

Tibetan Collections in Scottish Museum 1890-1930: A Critical Historiography of Missionary and Military Intent.

Inbal Livne

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Abstract

This thesis looks at Tibetan material culture in Scottish museums, collected between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It examines how collectors used Tibetan objects to construct both Tibet in the western imagination and to further personal, organisational and imperial desires and expectations.

Through an analysis of the highly provenanced material available in Scottish museums, collectors will be grouped in three categories: missionaries, military personnel and colonial collectors. These are not only divided by occupation, but also by ideological frames of reference. The historical moments in which these different collector groups encountered Tibetan material culture will provide a framework for an examination of the ways that collectors accessed, collected, interpreted, used and displayed objects.

Within the framework of post-colonial theory, this thesis seeks new ways of understanding assumptive concepts and terminology that has become embedded in western analysis of Tibetan material culture. These include Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion', 'Tibetan art', 'Tibetan Buddhist art' and the position of Tibetan 'art' versus 'ethnography' in western hierarchies of value. These theoretical concerns are scrutinised through an anthropological methodology, based on the concept of 'object biography', to create an interdisciplinary model for examining objects and texts.

Using this model, I will demonstrate that collectors, whilst giving Tibetan material culture a variety of social roles, invested these categories with a range

of values. Yet despite this heterogeneity, the mosaic of knowledge produced about Tibet by these varying encounters, established and then cemented British understandings of Tibetan material culture in specific ways, constructed to assist in the British imperial domination of British-Tibetan relations. I will argue that on entering the museum, these richly textured object biographies were 'flattened out', and the information embedded within them that gave traction to interpretations of British-Tibetan encounters was hidden from view, requiring this study to make visible once more the heterogeneity, richness and significance of Tibetan material culture in Scottish museums.

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Abbreviations and Object Referencing

Abbreviations (Missionary Societies)

Church of Scotland Foreign Mission: CoSFM

China Inland Mission: CIM

Scottish Universities Mission Institute: SUMI

Church Missionary Society: CMS

London Missionary Society: LMS

Tibet Pioneer Mission: TPM

Abbreviations (Former Names for the National Museums Scotland)

An explanation of the history of these name changes can be found in Appendix

B.

Royal Scottish Museum: RSM

Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art: EMSA

Object Referencing

Object accession numbers (numbers which identify an object within a museum)

are formatted differently within each museum. In order to clearly distinguish

both the object reference number, and its source museum, accession numbers

will be referenced as follows: (museum name, museum accession number).

For example: (NMS A.1912.203).

Museum names are recorded as follows and refer to an object's current location:

National Museums Scotland: NMS

Glasgow Museums: Glasgow

Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen: Marischal

McManus Museum and Art Gallery, Dundee: McManus

National Museums Liverpool: Liverpool

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 'Scotland to the World, the World to Scotland'

On July 29th 2011, the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) re-opened after a programme of major redevelopment.¹ The newly constructed galleries asked the visitor to 'take a tour of discovery through Scottish history...as our new museum brings the world to Scotland and Scotland to the world'.² As part of the World Cultures department, which was responsible for the development of six new galleries, I wanted to interrogate this statement and ask how the history of encounters between originating communities and those local to the Museum had influenced the construction of the world *in* Scotland, through material culture.

A major commitment of the redevelopment project team was to display the Museum's collections through new modes of interpretation. The new galleries were to be largely thematic, rather than geographic, with the hope that the themes chosen would reflect the strengths of the Museum's world cultures collections; bringing to public attention new objects and finding new ways for Scotland to see the world. One of these galleries, 'Living Lands', was to include a selection of the Museum's Tibetan material, alongside the material of indigenous communities from Japan, the Pacific Northwest coast, the North American arctic and sub-arctic regions and Australia. These collections,

¹ The National Museum of Scotland is the current name for the National Museums Scotland's flagship Victorian museum on Edinburgh's Chambers Street. See Appendix B for details of the organization's history, including historic name changes.

² National Museums Scotland website, accessed 06/05/2013, http://www.nms.ac.uk/royal_museum_project.aspx.

representing the variety of the world's landscapes, would examine 'traditional values and contemporary lives of indigenous peoples. Combining historic collections with new acquisitions... For the indigenous peoples who call these places home, these are the lands of their ancestors and the foundation of their cultures'.³ This statement assumes that the essential elements of these cultures, distilled into object form and available within the Museum's collections, could be rearticulated in a manner recognisable to both the Museum's targeted audiences and any Tibetan, Japanese Ainu or Australian Aboriginal who might happen to walk into the gallery. As a curatorial assistant, my role was to test such assumptions by interrogating the objects and their related historical sources. The process of unpacking such 'cultural foundations', of grappling with the ways in which these cultures had historically been represented within the Museum, and how the Museum had been responsible for perpetuating certain historical constructions relating to the material in its care, has been the catalyst for this thesis.

Within the representation of each cultural grouping, the 'Living Lands' team wished to outline how these communities engaged with their landscapes practically – for food, shelter, warmth and clothing – but also through belief systems that were intrinsically linked to the geographical features of the places they called home.⁴ The team began to unconsciously separate the beliefs of

³ National Museums Scotland website, accessed 06/05/2013, http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum/explore_the_galleries/world_cultures/living_lands.aspx.

⁴ The project team for 'Living Lands' consisted of the Principal Curator for East and Central Asia Jane Wilkinson (team leader), Keeper of the Department of World Culture Dr. Henrietta Lidchi, and myself, assistant curator of East and Central Asia. Additional input came from the NMS

Tibetans from those of the other cultures represented in the gallery. Whereas the Ainu had named ceremonies and practices, collectively these were classified as the 'beliefs' of the Ainu. Conversely, Tibetan practices were assumed to be 'Tibetan Buddhist' practices. Moreover, Tibetan Buddhism was assumed to be not just a set of 'beliefs' but a 'religion', in contrast to the ceremonial practices relating to the other cultures represented, and in common with 'religions' dominant in the West, such as Christianity, Judaism or Islam. The distinction of Tibetan Buddhism was expounded by the assumption that a material culture associated with Tibetan Buddhist practices, distinct from other elements of Tibetan culture, was clearly visible and well represented within the Museum's collections.⁵

Very quickly assumptions had been made about what the Tibetan collections within NMS represented and there was a danger that, rather than highlighting new ways of interpreting objects and viewing them with fresh eyes, we would become too reliant on institutional memory and accepted cultural representations.

However, as part of the gallery research and development process, three events led me to re-evaluate how this Tibetan material could be interpreted. Firstly, in 2009 the gallery leader Jane Wilkinson retired, giving me a larger role within the creation of the new Tibetan displays. Secondly, we had begun to work with the Samye Ling Monastery, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the

education department and interactives manager, Lyndsey Clarke. I worked on the development of this gallery from 2005-2009.

⁵ In late 2005 the gallery team had a series of lengthy discussions regarding the thematic direction of the gallery. Many of those ideas, documented here, would fall by the wayside in the process of the gallery's development. These discussions are recounted here from my own memories of working as part of that team.

Scottish Borders, who were assisting with the contemporary aspect of the gallery's remit, through the construction of a new wall of Tibetan prayer wheels that would be placed in the gallery as an interactive element for audience engagement. Thirdly, the team had decided to create a focus on collectors to examine the historic relationships that had brought the objects to Scotland.

Jane Wilkinson's retirement was inevitably a moment for taking stock of what we had achieved in the planning process. In doing so, we became aware of the connections we had been inadvertently making between Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism. This had in part been influenced by Wilkinson's personal interest in the representation of Tibetan Buddhism, but we had all made assumptions about the role of Tibetan Buddhism as *the* defining aspect of Tibetan culture and Tibetan identity. Additionally, as a longstanding member of staff, Wilkinson had the weight of institutional memory on her shoulders, particularly regarding the meanings that had historically been ascribed to certain objects and certain collectors.⁶ However, as we delved further into the collection's history, and the Museum's relationship with Samye Ling monastery developed, we were forced to question whether the ideas that were emerging were really reflective of either the historic encounters that had formed the collections, or the views of contemporary Tibetan Buddhists with whom we were engaging.

One strand of research that I had been undertaking was an examination of collector biographies, to understand how historic British-Tibetan encounters

⁶ Jane Wilkinson was a member of NMS staff for over thirty years, one of the longest serving members of the Department of World Cultures.

impacted our interpretations of Tibetan material culture. Through an initial study of the missionary Annie Royle Taylor, it became clear that the Museum's institutional memory, and the processes through which objects became part of the Museum's holdings, had suppressed significant information about both the objects and the people who collected them.⁷ As a result, a whole series of assumptions about objects and collectors were being perpetuated, rather than challenged, making it harder to develop new interpretations about the Tibetan material held in NMS.

Researching this material from the biographical perspective – both of the collector and the collection – uncovered a wealth of information embedded within museum archives and around objects, particularly relating to each collection's provenance. It soon became clear that the Tibetan collections were somewhat unique amongst NMS's ethnographic holdings, as between eighty and ninety percent of collectors could be positively identified. It seemed that, in line with the remit for the development of 'Living Lands', a new way of interpreting and displaying Tibetan material was taking shape.

Concurrently, the gallery team worked with Samye Ling on the creation of the prayer wheel wall and a film detailing its construction and purpose. The film examined the role of the prayer wheel in Tibetan society from the contemporary Tibetan perspective and it became clear that the prayer wheel, embedded within Tibetan culture and the Himalayan landscape, had a meaning far more complex and multi-dimensional than merely as a marker of a specific

⁷ The author has published this initial research. Livne, *The Many Purposes of Missionary Work: Annie Royle Taylor as Missionary, Travel Writer, Collector and Empire Builder*, 43-70.

Tibetan Buddhist practice.⁸ Additionally, the language used by the monks and nuns interviewed for the film shed a new light on our interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion', which had marked it out as separate from the other practices discussed in the gallery. Those adherents of Tibetan Buddhism interviewed for the film only referred to Tibetan Buddhism as a practice or a tradition, never a 'religion'.

A re-evaluation of the terms and concepts we used to interpret Tibetan material culture was clearly needed, but any such re-evaluation had to be nuanced to the historical development of NMS and its collecting history. It was at this point that I realised the further interrogation of these questions was important to the development of the gallery. Furthermore, by widening my research to incorporate the largely unknown Tibetan collections in museums across Scotland,⁹ I would not only be able to locate the NMS material within a broader Scottish understanding of Tibetan culture but potentially break down a wider series of assumptions embedded within Tibetan collections in Scottish museums. This process would, I hoped, uncover new significances regarding both objects and collectors.

This thesis is the result of that process. After an initial scoping exercise to locate Tibetan material in Scottish museums and to collate a list of collectors, three key facts became immediately apparent. Firstly, nearly all Tibetan

⁸ A shorter version of this film, highlighting the process of making the prayer wheel and the meaning surrounding the mantras within it, is available on the NMS website. Accessed 06/05/2013, http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum/explore_the_galleries/world_cultures/living_lands.aspx. The full film is available in the *Living Lands* gallery, and was filmed and produced by the documentary film-maker Sitar Rose.

⁹ Emails sent to museums in Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perth and Dundee quickly revealed that none of their Tibetan material had ever been published, and very little had ever been on display.

material in Scottish museums was collected in a very short space of time, only fifty years from 1880-1930, showing that the construction of Tibetan culture in the western imagination developed rapidly.¹⁰ Secondly, distinctive groups of collectors were clear, with a predominance of missionary and military collectors. Finally, the excellent provenance of material within NMS was in fact mirrored across Scotland's museums, where approximately eighty percent of Tibetan objects could be provenanced to specific collectors.

Many of the questions being asked by this initial research, and the research undertaken for the new NMS displays, were already being tackled. The seminal work of Donald S. Lopez had sought to break down western understandings of Tibetan Buddhism as it relates to Tibet as a geographical entity and the identity of people who classify themselves, and are classified, as Tibetans.¹¹ Clare Harris has continued this critique of historically constructed western assumptions about the nature of Tibetan culture. Harris has focused on deconstructing the term 'Tibetan art' and examining its assumed correlation with 'Tibetan Buddhist art'. She recognises 'Tibetan Buddhist art' as a creation of the British forces who invaded Tibet in 1904, thereby beginning the process by which the assumptions outlined in the opening pages of this introduction came into being.¹² Harris' research has shown the fundamental impact of military collecting associated with 1904 on the place of Tibetan material culture

¹⁰ The dates in the thesis title, 1890-1930, relate to the timeframe within which material entered museum collections.

¹¹ Lopez, *Curators of the Buddha* and Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*.

¹² The 1904 Expedition, an expedition of British forces into Tibetan territory, is detailed later in this chapter, and in Chapter Three.

within Britain.¹³ I will show that the collections within Scottish museums expand Harris' model, thanks to the prominence of provenanced material associated with missionaries, who were collecting Tibetan material culture twenty years before this military incursion. In other words, Scottish collections of Tibetan material culture address a pre-existing stage in the construction of Tibetan culture in the western imagination, adding extensive layers of texture and detail to an important model that is already engaging with many of these questions. Therefore, through object-based research, an analysis of these collections has the potential to prove the significance of un-researched Scottish collections in the historic construction of concepts such as 'Tibetan Buddhism' and 'Tibetan art' in the West.

In tandem with Harris and Lopez, a broader deconstruction of the term 'religion' and the development of a field of study termed 'critical religion', has been set in motion by Timothy Fitzgerald, Naomi Goldberg and others, to question the fundamental category of 'religion' (in which Tibetan Buddhism has been frequently assumed to sit), and to challenge the assumption that 'what 'religion' actually is, is common knowledge and applies to all contexts, geographic and conceptual'.¹⁴

In bringing together these theoretical trends, I wish to show how Scottish museums can harness such modes of understanding to interrogate the relationships between collectors, museums' institutional histories and the

¹³ Harris' research focuses largely (although not exclusively) on the British Museum and the Pitt-Rivers Museum Oxford. She also makes reference to collections in NMS relating to the 1904 Expedition.

¹⁴ Website of the Critical Religion Network, accessed 06/05/2013, <http://www.criticalreligion.stir.ac.uk/what-is-critical-religion/>.

history of British-Tibetan encounters, as mediated through material culture. By focusing on collector intent, which can be recovered through the excellent provenance attributed to Scottish collections, I will develop a methodology for rearticulating how we think about Tibetan material culture that acknowledges, and is more reflective of, historic British and Tibetan perspectives and can inform future museum displays and cross-cultural encounters.

1.2 Constructing an image of Tibet

The first objects from Tibet known to reach Scottish shores arrived in about 1850, making their way to Dundee with the Scottish doctor, social commentator and East India Company employee, Thomas Alexander Wise. Wise represents the beginning of a relationship between Scotland and Tibet, which was tempered by the movement, interrogation and manipulation of material culture.¹⁵

It is the strong provenance associated with Tibetan collections in Scottish museums that has allowed me to trace the relationship between Wise and his Tibetan collection, and it is this knowledge of provenance that sits at the heart of this thesis, with the objects providing the data for unpacking how relations between Scotland and Tibet constructed Tibet *in* Scotland. Such

¹⁵ Wise was not, however, the first Scot to engage with Tibet. A fellow Scot, George Bogle, who was also an employee of the East India Company, was selected by Warren Hastings in 1774 to lead a small diplomatic mission to Tibet, to meet with the Panchen Lama and form trading ties on the East India Company's behalf. Bogle spent six months in Tibet, becoming a friend of the Panchen Lama and forging links between the East India Company and the Tibetan dignitary. He died in Calcutta in 1781 and, if he had collected Tibetan objects, these were not returned to a Scottish museum. See Teltscher, *The High Road to China: George Bogle, the Panchen Lama and the First British Expedition to Tibet*.

relations formed part of a wider attempt by the West to position Tibet within a hierarchy of non-European cultures, in relation to the Empires of Europe. The construction of Tibet in the western imagination played a formative role in both the personal experiences of collectors and the global expectations of the administrators of the British Empire.

This thesis analyses a series of foundational principles, around which ideas about Tibet – geographically, culturally, racially, intellectually and personally – were built. At the simplest level, the evidence of each collection's provenance allows us to untangle the different groups of imperial agents who encountered Tibet and Tibetan material culture. How they went on to use the material they collected, the ways in which objects mediated their experiences of Tibetan culture, and their very specific constructions of Tibet in its many guises, can all be determined through deeper investigation of these collections.

Crucially, objects can tell us how they were made to perform. Collectors used objects, not just to present an image of Tibet to Britain, but to present themselves with a significant role within the process of constructing an image of Tibet. This is the unique contribution that this project can lend to the study of those British agents who engaged with Tibet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Each of these collections performed a task for their collector, and each group of collectors offers a different viewpoint from which Tibet was constructed. The fact that Scottish museum collections have retained such a high level of detail regarding provenance, allows us to simultaneously rebuild both object and collector biographies as an aid for understanding the heterogeneous nature of this particular imperial encounter.

The manner in which individuals appropriated Tibetan material culture for their own uses was, however, mediated by the organisations they worked for and the policies of those organisations. Missionaries were usually subject to the guiding doctrines of missionary organisations; military officers operated under the influence of British military imperialism, and other imperial agents working for the India Office or in other governmental roles were subject to the working practices of the British, and British Indian, government.

Museums also operated in an organisational capacity. They were conduits for imperial aspiration and personal ambition (of both collectors and museum curators) and functioned as mediators, working with material culture to negotiate between local, national and imperial expectations. Through display, research and textual output, the museum space was a contested terrain for the representation of Tibetan culture.¹⁶ However, as I will demonstrate, the British imperial imagination was an even more contested space in which representations of Tibetan culture were constructed and objects, both within and outside of the museum setting, were vital to the establishment of those ideas.

1.2.1 'Real' and 'imagined': The British Empire and the construction of Tibet

Prior to the late nineteenth century, Tibet was largely peripheral to British imperial interests. Over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

¹⁶ Karp, "Culture and Representation", 15.

centuries, Tibet moved from the periphery of the British imagination about the world 'out there', to its centre (Whitehall),¹⁷ culminating in the very real military actions of the 1904 Younghusband Mission (the 1904 Expedition).¹⁸

Peter Bishop has suggested that the construction of Tibet in the British consciousness occurred 'imaginatively' in three ways: imperially, particularly in relation to India; geographically, which was extensively developed in the nineteenth century through various mapping and scientific exercises and which dominated Britain's understanding of Tibet in the late nineteenth century; and personally, such as through the experiences of the collectors that will be examined in the following chapters.¹⁹ Bishop's categories offer a useful way of thinking about how collectors visualised Tibetan material culture and how they appropriated it for their own purposes through a mixture of personal and global perspectives. Personal experiences are a thread running throughout this thesis, articulated through the biographical model, which provides the methodological backbone to my research.²⁰ Here I would like to examine the imperially and geographically imagined Tibet.

British encounters with Tibet were largely mediated through experiences in India: the way collectors understood and related to Indian culture was crucial to how they perceived Tibetan culture and its associated material goods. British interpretations of Indian culture were equally

¹⁷ Richards, "Archive and Utopia", 104-135.

¹⁸ Although more commonly referred to as the Younghusband Mission, due to its initial purpose as a political, rather than military action, I will refer to it as the 1904 Expedition to make it clearly distinguishable from the activities of missionaries, who form an extensive part of this thesis.

¹⁹ Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, 11.

²⁰ Outlined in this chapter, section 1.4.1, Collecting: a biographical model, 76.

interpretations of British relationships *to* India, and the position of a British population *in* India. India was unique within the British Empire, tied to Britain with stronger economic, social, governmental and ceremonial bonds than other colonies.²¹ Tibet, bordering this important piece of imperial territory and buffering India from the Russian Empire, was therefore of strategic significance to the security of the British Empire.

Through the early to mid-nineteenth century British interest in India, and the way India was constructed in the British imagination (in addition to a space to be practically governed) relied heavily on the collection and classification of evidence in both textual and material form. The seemingly insatiable desire for the collection, and later the production, of knowledge about India was responsible for the development of many of the institutions and processes through which the Indian subcontinent was made knowable. The participation in Orientalist scholarship (examining the textual history of Hinduism and Buddhism, through a developing interest in Sanskrit),²² the formation of learned societies within India for the study of Asian culture, geography and zoology,²³ the formation of government-run institutions such as the India Survey, and the establishment and development of museums both in

²¹ India was, as Ronald Hyam notes, the one piece of genuine imperial 'real-estate' and was the validation for British claims to be a world power. *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion*, 32.

²² Although the British construction of Buddhism, specifically Tibetan Buddhism, is a focus of this thesis, it is important to note that for Orientalist scholars, far more energy went into the interpretation (and construction) of 'Hinduism'. For example, see Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Constructions of Hinduism, 1793-1900* and King, "Orientalism and the Modern Myth of 'Hinduism'", 146-185.

²³ For example, the Asiatic Society of Bengal was visualised by its founders as a centre for the study of almost everything concerning man and nature within the geographical limits of the continent of Asia. This wide-ranging remit was indicative of Britain's desire for knowledge. For further discussion of the importance of such epistemological sites in the Victorian age see Daunton, "Introduction", 11.

India and Britain, all enhanced the ways in which knowledge was gathered and rearticulated to reflect British imperial concerns. These different epistemological spaces produced a mass of information that fell under the rubric of the archived knowledge of the British Empire. Once these processes were underway in India, Tibet would also fall under British scrutiny.

There were direct links between the 'imperial imagination' that formed around British India and the way in which Tibet fitted into a geographical, scientific understanding of the world. By the early twentieth century western knowledge of Tibet's geographical layout was steadily increasing but the evidence available (maps, topographical narratives etc.) was still fairly limited when compared with other parts of the world. However, the preceding decades had seen the British send a series of Indian Pandits to Tibet,²⁴ who mapped large areas in secret. One of the most famous of these was Sarat Chandra Das, who made several expeditions to Tibet, including a short visit to the capital in 1881. His experiences were recorded in his book *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*.²⁵ Another Pandit, Nain Singh, had visited Lhasa even earlier in 1866,²⁶ so that by the early twentieth century western knowledge of Tibetan territory had improved somewhat, even if that knowledge had not been acquired and verified directly by the British themselves.

The Royal Geographic Society (RGS), the official archive of such data, not only provided practical assistance to the exploration of the globe – such as

²⁴ The Indian Pandits were trained in British intelligence and survey techniques and sent into hostile areas, such as Tibet. As Indians, they were able to move about undetected, unlike their British employers.

²⁵ Das, *A Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*

²⁶ Rockhill, "Introduction", vii.

training, maps and equipment – but also provided an intellectual space for the sharing of information amongst likeminded individuals who wished to shrink the imagined world and expand their practical knowledge.²⁷ As one of the numerous epistemological sites of the age, the RGS's hegemonic control over knowledge, and the perception of other peoples and cultures, could be just as influential on collectors as the more embedded, and often unacknowledged, ideologies of imperialism.²⁸

Most of the collectors examined in this thesis held the belief that their collections presented the 'reality' of Tibetan culture, suggesting authenticity (of both objects and the collecting process), authority (of the collector) and certain cultural and economic values for the collection itself. Collections were formed out of multiple concerns with wide reaching implications for the ways in which individual collectors chose to construct Tibet. These constructions were developed around a series of often competing ideological concepts.²⁹ Individual intentions and expectations regarding the presentation of something known as 'Tibetan culture' were hugely varied, but so too were the epistemological spaces in which such understandings were created. For example, missionaries collected objects from the Tibetans they worked with, so that their knowledge of Tibetan culture was often acquired locally, through informal interactions. Conversely, an amateur scholar may have enlisted many techniques the

²⁷ See Jones, "Measuring the World: Exploration, Empire and the Reform of the Royal Geographic Society c.1874-93", 313-336.

²⁸ A fuller explanation of such ideological concepts, which I refer to as 'imperial ideologies', is discussed in this chapter, section 1.2.2, 'Imperial ideologies' in the construction of Tibet, 31.

²⁹ This follows Susan Stewart's observation that, 'we cannot assume the existence of a 'representative' aim independent of an ideological aim, for representation always strives, through manipulation and the forced emergence of detail, to create an ideal that is the 'real'. Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 25.

missionary did not use, such as more formal, anthropological methods of recording data, creating a markedly different image of Tibet.

Many forms of knowledge, geographic and cultural, real and imagined, came together through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to make Tibet 'known' in relation to the British Empire; an experience which was as influential on Britain as it was on Tibet.

1.2.2 'Imperial ideologies' in the construction of Tibet

The foundational principles that framed collecting practices, and constructed a position for Tibetan material culture in the British imagination, can be located within what I will term 'imperial ideologies'. In defining an imperial ideology, I employ Alcock and Morrison's definition: 'to encompass the broad overlapping spheres of religious belief and ritual, of power negotiations and relations, of self-definition and self-representation, or human understanding of 'world order'.³⁰ Fundamental elements of imperial ideologies, in the context of this study, were the construction of the concepts 'religion' and 'politics': both complex terms, continuously reconfigured in relation to Tibet throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The relationship between religion and politics in British-Tibetan encounters was influential on British governmental decision-making and cultural categorisation alike. As I will demonstrate throughout this thesis, British agents constructed Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion', something that could be

³⁰ Alcock and Morrison, "Imperial ideologies", 279. Though rather all encompassing, this definition fits well with the inter-disciplinary nature of Alcock and Morrison's work, which I feel is appropriate to this study also.

empirically studied, observed and classified along with fauna, flora and ethnology. As an ideological entity, 'religion' was assumed to exist, in the western mind, in opposition to another entity known as 'politics' – a reflection of the theoretical divisions of Church and State within Britain.³¹

Timothy Fitzgerald suggests that 'politics' can be defined in two ways. Firstly, as a distinct domain of non-religious rational action separate from another domain 'religion', and secondly as a more general sense of power, in which case, he notes, many things can be considered 'political'.³² Fitzgerald and others associated with the Critical Religion Research Group (CRRG) have sought to examine the varying ways in which 'religion' is constructed in relation to other categories – such as politics, secularity, or economics. The CRRG have shown that one of the major problems in defining 'religion' as a bounded concept, is that it hides the tensions and ruptures that form when the boundaries of 'religion' become blurred with other constructed categories.³³

The separation of 'religion' and 'politics', as understood to exist in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, also existed in the Tibetan context. The State was represented by the Tibetan government in Lhasa and the 'Church' by a network of Tibetan Buddhist Monasteries, focused around particularly important centres such as the seat of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa (the Potala Palace) and the seat of the Panchen Lama (the Tashilhunpo monastery in Shigatse).

³¹ In practice these divisions are not quite so clear, as the Church continues to play a vital role in state functions and the Queen remains the nominal head of the Church of England.

³² Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations*, 7.

³³ Critical Religion Research Group website, "What is Critical Religion?", Accessed 07/05/2013, <http://www.criticalreligion.stir.ac.uk/what-is-critical-religion/>.

However, this was by no means a clear division for British bureaucrats, diplomats and government officials. The Dalai Lama was a religious leader who wielded a degree of political (understood as secular) power and many prominent monasteries and their leaders were in similar positions. Nor were the physical spaces in which Tibetan Buddhism was practiced purely religious sites. From the late eighteenth century onwards the Jokhang temple complex in Lhasa contained government offices.³⁴

Yet until the end of 1904, a sense of either recognition of similarities between governance in Britain and Tibet, or an understanding of that fact, seemed to be lacking. The continued attempts by British agents to exaggerate the separation between the two was part of an imperial strategy of western domination that included the very construction of terms such as 'Tibetan Buddhism'. By defining Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion' in the western context and disarticulating the important connection between Tibetan Buddhist centres and the Lhasa government, both could be made benign and ineffectual in western eyes. A result of the use of such contrived terminology to describe Tibetan systems of power was to build up a series of terms that linked Tibetan Buddhist practices to western articulations of concepts such as 'religion' and 'politics'. Fitzgerald notes the cause and effect of these actions:

'[The] idea of religions as distinct categories of practice are in part ... a tool of the Christian administration of colonised subjects and became increasingly entrenched through the emergence of new class interests as a way of legitimating not only scientific knowledge but

³⁴ Alexander, "The Lhasa Jokhang – is the World's Oldest Timber Frame Building in Tibet?", 127-129.

also new concepts of ownership, new forms of labour and productivity and new concepts of rationality'.³⁵

European political power was therefore embedded in the process of classifying 'religions', and in the formation of the language used to make such moral and theoretical distinctions. These classifications enabled colonial rule,³⁶ and therefore acknowledging their significance within imperial ideologies is fundamental.

Imperial ideologies were constructed out of multiple concerns, often dovetailing with other ideological constructs. For example, Protestant identity and evangelism were dominant ideologies within the missionary movement and beyond,³⁷ whilst Victorian society created a domestic ideology, linked to class ideologies, women's roles and gendered relations.³⁸ Museums have also been shown to be effective constituents of an imperial ideology.³⁹ Imperialism brought these ideas together, along with other concerns such as economics, race, and the position of British culture against other nations, cultures and empires.

The following chapters will show how class and gender, as well as dominant racial prejudices, affected both British encounters with Tibetans and their internalisation of imperial ideologies. Some collectors were accepting of

³⁵ Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations*, 8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁷ See for example Mitter, *Much Maligned Monsters*, 238 and Carey, "Introduction: Empires of Religion", 6.

³⁸ Lesley Orr Macdonald notes that this domestic ideology was also linked to the promotion of the patriarchal family model and Presbyterian discourse, thereby entwining domestic and imperial ideologies in Victorian Britain. *A Unique and Glorious Mission*, 23.

