

# MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

*A Journal of the Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies*

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

(*Spring 2017*)

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VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

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*Special Issue:*  
*Collectors and Collections in the History of*  
*Thai Manuscripts*  
Guest Editor: Justin McDaniel

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# Henry D. Ginsburg and the Thai Manuscripts Collection at the British Library and Beyond

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JANA IGUNMA  
*The British Library*

THE THAI MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION held at the British Library is the most extensive and most important collection of such manuscripts in the United Kingdom, and one of the most significant in Europe, although it is a rather small collection compared with other Asian manuscript holdings of the same institution.

The person who contributed in a very special way to the development and who shaped the scope of the Thai manuscripts collection was Henry David Ginsburg, who worked for the library for more than thirty years, first as special assistant for Thai and later as part-time curator of the Thai, Lao, and Cambodian collections.

Ginsburg was born on 5 November 1940 in New York, the youngest son of a prominent and cultured Jewish couple of Russian descent. His father, Benjamin Ginsburg, was a leading dealer in antique English American furniture. Among the clients of his firm were the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Henry Ford, Colonial Williamsburg, the Shelburne Museum in Vermont, and many other institutions and prominent people. He was a scholarly man and published numerous articles on antique furniture and porcelain. During President John F. Kennedy's term, he was a consultant to the White House when it was redecorated and he contributed to the refurbishing of the diplomatic reception rooms at the State Department during the administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Cora Ginsburg (née



FIGURE 1. Henry Ginsburg as a student at Tarrytown High School, New York, ca. 1952 by Aaron Siskind. Courtesy of the Aaron Siskind Foundation. British Library Photo 1213/13.

Kling), Ginsburg's mother, worked with her husband in his firm, but also became a well-known dealer in antique fabrics and clothing. She helped develop the field of costume in the worlds of antiques and museums, sharing her knowledge with a number of institutions in the United States and abroad. Her New York gallery, Cora Ginsburg LLC, founded in 1982, is now owned by Titi Halle and still exhibits and sells antique costume and textiles.<sup>1</sup>

Ginsburg grew up in a family that admired art and antiques, adopting a lifelong appreciation and sympathy for fine art and scholarship from parents who actively engaged in scholarly research. Music played an important role

1 "Cora Ginsburg, 92, a Dealer and a Consultant in Antique Textiles," *New York Times*, 2 September 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/02/09/nyregion/cora-ginsburg-92-a-dealer-and-a-consultant-in-antique-textiles.html>, accessed 13 December 2016.

in Ginsburg's childhood and throughout his life. By his teens, Ginsburg had become an accomplished pianist who was proficient enough to consider a career as a musician.

After attending Tarrytown High School in New York, he studied French and Russian at Columbia College, New York, obtaining a bachelor of art in French literature in 1962. In 1964–65 he volunteered with the American Peace Corps in Chachoengsao, Thailand, where he fell in love with the country, its culture, and its people.

It was during his time in Thailand that he turned his back on a musical career, deciding to study for a master's degree at the University of Hawaii-Manoa. His thesis, "Thai Literary Tales Derived from the Sanskrit Tan-tropakhyana with Special Reference to the Pisacapakaranam," was accepted in 1967. He then moved to London to continue his studies under Stuart Simmonds at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), working toward a doctorate in Thai literature. In his Ph.D. thesis, "The Sudhana-Manoharā Tale in Thai: A Comparative Study Based on Two Texts from the National Library, Bangkok, and Wat Machimāwāt, Songkhla," accepted in 1971, Ginsburg compared two poetic versions of the Sudhana-Manoharā, a literary tradition based on a Pāli text from the collection of extra-canonical *jātakas* (*Paññāsa jātakas*). According to his research, the two versions that claim the Pāli text as their source show numerous stylistic and linguistic similarities, but at the same time, regional distinctions are apparent.

### *Curator, Scholar, Collector, Photographer*

Still a doctoral student at SOAS, Ginsburg joined the British Museum on a part-time basis as a special assistant for the Thai collection. In 1973, under the British Library Act, the library departments of the British Museum, the National Central Library, and the National Lending Library for Science and Technology were administratively combined to form the British Library. Together with other staff at the British Museum's Department of Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books (OMPB), Ginsburg moved to the newly formed library and continued to work as a part-time curator for Thai, Lao, and Cambodian collections until he retired in 2002. He chose to work on a

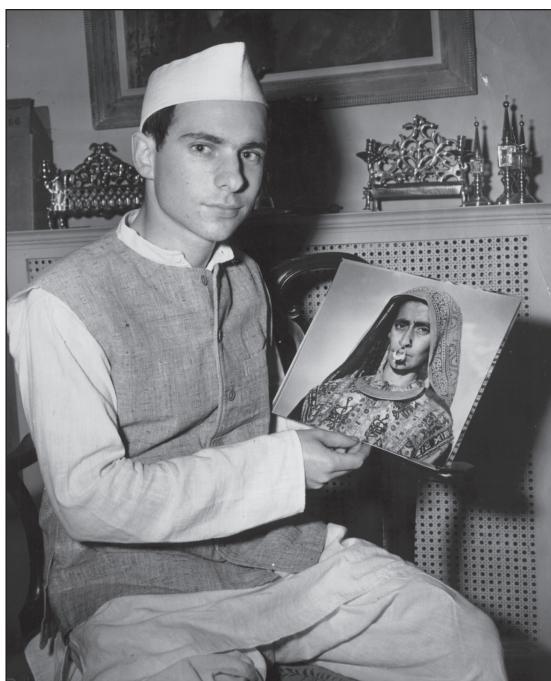


FIGURE 2. Ginsburg during his time at University of Hawaii, Manoa. Courtesy of the Ginsburg Family. British Library Photo 1213/1.

part-time basis that enabled him to travel and pursue numerous other interests, including research on Thai art and textiles, the study of languages, and music.

The Southeast Asian collections at the British Museum library, which formed the initial basis of the British Library's Southeast Asian collections, were strongly based on and reflected British imperial involvement in the region. The richest collections of manuscripts and early printed books were from countries that were formerly under British colonial administration, such as Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, and Java, which was briefly under British rule from 1811 to 1816. Collections from regions where Britain had had little imperial involvement—the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand—were rather thin. In 1973, there were just about one hundred manuscripts in the Thai, Lao, and Cambodian collections and a few hundred printed books, mainly from the nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries, most of which were given to the library by Christian missionaries. Among these, Ginsburg found several unique copies, including the only known copy of the first Thai book ever printed in Thailand, a Christian text published in 1838 (ORB.30/894). In the early twentieth century, most publications by the Thai National Library (formerly Vajirañāṇa Library) were deposited at the British Museum Library.

British official relations with Thailand date back to 1612, when the East India Company ship *The Globe* arrived in Siam carrying a letter from King James I for King Songtham of Ayutthaya. The king allowed the English Factory to start trading at Ayutthaya. However, it closed after only ten years, but another was set up in 1661 during the reign of Phra Narai (1657–1688), after the British were forced to close their trading post at Lovek in Cambodia. Thus, the British Library's collections relating to Thailand include the account by Peter Floris, a member of the first English expedition (IOR, L/MAR/A/XIII, ff. 28/29), and other records of early East India Company trading activities in Siam.

Thai manuscripts, historic documents, and early printed books came to Britain mainly through trade and missionary contacts. Documents from the earliest period include official letters and materials received from the Thai counterparts. Some manuscripts were brought from Thailand by travelers, diplomats, scholars, missionaries, traders, and soldiers—like Buddhist scriptures, literary works, or manuscripts on traditional medicine, law, cosmology, fortune-telling, and other treatises. The first Thai illustrated manuscript to come to the British Museum was from the hands of a sea captain at Singapore who bought it from “a Malay or Siamese sailor” and sent it to London via a Liverpool merchant, Mr. Thomas MacGill, in the year 1844. James Hayes acquired one of the first Thai-English dictionaries and two rare historical manuscripts, including a history of the Mon (*Rātchathirāt*). The British Museum also purchased a splendid album of Thai drawings at auction around 1866. The drawings in it were made to the order of Captain James Low of the East India Company, and illustrate many subjects from traditional Thai manuscript painting.

Among the highlights Ginsburg discovered is an important Thai historical chronicle (Or 11827), a *Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya*, copied on European paper by royal scribes around 1807. The manuscript had been in

the possession of James Hayes, who lived in Bangkok in 1847. It was bequeathed to the British Museum in 1948 by J. Hurst Hayes, together with a copy based on the Thai-English dictionary of Eliza Grew Jones (Or 11828).

Although the first fine illustrated Thai folding book came into the India Office Library in 1825 (MS Pali 207), there were only a limited number of illustrated manuscripts in the collection, and Ginsburg saw much room for improvement in this area. Each year since Ginsburg started working at the British Museum, the accession registers for Oriental manuscripts show a handful of choice acquisitions, especially of illustrated Thai manuscripts, such as the legend of the monk Phra Mālai, the Ten Birth Tales of the Buddha, divination and astrological works, as well as elephant albums and cat treatises.

Occasionally, considerable detective work was involved in the acquisition and identification of manuscripts—for example, when Ginsburg successfully tracked down paintings that had been removed from an elephant album before it was acquired by the British Library (Or 13652).

Ginsburg's close contacts with scholars, collectors, and dealers led to numerous opportunities to buy rare material, such as in 1983, when eight drawings by the Thai artist Bun Khong commissioned by Captain James Low were acquired (Or 14179), to complement the album of drawings by Bun Khong for Low already held in the British Library (Add 27370). Low was the British envoy to the state of Nakhon Sithammarat (formerly also known as Ligor) in 1824, and these are the only known Thai examples of the Company School of painting, which produced paintings by local artists commissioned by officials of the East India Company.

Some of the finest and most important manuscripts that Ginsburg acquired for the library are several Phra Mālai manuscripts (Or 14732, Or 14559, Or 14664), the Ten Birth Tales (Or 14068, Or 16552), a *Traiphum* manuscript (Or 15245), a rare elephant treatise (Or 13652), a treatise on Siamese cats (Or 16008), a Thai massage treatise (Or 13922), a manuscript containing Buddhist texts and sūtra with illustrations of *deva* and Hindu gods (Or 16009), wooden and ivory title indicators for palm-leaf manuscripts (for example, Or 14613 and Or 14528-29), and protective shirts (for example, Or 14722).

The scope of the British Library's Thai manuscripts collection very much reflects the research interests of Henry Ginsburg, who through his work first at the British Museum and then at the British Library expanded his knowledge and expertise by focusing on the relationship between text and art in the Thai manuscript tradition. With this approach, Ginsburg was one of the forerunners in the field of Thai manuscript studies, which is attracting more and more interest not only among academics, but also the general public.

Ginsburg was more than curator of Thai collections. During the three decades he worked at the British Library, he contributed to the study and research of Thai manuscripts and art with numerous scholarly articles and book chapters. His two books, *Thai Manuscript Painting* (1989) and *Thai Art and Culture: Historic Manuscripts from Western Collections* (2000), were groundbreaking publications on the subject of Thai manuscripts and manuscript art.<sup>2</sup> In the first book, he discussed Thai manuscripts in terms of their subject matter, followed by studies of genre painting and developments in style, and an appendix listing important illustrated manuscripts in Western collections. The publication was marked by an exhibition in the King's Library from 16 February to 1 July 1990. The second monograph was the result of an exhibition of original and facsimile Thai manuscripts from the library's collections in Bangkok to mark the Golden Jubilee of His Majesty King Bhumiphol and the state visit to Thailand of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Office of the National Culture Commission of Thailand invited the British Library to produce such an exhibition, which was held from 31 October to 29 November 1996 at the Changing Exhibition Hall of the Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok, and was officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, together with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. The success of this project owed much to the friendship between Ginsburg and Princess Sirindhorn, who visited the British Library on several occasions. His book, which became a lasting memento of this exhibition, included descriptions of most

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<sup>2</sup> Henry Ginsburg, *Thai Manuscript Painting* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989), and *Thai Art and Culture: Historic Manuscripts from Western Collections* (London: British Library, 2000).



