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Joseph Francis Rock (1884–1962)

Travel diaries of a botanist and ethnographer from Lanzhou to Koko Nor (Qinghai) 1925 and from Chone to Songpan 1927 (Eastern Tibet / West China)

Edited from Rock's revised manuscripts by
Hartmut Walravens

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Preface

Joseph Francis ROCK (1884–1962) has become well-known by his many publications in the fields of botany, Southwest China, and especially, the Naxi. He can justly be called the father of Naxi studies even if single researchers preceded him with individual articles. The fact that he collected about 10,000 ritual pictographic Naxi manuscripts and translated and explained many of these with the help of *dto-mbas* (priests, sorcerers), that he prepared a two volume Naxi dictionary[1] which is a kind of encyclopedia, and provided a comprehensive history and geography of the Naxi may justify this statement.[2]

Also on the botanical side, ROCK's achievements are considerable. He became – after William HILLEBRAND[3] – the second father of Hawaiian botany, which is easily proved by his publications.[4] From the ten thousands of plant specimens that he collected especially in Southwest and Northwest China, botanical gardens all over the world profited. The herbaria at Harvard University, the U.S. National Museum (Smithsonian Institution) and the Arnold Arboretum hold most of the original collections while the Museum of Comparative Zoology acquired almost two thousand bird skins through ROCK.[5]

ROCK was a great book collector, and while he boasted an excellent collection in his chosen fields of study he also provided American institutions with rare items that he found. A large part of his Chinese library went to the University of Washington.

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1 *A [1]Na-[2]khi-English encyclopedic dictionary*. By J. F. ROCK, Honorary Research Associate, Far Eastern Institute, University of Washington. Part 1–2. Roma: Is.M.E.O. 1963, 1972. XLII, 512, 589 pp. 57 pl. (Serie Orientale Roma 28.)

2 ROCK's publications are recorded in Joseph Franz Rock (1884–1962): *Berichte* .... 2002 (see below).

3 Wilhelm F. HILLEBRAND (1821–1886): *Flora of the Hawaiian Islands*. A description of the phanerogams and vascular cryptogams. London: Williams & Norgate; New York: Westermann 1888. Reprint: New York, London: Hafner 1965. XCVI, 673 pp. – Hillebrand lived in Hawaii from 1851 to 1871.

4 It may suffice to mention here *The indigenous trees of the Hawaiian Islands*. By Joseph ROCK, Botanist of the College of Hawaii, Consulting Botanist, Board of Commissioners of Agriculture and Forestry, Territory of Hawaii. With two-hundred and fifteen photo-engravings. Published under patronage. Honolulu 1913. 518 pp. incl. 218 pl. – *List of Hawaiian names of plants*. By Joseph ROCK, Consulting Botanist, Board of Agriculture and Forestry. Honolulu: Hawaiian Gazette 1913. 20 pp. (Territory of Hawaii, Board of Agriculture and Forestry. Botanical Bulletin 2.)

5 Outram BANGS and James L. PETERS: Birds collected by Dr. Joseph Rock in Western Kansu and Eastern Tibet. *Bulletin of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College* 68.1928, 311–381.

Last not least, ROCK was an excellent photographer. Major collections of pictures (prints) are found at the National Geographic Society, the Library of Congress (ex CIA?), Harvard University, Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh and Berlin State Library.[6]

It may be useful here to briefly mention some of the major publications on ROCK:

Stephanne B. SUTTON: *In China's border provinces. The turbulent career of Joseph Rock*. Illustrated with photographs. New York: Hastings House 1974. 334 pp.

H. WALRAVENS: Joseph Franz Rock (1884–1962). Sammler und Forscher. Eine Übersicht. *Oriens Extremus* 38.1995, 209–237

H. WALRAVENS: *Joseph Franz Rock (1884–1962): Berichte, Briefe und Dokumente des Botanikers, Sinologen und Nakhi-Forschers*. Mit einem Schriftenverzeichnis. Herausgegeben von H. Walravens. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag 2002. 452 pp. (VOHD Supplement. 36.)

H. WALRAVENS (ed.): Joseph Franz Rock: *Expedition zum Amnye Machhen in Südwest-China im Jahre 1926*. Im Spiegel von Briefen und Tagebüchern. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2003. 237 pp. (Orientalistik Bibliographien und Dokumentationen 19.)

H. WALRAVENS (ed.): Joseph Franz Rock: *Briefwechsel mit E. H. Walker, 1938–1961*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2006. 328 pp. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte 738.)

H. WALRAVENS (ed.): *Joseph Franz Rock (1884–1962): Tagebuch der Reise von Chieng Mai nach Yünnan, 1921–1922*. Briefwechsel mit C. S. Sargent, University of Washington, Johannes Schubert und Robert Koc. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2007. 580 pp. (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte 757.)

H. WALRAVENS (ed.): *Joseph Franz Rock: Phytogeography of Northwest and Southwest China*. Edited with indices.
Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2010. 356 pp.
(Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte 799.)