³⁹ Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 43.

certain aspects of their own dominant ideological position, whilst fighting against others.⁴⁰ Other collectors appeared to be in tension with all of the prevailing ideological concerns of their time.⁴¹ Most collectors, however, were unaware of the ways in which imperial ideologies shaped how they viewed the world.

As the following chapters will show, each group of collectors, influenced to a greater or lesser degree by differing elements of imperial ideologies, understood and worked within the framework of imperialism in very different ways. For this reason, I prefer to think of the collectors examined in this thesis as operating around a *series* of imperial ideologies, all broadly similar and identifiable as products of imperialist discourse, but often weighted in very different ways.⁴²

These were not abstract ideas but, critically, were expressed through political and social action, and organisation.⁴³ Within this thesis I will show how Imperialism was a network, linking Britain (and specifically Scotland) to the world in multiple ways. These views were built into the fabric of the society from which collectors came and transported to the places from which they collected. Yet in the act of collecting and the resultant British-Tibetan

⁴⁰ For example, Lilian Le Mesurier fought against established boundaries society placed on women's activities, but was keenly aware of how to use her upper-class status to her advantage. See Chapter Four, section 4.5.6, Lilian Le Mesurier, 351.

⁴¹ The missionary Annie Taylor consistently fought against the position society ascribed to her as a woman of the upper classes. See Chapter Two, section 2.4.3, Gender and missions: the relationship between class and gender, 157.

⁴² There were of course many alternative ideological concerns in the Victorian and Edwardian eras including, for example, liberal economics, non-Conformism and social Darwinism. However, I have found no evidence that the collectors examined in this thesis were particularly influenced by such ideologies, and will therefore omit them from this discussion.

⁴³ For example, Ann Laura Stoler (*Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*) charts the ways in which race and gender prejudices were built into governmental policy in Java, restricting rights to work and marriage .

encounters, these ideas were also remade and developed, showing the way in which collecting objects formed part of the process of the making of colonialism.

1.2.3 'Knowing' Tibet: constructing Tibet through the process of collecting

The knowledge gathered by imperial agents stoked the fires of imperial development: collecting was both a legacy of such knowledge production and a producer of new knowledge. The changing role of collecting was related to the continual reshaping of imperial ideologies, which tied a heterogeneous worldwide population together by invisible bonds and created a shared system of knowledge and understanding. Such ties were fundamental to the construction of empire. No single country could literally contain the globe physically; any such domination had to be led by information, which would bond those under the banner of empire. So the creation of 'archival spaces', filled with facts about the world, became paramount to British imperial dominance.⁴⁴ This archive was not a single building, or collection of texts, but the 'collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire'.⁴⁵ This collection of the knowable included material culture, and museums acted as significant repositories for this accumulation of things and ideas.

⁴⁴ For further discussion of these archival spaces, both real and imagined, see Richards, *The Imperial Archive*.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

However, this almost fanatical drive to generate knowledge was part of a more extensive genealogy; that of the West's desire to make the East knowable. Within this paradigm information moved around the Empire and was authenticated and reauthorised by British imperial discourse.⁴⁶ Edward Said, in his discussion of the British understanding of what it meant to 'know the Oriental', uses the example of Egypt which, like India, formed a very distinctive relationship with Britain.⁴⁷ Through an analysis of early twentieth century speeches given by Lord Cromer and Lord Balfour regarding the 'problems' of Egypt,⁴⁸ Said shows how Oriental countries were assumed only to exist in the manner in which the West knew them. For Balfour, Said argues, British knowledge of Egypt *was* Egypt.⁴⁹ Balfour's understanding was the legacy of over a century of western Orientalism,⁵⁰ illustrating how western assumptions of the ways in which another culture could be 'known' had a long, self-perpetuating, history.

Collected objects, both in private and museum hands, played a significant role in this process. Continuing with the example of Egypt, Timothy Mitchell's examination of European world exhibitions in the mid-nineteenth century, and their influence on European ways of seeing, illustrates perfectly the idea of such self-perpetuating knowledge.⁵¹ Mitchell examines the way in which world exhibitions, along with museums and other visual spectacles,

⁴⁶ Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge", 264.

⁴⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 31-48.

⁴⁸ In particular Said cites Balfour's speech to the House of Commons of June 13th 1910. Said, *Orientalism*, 31-35.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵¹ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 1-33.

established a way in which Europeans viewed the world: the 'world-as-exhibition'.⁵² In other words, exhibitions attained such extensive accuracy – such as the dirty paint used at the Paris Exhibition of 1889 in the representation of a Cairo street – that as Europeans entered the physical space of the Orient, they did not realise they had left the exhibition.⁵³ Thus the Orient became a place that was already known before one's arrival there, and a walk around the 'real' Cairo was merely an opportunity to rediscover an experience that had already taken place.⁵⁴ Mitchell refers to these juxtaposing elements that made up the British perspective as 'external realities' and 'representations', terms equally useful when expressing the ways in which Tibet was constructed in the British imagination.⁵⁵

Just as viewers of world exhibitions experienced the 'known' world, museum visitors were presented with a vision of other cultures curated by the prescriptive lens of collectors, museum employees and scholars who mediated encounters between audience and objects. In her study of how Africa was reinvented in the popular imagination of Edwardian Britain, Annie Coombes notes that the way these collections were displayed and interpreted in Britain 'elaborate the symbolic status of collections as a form of social transaction which tell us more about the colonial process and the subject positions occupied by the main players in colonial drama'.⁵⁶ Collecting, and the processes of authorising the knowledge produced by collections, was part of a larger

⁵² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁶ Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 5.

concern with self-identification, which formed that long established and complex east-west dichotomy. Although many of the collectors in this thesis were never part of the scholarly circles who directly influenced and informed governmental policy through their knowledge of Asia – often because of class or gender distinctions – many of these collections did form part of a public dialogues about Tibet.

One of the most influential men in the quest to make Tibet ‘known’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the Glaswegian civil servant and Orientalist scholar, Laurence Austine Waddell. Waddell’s perceived authority regarding what was ‘known’, or indeed ‘knowable’, about Tibetan culture was such that he was appointed official collector of the 1904 Expedition, collecting hundreds of texts and objects for British libraries and museums. His role as a distinguished ‘man on the spot’, his location in Darjeeling in the 1880s and 1890s (a contact zone of British-Tibetan interaction) and his published work on Tibetan Buddhism, were all highly influential on other more amateur collectors and scholars and helped cement ideas about Tibetan society – such as its backwardness and the malign influence Tibetan monks over the Tibetan people– that were part of this cycle of self-perpetuating knowledge.⁵⁷ Waddell’s analysis of Tibetan culture after 1904, once he had physically been to Tibet, shows how the ‘factual’ information acquired under imperialism could be continually recycled. This meant the verification of knowledge was often

⁵⁷ Clare Harris notes that on its publication in 1894, Waddell’s book (*The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism: with its mystic cults, symbolism and mythology, and in its relation to Indian Buddhism*) became one of the most widely consulted texts on the subject and was reprinted in six different editions between 1894-1958. Waddell was also a member of the Royal Anthropological Institute and conducted much of his research following contemporary anthropological methodologies. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 44-5.

considered unnecessary, fixing a view of Tibet which would become the basis of further fact-finding missions.⁵⁸

1.3 Contextualising the British-Tibetan encounter

So far, I have outlined the ways in which Tibet was constructed as an imagined space – geographical and ideological – within Britain. I have examined how material culture was one form of information that mediated how Tibet was made ‘knowable’ to the British Empire, as part of a wider imperial framework for ‘knowing’ the world. The objects that form the basis of this thesis express the ways in which those ideas interacted, both positively and negatively, to construct certain understandings of Tibet within Scotland. This encounter between objects and people, and the multiple ways in which objects aided the construction of many different, but related, notions of ‘Tibet’, is the crux of this thesis.

Such questions must, however, be understood within the framework of their own social, historical and political moment, if they are to provide texture to the broader study of the representation of Tibetan material culture in Britain. The backdrop to this research is therefore the British Empire from the mid-

⁵⁸ Waddell’s earlier text (before he had been to Tibet in 1904) was considered verifiable, because he had made a direct study of a Tibetan temple near Darjeeling and therefore had a physical body of ‘proof’ from which to make prejudicial statements about Tibetan Buddhism, the Tibetan monastic system and the general state of the country. But Waddell’s findings were heavily tainted by his own racial and religious prejudices, and his privileged position within British Imperial concepts of order, status and legitimate self-interest. This earlier work, (*The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*) outlined ideas about the fundamental nature of Tibetan people, Tibetan culture and Tibetan ‘religion’, and he remained largely unchanged by his 1904 encounter (as seen in his publication after the 1904 Expedition of *Lhasa and its Mysteries: with a Record of the Expedition of 1903-1904* published in 1905), See also Lopez, “Foreigner at the Lama’s Feet”, 259-262.

nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, focusing on the geographical regions of West Bengal in India, and the Xining area of China, in the historic Gansu province, on Tibet's eastern border.⁵⁹ The geographical imagination influenced how imperial agents understood Tibet, so that those approaching Tibet from China or Afghanistan held different notions to those coming from India.⁶⁰ Additionally, the many myths and exoticisms surrounding India and China, which had been dispelled by the processes of European colonialism, now made their way across the Himalayas to the frontiers of an idealised, imagined Tibet.⁶¹ As most of the collectors examined in this thesis encountered Tibet from British India, the influence of India on the interpretation of Tibet needs to be accounted for.

Tibet was never under British colonial rule, and thus the structures and practices of colonial government, which allowed Britain to construct Indian society in a very particular way, were not necessarily applicable in the Tibetan context. For the period covered by this thesis, there was only one moment of colonialism during which Britain had direct access to Tibet physically: the 1904 Expedition. Yet, as Harris notes, Tibet's 'position on the fraying edge of the British Empire meant that it was at least viewed 'colonially' as a potential extension of that empire from the nineteenth century until 1947'.⁶² The border areas from which Tibet was most readily encountered and the collections that

⁵⁹ Xining, historically spelt Sining, is now part of the modern province of Qinghai. Whereas these early twentieth-century missionaries were positioned on the borders of Tibetan territory, the Chinese invasion of Tibet now places Xining over 1000 kilometers from the nominal Tibetan border.

⁶⁰ Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, 13.

⁶¹ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 6.

⁶² Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 8.

were established through interaction within these 'contact zones',⁶³ show that Tibet was not hermetically sealed off from the rest of the world as was commonly visualised in the British geographical and imperial imagination.⁶⁴

Collectors appropriated Tibet in many different ways but in general, I will argue, worked within the organisational structures set out by imperialism and were governed, often unwittingly, by imperial ideologies. Such ideologies dictated ideas of race, class and gender, all of which influenced British relationships with Tibetan material culture. It is those individual appropriations, and wider social and political constructions of Tibet as a place, and Tibetan material culture as a useful tool for personal needs and expectations, that is the particular concern here.⁶⁵

1.3.1 East-West encounters

I have already discussed the development of processes and ideas that provided the West with a framework for the ideological and physical domination of eastern cultures. Such a process also provided the West with a means of self-identification, in relation to that distant 'other' – a concept at the heart of post-colonial theory. My aim is to overlay part of that theoretical model with an anthropological methodology, based around the three-dimensional world of the object. Whilst textual sources, particularly in the form of archival and personal

⁶³ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 4.

⁶⁴ Yet such perceptions continued well into the twentieth century, the most well known of which could be found in James Hilton's novel *Lost Horizons*, which wasn't published until 1933.

⁶⁵ This follows Said's model for the study of Orientalism, which he notes is 'a dynamic exchange between individual authors and the larger political concerns shaped by the three great empires – British, French and American – in whose intellectual and imaginative territory the writing was produced'. Said, *Orientalism*, 14-15.

narratives, play a role in interpreting these collections, here objects are positioned as primary evidence which can be directly interrogated and read on their own terms, without over-reliance on texts.

In *Orientalism*, Edward Said addresses this east/west imbalance of power, the basis of the postcolonial model, explaining it in terms of cultural hegemony as well as the taking of geographical territory through violence.⁶⁶ Contemporary concepts of race, gender and class all form part of this hegemonic model, which I have referred to as a series of imperial ideologies. Significantly, Said notes, though this imperial domination was a construct of the West, it was not purely abstract. Orientalism dovetailed with many imperialist ideas and created a body of theory and practice in which there was a very real material investment.⁶⁷ Colonial transportation networks, educational reforms and zoological discoveries were just some of those investments, all stemming from the particular ways in which the West chose to construct the East, and were just as important and responsible for the production of knowledge as academic enquiry focused around western libraries, which dominated the field of scholarly Orientalism.

Imperialism was the lens through which institutions and individuals viewed information about the world around them. Whilst Said recognises the importance of this dynamic for literary output of the period,⁶⁸ the same spaces provided an intellectual catalyst for the collecting of objects and the formation

⁶⁶ For a brief explanation of cultural hegemony according to Edward W. Said, see *Orientalism*, 7-8. Also see Bernard Cohn on the conquering of epistemological space (*Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 4).

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 15.

of distinct collections with explicit purposes. Locating collectors within their collections, just as an author might be located within a text, provides a way of analysing both a collector's relationship to the objects they collected and how different collections may relate to one another. This forms a body of evidence outlining, in this instance, the ways in which Tibet was constructed in the collections of Scottish museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁹ However, whilst an author generally puts their name to a book, the collector may choose whether or not to publicly present their relationship to their collection, or may purposefully remodel that relationship. Collectors often have unseen agency that can only be located within the objects themselves. Other individuals associated with the collections (such as Tibetans) may also have hidden agency, which needs to be made visible once more.

The collectors featured in this thesis, along with other scholars, civil servants, merchants, missionaries and other imperial agents, relied on a shared corpus of knowledge and images of Tibet and Tibetans, as they had done regarding Chinese, Indian or any 'other' culture encountered. Just as in the earlier example of British representations of Egypt, these constructions became the basis for further interpretation and investigation. By the late nineteenth century, the British construction of Tibet was more reliant on its own characterisation of what Tibet *should be*, than on Tibetans or Tibet itself. Whilst Said's model assumes the total domination of the West, there is in fact a

⁶⁹ Said uses the methodological principles he calls 'strategic location' and 'strategic formation' to analyse an author's relationship to text, and the relationships between groups of texts. Said, *Orientalism*, 20. For an analysis of locating an author within specifically anthropological texts, see Geertz, *Works and Lives*,

'mutual dependence of the tropes of similarity and difference in the construction of any image of the 'other''.⁷⁰ The domination of western constructions, however, has often rendered the 'other' silent or less visible, making our role as researchers to reveal such mutual dependencies. If Orientalism was the western way of thinking about its experiences of non-western cultures and of coming to terms with its own relationship to the East,⁷¹ a minimal reliance on Tibetan sources (historically) is hardly surprising.⁷²

Despite the construction of Tibet taking place under the hegemony of the West, suggesting that it was merely a representation of something imaginary, such ideas were built on interpretations of witnessed events and scientific discoveries. Official British reports and indigenous narrative all had some sort of structure, based on a shared series of ideas, brought together to produce a Tibet that was simultaneously real and imagined.⁷³ Conversely, anything that did not fit into this structure was generally filtered out: what was absent was just as important to the construction of Tibet as what was present. This particular way of seeing not only impacted written analysis, but habits of collecting material culture as well.

Imperial ideologies did not eradicate Tibetan agency. The Tibetan voice can be found in both textual and material evidence alike. Objects were acquired through a variety of interactions between British and Tibetan agents and the

⁷⁰ Karp, "Other Cultures in Museum Perspective", 284 (endnote).

⁷¹ Balagangadhara and Keppens, "Reconceptualizing the Postcolonial Project", 58.

⁷² The self-reflexiveness of the collector in relation to non-British culture is, although not always explicit or intended, a part of how collections were both built up and used within British society.

⁷³ To return to Mitchell's concept of world-as-exhibition and the distinctions made between 'representations' and 'external realities'. The 'imaginary structures' of such representations provided the framework within which the external realities could be viewed. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 21.

traces of those encounters are visible today, in some cases on the objects themselves.⁷⁴ Whilst evidence of Tibetan agency may sometimes be faint, its presence had a substantial impact on the collecting and interpretation of several collections examined in the following chapters, and must be acknowledged and understood as a major part of these collections' histories.⁷⁵

However, the focus of this thesis is undeniably the perspective of British imperial agents. How they, as collectors, represented other cultures was a cultivated response to their own self-representation. The influence of Christianity, particularly Presbyterianism through missionary work, gendered roles, the impact of class hierarchy, and developing racial attitudes, were an embedded part of British culture that shaped many of the ideas collectors took with them into Tibetan communities.⁷⁶ Therefore, contextualising the notion of imperial ideologies within the social and historical developments that were impacting on collectors is fundamental and will be examined at the start of each chapter.

British identity was knitted around internal difference as much as sameness, and was changed by its relationship to the Empire, just as society

⁷⁴ Said's own work denies much agency to the Oriental in his description of the Occident/Orient power struggle. Many of his followers and critics alike are in disagreement with this point, and the following chapters will provide evidence for the very visible impact Tibetan agency had on both the formation of collections and the way in which they were presented to the British public.

⁷⁵ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of Annie Taylor and her Tibetan aide Puntso, Chapter Three for a discussion of Eric Bailey and his relationship with the Panchen Lama and Chapter Four for a discussion of Lilian Le Mesurier and her relationship with the monks at Hemis and Spituk monasteries.

⁷⁶ The importance of Presbyterianism relates to a particularly Scottish context. Anglican missionaries were an established part of the Indian missionary landscape and were also deeply influential, but this is not an influence that is visible within Scottish museum collections.

within India was being altered under British rule.⁷⁷ Britons conceived of themselves as belonging to an unequal society, which consisted of layers of hierarchy and tradition, traceable from the monarch to the pauper.⁷⁸ These internal hierarchies were exported around the world and could be found, for example, in the extension of the British honours system across the Empire, which went hand in hand with the solidification of the caste system in India, in an attempt to mirror British understandings of hierarchy.⁷⁹ An acceptance of hierarchy, both at home and abroad, created a homogenous sense of British identity. Despite the variety of people and ideas it encompassed,⁸⁰ British identity tied together the foundational principles of global, organisational and personal experience. More subtly, social and racial hierarchies are visible within collecting patterns, giving us an insight into how divides within Britain were mirrored in interactions with Tibetans during the collecting process.

This process, through which objects as ‘facts’ were used to produce ‘evidence’ of non-European cultures, was echoed in the representations of colonial subjects within museums. Museums as institutions responsible for both the production of knowledge and the representation of that which was ‘known’, used the material in their possession to promote several ideas simultaneously. Ethnographic collections became ‘proof’ of racial and cultural inferiority,

⁷⁷ The Empire, and India in particular, was a haven for the growing population of educated middle-class British men who wished to advance their social position, often through commercial activities. Therefore the changes brought about to India’s economic development by the British, were equally influential on both cultures. For example, in Scotland the jute trade that operated between Dundee and Bengal elevated the city of Dundee and its population to new economic heights in the nineteenth century. See, for example Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000*, 249-255.

⁷⁸ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 18-41.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 85.

objective evidence for the comparative study of cultures and also as spectacle,⁸¹ exoticising those places that were so geographically and imaginatively out of reach to the majority of the British population.

Although individuals not initially associated with museums collected nearly all the objects examined in this thesis, museums played a major role in tying objects to constructions of self and other and to the Empire at large. Using foreign material culture, museums were part of the process by which other cultures were constituted by the West for the West.

1.3.2 The influence of British India on British-Tibetan encounters

Through the influence of the imperial and geographical imagination, India became a keystone in the construction of ideas about Tibet. Many of the founding fathers of British imperial policy in India were in fact Scottish, and Scotland's role within a wider British imperialism had specific, identifiable influences. Scotland's identity within Britain is more strongly visible in certain circumstances (missionary collecting) than in others (military collecting) and these differences will be examined further throughout the thesis. However, Scotland was also a significant part of the 'British' Empire, and needs to be examined within this context as well.

The imperial processes of constructing knowledge about India and the project to categorise the subcontinent (thus dominating it through knowledge and physical violence in a variety of different ways) were transposed to

⁸¹ Ibid., 44. Mitchell describes the term 'objective' – a mid nineteenth century concept – as a combination of detachment and close attentiveness, which was the essence of the European gaze when encountering the East. Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 19.

encounters with Tibetans, both in India and Tibet itself.⁸² India was simultaneously timeless and organic, which needed to be preserved against change, and backwards and inefficient, requiring remodelling in the shape of a more modern, western, image.⁸³ This uneasy tension of ideas influenced Britain's eventual physical encounter with Tibet in 1904, including the perception of Tibetan Buddhism, whose practices were to be abhorred, but whose material manifestations were to be preserved. The British move to categorise and fix the caste system had a huge impact both on Indian society and the construction of Hinduism as a 'religion', intelligible to the British visualisation of that term. The same process occurred with Tibet and Buddhism, entwining the notion of Tibetan Buddhism with Tibetan culture. This shows that methods and practices considered successful and useful in one part of the Empire were transformed and redefined for the next imperial encounter.

As discussed, the transformation of Indian society started with 'knowing' Indian society. In the early nineteenth century, interest in Orientalist knowledge was often channelled through empiricism, rooted in the Enlightenment rubric of objective science. Evidence had to be empirically substantiated. Knowledge of India was understood through scientific discoveries whose veracity was based on methodologies authorised by scientific standards of the day.⁸⁴ As part of this framework, Orientalism as a body of knowledge became institutionally

⁸² The production of knowledge was not necessarily a benign activity and there was a reciprocal relationship within the Empire between knowledge and violence.

⁸³ Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 12.

⁸⁴ Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism", 252.

embedded in Indian political culture.⁸⁵ This knowledge, initially collected in the libraries of Europe and later in the field by persons 'on the spot', guided the practical implementation of governance in India, and was grounded in preconceptions about Asian history, derived from western intellectual discourse.⁸⁶

How knowledge was both collected and interpreted would change over the course of the nineteenth century, shifting with changes to imperial ideologies and as a consequence of historically influential moments. The imperial ideologies of collectors and Orientalist scholars of the early nineteenth century were more heavily influenced by rationalism and scientific enquiry, whilst collectors of the later nineteenth century were predisposed to look towards Christian triumphalism or be influenced by racial prejudices when making judgements about non-European culture. Collecting, originally as a means of documenting India, became a means of advancing and corroborating views of India.⁸⁷

Although much of the early knowledge of India and Tibet was found in the libraries of Europe rather than through personal encounters, the importance of contemporary information was always acknowledged. The first generation of British government administrators and diplomats to rigorously study Indian society were desperately seeking a sort of knowledge that could

⁸⁵ Breckenbridge, "Introduction", 8.

⁸⁶ McLaren, *Career Building and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance*, 227.

⁸⁷ Durrans, "Collecting in British India: A Sceptical View", 248.

not be found in ancient texts in the British Library.⁸⁸ Collecting material culture provided one element of that practical and tangible knowledge base, and would continue to provide that role through the nineteenth century.

Classifying the Indian sub-continent required many disciplines from both the arts and sciences. The way in which the West viewed Indian 'art' in terms of its aesthetic and monetary value was essential to this process.⁸⁹ At the same time that British society could be made complex through the layering of a hierarchical social network, India could be made simple and homogeneous. The classification of flora, fauna, cultures, customs, diverse populations, arts and antiquities could all just as easily feature within a collective constellation called 'India' that was unifying and singular, even as each portion had its own classificatory label.⁹⁰ Making distinctions between categories of material culture (for example through the distinction of 'art') created another way in which Britain could appropriate, and therefore dominate Indian, and later Tibetan, society.⁹¹ 'India' could be labelled as one body of evidence, and Tibet would be viewed in a similar light when it came onto the western radar. But it wasn't just a case of categorising Indian material culture: what collectors *did* with their

⁸⁸ McLaren, *Career Building and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance*, 236. Interestingly, another scholar working contemporaneously to Wise was Alexander Csoma Korös, credited as the first person to study Tibet in an academic fashion. Korös studied from the borders of Tibet (in Ladakh) but most of his information was gleaned from the libraries of Europe, and Korös remained a singular figure in the field of Tibetan studies for some time. See Lopez, "Foreigner at the Lama's Feet", 257-9.

⁸⁹ For an in-depth examination of the way in which the British attempted to define Indian art over the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries see Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*.

⁹⁰ Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, 46.

⁹¹ As Bernard Cohn notes: 'It was the patrons who created a system of classification which determined what was valuable, that which would be preserved as monuments of the past, that which was collected and placed in museums, that which could be bought and sold and that which would be taken from India as mementoes and souvenirs of their own relationship to India and Indians.' Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, 77.

collections played a part in the process of constructing India, and later Tibet, in Britain. There was a practical application for this material, just as there was for other forms of knowledge. Richard Davis notes that, though Hinduism assumes religious images to be animate beings, the people who enliven those images are not necessarily Hindu practitioners. The British, bringing with them differing religious assumptions, political agendas and economic motivations, may have animated 'the very same objects as icons of sovereignty, as polytheistic 'idols', as 'devils' as potentially lucrative commodities, as objects of sculptural art, or as symbols of a new range of meanings unforeseen by the original worshippers'.⁹²

The collection of these shifting categories of objects was a strategic ploy by British agents who needed the idea of 'Indian culture' to remain malleable. Therefore, even as the western view of India or Tibet was historicised and static, collectors of its material culture could make the purpose of objects fluid and multi-tasking.

1.3.3 Britain and the 'discovery' of Tibetan Buddhism

Britain's interest in Tibet was entwined with her interest in India. The study of Buddhism throughout the nineteenth century by Orientalist scholars, largely based in the libraries of Europe, created a desire to trace a pure and unadulterated lineage of Buddhism, which was perceived to exist in Tibet, hidden from scholarly view. As a consequence, Tibet in the western imagination was to become wholly synonymous with 'Tibetan Buddhism', impacting how associated material culture was classified, understood and valued.

⁹² Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 7.

In early nineteenth century Britain, Buddhism had become an object, to be used and reinterpreted by the British.⁹³ Philip Almond suggests that this materialisation occurred in two phases. The first, in the early nineteenth century, saw the creation of Buddhism as a category of object that was 'out there' located geographically, culturally, and therefore imaginatively, in a space quite distant from the scholars who pursued it. By the late nineteenth century, when most of the collectors examined in this thesis were engaged in their collecting activities, Buddhism became more centrally located, not in the East, but in the libraries of the West, through the progressive collection, translation, and publication of its textual past.⁹⁴ Buddhism as a 'religion' was therefore constructed as something more tangible and 'real' than the 'collective acts of the imagination' out of which it was created.⁹⁵ Both 'external realities' and 'representations' were equal parts of the western visualisation Tibetan Buddhism.⁹⁶

How the West chose to study Buddhism was not just an exercise in categorising a series of 'world religions'; it had political implications as well. These included the notion of secularity and religion as key sites of difference in Britain and India's close encounter.⁹⁷ As already noted, despite the assumed separation of Church and State, Christianity remained both politically and socially dominant in Britain.⁹⁸ This was perpetuated in England by the strong relationships that existed between the Church of England and the British

⁹³ Lopez, "Introduction", 7-10.

⁹⁴ Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, 12.

⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations*, 2.

⁹⁶ Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt*, 21.

⁹⁷ Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 14.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

monarchy and aristocracy, which embedded class hierarchy in both Church and State interests. Scottish Presbyterianism, in contrast, was perceived as more austere, with an emphasis on education and welfare reforms.⁹⁹ So across Britain, Christianity dominated modes of understanding and was a significant influence on imperial ideologies, as well as how 'other' practices across the world were characterised. How British agents related to their own Christian practices therefore had a bearing on how they would encounter and interpret Buddhism in Tibet. The ways in which British imperial politics chose to categorise 'religions' across the globe and the rise of the study of 'comparative religion' in the nineteenth century, also had an important role in determining the place of Buddhism in the West. For colonial powers in the nineteenth century, the list of 'religions' grew steadily and a crude list of 'qualifications' for inclusion under this term began to be extrapolated. These included the need for a founder, an organised hierarchy of priests, a canon of sacred texts and a set of defining beliefs.¹⁰⁰ Buddhism, Hinduism and other practices designated 'religious' were shoehorned into the category 'religion' in order to appease western requirements for classificatory order. Such classificatory delineation also fed into a desire to create hierarchies in which European practices and ideas were always placed above those of their non-European counterparts. Therefore a key ideological function of the categorisation of Buddhism as a religion was to pit it against Christianity, which stood for western rationality. Christianity had therefore been at the forefront of the vast expansion of the

⁹⁹ Orr Macdonald, *A Unique and Glorious Mission*, 10-12.

¹⁰⁰ Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 161.

British Empire, through a dependence on science, industry and Enlightenment thinking. Non-western practices were a counterbalance to European progress, and were vital in reflecting how much progress had been achieved. Therefore, although both Buddhism (in this case Tibetan Buddhism specifically) and Christianity were 'religions', one marched in line with secular progress, whilst the other was assumed to march against it.

