

**The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York**

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 4

Finding Aid for

Robert Ernest Hume Papers, 1817



Credit to: MRL 4: Robert Ernest Hume Papers, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

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Summary Information

Creator: Robert Ernest Hume, 1877 – 1948
Title: Robert Ernest Hume Papers
Inclusive dates: 1817
Abstract: Palm leaf book containing Buddhist ordination vows from Thailand. Given by Robert Ernest Hume, a missionary to India and later the Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions at Union Theological Seminary.
Size: 1 OS box, 1.50 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance: Given as a gift to the Burke Theological Library by Robert Hume on June 9, 1943. Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access: Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions: The collection is unrestricted to readers, however it is extremely fragile with a glass cover which will **RESTRICT** handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation: Item description, MRL 4: Robert Ernest Hume Papers, box #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Robert Ernest Hume was born on March 20, 1877 in Ahmednagar, India, to missionary parents Robert Allen Hume and Abbie Burgess. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale University, and received his B.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1904. A year later he was ordained a Congregationalist minister. In 1907, he married Laura Caswell and traveled to India to serve as a missionary under the American Board of Congregational Foreign Missions.

Hume served on the faculty of Ahmednagar Theological Seminary in India for two years before becoming the editor of Bombay's bilingual weekly, *Dhyanodaya*, in 1909. During his seven years as editor he also taught at Williams College, helped to organize the Social Service League in Bombay, and lectured at universities across India.

Hume returned to the United States in 1914 and was inaugurated that same year as the Marcellus Hartley Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions at Union Theological Seminary. After four years he was transferred to the Charles Butler Chair of History of Religions, a position which he held until his retirement in 1944. His book entitled *The World's Living Religions* was widely circulated; it was the only religious book other than the Bible to be included in the time capsule at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Hume also served as president of the American Theological Society in 1939, and was a member of the American Association of the Advancement of Science. Hume passed away on June 14, 1948 in New York City.

Sources:

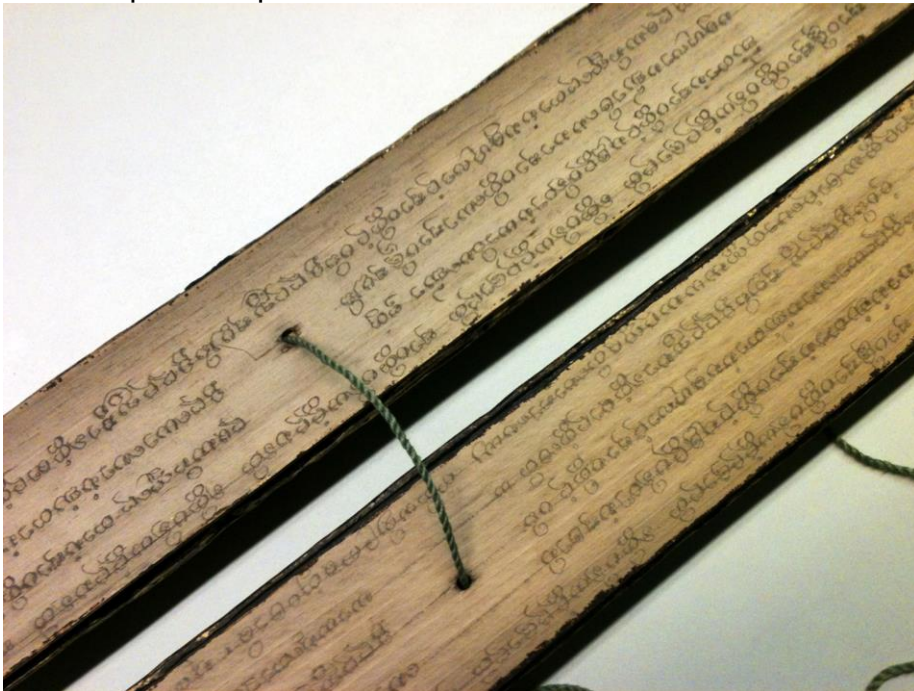
- Handy, Robert F., *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1987.
- Westinghouse Electric & Manufacturing Company, "The Story of the Westinghouse Time Capsule," East Pittsburgh, PA: Westinghouse, 1939.

Shavit, David, "Hume, Robert Ernest," *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1990, 252.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection contains one palm leaf book with mirror glass cover from Chiangmai, Siam [Thailand]. The book is written in Lao characters, and contains *karmacacha*, the ordination vows for a *bhiksu* (a Buddhist monk). It is dated on Friday, the 3rd of the waxing moon, in the fourth month of Julasakarat Era 1179 [January 1817 A.D.].

Detail of palm script:



Processing

Preservation was completed on the palm leaf book, which has been placed in a box that is cut to size. The book is wrapped in tissue and tied with cotton tying tape.

Related Sources

- Hume, Robert E., "Hinduism and War," *The American Journal of Theology*, vol. 20, 1916, 31-44.
 Hume, Robert E., transl., *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads, with an Outline of the Philosophy of the Upanishads*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1921.
 Hume, Robert E., ed., *Treasure-house of the Living Religions*, New York: Scribner, 1932.
 Hume, Robert E., *The World's Living Religions*, New York: Scribner, 1924.
 Hume, Robert E., "Will Jesus Christ Satisfy the Religious Needs of the World?: Inaugural address of the Reverend Robert Ernest Hume, [S.l.: s.n.], 1914.

Further Sources

The Missionary Research Library at the Burke Library (Columbia University Libraries) has other collections relating to Southeast Asia and missionary work. These can be located on the website at: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives/mrl.html#series4>.

Burke also offers other collections which contain palm leaf manuscripts including C. P. Bush Papers and the John Franklin Goucher Papers. More information can be found online: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives/mrl.html>.

The Burke Library also houses the records of Union Theological Seminary, where Hume was educated and later worked as a professor. More information can be found: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives/uts.html>.

Contents list

Box	Item
OS	[FRAGILE] Palm leaf book, 1817