



ArchivesSpace

a community served by †Lyrasis

Robert Ernest Hume palm leaf book10209015

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on January 22, 2026.

Description is written in: English.

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Biographical / Historical	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	4
Administrative Information	4
Controlled Access Headings	5
Burke Library record group:	5
Collection Inventory	6

Summary Information

Repository:	Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Creator:	Hume, Robert Ernest, 1877-1948
Title:	Robert Ernest Hume palm leaf book
ID:	10209015
Date:	January 1817
Physical Description:	1.50 linear feet 1.50 linear feet; 1 box
Language of the Material:	Lao
Abstract:	This collection contains a palm leaf book with Buddhist ordination vows from Thailand, donated by Robert Ernest Hume, a missionary to India and later the Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions at Union Theological Seminary.

Preferred Citation

Item description, MRL4: Robert Ernest Hume palm leaf book, 1817, box #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Biographical / Historical

Robert Ernest Hume was born on March 20, 1877 in Ahmednagar, India, to missionary parents Robert Allen Hume and Abbie Burgess. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Yale University, and received his B.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1904. A year later he was ordained a Congregationalist minister. In 1907, he married Laura Caswell and traveled to India to serve as a missionary under the American Board of Congregational Foreign Missions. Hume served on the faculty of Ahmednagar Theological Seminary in India for two years before becoming the editor of Bombay's bilingual weekly, *Dhyanodaya*, in 1909. During his seven years as editor he also taught at Williams College, helped to organize the Social Service League in Bombay, and lectured at universities across India. Hume returned to the United States in 1914 and was inaugurated that same year as the Marcellus Hartley Professor of the Philosophy and History of Religion and Missions at Union Theological Seminary. After four years he was transferred to

the Charles Butler Chair of History of Religions, a position which he held until his retirement in 1944. His book entitled *The World's Living Religions* was widely circulated; it was the only religious book other than the Bible to be included in the time capsule at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Hume also served as president of the American Theological Society in 1939, and was a member of the American Association of the Advancement of Science. Hume passed away on June 14, 1948 in New York City.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains a palm leaf book with a mirror glass cover from Chiangmai, Siam (Thailand). The book is written in Lao characters, and contains karmacacha, the ordination vows for a bhiksu (a Buddhist monk). It is dated on Friday, the 3rd of the waxing moon, in the fourth month of Julasakarat Era 1179 (January 1817 A.D.).

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

This collection is arranged in original order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

3041 Broadway

New York, NY 10027

Telephone: (212) 851-5606

burke@library.columbia.edu

URL: <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/burke.html>

Revision Description

PDF converted to EAD and description updated by Leah Edelman. 2021-09-09

Conditions Governing Access

This collection may contain some restricted material. Restrictions related to specific material are listed in the detailed contents list.

Onsite storage.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Donated to the Burke Theological Library by Robert Hume on June 9, 1943.

Processing Information

Preservation was completed on the palm leaf book, which was placed in a box cut to size, then wrapped in tissue and tied with cotton tying tape. The finding aid was created by Kristen Leigh Southworth and Brigette C. Kamsler in 2013 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation, and edited by Leah Edelman in 2021.

Conditions Governing Use

Some material in this collection may be protected by copyright and other rights. Information concerning copyright, fair use, and reproduction requests can be consulted at Columbia's Copyright Advisory Office.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Missions -- India
- Thailand

Burke Library record group:

Missionary Research Library Archives: MRL4, Southeast Asia

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances
<p>Palm leaf book, January 1817</p> <p><u>Language of the Material:</u> Lao</p> <p><u>Conditions Governing Access:</u> Conditions Governing Access</p> <p>This item is open for research, but is extremely fragile, necessitating great care in handling. Please contact Burke Library staff for more information.</p>	<p>box 10S</p>