The West's initial interests in Tibet came from a desire to locate and translate early Pali and Sanskrit texts, which would reveal the origins of Buddhism and its forms and practices considered absent from contemporary India and Tibet. These texts were believed to exist in the 'deep freeze' that was the Tibetan monastic system, closeted from the upheavals of the world around.¹⁰¹ Although the textual genealogy relating to an 'original' Buddhism was assumed to exist in Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism as seen and practiced in the nineteenth century was something else entirely. 'Lamaism' as it was commonly denoted, was generally considered a completely debased form of Buddhism, so far removed from the 'real thing' that it was disqualified as a legitimate lineage of that known and accepted religion.¹⁰² Therefore, for Orientalist scholars looking for the origins of Buddhism, Tibet played a complex role. On the one hand, the texts believed to be located within its monasteries were seen as the key to a lost, pure set of beliefs and practices. On the other, when actually encountered, those same monasteries that were thought to hold Buddhist truth were observed by later nineteenth century Europeans as an aberration, with no

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰² See Chapter One in Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La* (15-45), for a discussion of the term Lamaism and its historical use and understanding in the West.

legitimate ancestral heritage in Asia.¹⁰³ So whilst aspects of Tibetan culture were considered worthy of admiration and preservation – such as a historical form of ‘Buddhism’ and its writings – its system of governance and religion was not.¹⁰⁴ Consequently, just as the East was created as part of the West’s own identity, so too specific elements such as Tibetan Buddhism became constituted by the West, for the West.¹⁰⁵

This complicated relationship between ‘original’ Buddhism and ‘Lamaism’ was not solely the purview of Orientalist scholars and learned professionals. The collectors examined in this thesis were also drawn into this debate, which is reflected in both their writing (where it exists) and their collections. Buddhist texts, both ‘original’ and contemporaneously Tibetan, were representative of traditions that were seemingly vastly different from Protestant Christianity. Yet there was also a recognition that Buddhism was a ‘religion’, to be catalogued alongside Protestantism, and that it was one of the purest of the non-Christian religions at that.¹⁰⁶ Missionaries believed they recognised similarities between Tibetan Buddhism and Catholicism. As such, they perceived themselves as having a familiarity with Tibetan Buddhism, an advantage in their quest for conversions and the spreading of the gospel.¹⁰⁷ At

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 57.

¹⁰⁵ Almond asserts that the construction and interpretation of Buddhism in the Victorian period reveals much about nineteenth century concerns within Britain (and Europe) and can be read as an important sign for certain socio-cultural aspects of the period. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism* 4-5.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Nineteenth century Protestant missionaries had drawn close links between Buddhist monasticism and aspects of Catholic practice. Earlier Catholic missionaries had viewed these resemblances as something satanically inspired but ultimately redeemable. The point being that many Christian missionaries believed their knowledge and understanding of Catholic practices

the same time, they could preserve their own dominance through the dismissal of Tibetan Buddhist practices, which they 'knew' to be superstitious, deviant, and opposed to legitimate Protestant customs.¹⁰⁸ For most of these collectors, the way in which Tibetan Buddhist practices were delineated as religious, superstitious, cultural or deviant was fundamental to how they both categorised objects and viewed Tibetan society. Those collectors who wrote texts as well as collecting objects give the clearest picture of how complex an issue this was, something that will be elaborated on in the later chapters.¹⁰⁹

1.3.4 Britain and Tibet in the late nineteenth century: becoming a closer encounter

The ways in which Tibet was constructed in the British imagination were part of a lengthy lineage of east/west encounters. These representations were built on the self-perpetuating belief in what was, and could be, 'known'. They were tied to longstanding scholarly interests in Buddhism, Victorian rationalisation of Christianity in relation to other practices deemed 'religious' and to British rule in

meant Buddhism was not, in many respects, completely alien (Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, 123-4). In fact, Protestant missionaries had a history of using their knowledge of Catholic 'Popery' to draw links with a variety of 'religious' practices they considered illegitimate. For example, comparisons were made between Jewish and Catholic doctrines. Bonar and McCheyne, *Narrative of a Visit to the Holy Land and Mission of Inquiry to the Jews*, 530-532.

¹⁰⁸ For example, see Richard King's discussion of mysticism and the 'mystical' in India, in relation to Orientalist hegemony, British dominance over the definition of these terms, and their relation to 'religious' practices in India. King, *Orientalism and Religion*.

¹⁰⁹ See Chapter Two for the way missionaries used the term 'superstitious' as they tried to come to terms with Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion' in relation to their own Christian values (section 2.5, Missionary collectors and Tibetan Buddhism as 'religion', 161). Also see Chapter Four, for the examination of Lilian Le Mesurier's writing on her collection, which distinguished religious items as both separate and more important than non-religious pieces (section 4.5.6, Lilian Le Mesurier, 350).

India. Such representations were ultimately dominated by British imperial ideologies.

Whilst from 'the mid-nineteenth century, the British public had started to encounter the idea of Tibet within the galleries of museums and other display spaces',¹¹⁰ Tibet remained peripheral to British interests until the latter part of the nineteenth century, mainly due to the fact that it had not been colonised by any of the dominating empires in the region.¹¹¹ As a result, the types of knowledge that were usually produced as part of colonial endeavours (such as the Geographical Survey of India or learned societies of art and zoology) were not available. Instead, it was left to missionaries, merchants and early explorers to begin the process of constructing Tibet for the British imagination.¹¹² For most of these imperial agents, Tibet was collected and collated from afar, usually from India or China.¹¹³ Therefore for most of the nineteenth century Tibet was manufactured from collected materials, narratives and imaginative representations, without the need to actually set foot in Tibetan territory.¹¹⁴

The entry of British troops into Tibet in 1904 was a pivotal colonial moment in the British-Tibetan encounter. The 1904 Expedition allowed the last

¹¹⁰ Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 27.

¹¹¹ China believed itself to have suzerainty over Tibet, and therefore an element of political control, but this was a disputed state of affairs, which would have implications for Britain's attempts to negotiate a treaty after the 1904 Expedition.

¹¹² Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 157. In fact, Catholic missionaries had been active within Tibetan territory in the eighteenth century, but do not seem to have produced extensive information about Tibet in the same way their Protestant counterparts went on to in the nineteenth century, showing that Catholic and Protestant missionaries had quite different strategic aims.

¹¹³ The major exception was Annie Taylor, who lived in Yatung, just inside the Tibetan border.

¹¹⁴ Both Lopez and Harris have argued that Tibet continues to be imagined in that way – as an idea separate from geographical or political space - although different people may contest that image. See Harris, *In the Image of Tibet*, 1-11.

empty space on the western map to be filled and ended a tradition of several hundred years of exploration and the stamping of British authority on what was found. There was almost a sense of loss following the withdrawal of troops as British sovereignty over this last unknown geographic space was denied.¹¹⁵ From the late nineteenth century, in the run up to the 1904 Expedition, the study of Tibet had intensified, using many of the tools and institutions set up to collate knowledge in other parts of the Empire. Tibet also became a contested space between empires and therefore of far greater interest to Britain as an economic and political entity.¹¹⁶ This surge in interest was not just a desire to map the landscape or potentially proclaim sovereignty over territory; there was also a desire for objects. Tibet's material culture, familiar to late nineteenth century collectors, many of whom encountered Tibetan objects in India, was a conduit for projecting Tibet into the western arena of interest following the 1904 Expedition, after which there was a huge influx of Tibetan objects into Britain.

1.3.5 Collecting and the Creation of the Category 'Tibetan Art'.

This expansion of the available pool of objects for academic study allowed for an increasingly refined categorisation of Tibetan 'art' amid a sea of artefacts, although this classificatory process had little to do with Tibetans themselves.

¹¹⁵ Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, 172.

¹¹⁶ Bishop notes that British organisations like the Royal Geographic Society and the India Survey threw themselves into the exploration of the Himalayas and Central Asia at this time, which included the disciplines of botany, geology and geographical surveying (including the covert surveying by Indian Pandits in Tibetan territory). British imperialism kept Tibet firmly connected to the struggle over global space, precisely because it was a no-mans-land. *Ibid.*, 144-5.

Tibetan art was to become Tibetan Buddhist art defined, as Harris argues, not by its locality (Tibet) or ethnicity (Tibetans), but by its purpose (Buddhism).¹¹⁷

The authority of collectors, as westerners who could impose values on the Tibetan objects they brought into Britain, allowed them to curate Tibet in private spaces and museums, in ways that would be as influential as contemporary scholarly interpretations.¹¹⁸

The creation of the term 'Tibetan art', and the definition of those elements of Tibetan culture it encompassed, was as significant as the classification of Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion' in the western context. Harris has traced the development of Tibetan material culture, from curio or ethnographic specimen into 'art', seeing the turning point as the 1904 Expedition,¹¹⁹ although she notes that museums and academics in the late nineteenth century had laid the foundations for the definition of the term.¹²⁰

Essentially, then, defining Tibetan art was not only about ascribing the term to a specific series of objects (focused largely around the material culture of Tibetan Buddhism) that had certain decorative styles, materials or shapes. Instead, defining Tibetan art, like the definition of Tibetan Buddhism as 'religion', was a political act. As Harris notes:

¹¹⁷ Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 18.

¹¹⁸ Lopez defines 'curators of the Buddha' as those figures who played an important role in the creation and maintenance of Buddhism as an object of study in the West. My assertion is that the collectors examined here, though working in less public ways, were collectively significant to how Tibet was maintained in formal institutions and private collections for the West, particularly in Scotland. Lopez, "Introduction", 1.

¹¹⁹ Harris dedicates a chapter of her book to exploring the complex development of the term through the course of the 1904 Expedition. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 49-78.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

‘Just as Tibet’s borders were to be drawn by British surveyors, its topography mapped by imperial agents, and its monastic system penetrated by Younghusband and his successors in the diplomatic service, Tibet was to be framed by colonial-period museology as a distinct entity with treasures waiting to be harvested’.¹²¹

For such ‘harvesting’ to take place, Tibetan material culture needed to be defined, like Tibetan Buddhism, in a way that was understandable to the Empire’s agents, responsible for the task of collecting. Tibetan material culture therefore needed to be positioned in relation to other cultures and the influx of objects into Britain after 1904 allowed just that, through the domestication of Tibet into the British home.¹²² This process allowed Tibetan objects to be ‘cleaned of the brute facts of their removal from Tibet, polished up and domesticated as art’.¹²³ Therefore despite the 1904 Expedition offering the turning point for the creation of the category, it was the infiltration of this idea into museums and homes that established an enduring legacy for the concept in the West.¹²⁴

1.3.6 Collecting the essence of Tibet: Thomas Alexander Wise and the development of nineteenth century collecting strategies

The ways in which eastern cultures were constructed in the western imagination clearly had varied and complex ideological foundations. For the

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²² See *Ibid.*, 71-77.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹²⁴ This will be explored further in Chapter Three, specifically in section 3.9, Case study: Florence Bailey – military acquisitions and the domestic space, 272.

Empire's governors, physical evidence (external realities) that aided the articulation of how other cultures lived, and therefore how they needed western instruction to improve, was an important and useful imperial tool. Objects were quickly established as a key part of the imperial archive, sustaining knowledge collection and knowledge production.¹²⁵ The enthusiasm with which troops of the 1904 Expedition went about collecting Tibetan material culture was part of this extensive historical process; from the earliest days of British involvement in India the collection, interpretation and display of material culture was a fundamental part of governance.

However, in this section I wish to briefly return to the early nineteenth century, to examine the first collector to bring Tibetan material to Scottish shores. Thomas Alexander Wise's collection offers a starting point from which to question the ways in which material culture played a formative role in the construction of Tibet within Scotland, and in the construction of collectors' identities.

From as early as the seventeenth century, when The East India Company (The Company) invaded new territories within the Indian subcontinent, its agents understood the importance to their political governance of sites regarded as particularly important manifestations of indigenous practice.¹²⁶

Richard Davis suggests that the British were acutely aware of the importance

¹²⁵ Both collecting as a general practice and Museums in particular formed part of the imperial archive. By creating a sense of collective understanding, the Empire could be ruled by knowledge as well as violence. See section 1.2.3 'Knowing' Tibet: constructing Tibet through the process of collecting, 36.

¹²⁶ The East India Company was granted a royal charter in 1600, and from the 1750s, with its own private army, ruled large portions of the Indian subcontinent. Their rule ended in 1858 following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when control of India was taken over by the British government.

attached to certain images and temples,¹²⁷ symbolic of indigenous Indian constructions of power and authority. Any such apparent reverence bestowed on these sites by imperial agents was, therefore, a political tactic aimed at embedding 'Hinduism' and later 'Buddhism' into British administrative practices.¹²⁸ This was effectively an attempt at aligning British processes of governance with traditional Indian practices deemed to be 'religious' so that those under British rule would (hopefully) accept their masters and the systems of administration that came with them. Therefore from these first moments of British authority over India, material culture played a decisive role in governance. The perception of the material culture of the 'other' as a useful tool would follow them as they explored further afield.

Thomas Alexander Wise was a quintessential product of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century industrial entrepreneurialism. Born in 1802 to a well-off family, like many other educated Scots he took advantage of the opportunities available in British India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Following in his father's footsteps, Wise graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 1824 with a degree in medicine and joined the Bengal Medical Service in 1827, at this time part of The Company.¹²⁹ Wise found himself in India at a time when a particularly Scottish nuanced understanding of Indian culture, influenced by Scottish policy makers, was being developed and

¹²⁷ 'Hinduism' was itself a creation of the West. As Robert Eric Frykenberg notes, the term 'Hindu' was cultivated under early Company rule to refer to a native of 'Hindustan'. Place, people, culture and practices were therefore amalgamated under one heading, providing the West with a unified way of experiencing India. Frykenberg, "Christian Missions and the Raj", 108.

¹²⁸ Davis, *Lives of Indian Images*, 203.

¹²⁹ For a brief biography of Thomas Alexander Wise see Proctor, *Cultures of the World*, 93.

practically applied to new forms of governance in India.¹³⁰ The scientific reasoning of the age influenced Wise's career choices and intellectual interests, as well as his collecting. The desire for evidence and explanation to make sense of the world around them was indicative of the way in which Wise and his contemporaries came to know the subcontinent. He approached the study of Indian culture from a number of angles: textually, linguistically, ethnographically and scientifically. However, his study of Tibetan culture is now only visible through his material collections and is not documented textually.¹³¹

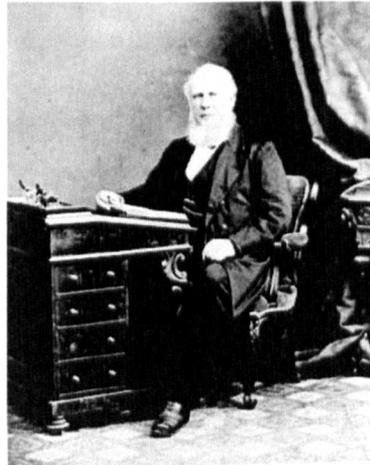


Figure 1: An Enlightened man: Thomas Alexander Wise (1802-1889). © Dundee Art Galleries and Museums.

¹³⁰ McLaren, *Career Building and a Scottish School of Thought on Indian Governance*, 3.

¹³¹ Wise's object collection is located in the McManus Museum and Art Gallery, Dundee, which also holds a selection of archival material. Further archival material, as well as maps and drawings showing Tibet and Tibetan culture, are held at the British library. The author was unable to find a clear indication as to where he might have acquired his Tibetan objects from either the archival material in Dundee, or Wise's military records at the British Library. Dr. Diana Lange, Leipzig University, is currently undertaking a study to establish the origin of this collection, however this has yet to be published. She has indicated to the author that she has also been unable to concretely ascertain how Wise acquired these items. Diana Lange, email message to author, 26/11/2013.

Wise's collection and associated writings offer a starting point for broaching some of the recurring concerns of this thesis.¹³² Such concerns include the ways in which the British Empire produced knowledge; how the idea of 'knowing' was to become self-perpetuating amongst British imperial agents and the role of knowledge as a backbone of practical imperial politics. Additionally, the place of Scottish identity within a more encompassing idea of 'Britishness'; the role of Scots in the formation of the Empire; the dissemination of knowledge in Britain, and the role of objects within the Empire's knowledge production mechanisms are all captured within the collection of objects. Crucially, in relation to Tibet, Wise's collection begins to identify the importance for the British Empire in classifying the 'religions' of colonial subjects and brings to the fore the implications this had for British experiences of foreign cultures encountered through this process, and their material heritage which was sent to Britain.

During his time in India, Wise collected seventy-five ethnographic objects and a large collection of medical paraphernalia.¹³³ The ethnographic collection includes nineteen Tibetan artefacts, all relating to the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. There are only two categories of objects for which there are

¹³² Wise collected both ethnographic and medical artefacts from across South Asia and the Himalayan region. He also wrote books on the Indian education system, Hindu medicine and the treatment of the mentally ill. His interests diversified further on his return to Britain, including writings on Celtic archaeology and Paganism.

¹³³ Wise's medical collection is now housed in Dundee University's museum, whilst his ethnographic collections are in the McManus Museum and Art Gallery, Dundee. With thanks to Christina Donald, curator of early history at McManus for her assistance in the research of this collection.

multiple items – statues of Buddhist deities and *thangka* paintings.¹³⁴ The figures represent several of the most important deities in Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, and the objects that form the rest of the collection are associated with their veneration and the performance of Tibetan Buddhist rites.¹³⁵ The collection does not include objects relating to domestic activity or warfare and excludes objects that are not specifically associated with Tibetan Buddhism. This suggests that from this first moment in which objects from Tibet entered Scotland, ‘Tibetan Buddhism’ was tied to the idea of ‘Tibetan culture’.

Wise was collecting at a moment when scholarly Orientalism was beginning to take a keener interest in Buddhism, both in terms of its adherents and its textual genealogy. As noted earlier in this chapter, the first phase in this ‘discovery’ of Buddhism in the West was occurring as Wise travelled to India.¹³⁶ Early Orientalist scholarship contributed to the West’s knowledge of India, and later Tibet, not through overt domination of the peoples of Asia known as ‘Buddhists’, but in the creation of a reified entity called ‘Buddhism’ and the writing of its history.¹³⁷ As the man on the spot making practical application of new knowledge about Buddhism, Hinduism and the Indian subcontinent, Wise was part of the beginnings of a process through which Tibetan material culture

¹³⁴ A *Thangka* is a painting usually depicting Buddhist deities, symbols or historical figures. The painting is backed with silk and hung from a wooden rod. In larger monasteries *thangkas* were produced on a very large scale, to be hung down the side of the building during certain festivities. The Tibetan collection of Thomas Wise includes nine statues and four *thangka* paintings, accounting for over half of the overall collection. By contrast, his Indian collection contains a much more varied selection of objects, including personal items and jewellery.

¹³⁵ The statues appear to represent Avalokitesvara, Gautama Buddha, Green Tara, the Medicine Buddha, Vaisravanna, Vajradhara and an unknown lama. These represent not just important figures, but also some of the most widely available statues, which may also account for Wise’s choice.

¹³⁶ Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, 7.

¹³⁷ Lopez, “Introduction”, 12.

was essentialised, and through which Buddhism as a concept was materialised.¹³⁸ This allowed its many elements (ideas, practices, institutions) to be defined as an object for categorisation and interpreted as part of the West's wider intellectual domination of knowledge about the world.



Figure 2: Three Buddhist statues from the Thomas Wise Collection. © Dundee Art Galleries and Museums.

(L-R) The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (patron deity of Tibet); Gautama Buddha (the historical Buddha and founder of Buddhism); Medicine Buddha (also known as Bhaishajyaguru, an important figure in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly to practitioners of Tibetan medicine).¹³⁹

Committed to the rationalist principles of Enlightenment thinking and new scientific methodological approaches, Wise was dedicated to further understanding the communities from whom he collected. He became the first medically qualified scholar to make a detailed study and translation of the ancient Indian medical writings of the *Ayurveda*,¹⁴⁰ but was also concerned with the 'plight' of contemporary Indian society. Although a friend of Lord Macaulay, and an advocate of the reformation of the Indian educational system, the

¹³⁸ Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, 12.

¹³⁹ Left to Right: (McManus 1993-319) (McManus 1993-315) (McManus 1993-321).

¹⁴⁰ Ayurveda is a form of Indian traditional medicine. Information on the life of Thomas Wise, Fleming, "A Dundee Doctor's Cabinet of Curiosities" abstract for a paper given at the University Museums in Scotland Conference, accessed 30/11/2011, <http://www.umis.ac.uk/conferences/conference1998.html>.

treatment of diseases and the improvement of the way the state dealt with the mentally ill in India,¹⁴¹ Wise had no desire to completely break down traditional Indian society, preferring instead to work within its confines and by mediating interests in both science and religion.¹⁴²

Wise's interest in the 'religions' of India, particularly Hinduism and later Buddhism, was reflected in both his writing and collecting. These interests then fed into his work as both social commentator and medical practitioner.¹⁴³ As an employee of The Company, Wise was part of a global network that engaged in powerful economic concerns with far-reaching implications for both Britain and India, but also social and intellectual implications for those men 'on the spot' and the Indians they worked amongst.

Wise's view of Tibet, seen through his collection, builds a picture not just of Tibet as analogous with Buddhism, but of Wise himself, and how his concerns as a man were innately tied up in both objects and empire. There is no evidence in either his military records, archival records in Dundee (where the collection is now located) or his own writings that he ever entered Tibetan territory, tried to enter Tibetan territory or even had any particularly noteworthy encounters with Tibetans in India. Though based in India, and therefore geographically close to

¹⁴¹ Wise, *Practical Remarks on Insanity in Bengal also Thoughts on Education in India, its Object and Plan*.

¹⁴² In this way, Wise differed greatly from Macaulay, for whilst both men believed there to be much merit in Indian culture, Macaulay believed the only way that British domination of the subcontinent could be achieved was through the complete replacement of Indian cultural values with British systems and values, a practice which was to become known as Macaulayism. Wise on the other hand, looked to adapt Indian methods to British understandings.

¹⁴³ The categorisation of a variety of practices and rites into 'religions' was a western construct designed to make the heterogeneity of Indian culture intelligible to the British administrators who oversaw it through both the East India Company and the British Indian Government. The very terms 'Buddhism' and 'Hinduism' being themselves western constructs, creating a very particular understanding of the practices and ideas attached to them.

Tibet, his picture of Tibet was painted in much the same way as that of Orientalists in the British Library.¹⁴⁴

This collection was made eighty years before Britain's only military foray into Tibetan territory. It offers a place from which to start examining how, over the course of the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, collectors, objects and the Empire, concerned with imperial ideologies, operated both together and in tension with one another, to construct a series of places called 'Tibet', which would fill the British imagination for more than a century.

Although these ideological concepts, from which Tibet would be constructed in the western imagination, only cemented in the late nineteenth century, the first British envoy to travel to Tibet did so much earlier. George Bogle was a Scottish employee of The Company, selected by Governor Warren Hastings in 1774 to lead a small diplomatic mission to Tibet. The aim of this mission was to form trading ties with the Panchen Lama and Bogle would spend six months in Tibet.¹⁴⁵ By the time Thomas Alexander Wise brought Tibetan objects back to Scotland in about 1850, public knowledge of Bogle's encounter, and the reciprocity that had taken place between these British and Tibetan representatives, had already faded.¹⁴⁶ As the nineteenth century progressed,

¹⁴⁴ In fact, his collection of objects and their associated labels and notes offers the only indication that he had an interest in Tibet at all. India Office Military Records, *Record of Service for Thomas Alexander Wise*.

¹⁴⁵ The Panchen Lama is Tibet's highest-ranking monastic figure, after the Dalai Lama, and is a reincarnation of the Amitabha Buddha. The Panchen Lama was seen as having great political, as well as spiritual, importance, as evidenced by British attempts to form relations with him. Bogle's diaries show the development of his relationship with the Panchen Lama during this time, though sadly this relationship was not continued by Bogle's successors. Bogle died in Calcutta in 1781 and, if he had collected Tibetan objects during his travels, these were not lodged with a museum in Scotland.

¹⁴⁶ Stewart, *Journeys to Empire*, 141.

the dominating position of European technology, industrial capability and associated military power, encouraged a greater sense of European superiority over other cultures and fixed ideas about racial hierarchies. This was in contrast to the more fluid relations between Britons, Indians and Tibetans, that had been possible in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.¹⁴⁷

By the time that most of the collections examined in this thesis were entering Scottish museums – between 1890-1930 – the importance of knowledge *collection* established by the likes of Wise, had been rearticulated by imperial ideologies into a process of knowledge *production*, influenced less by rationalism and scientific enquiry, and more by aggression, Christian triumphalism and racial prejudice.¹⁴⁸ The collections which form the core of this study were gathered by people who span these changes in imperial ideologies and their collections exemplify many of the tensions in those shifts, which are in turn reflective of Britain's changing understanding of Tibetan culture.

As such, by the early twentieth century, the early views of Tibetan culture as innately tied up in Buddhist practice and ceremony were firmly cemented. This meant that objects collected during the 1904 Expedition, which flooded into British museums and private collections, 'performed honourable service to the static, religious vision of Tibet'.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 230. Interestingly, Bogle was said to have had two daughters by a Tibetan woman, although he never married. On his death the children were sent to Scotland to live with his family and eventually married local men. One hundred years later, such events would almost certainly have not occurred.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 231.

¹⁴⁹ Harris, *In the Image of Tibet*, 29.

1.3.7 Scottish museums/Scotland and The Empire

The example of Thomas Wise shows how Scots were forging a position for themselves in the Empire from early on in its history. Scots formed an established part of the ruling structure across the colonial world and, Tom Devine argues, felt themselves equal partners to the English in the 'great imperial mission'.¹⁵⁰ Well-to-do Scots took many leading roles in the governance of India and in other high-profile imperial positions throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as attaining high levels of education.¹⁵¹ If Scots were following similar patterns of work and education to their English neighbours, were there particularly Scottish nuances to collecting practices? Such distinctions may come to light by interrogating the way collections were presented to the public once in museums, which were formed around a local, Scottish audience, even when they had national ambitions. Whereas the collectors themselves were not exclusively Scottish, the museums in which their objects were finally deposited were and the biggest of those, NMS, was instructed to provide inspiration and assistance to many Scottish trades and local interests.¹⁵² The following chapters will touch on the moments in which a sense of 'Scottishness' may have been more or less pervasive. However, within

¹⁵⁰ Devine notes, for example, that a third of all governor generals between 1850-1939 were Scottish, showing Scots to form a major part of the empire's ruling class. Devine, *The Scottish Nation*, 289-290.

¹⁵¹ The University of Edinburgh Medical School was highly influential throughout the eighteenth century, losing its grip to London somewhat in the nineteenth century although it continued to train many imperial agents from all over Britain for work in the Empire. See Burnett. "Age of Industry (1843-1914) Medicine", 147-149.

¹⁵² See Chapter Five, section 5.3.1, Bringing the World to Scotland: The Identity and Purpose of the 'National' Museum: 368. NMS was originally founded as an industrial museum, with commercial interests at its heart. See Wilson, *The Industrial Museum of Scotland in its Relation to Commercial Enterprise*.

the context of missionary work does the influence of a specifically Scottish identity appear within the collections, and this only really occurred in those collections from West Bengal, India, where Scottish missionaries had a particularly high-profile presence.¹⁵³

Yet, as Thomas Wise demonstrated, the background and education of Scottish collectors did have a broader influence on the way in which they understood their roles as imperial agents and so 'Scottishness' must be reflected on, even if it does not form the core of an understanding of collector intent.

Whilst the focus of this thesis will largely be on the lives of objects before they entered a museum – when still in the hands of their collectors – the very fact that such a study can take place is due to the current location of these objects in Scottish museums. Not only are museums the spaces in which these objects have been gathered together, allowing us to draw conclusions about how they played a role in the construction of Tibet from a British perspective, but they have continued to provide a space within which the biographical detail of these objects can repeatedly expand and be redefined.

The museum is therefore a 'collector' in its own right, and as such straddles both personal and organisational levels of power and knowledge production about Tibet. At the same time, the museum is also an artefact, affected by the changes other actors press upon it, and continuously

¹⁵³ The areas around Darjeeling and Kalimpong were home to the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission, the Scottish Universities Missionary Institute and several independent Scottish missionaries. See Chapter Two, section 2.1.3, West Bengal as a 'Scottish missionary enclave': 114.

remodelled to adapt to those changes. Museums, like individual collectors, formed networks within which power and authority was often unequal. The relationship between smaller Scottish museums and the NMS in Edinburgh, and the relationship between NMS and institutions in London, particularly the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), contributed to museums' own constructions of Tibet through material culture.¹⁵⁴

The museum was not only representative of Scottish needs, but also of wider imperial ones.¹⁵⁵ Museums as public spaces were constructed by Victorian society; the Victorians celebrated, criticised, attended, worked in, wrote about and collected in homage to these institutions, making the museum a place infused with the spirit of the age.¹⁵⁶ Museums then, despite their locally based affiliations, were also tied to imperial ideologies. Within this imperial process, museums were effectively meeting the needs of their local communities, by bringing a vision of the Empire home.¹⁵⁷ In doing so the museum was providing assistance to the imperial machine, setting up ideas about both the Empire and the 'Other'. These representations would be seen by the Scottish public, some of whom would venture out into the Empire, others who could not, but would (hopefully) support its aims.

¹⁵⁴ From the founding of the museum in 1854 until 1904, when the museum in Edinburgh was renamed the Royal Scottish Museum, the art and ethnography sections had been administered, including the administration of budgets, by the South Kensington Museum (later the Victoria and Albert Museum). The history of the two institutions is therefore closely entwined.