FIGURE 3. Princess Sirindhorn with Henry Ginsburg, viewing Thai manuscripts at the British Library in 1991. Courtesy of the British Library Board. British Library Photo 1213/2.

of the exhibited masterpieces. In a natural scholarly progression from his earlier book, this work presented Thai illustrated manuscripts alongside texts of literary or historical value, as well as important foreign source materials on Thailand, including East India Company trading records and a unique seventeenth-century Persian account of an embassy to the court of King Narai (Or 6942).

Ginsburg's close friendship with another member of the Thai royal family, Princess Narisa Chakrabongse—granddaughter of Prince Chakrabongse—led in 2001 to the generous donation to the British Library of the Chakrabongse Archive of Royal Letters (Or 15749). The collection comprises more than 250 letters written by Prince Chakrabongse, his father King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), and his successor King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) to one another.

Through his personal and professional contacts, Ginsburg liaised with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation regarding another significant gift to the British Library in 2004, containing manuscripts and gilded manuscript

furniture from Thailand and Burma.<sup>3</sup> These items had been part of Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection, of which a major part was donated in the United States to the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, and in the United Kingdom to the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the British Library. Doris Duke was an American heiress who formed a large and important collection of Thai and Burmese art and antiques. After her death in 1993, she left the major portion of her estate to the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Altogether, the British Library received two large Thai manuscript cabinets, one manuscript box, and one chest from Northern Thailand, and four Buddhist paintings in addition to eight other items from Burma.

Traveling was one of Ginsburg's passions, and he would always try to combine traveling with opportunities to expand his expertise and to explore places with a rich historical or cultural heritage. Numerous trips took him to all parts of Thailand, to Laos, to the Shan States in Burma, and to other Southeast Asian countries, as well as to China and India. During his trips to the United States, mainland Europe, and Russia, Ginsburg visited libraries and museums and made contact with curators working with Asian collections, attended conferences and auctions, and often acquired—sometimes by chance—a rare manuscript, an important textile, or an interesting piece of art or furniture either for the British Library or the British Museum, or for his own art collection. Ginsburg also traveled to view Thai manuscripts in other collections in the United Kingdom—for example, the Wellcome collection, the Royal Asiatic Society collection, and the John Rylands collection in Manchester. Some outstanding items from these collections are discussed in Henry Ginsburg's books on Thai manuscripts.

Photography always played an important role in Ginsburg's work and research activities. His photographic collection, which was given to the British Library after his death in 2007, contains approximately three thousand photographs and transparencies, most of them taken by Ginsburg himself

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<sup>3</sup> See Nancy Tingley, *Doris Duke: The Southeast Asian Art Collection* (New York: Foundation for Southeast Asian Art and Culture, 2003).



FIGURE 4. Photograph of a Nora performance in Southern Thailand taken by Henry Ginsburg during a visit to Thailand when researching Nora (Manohra) manuscripts for his Ph.D. thesis, ca. 1970. British Library Photo 1213/350.

and some ordered from the British Library's Imaging Services and from other institutions. The scope of this photo collection includes Thai and Southeast Asian manuscript art, Thai mural art, Southeast Asian art in general, Asian textiles, and Southeast and South Asian archaeology, iconography, and performing arts. It is an invaluable supplement to the library's Thai manuscripts collection, highlighting outstanding examples from and providing additional information about the Thai manuscript culture.

After his retirement, Henry Ginsburg continued to volunteer at the British Library, graciously imparting his immense knowledge of the Thai books and manuscripts to his successor as curator, Jana Igunma. Occasionally, he still sent important manuscripts to the library that he felt should be added to the collection. He had brought in one such manuscript—a collection of Buddhist texts with fine illustrations from the Ten Birth Tales—for consideration shortly before his final visit to New York in 2007. The manuscript was acquired by the British Library later, in his memory.

In the months before his unexpected death in March 2007, Ginsburg was working on a catalogue of the Thai manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and a book on Thai banner painting, while continuing to translate and catalogue some of the letters in the Chakrabongse Archive.

Graham Shaw, who was at the time head of the Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections at the British Library, highlighted in an address at Ginsburg's memorial service in London on 15 June 2007 that "Henry's unique achievement at the British Library was to build up, slowly and steadily, by discerning acquisition and within all the constraints of the age, one of the finest collections of illustrated Thai manuscripts in the world."

The current state of the Thai manuscripts collection at the British Library is mainly owing to Henry Ginsburg's imaginative, independent, and adventurous spirit and his lifelong fascination with Thai art and culture. He had dedicated his book *Thai Art and Culture* to "the superb artists and scribes, nearly all anonymous, who created the life-enhancing works of art shown here, happily enduring memorials to the rich cultural heritage of old Thailand," but he himself should best be remembered for his unique role in

enhancing lives by preserving, documenting, and interpreting these exquisite works of art, and greatly raising their public profile in Thailand and beyond.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Thai Manuscripts Collection at the British Library*

The British Library's Thai manuscripts collection consists of approximately three hundred manuscripts originally from Thailand. They are either in Thai, Northern Thai/Lao, or Pāli, or sometimes in two or more languages (for example, Thai, Pāli, and Khmer). Scripts found in the Thai manuscripts are Thai, Northern Thai (Lānnā), or Lao Tham script, and Lao Būhān script (in Thailand also known as Tai Nōi script). A few manuscripts are in Tai Lue and in Tai Khoen scripts based on the Northern Thai or Lao Tham script.

Most of the manuscripts are paper folding books (approximately 50 percent) and palm-leaf manuscripts (approximately 40 percent), but there are also some unique items like protective shirts and Buddhist paintings in addition to other items related to Thai manuscript culture. For example, wooden and ivory seals, manuscript bags and wrappers, wooden manuscript covers, title indicators, manuscript boxes, and cabinets are important additional items in the Thai manuscripts collection that help one to understand the Thai manuscript tradition.

The collection is particularly rich in illustrated manuscripts, which is an immediate result of Ginsburg's passion for Thai manuscript art. The scope of illustrated Thai manuscripts reaches from Buddhist themes and literary works to treatises on animals, traditional medicine, astrology, and divination. Most of the illustrated manuscripts have the format of folding books (*samut khōi*), but the library holds also a small number of illustrated and illuminated palm-leaf manuscripts. Most manuscript boxes and cabinets are lavishly decorated in gilt and lacquer with Buddhist scenes.

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4 Quote from Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture*, 6.

## BUDDHIST MANUSCRIPTS

Buddhist subjects are prevalent in illustrated Thai manuscripts. A major theme for manuscript illumination are the previous lives of the Buddha, particularly the (Last) Ten Birth Tales (in Thai, *thotsachāt* or *sip chāt*), whereas the life of Gautama Buddha himself seems to be a rarity that contrasts with Thai mural painting and the Burmese manuscript painting tradition, in which the life of the Buddha is treated extensively and in great detail.

Besides the Ten Birth Tales, the story of the monk Phra Mālai is an extremely popular subject. Surprisingly, the legend was reproduced mainly in Thai funeral books, but not in Burmese or Cambodian manuscripts. Often, the legend of Phra Mālai is combined with Buddhist texts, and sometimes with illustrations from the Ten Birth Tales.

According to the legend, Phra Mālai visited various hells (*naraka*) and heavens (*dēvalōka*) and afterwards described to the laypeople and fellow monks what he had seen. By his visit to the *narakas*, he bestowed mercy on the creatures suffering there and temporarily brought relief to their anguish. They implored him to warn their relatives on earth of the horrors of the *narakas* and how they may escape them by following the Buddhist precepts, making merit, and meditation.

Back on earth, Phra Mālai received an offering of eight lotus flowers from a woodcutter, which he promised to take along to the *dēvalōka* and to offer at the Chulamani Chedi, a heavenly *stupa* believed to contain a relic of the Buddha. In one of the *dēvalōka*, Phra Mālai engaged in discourse with Indra (Sakka), the green-faced leader of the *deva*. Eventually, he also met and spoke with the Buddha-to-come, Metteyya, who taught him about the future of the humans on earth.

Paintings often found in Phra Mālai manuscripts are illustrations of monks (*bbikkhu*) reciting the story itself, who would often embellish and dramatize their tellings, contrary to the behavioral rules for monks that were introduced during the reigns of King Rama IV and King Rama V. By the end of the nineteenth century, monks were, in practice, banned from performing Phra Mālai recitations. As a result, former monks who had left the Buddhist order (*saṅgha*) often delivered the popular performances, dressed

up as *bhikkhu* for the occasion, unconstrained by the rules of proper behavior for real monks.

It was through tellings of Phra Mālai that the karmic effects of human actions were taught at funerals and other merit-making occasions on behalf of the deceased. It was also through these verbal and visual narratives that Metteyya's message of hope for a better rebirth and for attaining the transcendent state of nibbāna was conveyed. According to the Buddha Metteyya, following the Buddhist precepts, making merit as well as the attendance of a *Vessantara Jātaka* performance count as virtues that increase the chances of a more favorable rebirth, or *nibbāna*, in the end.

Although the subject of hell is mentioned in the Pāli canon (for example, in the *Nimi Jātaka*, the *Lohakumbhi Jātaka*, the *Samkicca Jātaka*, the *Devadūta Sutta*, the *Bālapandita Sutta*, the *Peta-vatthu*, etc.), the legend of Phra Mālai helped to shape the idea of hell in Thai society.

Other important themes are Buddhist cosmologies, in Thai known as *Traiphūm* (Three worlds) or *Traiphūm Phra Rūang* (*The three worlds according to King Rūang*). *Traiphūm* manuscripts, based on traditional Indian Buddhist and Hindu concepts, explained the nature and appearance of the universe with elaborate illustrations. Illustrations of the *Traiphūm* depict many facets of the visible world, and imaginations of heaven and hell, and also many subjects from Buddhist scriptures. Some *Traiphūm* manuscripts also include fascinating early maps of Thailand and surrounding areas. The objective of those maps is not to provide geographic accuracy, but rather to indicate important places and the magico-powerful and natural character of such places. Therefore, the seas are filled with all types of real and supernatural creatures; landscapes are identified by mountains, rivers, trees, animals, or Buddha footprints, which are understood as marking points for geographic orientation. Places like countries, towns, and islands are named in some cases. In the world of the *Traiphūm*, everything revolves around an axis, which lies at its absolute center and provides the entire universe with its core and meaning. It creatively depicts the centralized political and social order of the ideal Buddhist kingdom, often referred to as *mandala*.

Buddhist chanting books (*sūtra*; in Thai, *tamrā sūt*) were often decorated in outstanding quality with scenes from the heavenly forest *Himmaphān* (Himavanta), which is inhabited by natural animals and various mythical

beings and hybrid human-animal creatures. The tradition of *tamrā sūt* goes back well into the Ayutthaya era. Another important genre is formed by meditation manuals illustrating meditation practices (*samādhi*) and practices of the tantric Yogāvacarin tradition, including morbid meditations (*asubha-kammathāna*). In most cases, the morbid meditation scenes in these manuscript paintings depict one monk sitting or standing in meditation near one or more decaying corpses. The monk usually has one or more of his paraphernalia, like a fan, an alms bowl, an umbrella, or a walking stick. The walking stick fulfils various purposes—to scare away small animals when the monk is walking, or to provide support during seated or standing meditation—but sometimes the monk can be seen touching a corpse with his walking stick in order to transfer merit to the deceased while meditating.

## ANIMAL TREATISES

There was a tradition in nineteenth-century Siam to produce treatises on animals that played an important role at the royal court and monasteries. Among animal treatises, those on elephants are the most remarkable. According to traditional beliefs, elephants—especially white elephants—symbolized strength and wisdom. Elephants had a semi-divine status and were revered as a powerful symbol of the king's power and the prosperity of the kingdom. In Thai mythology, some elephants are known to have magical powers, and others were believed to be able to fly or to have three or more heads (up to thirty-three heads). Such beliefs originated from Hindu mythology, which was adopted among the Thai through Khmer influences and Buddhism. The three-headed white elephant served as a royal symbol in several Thai/Tai kingdoms on flags and state emblems. Elephants also had a practical use, playing an important role in warfare and as labor and hunting animals.

