

I. Collections Level Description

Department: The Fusilier Museum, Tower of London

Collection Type: Tibetan Collection

Reference: RFM.COLLECTION

No. of items: 40

Notes

Date of research visit: 1st-2nd April 2014 Contact: Stephanie Killingbeck, Assistant Curator



Tibet Campaign display at Royal Fusiliers Museum, Tower of London

Category

Religion and ritual
Souvenir
'Enemy Items'
Diaries and news cuttings
Photographs

Description

INTRODUCTION: The Regiment had established a private museum by 1949 and this was then opened to the public in 1962. A major redisplay took place in the 1980s and another one more recently thanks to HLF funding. The 1st Royal Fusiliers were involved in the Younghusband Mission to Tibet (1903-04). Approximately 40 objects, 4 photograph albums and a number of single images (5), and 5 diaries, as well as other archival documentation in the museum's collection relating to this campaign were consulted on this visit.

This campaign is represented in the museum in Gallery 4 titled '1904 Tibet Campaign'. The museum's is arranged chronologically by campaign, and the Tibetan material shares a case with material relating to the Boer War. There are 27 objects on display in this case, 23 of which are Tibetan.

OBJECTS:

The 40 ethnographic objects in the collection which can be fitted into the following

categories: carved figures (15), musical instruments (4), domestic utensils (22) which include 1 eating set and 5 chopstick sets, religious/ritual objects (3), weapon (1), jewellery (2), seals, stamps & coins (4). There are also a number of objects that are now registered as missing: a prayer horn and a Tibetan knife.

There were two significant groupings of objects:

1) RFM.1020 and RFM.1021 (24 objects in total) accession numbers were collected by Major Frederick A Greenwood, who was enlisted in 1900 and held the rank of Lance corporal during the Younghusband Mission to Tibet. His collection was presented to the museum by his widow in 1963. Some of these items have paper labels with handwritten numbers on them which seem to pre-date entry into the Fusilier Museum. The collection of objects includes:

- 3 carved soapstone figures depicting monkeys,
- 2 soapstone Buddha's [RFM.1020.1.1-2],
- 2 soapstone figures, probably representing different Buddhist deities [RFM.1020.6-7]
- a tsa-tsa (votive offering)
- a carved piece of bone depicting a Buddhist deity
- There is a prayer wheel [RFM.1021.10] and two amulets or gau [RFM.1021.13-14].

2) RFM.1564 accession numbers (Tibetan or Burmese provenance) were acquired by Mr John Henry Bradley (1881-1968), and gifted by Mr P Bradley in 2002. The rest were accessioned individually and a few objects have a particular individuals associated with them. This group of objects includes a number of utilitarian items such as two chopstick sets, a flint and tinder pouch, a fly whip, two amuletic bracelets, a wooden printing block with Buddhist sutras or prayers on both sides, some beads, and a cigarette tin containing both carved and un-carved shells.

There are also other chopstick sets which consist of holder, chopsticks, forks, eating dishes and knives. There is a razor and two spoons, and a cup which is similar in style to a butter lamp. There are also musical instruments - a cymbal, a prayer horn and a bell – however these could all be classified as religious/ritual objects, as could the butter lamp.

2 seals, 1 stamp, 2 coins, and a wooden panel were presented to Colonel A C Hewitt OBE. One of the seals could be more accurately classified as a mould, perhaps even a tsa-tsa mould.

PHOTOGRAPHS: There are several photograph albums [Lt. Col. Julian Lawrence Fisher (1887-1953), Tibet Album RFM.1141.9; RFM.ARC.2081; RFM.ARC.2082] which include panoramic images of Tibet taken during the campaign. There are images of the landscape, key buildings and places, regimental camps and activities, Chinese diplomats, Tibetans and the soldiers themselves. A number of images appear in several of the diaries, some with captions and some without.

DIARIES:

RFM.1246 'Expedition to Thibet / Letters and extracts from diary, from J. de B. Carey, 1st Royal Fusiliers 1904'.