¹⁵⁵ Scottish needs, for example, included development in particular fields of industry and technology. Whilst the empire as a whole ran huge commercial interests, Chapter Five will show how the specific needs of Scotland, such as the development of the coal industry in East Lothian, were strongly represented in the museum setting.

¹⁵⁶ Black, *On Exhibit: Victorians and their Museums*, 4.

¹⁵⁷ Today, set into the stone floor of NMS are the words 'The World to Scotland, Scotland to the World', a reminder of that longstanding commitment.

Chapter Five will examine the specific role of the museum. Crucially, museums played an important part in the considerations collectors took into account: which museum would they were willing or able to place their collections in and which objects would best suit that circumstance. What collectors chose not to give to museums is often as telling as those objects that were donated or sold and so following the lives of objects as they bridged that gap – from private to public domains – is a crucial part of their narrative.

1.4 Recounting biographies: objects and collectors

Thomas Wise, the first collector examined in this thesis to encounter Tibetan material culture, represents a bridge between the theoretical framework and historical contextualisation of the preceding pages, and the methodological approach I will be taking, based on the biographical model. I now wish to turn my attention to an examination of the evidence itself, namely the objects, and the men and women who collected them, to explain my methodological approach. Textual sources remain important and insightful, but in this thesis I aim to give a stronger role to the object, to fully interrogate the intentions of the collectors examined, and the ways in which personal, organisational and imperial concerns were invested in material things. By locating a collector within their collection, I will reveal how alternative sources of evidence about imperial relations, including objects and ‘unofficial’ written sources, show the complexity of ways in which objects were used to curate very particular visions

of Tibet within Britain. Consequently, I will also examine why those who made them needed such images of the Tibetan 'other'.

1.4.1 Collecting: a biographical model

Just as objects act as markers in the biographies of people, they also accumulate their own biographical detail. It is this premise, outlined by Igor Kopytoff's in his paper 'The Cultural Biography of Things', which forms the basis of my approach.¹⁵⁸ Kopytoff's focus is the circulation and exchange of objects, and the unpacking of layers of biographical detail from these moments of movement within the commoditisation process. My aim is to position this way of viewing the movement of objects and the creation of value alongside the structure for understanding British-Tibetan encounters outlined in the previous pages. In particular, I will follow Christopher Steiner's argument for the biographical model, in which he places greater emphasis on the power of people over objects, rather than objects over people. Steiner contends that the development of the biographical model has given too much emphasis to the agency of the object, diminishing the impact of human agency and the systems that construct and imbue material goods with value, significance and meaning.¹⁵⁹ In other words, the objects that form the evidence for this thesis can help us to re-engage with the idea that the meanings of objects are 'constructed by people'.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process", 64-94.

¹⁵⁹ Steiner, "Rights of passage", 210.

¹⁶⁰ Kopytoff in Steiner, "Rights of passage", 209.

Fundamentally then, objects are neither inert nor passive; they help us give shape to our identities and we engage with them in different ways at different times.¹⁶¹ Unravelling object biographies can provide a collection, and therefore a collector, with a voice in the absence of more commonly appreciated forms of historical evidence, such as the text. As part of a collection, objects are given additional biographical texture and the web of relationships *between* objects allows for the perception of differences and commonalities, and the way in which one collection might relate to another.¹⁶² This process not only locates the collector within a collection, but also allows a variety of responses to biographical detail to be recorded revealing, as Kopytoff notes, ‘a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical and even political judgements, and convictions and values that shape our attitudes to objects labelled ‘art’’.¹⁶³ Biographical detail, therefore, is not just about the singular or personal; the ‘social life of things’ can link the competing ideologies that frame the process of knowledge production. At the same time, unravelling an object’s biography can show how the individual is often caught between social norms and expectations and personal attempts to bring a value order to the universe of things.¹⁶⁴

This approach will be developed further in Chapter Four (*Colonial Collecting*) and Chapter Five (*Tibet and the Museum*) building a perspective on personal relationships from the ground up and bringing to light the importance

¹⁶¹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, 18. The importance of fluidity is also noted by Edwards, Gosden and Philips, who state that: ‘in a biographical model, objects cannot be understood in terms of a single, unchanging identity but rather by tracing the succession of meanings attached to them as they move across space and time’. Edwards, Gosden and Philips, “Introduction”, 13.

¹⁶² Pearce, *On Collecting*, 20.

¹⁶³ Kopytoff, *The Cultural Biography of Things*, 67.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

of 'distributed agency': the idea that individuals cannot enact agency on their own, but require the 'scaffolding of other people and things to make actions happen in the world'.¹⁶⁵ This perspective draws on elements of actor-network-theory, as expressed by Sarah Byrne in a model she terms 'trials and traces'.¹⁶⁶ Byrne's re-working of Bruno Latour's model offers a methodological approach for mapping biographical relations between objects and people by following the experiences of different actors (the trials of the collectors) to unpack the relationships and agencies inherent in collections (the traces). In conceptualising objects as traces, through which agency can be revealed,¹⁶⁷ Byrne offers a mode for making salient those details Kopytoff suggests are masked by more traditional or formal ways of viewing material culture.¹⁶⁸ Locating (and re-locating) those individuals whose agency is enmeshed in the lives of these Tibetan objects will be at the heart of this thesis, driving all the other themes and ideas that will be developed throughout.

As objects were circulated, exchanged and moved from Tibetan to British ideological frameworks they built up layers of value, which were more than just economic. Information was produced about and around objects and authority over both objects and their roles as social markers became tenuous. Thus the ways in which these objects actually circulated – through trade, gift and violent removal – characterised issues of knowledge production.¹⁶⁹ Those with the authority to construct a system of value for Tibetan artefacts, including

¹⁶⁵ Byrne et al., "Introduction", 11.

¹⁶⁶ Byrne, "Trials and Traces: A.C. Haddon's Agency as Museum Curator", 307-326.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 308.

¹⁶⁸ Kopytoff, *The Cultural Biography of Things*, 67.

¹⁶⁹ Appadurai, "Commodities and the Politics of Value", 43.

the construction of categories such as 'art' or 'ethnography', were able to dominate this western construction of Tibet.

The categories of 'art', and 'ethnography', had many forms and their practical uses were ever changing. The relationship between 'art' and 'ethnography' will be developed in later chapters, as I examine the collections in more detail. Most of the material considered 'ethnographic' by museum curators today was not associated with that term at the time of its collection. Nowhere in archival sources is the word associated with the late nineteenth century collections of missionaries, whose objects make up the bulk of the material presently considered in those terms. The division of these categories was initially a scholarly one, most visibly charted through the changing status of the term 'ethnographic' in each new edition of the anthropological field book *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*.¹⁷⁰ Yet collectors were often making the same distinctions in the categorisation of their collections, even if they were not identifying them in those terms. Collectors created hierarchies of objects and made statements about the meanings and values of certain objects that were in line with those being made by scholars and museum staff. These were largely unspoken divisions that I am making artificially apparent in order to probe the developing identities given to Tibetan material culture within Britain.

Whilst biography can record more than personal experience, those experiences are at the core of collector intent, and provided the catalyst for the initial process of collecting. Within a collection a collector can, as Susan Stewart notes, re-appropriate their own experiences, authenticate life events and

¹⁷⁰ Petch, "Pitt-Rivers and Notes and Queries", 21-39.

therefore mark their own authority to speak about their objects.¹⁷¹ As such, on the most basic level, objects authenticate lived experiences, such as through the collection of souvenirs when we travel, or the retention of family heirlooms.

Object meanings are therefore multi-dimensional and both individuals and societies attach different moral and economic values as a result of historical experience, both personal and communal.¹⁷² Following those objects, as they pass through the wider historical processes of imperialism and social delineations such as class, gender and race, allows us to understand those experiences in more nuanced ways.¹⁷³ Fluidity, and the expectation of change are part of the biographical cycle of objects. An object's identity is not a fixed thing, based on its material components: 'not what it was made to be, but what it has become through this transformative process'.¹⁷⁴ The life of an object, including the process of exchange, ways of viewing and methods of display, all mediate encounters between objects and people. These processes made 'evidence' out of objects and provided data for personal, organisational and imperial projects. Objects, and the ways they were collected, were an integral part of imperial ideologies and part of the arsenal of imperial dominance.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Stewart suggests that we need object as souvenirs to make events in which we participate reportable, even when the event's materiality has escaped us, and therefore exists only through the invention of narrative – and the retention of the souvenir. Stewart, *On Longing*, 135.

¹⁷² Pearce, *On Collecting*, 16.

¹⁷³ An excellent example of this approach is given by Richard Davis. In his examination of the 'life' of Tipu's tiger, Davis notes that: 'by following the tiger and other appropriated objects into the twentieth century, we will see how changing conceptions of Indian 'art' and the altered political relationship of India and the UK have transformed the frame within which modern western museum goers now encounter these icons of colonialism'. *Lives of Indian Images*, 12.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 4.

¹⁷⁵ Gosden and Knowles study the importance of material culture in colonial relations in the context of Papuan and European relationships which, they argue, were constructed through the flow of materials. Gosden and Knowles, *Collecting Colonialism*, 6.

In the following chapters I will explore the ways of unpacking the information that is built in and around objects. This will provide the evidence for how collectors – individuals – operated to construct knowledge about Tibet, within personal, organisational and imperial frameworks.

1.4.2 Collecting: a methodological approach for analysing objects

The biographical model, by virtue of being built around the ways in which object's circulate, follows a dynamic process of movement. How people moved objects was tied up in networks, which were an important part of the mode of operations through which imperial agents – missionaries, military personnel, merchants, civil servants and travellers – were able to acquire and disseminate knowledge about Tibet. Networks met practical needs such as travel, physical comfort and the movement of material things, including collections of objects.¹⁷⁶ Networks did not just move objects, but embedded them in processes of knowledge production, linking collections to their collectors, their initial makers or sellers, and the institutions in Scotland in which they would eventually take their place.

It was within these networks that objects and people came together, and objects were made to perform specific roles *for* people. Just as collectors have traceable lives, marked by certain events, demographic differences and

¹⁷⁶ One of the networks of the British Empire I personally find the most intriguing is that of the Army and Navy Stores, which acted as postal service, goods stores and long term storage of people's possessions. Anecdotal evidence found in the British Library suggests that the movement of the collections examined here literally couldn't have happened without their logistical support. See for example *Letter from Eric Bailey to his father Frederick*, 26/12/1907, [Mss EUR/F.157/167], Bailey Family Papers.

geographical locations, so do objects. I have roughly constructed a four-phase lifecycle for the analysis of the objects in this thesis, though of course such a cycle is not the same for every object in every situation. These phases form the building blocks of object biographies and provide a methodological framework for the analysis of different collector groups.

Phase 1 is the process of making the object. This is the time when its maker, or initial owner, still had control over that object's movement and use – a moment of indigenous agency. This phase is often lost, intentionally or unintentionally, once an object becomes part of a European collection and yet, such agencies can be recovered through the interrogation of the object. For example, in Chapter Four I will show how the monks of Spituk monastery modified objects collected by Lilian Le Mesurier – specifically a shrine box containing a *thangka* painting – to retain what was important to them, whilst allowing the collector to take what was important to her.¹⁷⁷ This keeping-whilst-giving allowed the monks to participate in wider political negotiations between British and Indian representatives.¹⁷⁸ Paradoxically, this first stage, though usually forgotten, was often the reason for an object's collection in the first place, perhaps for its relationship to an important individual or its use in a particular ceremony. In Chapter Three I will show how Eric Bailey's relationship to the objects given to him by the Panchen Lama, is one occasion when this first

¹⁷⁷ See Chapter Four, section 4.5.6, Lilian Le Mesurier: 350.

¹⁷⁸ The idea of 'keeping whilst giving' is outlined by Annette Weiner, who notes that 'replacements allow the keeping of things while giving things to others. For replacement allows a person to retain some part of inalienable possessions or some degree of inalienability. The need to exchange with others is inherently dangerous because a person not only gives away material things, but a measure of their own identity'. Therefore keeping while giving becomes an act of social and political power. Weiner, "Inalienable Wealth", 224.

stage in an object's life was fundamental to its continuing relationship with other owners.¹⁷⁹

Phase 2 is the act of collecting,¹⁸⁰ in which initial encounters take place between a British collector and a Tibetan whose objects they wish to collect. This stage includes a series of differing modes of acquisition, processes of collecting knowledge associated with that object and the first moments in which a collector may begin to rearticulate an object's purpose. The commoditisation of goods, the looting of property during warfare or the exchange of gifts, lend different levels of authenticity and authority to both the collector and the collection, and begin to demarcate values for those objects. For example the missionary J.W. Innes-Wright discussed in Chapter Two and the military officer W.J. Ottley discussed in Chapter Three, both reshaped their collections as commodities with a complete focus on their economic values. Despite some crossover in the types of objects collected, the context in which each act of collecting took place – the village bazaar versus a famous military campaign - had a significant impact on how that value was calculated. Therefore Major Ottley's bullet-riddled *gau* from the battlefield at Guru was assumed to be invested with more meaning, and more value, than the *gau* the missionary J.W. Innes-Wright purchased from a Tibetan trader at Ghoom bazaar.

Phase 3 is the moment when the collector cements the new ways in which their objects have been reconstituted and designates how their collection

¹⁷⁹ Chapter Three, section 3.8.1, Taking and giving: friendship, negotiation and bureaucracy in the British Empire 259.

¹⁸⁰ There may be many other paths down which an object travels before it reaches a European collector, but my focus here is those stages around the moment of collection.

will engage with other objects, and other people. This is the moment in which collectors openly state the purpose of their collections so that, for example, the missionary H.F. Ridley (Chapter Two) involved objects in community lectures and missionary society exhibitions about his work, emphasising how Tibetan material culture proved the necessity of Christian intervention in the area.¹⁸¹ Florence Bailey (Chapter Three) became the curator of her son's collection, not only reshaping the purpose of the objects as they moved from the battlefield to the front room, but using her son's collection as a means of integrating herself, and her family, into Edinburgh society.¹⁸² In fact, within this phase the role of women as mediators and curators of collections made by brothers, sons and husbands, is highly significant. Whilst I will argue that specifically 'gendered' collecting is largely absent within the collections studied here, the role of women in this context was vital to the further transformative processes collections underwent and women were often responsible for the eventual move of collections into the museum.

Phase 4 can be considered the 'final' stage in the life of the objects discussed in this study. Here further exchanges of objects lead them eventually into a Scottish museum, where they remain. This process requires the collector to relinquish control and authority over the object or collection (although many retain an interest). As the museum evolves an object's purpose and meaning once more, the object can often undergo a process of 'flattening out', whereby the layers of texture built up around an object's biographical detail in the

¹⁸¹ See Chapter Two, section 2.2.1, Missionary collecting: education, 119.

¹⁸² See Chapter Three, section 3.9, Case study: Florence Bailey – military acquisitions and the domestic space, 272.

previous phases, are buried under the weight of the museum's institutional processes. This process can affect objects and collectors in different ways, but has the ability to paint a simple black and white picture of objects and collectors, removing the colour and texture of their life histories. Recovering those agencies is not impossible, but requires new ways of seeing the information stored on and around objects. In Chapter Five I will discuss one such example of this process, examining the labels NMS placed on objects collected by Robert Brown and how those labels made it possible to recover his agency, when the objects passed to his daughter Amelia Thexton.¹⁸³

Of course, there is nothing final about this process; objects continue to have a varied and ever-changing 'life' within the walls of a museum, and may even pass into the wider world again, through processes of museum disposal. However, objects usually remain within that particular space.¹⁸⁴ Not every chapter will replicate this pattern for the analysis of the 'life of objects' exactly, but each chapter will operate within this broad framework, focusing on different phases, depending on where the evidence leads. In this way, it will be possible to piece together the lives of collections and the traces they have left behind.

¹⁸³ See Chapter Five, section 5.5.3: Loan labels: recovering legacies, 317.

¹⁸⁴ For a discussion of the way in which the museum has been cast as an 'institution in which the forces of historical inertia are profoundly implicated' see Stocking, "Introduction", 3-14.

1.4.3 Collecting: hierarchies of value

These networks, within which objects became parts of collections and which can be re-traced to make visible the phases in the lives of objects, were built around a series of exchanges. Kopytoff recognises the processes of circulation and exchange as the moments in which objects are given meaning but also *value*. However, in order to recognise how value is made, Arjun Appadurai argues, we need to follow the things themselves ‘as meaning inscribed in form, uses and trajectories’.¹⁸⁵ He goes on to note that ‘the analysis of these trajectories allow interpretation of human transactions and calculations that enliven them’.¹⁸⁶ Therefore these processes cannot be explained away as a simple dichotomy between gifts and commodities.¹⁸⁷ Instead, relations of power and authority often guide how links are created between an object’s value, and the way in which it was acquired.¹⁸⁸ So, for instance, as Susan Pearce suggests, certain words such as ‘art’, ‘masterpiece’ or ‘cultured’ tell us something of the power play of aesthetics, whilst ‘known’, ‘real’ or ‘authentic’ give us an idea about the power play of knowledge. These terms add up to create value, which is presented in the realm of objects and collections.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, those values were created out of the cultural and political situations in which exchanges took place, making issues of gender, occupation, race, class

¹⁸⁵ As echoed in Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value”, 3.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸⁷ See for example Daniel Miller, who argues against the retention of the simple gift/commodity opposition in which ‘gifts’ evoke a sense of inalienability, whilst a ‘commodity’ is taken to be totally alienable. Miller, “Alienable Gifts and Inalienable Commodities”, 91-115. On the idiosyncratic nature of networks of exchange also see Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things”, 78.

¹⁸⁸ Thus economically valuable objects looted from monasteries were value-laden in very different ways from items gifted or exchanged between Tibetans and missionaries.

¹⁸⁹ Pearce, *On Collecting*, 287.

and many other aspects of the imperial situation fundamental to European notions of value. How an object was valued, perhaps economically but also aesthetically (its relationship to 'art'), culturally (a good example of something 'typically Tibetan' for use in a lecture), or materially (when made of exotic materials or unusual craftsmanship), played directly into the processes by which collectors used their objects to construct Tibet. What this means, of course, is that 'value' is not a fixed quality, but is fluid, even volatile.¹⁹⁰

Some values operate outside of socially established parameters. For example, there is personal value attached to objects because of their process of exchange or through sentimentality on the part of the collector, or heirlooms handed down through generations of a family.¹⁹¹ Personal values are often more deeply embedded within collections, and harder to establish.¹⁹² They may however offer some of the most interesting insights about the paths objects have taken as they pass through collector's lives. Chapter Four will focus on how we might make these often hidden, personal values visible once more.

The process of acquisition can also affect value, so that objects taken in warfare, of which a number can be found in this study, fall outside the categories of gift or commodity, the standard categories for thinking about how objects circulate. The most mundane object can take on a symbolic intensity during battle that cannot be established in normal commoditisation

¹⁹⁰ Kirschenblatt-Gimblett and Myers, "Art and Material Culture", 299.

¹⁹¹ For example, Eric Bailey did not sell objects *gifted* to him by the Panchen Lama to the Royal Scottish Museum. Annie Taylor's hat – moth eaten and well worn – had a place in her collection because it accompanied her on all her adventures and can be seen atop her head in many images of her from her decade spent in Tibet.

¹⁹² Personal value is just that – personal – and meaningless (and therefore valueless) to most other people. Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 31.

processes.¹⁹³ Conversely, things valued highly outside of warfare can lose that value due to the abnormal constraints of war.¹⁹⁴ The 1904 Expedition created such imbalances of value, which continued to be contested as objects entered the realm of the museum. In Chapter Five I will examine this process, through the collection of the military officer W.J. Ottley and two particular objects – a gilded *chorten* and a bone apron.¹⁹⁵

‘Value’ in its various permutations, then, is innate in many of the phases of collecting, and can guide many collector decisions. It therefore becomes an important part in the collector’s process of constructing ‘Tibet’. Linked to value are denotations of authenticity (both of the object and the collecting experience) and authority (of the collector), which has already been touched on.

1.4.4 Collecting: authenticity

‘Authenticity’ is ideologically constructed but also, to some extent, subjective. There is evidence that several collectors examined here saw the collection of ‘authentic’ Tibetan artefacts as an integral part of the collecting process, but how authenticity was established was often personal and vague. For example, Lilian Le Mesurier recorded in print the need for ‘authentic’ specimens, whose

¹⁹³ For example the taking of flags, weapons or human body parts from the enemy. Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value”, 26.

¹⁹⁴ For example, as Hooper-Greenhill notes, the recalculation of value can occur, making a painting (potentially) preferable to a statue made of precious metals because it is lighter, more portable and less susceptible to damage during transportation. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 178.

¹⁹⁵ See Chapter Five, section 5.4.2, Selling collections: the 1904 Expedition.387.

authenticity was enhanced by their purchase direct from a monastery.¹⁹⁶ What I will argue in the following chapters is that for many collectors, the authenticity of the object was often far less important than the authentication of their experience as a collector 'in the field', which provided the authority with which they could then use the collection for a variety of purposes.¹⁹⁷

The way in which authenticity of the collection was linked to that experience of 'being there' in the field was highlighted by other methods of recording, such as photography. For example, Eric Bailey not only collected objects during the 1904 Expedition, but also photographed every notable event of the experience. Photographs offered 'proof' of the collector's status as an eyewitness, a strategy also employed by museums from the late nineteenth century to the present.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, for the viewers of these collections, photographs were a bridge between the object as representation (to return to Mitchell's terminology) and the actual place to be experienced: the external reality. Collated with objects and written accounts, photographs form part of an effective body of evidence collectors used to authenticate their experiences.

The authenticity of both collector and object provided the collector with the authority to make the statements that formed their construction of Tibet; it gave them the right to represent themselves as knowledgeable and Tibet as in

¹⁹⁶ Le Mesurier, "Tibetan Curios", 271.

¹⁹⁷ Pearce suggests that the term 'authentic' not only carries connotations of the 'real' in the scientific sense, but also the feelings of something 'genuine' in an emotional sense, which has a truth of its own kind. Pearce, *On Collecting*, 251. Stewart suggests that the capacity of an object to serve as a trace of an authentic experience is exemplified by the souvenir, which, as an actual object, is often associated with the inauthentic and usually made for that exact purpose. Stewart, *On Longing*, 135.

¹⁹⁸ On the use of that strategy within the museum, see Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 138.

need of representation by them.¹⁹⁹ Such authority is perhaps more visible in the texts that collectors wrote, than in the collections themselves, if only because it is more explicit. Beyond the obvious 'work' of an author, there are other ways in which they are made manifest in texts.²⁰⁰ The author – be they a professional anthropologist or an amateur enthusiast – draws their audience in not just by convincing us that their experience was real, but by convincing us that, had we had the same experience, we would have had the same feelings, and come to the same conclusions as they did.²⁰¹

Crucially, authority, and how it sanctioned the collector to denote authenticity, links back to notions of value, and allows the (western) collector to dominate the processes by which valuations for Tibetan material culture were ascribed. The way in which collectors, Orientalist scholars, art critics and museums created a hierarchical categorisation of Tibetan artefacts, was part of the wider strategy of western (in this case British) domination of knowledge about Tibet. It is this position, as the dominating group, that allows its members to make their tastes appear universal,²⁰² thus authorising them to denote what is and is not of value within Tibetan culture, over and above any categories a Tibetan may make claim to.

Understanding how collectors formed categories of value for objects, how they 'proved' the authenticity of their experience and used that to stamp their authority on constructions of Tibet, were all part of the process of forming

¹⁹⁹ James Clifford notes that, because the 'experience' of being the man on the spot and collecting is an idea that is hard to pin down, it served as a very effective, yet also ambiguous, guarantee of ethnographic authority. Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 37.

²⁰⁰ Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 4.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁰² Myers, "Introduction", 34.

collections. However, more than just aiding our understanding of what objects are and how we see them, we need to look at what work they performed for their collectors. The questions this thesis seeks to untangle are not just about the objects themselves, but about their relations to collectors in specific temporal and spatial contexts.²⁰³

1.4.5 Collecting: collectors

Just as there are many ways in which objects can be collected, there are many types of collectors. In his study of European collecting in Melanesia, Michael O’Hanlon suggests three collector types: primary, secondary and concomitant.²⁰⁴ Primary collectors were those for whom the act of collecting was the main focus of their activities and reason for being in the location from which they collected.²⁰⁵ None of the British agents collecting in Tibet in this period fall into this category, and therefore primary collectors will not form part of my analysis. Secondary collectors were those who made collecting a goal, but not a primary focus.²⁰⁶ Many missionary collectors fall into this category, explicitly using Tibetan material culture for its commercial value as a means of funding their vocational work. However most collectors can be understood as falling into the third category – concomitant collecting – where the collecting process was incidental, or a by-product of other activities.²⁰⁷ Crucially, as

²⁰³ Brown, “Thing Theory”, 7.

²⁰⁴ O’Hanlon, “Introduction”, 12.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

O'Hanlon note, the distinctions between these categories cannot be forced and, as the following chapters will show, collectors often waived between roles as secondary and concomitant collectors.

Collectors came into contact with Tibetans and Tibetan material culture in a variety of ways and to varying degrees. As noted earlier, Thomas Wise may never have personally encountered a Tibetan, whereas the missionary Annie Taylor was to spend a decade living in Tibet, amongst Tibetans. There are, however, certain commonalities linking the collectors represented in Scottish museums. Firstly, the majority of the 1400 objects on which this study is based, were collected between 1880 and 1920 and donated to Scottish museums between 1890-1930.²⁰⁸ This time period is significant for several reasons. It shows the speed with which material from Tibet was collected – only a lifetime. Furthermore, it suggests that many of these collectors were in the process of collecting simultaneously, forming a network of collectors and collections, influencing each other and providing both competition and support. This tight timeframe also shows that there was a certain window of opportunity for engagement with Tibetan culture and Tibetans at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.²⁰⁹ In the middle of that collecting timeframe sits 1904 – Tibet's moment of British colonial encounter. This gives us the opportunity to observe the ways in which both the process of collecting

²⁰⁸ This is an approximate total of Tibetan objects in the Scottish museums examined in this study. See Appendix C for a breakdown of the main museum collections examined for this thesis.

²⁰⁹ See Appendix A for a list of the main collectors and short biographies.

and the process of constructing Tibet for a western audience, shifted around that sharp change in relations between Britain and Tibet.

Another significant commonality amongst collectors represented in Scottish museums is that two distinct groups are clearly visible in terms of collector occupation: missionaries and military personnel. These groups are somewhat chronologically distinct, with most missionaries collecting before 1904 and military officers collecting around 1904. After that time, a larger portion of collectors appear to be civil servants and merchants, showing another demographic shift in encounters with Tibet. Within each chapter the reasons for such shifts will be dealt with in more detail, but this chronology forms the basis of the structure of this thesis. Collectors will therefore be examined in three groups: missionaries, military personnel and lastly a group I have termed colonial collectors.

The backgrounds of collectors were often broadly similar. Most were well educated and from reasonably well-off, or very wealthy, families. The majority of collectors represented are men, although the collections of Lilian Le Mesurier and Annie Royale Taylor are both quantitatively and analytically significant. Additionally, women within the families of male collectors, such as Eric Bailey, J.F.C. Dalmahoy, and David Tyrie were important to the later life of those collections. Not all the collectors represented were Scottish. For those who were not, the process by which their collections made their way to Scottish museums helps us to understand how Tibetan material was valued within Britain, and the relationship between London and Scotland as locations within the heart of the British Empire.

Despite the many similarities outlined, these collectors of Tibetan material culture were a heterogeneous group. Although most collectors worked *with* and *within* imperial ideologies, believing that as British subjects they had the right to impose their own ideas and expectations on Tibetan culture, they did so in a multitude of ways, often in tension to one another and with a variety of expected outcomes. Each collector, influenced by their gender, class, education, religious affiliation and occupation, constructed a slightly different 'Tibet' for exportation to Scotland through material collections. Some collectors also wrote about their experiences and collections, which can broaden our understanding of a collector's experiences, but on occasion these appear to be in tension with the objects themselves. For instance, Thomas Wise's Tibetan objects formed a significant part of his overall ethnographic collection, but his writings are based exclusively on India, and his Indian objects.

