

II. Individual Records

Department: Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, Belfast

Collection Type: Tibetan Collection

Accession number: BELUR.AC.769

No. of items: 1

Category

Religion and ritual

Object name:

Ornament





Description

Ornament comprised of two strands of round beads connected to larger square and rectangular pieces at regular intervals. The breast ornament is mostly made from human bone and there also some beads made of glass. The square and rectangular shaped pieces of bone are carved with deities and ritual symbols, for example a conch shell, fly-whisk, and others look like dice.

The strands of beads are grouped in two loops, one larger than the other, and both loops are connected to a wooden(?) medallion in the centre. The medallion is shaped like the Buddhist Wheel of the Law (Dharmacakra), a common symbol in Buddhist art. There is a relief image in the central section of the medallion depicting a 'yabyum' pairing. There are three short strands of strung beads suspended from the lower edge of the medallion with a cotton tassel at the end of each. The back of the wooden medallion is covered in a piece of hessian cloth and there is a small black wax seal to one side. This suggests either of the central part of the medallion or something concealed behind it was consecrated.

Notes

This ornament was possibly either worn as part of the regalia of a Cham costume, or the

costume of a medium/oracle, along with other bone ornaments such as an apron and earrings, or it may have been for a statue of a wrathful deity. Buddhist monks or lamas wear these as part of a costume along with a mask representing different gods and demons to perform 'religious operas' or morality plays at New Year and various religious festivities throughout the year. This was not for ordinary or everyday use.

At some point this bone ornament was mounted on a board in a frame with a pair of and two of Col. Sgt. Lyle's medals, however these are now missing. There are references to these items in various forms of related documentation, and there are three different numbers associated with it, however it appears as though all the items were definitely in the museum's collection by 1945.

Original description

MODES: 'Large frame containing Tibet priest's rosary and ear rings. Brought from Tibet by Col. Sgt. J. Lyle R.I.R. 1903-1903 [sic] and also Tibet War Medal 1 Bar 'Gyantse' and Long Service Medal Col. Sgt. Lyle. He served in MG Det under Lt Bowen Colthurst RIR. Caption to S.42'.

REGIMENTAL MUSEUM CATALOGUE, 1945: '1298. TIBETAN Priest's rosary carved from human bones, also earrings, (carved bone), in case, 2 medals, TIBET, 1 Bar. L.S.G.C. Col/Sgt. Lyle'.

ACCESSION REGISTER: '769 Large frame containing: Tybetan [sic] Priest's rosary and ear rings brought from Tibet by C Sgt J Lyle RIR 1903-1904. Also Gyantse and Long Service medal C Sgt Lyle. Mrs Lyle (Widow)'.

OLD DISPLAY LABEL: 'These medals were won by the late Col. Sergeant J . Lyle, 1st Battalion The Royal Irish Rifles. Tibet - 1 Bar, 1903-04, Long Service and Good Conduct. S. 42 [on reverse] AC 769'.

Production information:

Place: Tibet, Asia
School/style: Tibetan, Buddhist

Date: 19th-Early 20th Century

Materials: Cotton cord
Wood
Bone (human)
Hessian
Glass beads

Techniques: Carved

Dimensions:

Part	Dimension	Value	Unit	Precision	Notes
	Length	760	mm	Approx.	
	Width	180	mm	Approx.	
Central wooden part	Width	125	mm		
Central wooden part	Height	120	mm		
Central	Depth	15	mm		

wooden part					
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Condition assessment

Purpose: curatorial comment

Condition: Fair

Date: 2014-05-20

Location

In storage : 2014-05-19 :

Name Associations

1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles
Lyle, J., Colour-Sergeant
1903-04 (fl.)

Type

regiment/service
personal name

Note

Associations

Younghusband Mission to
Tibet (1903-1904)

Type

event

Note

Other numbers:

Number

42
1298

Originator

Regimental Museum
Catalogue, 1945

Date

1962
1945

II. Individual Records

Department: Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, Belfast

Collection Type: Tibetan Collection

Accession number: BELUR.AC.957

No. of items: 1

Category

Photographs

Object name:

Photograph Album



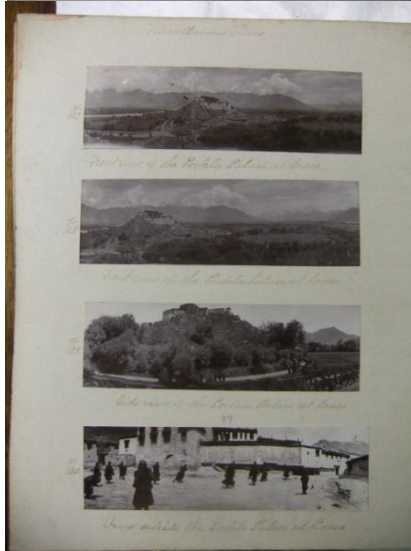
'Views from Thibet' photograph
Album
[BELUR.AC.957]



