were robbed of their possessions on the home

journey and in the restless surroundings by bandits. They settled down in Cao Tan Ba Village outside of Jishi Town, and offered the medical services and taught the language to the Salar Muslims and their children while they preached the gospel messages. In the period of the latter 1928 to the year of 1933, Rev. Holton took lot of photos on the social life of Salar Muslims and Tibetans.

Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1931. Mr. and Mrs Holton's second daughter, Lora Jean Holton was born in the Borden Memorial Hospital, Lanzhou, Gansu, China.

1932. The Holtons spent 8 days traveling from Xunhua to Lanzhou, Gansu for the missionary conference in Lanzhou.

On June 20, 1931 *the Alliance Weekly* published an article "Back to the Kansu-Tibetan Border" written by Mr. Thomas Moseley, a missionary of C&MA which says: "To the Northeast of our Tibetan field the Rev. and Mrs. Carter Holton may be found pouring out their lives among the Salar Mohammedans at City of Shunhua. They have been called to one of the most difficult tasks on our West China Field. This clan of Moslems originally arrived in Northwest China from the wilds of Central Asia. They are the powder pot of the surrounding Mohammedan territory. Brigandage and highway robbery are their pastime, and farming and trading their usual mode of gaining a livelihood. Mr. and Mrs. Holton, passing through the severe strain of the siege and capture of Minchow by Mohammedan brigands, stricken down at death's door by typhus, and robbed of their possessions by bandits, still press on, praying through their trials and praising God for the glorious victory ahead."<sup>3</sup>

May 21, 1932. Mr. Holton's article: "Among the Salars of the Tibetan Borderland" was published in *the Alliance Weekly*. He wrote in this article: "Some six months ago we opened a chapel in the city. On the whole we have had a good hearing, but most of those who come are either Chinese or Chinese Moslems. We live in a Salar village outside the west gate of the city and receive a number of Salar guests. In this way we reach many, but the best way to reach them is in their own villages."<sup>4</sup>

1933, the first week of May. The Holtons participated in the missionary conference in Minchow (Minxian), Gansu.

Late June, 1933. Rev. Holton met Dr. Samuel Zwemer and his son-in-law Rev. Claude Pickens in Lanzhou from where Dr. Zwemer and Rev. Pickens went to Xining of Qinghai for missionary investigation. On July 8<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Zwemer and Rev. Pickens via Hualong (Bayanron at that time) came to visit the Holton's family in Xunhua where they accepted and appreciated the Holton's hospitality. Dr. Zwemer said that Rev. Holton speaks Chinese and Tibetan like a native. He had a large collection of Arabic books received from the Akhung. On July 10<sup>th</sup> Rev. Holton accompanied Dr. Zwemer and Rev. Pickens traveling to Hezhou (Linxia) where the Conference on Muslims held with Dr. Zwemer for several

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Moseley: "Back to the Kansu-Tibetan Border", *the Alliance Weekly*, June 20, 1931, p. 402.

<sup>4</sup> Rev. C.D. Holton: "Among the Salars of the Tibetan Borderland", *the Alliance Weekly*, May 21, 1932, p. 329.

missionary societies. Rev. Holton participated in this conference.

Sept. 2, 1933. Mr. Holton's article: "The Salars of Kansu, West China" was published in *the Alliance Weekly*. He introduced in this article: "Though they have lived in their present location on the Tibetan border for more than five hundred years, they still number not more than twenty-five thousand people. But what they lack in numbers they make up in influence. Salar ahungs occupy many positions of leadership throughout northwest China. Salar officers and soldiers fill a very important place in the army in Chinghai and northwest Kansu. Like most Moslems, the Salars are very religious. Each village, no matter how small, has its own mosque. Many of these are very well built. From the minaret, the call to prayer goes forth five times a day without fail. Most of the middle aged and elderly men are found in the mosque at prayer time. The main service on Friday is held in the large central mosque of each district, with men from all the near-by villages attending. There are no mosques or special services for women. It is said that old women are allowed to attend the evening service in the mosque if they stay to the rear, but I have never heard of a woman taking advantage of this. Most of them take little or no interest in their own or any other religion, though some of them say the prayers in their own homes."<sup>5</sup>

Jan. 13, 1934. Mr. Holton's article: "Moslem Problems" was published in *the Alliance Weekly*. He pointed out: "That is, the adherents of those religions with little of the truth, such as the animistic religions, are more easily won to Christ than the followers of such religions as Mohammedanism, which contains much that is true. The devout Moslem believes more of what we call the Fundamentals of Christianity than many modernists. Among other things, he believes in the creation, the flood, many of the Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, such as Moses, Abraham, and David. He believes in the virgin birth of Christ, His ascension, and His near return. What he does not believe in regard to Christ centers mainly around His propitiatory death and His resurrection."<sup>6</sup>

1934. Rev. Holton and Rev. Snyder<sup>7</sup> took a 14-day tour of 150 miles to market towns in the Dongxiang, near in Linxia (Hezhou). Rev. Snyder and Rev. Holton visited 14 markets for missionary work among the Dongxiang Muslims, preaching and distributing literature in Chinese and Arabic on their traveling journey, which was eagerly received by their listeners and treated friendly.