In addition to their occupations, collectors had roles ascribed to them and by them. Most considered themselves to have some sort of authority in relation to Tibetan culture, which stemmed from the position of 'being there' to collect and 'being here' to present.²¹⁰ These relationships to networks of people and organisations in both India and Britain influenced the way in which their construction of Tibet, through their objects and texts, was accepted or rejected by their 'viewers' within Scotland. Networks of collecting and exchange, and

²¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, in his study of ethnographic texts, examines the way in which the author of such texts is positioned within the text, and the implications this has for the presentation of 'real' ethnographic 'facts' by the anthropologist. I would suggest that the same tensions Geertz ascribes to professional anthropologists from the early twentieth century onwards are visible in the writings and collections of amateur collectors from the late nineteenth century, who were engaged with many of the same problems that would later face the professionals examined in Geertz's study, such as Malinowski. Geertz, *Works and Lives*, 73-101.

arenas of display, which might include museums and their staff (both in Britain and India), collectors in the field (both amateur and professional), indigenous agents (working with and against British interests), and auction houses and collectors within Britain, all had potential to add layers of meaning and differing sets of value to objects, but also to the collectors who owned them. Thus object biographies and those of their collectors become entangled, giving agency and authority to one another. For some objects, as we shall see, those links became inextricable, so that a connection between an object and a collector can no longer be untangled.²¹¹

Whilst most of these networks of collecting had an end point within Britain, or with a British agent in India or Tibet, they all started with an (usually) unknown Tibetan maker. Puntso, Annie Taylor's assistant, or the Kushok of Spituk Monastery who assisted Lilian Le Mesurier, are recorded Tibetan agents who have visible agency within collections. Yet the majority of Tibetan makers and sellers remain resolutely invisible and anonymous. Ethnographic authority was, from the British perspective, the purview of the man or woman on the spot. However, many of those authoritative persons were themselves reliant on indigenous help either with the location of items, negotiation of sales or for information about local material culture. Networks, then, created a series of personal dynamics that drew in larger concerns, but which operated between individuals, who each had private agendas, and included people who were not

²¹¹ A well-known example already noted is Tipu's Tiger (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum), the mechanical wooden beast, constantly in the act of devouring a European soldier. Taken from the Palace of Tipu, Sultan of Mysore in the late eighteenth century, the figure has spent most of its life in Britain, with a history more closely connected to London and The Company than Mysore, or Tipu himself. Yet its name permanently reminds us of that one moment in this object's life.

British and did not necessarily have an outlook coloured by British imperialism. Who was, and was not, made visible within collections is evidence of the complex layering process of agency (both British and Tibetan), which surrounds an object's biographical detail.

1.5 Thesis Structure

As noted, this thesis will follow a chronology that mirrors both the historically salient moments in British-Tibetan relations, and the distinctive temporal and spatial moments in which each of the three collector groups operated.

This chapter has set out the aims of the thesis and established a methodological approach. The theoretical framework has looked to an interdisciplinary model, bringing together elements of post-colonial theory with object biography, to use textual and object-based evidence together. By contextualising these elements within the historical and social milieu of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain and British India, I have created a structure for examining collector experiences and intentions. The example of Thomas Wise provided a jumping off point for showing how collector intent could be unpacked from within objects themselves, supplemented by textual evidence.

Chapter Two will focus on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century activities of missionaries, particularly on missions operating around Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, and in the Xining area of China. After contextualising missionary work in general, the chapter will focus on how

missionaries developed particular uses for collections of Tibetan objects, giving them specific roles that were both educational and economic and incorporating objects into missionary practice. Within this analysis of missionary collecting is a longer case study, focusing on the missionary the Reverend James Thomson. Thomson's objects and collecting practices provide a tension against the way missionary collecting processes are generally understood, and as such evidences the heterogeneity and complexity of the idea of a missionary collecting 'type'.

Chapter Three turns to military collecting, specifically the 1904 Expedition. Collecting practices will be contextualised in light of both the 1904 Expedition and the historical genealogy of 'looting' as a process within the armed forces. As noted earlier in this chapter, it is within this moment of violent encounter that the categories of 'Tibetan art' and 'Tibetan Buddhism' become tethered together, due to the responses of officers to the new and uncharted waters of Tibetan monastic material culture. I will then examine the ways in which military officers created roles for collections, often tightly connected to self-representation through what I have termed 'prestige collecting'. This will be contrasted with the roles given to diplomatic gifts in the context of this military encounter, and will be followed by a case study examining the way in which one collection, that of Eric Bailey, was provided with multiple layers of biography and identity as it passed from the military barracks to the Scottish domestic environment.

Chapter Four covers the full timespan of the thesis, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries, threading together a series of colonial collectors who, superficially, appear to be a disparate set of individuals.

However, by developing the biographical methodology to include Sarah Byrne's concept of 'trials and traces', I will show how different imperial and personal concerns thread these collectors together, bringing into focus the more settled 'colonial' influences of British India and the explosion in academic interest in Tibet after 1904. This included the development of the categories of 'art' and 'ethnography' which, I will show, became more distinctly developed after the 1904 Expedition.

Finally, Chapter Five turns to the movement of collections into the museum, specifically NMS, which will be the focus of this chapter. It examines the trajectories taken by Tibetan objects as they move through the museum and negotiate both museum processes and expectations of staff and patrons. I will argue that whilst the evidence shows Tibetan material was an important and coherent part of the Museum's collection, the biographical details, so carefully unravelled in the previous chapters can be seen to be 'flattened' by the Museum's own processes for incorporating objects into its collections.

1.6 Conclusion

As this introduction has summarised, the construction of Tibet in the British imagination was part of a wider process of categorising the non-European world through the lens of imperialism. This shaped the world-view of all the collectors encountered in this thesis, although the nature of that encounter varied widely. The objects examined within this thesis, though able to be positioned within a

biographical framework, did not act in their own right. Rather, material culture, as Samuel Alberti notes:

‘was acted upon, and was a conduit for human intention. People imbued things with value and significance, manipulating and contesting their meanings over time. Objects prompted, changed and channelled relationships but were nonetheless inanimate’.²¹²

Thus locating the collector is a crucial part of ‘reading’ the collection.²¹³

In the following chapters, I will chart how that intention was manifested, how objects were made to perform roles for their collectors, and how those presentations came together to construct particular visions of Tibet. Through the examination of missionaries, military officers and other colonial collectors, as well as the particular role of the museum (and specifically the NMS), I will show how these collections functioned as efficient tools, managing the desires and expectations of imperialism, on personal, organisational and global levels.

²¹² Alberti, *Nature and Culture*, 189.

²¹³ This is a sentiment echoed by Christopher Steiner, who argues that Kopytoff’s model of object biography has often been misunderstood, giving too much agency to objects themselves whilst diminishing human agency and the ‘role of individuals and systems that construct and imbue material goods with value, significance and meaning’. Steiner, “Rights of Passage”, 210.

2 MISSIONARY COLLECTING IN TIBET

'These Tibetans believe that with every flutter of the breeze these senseless rags, with their senseless washed out inscriptions, lay up merit for those who hang them up there. And looking into the Temple, we saw a row of prayer wheels, which are whirled round with the same object. Truly this seems a stronghold of Satan.'¹

In the introductory chapter I examined how Tibet as a place, and Tibetans as a people, became inextricably linked with 'Tibetan Buddhism'. At the same time, Tibetan Buddhism was constructed in the British imagination as an object; to be studied as part of the Empire's wide-reaching taxonomic activities. The perceived discrepancies between the historic Tibetan Buddhism studied in the libraries of Europe and the contemporary practices Tibetans participated in, caused uneasiness amongst European Orientalists in the late nineteenth century. The above quote, from the missionary Miss Foster in 1897, is a typical manifestation of this struggle between the imaginative representation and the external reality of Tibetan Buddhism.

Between the early nineteenth century, when Thomas Wise's Enlightenment inspired exploration of Indian culture took place, and the time that Miss Foster encountered a Tibetan temple at the end of the century, missionaries were a leading force in the construction of an account of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan culture. The development of their personal attitudes and

¹ Miss Foster, in Taylor, *Pioneering in Tibet*, 72.

public interpretations, influenced by imperial ideologies, moved from the fluid, rationalisation of Thomas Wise, to a more fixed and generally more negative series of encounters. Objects collected by missionaries now in Scottish museums were mostly collected in the decades before the 1904 Expedition, which saw an explosion in British public interest in Tibet. These objects, which were given a variety of public roles by missionaries, started that process of constructing Tibet for a British audience.

I will begin this chapter with an assessment of the social and historical context in which missionary work in Tibet was carried out, and the way in which material culture became a tool of missionary activity. Subsequently, I shall work through a number of examples from Scottish museum collections, which outline the ways in which missionaries used Tibetan material culture to promote their work. A longer case study will focus on Glaswegian missionary the Reverend James Thomson, whose collecting activities in Sikkim highlight the way in which the organisational practices and theological concerns of different missionary societies had significant implications for the collecting of material culture, thereby helping to shape our understanding of what a 'missionary collector' might look like. Finally, I will draw together some conclusions about missionary collecting and locate them within the broader themes reflected across all collector groups, namely the missionary relationship to imperial ideologies and their influence on the missionary construction of Tibet in the British imagination.

2.1 Missions and missionaries in Tibet: contextualising the encounter

The British foreign missions movement as a whole has a long and rich history.² However, my focus here will be on a select few organisations working along the Tibetan border, or with a particular interest in the conversion of Tibetans, whose missionaries would go on to sell or gift their collections of Tibetan material culture to Scottish museums.³ The most significant organisations in the context of this study are the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission (CoSFM) and the China Inland Mission (CIM), along with a series of partner organisations, such as the Scottish Universities Mission Institute (SUMI) and Dr. Graham's Homes, both in Kalimpong.⁴ There were also several independent missionaries working in the Darjeeling area who are central to this thesis. These organisations worked in different ways, with varying degrees of autonomy from their home committees in Britain and a variety of methods of integration and encounter with the cultural groups they worked amongst.⁵

² For a more general overview of British missionary activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* and Carey, (ed.), *Empires of Religion*.

³ The history of missionary contact with Tibet is also long and rich, starting long before this thesis picks up the story. In the eighteenth century a series of Jesuit monks entered Tibet and settled for several decades, most famously Ippolito Desideri. Other Jesuits were known to have visited Tibet even earlier. For further information on early western encounters with Tibet, see Kaschewsky, "The Image of Tibet in the West Before the Nineteenth Century", 3-20.

⁴ Dr. Graham's Homes was in fact called St. Andrew's Homes until the mid-twentieth century, when it was re-named in honour of its founder, Dr. Graham. However, Dr. Graham was himself so well known that even in his lifetime the institution was often referred to by his name. For this reason, and to avoid confusion, I will use the institution's modern, better know name.

⁵ Within the timeframe that interests this thesis other missionaries, who do not form part of this study, were also working with Tibetans. Some of the most prominent include the Moravian missionaries Rev. A.H. Francke and Dr. Karl Marx. Francke published *A history of Western Tibet, One of the Unknown Empires* in 1907 and Marx sold a collection of Tibetan objects to the American Museum of Natural History, New York, in 1920. Even earlier, another Moravian missionary, Heinrich August Jäschke, had published *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Special Reference to the Prevailing Dialects* in 1881, which would be foundational to European

2.1.1 Missionary organisations: theological approaches and practical concerns

Many Scottish missionaries had a distinctive approach to imperial opportunity, positioning themselves across the Empire's frontiers and at the heart of much political imperial discourse.⁶ Within the category of 'missionary collector', then, it is unsurprising that a distinctive 'Scottish' identity is visible. However not all the missionaries in this study were Scottish, suggesting that Scottish Presbyterianism's Evangelical missionary practices were influential across a variety of missionary organisations.⁷ Conversely, many 'national' missionary societies, such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS) drew in missionaries from across Britain and beyond.⁸ Therefore, despite society names often signifying national and local identities, many were global in their outlook and practice. Unlike English missions, which had the support of the Church but were not run directly by it, in Scotland most of the larger, established missionary societies were run under the auspices of the Church of Scotland, the Free

understandings of the Tibetan dialect for many years. In the early twentieth century the American missionary Albert Shelton worked in Kham (eastern Tibet). Shelton sold objects to the Newark Museum in the early 1930s and published an account of his work (*Pioneering in Tibet*) in 1921.

⁶ MacKenzie, "Making Black Scotsmen and Scotswomen?", 114-115.

⁷ Presbyterianism, as a form of church government, was based on the principles of the sixteenth century French reformer, Calvin. The social strand of Calvinism, which was to strongly influence Scottish Presbyterian missionary work, deemed the local parish responsible for the education, care and welfare of the poor. In the eighteenth century it was proposed that everyone in Scotland be educated to a standard that allowed him or her to read the bible, making Scottish Presbyterianism very much a religion of the Book. It also fostered an austere form of observance, mixed with a strong ethos for educational and charitable work. Orr Macdonald, *A Unique and Glorious Mission*, 10-12.

⁸ Though founded in Britain, the CMS's first missionary candidates were German Lutherans and it was ten years before an English missionary was employed by the CMS. Church Missionary Society website, "CMS History", accessed 15/05/2013, <http://www.cms-uk.org/Whoweare/AboutCMS/History/tabid/181/language/en-US/Default.aspx>.

Church of Scotland or the United Presbyterian Church.⁹ Scottish run missionary organisations became a dominant missionary presence in the small town of Kalimpong in West Bengal from the 1880s, with the establishment of SUMI, and became an important part of a particularly Scottish enclave in the area.¹⁰ Missionaries like Annie Taylor, who was not Scottish but heavily influenced by such missionary approaches, became part of a wider network of Scottish missionary activity.¹¹

The level of activity that the CoSFM achieved was made possible in part through the direct connection between the mission and the Church of Scotland itself. As Alex McKay notes, the mission stations and their associated educational and medical work were part of a well organised network of sites controlled from Edinburgh. These had clear structures for working, defined rates of pay and pension funds, all necessary and important to many missionaries who, despite the desire to spread Christianity, still needed to

⁹ There were of course many smaller organisations, not run directly by the Church including, for example, the Edinburgh Medical Mission Society, which trained missionaries in Edinburgh's slums for work with foreign missions, and the Faith Mission in Glasgow, which supported many independent missionaries but did not directly sponsor and administer foreign mission postings. The way in which foreign missions in Scotland were run was complicated by the upheavals within the Scottish Church itself. The Disruption of the established Church in 1843 saw it split into the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland; virtually all the Church of Scotland's overseas missionaries went over to the Free Church, though by the late nineteenth century, the Church of Scotland had re-established a strong missionary presence, particularly in Africa and India. In 1847 the United Presbyterian Church was formed, which then combined with Free Church of Scotland in 1900 to form the United Free Church of Scotland. In 1929 the Church of Scotland and the vast majority of the United Free Church joined in union as the Church of Scotland. Breitenbach, "Religious Literature and Discourses of Empire", 85.

¹⁰ Dr. Graham's Homes today houses many plaques in honour of past donors and patrons. The names of those donors and the names of many of the streets around Darjeeling tell of a particularly strong Scottish presence, as does much of the architecture. Many of the merchants and tea plantation managers in the late nineteenth century were also of Scottish extraction, and supported the CoSFM in the area.

¹¹ In his account of the 1904 Expedition, the adventurer and author Peter Fleming referred to Taylor as 'an indomitable Scots missionary'. Fleming's understanding of Taylor's background probably came from her evangelical zeal, which suggested Scottish Presbyterian influences on her missionary work. Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*, 114.

attend to their practical needs.¹² The way in which the CoSFM carried out its educational and medical work was in keeping with broader imperial concerns for development within India, and thus religious and imperial interests converged.¹³ This meeting of religious and imperial identities presented the Presbyterian foreign mission movement as a particularly Scottish contribution to Empire.¹⁴

The height of the missionary movement was linked with the height of British imperial dominance, running roughly from the years 1880-1920. However the connection between the spread of missionary activity and the development of imperial policies shared more than a timeframe. For missionaries, religious discourse aimed not only at the actual conversion to Christianity of people in foreign territories, but more broadly sought a role for Christianity in the wider 'development' of non-European cultures - the establishment of the 'civilising mission'. This widespread belief that the Empire could be ruled by a moral, rather than physical, order was at the heart of missionary dialogue. Over the course of the later nineteenth century, it became a more widely established part of imperial policy as well. The perceived superiority of Christianity to other practices designated 'religious' was the moral justification for the missionary enterprise; its humaneness and rationality both sanctioned their activities and allied them with wider imperial ones.¹⁵

¹² Mckay, *Their Footprints Remain*, 71.

¹³ For a more detailed analysis of the way in which missionaries in Darjeeling and Kalimpong established educational and medical training institutions, see *Ibid.*, 55-83.

¹⁴ Breitenbach, "Religious Literature and Discourses of Empire", 99.

¹⁵ Breitenbach, "Empire, Religion and National Identity", 129.

In contrast to the CoSFM, the CIM was run as a faith mission; an interdenominational society characterised by a desire to work in isolated territory, beyond the reaches of the imperial framework, other missionaries and European influences. The key to the mission's philosophy was simplicity; the emphasis was on direct evangelisation by lay preachers, both native and European.¹⁶ Faith missionaries conducted their work in the local dialect and were expected to assimilate themselves into local life. To this end, the CIM was nicknamed the 'pigtail mission' because this policy of integration included the wearing of local dress.¹⁷ Whilst the CIM had a central office in London and a large field office in Shanghai, the idea was that each locality would be self-governing and would, over time, propagate new branches for the mission further afield and recruit new, indigenous, missionaries to further disseminate the CIM's work.

The CIM, and the Glasgow based Faith Mission, would have appealed to the Scottish sense of religious purpose. Christianity played a fundamental role in the lives of most Scots throughout the nineteenth century, and this was reflected in the way the Scottish Churches established and ran foreign missions and promoted their work within Scotland.¹⁸ Scots felt they were more serious than the English about spreading Christianity and many of them saw Scottish

¹⁶ Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?*, 194-208.

¹⁷ Austin, *China's Millions*, 2.

¹⁸ For further discussion of the place of Christianity within Scottish identity and the varied work of Scottish missionaries, see (for example): Orr-Macdonald, *A Unique and Glorious Mission*; MacKenzie, "Making Black Scotsmen and Scotswomen", 113-136; and Walker, "Empire, Religion and Nationality in Scotland and Ulster before the First World War", 97-115.

Presbyterianism as less corruptible than English Anglican practices.¹⁹ In this context, it is clear why the simplicity of the message of faith missions appealed to Scottish missionaries and their supporters and how, conversely, non-Scottish missionaries working for faith missions formed a connection with Scotland.

The CoSFM were based near Darjeeling, the summer administrative centre of British rule in West Bengal and home to large-scale commercial interests such as tea growing. By contrast, the faith missions sought to strive into the unknown, away from British influence. The CIM and other faith missions were characterised by their determination to work in isolated territory beyond the influence of British imperialism, which in turn would limit the visible links between Christianity and western society. China as a potential missionary destination fitted this methodology perfectly, especially inland China, which had limited European contact.²⁰ By the time the CIM's founder Hudson Taylor died in 1905, the CIM had become synonymous with work amongst remote Chinese communities. As Alwyn Austin notes in his history of the CIM, 'turn of the century explorers like Sven Hedin were always stumbling into China Inland Mission outposts in remote places where invariably they received every possible kindness before pushing on'.²¹

However even the CIM did not cut ties with western ideals and western innovations. Despite the founder Hudson Taylor's view that medical work was an auxiliary activity only, with no substantial direct benefits to the missionary

¹⁹ Walker, "Empire, Religion and Nationality in Scotland and Ulster before the First World War", 99.

²⁰ Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?*, 194.

²¹ Austin, *China's Millions*, 23.

cause, medical practices became an important part of the CIM's work in remote Central Asia, just as it was a part of the established set up of hospitals and clinics that the CoSFM administered in Kalimpong.²² The reality was that, by the late nineteenth century, most missionaries accepted that the principle of pure evangelisation was not leading to sufficient conversions, prompting many missions to offer educational and medical services as well. Missionaries believed that 'on an empirical field they could prove the superiority of the medicine of the Christian West, a victory that would equate to religious victory'.²³ Medicine and the other great 'tool' of the missionary enterprise, education, were effective means of accessing indigenous communities who were resistant to evangelisation, but meant that the separation of Christianity from western culture was, in practice, impossible. Jeffrey Cox has suggested that many Christian medical practitioners actually did very little to press Christian views on their patients, instead using their work for the missions as an opportunity to practice medicine, rather than vice-versa.²⁴ Personal motives for pursuing missionary work, or indeed choosing to work in the difficult environment that was the Tibetan border, sometimes had little to do with the

²² The inclusion of qualified medical personnel in missions staff was a drawn out and complicated process, which tried to reconcile practical concerns for the health of missionaries and the populations amongst whom they worked (who were often hostile to attempts to spread the gospel) with the principles of evangelical missionary work, which in the mid-nineteenth century had focused on the saving of souls, rather than physical bodies. Yet as medical techniques improved and missionary practices had a greater focus on benevolence, 'the simplistic belief in the eternal punishment of the heathen declined in impact. There was less concentration on saving men from a fearful eternity, more on creating a meaningful present'. Williams, "Healing and Evangelism", 276.

²³ McKay, *Their Footsteps Remain*, 60.

²⁴ Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 177.

desire to promote Christianity and more to do with adapting a particular position in the Empire to suit individual needs and expectations.

Although the CIM and the CoSFM had very different attitudes to their relationship with the imperial administration, both organisations and nearly all missionaries in general, had to form some sort of association with the wider imperial enterprise. In fact, it was in the desire to take their work to Tibet that late nineteenth century missionaries were perhaps most aligned with imperial policy. Tibet was never 'opened up' to either wider evangelisation or fully opened to the concerns of the British Empire, such as trade. However, by the early twentieth century there were a string of European mission stations along Tibet's western, southern and northern borders.²⁵ These missionaries saw themselves as an 'advanced guard', waiting at the border's edge until such time they might cross into Tibet itself; a time when the intervention of the British Empire might make that move possible. Missionary language was commonly laced with military metaphor, fuelling the link between the progress of the Empire and the progress of missionary activity.²⁶

While the CIM saw their target for conversion as the Chinese and the missions in the Eastern Himalayas were aimed at communities within British India, many of the missionaries who served these areas were primarily attracted to the Buddhist territories just out of reach. These missionaries believed that their medical and educational work with Tibetan communities in China and

²⁵ Bray, "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Missionary Images of Tibet", 26.

²⁶ For example the missionary Annie W. Marston wrote in 1894 '[there is a] front rank... sent out by half a dozen societies. But they do not stand alone in their attack on their [Tibetan]... impregnable fortress of heathenism. The cordon around Tibet has a rear rank, faithful men and women...'. Marston, *The Great Closed Land: A Plea for Tibet*, ix.

India would open the way for formal entry to Tibetan territory.²⁷ Although access to Tibet was restricted, Tibetans themselves moved freely across the borders, often as part of trading convoys, and it was these groups who were targeted by border area mission stations. Working at a physical distance from Tibet itself, many missionaries relied on their previous knowledge of working either with Indians or Chinese to promote their work amongst Tibetans. This fuelled both the geographical and imperial 'imaginative' constructions of Tibet in a manner suited to the needs of the missionary discourse.

2.1.2 The missionary persona

Who were these missionaries establishing contact with Tibetan communities in India and China and what were their experiences, a part of which was the formation of collections of material culture? The missionaries examined in this study came from broadly similar social background, being from middle and upper-middle class homes, with a good educational background, although not necessarily a family connection to the Church, or even religious observance. In fact, Annie Taylor's father was deeply concerned by her interest in missionary work, preferring that she should use her nursing skills for the good of the British army.²⁸ Her father's work as a shipping agent made full use of the Empire's power and resources for economic gains, as did the father of the CoSFM and Independent missionary J.W. Innes-Wright, who was an agent for the East India

²⁷ Mckay, *Their Footsteps Remain*, 64.

²⁸ Taylor's grandparents on her mother's side were missionaries and her father's objections may have stemmed from first-hand experiences of how difficult such a life could be. See Livne, 2011: 45-46.

Company. James Thomson was the only ordained minister from this group of individuals who would go on to collect for Scottish museums, and the only missionary examined to come from a more humble background, as his father was a warehouseman.²⁹

The place of missionaries within the British class structure was significant to their vocational aspirations. Susan Thorne has argued that missions were a 'distinctively middle class alternative to gentry modes of authority, a means of controlling the lower orders at home as well as abroad that was in direct opposition to traditional gentry forms of rule'.³⁰ She goes on to note that:

'Missions... were an important marker and mediator of the considerable social distance that separated the largely provincial and industrial middle-class, on which the missionary movement depended for the bulk of its support, from the landed elite that continued to control the institutions of the British state, at least on a national level'.³¹

The connections made by missionaries between the British working classes and non-European cultures encountered in the mission field, were therefore not only social but political; a means by which missionaries could establish themselves within imperial power structures. In other words, missionary working practices may have looked 'down' to the working classes, but their ambitions looked 'up' beyond the confines of their own middle-class

²⁹ See Appendix A.

³⁰ Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of Imperial Culture in Nineteenth Century England*, 39.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

existence. Both Innes-Wright and the Yorkshire missionary Harry French Ridley began their missionary careers administering to their local communities at home. Ridley had a successful career with the YMCA before joining the CIM. Working in Glasgow or Edinburgh's slums became training – both practical and ideological – for working abroad.

Among the collectors examined in this thesis, one might expect to find a greater presence of women missionaries. By the 1880s, women were taking a large and active role in the foreign mission field.³² Missionary concerns regarding indigenous morality and the promotion of Christian values – part of the 'civilising mission' - increased roles for women within the foreign mission movement. As women in the late nineteenth century went into foreign mission work in ever increasing numbers, many became part of society's new belief in 'women's work for women', whereby women missionaries would offer their civilising influence to their foreign counterparts, allowing this influence to extend to their men folk.³³ By 1901, sixty-one percent of the CoSFM's workers were female, though managed within carefully demarcated roles.³⁴ For example, women were almost always workers, helpers and assistants, rarely missionary leaders or policy makers. By the end of the nineteenth century women were also contributing more than seventy percent of the funding for foreign missions operations.³⁵

³² See, for example, Orr Macdonald *A Unique and Glorious Mission*, or Catherine Hall "Of Gender and Empire", 46-76.

³³ Hall, "Of Gender and Empire", 47.

³⁴ Breitenbach, "Empire, Religion and National Identity", 83.

³⁵ Thorne, "Missionary-Imperial Feminism", 41.

Despite their quantitative significance within the missionary movement, the roles given to women in the field were generally restrictive (in terms of people and material culture), explaining why female missionaries are not better represented in Scottish collections. Many missionaries paid for the Tibetan objects they collected, but the salaries afforded to female missionaries (compared to their male counterparts) were prohibitively low. Additionally, in larger institutions, such as the CoSFM, gifts from Tibetan converts or medical patients may have been presented to the Society at large, or its leading figures, rather than individual missionaries. This may explain the lack of Tibetan collections associated with the CoSFM at Darjeeling and Kalimpong, in Scottish museums. In fact, Annie Taylor and a later missionary, Miss Goalen, are the only named female missionary collectors in Scottish museum collections.³⁶ So although a large proportion of missionary workers were women, they often held an ambiguous position. Most were only considered to have an independent status as missionaries whilst unmarried and many female missionaries therefore lost both their status and their salary on marriage, although the often continued to commit to missionary work.³⁷ Though missing from traditional archival sources, and even the official records of museums,

³⁶ Miss Goalen gifted two Nepalese items to the RSM in 1930. Both had previously been shown as part of a 1907 LMS exhibition in Edinburgh. It is unclear whether she collected the items herself in India, or purchased them at the event in Edinburgh, although the types of objects in question (a scythe and a spindle) suggest the former.

³⁷ As Grimshaw and Sherlock note, because married women were not usually officially commissioned by missionary societies, and therefore unpaid, they are underrepresented in archival sources as they had no obligations to submit reports or journals. Single women, on the other hand, had the same commitments as men. Grimshaw and Sherlock, "Women and Cultural Exchanges", 174.

there is some evidence within museum collections that missionary wives played active roles both in frontline missionary work and in collecting.³⁸

2.1.3 West Bengal as a 'Scottish missionary enclave'

Regardless of the collector's gender, the Tibetan collections in Scottish museums appear to show a specific connection between the area of West Bengal, which included Kalimpong and Darjeeling, and Scottish missionary activity. William Macfarlane had established the CoSFM's first mission station in Kalimpong in 1874 and by 1880, with the arrival of the Reverend W.S. Sutherland, the mission was already looking beyond the borders of British India. In 1883 Sutherland, probably accompanied by the Reverend James Thomson, travelled to the Choygal's palace in Tumlong to ask for permission to establish a mission within Sikkim's borders.³⁹ Sutherland was denied, but the trip allowed Thomson to collect some of the earliest Tibetan Buddhist artefacts associated with missionary work in a Scottish museum.⁴⁰

Ten years later, Dr. Graham's Homes for destitute Anglo-Indian children had also been established in Kalimpong and the Church of Scotland sent the

³⁸ For example, J.W. Innes-Wright's wife Rebecca ran a medical dispensary as part of their mission, whilst her husband's work was based entirely around the spiritual needs of the community.

³⁹ The Choygals were the monarchs of the Kingdom of Sikkim from 1642 until 1975 when Sikkim became an Indian state. The Choygal at this time was Thutob Namgyal (1860-1914), who was responsible for moving the Sikkimese capital from Tumlong to its present location of Gangtok.

⁴⁰ There is no formal record of Thomson accompanying Sutherland, but a letter from Thomson's wife to the Glasgow Museum notes that Thomson made his collection whilst accompanying Sutherland 'up towards Tibet' on a visit to Kalimpong during his tenure at the Calcutta based Scottish Church College between 1880-1883. As Sutherland's only known forays into Sikkim were in 1880 and 1883, it is more than likely that one of these trips provided a moment for collecting. *Letter from Anne Thomson to Glasgow Museums*, 14/05/1940, [Reference 2/5/82], Glasgow Museums.

