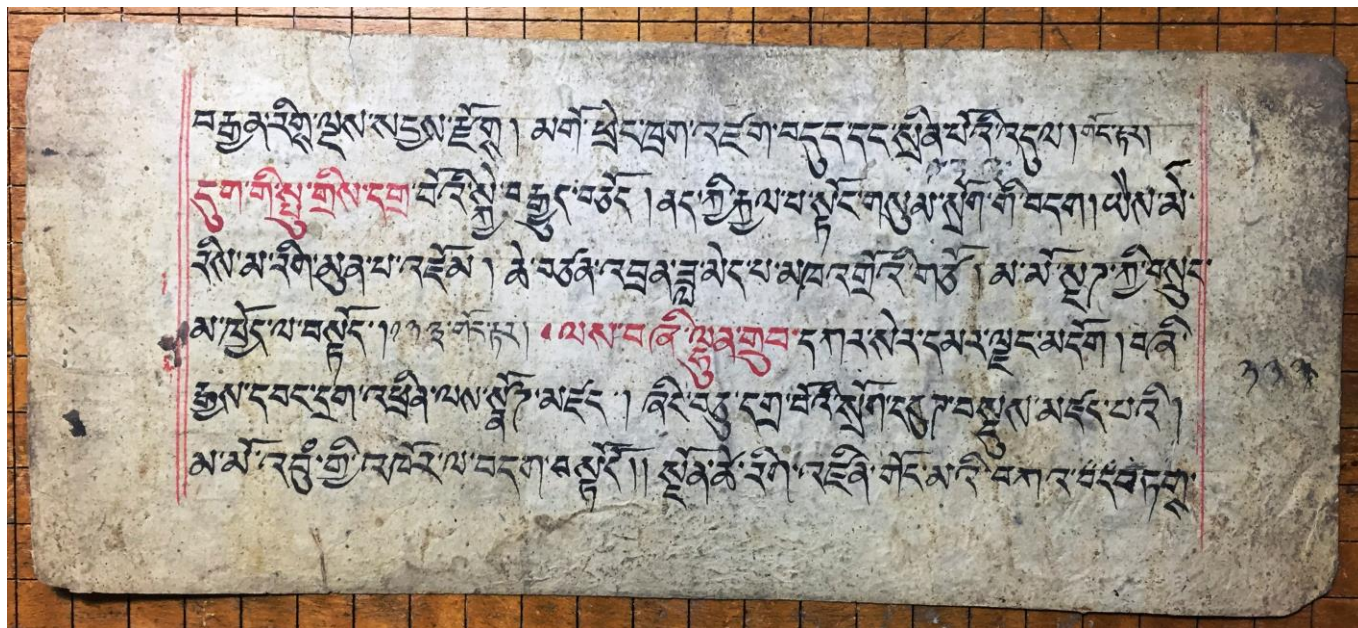


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 5

Finding Aid for

East Asia General Records, 1885 – 1960



Tibetan manuscript. Credit to: MRL5: East Asia General Records, box 2, folder 1,
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, December 2014
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: East Asia General Records
Inclusive dates: 1885-1960
Bulk dates: 1955-1960
Abstract: Information related to missions in East Asia. Contains a book, manuscripts and planning documents.
Size: 2 boxes, 0.50 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:** 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. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL5: East Asia General Records, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The Missionary Research Library was created by John R. Mott in 1914 after the World Missionary Conference, held in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1910. It was created in order to be not only a resource for missionaries, but a means to document the missionary movement. With funding from John D. Rockefeller, Mott stated,

“We are now ready to...secure the most complete and serviceable missionary library and archives in the world. I desire it to be thoroughly interdenominational, ecumenical and international. It should be made preeminently rich in source material.”

It was located at the Madison Avenue headquarters of the Foreign Missionary Conference of North America. By the 1920s, funding was becoming scarcer; therefore it was moved to the Brown Tower of the Union Theological Seminary, New York City in 1929.

The Library was an important center of information and research. Active missionaries would consult the material of the Missionary Research Library while on furlough. Much of the Library's success was due to the director and librarian, Charles H. Fahs. Upon his retirement in 1948, the MRL's financial difficulties continued until it was finally integrated as one with the Burke Library's collections in 1967. In 2004, the Burke Library was fully integrated with the Columbia University Library System.

Sources:

- Anderson, Gerald H. “To The Ends of the Earth: American Protestants in Pursuit of Mission.” *A Century of Church History: The Legacy of Philip Schaff*, edited by Henry W. Bowden, 168-215. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.
- Anderson, Gerald H. “Research Libraries in New York City Specializing in Christian Missions.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Aug. 1966), 733-736.

Frame, Cynthia. "Missionary Research Library Collection: From Idea to Special Collection," *Union News*, Summer 1998.

Price, Frank W. "Specialized Research Libraries in Missions." *Library Trends* 9 (2) 1960: Current Trends in Theological Libraries: 175-185.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The Missionary Research Library created and collected many individual items to document a specific topic. This is one such collection, which focuses on the missions that took place in East Asia. The items were pulled from unknown locations and have no relationship to one another other than they contain information that is generally related.

The Tibetan manuscripts in box 2, folder 4 have a note accompany them that says:

Certificate: I certify that the Manuscripts accompanying this note were brought from the great Monastery of Lhasa, Tibet, by the English Army which occupied Lhasa during the Tibetan war. These leaves were part of a collection under the personal care of D. Macdonald of Darjeeling one of the three interpreters who accompanied the Army. On arrival in Calcutta he was employed by the Government of India for several months classifying the manuscripts for the Calcutta and English Museums. During that time he lived in my house and did some of his work there, so that I am in a position to certify to the genuineness of these leaves as they came direct from Lhasa to me. They are part of a work on the Medicinal and religious properties of plants the smaller leaves being in the nature of an index and description. Signed: George Henderson, Missionary of the Methodist Mission 46, Dharamtala St., Calcutta. January 26th, 07.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. These materials were part of a large grouping of unprocessed and disorganized boxes. The order is imposed.

Further Sources

The Burke Library Archives offers many other collections related to missionaries and mission work in Asia. For more information, please [see the website](#).

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	[FRAGILE] Book, "Pagan and Christian Smyrna, and the Seven Churches of Asia," with an account of recent discoveries, and many original illustrations," by Henry J. Van-Lennep, 1885
2	1	Urban Churches in East Asia Program Manual, 1960
2	2	Conference on Asian Affairs, 1955-1957
2	3	East Asia Mission Conference Planning, 1925-1938
2	4	[FRAGILE] Tibetan Manuscripts donated by George Henderson [1907?]