Guide to the W. Y. Evans-Wentz Buddhism and Eastern Religions Collection

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M0205

Department of Special Collections and University Archives
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URL: http://library.stanford.edu/spc
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Department of Special Collections and University Archives
Title: Evans-Wentz Buddhism and eastern religions collection
source: Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (Walter Yeeling)
Identifier/Call Number: M0205
Identifier/Call Number: 915
Physical Description: 20 Linear Feet(27 boxes, one oversize folder)
Date (inclusive): ca.1600-1922
Abstract: Collection of Buddhist and other Asian religious texts, the majority of which are 19th century manuscripts. There are also a small number of objects.
Scope and Contents
A collection relating to the religions of Asia, principally Sri Lanka, but also China, Tibet, and Southeast Asia. The bulk of the collection consists of Buddhist textual works assembled by Evans-Wentz on his travels, including palm leaf manuscripts and other medical and religious texts. Note that some material was added later to his collection and may not have been originally collected by him.
Identification of the works in this collection is based on the notation of Evans-Wentz. Similarly, the descriptions (dates, nature of the work, etc.) are as quoted from him, as well as from a pamphlet entitled, *Catalogue of Pali, Sinhalese, and Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Colombo Museum Library* (Colombo, Government Printer, 1901). Although there was consultation with various scholars in the process of reorganizing the collection in 2017-2018, some items remain unidentified.
Biography
Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, born February 2, 1878 in Trenton, New Jersey, attended Stanford University where he received his B.A. and his M.A. Evans-Wentz traveled extensively in Mexico, Europe, and the Far East. He spent several years in Tibet where he became a Buddhist monk. He was a pioneer in the field of Tibetan Buddhism and authored several books on the subject.
Preferred Citation:
[Identification of item] Evans-Wentz Buddhism and eastern religions collection, M0205, Dept. of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, Calif.
Provenance
Gift of Dr. Evans-Wentz, 1923; Louise Evans, 1975, and transfer from Stanford Museum, 1981.
Conditions Governing Access
Open for research. Note that material must be requested at least 36 hours in advance of intended use.
Conditions Governing Use
These materials are believed to be in the public domain. There are no restrictions on use of public domain materials.
Related Materials
Stanford Libraries holds the following related collections:
Notes concerning W.Y. Evans-Wentz (MISC0862) https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/4335715
Yoga Institute of America papers (M1135) donated by Louise Evans https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/4383808
Evans-Wentz was attending Stanford at the time of the 1906 earthquake, and letters discussing his experience have been digitized and transcribed here: https://www.fromthepage.com/stanforduniversityarchives/1906-earthquake/sc0206-b01-f14-evans-wentz-incident
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Buddhism -- Sri Lanka
Buddhism -- China -- Tibet Autonomous Region
Taoism -- China
Evans-Wentz, W. Y. (Walter Yeeling)
Guideline to the W. Y. Evans-Wentz

Box 1, Object 1a
A Folk Treatise On Astrology (as applied to man’s daily life and occupations) (Sinhalese) 299521
Scope and Contents note
"The auspicious moment for doing particular acts or the time when they should be avoided, as indicated by the Planets and constellations." -- English inscription on last leaf

Box 1, Object 1b
Medicine Books In Verse (Sinhalese) 299519
Scope and Contents
also written as "Medicine Books In Rimes." English inscription on last leaf indicates that text was written December 8th, 1935, "that having been no doubt a lucky day for writing." Arabic numerals used for pagination. A second medical text is included in the binding, also in Sinhalese, "Treats of Breathing, Dysentery, Fever, Rheumatism, Abscesses in newly-born children, etc. A well-known book held in high esteem by the Sinhalese people and rural Sinhalese doctors."

Box 1, Object 1c
Neket Pota, an horary astrology (Sinhalese) 299517
Scope and Contents
Possibly medical subject matter. Heavily illustrated. "from Badulla."

Box 2
Satipatthána Sutta (The Discourse on the Establishing of Mindfulness) (Pali-Sinhalese) 299515
Scope and Contents note
"The Satipatthána Sutta is a sermon by the Buddha on Meditation and is one of the most frequently copied of the Suttas, being one of the best known portions of the Buddhist scriptures amongst the people of Ceylon who are Buddhists. This sort of ms. in paraphrase is made use of by students in the monasteries in studying the Pali language, the language of all the canonical writings of the Ceylon Buddhists ...Cover of MS is a very fine specimen of Ceylon Satin Wood." Other version of text in box 9.

Box 3
Visuddhi Magga (Pali) 299513 circa 1800 - 1820
Scope and Contents note
A Pali prose work, being a compendium of the Buddhist scriptures, by Buddhaghosa Théra. This is a very important work, and is considered by all Southern Buddhists to be of the highest authority on questions relating to the Buddhist religion. It is considered to be Buddhaghosa’s first work during his three years’ sojourn in Ceylon, 930 A.D.

Box 4
Anguttara Nikaya (also known as Anguttara Sangiya) (Pali) 299511
Box 5
Anguttara Nikaya (Sinhalese) 299509
Scope and Contents note
One of the five sections of Sutta Pitaka: miscellaneous discourse and sermons of Buddha. Was wrapped in a cotton shroud. Satinwood boards, paginated. Begins in Pali, possibly a mix of languages.