Glaswegian missionary J.W. Innes Wright to assist Dr. Graham in his work there. Within two years Innes-Wright had left the CoSFM and established an independent mission – the Nepaul Mission – twenty miles west of Darjeeling near the Nepalese border.⁴¹ Innes-Wright's mission was affiliated with the Glasgow Faith Mission, which appears to have helped raise funds, organise furlough speaking tours, publish letters and make monetary appeals in their periodical *Bright Words*.⁴²

At almost the same time that Innes-Wright was bound for Darjeeling, Annie Taylor was making her way, with her Tibetan companion Puntso, from the town of Tau-Chau, on China's northern border with Tibet, to the Tibetan capital of Lhasa.⁴³ Her attempt to reach Tibet's 'Forbidden City', which was heavily publicised amongst missionary circles and learned societies alike, brought her brief fame and a desire to establish an independent mission, based on the principles of the CIM, for the Tibetan people.⁴⁴ Whilst Innes-Wright was launching the Nepaul Mission in 1896/7, Taylor was gathering the newly formed Tibet Pioneer Mission (TPM) in Darjeeling, only a few miles away.⁴⁵ Taylor and Innes-Wright were to both undertake furlough speaking tours of Scotland in the

⁴¹ As the name suggests, the focus of this mission was the Nepalese community around the India-Nepal border. However the material culture Innes-Wright went on to sell to museums and the proximity of his mission to Darjeeling (with a larger Tibetan community) suggests Tibetans formed a significant part of his mission field as well, even if this was never explicitly stated in missionary literature or publicity.

⁴² The Faith Mission in Glasgow published several letters from J.W. Innes-Wright in the publication *Bright Words*. For example, "Needy Nepaul", 261-263 (1896); "On the Way to Nepaul", 172 (1897); "Getting Started in Nepaul", 18 (1898).

⁴³ I have been unable to find the definitive modern name or location for Tau-Chau, but believe it to be somewhere near the Tibetan-Chinese border in Gansu Province.

⁴⁴ Taylor's journey and subsequent establishment of a mission was published as a diary/travelogue called *Pioneering in Tibet*, in about 1898.

⁴⁵ For a history of the Tibet Pioneer Mission see Livne, "The Many Purposes of Missionary Work", 56-59.

summer of 1897 and both sold material to the Royal Scottish Museum (RSM) and Glasgow Museums during those visits. Although there is no evidence to support the idea that Innes-Wright and Taylor knew, or where known to, each other it seems likely. From 1895 to 1898 they are both locatable in the same places. Within the British community in Darjeeling, it would be surprising if two individuals working towards the same goals with similar theological principles would be completely unknown to one another.

In a short space of time and in a very small geographical area a network of missionaries, most with strong connections to Scotland or influenced by a particularly Scottish notion of Presbyterian evangelism,⁴⁶ was settling in and around the Kalimpong/Darjeeling area. In this period before the 1904 Expedition, but at a time when the British government were beginning to take an interest in the land beyond the Himalayas, these men and women were creating the encounters with Tibetan communities which would form the basis for their collecting activities. Additionally, they were forming ideas about Tibetan culture that would provide the British public with the foundations of museum collections. Through these objects, the Scottish public would be able to form their own relationships with Tibetan culture and their own ideas about Tibetan Buddhism.

⁴⁶ See this chapter, footnote 7 for a brief description of Scottish Presbyterianism and its influence on foreign missions.

2.2 The public life of Tibetan material culture: education, commoditisation and the 'reality' effect

Between roughly 1880 and 1915 missionaries collected over 500 Tibetan objects that would be deposited in museums in Edinburgh and Glasgow alone.⁴⁷ Yet less than a dozen individuals collected this vast selection of material, suggesting that these objects acted as more than mementos or souvenirs: that material culture had specific roles within missionary practice.

Objects did, in fact, have a range of functions for the missionary enterprise, dependent in part on the focus of the missionary organisation, the reception of local communities to evangelisation, the way in which missionary organisations funded their own missionary staff, and how they promoted their work within Britain. For example, in Southeast Asia, Dutch missionaries were known to collect idols and artefacts associated with indigenous beliefs, as a means of both taking them out of circulation in those communities (effectively removing the focus of ritual or ceremonial practices), and as proof of the success of their evangelising, which made such items redundant.⁴⁸ In Africa, the collection of objects for display in Britain offered proof of indigenous savagery; first hand verification of the nineteenth century racial hierarchy in which so

⁴⁷ The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum was not opened until 1901. Previously the collection was housed in the City Industrial Museum. For the purposes of simplicity I will refer to both institutions as 'the Glasgow Museum'.

⁴⁸ See Corbey, "Destroying the Graven Image: Religious Iconoclasm on the Christian Frontier", 10-14.

many imperial agents, missionaries included, were invested. Such simplicity and savagery offered evidence for the need for missionary action.⁴⁹

Indian and Chinese material culture had a longer history within Britain. Trade, travel and imperialism had increased the flow of goods into Britain, allowing the Indian and Chinese aesthetic to become part of the British home.⁵⁰ India's particularly strong links with Britain meant that even the less well travelled generally had opportunities to see examples of the sub-continent's material culture. As a consequence, whilst markedly 'other', Indian culture did not hold the same exoticism for the British public that Pacific, African, or indeed Tibetan, material culture may have done. Although Annie Taylor is the only missionary in this study who actually lived within Tibet's borders, none of these missionaries collected substantial material from the more numerous ethnic groups amongst whom they were based, namely Han Chinese, Lepchas, Nepalese or Bengalis. This exclusion not only signalled their specific interests in working with particular Himalayan groups, but separated their work from the 'regular' and longstanding work that was taking place within Chinese and Indian communities, to which the British mission-supporting public had been contributing for some time.

⁴⁹ A good example can be seen in the RMS's 1912 *Livingstone Exhibition*, which tied the historic collections of David Livingstone to the continuing contemporary needs of missionary work in Africa. The relationship between the museum's 'newer' collections from Africa and the older material collected by Livingstone and his contemporaries, presented an Africa that was unmoving through history without Western intervention. Royal Scottish Museum Edinburgh, *Report for the Year 1912*, 6-7.

⁵⁰ By the mid-nineteenth century shoppers at London's Liberty's could enjoy the 'exoticism of foreign travel without leaving the comforts of the West End' as the shop included a Far Eastern Bazaar and a curio department which included Chinese and Indian goods. Cohen, *Household Gods*, 56.

Within the context of the collections in this study three main functions for material culture are visible, each of which can be extracted from the collections themselves and their associated archival sources. These were education, commerce and personal use.

2.2.1 Missionary collecting: education

'Education' was a broad term, covering both the school-based education of indigenous children in missionary schools and the education of British supporters as to the purpose and needs of missionary work. Objects came into their own in the latter, as part of a system of conveying a very particular knowledge about Tibet to the British learning public through lectures, exhibitions, lanternslides and public meetings. Many missionary societies had a travelling collection of props, which could be borrowed for such lectures and educational events, and the London Missionary Society even had a museum.⁵¹ As Bickers and Arnold have noted, missionaries sent back to Britain a 'mass of letters, reports, photographs, drawings and *objects...*' (Emphasis my own),⁵² and for over a century many of these organisations carefully collated and catalogued those correspondence, objects and photographs, editing content,

⁵¹ The London Missionary Society ran a museum at their London headquarters from 1814-1910. A leaflet printed for CIM missionaries in the early twentieth century, titled *Hints for Furlough* comments: 'Shall I use curios or not? Is a question sometimes asked... In meetings for young people and in country districts a few well-selected curios are very useful. Curios with an interesting story attached are of particular value. Chinese costume can frequently be used to advantage. The Curator of the Curio Loan Department...will greatly value any good curios you may have to spare. We lend to exhibitions where a useful purpose will be served...'. CIM Archive, [CIM/01/01/5/399]. The CoSFM also held a collection of props that could be loaned out from their Edinburgh headquarters in George Street. With thanks to Sandy Sneddon, Asia Secretary for the Church of Scotland World Mission Council for information on material culture as educational aids. Email message to author, 16/07/2010.

⁵² Arnold and Bickers, "Introduction", 2.

changing meanings and leaving us with an archive of missionary activity which is both vast and heavily curated. This 'education effect' as we might call it, aimed to build up a perspective of Tibetan culture which was mediated by a missionary lens, and constructed an image of Tibet that was of benefit to the missionary cause. This missionary representation of Tibetan culture was based on a mixture of imperial ideologies, including particular views about race, gender and class, the theological and practical basis on which different missionary societies operated, and the personal experiences of the missionary in question.

2.2.2 Missionary collecting: personal and commercial use

Although the Church of Scotland provided a substantial amount of financial support for its missionaries, faith missions such as the CIM had little in the way of funds to alleviate the troubles of working away from home, and so many missionaries had to be economically creative.⁵³ The working methods of faith missions had other implications: many missionaries arrived in the field with very little in the way of material provisions. Those who were itinerant, or worked beyond the regular routes of European travellers and traders, were reliant on the use of local goods for their daily needs. Collections thus might contain the essential tools of everyday living for a missionary. For example, the collection Annie Taylor sold to the RSM included personal clothing and household items.⁵⁴

⁵³ CoSFM salaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were fairly competitive, allowing those in missionary service in India to live comfortable middle class lives. See McKay, *Their Footsteps Remain*, 71.

⁵⁴ Teapot (NMS A.1897.320.17) and hat (NMS A.1897.320.14). Both items appeared in photographs of Taylor, which were widely published in both missionary and her own publications.

Such items were not just expressions of the life of a missionary, but also acted as tools for education – real examples of the world the missionary had to inhabit – and had commercial value once they were no longer of practical use. These objects also lent credibility to missionary talks and exhibitions, as evidence that the missionary *really was there*. Such expressions of the reality of missionary life authenticated furlough tour speeches, slide shows and fundraising efforts. Additionally, the use of objects familiar to the British public – utility items for the home and clothing – opened a dialogue with audiences based on a tension between sameness and difference. The simplicity of a clay teapot or a rough cotton dress, placed in the context of a Tibetan mud-floored hut, and seen through photographs (Figure 3), drew links between Tibetan ways of living and the deprivations of the British working classes. This not only made visible the links that missionary societies created between their work at home and abroad, but fed into broader imperial concerns for the development of capitalism.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Nineteenth century Europe had witnessed a simultaneous increase in industrial productivity and significant social change, such as the promotion of education (Education Act 1880) and restricted working hours for children (The Factory Act 1833). The promotion of both the products and social circumstances of populations who could potentially be drawn into Britain's global capitalist development therefore served an important dual purpose.



Figure 3: Annie Taylor, Puntso and Sigu reading from the bible and taking tea (c.1897). © National Museums Scotland.

A scene familiar to many British viewers, yet equally different through the inclusion of Tibetan material culture and the backdrop of a Tibetan dwelling (though this image was most likely taken in a studio, either in Darjeeling or Britain). Many of the objects in this image form part of the National Museums Scotland collection.⁵⁶

Other societies, such as the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society, did have a history of engagement with commerce. However, by the 1890s there were protests from home supporters and other missionaries that involvement in commercial activity was too great a diversion from evangelism and a sign of religious and moral inadequacy.⁵⁷ One way of engaging in commercial activity whilst remaining true to their evangelical principles was to sell objects to missionary supporters and museums. As noted in the Introduction, by the late nineteenth century museums were an important part of the process of the scientific recording of empire.⁵⁸ Providing content to a

⁵⁶ Plate from Carey, *Travel and Adventure in Tibet*. opp. 242

⁵⁷ Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?*, 257. The LMS had been actively involved in commercial ventures in Africa in the mid-nineteenth century. Their most famous missionary, David Livingstone, had undertaken his expedition to trace the Zambezi River in order to find new routes for both Christianity and (British Imperial) trade. By the latter part of the century the commercial angle appeared too highly emphasised and it lost the approval of many missionary home supporters.

⁵⁸ See Introduction, section 1.2.3, 'Knowing' Tibet: constructing Tibet through the process of collecting: 36.

museum was therefore not just a case of commercial gain, but of advancing the scientific and taxonomic record. Museums, as institutions of learning, were places where missionary supporters could go to view these objects, gaining a direct link to the work being undertaken in the mission field. The 1910 World Missionary Congress, which took place in Edinburgh, even included a reception at the RSM for up to 5000 representatives of missionary organisations from all over the world, reinforcing the appropriateness of links between missions and museums.⁵⁹

In Scotland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the larger museums in Edinburgh and Glasgow had funds available to pay for objects, and became obvious targets for the object rich but money poor missionary. Selling objects to a museum gave the missionary funds that did not relate to specific commercial activity and allowed the museum to promote education and empire, both of which were respectable arenas of missionary involvement.⁶⁰ Most missionary collections coming into Scottish museums at this time were sold, often for substantial sums of money. Whether this was indicative of all faith missions across Britain would be a matter of further study, but the evidence of those missionaries who sold to Scottish museums suggests that it was an extensive practice.⁶¹ Such practices raise questions about who dictated the prices of objects and how such values were calculated, questions

⁵⁹ Royal Scottish Museum Edinburgh, *Report for the Year 1910*, 2.

⁶⁰ There is little evidence that in the late nineteenth century missionary activity was a popular topic for display within the museum, apart from the exhibition to mark the centenary of David Livingstone's birth. The *Livingstone Exhibition* was based on material already held by the museum, loans, and a collection of 'other ethnography representing the region he traversed'. Carlaw Martin in Royal Scottish Museum Edinburgh, *Report for the Year 1911*, 12-13.

⁶¹ To examine whether or not this was a widespread phenomenon would require a study of all missionary collections across all museums, which was not possible here.

which revolve around ideas of authenticity, authority and permutations of value.

Generally speaking, those missionaries selling collections to museums before 1904 were in a greater position of authority than those who sold collections after this date, especially when it came to ascribing value to Tibetan material culture. Scottish museums contained few Tibetan objects prior to the mid-1890s and were therefore reliant on missionaries to accurately ascribe values to their collections and provide associated information about rarity, significance and object use. In 1897 when Taylor and Innes-Wright undertook their furlough speaking tours and sold their collections, they did so as authorities on Tibetan culture, offering the first glimpses of a new and unknown cultural phenomenon to the church-going Scottish public. Such status was achievable because they were largely unchallenged by information stemming from more formal circles of knowledge production, such as from government agencies and learned societies.⁶² After 1904 an influx of Tibetan material culture into Britain would be accompanied by a reshaping of Tibetan culture in the western imagination, based on different forms of knowledge to those relied on by missionaries. In other words, the temples and monasteries expounded as 'authentically Tibetan' by Waddell and other Expedition officers would be invested with far more authority by academic circles than informal anecdotes

⁶² The RGS was, of course, publishing papers on Tibet, but much of the information they contained was gleaned from library records or the work of Indian pandits who, despite using every professionalism, were hampered by British racial prejudices. Only when 'proper' British soldiers could confirm accounts with their own eyes, was such knowledge widely considered verified. Waddell's study of a Tibetan temple had been published in 1894 and was therefore widely available by this time but focused on a very different type of material culture to that presented by missionaries, which was largely the domestic material culture of nomadic Tibetans and not directly associated with monastic Tibetan Buddhism.

and observations that dominated missionary narratives.⁶³ This would reduce both missionary authority and the value – both academic and material – of what they had to offer the public.⁶⁴

In the next section I will examine specific examples from Scottish museum collections, showing the ways in which missionaries made their collections perform specific functions, and how those functions produced very particular imaginings of Tibetan culture. These representations fitted into the needs of missionaries, missionary organisations and a wider imperial discourse about how the non-European world should be represented.

2.3 Missionary working practices and material culture

Of the nine missionaries identified in Scottish collections, eight worked along the principles of a faith mission, similar to that of the CIM, although they worked for a variety of societies.⁶⁵ As noted, faith missions had a policy of integration into local communities and attempted to distance Christianity from western culture. As one missionary wrote in the CIM publication *China's Millions*, 'There was a new way of life to learn – the Chinese way with a

⁶³ Missionaries were often quite aware of their academic shortcomings. Taylor addressed the Glasgow branch of the Royal Scottish Geographic Society in December 1894, beginning with an apology for her lack of formal geographical training. Annie Taylor, "Some Notes On Tibet", 1-8.

⁶⁴ Although both Taylor and Innes-Wright were well remunerated for their collections, those collections made during the 1904 Expedition and sold immediately afterwards fetched substantially higher prices for objects that did not necessarily hold a higher monetary value, reflecting the importance given to the provenance of the 1904 Expedition itself, and the status of the figures who took part in it.

⁶⁵ Of those not already identified: William Evan Macfarlane and Dr. James Grieve Cormack worked for the LMS (Cormack also worked for the CIM), John Howard Lechler and Dr. Henry Martyn Clarke worked for the CMS, the Reverend James Hutson worked for the CIM. Although not all these societies were 'faith missions', the locations of these particular missionaries seems to have placed them in a similarly autonomous and independent position, and their working methods show distinct similarities.

Christian purpose. Our sisters will become Chinawomen in dress, custom, speech and mode of living, in everything save in sin'.⁶⁶ Annie Taylor, though best known for her work as an independent missionary in Tibet, started her career with the CIM and appears to have been heavily influenced by their ethos. When her first attempt at establishing an independent mission – the TPM – failed, she published a second call for missionaries, this time explicitly stating that 'workers for Tibet must feel they are sent by God. They must be ready to... sleep out in the snow, to live at times on barley flour alone, while to wear the native dress and live as much like Tibetans as possible is absolutely necessary.'⁶⁷

Taylor, therefore, chose to commit to a very particular way of life and her collection offers some insight to this. The inclusion of utilitarian items such as the tea churn and teapot and Chinese teacups, that would have been a fairly common sight in late nineteenth century Britain, captured the daily lives of these missionaries for the British public.⁶⁸ However, missionary collections were revealing of other concerns as well. Items in Harry French Ridley's collection, which may have been the personal goods of his family, are quite distinct from the parts of the collection that represent the communities of their missionary focus. Whilst the enamel teacups and plates appear well used and heavily repaired (see Figure 4), clothing collected from a variety of ethnic groups in the Xining area shows remarkably little wear and appears well cared for (Figure 5).⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Quoted in Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*, 10.

⁶⁷ Taylor, Leaflet titled *Tibet Pioneer Mission*, [CIM/JHT Box15 doc.8224f.], CIM Archive.

⁶⁸ Several of these items are in the photograph (Figure 3) including a bag for soda, tea and salt to the front of the image (NMS A.1897.266.37+A-B) and a tea churn to the right (NMS A.1897.320.16).

⁶⁹ The utilitarian items within the collection are in very poor condition and it is interesting that the museum was willing to pay for them at all. By 1912 the RSM had a substantial collection of

This, as I will demonstrate in the next section, reveals the distinctions between the key ways in which missionaries used Tibetan material culture – for personal use, commercial gain and educational enlightenment.

The ways in which missionaries were immersed into local communities were therefore a product of personal expectation and organisational practice. With missionaries working in relative isolation from each other and from other colonial agents, many relied heavily on local people for the support and protection they otherwise lacked. In times of famine or war, survival often depended on such alliances.⁷⁰



Figure 4: Enamel cup and plate, H.F. Ridley. © National Museums Scotland.

This enamel cup and plate from the Ridley collection are indicative of the condition of the Chinese objects within the collection, items that are likely to have been for the personal use of the family. They offer an interesting contrast to the clothing of Tibetan and Mongolian origin, which is in much better physical condition.⁷¹

Chinese porcelain and enamelware of a high quality. Ridley's items would never have gone on display. Therefore I suggest that either the museum took them in order to be able to also purchase the far more interesting clothing collection, or perhaps the general interest at the time in missionary work (as these items came to the museum in 1912 – the Livingstone centenary) made these items of daily use far more popular to the Scottish public than they might otherwise have been.

⁷⁰ Barker, "Where the Missionary Frontier Ran Ahead of Empire", 86.

⁷¹ Cup (NMS A.1912.216) and plate (NMS A.1912.215).

For example, Ridley and his wife Sarah were caught up in the Muslim Rebellion of 1895 that occurred across a number of villages south of the Yellow River around Xining. The Ridleys administered medical aid to wounded villagers during the Rebellion and in return village leaders provided them with food at a time when supplies were severely limited.⁷² These relationships were, therefore, if not carved out of friendship then out of reciprocity, which is reflected in both the objects missionaries were able to collect and those they chose to collect.⁷³ Consequently, missionary 'collections' are also representative of a strategy for survival in the mission field.



Figure 5: The Sleeve from a woman's tunic, H.F. Ridley. © National Museums Scotland.

The fur and fabric trim appear to have been repaired and is pristine in comparison to the threadbare blue fabric of the sleeve. From a distance, the effect is of a well cared for and brightly coloured garment.⁷⁴

⁷² Information taken from a two-part biography of H.F. Ridley, written by his great-great nephew Patrick Miles. I have been unable to verify many of the details in this account and therefore assume that Ridley left personal papers and diaries to the family, from which this account was derived. Unfortunately I have been unable to contact Patrick Miles. Miles, "My Great-Great Uncle, Missionary to China (Part One)".

⁷³ Very few Tibetans are specifically named by missionaries, suggesting that even if friendships did exist between British missionaries and Tibetans, racial prejudices and missionary practices often prevented them from being publicly declared as such.

⁷⁴ Woman's gown (NMS A.1912.193.1).

The manner in which mission stations were run and the daily routines of their missionaries had an impact on whether or not items we might class as utilitarian formed part of missionary collections. Different objects, however, played different roles and the vast majority of missionary collections studied as part of this thesis had either primarily educational or commercial uses.

2.3.1 Missionary practices: the furlough tour

The furlough tour was an important part of the educational and fundraising practices of many missionary organisations and John Mackenzie has suggested it was a tradition particularly prevalent in Scotland.⁷⁵ Such tours, where a missionary recently returned from the field would speak about the communities they worked amongst and present a mixture of photographs, lanternslides and objects, were assumed to give the listener an accurate account of those foreign places and an idea of the scale of the missionary endeavour. These aids to the missionary narrative were an important part of the experience.⁷⁶ However, whilst the objects themselves might be 'real' in the sense that they were tangible symbols of a culture, how they were presented to the public, through the missionary's narrative, wove together both missionary representations and external realities.⁷⁷

Ridley's collection, with the exception of his utilitarian Chinese items, consists almost entirely of clothing; complete outfits representing a variety of

⁷⁵ MacKenzie, "Making Black Scotsmen and Scotswomen", 112.

⁷⁶ Sandy Sneddon, Asia secretary of the Church of Scotland World Mission Council. Email to the author, 16/07/2010.

⁷⁷ C.f. Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of Imperial Culture in Nineteenth Century England*, 4.

ethnic groups with whom he would have had contact in Xining. In total he sold the RSM forty-five objects, twenty-three of which were Tibetan and fourteen pieces which were Mongolian, with the rest being Chinese. The cultural diversity of these items of clothing, brought together in the context of the Scottish church hall, represented the variety, and therefore the challenge, of the Ridley's enterprise.

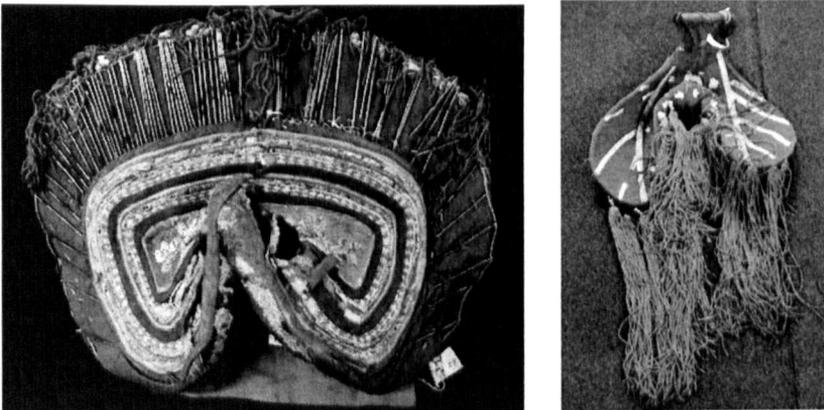


Figure 6: Two parts of a headdress of a woman living in the Koko-Nor region, H.F. Ridley collection. © National Museums Scotland.

The headdress, though from the Koko-nor region, and of Mongolian origin, was collected in Xining, showing the diversity of the community amongst whom the Ridley's worked. The headdress accompanies a tunic, waistcoat and boots. Collectively they would have appeared quite spectacular.⁷⁸

Part of the public role ascribed to the collection was to represent the many peoples who were singularly different from British audiences and yet who seemed to have collectively formed a homogeneous, exotic 'other' (**Error! Reference source not found.**). However Ridley had, at this stage, very little interaction with Tibetans or Mongolians (with whom much of his collection was associated). Most of his work was amongst the Han Chinese, who are underrepresented in his collection. His first Tibetan conversion did not take

⁷⁸ Headdress (NMS A.1912.195.5).

place until 1923, when a Tibetan Gospel Inn was established with a Tibetan-speaking evangelist.⁷⁹ Ridley had, however, had one recorded encounter with Tibetan culture in 1910, when he visited Kumbum Monastery for the annual Butter festivals. There he apparently met the Dalai Lama and formed a strong personal friendship with a leading Lama in the monastery, where he collected three monk's robes.⁸⁰

Ridley's collection may, therefore, have been a means of presenting the future of missionary work and the direction in which he intended to move his activities. He provides the only large missionary collection in this study to include material collected after the 1904 Expedition, although he had been stationed in China for some time by then and may have collected some of the material earlier. Crucially, by the time he brought the collection to Britain in 1910, the British public viewed Tibetan material culture in a very different light to how they would have viewed material used as part of Taylor or Innes-Wright's furlough tours. Post 1904, both levels of interest and levels of assumed knowledge about Tibet amongst the British public were generally higher.⁸¹ Consequently, how Ridley chose to present Tibetan and Mongolian culture was fundamental to securing future interest from home supporters. In this context his use of striking clothing, quite distinct from the Chinese and Indian clothing

⁷⁹ Miles, "My Great-Great Uncle, Missionary to China (Part Two)".

⁸⁰ Monk's Robes (NMS A.1912.190-192). Miles refers to Ridley's friendship with a 'reincarnated Lama' (Miles, 2002b). The butter lamp (NMS A.1912.205) and offering bowl (NMS. A.1912.209) may also have come from this visit. Interestingly the name of the Lama is not recorded in the article. It is unclear whether Ridley knew the name of his 'friend', relating back to the issue of 'friendship' in British-Tibetan missionary encounters.

⁸¹ The area of Tibet from which most of Ridley's Tibetan contacts would have come was quite culturally distinct from the southern part of the country that the British military forces had entered in 1904.

that supporters may already have been aware of, or the clothing from southern Tibet that military forces were collecting, acted as a potential 'hook' for inviting further interest. It also bought in to the public interest in Tibetan exoticism that had been generated by the 1904 Expedition.⁸²

There is evidence that Ridley's collection toured Britain during his two-year furlough, before being sold to the RSM when he returned to China. A Mongolian woman's apparel has a label, now partly missing, which reads 'Missionary Lo[an?] YMCA Mongolian',⁸³ suggesting it was on display as part of the YMCA's programme of travelling exhibitions, as well as Ridley's own tour with the CIM.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the pattern left by fading on a Mongolian woman's sleeveless tunic is suggestive of display, rather than the natural fading of everyday wear (**Error! Reference source not found.**)⁸⁵ Other items have been repaired and remained unworn since those repairs were made. For example, the woman's robe of blue silk from the Koko-nor Province has repairs to the wool and fur trim of the sleeve, which are pristine, whilst the sleeve just above it is threadbare (Figure 5).⁸⁶ Additionally, one of the brass buttons is in a European style with an image of a ship's anchor, rather than a more traditional plain Chinese brass or silk one. As there is no evidence that the Museum made

⁸² The 1904 Expedition will be the subject of Chapter Three.

⁸³ The label is attached to a woman's gown (NMS A.1912.193.1). The label is torn in half, the word beginning 'Lo...' I suggest may have read loan. The YMCA did have travelling exhibitions.

⁸⁴ Ridley had previously worked for the YMCA. See Appendix A for details of his earlier career.

⁸⁵ This tunic is very badly faded to the front, but in almost pristine condition on the back, suggesting that only the front has been exposed to light, perhaps from display against a board. This is not natural fading from wear. Additionally, by 1912, when the item came into the RSM, the Museum was well aware of the effects of light on textiles, and it is more likely that such fading occurred in another exhibitory context, rather than within RSM displays.

⁸⁶ The light colour of the fur and the bright cotton of the trim would have quickly picked up dirt if worn after the repairs were made. Therefore, I believe that these repairs were made after acquisition when the items were no longer to be worn.

these changes (and any repairs by the Museum would most likely have been in keeping with the style of the garment), it is very possible that basic, superficial, repairs were carried out either by the Ridleys, the CIM or YMCA, so that the items were presentable for exhibition.⁸⁷ All these factors point to the collection having been assembled for a largely educational, and then commercial, purpose.

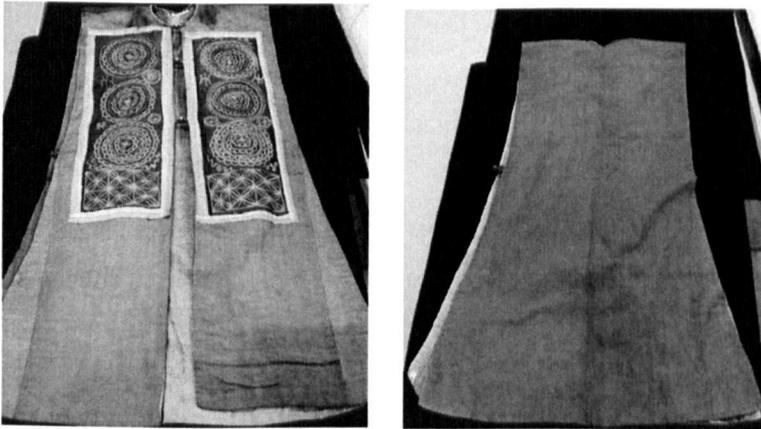


Figure 7: Front and back of woman's tunic, part of the Ridley collection. © National Museums Scotland.