In Thai manuscripts, royal elephants are preferably shown in bright colors (white, light-yellow, golden, light-gray, light pink, or light blue), but elephants are also shown as they appear in nature (gray to dark gray). Mythical elephants, like Ganesha, are often decorated with crowns, jewelry, or other paraphernalia and sometimes wear Thai-style trousers or sit on a

pedestal or throne. Some manuscripts describe real elephants, their natural appearance and character, set in an elaborate naturalistic background. Paintings of real elephants mostly show peaceful, idyllic scenes and reflect the best of Thai feeling for nature and animals. Some elephant treatises explain features that are a sign of the good or bad character or behavior of an elephant, and certain disabilities of natural elephants.

Other animal treatises are dedicated to cats, horses, dogs, and birds. The breeding of certain cats was originally reserved for the royal family alone, and the tradition of producing cat treatises is thought to go back to the palace culture of the late Ayutthaya period (seventeenth through eighteenth centuries). The Siamese cat is known in Thailand as the Korat cat, in treatises usually described as a particularly auspicious cat. Certain cats also were believed to be the “keepers” of Buddhist temples, resulting in these types being closely guarded and highly revered. There was a strong belief that certain types of cats could bring good luck, prosperity, or health to the owner, whereas other cats were regarded as unlucky animals to be avoided. Altogether, seventeen types of cats have been found to be described in poetic form in such treatises. Manuscripts containing illustrations of horses, dogs, and birds are rather artists’ manuals showing techniques for the artistic representation of such animals.

## TREATISES ON TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

Most extant medical treatises were written during the nineteenth century and give a broad overview of different methods of treatment and prevention, of the understanding and knowledge of the human body, mind/spirit, and diseases. It is assumed that many of these treatises were compiled at Wat Phō in Bangkok or are copies of manuscripts from this temple, where a school of medicine was established in the 1830s to revive traditional medical knowledge.

Medical manuals and handbooks describe the anatomy and physiology of the human body in the Thai/Buddhist cultural context, as well as diseases and their possible causes, diagnosis, and treatment. Some of these books are finely illustrated with human figures and diagrams; some diagrams of human

figures show points for pressure massage. The manuals were used by medical practitioners and herbalists, who often were Buddhist monks or specialists who had left the *sangha* but still were associated with their temple or monastery (*wat*). Another purpose of these books was to educate younger specialists in the science of healing.

### DIVINATION, FORTUNE TELLING, AND ASTROLOGY

Divination, fortune telling, and astrology have long been practiced in Thai society and can be traced back to the earliest Hindu and Chinese influences in mainland Southeast Asia. The popularity of these practices is attested to by illustrated manuscripts devoted to these arts. Their production seems to have reached a climax, in both quantity and artistic quality, during the nineteenth century. These manuscripts, which often bear titles like *Phrommachāt*, *Hōrāsāt*, and *Tamrā phra yan*, were used for general prognostication and specifically for judging marital prospects, siting and construction of buildings, interpretation of natural events and occurrences, and the compilation of personal horoscopes, protective diagrams (*phra yan* in Thai, meaning *yantra*), and mantra.

*Phrommachāt* manuscripts make extensive use of the (Chinese) twelve-year animal cycle, the lunar and solar calendars, and identification of days with planets. Each of the twelve years is illustrated with four forms of the animal for that year. Then each year is personified by a male or female mascot, associated with an animal that serves as its vehicle and shown next to the tree of that year, which is believed to be the abode of the spirit of persons born in that year. Each year also has an assigned element, like water, earth, wood, fire, and metal. The text then provides a short character summary to describe those born in this period.

Another important category includes yantra manuals (*tamrā yan*), as well as protective shirts and amulets that make heavy use of protective diagrams. In the Thai context, yantra is understood to be an instrument designed to curb spiritual and magic forces by concentrating them in a certain pattern. But it is also regarded as a visual expression of a *mantra*, an invocation containing a sacred syllable or set of syllables. Often, yantra designs are com-

bined with mantra in Khmer script, which is considered sacred and therefore was often used to write down the invocations in combination with explanations in Thai script. When a mantra is uttered with specific rhythm, sincerity of devotion, purity of thought and action, and phonetic and grammatical accuracy, it is believed to invoke a particular spiritual power and compel this power to assist the invoker to achieve a desired end. Yantra manuscripts served as manuals for designing protective tattoos, shirts, and amulets.

## *Two Highlights from the British Library's Thai Manuscripts Collection*

### BUDDHIST TEXTS WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE TEN BIRTH TALES (OR 16552)

This manuscript is a typical folding book (in Thai, *samut khōi*) made from mulberry bark paper, of a cream buff color. The folio size is 670 mm × 135 mm. It has plain black lacquered covers that show some tears and holes. The text is written in black ink, in five lines per side in thin Khom script, a variant of Khmer script that was created and frequently used in Central Thailand for religious texts. Although the manuscript may have been exposed to some water damage and has some tears and numerous stains caused by water and mold, it is in reasonably good condition. It is one of the most precious manuscripts in the Thai collection due to the outstanding quality of the illustrations. There is no date mentioned in the manuscript; however, the painting and writing styles allow us to place the creation of this manuscript in the Rattanakosin era, most probably the second half of the nineteenth century CE.

The text contains extracts from the *Abhidhammapitaka* (*Dhammasaṅgaṇī*, *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, *Puggalapaññatti*, *Kathāvatthu*, *Yamaka*, *Mahāpaṭṭhāna*), the *Vinayapitaka* (*Pārājika*), the *Suttantapitaka* (*Dīghanikāya*, *Brahmajālasutta*), *Sahassareyya*, and *Mahābuddhagunagāthā*, the Great Perfections of the Buddha. The latter constitutes the main part of the text. The purpose of the paintings, though not directly related to the text, is to illustrate the Great

Qualities of the Buddha. Each of the Ten Birth Tales symbolizes one particular virtue or perfection of the Buddha.

All paintings in the manuscript are fine examples of the Rattanakosin painting style, which is a continuation of Ayutthaya painting, but more open to European and Chinese influences. Most of the illustrations in this manuscript employ Western perspectives providing three-dimensional views, an important innovation in the Rattanakosin style. The colors are bright, often highlighted by a dark background, and blue and gold appear frequently. The use of a greater variety of paints was a result of increased trade with China and European countries.

The figures are characterized by slim waistlines, slender extremities, and oval faces with fine details (eyes, nose, mouth), reminding the viewer of Buddha statues from the Rattanakosin era, particularly in the cases where former incarnations of the Buddha are represented.

In the background, there are often rocks, trees, bushes, flowers, and birds, which give the whole scenery a rather peaceful and calm atmosphere. Images of plants and certain flowers evidence the influence of Chinese landscape painting methods in this particular manuscript. Free-flowing brush-strokes, which were only occasionally emphasized with black ink, and rubbed brushwork were used to replace the colored ink drawings of the Ayutthaya period. However, about half of the paintings also feature images of buildings, either in the style of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century urban Thai architecture or edifices based on ancient Khmer temple architecture.

## THE TEN BIRTH TALES

Among the Ten Birth Tales, titled *Temiya Jātaka*, *Mahājanaka Jātaka*, *Nimi Jātaka*, *Sāma Jātaka*, *Mahosadha Jātaka*, *Bhūridatta Jātaka*, *Candakumāra Jātaka*, *Nārada Jātaka*, *Vidhurapāṇḍita Jātaka*, and *Vessantara Jātaka*, the last one is the most important Jātaka. In the Thai tradition, it is also called *Mahāchāt*, the “Great Birth.” It is the story of Prince Vessantara, who had perfected himself with the highest and noblest virtue in a human’s life, charity, the ability to give and to forgive in all circumstances, with no reservations whatsoever. Rewritten by King Songtham of Ayutthaya in beauti-

ful verses, the *Mahāchāt* has long been a major work of literature in Thai language.

Manuscripts including illustrations of the Ten Birth Tales were frequently produced as acts of merit, often on the occasion of funeral memorial services, which is why they exist in a relatively high number.

The *Vessantara* is still today regularly performed on theater stages set up at annual Buddhist festivals or during temple fairs throughout the country. Therefore, manuscript illustrations as well as mural paintings depicting scenes from the *Vessantara Jātaka* are always easily recognized.

Illustrations from the *Vessantara Jātaka* usually depict scenes from the life of Prince Vessantara, who from early childhood on shows true generosity and a great sense of charity. He gives away all his possessions, including an elephant, his children, and his wife, in order to fulfill the requests of others.

His gifts could be regarded as acts of cruelty, but this is to miss the point—his goal is to renounce attachment to all that is dear to him. The suffering of his wife and children, often illustrated with great detail revealing the emotions of the persons involved, is at least minimized by protection provided by certain gods.

Even in infancy Prince Vessantara began to give away his possessions, such as his toys. The sacred white elephant that had grown up with the prince was the first great gift. Eight Brahmins from a neighboring state suffering from drought were sent to ask Vessantara for the auspicious elephant, and he gave it gladly. The people of the kingdom believed that the white elephant played a crucial role in the prosperity of the land, and demanded the prince's immediate banishment for giving it away. The prince barely had time to give away all his possessions—seven hundred elephants, horses, chariots, servants, and so on, called the Gift of the Seven Hundreds—before departing.

These paintings show scenes from the *Vessantara Jātaka*. Vessantara with his wife Maddi and their children pay a visit to Vessantara's mother, Phusatī, before their departure into their forest exile. Here we see Phusatī on the left side, kneeling on an elevated pedestal in her alms hall. She faces Vessantara, who sits in front of her on a slightly lower pedestal, together with his wife and their two children, who are sitting on Maddi's lap. Vessantara greets

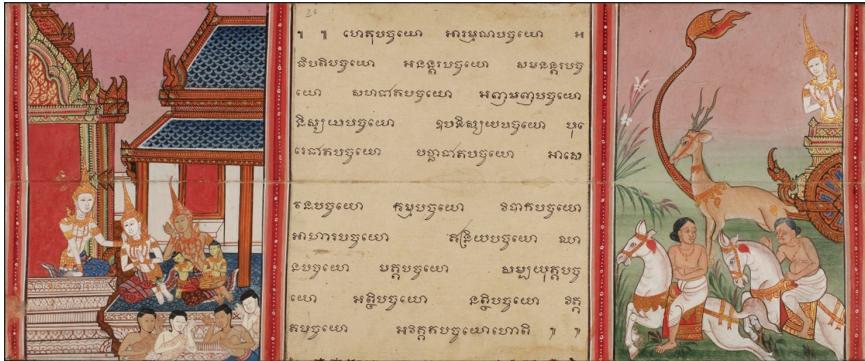


FIGURE 5. Scenes from the *Vessantara Jātaka*. Prince Vessantara with his family visit Vessantara's mother before their exile into the forest (left). Vessantara gives away the horses that were pulling the chariot on their journey to the forest (right). British Library Or 16552, fol. 26.

and pays respect to his mother with a *wai* while she is patting his right shoulder to console her son, and to give her blessings for their departure. Phusatī and Vessantara have the same fair color of skin, whereas Maddi is slightly darker. The gilt headgear, jewelry, and clothes of all three of them show that they are of royal descent. In front of the pedestal, one can see female attendants of either Phusatī or Maddi, or of both of them. On the right side, Vessantara gives away the horses that were pulling the chariot on their journey through the forest to the Brahmins. The horses were replaced by a deer, shown in the very center of the painting. The majestically adorned horses are being driven away by the Brahmins, who are represented with a sturdy body shape and hair bound in a knot, which is clearly different from Vessantara and members of his family (British Library Or 16552, fol. 26).