1934. The Holtons went on furlough with their two daughters leaving Gansu March 14<sup>th</sup>, first traveling by cart for 8 days, then continuing through heavy rain, snow and bandit infested country on their way to the coast. They left China by ship on May 15<sup>th</sup> and arrived in Los Angeles, California May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1934, then went on to Seattle, Washington.

1934-1936. Rev. Holton was the speaker at churches and at missionary conventions while on furlough. He studied Arabic and Islam with Dr. Samuel Zwemer, a professor at

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<sup>5</sup> Carter Holton: "the Salars of Kansu, West China", *the Alliance Weekly*, September 2, 1933, p. 552.

<sup>6</sup> Carter D. Holton: "Moslem Problems", *the Alliance Weekly*, January 13, 1934, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> In the materials published in Hong Kong, he was named as Song Changren 宋昌仁, this a mistake; it should be De Wenhua 德文华 which both confirmed by author's fieldwork and the recalling from Robert Carlson, the son of Edwin Carlson, the early period missionary in Gansu and Qinghai province.

Princeton Seminary. Mrs. Holton had medical treatment and improved health.

Aug. 1936. The Holton family sailed from Seattle for Shanghai, China.

1937. Carter and Lora Holton were eager to get to Gansu although there was much political unrest and fighting in China. They traveled from Tianjin to Beijing where Rev. Holton took photos to record the mosques and life of the Muslims, their Islamic culture there as he visited several famous mosques. Afterward the Holtons went to Xi'an where they met the Griebenows, their fellow missionaries. Mrs. Griebenow with her young son and Mrs. Holton took an airplane from Xi'an into Lanzhou to avoid the dangerous roads. Mr. Griebenow and Mr. Holton went there by truck taking three days. 1937. The two Holton daughters were sent to study in the Chefoo China Inland Mission School in Yantai, Shandong.

May 16-23, 1937. The Holtons participated in the Delegates' conference in Titao (Lintao), Gansu. Mr. Wang Mingdao was invited from Xi'an to Titao for this conference.

Aug. 21-Sept. 1, 1937. The Holtons attended the yearly Gansu-Tibetan Border Mission Conference in Hezhou (Linxia), Gansu Province.

1937. The Holtons were now stationed in Hezhou (Linxia) to reach the large Muslim population there and also to work actively in the Chinese church in the city of Hezhou.

End of 1937. Mr. Holton made a trip to Xunhua with Mr. Charles Notson to find a suitable compound for the Notsons to live and work. Mr. Holton's many Muslim friends welcomed and greeted him in Xunhua, responding to the Holtons' past kindness and interest in their welfare (medical work and charity work).

1939-1940. Carter Holton traveled via Labrang to Songpan, Sichuan with his missionary colleagues. After preaching among the people, Mr. Holton continually rode on horse to Chengdu, from there he undertook the hardship traveled to Chongqing, the capital of the warring time. Then Mr. Holton met his wife and took the plane traveling to Hong Kong. They met their two daughters who studied at the school for the missionary children in Chefoo of Shandong and spent their vacation in Hong Kong. They stayed at Institute of Christian & Mission Alliance in Cheng Chow Island of Hong Kong. After that the Holtons returned back to Gansu for their missionary life.

1940. The Bible School would be re-opened in Titao (Lintao) after it had been closed for several years. Rev. Holton was appointed temporary overseer of the school and assistant to the principal, Rev. Paul Keo.

Nov. 1940. In Lanzhou, Gansu, Rev. Holton met Rev. Alfred Snead, the Foreign Secretary of the C&MA, who was touring their China mission stations, including the Gansu-Tibetan Border. After two days in Lanzhou they traveled by horseback with three fellow missionaries for three days through high snowy mountains to the Holton's home in Hezhou. There they were heartily welcomed and entertained. After two days they left Hezhou, passing Muslim mosques and tombs (shrines of the Sufi saints) as they traveled, and visiting other mission stations such as Hezuo, Minzhou (Minxian), Zhuoni, Taochow (Lintan) and Titao (Lintao) in the Gansu area.

Very possibly in this year or the year next, Rev. Holton was invited by the Living Buddha of Youning Temple in Huzhu County, and the Living Buddha of the Lamar temples in Minhe County, Qinghai Province to participate in the Lamar Buddhist rituals hosted by Tu People. Mr. Holton using his camera took more than sixty pieces of the photos on the customs and culture of the Tu ethnic group and their Tibetan Lamar Buddhism rituals in these two locations and left very rare historical materials of the Tu's culture.