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6 A number of excellent reproductions are given in ROCK's books, and especially also in his contributions to the *National Geographic Magazine*. There is one exhibition catalogue: Michael ARIS*: Lamas, princes, and brigands: Joseph Rock's photographs of the Tibetan borderlands of China*. With the assistance of Patrick BOOZ, and contributions by S. B. SUTTON and Jeffrey WAGNER. New York: China House Gallery 1992. 141 pp.

Manfred TAUBE (ed.) *Briefwechsel J. F. Rock – J. Schubert, 1935–1961*. Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 2009. 315 pp. (Sitzungsberichte, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften 782.)(Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens 64.)
H. WALRAVENS: Wolfram Eberhard and J. F. Rock and the ethnology of China. *Münchner Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 13.2009, 281–291
H. WALRAVENS (ed.): Briefe von Rolf Stein an J. F. Rock [1938–1961]. *Zentralasiatische Studien* 43.2014, 159–256
H. WALRAVENS: Rockiana. *Zentralasiatische Studien* 45.2016, 677–692
H. WALRAVENS (ed.): *Joseph Francis Rock: Travels in Eastern Tibet: Letters to the Botanist David Fairchild, 1922–1924, from Southwest China. Journey from the Xifan Kingdom of Muli to Mt. Konkaling in 1928.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2024. 193 pp. (Asien- und Afrika-Studien 61.)

The present edition

This book comprises two of (altogether 20 numbered) ROCK's field diaries from his travels in Eastern Tibet / Western China, which he himself titled:
– Diary IV: Lanzhou to Koko Nor Ba-bo or Babao 八寶.
Director Harvard Arnold Arboretum Asiatic Expedition from August 31, 1925 in part to November, 1925 (call no. in the archives of the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh (RBGE): GBR 235 JFR / 1 /1 /7)
– Diary VIII: Journey from Chone via Thewu country to Chongqing from March 9 to April 22, 1927 (call no. in the RBGE: GBR 235 JFR / 1/ 1/ 11)
They were selected because they describe two trips within the expedition funded by the Arnold Arboretum, Harvard University, 1925–1927. Another reason is that ROCK revised some of his diaries, probably during the Pacific War, at the request of the US Army Map Service; and the two selected diaries belong to the copies which Rock corrected and augmented, especially with regard to the toponyms.[7] The addition of the original spellings of Chinese and Tibetan names is of enormous value for research purposes.

Editorial notes

ROCK used the Wade/Giles transcription for Chinese (with a few variants) and a kind of pre-Wylie transcription for Tibetan, in his diaries. For the convenience of modern researchers the Chinese transcription has been changed

7 The unrevised version is also extant; when ROCK corrected and updated his draft for making it available to other scholars, he left out occasional subjective remarks, without suppressing any factual information on the trip.

to Hanyu pinyin by the editor. This was sometimes problematic in Diary 8 when the original spelling was not available, as it was not always clear whether Rock quoted the Chinese or Tibetan pronunciation.

More of a challenge, however, is the fact that ROCK used both spoken and written forms of Tibetan names; when mentioned for the first time the different spellings are sometimes given, including the Chinese transcriptions. Colloquial forms are sometimes quoted, but not always consistently. As ROCK refers sometimes to local pronunciations, it seemed inappropriate to try to standardize his spellings.

Rock's map of his travels is of considerable help for following his tracks as described in Diary 8. The original 10 sheet map is kept by the Harvard-Yenching Institute of Harvard University and is freely available online. The sheets relating to the Diary are reproduced in this book: *Choni Territory, Upper and Lower T'ieh-pu Country and Route to Sung P'an, 1925–1927*. [8]

The given compass bearings are useful for topographers while the occasional references to photo numbers would require additional research to identify the negatives or prints. The large amount of ROCK's photos in Berlin and the Library of Congress has not been worked up so far.

The present editor refrained from making changes in ROCK's text, except for some obvious writing errors and the occasional addition of Chinese characters.

The Sources

Rocks papers were divided by his will between the Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh and the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft (DMG). Edinburgh was to receive the botanical material while the ethnographical and language notes and manuscripts went to Marburg where part of the holdings of the former Prussian State Library was housed. The papers were separated by the Indologist Klaus Ludwig JANERT[9] who acted as a kind of Amanuensis to ROCK during his term of work at Marburg.

8 URL: https://hgl.harvard.edu/catalog/harvard-rockmapvii-453934 (Internet Archive 22.9.2024); https://hgl.harvard.edu/catalog/harvard-rockmapix-453936 (Internet Archive 22.9.2024); https://hgl.harvard.edu/catalog/harvard-rockmapx-453937 (Internet Archive 22.9.2024).

9 1922–1994. He became later professor of Indian Studies at Cologne University. See Klaus KARTTUNEN: Persons of Indian Studies. https://whowaswho-indology.info/2784/janert-klaus-ludwig/ (Internet Archive: 17.9.2024)