The family set off in a chariot after paying respect to Vessantara's mother, and when four other Brahmins asked for the horses they were using for their journey, the prince gave them too. The gods then provided four deer to pull the chariot, but very soon another Brahmin asked for the chariot, so they gave it, and continued on foot, carrying the children in their arms. At the foot of Mount Vamka in the forest, the gods provided dwellings for the family, and suitable garments, and there they lived chastely for seven months.

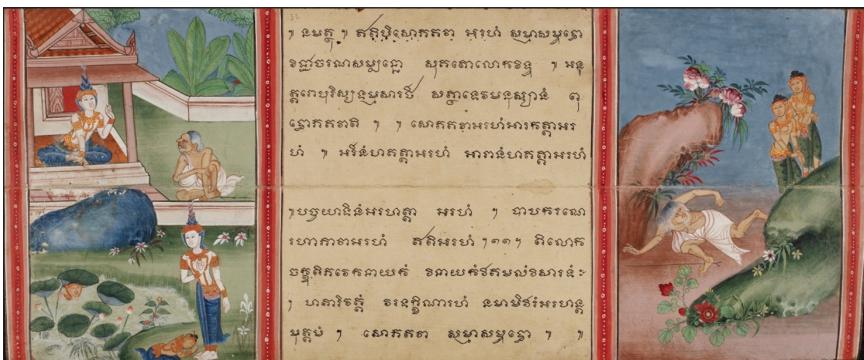


FIGURE 6. Scenes from the *Vessantara Jātaka*. The Brahmin Jūjaka asks for Vessantara's children (left). Jūjaka leads the children through the forest (left). British Library Or 16552, fol. 32.

This folio shows the scenes where the Brahmin Jūjaka asks for Vessantara's children, who first hide in a lotus pond, but then obey their father's will. On the left side, there is a typical feature of Thai painting, often seen in mural painting, where successive events are represented in one picture. That's why one can see Vessantara twice in this painting. On the right side, Jūjaka, stumbling over rocks, leads the children through the forest. Although this is a very cruel scene, the beauty of the natural environment creates a sense of harmony (British Library Or 16552, fol. 32).

As the story goes, in a neighboring kingdom, a poor Brahmin named Jūjaka was berated by his wife for their poverty, for which she suffered humiliation from other village women. She ordered him to go and ask Vessantara in the forest for his two children to be her servants, hearing of his reputation for giving. By asking a hermit in the forest, Jūjaka found the way to Vessantara's abode, and the prince at once agreed to give his two children to Jūjaka, pouring water on Jūjaka's hands to symbolize the gift. Although the children hid under lotus plants in the pond, the prince called them and gave them away. Jūjaka treated the children cruelly, but at night the gods took the form of their parents and comforted them. The gods also took the form of wild animals to block the way when Maddi was returning from the forest, to protect her from the shock of learning of the loss of her beloved children. The two



FIGURE 7. Scenes from the *Vessantara Jātaka*. Maddi collects fruits in the forest for the family while Jūjaka asks Vessantara for his two children (left). Vessantara consoles Maddi (right). British Library Or 16552, fol. 52.

parents grieved together, but both understood through intuition the necessity of this extreme gift as a step on the path to enlightenment.

The painting on the left side depicts Maddi collecting fruits in the forest for her family while the Brahmin Jūjaka meets Vessantara to ask for his two children. As Jūjaka drives the wailing children through the forest, the gods were thinking of Maddi's anguish if she should see them in this state. Three gods decide to take the forms of a royal lion (*rājasīha*) and two tigers to block the path of Maddi, thus preventing her return to the hermitage until after night had fallen. Maddi is kneeling down in front of the three animals, greeting them with a *wai* fearlessly and respectfully. Her jewelry still shows that she is of royal descent, but her clothes reveal that she is living as a hermit. On the floor in front of her are two baskets with forest fruits on a carrying stick. The three animals are only partly to be seen.

On the right side of the painting, one can see Vessantara and Maddi in their hermitage, which is similar to parts of Khmer temples found in the northeast of Thailand. Maddi is resting her head on Vessantara's lap, and he is consoling her. In the background are banana plants, one blossoming, which provide nutrition for the couple (Or 16552, fol. 52).

Only Maddi remained to be given away, and the god Indra took the form of another Brahmin and asked for her. Maddi understood the meaning of

the gift and accepted it. The god soon returned her to Vessantara when he saw that the great gift had been made without hesitation.

One night, Jūjaka tied the children to a tree trunk, while he slept above them in the branches. The gods disguised his route home so that he took them back to their home rather than to his own land, and Vessantara's father Sañjaya paid a huge reward to Jūjaka for bringing back the children. Jūjaka's wealth soon led to extreme overindulgence and to his death from overeating. Sañjaya resolved to travel in royal procession to the forest to invite Vessantara back home, and the six members of the royal family were reunited in a tearful scene.

In the Thai Buddhist tradition, during the rainy season when rice planting was completed and there was some leisure time, a major festival took place called *thēt mahāchāt*. This was the recitation by monks of the entire Vessantara story. The full hearing of one thousand Pāli verses (in Thai, *kātha phan*) lasted a whole day and well into the night. Hearing all the verses was believed to help accumulate great merit. But although the merit was obtained from hearing the holy Pāli verses alone, only educated monks were able to understand or to explain the Pāli language verses. Therefore, more and more often the monks began to recite a Thai language version for the appreciation of the people assembled, and it could be truly entertaining, depending on the wit and skill of the reciter. The comical parts of the story were elaborated and localized in the Thai style—for example, the rough exchanges among Jūjaka, his wife, and the local women who mocked her, and Jūjaka's dissolute behavior when he was given great wealth after returning Vessantara's children to their home by mistake.

The Vessantara recitation was divided into thirteen chapters, and each chapter was recited by a monk who was sponsored by one or more members of the community. The sponsors provided gifts for the reciting monk and for the temple, as well as accompanying entertainments.

The *Vessantara Jātaka* embodies a vision of a perfect world. In the kingdom of Sivi, King Sañjaya and Prince Vessantara are wholly just and moral, and in the forest a perfect harmony reigns. The unfolding of the plot reveals the perfectly just roles enacted by the king and prince, and passages of lyrical verse extol the beauty of nature. In manuscript paintings, scenes of nature with forests and wild animals living in harmony illustrated Buddhist

texts in general. For this reason, manuscripts containing Buddhist prayers, narratives, and commentaries were generally adorned with beautiful forest scenes. They also represented the Himavanta forests that lay between the human world and the mountain Meru leading up to heaven.

The remaining nine of the Last Ten Birth Tales are illustrated with one pair of paintings, each of equally high quality, although they are of a lower importance here than the *Vessantara Jātaka*, which stands out significantly.

Another popular birth tale illustrated in the manuscript is the *Nimi Jātaka* (in Pāli, *Nemiya Jātaka*), which symbolizes resolution. It tells about the Buddha's former incarnation as the son of the king of Mithila. The prince was born to round off the family of the king and was therefore called Nimi, meaning hoop (like hoop of a chariot). After his father had renounced his throne, Prince Nimi became king and stood out for his righteousness and generosity. Soon the gods in the heavens heard about his extraordinary merit. When King Nimi had a doubtful moment about living a holy life and giving alms, Indra (Sakka) appeared before Nimi to encourage him. When the other gods desired to see Nimi, Indra sent his heavenly chariot with his driver Mātali to fetch the king. On his way to Tāvatimsa heaven, where Indra resides, Mātali drove Nimi through various hells and heavens and the palaces of the gods. After several days, King Nimi returned to earth and taught his followers and subjects about his encounters. This *jātaka* bears some similarity with the legend of the monk Phra Mālai, who also was said to have traveled to the heavens and hells and on his return to earth told the laypeople what he had seen.

The illustration on the right side shows King Nimi in his royal outfit in traditional Thai style. He kneels on the veranda of a building in his palace. Remarkable in this painting is the Western-style perspective of the building and the wall surrounding the courtyard. The delicately painted tree in the background evidences some Chinese influence. In front of Nimi kneels Sakka, who in the Thai manuscript culture is always represented in the color green. On the left side, one can see the chariot with the driver Mātali riding a lavishly adorned white horse. Mātali wears a pointed conical white hat that is similar to hats traditionally worn by the Brahmin servants at the Thai royal court. In the chariot, King Nimi points toward creatures in front of the chariot who are suffering the torments of one of the many Buddhist

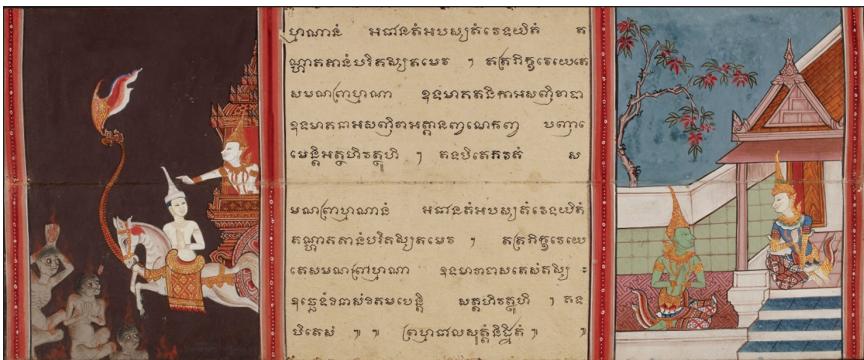
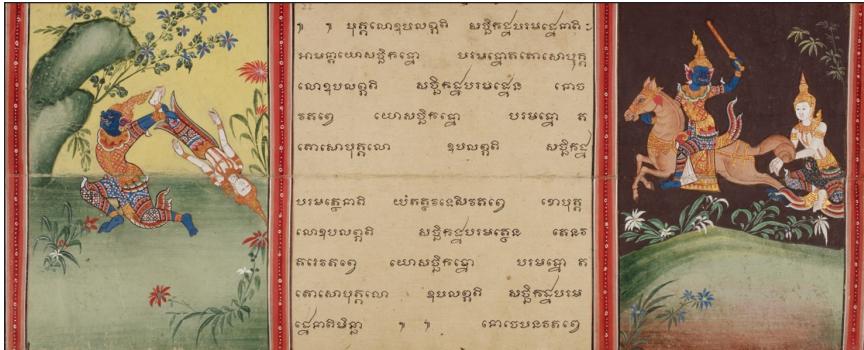


FIGURE 8. Scenes from the *Nemiya Jātaka*. Nimi on his visit to one of the *narakas* (Buddhist hells) (left). Sakka kneels before King Nimi in his royal outfit in traditional Thai style (right). British Library Or 16552, fol. 13.

hells. The background of this painting is dark brown. Dark backgrounds became fashionable in Thai manuscript art only during the Rattanakosin era (British Library Or 16552, fol. 13).

The *Vidhurapandita Jātaka* is another example that has been illustrated in outstanding quality in this manuscript. This Birth Tale stands as a symbol of truth. Vidhura, another previous incarnation of the Buddha, was a minister of great wisdom whose fame was widespread. Vimala, wife of Varuna, the Nāga king, plots to obtain Vidhura's heart and orders the demon (*yakkha*) Punnaka to get hold of his heart. Through magic he wins power over Vidhura in a game of dice with the king that Vidhura served. Vidhura agrees to go with Punnaka, who tries to kill him on the way to the Nāga kingdom. But thanks to his merit, Vidhura is not injured. When he discovers Punnaka's intentions, he begins to preach to him about the moral laws. Punnaka is so moved that he offers to take Vidhura back home, but Vidhura insists on going to the Nāga kingdom in order to preach to the Nāga king and his wife. Finally, the Nāga queen understands that Vidhura's "heart" is his truthfulness and wisdom.