RFM.ARC.2083.1 'Extracts from my diary when in Tibet in the year 1904, with the Tibet-Mission Escort, P.C. [in pencil Percy A Coath]'

RFM.ARC.2090 facsimilie of diary of E. Fessey

RFM.ARC.2089 facsimilie of diary of Lance Sergeant Alfred Stanley Dunning (Also known as Alfred James) No. 7245 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers kept between May 23rd and August 5th, 1904, while serving in Tibet.

Some sections of these diaries are referenced in the display cases' text panel and on the website in relation to a 'Tibetan Soapstone Figure' in the 'Collection Highlight'. The latter is the only quote which has not yet been traced to a particular diary entry:

'This soapstone figure was bought back from the 1904 Tibet expedition by a Royal Fusilier. The campaign was undertaken amidst British fears of the expansion of Russian influence in Central Asia; a rivalry that became known as the Great Game. The Fusiliers spent over a month camping at the city of Lhasa whilst British officials negotiated with the Tibetan Dalai Lama, giving them plenty of time to collect souvenirs. 'The vendors ... discovered our childish mania for curios, and brought with them each morning such trinkets as would attract our fancy.'

OTHER ARCHIVAL MATERIAL: The Fusilier Chronicle is the regimental journal which dates back to the 1911. There were a few references to Tibet and one of the diaries above (Coath) was published in full over three editions of the chronicle June 1961, Dec 1961, Jun 1962, Dec 1962. There was also an article relating to the museums history from Dec 1962 which states that in 'Room 2, 1854-1918' there were 'relics' on display from the 'Tibet expedition 1904'.

There is also a document compiled and edited by J P Kelleher in 2011 titled 'The Tibet Medal Role' [RFM.ARC.2093] which provides detailed information about the 1st. BATTALION ROYAL FUSILIERS and their involvement in the Younghusband campaign.

Other archival material includes regimental correspondence, pay books, a church service sheet and maps. There is also a regimental 1904 Christmas card [RFM.1679.2] comprised of images from the Younghusband Mission to Tibet. This is a small pamphlet which includes four images: 'Lebong, Himalayas'; 'Gyantse Jong, Tibet. Captured 6th July, 1904, by the Royal Fusiliers, Ghurkas & Pathans'; 'Gyantse Jong, 6th July, 1904'; '"F" Company hoisting the Union Jack on Gyantse Jong, captured on 6th July, 1904.' Handwritten in the front 'To Charlie and Mag with best love', this card is associated with John Bromley. The images used can also be found in the photograph albums above.

Production information:

Place: Tibet, Asia
Date: 1903-1904

Name Associations	Type	Note
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	regiment/service	
Fisher, Julian Lawrence, Lt. Col. (1887-1953)	personal name	
Carey, Thomas De Beauvoir, Lieutenant (1881-1945)	personal name	
Greenwood, Frederick A, Major (Q, M) 1900 - 1916 (fl.)	personal name	
Bradley, John Henry, Mr (1881-1968)	personal name	
Hewitt, Albert Claude, Colonel OBE (1882-1959)	personal name	

Associations	Type	Note
Younghusband Mission to	event	

Tibet (1903-1904)

Exhibitions

Name of exhibition: *Royal Fusiliers Museum Permanent Display*

Exhibition area: Gallery 4 - '1904 Tibet Campaign'

Notes:

The introductory panel includes a map to identify the geographical area in which Tibet lies and a quote from Lieutenant Thomas De Beauvoir Carey's diary [RFM.1246, p.45] and some contextual information. This reads as follows: 'A letter came to Colonel Younghusband today from the Dalai Lama...' From the diary of Lieutenant Carey. Carey was serving India when he was selected to accompany an expedition to Tibet. Political Commissar, Colonel Younghusband led the expedition amidst British fears that the Chinese Government were about to give the province of Tibet to the Russians.

Bibliographic references

Harris, Clare E. (2012) *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet*. The University of Chicago Press: Chicago and London.

Myatt, T. (2011) 'Trinkets, Temples, and Treasures: Tibetan Material Culture and the 1904 British Mission to Tibet' in *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, No. 21

The Fusilier Chronicle, June 1961, Dec 1961, Jun 1962, Dec 1962

J P Kelleher. 2011. 1st. Battalion Royal Fusiliers (The City of London Regiment): The Tibet Medal Role [Unpublished]