

I. Collections Level Description

Department: The Gurkha Museum, Winchester

Collection Type: Tibetan Collection

Reference: WINGM.COLLECTION

No. of items: 18

Notes

Date of research visit: 10-11th April 2014 Contacts: Gavin Edgerley-Harris, Curator and Eli Dawson, Collections Assistant



Displays relating to the Younghusband Mission to Tibet in the 'Small Wars 1875-1904' section of the Gurkha Museum



Category

Loot
Photographs
Clothing
Religion and ritual

Description

INTRODUCTION: The Gurkha museum opened in 1990 in Peninsular Barracks, Winchester, along with the Royal Green Jackets (Rifles) Museum, the King's Royal Hussars Regimental Museum, the Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum and the

Guardroom Museum. The Gurkha museum differs slightly from other regimental museums in that it has an introductory section about the Gurkha's homeland and a soldier's civilian life in Nepal in order to contextualise the Gurkha soldier's social and cultural background. The museum uses large scale fibre optic interactive maps, photographs (both historic and contemporary), soundscapes and audio descriptions, dioramas and tableaus in its display.

There are a number of Tibetan objects in their collections, both on display and in storage. However, only two are specifically documented as relating to the Younghusband Mission to Tibet 1903-04, however it is possible that some of the other objects came from this campaign as well.

OBJECTS:

The majority of the Tibetan objects in the Gurkha Museum were collected by Major Tom Le M Spring Smyth (d. 2009) who served with the Queens Gurkha Engineers, and was a well-known botanist and life-long collector. He is known for collecting the Himalayan *Daphne bholua* from Eastern Nepal in 1962. His collection primarily dates to the mid-20th Century.

A Buddhist prayer banner [WINGM.2002.01.41] in a modern glass frame is the only item attributed as being taken from a monastery during the Younghusband expedition. Additional objects from the Major Spring Smyth are as follows:

1 hand-held prayer wheel [WINGM.2010.10.18]
2 hats [WINGM.2002.01.40; and one on display]
1 Knife [on display]
1 Tinder and Flint pouch [on display]
Silverware - 3 cups [probably all butter lamps] and 2 bowls. The two that were accessible during the visit have the following accession numbers: butter lamp WINGM.2010.10.19 and a bowl [WINGM.2010.10.21]

In addition, a pair of Tibetan boots and a bronze sword are listed in the Accession Register and on the Entry Forms however it was not possible to locate these at the time of the research visit.

Other objects in the collection from Tibet include:

3 silver and wood tea bowls [WINGM. 97.3.10]
1 hat [WINGM.1997.03.34]
2 telescopic prayer horns (one on display, one in storage) [WINGM.90.6.29-30]
3 thangka paintings (one on display and two in storage). The 2 in storage are noted as being c.1840 [WINGM.1992.03.15-16]. The one on display is stylistically very similar and in a similar condition, but is from a different donor but no documentation was available.

PHOTOGRAPHS:

One photograph album of 'Tibet' associated with Sir John Coleridge (d.1951) who served during the Younghusband Mission. He later went on to become Major General and Colonel-in-Chief of the 8th Gurkha's. The album was recently donated to the museum by his grandson.

Production information:

Place: Tibet, Asia
Date: Mid-19th to mid-20th Century

Name Associations	Type	Note
8th Gurkha Rifles Queen's Gurkha Engineers Spring Smyth, Tom Le M, Major (d. 2009)	regiment/service regiment/service personal name	Major Spring Smyth served with the Queens Gurkha Engineers, but was also a well-known botanist and life-long collector. He is known for collecting the Himalayan <i>Daphne bholua</i> from Eastern Nepal in 1962.
Coleridge, John Francis Stanhope Duke, General Sir (1878-1951)	personal name	General Stanhope was a senior British Indian Army officer who went on to become the Military Secretary to the India Office. He was a served with the 8th Gurkha Rifles during the mission to Tibet 1903-04.

Associations	Type	Note
Younghusband Mission to Tibet (1903-1904)	event	

Exhibitions

Name of exhibition: *The Gurkha Museum*
Exhibition area: Small Wars 1875-1904

Notes:

One display case, accompanied by a text panel and small diorama depicting the storming of the Gyantse Jong by the 8th Gurkha Rifles and the Royal Fusiliers on 5th July 1904. There is an audio commentary to go with the diorama.

Text: GYANTSE JONG Gyantse Jong was a fort commanding the approaches to Lhasa, capital of Tibet. The diorama shows the attack by the 8th Gurkha Rifles and the Royal Fusiliers in 1904 when Lieutenant J. D. Grant won the Victoria Cross and Havildar Karbir Pun the Indian Order of Merit.

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