On the right side, again on a dark brown background, one can see Punnaka riding on a horse while swinging his sword violently, hoping to frighten his captive to death. Vidhura is tied to the horse's tail in order to be dragged to the Nāga kingdom. The presentation of the *yakkha*, here shown with skin



**FIGURE 9.** Scenes from the *Vidyurapanḍita Jātaka*. Punnaka attempting to kill Vidhura (left). Punnaka rides on a horse while Vidhura is tied to the horse's tail, being dragged to the Nāga kingdom (right). British Library Or 16552, fol. 22.

colored bright blue, is carried out in outstanding quality. Blue color was rare in manuscript paintings from before the Rattankosin period, as it had to be imported from China or Europe. The illustration on the left side depicts the scene where Punnaka tries to kill Vidhura by smashing him on a rock, but does not succeed. The landscape with gray, smoothly shaped rocks and delicate floral decorations shows the influence of Chinese landscape painting (British Library Or 16552, fol. 22).

### Manuscript Cabinet (F 1057)

A huge manuscript cabinet from Central Thailand, measuring 1900 mm × 1110 mm × 900 mm, was part of the bequest from Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection that the Library received in 2004. It is made from teak wood, decorated with black lacquer and gilt on three sides. Both the front doors have a metal loop to support a lock. A small triangular area around each loop is decorated with raised lacquer, gold leaf, and turquoise glass inlay. Two carved panels lacquered in red and gilt and decorated with turquoise glass inlay on a floral design, which were inserted between the legs on the right and left sides, strike a contrast with the delicate patterns on the

main body panels. A third carved panel, also gilt and lacquered between the front legs, bears images of two Chinese dragons.

The legs are 500 millimeters long; this type of cabinet is also called a “pig-leg” cabinet (*tū khā mū*) in Thailand. Each of the legs is decorated with a gilt guardian figure (*yakkha*) on black lacquer.

The inside of the cabinet is painted with red lacquer or paint (material unidentified). The cabinet may initially have been donated to a Buddhist temple together with a large collection of Buddhist texts. Donors usually provided the best materials for the production of manuscript storage that they could afford in order to make merit.

There are three forms of traditional manuscript storage: the single manuscript box, the chest, and the cabinet. All three are usually made from wood, often beautifully carved and/or decorated with lacquer and gilt, or with mother-of-pearl inlay. Thick layers of lacquer may have helped to prevent damage of the manuscripts by insects.

Single manuscript boxes were custom-made for a Buddhist manuscript of special importance, like, for example, a royal manuscript (sponsored by the royal family) or a manuscript produced for a special occasion, like a monk’s ordination or a funeral of a prominent person.

Chests and larger cabinets were produced for the storage of manuscripts in Buddhist temple libraries (*hō trai*) or in the royal palaces. The cabinets are commonly known in Thai as *tū phra traipitok*, meaning Tripitaka cabinet. There was not much consensus before the late nineteenth century in Siam of what constituted the entire Tripitaka (or the Theravāda Buddhist canon), and usually *traipitok* or *tripitaka* refers to a large collection of texts including Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma texts and commentaries along with vernacular Thai Buddhist texts.

The shape of the chests is mostly rectangular with a lid at the top. The cabinets are usually higher than wide, with two lockable doors at the front. The most frequently found decorations of chests and cabinets are made in lacquer and gilt, called *lāi rōt nām*, which is the best possible method to add intricate motifs and entire scenes from the Buddhist scriptures, from literary works, or from everyday life to the furniture. Sometimes, only natural scenes or floral and fire (*kranok*) motifs were applied.

To create the delicate gilt motifs on either black or red lacquer required experienced craftsmanship. After the piece of furniture had been covered with at least three coats of pure lacquer, followed by a fourth layer of thick blackened lacquer, the surface had to dry and was then polished. The design's outline was drawn or pounced on the surface, and then parts to remain black were coated with a mixture of tree sap and ground yellow stone. Following this, gold leaf was applied before the tree sap mixture was washed off with water, thus leaving the gold leaf decor on black (or red) lacquer. The technique is called *lāi rōt nām*, literally "design by pouring water." The oldest extant manuscript cabinets and chests date back to the mid to late Ayutthaya era, but the technique reached a climax—in both quantity and quality—during the Rattanakosin era. Similarly to developments in manuscript painting, some motifs shown on gilt and lacquer works of the nineteenth century evidence growing Chinese and European influences—for example, Chinese dragons and peonies, bird-and-flower motifs, people dressed in European clothes, and Western and Chinese ships and buildings.

## MAHOSADHA JĀTAKA

This particular manuscript cabinet is lavishly decorated with figures from Thai mythology of Hindu origin and scenes from the *Mahosadha Jātaka* (*Mahā Ummagga Jātaka*), which symbolizes one of Buddha's qualities, wisdom.

Mahosadha was a sage of unsurpassed wisdom in the kingdom of Mithila, ruled by King Videha Rāja, but jealous rival sages tried to discredit him by setting tests and challenges. Mahosadha outwitted them all and also defeated an enemy king, Chulani (*Cūlani Brahmadatta*, king of Kampilla), with his large armies who had laid siege to the kingdom of Jambudīpa. Chulani, following the advice of his priest (*purohita Kevatta*), then tricked King Videha Rāja into coming to his kingdom by promising to marry his beautiful daughter to him. Foreseeing Chulani's evil intentions, Mahosadha requested to build a palace for Videha Rāja in King Chulani's capital. The palace, however, was equipped with a lavishly decorated underground tunnel leading to the palace of King Chulani's daughter, and then through a cave outside the city walls. Once King Videha Rāja realized that he was in

serious danger, Mahosadha helped him to flee through the tunnel and in the process also take the princess, already married to him, and other members of Chulani's family along.

The front doors of the cabinet are lavishly illustrated with battle scenes from the *Mahosadha Jātaka*, depicting the attacks of King Chulani's armies against Jambudīpa.

In addition to the battle scenes, there are royal symbols at the top of each door. The door on the left side is at the top, decorated with an emblem of Indra (Sakka; in Thai, *Phra In*) riding on Erāvaṇa (in Thai, *Ērāwan*), a multiheaded elephant that is his vehicle. Indra is believed to be the leader of the deva and resides in Tāvatīṣa heaven situated at the top of Mount Meru. He is regarded as the god of rain and thunderstorms, and is the god of the *kshatriya*. Some of the kings of the Chakri dynasty (Rama V, Rama VI) used to sign royal orders and letters with Sayāmin (Siam-Indra). Erāvaṇa, a white elephant with several heads, is in the Thai manuscript tradition usually represented with three or more heads, however on Thai flags and royal standards he is usually equipped with three heads.

At the top of the right door is the emblem of Vishnu (*Nārāyaṇa*; in Thai, *Phra Nārāi*) riding on the holy bird Garuda (in Thai, *Phra Khrut*) in the top half. Garuda is a symbol of royalty in Thailand, whereas the Hindu god Nārāyaṇa is regarded as the sustainer and preserver of the universe. Both Garuda and Erāvaṇa feature in one of the Thai Four Great Royal Seals.

In the background one can see intricate floral *kranok* decorations with occasionally added birds, monkeys, and squirrels.

In the lower half of the right-side panel, a scene from the *Mahosadha Jātaka* is presented before a background of fine floral *kranok* design. Here one can see the flight of King Videha Rāja's followers through the tunnel that Mahosadha had built in wise foresight. Mahosadha, leaping up while raising his sword, confronts King Chulani, who kneels in defeat (British Library F 1057, right side, bottom).

The right-side panel of the manuscript cabinet shows four heavenly figures seemingly hovering in the air above an earthly scene. Two of these figures can be identified as *deva* (in Thai *thēppanōm*), but the other two are somewhat obscure, resembling a couple of winged male and female creatures with lion-shaped bodies and human heads, wearing a European hair-

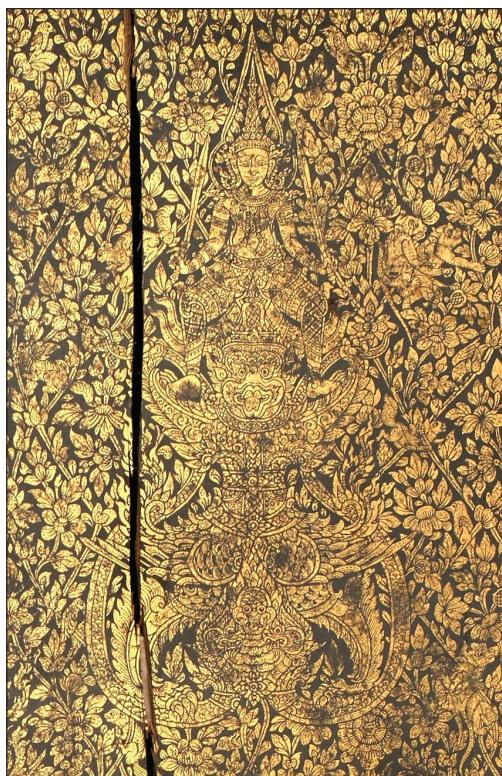


FIGURE 10. Scene on a manuscript cabinet showing an emblem of Vishnu riding on Garuda. Right-side panel from the left front door. British Library F 1057, right side, top.

style in the fashion of Louis XIV. Depictions of such unusual creatures or figures with some European features can be found not only in nineteenth-century manuscript painting and manuscript furniture decoration, but also frequently in Thai mural painting. At the bottom of this panel is one more important scene from the *Mahosadha Jātaka*. The scene here shows how Mahosadha leads King Videha Rāja and his followers to safety through a cave while making his unmistakable sword-swinging-gesture in front of King Chulani, who finally has to accept the superiority of King Videha Rāja thanks to Mahosadha's wisdom (British Library F 1057, right side).

The two examples above, one Buddhist manuscript and one manuscript cabinet, were chosen to demonstrate that the Thai manuscripts collection at



FIGURE 11. Scene from the *Mahosadha Jātaka* on a manuscript cabinet depicting the flight of King Videha Rāja's followers through the tunnel built by Mahosadha, who confronts King Chulani with raised sword. British Library F 1057, lower half of the right-side panel.

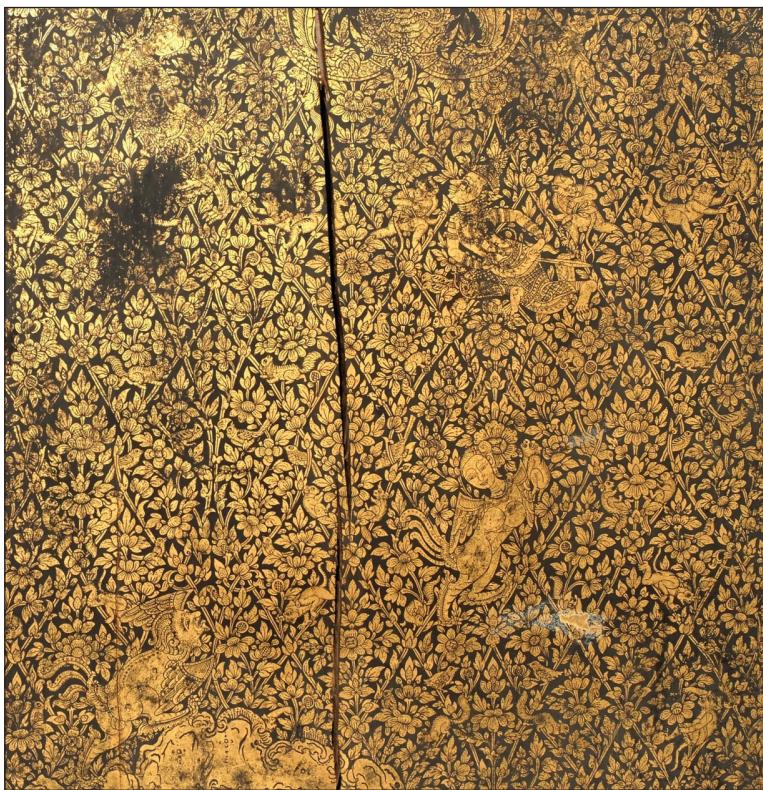


FIGURE 12. Scene on a manuscript cabinet showing four heavenly figures. British Library F 1057, right-side panel.

the British Library is an incredibly rich source for the study of Thai manuscript art and art history, especially from the late Ayutthaya era up to the early twentieth century. Numerous similar collection items—for example, Phra Mālai manuscripts, Phrommachāt manuals, medical treatises, and cat treatises—are ideal for comparative studies. A great variety of Buddhist and secular texts provide a good basis for linguistic studies, like text analysis, text comparison, interpretation, and translation.