Panoramic prints in 'Views from
Thibet' photograph Album
[BELUR.AC.957]



'Lassa'
[BELUR.AC.957]



Panoramic views of the 'Potala
Palace, Lassa'
[BELUR.AC.957]

Description

Large photograph album of 'Views of Tibet' with a green and black leather cover, and 446 individual images that are arranged according to the chronology of the Mission with handwritten titles for the pages and captions for each image. On average there are five smaller prints per page and then there is a series of panoramic with four prints per page. There is a handwritten index in the back of the album.

Notes

It is not known who the photographs or album compiler actually were, but this was probably an official regimental album.

The sheer volume of prints means that every subject imaginable in relation to the mission has been captured from landscapes; diplomatic events; other regiments; Tibetans; animals; significant places/buildings. It starts off in 'Gnatong & Kupup [in pen 1904]', then 'Richengong', 'Chumbi', 'Lingmatam[?]', 'Goutsu', 'Dotha', 'Phari Jong', 'Phari', 'Tangla', 'Tuna', 'Guru', 'Kalat so & Meuza', 'Kaugma', 'Nani', 'Gyantsi', 'Ralung & Zara', 'Nau Gatsi', 'Pete Jong', 'Demalung[?]', 'Pati Ferry & Chaksekam Ferry', 'Ghaut', 'Trelung Bridge', 'Lassa'. There is also a large section titled 'Miscellaneous Views' which does contain some duplicate images from the earlier sections.

The index in the back of the album provides a guide to the numbering system; for example each 'camp' has been given a number, then each 'view' from a camp is also given a number, for example 9/14. However, there are also other numbers associated with the prints, both written next to them and also actually on the prints, for example some of images have a number in white in the bottom left hand corner. It is highly likely that these are serial numbers indicating that these are commercial prints.

Some of the photographs are very similar (but not duplicates) to those in the Royal Fusiliers albums, especially the panoramic ones. However, this can perhaps be explained by the fact the Royal Irish Rifles were attached to the Royal Fusiliers whilst serving in Tibet. Each regiment must have had their own photographer, but they were taking photographs of the same subjects from almost identical viewpoints. However, one of these panoramic prints captioned 'Genl. Mac Donald & Troops at Lassa' has already been attributed to John Claude White elsewhere, which raised the question of whether any more of the panoramic images are by him. This would require more investigation.

Original description

ACCESSION REGISTER: 957 Large album containing photographs of scenes in Tibet. Unknown.

Production information:

Place: Tibet, Asia

Date: 1903-1904

Materials: Photographic prints

Condition assessment

Purpose: curatorial comment

Condition: Good

Date: 2014-07-04

Location

In storage : 2014-07-04 :

Name Associations

1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles
White, John Claude (1853 –
1918)

Type

regiment/service
personal name

Note

Associations

Younghusband Mission to
Tibet (1903-1904)

Type

event

Note

II. Individual Records

Department: Royal Ulster Rifles Museum, Belfast

Collection Type: Tibetan Collection

Accession number: BELUR.AC.4505 L & H

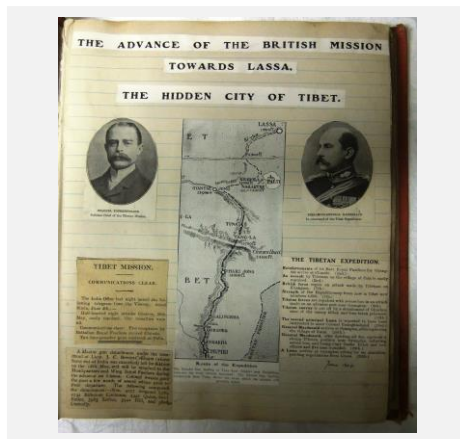
No. of items: 3

Category

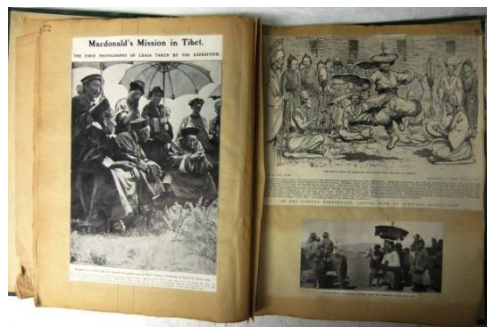
Photographs
News Cuttings

Object name:

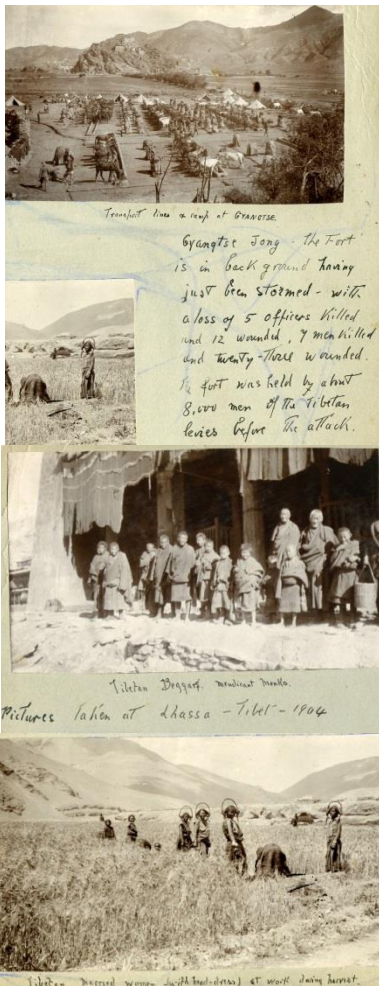
Albums



'The advance of the British Mission towards Lassa. The hidden city of Tibet' in an album of news cuttings compiled by J. C. Bowen-Colthurst [BELUR.AC.4505 L]



'MacDonald's Mission in Tibet' in an album of news cutting compiled by J. C. Bowen-Colthurst [BELUR.AC.4505 H]



'Transport lines & camp at Gyantse' in an of photographs taken by Bowen-Colthurst
© Royal Ulster Rifles Museum

'Tibetan Beggars mendicant monks. Pictures taken at Lhasa, Tibet, 1904' in an of photographs taken by Bowen-Colthurst
© Royal Ulster Rifles Museum

'Tibetan married women (with head-dress) at work during harvest' in an of photographs taken by Bowen-Colthurst
© Royal Ulster Rifles Museum

Description

Two scrapbooks relating to the campaign, which belonged to Lt. J. C. Bowen-Colthurst:

BELUR.AC.4505 L is an album with a red leather cover with a black diagonal band across the front with 'News Cuttings' in gold embossed on it.

BELUR.AC.4505 H is an album with a green cover with 'Newspaper Cuttings' in silver on the front cover. 'Copy of Diary of Sikkim Tibet Expedition. 1904. by Lt. J. C. Bowen-Colthurst 1/ Royal Irish Rifles' written on the first page. This diary consists of the date and one brief line for each entry.

Notes

These are comprised of news cuttings relating to the mission and Tibet more generally, with some annotations. H also has some battalion orders pasted into it and L contains an 'extract from a letter received from Lieut. Colthurst [...] Gyantse. 27th-29th June 1904' which was also published as part of the section on the Tibet Mission in the 'History of the Royal Irish Rifles (1860-1912)' by Lieut.-Colonel George Beaton Laurie, pp.335-337. A handwritten note in the scrapbook states 'Issued with Regimental Orders 1/Royal Irish Rifle July 1904 Fyzabad.' Then another note beneath reads: 'I regret writing such a cold-blooded letter JCBC [?] 1905'.

In this letter there is a description of the Red Gorge which perhaps correlates to some photographs in the Regimental Album. The description reads: 'The actual gorge is very

narrow and about three quarters of a mile long full of piled up rocks, some with Lamaist paintings of Buddha or other incarnations; painting out here is a common form of worship and owing, I suppose, to the small rainfall these paintings keep very fresh.'

The newspaper cuttings relate to the events and progress of the military campaign, as well as to elements of Tibetan culture and wildlife. The cuttings also reveal that some of the photographs in the regimental album were published in the illustrated papers.

This either confirms that they were commercial prints or that Bowen-Colthurst was the photographer of at least some of the images, especially as it seems that he did have his own camera in the field, as there is also another photograph album/scrapbook of Tibet and India which belonged to him in the museum's archives. However, this seems to have become separated into loose pages and is no longer a coherent album. It contains photographs pasted onto pages along with handwritten captions and notes. The images/pages which related to Tibet had already been digitised (21 prints).

Production information:

Place: Tibet, Asia
Sikkim, North-West India, South Asia

Date: Early 20th Century

Materials: Photographic prints
Newspaper cuttings

Condition assessment

Purpose: curatorial comment
Condition: Good
Date: 2014-07-04

Location

In storage : 2014-07-04 :

Name Associations	Type	Note
1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles Bowen-Colthurst, John C., Lieutenant (later Captain) (1880-1965)	regiment/service personal name	

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

Bibliographic references

'History of the Royal Irish Rifles (1860-1912)' by Lieut.-Colonel George Beaton Laurie, pp.335-337.