Winter 1941. The two Holton daughters came to Shanghai from the Mission School in Chefoo (Yantai) then sailed to the USA, with other missionary children as advised by the American Consul and the C&MA Foreign Secretary Rev. A. Snead, due to war with Japan. In the USA they attended school in Florida. The Holtons remained in Gansu and Qinghai provinces for the missionary work.

1941. Rev. Holton attended the conference in Minzhou, Gansu.

1942. The Holtons in Hezhou rented and had a large garden of vegetables, fruits and flowers, which they shared with neighbors and missionaries. They made many friends and introduced nutritious vegetables (including potato) and fruits by cultivating and transplanting the seeds from the America, which helped in time of famines in the southern Gansu. Rev. Holton traveled extensively with the Chinese pastors to market towns, preaching to large crowds and distributing literature in Chinese and Arabic. Their missionary activities attracted the peoples from the various ethnic groups in the region.

Nov. 20, 1943. Mr. Holton's article, "Streams of Blessing in Kansu" was published in *the Alliance Weekly*. He narrated his work in the report: "About noon yesterday we had a baptismal service in which eleven (three men and eight women and girls) followed their Lord in the waters of baptism. After that there was a testimony meeting which was concluded by a communion service. Some of the testimonies were very fine, and all told of the Lord's goodness to them. ...One man and his wife who were baptized here had a most interesting experience. For a long time the wife had been troubled with demons. They have used all sorts of methods to try to rid themselves of the demons. They have had Chinese and Tibetan priests in to chant, and they had erected some things in the yard that were supposed to counteract the demon influence. However, none of these things helped her."<sup>8</sup>

1943. The annual Conference of the Chinese Church was held in Hezhou with Mr. Paul Keo (Gou Xitian) the main speaker.

1943. Mrs. Holton started an evening class for teenage girls and young women and Mr. Holton opened a class for men. The classes were well attended. Over 350 children attended the Sunday School run by Mrs. Holton where many children had to stand, as there was not room in the small chapel.

Dec. 4, 1943. Mrs. Holton's article "Darkness & Light" was published in *the Alliance Weekly*. She was so proud in telling the readers: "We have opened our home to the young people on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. They have Bible study, testimony, singing

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<sup>8</sup> Carter D. Holton: "Streams of Blessing in Kansu", *the Alliance Weekly*, November 20, 1943, pp. 744-745.



of hymns, and prayer, and take almost complete charge of the meetings themselves. The attendance among the young women has been especially gratifying, and many of them have been helped in their Christian experience and are more prepared for positions of leadership. Every Sunday morning at nine o'clock there is a special service for children before the regular services begin. At times our little chapel is packed to capacity with every bench filled and much of the standing room occupied. A few weeks ago we had the children counted and were surprised to find more than 350, not including babes in arms.... This summer on the first day of vacation we began a week of special children's services. Some of the older young people helped in these meetings, and the children turned out splendidly. It was a time of joy as they hid away new Scriptures in their hearts and their voices rang out to new hymns, "Jesus, my best friend," "Apart from Jesus there is no other way," and "Jesus can save to the uttermost." Most of the songs we use among the children are the very words of Scripture put to Chinese tunes, and how they do love to sing them!"<sup>9</sup>

1943. During World War II, Mr. and Mrs. Holton had to leave China by the flying "over the Hump" by airplane crossing the world roof the Himalaya Mountain to India and then went by ship to the United States arriving in California in February 1944. During staying in USA the Holtons continually participated in the activities of C&MA, and they concerned the fate of the China's resistance to the Japanese invasion and the suffering of the peoples in Northwest China. They could not forget the friendship made with many Christian friends and lot of other ethnic friends including the Muslims and Tibetan nomads with whom they had lived together for many years.

May 14, 1947. The Holtons returned to China, sailing from San Francisco for Shanghai from where they took en route traveling through the mountains and rivers in hardship, and finally came to West China and their home in Hezhou (Linxia), Gansu. They got the chance coming back West China for the missionary work after the end of the China's Anti-Japanese War.

In the early of 1948, Rev. William Carlsen and Rev. Charles Notson drove the Holtons by jeep from Titao (Lintao) to their home in Hezhou (Linxia). They traveled over steep mountains, bad roads and crossed frozen rivers and streams with many difficulties. While their car nearly reached to Hezhou, due to the factor of the frozen river could not bear the weight of the jeep, the car sank into the bottom of the river. After two days' great efforts, the missionaries under the helps from the local people hauled the jeep up to the bank by horses and mules, then it was pulled into the city.

July 1948. The Holtons attended the thirty-eighth annual conference of the C&MA Gansu-Tibetan Border missionaries. Rev. Holton was elected as Chairman of the group. Much growth was reported in the Chinese churches with 122 baptisms and large attendance at all services, pointed out by the conference's annual report.