### *Other Thai Manuscripts Collections in the United Kingdom*

#### WELLCOME TRUST, LONDON

The Wellcome Trust was established in 1936 under the will of Sir Henry Solomon Wellcome, a successful pharmaceutical businessman, researcher, and passionate collector and philanthropist. Wellcome was born in 1853 on a pioneer farm in Almond, Wisconsin. When his deeply religious parents, Solomon and Mary Wellcome, moved to Garden City, Minnesota, in 1861, the foundations of Wellcome's most dominant qualities and interests were laid. Soon after the Wellcome family had settled into their new home, there was an uprising by the neighboring Native American tribes, and the town became a temporary fortress. Wellcome, still a boy, helped to care for the wounded and witnessed the killing of white settlers, which was followed by the dispossession of the Native Americans and hanging of their tribal chiefs. These events stirred in the boy a deep sympathy for the wounded as well as the dispossessed Native Americans.

While still attending school, Wellcome helped his father run a drugstore owned by his uncle, Jacob, a medical practitioner. When he was only sixteen, Wellcome's first product appeared on the market, lemon juice labeled as "invisible ink." Soon afterwards, he started to work with a pharmaceutical chemist, Poole and Geisinger, while attending college. He graduated from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy in 1874 and decided to join a firm in New York, Caswell and Hazard Co., where he also became an active member of the American Pharmaceutical Association. Just two years later, he was offered a job as a traveling salesman at McKesson & Robbins, then

the leading American pharmaceutical company. His business trips took him as far as to remote areas of Peru and Ecuador, where he studied the preparation of chinchona bark, which is used for the production of quinine. His research was published in the *Proceedings of the American Pharmaceutical Association* and the *Pharmaceutical Journal of Great Britain* and received wide interest. Following this, his college friend Silas Burroughs, who was doing similar work in Europe for another American pharmaceutical firm, asked Wellcome to join him in a business partnership. The firm of Burroughs Wellcome & Co. was established in 1880 in London. They first introduced and distributed compressed tablets in Britain, but soon they began to manufacture their own products and expanded their trade to other countries. In 1894, Wellcome opened the first of his research laboratories. When Burroughs passed away in 1895, Wellcome continued to run the firm and in the following years opened offices in Sydney, Cape Town, Milan, New York, Montreal, Shanghai, Buenos Aires, and Bombay. Wellcome traveled extensively and allowed more time for his scientific, archaeological, and collecting interests. His interest in Africa led to the establishment of an important branch of research into tropical diseases. After a trip to Sudan in 1900, Wellcome helped to set up tropical research laboratories in Khartoum with the aim to eliminate malaria. Wellcome's research activities found their climax in the foundation of the Wellcome Bureau of Scientific Research in London in 1930, which was designed as a world-leading center for the study of tropical diseases.

Wellcome's interest in archaeology and collection began in his childhood and was associated with his sympathy for the Native Americans. During his travels to various countries, he collected any artifact related to medicine and traditional methods of healing. His biggest project in the field of archaeology was a four-year excavation program that started in 1910 at Jebel Moya, midway between the Blue and the White Nile. While traveling in Sudan, he met Gwendoline Maud Syrie Barnardo, whom he married in 1901. In 1932 Wellcome funded another archaeological expedition near Jerusalem.

Although Wellcome married and had a son, Henry Mounteney, he was said to have been a "curiously lonely" man (according to Henry Dale, one of Wellcome's closest associates in later life, in an obituary tribute in *The Times [London]*). His strict upbringing had made him an austere man, and restlessly

at work himself, he would not tolerate in others what he regarded as laziness. Due to the extensive traveling activities of both parents, the son was sent to foster parents at the age of three. The marriage broke down around 1910, and Wellcome never saw Syrie again. The formal divorce in 1916 was said to have seriously damaged Wellcome's public image, and he then abstained from forming close personal relationships. For the rest of his life, he found satisfaction in his work and in pursuing his interests in traveling and collecting. He bought from shops, markets, and individuals during his trips, but also employed foreign agents to buy artifacts for him and to bid at auctions. His collection is believed to have consisted of about 1.5 million items, including well over 20,000 books and 14,000 manuscripts, dwarfing the collections of Europe's most famous museums at the time. In 1913, Wellcome opened the first major exhibition at his newly established Wellcome Historical Medical Museum in London. A decade later, in 1924, Wellcome formally created the Wellcome Foundation in order to combine his business and research interests. A new building was finally opened in 1932 in London's Euston Road to house the museum, together with two laboratories and the library.

Wellcome passed away in 1936 after a short illness. The entire share capital of the Wellcome Foundation was to be held in trust by five trustees nominated according to his will. The income from the capital was to be used to further the advance of medical and pharmaceutical research and the understanding of the history of medicine. Due to limited space, a large part of Wellcome's collection had to be dismantled gradually and was dispersed to museums and other interested institutions across the globe, whereas another large part was transferred to London's Science Museum on permanent loan in the 1970s. The library and the heart of the museum, however, remained in the Wellcome Building and were given the joint title of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in 1968.

A small collection of Thai manuscripts, though apparently the second largest collection of this kind in the United Kingdom, formed part of Wellcome's vast manuscripts collection. These manuscripts are being held at the Wellcome Collection in London and are publicly accessible. It is believed that Wellcome acquired the major part of the Thai manuscripts collection between 1910 and 1926 with the help of the multilingual Dr. Paira Mall, whom he had employed to buy material in Asia and to translate selected

ancient medical manuscripts from Asia. Some of the manuscripts were acquired after Wellcome's death. The collection comprises mainly medical treatises (*tamrā phāēt*), massage manuals (*tamrā nūat*), herbals (*tamrā yā*), divination handbooks, and astrological manuals, but also includes various Buddhist texts written on palm leaves and four Buddhist folding books, lavishly illustrated with scenes from the legend of Phra Mālai. The fact that Buddhist manuscripts not directly related to medicine are part of Wellcome's collection is nothing unusual, but rather a result of Wellcome's holistic perspective on health, medicine, and well-being.

Most of the medical treatises in this collection were written during the nineteenth century, and some are believed to be related to Wat Phra Chetuphon (Wat Phō) in Bangkok, although not much is known about the origin and provenance of these manuscripts. Some of the manuscripts contain fine illustrations and diagrams of the human body. Other treatises contain information about medicinal plants and recipes for the preparation of medicines. One manuscript is a rare handbook for midwives.

The collection provides an excellent basis for the research on traditional medicine in Thailand, and together with medical manuscripts from other parts of Asia, it is an excellent starting point for comparative research on the history of medicine in Asia.

#### ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY, LONDON

The Royal Asiatic Society was founded in 1823 by the eminent Sanskrit scholar Henry Colebrooke and a group of like-minded individuals. It received its Royal Charter from King George IV in 1824 "for the investigation of subjects connected with and for the encouragement of science, literature and the arts in relation to Asia." The society has a library and a significant collection of Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, Pāli, Malay, and Javanese manuscripts, many of them donated to the society by fellows.

In addition to the larger manuscript collections, there is a small collection of twenty-five Thai manuscripts. The majority of them were given to the society by H. G. Quaritch Wales, Sir Alexander Johnston, and Captain James Low or their descendants.

Most of the manuscripts date back to the nineteenth or eighteenth centuries; one, however, might be a copy of a manuscript originally dated 1617 AD (*Samut Rātchathirāt*). The scope of the manuscripts collection reaches from historical treatises and chronicles, literary and linguistic works, to Buddhist texts and works on astrology, divination, and medicine. This collection is remarkable for its provenance because the donors were scholars and learned men with a certain focus and interest; therefore, they would have carefully selected these manuscripts.

### BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON

Following the British Library Act of 1972, the library departments of the British Museum were transferred to the British Library in 1973. As a result of this, the museum's original Thai manuscripts collection is now being held at the British Library. However, a small though important collection of painted Thai temple banners (*phrabot*) remains at the British Museum. Some of these banner paintings were presented to the museum by H. G. Quaritch Wales in 1959; others were part of a donation from Doris Duke's Southeast Asian Art Collection in 2004. This collection is significant as Henry Ginsburg worked on a book project on Thai temple banners just before his sudden death, and therefore spent a considerable amount of time researching the museum's collection of *phrabot*. Unfortunately, his book was never published, but in his undated notes found in the Henry Ginsburg Archive that was given to the British Library in 2008, he had written the following:

Thai paintings on cloth (called *phrabot* in Thai) were made to serve as reminders of the great teacher Gautama Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist faith, and of his teachings (dhamma). Buddhist paintings on wood were also made in Thailand and are also called *phrabot*. Many such paintings depict the Buddha flanked by his two main disciples, Moggalana and Sariputta. Others present scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha, and from his previous lives. The *phrabot* paintings are one of several forms of Buddhist art in Thailand that

commemorate the Buddha—others are manuscript painting, mural painting, lacquer painting, architecture, and sculpture. As with all Buddhist works of art, the work brought merit to the sponsor, and also to the artist. The concept of merit is a key idea of the Buddhist faith. . . .

The production of Buddhist paintings must date back many hundreds of years in Thailand, although the examples of phrabot painting that we can study and appreciate today date mainly from the nineteenth century, with a very few other paintings that are late eighteenth century (judged from their earlier painting style). Additionally, some even earlier examples are known that are only fragmentary, datable to the 16th and 17th centuries. Earlier than these rare fragments, we have no evidence. Thai painting on cloth and wood probably flourished extensively from early times, but these earlier treasures of Thai painting are lost to us.

The Thai word used for portable paintings on cloth and on wood—phrabot—derives from a word in the Pāli language “pata” (in Sanskrit, patra), meaning cloth. The word “cittapata” means more specifically a “painted cloth” in Pāli, but the shorter word “pata” is used for the same thing.

## BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

Among Oxford University’s libraries, the Bodleian Library has a special place. First opened to scholars in 1602, it incorporates an earlier library erected by the university in the fifteenth century to house books donated by Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester.

An important gift received in the seventeenth century from Archbishop Laud included manuscripts from Southeast Asia. The library’s most significant Southeast Asian manuscript collections are those in Burmese or Burmese script (over thirty), Javanese (fifteen), Malay (twenty-one), and Thai (twelve). The Thai manuscripts date back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and contain texts in the Pāli language, mainly extracts from the Tipiṭaka, sometimes in combination with the legend of the monk Phra Mālai

in Thai. This collection stands out as it includes some very rare Buddhist texts and manuscripts with excellent illustrations and border decorations.

### JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY, MANCHESTER

The John Rylands Library was founded by Enriqueta Rylands in memory of her husband John Rylands following his death in 1888. The library opened to the public in 1900 and merged with the University of Manchester Library in 1972. The John Rylands Library now houses the majority of the Special Collections of the University of Manchester Library.

The major part of the library's Oriental manuscripts was acquired from the earls of Crawford and Balcarres in 1901. Lord Lindsay, Earl of Crawford, was a discriminating collector of manuscripts and enjoyed a reputation as one of the most learned men of his time. He obtained a wide variety of Oriental manuscripts, including some from Southeast Asia.

The Thai manuscripts were acquired with the Crawford collection. In addition, a small number of manuscripts in the Pāli language in Khmer script from Thailand were presented to the library in 1915 by Rhys Davids. These manuscripts date mainly from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. One manuscript is thought to be a fragment of an eighteenth-century copy of a Buddhist cosmology (*Trailōk*) dating back to the fourteenth century. The scope of this collection is mainly literature, mythology, astrology, and history, but includes also a few Buddhist texts.

