

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

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 4

Finding Aid for

South and Southeast Asia General Records, 1897 – 1970



Burma photo album. Credit to:, MRL4: South and Southeast Asia General Records, box 6,
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, December 2014
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Summary Information

Creator: Missionary Research Library
Title: South and Southeast Asia General Records
Dates: 1897-1970
Abstract: Collections pertaining to committees, conferences, education, churches, Christianity, religion, missions, missionaries, and other subjects and topics in South and Southeast Asia. Collection contains reports, minutes, papers, photographs, and maps.
Size: 10 boxes, 4.25 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, MRL4: South and Southeast 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 South and Southeast 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 collection is grouped by the topic the material covers. The topics are missions and missionaries; Christianity, churches and religion; committees and conferences; reports and bulletins; education; albums and photographs; and subject files.

Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. The collection was organized following the "More Product, Less Process" method. This means that the collection was generally organized, but not taken to the folder level of description. The clips and staples were also left in the folders. This allows the collection to be made available more quickly and gives researchers a general idea of what is available in the collection.

Further Sources

The Burke Library Archives offers other collections related to South and Southeast Asia. For more information, please [see the website](#).

Columbia University Libraries also has the Starr East Asian Library, which contains collections specific to the study of East Asia, China, Japan, Korea and Tibet. For more information, please see [their website](#).

Contents list**Box****Contents**

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| 1 | National Christian Councils; Burma Baptist Convention Medical Education Committee; Madras Missionary Conference; Gujarat and Kathiawar Mission Conference; 1897-1958 |
| 2 | National Christian Council; Central Board of Christian Higher Education; Missionary Society Conferences; 1931-1950 |
| 3 | Indian Church Growth; Young Men's Christian Association in India; 1913-1930 |
| 4-5 | Missions; American Madura Mission; National Missionary Society of India; Mission Fields; Missionary Reflections on Thailand; American Baptist Foreign Mission Society reports; National Missionary Council of India; Missionary Union; 1917-1945 |
| 6 | Diary of Journey in 1905; Photo Albums from Burma [19??] |
| 7Roll | Poster: The Supreme Goal of the Suddhadvaita Saiva – Siddhanta School [19??] |

Subject and Topic Files

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| 8-9 | Indian Wisdom and Western Thought, annotated drafts, by Hans Jacobs, 1961 |
| 10 | Biographies; Studies from India; Reports and Newspaper Clippings; Communism; Nepal; Feltus, Books on Siam; White Fields of India; Christian Literature; 1908-1970 |