June, 1949. The recently arrived new missionaries in the Gansu-Tibetan field were evacuated with their children to the safety of Hong Kong, then they went on to other fields

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<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Lora N. Holton: "Darkness & Light", *the Alliance Weekly*, December 4, 1943, p. 777.

of service in the Southeast Asia and South Asia. This left only a few of the senior missionaries, including the Holtons, who remained in Gansu in spite of the American consular advice to leave as soon as possible.

Later June 1949. Rev. Holton went by airplane to Kowloon, Hong Kong to meet Rev. Alfred Snead, the Foreign Secretary of the C&MA. They met with the representatives of all China committees discussing the Communist army advances and possible evacuation of the remaining missionaries. On June 30<sup>th</sup> Rev. Holton flew back to Gansu.

Aug. 1949. Rev. and Mrs. Holton hurriedly left their home in Hezhou (Linxia) just one week before their city was taken over by the People Liberation Army led by the Communists. They were so hasty that they only carried two pieces of the luggage, all other properties and the literatures and documents were left in their residence in Hezhou. The remaining members of the C&MA foreign mission staff in Gansu also evacuated to Hong Kong, they traveled via Lanzhou to Guangdong and arrived in Hong Kong at the end of 1949.

1949-1950. The Holtons and other missionaries worked in the refugee camp at Rennie's Mill in Junk Bay in the British Colony of Hong Kong and in Tong Hua Hospital of Hong Kong Island where thousands of refugees were escaping from mainland China. They also taught the Bible among the children of the refugees.

Sept. 12, 1950. When they had seen no hope to return to China to assume the missionary work, Mr. and Mrs. Holton returned to the United States in San Francisco, California.

1950-1951. Mr. and Mrs. Holton did some traveling and speaking at the church services for the C&MA. They talked about the situation of the Christians in Northwest China and the missionary course of the C&MA. They appealed the churches to concern Christianity in China.

1951. The Holtons made their home in Riverside, California where Mr. Holton accepted a position with the Burpee Seed Company, which he continued until his retirement in 1971. Although they did not involve in the missionary work, they actively participated in their church and community and continued to have a strong interest in China and missionary work. During that period Mr. Holton always still remembered his missionary life in Gansu-Qinghai provinces, reminded his friends of Muslims, Tibetans and Han Chinese there, and he always concerned the fate of the Christians in the area of Hezhou. Since then on the Holtons actively involved in church services of American Japanese immigrant community in California. The young daughter of the Holtons Lora Jean Heurlin (83 years old) said to the author in the interview: "Daddy always missed the life in Qinghai and Gansu in that period, and he said: 'his best friends were in Xunhua and Hezhou'".

Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1963. In Glendale, California Mr. Holton attended the funeral service of Rev. Calvin Franklin Snyder<sup>10</sup>, a follow missionary in the Gansu-Tibetan Border, and gave a speech of introducing the life and contribution of Mr. Snyder.

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<sup>10</sup> The source of Hong Kong called his Chinese name as Song Changren 宋昌仁, actually the Chinese name should be De Wenhua 德文华, please refer to the footnote abovementioned.

Sept. 12, 1969 Glendale, California. Mr. Holton represented the Gansu-Tibetan Border and Foreign Department of the C&AM at the memorial service of his former co-worker in China, and a long time's friend, Mrs. Phoebe Snyder, wife of Rev. Calvin Snyder. He gave a speech to memorize her work.

1971. Mr. Holton retired from his work with the Burpee Seed Company.

April 26, 1973. Mr. Holton passed away in Riverside, California at the age of seventy two years. *The Alliance Weekly* announced his death news, and introduced his contribution to the missionary course in Northwest China. He is and will be missed and remembered by his family and his friends around the world.

October 29, 1987 Mrs. Lora Holton passed away at "Home of Missionaries" in California at the age of eighty-six years and she is also missed by her family and relatives, friends. During the years before Mrs. Lora Holton passed away she received the interviews from the scholars of the institutions in Europe and the America, briefly introduced the photos and the film negatives left by her husband. She gave a simple illustration to the scholars coming from Cambridge University in Britain on the colored slides left by Rev. Carter Holton. Before the 1970s *The British Encyclopedia* and America's *the National Geography* magazine published several pieces of photos on the natural landscape of Qinghai and Gansu taken by Rev. Carter Holton. The museum of Nyack City, New Jersey State collects several pieces of the jewelries which were bought by Rev. Holton from the Tibetan nomads in the areas of Qinghai and Gansu provinces.

The Chinese version of the article (Chronicle of Rev. Carter D. Holton) was published in *Qinghai Mingzu Yanjiu* (Research on Ethnology in Qinghai), No. 2, 2014, pp. 157-161. The author has done a slight revising again before it is to be included in this book.

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