### COLLECTIONS WITH SMALL NUMBERS OF THAI MANUSCRIPTS

Smaller collections with fewer than ten Thai manuscripts can be found at the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London; the Horniman Museum, London; the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; Cambridge University Library; and the India and Iran Trust in Cambridge.

*Appendix 1: Accessibility and Online Presentation of Thai Manuscripts Through the British Library Website*

All manuscripts in the Thai language and/or Thai script, or manuscripts originating from Central Thailand, have been catalogued in the British Library's system, available at <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/> (keyword search “*samut kh̄ī*” for folding books and “*bai lān*” for palm-leaf manuscripts).

Further details of individual items can be found in Henry Ginsburg's publications and in the following printed handlists:

Marrison, G. E., ed. *Handlist of the Tai and Mon-Khmer Manuscripts in the British Museum, Together with Pali Manuscripts from the Corresponding Region, and a Short Bibliography*. 1968.

Typescript handlist, updated by H. Ginsburg to include recent acquisitions of Thai and Cambodian manuscripts up to the year 2004 (ORC THAI 1).

Zwalf, W., ed. *Buddhism: Art and Faith*. London: British Museum, 1985. See “Thailand and Cambodia,” pp. 175–86, for details of manuscripts from the British Library (X 205/1792).

During an ambitious five-year pilot project (2008 to 2012) that had been funded by the Royal Thai Government on the auspicious occasion of the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, over 8,500 folios from 59 Thai manuscripts and the Chakrabongse Archive of Royal Letters were digitized. All fully digitized manuscripts and Royal Letters can be viewed online at <http://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/thai.html> or <http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/>.

The manuscripts that were selected for this project are important resources for research in the field of Thai studies, particularly Thai Buddhist and manuscript art. The scope of the chosen manuscripts ranges from Buddhist literature, history, and philology to astrology, traditional medicine, and biology. Included were the most notable highlights of the British Library's Thai collection.

The project took great care to ensure the digitization of the manuscripts had as little physical impact on the selected items as possible. A detailed risk assessment of the digitization of the manuscripts was undertaken. Where it was possible to repair manuscripts in the short term, such repair works were carried out before the digitization works commenced.

One complete set of digital images in master file quality was given to the National Library of Thailand in June 2013, providing the opportunity to make these images available to library users in Thailand and the wider research community.

*Appendix 2: List of Other Thai Manuscripts Collections in the United Kingdom*

Most of the manuscripts in the collections listed below have not been catalogued in the online cataloguing systems of the respective institutions. Their bibliographic details are displayed here in a rather simple format that was in use in many UK collections before the introduction of

electronic cataloguing systems. This format, however, is the basis on which more complex electronic metadata systems for manuscripts were built upon.

**WELLCOME LIBRARY**

**(Collection of Sir Henry Wellcome)**

183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE

**Thai 1**

**Phra Mālai**

Folding book, ill., Khmer script, brown lacquer covers with gilt, 19th century  
Buddhist legend about the monk Phra Mālai, who traveled to heaven and hell, accompanied by extracts from Buddhist canonical texts, including Abhidhamma and Sahassaneyya  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 2**

**Phra Mālai**

Folding book, ill., Khmer script (colophon in Thai script), red lacquer covers with gilt seal, 19th century  
Buddhist legend about the monk Phra Mālai, who traveled to heaven and hell, accompanied by extracts from Buddhist canonical texts, including Abhidhamma  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 3**

**Phra Mālai**

Folding book, ill., Khmer script, black lacquer covers, 19th century  
Buddhist legend about the monk Phra Mālai, who traveled to heaven and hell, mixed with extracts from Buddhist canonical texts including Abhidhamma (Saṅgāni) and Sutta texts accompanied also by illustrations from the Last Ten Birth Tales of the Buddha  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 4**

**Phra Mālai**

Folding book (fragment, some folios and covers are missing and some folios are wrongly attached), ill., Khmer script, late 18th century  
Buddhist legend about the monk Phra Mālai, who traveled to heaven and hell, mixed with extracts from Buddhist canonical texts including Abhidhamma (Saṅgāni) and Sutta texts, accompanied by illustrations from the Last Ten Birth Tales of the Buddha  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 5**

**Phrommachāt**

Folding book, 56 fols., ill., Thai script, late 19th century

A fortune-telling/divination manual based on the Chinese zodiac  
Thai

**Thai 6**

**Phrommachāt**

Folding book, 78 fols., ill., Thai script, 19th century  
A fortune-telling/divination manual based on the Chinese zodiac  
Thai

**Thai 7**

**Phrommachāt**

Folding book (incomplete), 76 fols., ill., Thai script, late 19th/early 20th century  
A fortune-telling/divination manual based on the Chinese zodiac  
Thai

**Thai 8**

**[Yantra and medical treatise]**

Folding book, 78 fols., ill., Thai and Khmer scripts mixed, early 20th century  
Protective yantra designs together with a medical treatise  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 9**

**[Astrology and divination]**

Folding book, 60 fols., ill., Thai script, late 19th century  
A manual for astrologers and divination specialists  
Thai

**Thai 10**

**[Astrology and divination]**

Folding book, 58 fols., ill., Thai and Khmer scripts mixed, late 19th century  
A manual for astrologers and divination specialists  
Thai and Pāli

**Thai 11**

**An̄guttara-nikāya pabbakanipāta, phük 11**

Palm leaf with gilt and red lacquer (1 bundle), Khmer script, wooden gilt and lacquered covers  
with gilt ornaments, 18th or early 19th century  
Extract from the Suttapiṭaka, folios dha-ne  
Pāli

**Thai 12**

**Sudhana, lem 1**

Folding book, 60 fols., Thai script, 19th century

Volume 1 of the legend of Sudhana and Manohāra, the Thai version of a literary text originating in India  
Thai

**Thai 13**

**Thētsanā maharāt khamchan namrōng mai chop**  
Folding book (incomplete), Thai script, 19th century  
A Buddhist chanting text  
Thai

**Thai 14**

[Extracts from the Tipiṭaka]  
Palm leaf (15 bundles gilt and red lacquered), Northern Thai script (Tham Lānnā script),  
wooden covers and wrapper, eighteenth or 19th century  
A collection of unidentified Buddhist texts that are extracts from the Tipiṭaka  
Pāli

**Thai 15**

[Extracts from the Tipiṭaka]  
Palm leaf, Khmer script, plain wooden covers, 19th century  
Brah abhidhammatthasaṅgaṇinipa (phūk 1), Vibhaṅga cakarana tma prasanga (phūk 2),  
Dhātukathā (phūk 3), Puggalapaññatti (phūk 4), Abhidhammasaṅgaṇī (phūk 5?), Yamaka  
(phūk 6), Mahāpaṭṭhāna (phūk 7)  
Pāli

**Thai 16**

**Brah aṭṭhakathā petavatthu**  
Palm leaf (8 bundles, gilt and red lacquered, that are out of order), Khmer script with notes in  
Thai script, plain wooden covers, 19th century  
Commentaries on the Suttapiṭaka; phūk 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9 only  
Pāli

**Thai 17**

**Sārasaṅgaha**  
Palm leaf (14 bundles), Khmer script, 19th century  
An anthology containing chapters on various topics of Buddhist teachings, a guide to the  
Dhamma  
Pāli

**Thai 18**

**Brah dhammapāda**  
Palm leaf (1 bundle, fragment), Khmer script with notes in Thai script, 18th/19th century  
Collection of sayings of the Buddha, part of the Khuddaka-nikāya; phūk 14 only, folios khra-grah  
Pāli and Thai

**Thai 19**

**[Extracts from the Tipiṭaka]**

Palm leaf (3 bundles, gilt and red lacquer), Northern Thai script (Tham Lānnā script), wooden covers, 19th century

A collection of unidentified Buddhist texts that are extracts from the Tipiṭaka  
Pāli

**Thai 20**

**[Extracts from the Tipiṭaka]**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), Northern Thai script (Tham Lānnā script), 19th century

A collection of unidentified Buddhist texts that are extracts from the Tipiṭaka  
Pāli

**Thai 21**

**[Extracts from the Tipiṭaka]**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), Northern Thai script (Tham Lānnā script), 19th century

A collection of unidentified Buddhist texts that are extracts from the Tipiṭaka  
Pāli

**Thai 22**

**Brah kankhāvitarani**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), Khmer script, 19th century

Buddhaghosa's *Commentary on the Patimokkha*; phūk 3 only, folios na-cah  
Pāli

**Thai 25**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Folding book, 57 fols., ill., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 29 (other shelfmark on box Thai 5/10814)**

**Tamrā yā dōi Lüang Phō Narang**

Folding book, Thai script, 19th century

Medical treatise compiled by Lüang Phō Narang

Thai

**Thai 30**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 41 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal including yantra for protection from diseases

Thai

**Thai 31**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 22 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 32**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 26 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 33**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 27 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 34**

**Tamrā yā kānyū philē**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 21 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 35**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 24 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 36**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 46 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 37**

**Kāthā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 24 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A handbook of kāthā and mantra (incantations) in Pāli language with explanations in Thai; also includes yantra designs for the protection of health and from injury

Pāli and Thai

**Thai 38**

**Kāthā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 22 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A handbook of kāthā and mantra (incantations) in Pāli with explanations in Thai; also includes yantra designs for the protection of health and from injury

Pāli and Thai

**Thai 39**

**Tamrā phāṭ**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 35 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise for practitioners

Thai and Pāli

**Thai 40**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 9 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai and Pāli

**Thai 41**

**Tamrā 'qk lūk**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 40 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for midwives (*mō tamyādē*)

Thai

**Thai 42**

**Tamrā rāk sat**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 26 fols., Thai script, 19th century

An herbal dealing with typhoid fever

Thai

**Thai 43**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 18 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise dealing with snake bites

Thai and Pāli

**Thai 44**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle, fragment), 24 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 45**

**Tamrā marāēng**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 51 fols., Thai script, 19th century

An herbal dealing with insects (or insect bites)?

Thai

**Thai 46**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf, (1 bundle, fragment, damaged), Thai script, eighteenth or early 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 48**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle, fragment), 7 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 49**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 31 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 50**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 51 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 51**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 43 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 52**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 43 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 53**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 31 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for practitioners, includes yantra design

Thai

**Thai 54**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 15 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 55**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 16 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 56**

**Tamrā 'ōk lük tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 43 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for midwives

Thai

**Thai 57**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 45 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 58**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 15 fols., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for practitioners

Thai

**Thai 59**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 40 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 60**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 28 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 61**

**Tamrā yā**

Palm leaf (1 bundle), 55 fols., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal

Thai

**Thai 64**

**Tamrā yā khai pen tāng tāng**

Folding book, ill., Thai script, 19th century

A medical treatise and herbal for fevers

Thai

**MS 801**

**Tamrā nūat**

Folding book, ill., Thai script, 19th century

Massage manual

Thai

**Thai 5/10818**

**Tamrā phāēt**

Folding book (fragment), front cover only, ill., Thai and Khmer scripts, 19th century

Medical treatise of diseases and tumors

Thai

**9541**

**Phāēn phāēt phong phinyō**

Folding book (fragment), ill., Thai script, 19th century

Medical treatise with astrological observations (?)