The front is not only heavily faded, but shows signs that the hemline, which is less faded, was folded under before exposure to sunlight. I suggest this is a wear pattern from display (probably in a missionary exhibition), not from use as a garment.⁸⁸

By patching clothes up to elevate their richness of decoration and their difference from British understandings of dress, Ridley constructed an image of Tibetan communities on the Tibetan/Chinese border as exotic, perhaps mysterious, but ultimately accessible, as clothing provided such a personal link to real people. This vision would benefit his particular needs at that moment

⁸⁷ Additional later changes/repairs also appear on a robe from an Amdo woman's outfit (A.1912.188.1), and on a set of hair-bags (A.1912.193.3), which have a later addition of a woollen knitted strip to hold the two together.

⁸⁸ Woman's tunic (NMS A.1912.194.3).

(publicity and fundraising) and the future needs of the CIM in that area (expansion).⁸⁹

This process of constructing Tibet as exotic and uncharted but ultimately 'knowable', through a constructed familiarity, bought into the Orientalist trope outlined in the Introduction.⁹⁰ By bringing this material into the church halls of Britain, missionaries could create stark contrasts between cultures, showing their supporters tangible proof of how different Tibetans were from themselves and how much missionary work was needed.

2.3.2 Missionary Practices: The Role of Tibetan Agency

It was Annie Taylor, however, who had perhaps the most riveting and exotic 'prop' of all – her companion Puntso. Taylor and Puntso's attempt to reach the Tibetan capital of Lhasa brought them both a certain amount of celebrity,⁹¹ which they used to raise support and funds, through lecture tours and public appearances, and for the establishment of the TPM.⁹² In keeping with other missionaries, Taylor's talks included the use of Tibetan objects and photographs of Tibetan people (such as Figure 3). Additionally, Taylor and Puntso would dress in Tibetan clothing whilst speaking. Puntso did not speak any English, and

⁸⁹ Clothing was a particularly good choice for making such distinctions. As McAllister notes, in nineteenth and early twentieth century England 'dress and manners were outward markers of Victorian cultural and social expression'. Therefore the use of clothing as a differentiator was a powerful statement. McAllister, "Cross-Cultural Dressing Victorian British Missionary Narratives", 127.

⁹⁰ See 1.2.3, 'Knowing' Tibet: constructing Tibet through the process of collecting: 36.

⁹¹ Dorothy Middleton notes that Puntso was interviewed by *Harpers and Queens Magazine* (Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*, 124) and articles appeared in newspapers such as *The Times* (*The Times*, Jul 04, 1893).

⁹² Talks were held at London's Exeter Hall, Leicester YMCA, North Berwick Oddfellows Hall and at the 1894 Keswick Convention.

so Taylor acted as interpreter: a mouthpiece for a 'real' Tibetan.⁹³ Taylor had the ultimate Tibetan 'artefact' in Puntso himself, who would also address the crowd, beseeching them to help bring Jesus to his fellow Tibetans.⁹⁴

The way in which Puntso not only helped Taylor build her collection, but also literally became part of it, raises important questions regarding the visibility of competing agencies within objects. Puntso's involvement in both the collection and promotion of Tibetan culture played a role of which Taylor herself may have been completely unaware. Puntso was in a position to appropriate the dominant western Christian discourses that were embedded in Taylor's narrative, concerning the superiority of European Christians and the need for social advancement in the East. He then used them to recast elements of his own culture and status.⁹⁵ Within Taylor's collection exists the only example in this study of a Tibetan agent being recognised within museum records for their role in making a collection. There are nineteen objects labelled distinctly as, 'Puntso per Miss A Taylor'.⁹⁶ Whilst some of these objects form part of Taylor's utilitarian collection of items for personal use, others hint at

⁹³ Robson, *Two Lady Missionaries in Tibet*, 80. H.F. Ridley may also have worn the clothing he collected during his lectures. The image of Ridley seen in Appendix A appears to show him wearing the Amdo man's printed coat (NMS A.1912.189A).

⁹⁴ 'Miss Annie R. Taylor, traveller and pioneer missionary to Tibet, in connection with the China Inland Mission... was accompanied by her Tibetan servant Puntso...on the platform was exhibited a number of curios, such as used in the heathen worship of Tibetans and for domestic purposes... Puntso addressed the meeting in his native tongue'. The Leicester Chronicle, "Missionary Meeting in Leicester".

⁹⁵ Susan Thorne notes that colonised peoples were able to 'use missionaries to their own ends and take advantage of European in-fighting', as Puntso did. Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of Imperial Culture in Nineteenth Century England*, 50.

⁹⁶ Objects associated with Puntso: small *thangka* painting (NMS A.1897.266.1), amulet box *gau* (NMS A.1897.266.4), drum *damaru* (NMS A.1897.266.5), bellows (NMS A.1897.266.7), saddlebags (NMS A.1897.266.9), woman's apron (NMS A.1897.266.29), two scarves *kata* (NMS A.1897.266.31-2), leather needle case and purse (NMS A.1897.266.34-5), leather bags (NMS A.1897.266.37-8), wooden bowl (NMS A.1897.266.40), pair of boots (NMSA.1897.320.12), two hats (NMS A.1897.320.13-14), incense from a monastery (NMS A.1897.320.22).

Puntso's own narrative. Taylor's account of her first meeting with Puntso suggests that whilst she travelled around Darjeeling in the early 1890s, he had been brought to her for medical treatment. Apparently the son of a Lhasa nobleman, he had run away from home, and from then on became Taylor's loyal companion and first convert to Christianity.⁹⁷

The story of Puntso's lineage is woven into the Museum collection through a pair of boots. No other object in Taylor's collection is specifically recorded as having an association with a particular individual, although photographic evidence shows that several objects were personal to Taylor, Puntso and his wife Sigu (Figure 3).⁹⁸ The boots are labelled as 'Tibetan Chief's (Puntso's) boots, a pair, Puntso per Miss A Taylor'. Their provenance in the Museum accession register is also given as Lhasa, tying Puntso both to the Tibetan capital from which all foreigners were barred and a prominent lineage, in which he is promoted from the son of a nobleman, to the 'chief' himself.⁹⁹ Whilst these object labels may have come at Taylor's behest,¹⁰⁰ Puntso's status within the label would have found leverage within Britain's obsession with formalisation and class hierarchy.¹⁰¹ The term 'chief' is rather opaque and its

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Pioneering in Tibet*, 78.

⁹⁸ Photograph 'taking tea in the Tibetan style', in Cary, *Travel and Adventure in Tibet*, opp. 242.

⁹⁹ It may be that by 1897 Puntso's father had died and he had been made chief in his stead, but Taylor's account suggests his family had disowned him, making his promotion to chief unlikely.

¹⁰⁰ Although there appears to be no official protocol to examine regarding how objects were accessioned into the Museum in 1897, it seems that objects were entered into the original registers (where Taylor is the only name mentioned) and then the curator would write object cards and object labels. There may have been a gap between these occurrences, during which time information given by Taylor could be incorporated into object labels, hence Puntso's inclusion on these. Information from Pamela Babes, Collections Development Manager, National Museums Scotland. Email to author, 13/06/2011.

¹⁰¹ For a discussion about how the hierarchical nature of British society was exported around the world in order to bring the whole empire into line with British social expectations, see Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*.

use was probably tactical, raising the status of both the object within the museum and the Tibetan agent and donor by association. Additionally, the term 'chief' distanced Puntso, who was also a Christian, from the analogies made within missionary circles between the British working class and the Tibetans who were the focus of Taylor's evangelisation. When Puntso returned to Tibet after their British tour in 1897, he was a Christian, a confidant to a European and a Tibetan who had travelled to the heart of the British Empire; a dramatic shift in status since he had travelled to Lhasa with Taylor as her 'servant'. The relationship between Puntso (who worked in the mission) and Taylor fed into wider concerns amongst missionaries at the time about the establishment of indigenous churches and imperial and social concerns about drawing indigenous agents further into roles from which they had previously been excluded by racial and class hierarchies.¹⁰² Even though the CIM in principle sought to establish Chinese and Tibetan run mission stations, there is no indication that any of the missionaries examined in this thesis believed this included the management of such missionary projects or the eventual dismissal of western missionaries from the Asian mission field.

¹⁰² For example, Cox examines the tensions between the racial prejudices of imperial agents in India, and the desire of some missionaries to establish an independent, indigenous Indian church. Cox cites the missionary Henry Martyn Clark, who was Afghan by birth but was raised by Scottish missionaries and educated in Edinburgh. Clark was described in the CMS register as 'an Afghan of Peshawar', although was also included in their list of foreign missionaries serving in India. Clark donated some of the earliest missionary material from Tibet to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art – a prayer wheel and a *gau* (A.1892.600-601). Interestingly, despite the tense relationship that many of the missionaries in this study had with larger missionary organisations, there is no evidence of any of them having a desire to see the establishment of indigenous Christian practices. Even Clark retained his identity as a Scottish Missionary throughout his twenty-five years in India, returning to Edinburgh on his retirement (see Appendix B). Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 91, 173.

Another item that is possibly reflective of Puntso and Taylor's relationship is a hat donated in Puntso's name that may actually have belonged to Taylor (Figure 8). The hat (worn in Figure 3) was of a common type, but Taylor wears it in nearly every photograph from this period. As many of the other personal items seen in these photographs now form part of the NMS collection, it is likely that the hat now in the Museum was the one Taylor herself owned and wore. The Museum's official recording of its status as a gift from Puntso was probably a means by which Taylor could officially acknowledge her relationship to Puntso and his role in the making of the collection.¹⁰³ The use of museum records to record personal information in this way will be further discussed in Chapter Five.¹⁰⁴

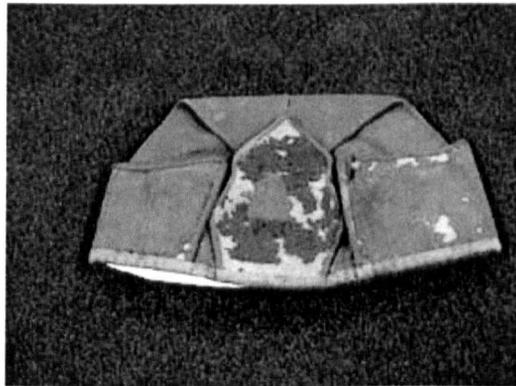


Figure 8: Annie R. Taylor's hat. © National Museums Scotland.

This well-worn hat appears on Taylor's head in many images of her in Tibetan costume. Despite evidence suggesting it was her own, she recorded it as another item given by Puntso, perhaps a suggestion of gift exchange between the two.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Museum labels were not part of public museum displays, so this was a subtle nod to racial and class equalities that could not necessarily be announced more publicly within late nineteenth century British society.

¹⁰⁴ See section 5.5.1, Ascribing agency through labels: 399.

¹⁰⁵ Hat belonging to Annie Taylor (A.1897.320.14).

The relationship between Puntso as a Tibetan man and Taylor as a western woman, a spokesperson for both her Tibetan companion and for a missionary discourse which, at this time at least, was aligned very much with wider imperial concerns, is all tangled into the collection and accompanying archive. What this shows is a complex set of relations, where both Taylor and Puntso were able to use their relationship with each other for a variety of purposes that suited them *both* – Puntso’s role as artefact was not one sided.

The most obvious comment on racial and class prejudices within missionary collections is the general absence of recognised indigenous agency in the collecting process.¹⁰⁶ Taylor was not the only missionary working with and living amongst indigenous communities but is the only missionary within this study to publicly proclaim the strength of her relationship with a Tibetan. Ridley’s collection of clothing, pieces of which may have been highly prized family heirlooms,¹⁰⁷ gives no recognition to this provenance or his relationship to the garments’ previous owners. J.W. Innes-Wright, who like Taylor worked independently and remotely, created a collection seemingly devoid of the presence of any actual Tibetans.

¹⁰⁶ On the whole, missionary collections reflect the poorer and nomadic sections of Tibetan society, rather than the town-dwelling or elite Tibetans encountered by military collectors in 1904.

¹⁰⁷ For example, this woman’s outfit (A.1912.188.1) includes coins sewn along the hem. These coins are several hundred years older than the rest of the costume, and may have been kept by the family and sewn into clothing as was common with family wealth. Information regarding coins thanks to Dr. Kevin Mcloughlin, Principal Curator of East and Central Asia, National Museums Scotland. Email to author, 07/09/2010.

2.3.3 Missionary practices: the commercial side of collecting

Furlough tours were an opportunity for the British public to view Tibet through the missionary lens, but when the tours finished and it was time to return abroad, these collections had an important commercial function. It is unsurprising then that three of the largest missionary collections sold to museums in Edinburgh and Glasgow – from Innes-Wright, Taylor and Ridley – came from missionaries who lacked financial assistance for their work.¹⁰⁸

Innes-Wright's decision to run a mission independently created a large financial burden, leading him to undertake a speaking tour of Scotland in 1896 to promote the new mission and raise funds.¹⁰⁹ To supplement the public fundraising activities of the furlough tour, Innes-Wright began the systematic sale of artefacts of Tibetan and Nepalese manufacture to British museums. Between 1897 and 1904 he sold objects to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (sixty-five objects), Glasgow Museum (eighty-six objects), Liverpool Museum (forty-four objects) and The British Museum (twenty-three objects).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Taylor was actually quite independently wealthy, thanks to her father's developing Business Empire and the death of most of her siblings, which left her a large inheritance. However, she does not seem to have drawn on these funds for her missionary work, though she may have used them for her personal needs, including funding her attempted expedition to Lhasa. With thanks to Winston and Christine Foukes-Taylor for information on the family history of Annie Taylor, particularly the Foukes-Taylor family's migration to Australia. Emails to author, Sept. 2009 - August 2012.

¹⁰⁹ With his wife Rebecca, Innes-Wright began work on the Nepal Mission (sic.) in 1892, after withdrawing himself from the service of the CoSFM. Although focusing on the conversion of Nepalese, the collection shows that the area around the mission station was also home to many Tibetans. A letter published in the Faith Mission magazine *Bright Words* outlines their needs including money for medical supplies, bibles, and £300 to build a mission house. The cost of the building alone would equate to about £30,000 today. Innes-Wright, "On the Way to Nepal", 172.

¹¹⁰ In fact, he sold objects to both Liverpool Museum and the Museum Mayeranum, also in Liverpool. Both collections are now in National Museums Liverpool.

As a collector, Innes-Wright was far more prolific than many of his contemporaries. The objects and archival evidence show that his collection engaged in the legitimate activity of educational collecting before being sold for commercial gain. Innes-Wright's life was steeped in the commercial interests of the Empire – his father was an East India Company merchant, and the 1891 census lists Innes-Wright as an 'American merchant and agent'.¹¹¹ As he joined the CoSFM and sailed for Calcutta in 1892, his earlier work with the Faith Mission and the Church of Scotland Young Men's Guild must have occurred concurrently with his other, entrepreneurial, professional concerns.¹¹² Clearly then, not all evangelical missionaries felt that commercial and theological interests conflicted, even if faith missions as organisations tried to distance one activity from the other. His commercial background formed part of his missionary identity and influenced his relationship with Tibetan material culture. In fact, whilst all the missionaries examined in this thesis eschewed outright commercial engagement, most were happy to carry out small business ventures, usually involving the purchase and sale of Tibetan material culture, so long as it was for the benefit of the mission.

The only surviving documentation to accompany Innes-Wright's acquisitions comes from Liverpool Museum, consisting of a list and letter which reads:

¹¹¹ Meaning that Innes-Wright worked for an American company. He was in fact born and raised in Glasgow. See Appendix A for a fuller biography.

¹¹² Anon, "Letter", [215/A0103010001000], The Nepal Church History Project.

'As arranged when I saw you in June last in Liverpool, I have now to advise having sent you by parcel post a tin box containing 24 Tibetan Nepalese articles, which I hope you will find suitable for the museum under your charge....it has cost me a considerable amount of time and trouble to secure the specimens now sent but... I am able to get other articles or photos such as are noted on enclosed memo. The values noted are only approximate as there are no fixed prices for such things and one had just to do the best one can – sometimes paying more and sometimes paying less according as the people are eager to sell or otherwise.'¹¹³

The letter, dated September 1897, referring to the first group of objects sold to Liverpool Museum, goes on to list all the items with descriptions and individual prices, including the cost of postage. Although this letter suggests that the objects in Liverpool were not brought directly to the museum by Innes-Wright, but were posted on his return to India, he still brought a substantial amount of material to Britain with him in 1896-1897. During that stay, objects were sold to Glasgow Museum and the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art (EMSA), the latter receiving two separate collections in 1897. It is likely that some of that material was used for lectures and events, but much of it was sold throughout the trip, not at the end before his return to India (unlike the collections of Ridley, Taylor and another CIM missionary J.G. Cormack). The material sold to the EMSA came through an intermediary, George M. King of

¹¹³ Only a fraction of the items listed in Innes-Wright's letter, and bought by Liverpool Museum, exist today. Liverpool Museum suffered great losses during the bombing raids of World War II and much of their material was lost as a consequence. *Innes-Wright to Dr. Forbes, 7/09/1897*, National Museums Liverpool Archives. With thanks to Emma Martin, Head of Ethnology and Curator of Asian Collections, National Museums Liverpool, for information on the history of Liverpool Museum and access to the Innes-Wright collection.

Glasgow.¹¹⁴ Innes-Wright appears to have focused his public work around Glasgow and King seems to have travelled to Edinburgh on his behalf.¹¹⁵

The two sales made to the EMSA occurred at the same time as Annie Taylor made her two sales to that museum. In fact, Innes-Wright's collection was given the accession number A.1897.319, and Taylor's A.1897.320, showing that she was literally the next person to offer anything (not just Tibetan material) to the Museum after Innes-Wright. This is perhaps the strongest evidence that the two missionaries were at least aware of each other, if not actual acquaintances. She also sold a small amount of material to Glasgow Museum, so it is possible that there was some competition between the two missionaries. In the end, Taylor seems to have benefitted most from The EMSA, whilst Innes-Wright profited most from Glasgow Museum. The most likely scenario was that Innes-Wright went to museums with objects to sell, and once he had gauged a level of interest, negotiations about further objects could be undertaken. The letter to Liverpool Museum is suggestive of this, and it seems Innes-Wright was not alone. A letter from Taylor to Glasgow Museum shows she used similar methods: 'We expect to be in Glasgow from tomorrow and if you would like to see the Tibetan curios will you kindly let us know what time you will be at the museum'.¹¹⁶ This technique, of appearing at the museum door with objects to show was obviously successful, and it was from these two

¹¹⁴ Who exactly George King was is unknown, although a missionary called George King worked for the CIM in the late 1870s. George King is absent from both the 1891 and 1901 Scottish and English Censuses, indicating he may have been stationed abroad.

¹¹⁵ It is unclear how well the two knew each other, as demonstrated by the mislabeling of Innes-Wright as 'Reverend' within the Museum's records. See Chapter Five, section 5.5.1, Ascribing agency through labels: 401.

¹¹⁶ *Letter from Annie R. Taylor to Kelvingrove Museum, 30/09/1897, [No ref.], Glasgow Museums.*

collectors that both the EMSA and Glasgow Museum created a foundation for their Tibetan collections.¹¹⁷

Taylor's second collection in late 1897 must have been sent to the Museum once she returned to Yatung,¹¹⁸ and was made up of different material from her first suggesting that she, like Innes-Wright, gauged what would sell and chose subsequent objects accordingly.¹¹⁹

A comparison of the items Innes-Wright sold in 1897, 1898 and those sold on his next furlough in 1903,¹²⁰ reveal a consistent pattern of what was bought in India and then sold to museums, implying he maintained some kind of cultural shopping list from which to supply a variety of institutions.¹²¹ The commonalities across the four museum collections are unlikely to have resulted from informal methods of collecting alone, such as gifts, occasional purchases and chanced upon objects. Instead they suggest objects were targeted, partly judged on how well they had sold previously. The Nepal Mission was based in the main square of Sukhia Pokhiri where a large market, including traders from Tibet and Nepal, gathered every Friday, creating ample supply for museum demand.

¹¹⁷ Glasgow had two Tibetan objects prior to 1897, and Edinburgh had about twenty-five.

¹¹⁸ In late 1895 she had moved her mission from Gangtok to the Tibetan border town of Yatung, where she stayed until her return to Britain in 1907.

¹¹⁹ This may also have been a logistical issue. Taylor sent bigger items in the second collection, so perhaps she felt it better to stick to more portable items initially, just in case they did not sell.

¹²⁰ In 1902 Rebecca Innes-Wright (nee Johnston) died. In 1903 J.W. Innes-Wright returned to Scotland and married Mary Elizabeth Colvill from Campbeltown, Argyll, on January 13 1904. The second Mrs Innes-Wright accompanied him back to Sukhia Pokhiri, where they continued to run the mission until the early 1920s.

¹²¹ See Appendix D for a comparison of Innes-Wright's four museum collections, showing the consistency with which he collected certain items.

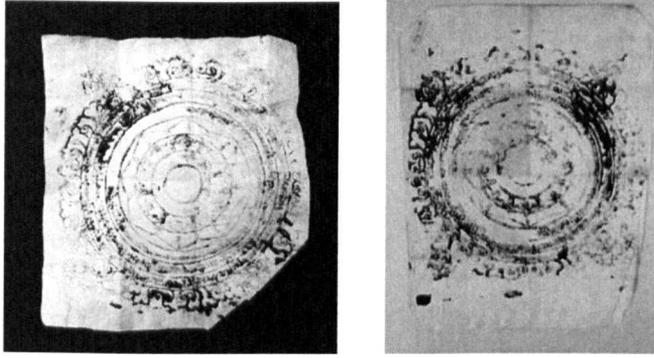


Figure 9: Printed charms and charm packets, Innes-Wright collection. © National Museums Scotland (L) and National Museums Liverpool (R).

These two prints of charms to ward off sickness appear identical. The one on the left is from Edinburgh, the one on the right from Liverpool. These are only two of many examples of duplicate objects through the four Innes-Wright museum collections, suggesting he acquired items from a list of objects he knew to sell well, distributing them amongst various museums.¹²²

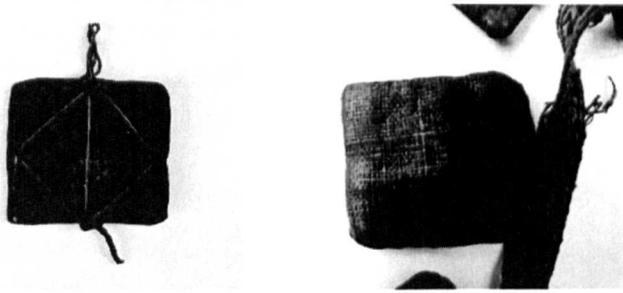


Figure 10: Blue charm packets, Innes-Wright collection. © National Museums Liverpool (L) and National Museums Scotland (R).

These charm packets contain similar paper charms (these ones from Edinburgh and Liverpool respectively), which in fact appear across all four collections.¹²³

Though Taylor's collection seems more haphazard – a mixture of her personal utilitarian items, objects associated with Puntso and his wife and some items readily associable with Tibetan Buddhist practices – she too participated in bartering activity. The 1893 Trade Mart Treaty signed between the British and Tibetans allowed for a trade mart to be established in the Tibetan border town of Yatung, and Taylor had taken advantage of this opportunity to establish a

¹²² Paper charms (NMS A.1897.319.6A) and (Liverpool 9.10.97/10a)

¹²³ Charm packets (NMS A.1897.319.12) and (Liverpool 9.10.97/10)

shop with an incorporated mission. Whilst there is no clear evidence that objects in the collection were part of the shop stock, or items gathered through bartering for the shop's products, this may account for certain objects in the collection. A gau now in the NMS collection is recorded as a 'soldier's gau'. As there is no known style of gau generally described in this manner, the description of a 'soldier's gau' within the Museum's records is more likely to refer to its provenance, suggesting that Taylor received it direct from its original owner and was recording his profession. There were Tibetan soldiers stationed in Yatung at the time, and Taylor's shop offered medicine as well as other goods. As Taylor was known not to take money for her medical services, perhaps this was an offering of gratitude or an item of barter.

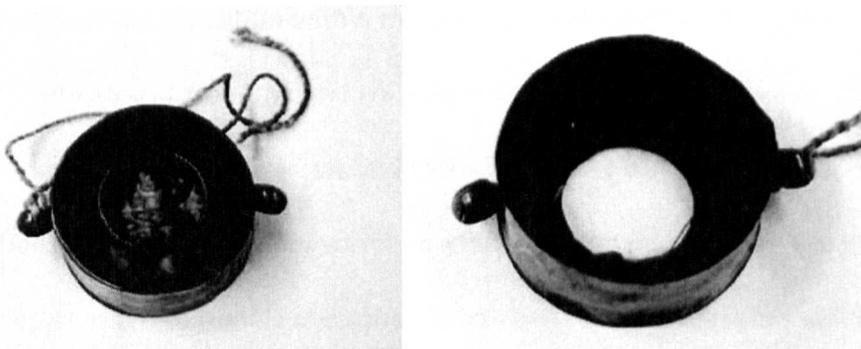


Figure 11: Soldier's gau, Annie Taylor collection. © National Museums Scotland.

This gau appears to be made from re-used materials (including the glass, which in other examples is shaped to fit the opening) making it an oddity among the other more uniform examples usually found in museum collections. The soldiers who gave or sold it to Taylor would have themselves purchased it from a monk after it, and the tsa-tsa inside, had been consecrated.¹²⁴

Commercial activity undertaken by missionary collectors was therefore varied, with the missionary acting as both buyer and seller in different

¹²⁴ Soldier's gau (NMS A.1897.266.10).

circumstances. Different ways of bartering and directly purchasing Tibetan goods, created both a variety of collections but also a variety of responses to Tibetan material culture, depending on how personal such negotiations became.

2.4 The impact of gender on missionary collections

As noted earlier in this chapter, Annie Taylor's collection is significant because of its size and range of objects, but also because Taylor appears to be the only female missionary who either sold or donated any substantial amount of material to a Scottish museum directly in their name. By the end of the nineteenth century women made up a substantial portion of active missionaries, but their position within missionary organisational structures often left them absent from the archival records.¹²⁵ Imperial ideologies, particularly as related to gender, were directly influential on large-scale organisations, such as missionary societies which, in turn, had a direct impact on the roles ascribed to female missionaries and their potential agency within the mission field and amongst a home audience.

¹²⁵ See this chapter, section 2.1.2, The missionary persona, 111.

2.4.1 Gender and missions: independent female missionaries

Within the highly stratified landscape of Victorian society, the missionary project provided one of the primary ways of imagining community.¹²⁶ But whilst such a project purported to bring men *and* women, of different classes, together in a shared institutional space with a shared ideological agenda, missionary claims of inclusivity did not displace class and gender divides.¹²⁷

Taylor had wished to run the TPM as part of the CIM, where she would manage a particular group of missionaries under their overall authority. The CIM already had a precedent of sending lone women into inland China, where they achieved a great deal of autonomy but were always alone, or with other women.¹²⁸

Whilst the CIM offered autonomy, this did not equate to equality, and they would not condone Taylor working under their banner in Tibet, where she planned to lead a mission station otherwise staffed by men.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of Imperial Culture in Nineteenth Century England*, 157.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ Williams, "The Missing Link", 50.

¹²⁹ *Minute Book*, 142-143 (1891-94), [CIM/01/01/2/07], CIM Archive.



THE "TIBETAN PIONEER MISSION."
Taken at Darjiling in 1894

Figure 12: The Tibetan Pioneer Mission. © National Museums Scotland.

The group included Puntso (centre), and twelve male missionaries. Only one woman, the wife of Ewan Mackenzie (and their son) accompanied Taylor.¹³⁰

In attempting to overcome prevailing gender inequalities, Taylor pitted herself against both the male chauvinism of institutional hierarchy and possible ridicule from wider society.¹³¹ She therefore left the service of the CIM at the end of 1893, and in 1894 set sail for Tibet under the title of the Tibet Pioneer Mission (TPM), with Puntso and a group of twelve men and one woman (Figure 12). Despite her own desire to break from social confines, Taylor had asked for only male missionaries for work in Tibet, in light of the hard work and difficult conditions. I would argue that Taylor was distancing herself from her own femininity in order to fulfil her role as missionary leader; a task generally considered to be within the male domain. When this strategy failed, in large part because male missionaries were unhappy under the employment of a woman whatever the circumstances, she turned to female missionaries and was far more successful in terms of the management of missionary activities,

¹³⁰ Plate from Carey, *Travels and Adventure in Tibet*, opp 142.