Box 6
Majjhima Nikaya (Sinhalese) 299507 circa 1800
Scope and Contents note
One of the five sections of Sutta Pitaka: miscellaneous discourses and sermons of Buddha.
box 7  **Syámópasampadávata (Sinhalese)** 299505 circa 1780  
Scope and Contents note  
"An account of the embassies to Siam and the introduction of Siamese ordination of Buddhist monks to Ceylon, ..."written in Sinhalese prose by Buddharakhita Therea, a pupil of Velivita Pindapatika Saranankara. This Copy was made by Sidharta Buddharakkhita Late High Priest of Malwathu Viharaya, Kandy, Ceylon in 2318 A.B."

box 8  **Milinda Panha (Pali)** 299503 circa 1800  
Scope and Contents note  
A well-known Pali work, being questions on Buddhism by King Milinda, and replies thereto by Nágaséna Théra.

box 9  **Satipatthána Sutta (Sinhalese)** 299501  
Scope and Contents note  

box 10  **Unidentified Sinhalese or Pali manuscript** 299499  
Scope and Contents  
Transferred from the Stanford Museum.

box 11  **Unidentified Sinhalese or Pali manuscript** 299497  
Scope and Contents  
Transferred from the Stanford Museum.

box 12  **Abhidhamma Pitaka (Sinhalese)** 299495  
Scope and Contents note  
One of the three great divisions of the canon of the Buddhist scriptures, treating the metaphysics of Buddhism.

box 13, box 14, box 15, box 16, box 17  **Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā (The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Lines) (Tibetan)** 299493  
Scope and Contents  
Volumes 2, 3, 7 & 9, with an additional box containing a shroud of religious significance, originally wrapped around volume 3. Alternatively known as the Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra

box 18, object 18a  **Small fortune-telling book (Sinhalese)** 299489  
box 18, object 18b  **Patimokkha (3 leaf fragment)** 299487  
box 18, object 18c  **Stylí for inscribing palm leaf manuscripts** 299473  
box 18, object 18d  **Unidentified portion of palm leaf manuscript with colored illustrations** 299477  
box 19  **Blank palm leaves** 299469  
Scope and Contents  
Probably donated by Mrs. Evans in 1975. Box contains what appears to be an inspection receipt from Bangkok, Thailand dated 4/28/1914.

box 20  **Unidentified palm leaf manuscript** 299465  
Scope and Contents  
Probably donated by Mrs. Evans in 1975.

box 21  **Unidentified palm leaf manuscript** 299463  
Scope and Contents  
Probably donated by Mrs. Evans in 1975.
box 22  

**Vessantara Jātaka (Lanna)** 299461 18th-early 20th century  

**Scope and Contents**  
Vernacular sermon version of the Vessantara Jātaka from Northern Thailand in Lanna language with some Pali, in Tham Lanna script. Probably donated by Mrs. Evans in 1975.

box 23  

**Unidentified manuscript** 299467  

**Scope and Contents**  
Wooden covers have stickers dated March 15, April 5 & April 26, 1907.  
Item has been scanned & is accessible on-line at https://purl.stanford.edu/nt029fk6245

box 24  

**Artifacts** 299299  

**Scope and Contents**  
Small objects collected from temples. A partial list is below. Includes "votive offerings made by pilgrims to Adam's Peak at the shrine of Saman Deviyo, and collected [by Evans-Wentz] on Adam's Peak January 31, 1918." Also seals, talismans, lamps "used in river ceremony of fire at night," fragments of carved stone, sandalwood rosary, palm manuscript string and palm leaves (?), soap box which originally housed some artifacts.

Covis from Old Delhi and Taxila (was in Kodak film canister) 299325  
URN from Kandy, Ceylon 299323  
Seal, Hanuman, Lingam, Vishnu, Feet of Vishnu, Talisman, and Armiece from Benares 299321  
Lingam from Kashmir 299319  
Buddhas from [Mt.] Isaya, India 299317  
Buddhist Temple Lamp, Kandy, Ceylon 299315  
2 Indian votive offerings or Talismans 299311  
Seal from Ceylon 299309  
Sandalwood Rosary from [Risbi?] Kesh 299307  

Scope and Contents note  
[Printed leaf, folded, removed from box and placed with manuscripts, MZ 78/8/9  
*Tirukalukundrum Patchi Dharisana Chart*, Viadras: Counian Press, 1918. 15th ed. 4,000 copies]

Votive offering (?) 299305  
Link chain with unidentified objects 299303  
Incense burner (?) 299301

box 25  

**Three Taoist texts (Chinese)** 299483  

**Scope and Contents**  
2. *Taishang laojun shuo jieshi zhouzu jing*. Daoist woodblock. Wanli 26 = 1598  
3. *Yuanshi tianzun shuo langling shangjiang guan yuanshi hu guo miao jing*. Daoist block print. No date, circa Ming period. Internal title is slightly different: "Taishang dasheng langling shang jiang chi feng hu guo xie tian da di miao jing.  
Information provided by Professor Paul Harrison, Stanford University.

box 26  

**Yin Deng Wen Tu Shuo (Chinese)** 299491 circa 1821  

**Scope and Contents note**  

box 27, folder 1  

**Unidentified map/poster, probably from Ceylon** 299471
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder Details</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>box 27, folder 2</td>
<td>Two drawings by L.C. W. Samaranayake, a student in Badulla, Ceylon 299459 December 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>box 27, folder 3-4</td>
<td>Rubbings 299457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>map-folder 28</td>
<td>Chinese map 299455</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>