Thai

**WMS Thai Lao**

**[Buddhist text]** (unidentified)

Palm leaf (collection of bundles with bamboo stick through holes in Burmese style), gilt and red lacquer, with wooden covers, Northern Thai script, 18th or early 19th century

Pāli

**WMS Pāli Thai 22**

**Satra**

Palm leaf, Khmer script, 19th century

Divination manual, probably from Southern Thailand

Pāli, Khmer

**ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY**

14 Stephenson Way

London NW1 2HD

**RAS Thai MS 2**

**Samut Rātchāthirāt**

Black folding book, 45 fols., Thai script in yellow ink on title page and the rest in white chalk, dated Chulasakkarat 979 = 1617 A.D. (perhaps a later copy of the original document)

Annals of Pegu/Mon chronicle (volume 19 only)

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 4**

**Samut nāyok**

Black folding book, 58 fols., Thai script in chalk, 19th century

List of people/population census

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 5**

**Phāēn din Chin**

Black folding book, 51 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

Samkok, a narrative based on Chinese chronicles “The Three Kingdoms”

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 6**

**[Buddhist treatise]**

Black folding book, 48 fols., Thai script in white chalk, 19th century

Literary treatise including kāthā and proverbs on Buddhist morality/ethics

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales

Pāli and Thai

**RAS Thai MS 7**

**Tipiṭaka**

Black folding book, 63 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

List of contents of Pāli canon

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales  
Pāli

**RAS Thai MS 8**

**Čhindāmanī**

Cream folding book, 50 fols., Thai script in black ink, dated Chulasakkarāt 1094 / BE 2275 = 1732 AD

The first textbook and grammar of Thai language

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 9**

**Sū'a kho khamchan**

Black folding book, 61 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

Proverbs and ethical teachings for children and young people

Presented by H. D. Quaritch Wales  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 10.A**

**Tamrā rāsrī**

Cream folding book, 67 fols., Thai and Khom scripts in black ink with drawings, 19th century  
Twelve animal cycle, fortune telling and match making  
Thai and Pāli

**RAS Thai MS 10.B**

**Phrommachāt**

Cream folding book, 55 fols., Thai script in black ink with colored and gilt illustrations,  
19th century

Fortune telling and match making  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 13**

**Bot phra 'aiyakān lak chai**

Cream folding book, 81 fols., Thai script in black ink, eighteenth or early 19th century  
Traditional legal text with notes by James Low

Presented on 5 January 1828 by James Low  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 14**

**Hōrāsāt**

Palm leaf, 44 fols., parts in Thai script and parts in Khom (Khmer) script, eighteenth or early  
19th century

Astrological text

Presented by Sir Alexander Johnston on 7 May 1851

Thai and Pāli

**RAS Thai MS 15**

**Phra wōhān phūwisēt**

Cream folding book, 78 fols., Thai script in black ink with lacquered covers, early 19th century  
Thai herbal and preparation of medicines

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 16**

**‘Inao**

Black folding book, 58 fols., Thai script in yellow ink on title page and the rest in white chalk,  
19th century

Thai court drama of the Panji story (volume 6 only)

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 17**

**Suthōn lae Manōrā**

Cream folding book, 79 fols., Thai script in black ink, 19th century

Thai verse romance based on the *Sudhana Jātaka*, one of the *Paññāsa Jātakas*

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 18**

**‘Unarut**

Black folding book, 55 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

Thai version of the story of Unaruddha/Aniruddha (volume 6 only)

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 19**

**Laksanawong**

Black folding book, 58 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

Verse romance by Sunthōn Phū (volume 3 only)

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 20**

**Čhanthakhōrop**

Cream folding book, 57 fols., Thai script in black ink, 19th century

Traditional Thai verse romance (volume 1 only)

Thai

**RAS Thai MS 21**

**Suphāsit kham klōng**

Black folding book, 58 fols., Thai script with some words on title page in Thai script invented  
by King Rama VI (Vajiravudh) in yellow ink, late 19th or early 20th century

Thai proverbs and teachings in verse form  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 21.A**

**Phra samut**

Black folding book, 56 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century  
Moral teachings for the ideal wife, colophon written by “Khūm”  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 21.B**

**Meriya Nirāt**

Black folding book, 57 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century  
Phra Rot Meri, a Thai folktale in verse form  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 21.C**

**Čhao katchathu**

Folding book, 77 fols., Thai script with Khom (Khmer) script on first page, dated Chulasakkarat  
1167 – 1805 AD  
Verse romance translated into Thai from Pāli  
Presented to RAS in 1851  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 21.E**

**[Treatise]**

Folding book, 97 fols., Thai calligraphy script that resembles Khom (Khmer) script, dated Mamia  
3rd month, 3rd day, 18th century or early 19th century  
(possibly a medical treatise)  
Thai

**RAS Thai MS 30**

**Phra ‘Aphai Manī**

Black folding book, 57 fols., Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century  
Thai epic verse romance by Sunthōn Phū (volume 3 only)  
Thai

**BODLEIAN LIBRARY**

Broad St., Oxford OX1 3BG

**BODL. Dep. Stol. 111**

**[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]**

Folding book, 102 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) and Thai scripts in black ink, 19th century

Parivāra—Brahmajālasutta—Dhammasaṅgaṇī —Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Phra Mālai  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Dep. Stol. 112**  
[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 94 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) and Thai scripts in black ink, dated 2426 BE = 1883 AD  
Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Phra Mālai  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Dep. Stol. 113**  
[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 100 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) and Thai scripts in black ink and parts in gilt, 19th century  
Parivara—Brahmajālasutta—Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Phra Mālai  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 7(R)**  
[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 102 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century  
Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Phra Mālai—Sahassaneyya  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 8(R)**  
[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 100 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) and Thai scripts in black ink, 19th century  
Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Phra Mālai  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 9(R)**  
[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 98 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century  
Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Phra Mālai  
Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 11(R)****[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]**

Folding book, 102 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, dated 2419 BE = 1876 AD  
 Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—  
 Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Parivāra—Brahmajālasutta—Phra Mālai—Mahākassapabojjhāṅga—  
 Mahāmogallānabojjhāṅga—Mahācundattherabojjhāṅga  
 Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 23(R)****[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]**

Folding book, 98 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century  
 Parivāra—Brahmajālasutta—Sahassaneyya—Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—  
 Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Phra Mālai  
 Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. a. 25(R)****[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]**

Folding book, 78 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century  
 Parivāra—Pārajika—Brahmajālasutta—Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—  
 Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Phra Mālai—  
 Mahākassapabojjhāṅga—Mahāmogallānabojjhāṅga—Mahācundattherabojjhāṅga—  
 Girimānanda—Isigilisutta  
 Pāli and Thai

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. c. 16(R)****[Buddhist texts]**

Folding book, 48 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century  
 Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—  
 Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Mahābuddhaguṇa—Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—  
 Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Pāmsukūla  
 Pāli

**BODL. Ms. Asiat. Misc. c. 27(R)****[Buddhist texts]**

Folding book, 78 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, eighteenth–early 19th century  
 Pārajika—Mahāvagga—Brahmajālasutta—Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—  
 Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Sahassaneyya—Mahābuddhaguṇa—  
 Mahābuddhaguṇavaññanā—Unhisavijaya  
 Pāli

**BODL. Ms. Pali. a. 31(R)****[Buddhist texts]**

Palm leaf, 85 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script, eighteenth–19th century  
 Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññattimātikā—  
 Kathāvatthupakaranamātika—Yamaka—Mahāpaṭṭhāna

Pāli

**BODL. Ms. Pali. a. 50(R)**

[Buddhist texts and Phra Mālai]

Folding book, 96 fols., ill., Khom (Khmer) script in black ink, 19th century

Dhammasaṅgaṇī—Vibhaṅga—Dhātukathā—Puggalapaññatti—Kathāvatthu—Yamaka—  
Mahāpaṭṭhāna—Dhammasahassaneyya—Phra Mālai

Pāli and Thai

John Rylands Library

150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH

**Siamese (Thai) MS 1**

**Phra thamma**

Folding book (black on side A, blue on side B), 94 fols., ill., 440 × 139 mm, Khom (Khmer) script in gold (Pāli language) and Thai script in yellow ink, wooden black lacquered covers with gilt edges and silver drawings of two bearded men together with flowers and bird decorations, title in Khom (Khmer) script on front cover, 19th century

Protective formulas and kāthā, with illustrations of Hindu gods and yantra diagrams

Pāli and Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 2**

**Phra samut trailōk winitchai thēwā kāthā 21**

Black folding book, 28 fols., ill., 345 × 110 mm, Khom (Khmer) script in gold and Thai script in yellow ink, black lacquered covers with title in red lacquer on front cover, 19th century

21st portion of the text on the Three Worlds (*Trailōk*), said to be a copy of a 14th-century text; contains explanations in Thai of stanzas in Khom script

Pāli and Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 3**

**Phrommachāt**

Folding book, 78 fols., ill., 364 × 120 mm, Thai script in black ink, English explanations in black ink on fol. 1 only, 19th century

A fortune-telling/divination manual based on the Chinese zodiac with fine colored drawings including entwined Nāga, Hindu gods, elephant, Chinese trade junk, man with plow, and two cattle

Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 4**

**Samut Rātchāthirāt lem 1**

Black folding book, 60 fols., 335 × 110 mm, Thai script in white steatite, title in yellow ink on front cover, 19th century

History of Pegu based on a Mon chronicle (volume 1 only)

Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 5**

**Phra samut 'Aphaimanī Srīsuwan lem 18**

Black folding book, 62 fols., 359 × 110 mm, Thai script in yellow ink, 19th century

Thai epic verse romance by Sunthōn Phū (volume 18 only)

Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 6**

**Siddhi kan yā**

Cream/brownish folding book, 46 fols., ill., 360 × 119 mm, Thai script in black ink, brown lacquered covers, 19th century

Protective formula and recipes for herbal medicines, with a fine illustration of a hermit or herb-alist on fol. 1

“Siamese book presented by the Prince Momfanoi to N.S.W. Ruschenberger April 22, 1836  
Bankok”

Pāli and Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 7**

**Čhanthakhōrop lem 3**

Black folding book, 60 fols., 350 × 112 mm, Thai script in yellow ink, black lacquered covers, 19th century

Thai verse narrative by Sunthōn Phū (volume 3 only)

“J. T. Jones 1838”

Pāli

**Siamese (Thai) MS 8**

**Samut phra 'Anirut khamčhan**

Palm leaf, 64 leaves in 2 bundles, 370 × 53 mm, gilt and red lacquered edges, Thai script, plain wooden covers, 19th century

Verse narrative of Aniruddha, a Thai version of the Kṛṣṇa saga

Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 9–10**

**Srī Mü'ang**

Cream-colored folding book, 6 vols. (78, 76, 78, 78, 76, 76 fols.), 360 × 124 mm, Thai script in black ink, title on front leaves of each volume, 19th century

Thai verse romance relating the adventures of Prince Srī Mü'ang

Thai

**Siamese (Thai) MS 11**

**Phrommachāt**

Cream-colored folding book, 1 volume as a screen., ill., 352 × 122 mm, Thai and Khom (Khmer) scripts in black ink, 19th century

A fortune-telling/divination manual based on the Chinese zodiac with drawings of entwined Nāga and couple-matching diagram  
Printed sticker on front cover: Biblioteca Lindesiana  
Thai

Pali MS 82

[Extracts from the Vinaya piṭaka]

Palm leaf, 7 sets of various numbers of bundles, 590 × 48 mm, gilt edges, Khom (Khmer) script, between 1851 and 1868 AD; all seven sets resemble the standards of manuscripts given to Wat Chetuphon in Bangkok by King Mongkut (Rama IV)

Bought from Rhys Davids in 1917 AD

Pāli

- Pācittiya, set of 17 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of plants, birds, snakes, insects, and frogs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band and carved ivory title indicator, both bearing the title and number of bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.
- Mahā-vagga, set of 12 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven Burmese-style title band (sazigyo) bearing text in Burmese script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.
- Parivāra, set of 18 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band bearing the title and number of bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.
- Culla-vagga, set of 12 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band bearing the title and number of bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.
- Culla-vagga, set of 12 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band and ivory title indicator, both bearing the title and number of bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.
- Mahā-vagga, set of 12 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band bearing the title and number of

bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.

- Mahā-vagga, set of 12 bundles, black and red lacquered covers with mother-of-pearl inlay decorations of birds and floral designs. Red silk wrapper with gold thread ornaments and red cotton inlay. A rope with hand-woven title band and ivory title indicator, both bearing the title and number of bundles in Khom (Khmer) script. Each bundle has a title leaf that is gilt and black lacquered with floral designs and deva (devata), ca. 35 leaves per bundle.

### *Appendix 3: Bibliography of Works by Henry D. Ginsburg*

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