¹³¹ Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden*, 29.

although no more successful in converting Tibetans. The TPM settled in Darjeeling whilst awaiting permission to enter Tibetan territory. Unfortunately for Taylor, the group had numerous disagreements and all but Puntso had left for other mission stations by the end of the year.¹³² Through her actions, Taylor had transgressed a series of social boundaries, which would have been unacceptable to many, particularly those located not in the Himalayan foothills, but in Britain, where such transgressions were far less easily forgiven. It was partly this infamy for going against the grain that gives her a presence in today's archival and museum records.¹³³

The place of Taylor's collection within the Museum suggests several things. Firstly, that single, independent woman could have a louder 'voice' within historical records than their married counterparts. Secondly, that class distinctions played a prominent role in missionary activity (which I will return to later) and, thirdly, that missionary collecting was not necessarily divided on gender lines, but was more obviously influenced by missionary practices: the objects collected by Taylor and Innes-Wright are highly comparable in terms of object type, style and manufacture. Taylor's collection therefore shows that she had a great deal of agency, even though she was a woman, and provides

¹³² See Isobel Stuart (c.1909), for a brief account of this time. All published sources give varying accounts as to why the group disbanded, none of which tally completely with the written evidence from Taylor herself, found in the archives of the CIM. *Letter from Annie Taylor to Hudson Taylor*, January 1895, [CIM/03/09/43/8224b/c], CIM Archive.

¹³³ Deborah Kirkwood, in her examination of married women's experiences, notes that only those with particularly forceful personalities tend to be the ones recorded in archival records. Of course, these women are not necessarily indicative of the more 'typical' or 'hidden' missionary woman, who can be very hard to uncover. Kirkwood, "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters", 28.

evidence that women were functioning in the same intellectual and professional capacities as men, though this was not always acknowledged.¹³⁴

2.4.2 Gender and missions: married women's experiences

Single women's experiences were often very different from those of their married counterparts. Married women did not receive a salary, and were therefore absent from the most basic recording keeping of missionary organisations – financial records. Whilst single women were often sought for their specific qualifications as nurses or teachers, married women undertook informal first aid, home nursing help and offered unofficial pastoral care.¹³⁵

Sarah Ridley was one such missionary wife, offering basic medical care in addition to her husband's evangelical work.¹³⁶ Her efforts during the Muslim Rebellion of 1895, when she cared for up to 200 people a day, was one example of the significance of this vital but invisible role she undertook with no medical qualifications to speak of.¹³⁷ Sarah Ridley's medical responsibilities in Xining continued to be significant but in 1913, just after their return from furlough in

¹³⁴ The detection of particularly female collecting habits is not always straightforward. Trinkets and jewellery are stereotypes of female collecting, which can consequently infer the less prestigious status of jewellery or 'crafts' compared with, for example, painting or metalwork (often collected by men). Objects associated with women in this manner are often mixed in with other kinds of household/interior goods and are not separated from the domestic setting as something special or significant. Pearce, *On Collecting*, 207.

¹³⁵ Kirkwood, "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters", 35.

¹³⁶ In fact, Sarah Ridley had come to China with the CIM a full year before her husband, who she met after completing training in Yangzhou. Sarah Ridley was one of many women who demonstrate that it would be inaccurate to make too sharp a distinction between marriage and vocation as alternative routes to missionary work. See Kirkwood, "Protestant Missionary Women: Wives and Spinsters", 25.

¹³⁷ Miles, "My Great-Great Uncle, Missionary to China (Part One)".

England, she died of typhus following a visit to a patient with the disease.¹³⁸

Sarah Ridley's life was recorded in a one line obituary notice in the CIM publication *The Chinese Recorder*.¹³⁹ Harry Ridley then found himself the only missionary in Xining, with a doubled workload.

Rebecca Innes-Wright's story bears marked similarities to that of Sarah Ridley. From the beginning of their work in Sukhia Pokhiri, the Innes-Wrights established a medical dispensary, and J.W. Innes-Wright noted in a letter to the Faith Mission magazine *Bright Words* (1898) that 'once or twice over 100 have come on one day, which means a pretty heavy strain on my wife, as much the harder part of the work falls on her'.¹⁴⁰ This suggests that, like Sarah Ridley, Rebecca Innes-Wright undertook the majority of the practical work in the mission, attending to the medical needs of the community whilst her husband attended to their spiritual ones. Like Sarah Ridley, Rebecca Innes-Wright died in the field, in 1902.¹⁴¹

Did the general absence of these women in archival records, regarding their missionary work, preclude their absence from other formal recording processes, such as museum records, or from the collection of objects themselves? Whilst neither woman is mentioned in museum files, knowledge of

¹³⁸ Miles, "My Great-Great Uncle, Missionary to China (Part Two)".

¹³⁹ *The Chinese Recorder*, "Death Notices", 600. The ratio between the numbers of deaths of women and children recorded in the pages of the *Recorder*, and the space within institutional memory given over to their work is perhaps one of the starkest imbalances in gender equality visible in missionary records.

¹⁴⁰ Innes-Wright, "Getting started in Nepal", 18.

¹⁴¹ Rebecca Innes-Wright received a full-page obituary in *Bright Words*, which described her earlier work for the Faith Mission in Glasgow, and her later time in Nepal. Most members of the Faith Mission probably knew the Innes-Wright's personally because the Glasgow Faith Mission was incredibly small by comparison to the CIM. The article finishes not with a final comment on Rebecca's life, but by noting that her husband would now have to carry out his work alone. "The Late Mrs. Innes-Wright", 205.

the activities they undertook as 'helpers' to their husbands' missionary work makes it probable that links existed between these women and the collections given in their husbands' names.

In the case of Rebecca Innes-Wright, there are no particular objects that point to her involvement in the collection. However, the sheer quantity of material her husband put his name to, the fact that they both engaged in the furlough tours and visits to museums, and the physical task of transporting the objects to Britain, all suggest that at a logistical level at least, she played a role. My reason for highlighting this collection is precisely because of this absence, and to make the point that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence; we must not assume that these women were not actively involved in the process of collecting, interested in Tibetan material culture, or less invested in providing objects roles within the missionary cause. Likewise, we cannot prove they were actively involved in the mission field because their contributions are not in the official record, yet anecdotal evidence points to their importance. In fact, there is no real sense within this collection of who Rebecca and J.W. Innes-Wright were as individuals, but we know his association exists undeniably through the formal museum record.

Within the Ridley collection there is a better indication of Sarah Ridley's involvement in the collecting process. Clothing, as a type of material culture to collect, is assumed to have strong associations with women, and in the case of the Ridley collection, most of the outfits were for women and children.¹⁴² Ridley was known to have taken the CIM's mandate of wearing local dress one step

¹⁴² Pearce, *On Collecting*, 206-207.

further, and wore Tibetan or Mongolian dress when administering to these communities.¹⁴³ It may therefore have been that Sarah Ridley also wore local dress, perhaps another explanation for some of the clothing repairs, such as the European buttons. However, whilst some of the clothing would have met their practical needs – such as the man’s woollen coat for winter¹⁴⁴ - the elaborate headdress associated with the Mongolian woman’s outfit (**Error! Reference source not found.**) would have been entirely impractical for Sarah Ridley to wear.¹⁴⁵ These items were often ornate, covered in beading, coins and rich fabrics. Sarah Ridley’s medical work and pastoral role amongst the female population may have given her access to these items, which were most likely long cared for within the home, and often kept for important occasions. As noted above, much of the medical care faith missions and the CIM provided was free of charge, but gifts in return for care were commonplace and may have resulted in parts of these collections, especially items which were not for everyday wear and included materials that would have had a relatively high monetary value.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Miles, “My Great-Great Uncle, Missionary to China (Part One)”.

¹⁴⁴ Man’s coat (NMS A.1912.188.1). See photograph of Ridley in Appendix A, in which he appears to be wearing this coat.

¹⁴⁵ Robe and associated apparel of a Mongolian woman (NMS A.1912.194.1-6), including a headdress and a set of ear cuffs linked with beads and an outfit with a three-part elaborate headdress belonging to an ‘aboriginal’ Mongolian girl (NMS A.1912.195.1-4).

¹⁴⁶ As Ridley did not achieve any Tibetan conversions until 1923, this was not the means by which he acquired these items, and therefore gifts and exchanges for their other, more practical work, seems likely.

2.4.3 Gender and missions: the relationship between class and gender

Marriage removed both Rebecca Innes-Wright and Sarah Ridley's status as missionaries in their own right and was the cause of their relative invisibility in these collections, despite the likelihood that they had some role in their formation. This reflects the problems faced by married women in the missionary field. However, without marriage these women, who came from middle class, educated homes, would have in many respects led a considerably harder life should they have still chosen to pursue a missionary career.¹⁴⁷ Whilst missionary work was an acceptable way in which women could retain independence and forge a career, working for a society such as the CIM, where one was likely to be working alone in remote locations, could be emotionally and physically straining, and for many this was enough of a reason to give up this newfound independence.

Taylor's decision to work independently, her ability to eschew social norms and retain her ownership over her collection may, therefore, have been as much about class as gender. Ideas about class were ingrained in the methodology of most missionary societies; from the LMS's desire to only employ 'ladies of culture and refinement' to Hudson Taylor's attempts to break such barriers by employing men and women with spiritual qualities, regardless of class.¹⁴⁸ Whilst all classes were involved in missionary work to some degree – as patrons, active missionaries or those targeted as having a missionary 'need' (the working classes) – it was a project undertaken overwhelmingly by the

¹⁴⁷ Rebecca Innes-Wright's father was an agent for the Bank of Scotland in Dumfries and Sarah Query appears to have come from a respectable, middle class Essex family.

¹⁴⁸ Seton, "Open Doors for Female Labourers", 58.

middle classes. Annie Taylor came from a far wealthier background than the majority of her contemporaries and, like the numerous adventuring 'lady travellers' of her day, used her wealth to further her ambitions. Taylor was to self-fund elements of her missionary work thanks to her background, but was also able to call on the generosity of other wealthy ladies because of her social position.¹⁴⁹ Whilst she chose to live by simple means when in India and Tibet, unlike the Innes-Wrights and the Ripleys, she didn't *need* to collect for economic reasons. Her motivations for going to the trouble to sell the two collections may instead have arisen from an attempt to separate her personal and working life, or to promote an interest in Tibetan culture amongst a broader Scottish public. As will be seen throughout this thesis, the relationship between class and the way in which collections entered museums, was reflective of British society's relationship to hierarchy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the way in which collecting provided a means of both cementing and elevating that status.

2.5 Missionary collectors and Tibetan Buddhism as 'religion'

Whilst the particular practices of different missionary societies can be seen to have approached the 'problem' of British-Tibetan encounters in different ways,

¹⁴⁹ Taylor's attempted journey to Lhasa was entirely self-funded. Though her stated aim was a reconnaissance exercise for future missionary work, her experiences read very similarly to adventuring lady travellers of the day, who travelled for leisure, adventure and to expand their otherwise confined worlds, rather than a higher, spiritual purpose. In *Pioneering in Tibet* (52) Taylor mentions a Mrs Grimke who supplied 3000 Christian text cards (presumably bible tracts) for Taylor to give to passing Tibetans. It was not uncommon for wealthy women in Britain to fund the printing of bibles or such cards for a particular mission.

what set missionaries apart from their contemporaries was the nature of their own Christian beliefs, and how those beliefs responded to Tibetan Buddhist practices. Many imperial agents who were not missionaries still considered themselves deeply religious, and missionary societies were often involved in administering to the spiritual needs of British, as well as indigenous, populations.¹⁵⁰ The bonds of imperialism therefore still brought together a variety of British agents, connecting them through shared imperial ideologies, even when specific practices placed them into tension with one another. Other British agents often perceived missionary activity as creating a direct 'struggle' with Tibetan Buddhism, which they themselves were keen to avoid.¹⁵¹ The basic aim of missionary work – conversion - appeared to place missionaries in direct conflict with Tibetan Buddhism. Yet the evidence of missionary experiences suggests their reactions were not categorically negative. The quote at the beginning of this chapter, berating Tibetan Buddhism's use of prayer wheels was a common expression of a missionary way of thinking and one of many varied responses to Tibetan Buddhism.

The earliest dialogues between western missionaries and Tibetan Buddhism were remarkably constructive. The Italian Jesuit missionary Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733) was one of the first Christians to actively engage in fair and reasonable debate about Tibetan Buddhism and believed that Tibetans,

¹⁵⁰ Although smaller missionary organizations and faith missions had less formal roles in relation to their contemporary Europeans, even Annie Taylor ran a prayer group and newspaper club for the men of the 1904 Expedition at their camp in Chumbi, Tibet.

¹⁵¹ It was widely felt that such interferences with local beliefs had been the root cause of the 1857 Rebellion – an incident the British were keen not to repeat.

already a holy people, needed only to be led to Christianity.¹⁵² When the French Roman Catholic missionaries Huc and Gabet entered Tibet more than a hundred years later in 1846, they believed that Christianity had already arrived in Tibet, through a long forgotten Catholic missionary, but that this missionary had died before completing his Christian teachings. Thus, they assumed, Catholicism was already at the core of Tibetan Buddhist doctrine, but, as Desideri proposed, Tibetans required a guiding, western Christian influence to fulfil its religious transformation.¹⁵³ However, by the time that the missionaries relevant to this study began their engagement with Tibetans – not in Tibet as their predecessors had done, but from the borders of India and China – such positive associations between Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity had more or less disappeared. In the second half of the nineteenth century two significant events occurred, which accounted in part for this change in attitude. Firstly, the Catholic missionaries of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were replaced with Protestant, largely evangelical, missionaries.¹⁵⁴ This occurred in tandem with domestic denominational rivalry, and saw many Protestant missionaries reshape the positive relations earlier Catholics had forged between Tibetan Buddhism and Christianity, and turn them into unsavoury reflections on Tibetan

¹⁵² Kaschewsky, "The Image of Tibet in the West Before the Nineteenth Century", 13-14.

¹⁵³ Lopez, "'Lamaism' and the Disappearance of Tibet", 9-10. What is of particular interest about Huc, is the connection he made between the object paraphernalia of Tibetan Buddhism found in monasteries, and those in the Catholic church, which he described in his book: *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China, during the years 1844-5-6*, Gutenberg online publication, accessed 18/05/2013,

http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=1712386.

¹⁵⁴ This was a world-wide occurrence, with the Catholic missionary enterprise reaching its lowest ebb for four centuries, leaving Protestant missions to fill the gap. See Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century*, 91.

Buddhists and Catholics alike.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, by the late nineteenth century, many of the fundamental components of the western side of this encounter had changed. Secondly, restricted access to Tibet narrowed the range of Tibetans missionaries were able to encounter, as well as the locations in which those encounters took place. Desideri had been resident in Lhasa and had attended Sera monastery to learn both the Tibetan language and Buddhist doctrines. Huc and Gabet's journey brought them to the gates of several monasteries within Tibet, where they were able to engage with the lamas, albeit more briefly than Desideri. In other words, early Catholic missionaries engaged with Tibetan Buddhists in the places western scholarship assumed to be the very heart, both physically and spiritually, of Tibetan Buddhist 'religion'. By the late 1890s, the mix of a changing missionary demographic, and a change in the location and access of missionary activity, shifted interest away from the monasteries and to the nomadic people encountered on the Chinese and Indian borders, and their more personal and private forms of devotion.¹⁵⁶ It would seem that the more remote monastic Tibetan Buddhism became, the more it became a target for western missionary disapproval, dovetailing neatly with concurrent Orientalist and imperial ideologies.

This shift in missionary focus and the influence of broader views on, and interests in, Tibetan Buddhism both academically and vocationally, runs through

¹⁵⁵ Porter, *Religion Versus Empire?*, 238.

¹⁵⁶ There were Tibetan monasteries around Darjeeling, one of the largest being in Ghoom, near where the Innes-Wrights were based, but there is no evidence that any of the missionaries based in the vicinity entered these sites with the regularity or interest of their Catholic predecessors.

the missionary collections now in Scottish museums.¹⁵⁷ Whilst Innes-Wright's collecting activities focused on making a profit, the objects he sought out and his corresponding documentary evidence (in the form of letters and articles in the missionary magazine *Bright Words*) subtly commented on his relationship, or lack thereof, with the dominant 'religious' discourse of Tibetan Buddhism. The collection is an important source of evidence for exploring how Innes-Wright understood and responded to Tibetan Buddhism. Whilst his collections of objects are reflective of Ghoom's dominant Buddhist community, Buddhism never forms part of his debate on missionary activity, which can be tracked through his articles and letters. Whilst each article discusses extensively the express need for the spread of Christianity, nowhere does he develop an understanding of what it was replacing, save for one description of Nepal (only a few miles over the border from Sukia Pokhiri), stating that 'most of these [people] are Hindus in religion, with some Buddhists and Demon-worshippers'.¹⁵⁸ In this instance it seems that an absence of evidence is in fact the evidence that Innes-Wright had little interest in gaining a deeper understanding of Tibetan Buddhist practices and traditions.

A large selection of the objects collected by these missionaries related to what was commonly known as 'popular Tibetan Buddhism'. This was a reflection on the mixing of Buddhism with older Bön traditions practiced in Tibetan territory before the introduction of Buddhism from India, and deriving

¹⁵⁷ L.A. Waddell's *Lamaism, or the Buddhism of Tibet* had been published in 1894, coinciding with Taylor and Innes-Wright's ventures. Both the missionaries and Waddell were based around Darjeeling at that time, connecting with similar communities of Tibetans, Nepalese and Lepchas.

¹⁵⁸ Innes-Wright, "Needy Nepaul", 261.

from a great reverence for the landscape and the power of the deities who guarded it. The mixing of these two traditions influenced much of the physical paraphernalia that Tibetan Buddhism is now known for; *gau*, *tsha-tsha* and prayer flags all link the power of the Tibetan landscape with the power and protective qualities of certain Buddhist deities.¹⁵⁹ It was this ‘popular Tibetan Buddhism’ that brought most sharply into focus the dilemma facing Orientalist scholars who were looking for a ‘pure’ form of Buddhism in Tibet. A tension arose between the desire to categorise Tibetan Buddhism as a ‘religion’ and the assumption that its practices were ‘superstitious’.

The Orientalist scholar L.A Waddell had been given the rare opportunity to study the daily practices of Tibetan Buddhism first-hand, thanks to his position as Sanitary Officer in Darjeeling in the late nineteenth century. The importance of Waddell’s work lay in the fact that he based his study not on texts found in the libraries of Europe but, as Harris outlines, on physical evidence – the ‘fixtures and fittings’ of a Tibetan Buddhist temple.¹⁶⁰ Waddell’s appraisal of the practices of both monks and lay Tibetans as superstitious were therefore, though clouded by his ideological prejudices, based on

¹⁵⁹ *Gau*, which are small and portable shrines, offer protection, or may hope to bring wealth, longevity or good health to their wearer. *Tsha-tsha* are small votive offerings, usually made of clay that are taken to or acquired at sites of pilgrimage. They may also be placed in shrines, temples or in walls made of larger carved sacred texts on stone, known as *mani* walls. Most importantly, the place in which they are deposited must be considered sacred for their effects to be felt.

¹⁶⁰ Harris examines how Waddell’s purchase of a Tibetan Buddhist temple and his subsequent detailed study of its workings, including the practices of its attendants, influenced the development of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the West. She notes that not only did Waddell’s text, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, become one of the most read on Tibetan Buddhism in the first half of the twentieth century, but it moved how Tibetan Buddhism was studied out of the library and towards the realms of anthropological practice and E.B Tylor’s cultural evolution theory. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 47.

anthropological research. As he notes in his enquiry into charms and amulets (paraphernalia of what he called 'domestic Lamaism'):

'Both Lamas and people are so steeped in pagan superstition and idolatry that their un-Buddhist features and practices are most conspicuous.... Their inveterate craving for material protection against those malignant gods and demons has caused them to pin their faith on charms and amulets, which are to be seen everywhere dangling from the dress of every man, woman and child'.¹⁶¹

Waddell in turn had been influenced by the cultural evolution theories of E.B Tylor, who offered a more nuanced explanation of this distinction between 'religion' and 'superstition'. Tylor argued that cultures developed gradually towards a state of civilisation (as seen in the West). However, whilst cultures were still in this developmental process, conservative principles also continued to operate, meaning that degeneration of the meaning of practices deemed 'religious' could occur, turning them instead into superstitions.¹⁶²

Whether following the more nuanced, empathetic approach of Tylor or the more negative position of Waddell, such attitudes were fairly universal. The traveller Jane E. Duncan showed this in 1906 when she wrote 'Tibetans are intensely superstitious and the outward signs of their religion are to be met

¹⁶¹ Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, 570.

¹⁶² Harris discusses the example of the prayer wheel, which Tylor posited as evidence of such degeneration. The wheel, turned repeatedly to send out prayers, had mechanised and therefore made meaningless their religious practices, making them instead into a degenerated form – a superstition. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 42.

with constantly'.¹⁶³ Duncan's observation highlighted the ambiguity in the western understanding of what 'religion' in Tibet did and did not include.

Whilst scholars of Tibetan Buddhism generally focused on the practices found within the monastic setting, missionaries, who were living and working amongst nomads and peasants, included relatively large quantities of 'popular' Buddhist items in their collections. Innes-Wright's collection captures this particularly well, in part because a comparison of all four museum collections highlights the importance he appears to have given to recording these, often ephemeral, items: *gau*, cloth amulets and prayer or luck flags were collected in far larger quantities than most other object types.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, thanks to the archives of Liverpool Museum, we have a fairly accurate idea of what Innes-Wright himself believed the purposes of these objects to be and how they were used.¹⁶⁵ For example:

'Carved wooden block from which the 'luck flags' are printed... printed with various mantras or spells to ensure the 'luck' of those who buy and put out the flags'.¹⁶⁶

'Mani, or Tibetan prayer wheel... The Tibetans turn it from right to left and believe by doing so they lay up much merit for themselves and escape punishment for their sins'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Duncan, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 33.

¹⁶⁴ Luck flags and *tsha-tsha* show a lot of wear and were probably taken from roadsides, alcoves and doorways of Tibetan houses rather than purchased new from markets.

¹⁶⁵ As well as the letter from Innes-Wright from 1897, Liverpool Museum's original accession registers appear to have descriptions taken directly from the collector. Most object descriptions are written inside speech marks, and are followed by (J.W.I.W). The language and style is very different from the more streamlined and standardized descriptions found in association with both the Scottish museum collections, which suggests those museums did not keep all of Innes-Wright's original descriptions. *Accession Register 1897*, 57-61 and *Accession Register 1898*, 116-119, National Museums Liverpool Archive.

¹⁶⁶ Description for flag (accession number 11.10.98-8) taken from, *Accession Register 1898*, 116, National Museums Liverpool Archive.

This demonstrates the late nineteenth century assumption that objects associated with popular Tibetan Buddhism were not 'religious', but were the survival of archaic beliefs. The use of 'spells' in the description of printed flags tied in with the contemporary ideas regarding the nature of 'superstition' (part of an archaic belief system) versus 'religion' already noted above. Whilst E.B. Tylor had outlined religions and superstitions in his explanation of cultural evolution, these distinctions also had a particular place in the collection of material culture. In *Notes and Queries*, for example, he described superstitions as, 'customs and beliefs of an absurd and harmful kind. They often belong to a class of 'survivals' being old fashioned habits and ideas retained after their original sense has vanished'. He further noted that, 'when thoroughly analysed, they can be referred to by their proper headings, such as magic, religion, custom... but it is convenient to keep superstition as an open class for the collection of a number of obscure and puzzling usages'.¹⁶⁸ Within academic circles these distinctions would become part of a scientific methodology for classifying practices that did not easily slot into established notions of 'religion'. Equally, the continued use of the term 'superstition' allowed notions of Tibetan Buddhism to remain malleable, which were useful to British imperial needs.

¹⁶⁷ Description for prayer wheel (accession number 9.10.97-3) taken from, *Accession Register 1897*, 58, National Museums Liverpool Archive.

¹⁶⁸ *Notes and Queries* was a well-known and standardised text for those wishing to record information about the cultures and communities in which they travelled. It began the standardisation, and professionalization, of anthropology, and had many reissues and developments. A different expert in their field wrote each section. Tylor, 'Superstitions', 59. As noted, Tylor did have some interest in and knowledge of Tibetan 'religion' (see Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 38-44).

However, in the eyes of missionaries who were supplying scientifically sound western medical knowledge, what could be more absurd than the idea that a piece of paper printed with an image and sold by a monk would protect you from sickness (Figure 9)?¹⁶⁹ Innes-Wright also frequently noted items were originally 'bought from Lamas'. Western scholars commonly believed that monasteries held a great deal of (ill gotten) spiritual power over the ordinary Tibetan, tricking hapless nomads and peasants into accepting charms and amulets with no scientifically provable (and therefore acceptable) function. As Waddell noted in regards to the use of such charms, 'these appliances, however good in theory, are found in practice to be deplorably deficient'.¹⁷⁰

Objects associated with popular Tibetan Buddhism, also present in Taylor's more utilitarian collection, were the frontline of the Tibetan Buddhism that missionaries, and especially those engaged in medical work, encountered. The description of these objects suggests that, by the late nineteenth century, missionary understandings of these practices were in line with broader academic and popular circles. British interest in 'superstition' and the idea that a physical object could protect its user from some malignant force or invisible ill continued through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – NMS alone has nearly 100 Tibetan objects, nearly all collected around this time, recorded as 'charms' and most of these are gau or paper prayers.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Several of the descriptions for amulets and *gau* refer to safeguarding against sickness.

¹⁷⁰ Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*, 570.

¹⁷¹ British interest in 'superstitions' in Tibet resurfaced acutely in 1904 following the battle of Guru where it was widely reported that Tibetans had run directly at British gunfire, believing their gau to protect them from the bullets. See Chapter Three, section 3.7.1, Prestige collecting: 240.

Despite the fact that most of the missionaries relevant to this study worked almost exclusively with nomads and peasants, their collections also contain a small selection of objects associated with monasteries, or at least the Buddhist practices of monks.¹⁷² Interestingly these objects, which include bells known as *dril-bu*, thunderbolt-shaped items called *dorje*, offering bowls and incense, are commonly cited as coming from Lhasa, whilst very little of the other material in these collections is associated with anywhere less vague than 'Tibet' (Figure 13). Whilst a great deal of metalwork did come from Lhasa, why was this recorded in these instances? Bishop's notion of imaginative knowledges, discussed in the Introduction,¹⁷³ suggests that sacred places seem to be located on the periphery of the social world and, as far as the West in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was concerned, Tibet was one such place.¹⁷⁴ More specifically, Lhasa held a special interest as the only part of Tibet to totally resist western penetration by the late nineteenth century.¹⁷⁵ It was understood as a truly unknown place, associated with the equally unknown Dalai Lama and the main seat of Tibetan Buddhist power. These objects, having supposedly made their way out of Lhasa and into the hands of missionaries poised at the Tibetan borders, added another layer to the already deeply established link of Tibet as a geographical place, and Tibetan Buddhism as

¹⁷² There were many itinerant monks, who travelled away from the monastery and therefore were more likely to encounter missionaries. For example, H.F. Ridley collected a bottle for holy water bottle (NMS A.1912.203) from one such monk.

¹⁷³ See Introduction, section 1.2.1, '**Real**' and '**imagined**': **The British Empire and the construction of Tibet**: 27.

¹⁷⁴ Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, 3.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 139.

central to Tibetan culture and identity.¹⁷⁶ The curio dealers of Darjeeling or Kalimong were linked to trade routes into Lhasa and offered the interested traveller access to such items from the mid nineteenth century onwards.¹⁷⁷ Whether these objects were in fact made in Lhasa or not, tying them directly to the Tibetan capital started to set apart objects of ‘popular religion’ collected locally to missionary bases, and objects of ‘pure’ Tibetan Buddhism, which lay beyond their grasp.¹⁷⁸

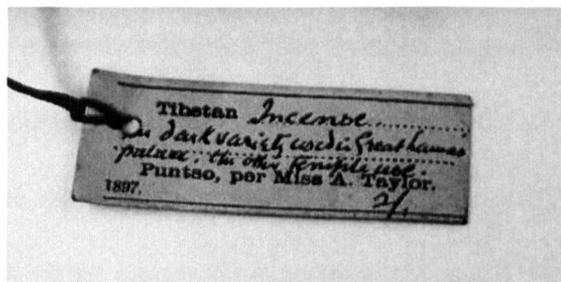


Figure 13: Label from a bundle of incense, Annie Taylor collection. © National Museums Scotland.

The Label refers to the ‘Great Lama’s Palace’ (Likely to be a reference to the Potala in Lhasa) and the original accession register entry adds a provenance of Lhasa – one of the few objects in the collection to have a specific provenance.

As well as connecting with popular views that mythologised Lhasa as part of a wider trope dealing with the ‘hidden’ aspects of Tibetan Buddhism (which Waddell was scientifically uncovering in the temple he purchased near

¹⁷⁶ This was linked to a broader fascination, tied up in Orientalist constructions of the ‘East’ more generally, with reaching what could not be known. Lhasa was just as out of reach as the Hareems in Turkey or Zenana in India (for western men anyway). It was the inability to make such places known that fuelled the drive to do so.

¹⁷⁷ Waddell outlines the offerings of the bazaar in *Among the Himalayas* (48), showing that this was a vibrant place for trade and acquisition long before the majority of missionaries were collecting in the last years of the nineteenth century.

¹⁷⁸ It is just as likely that many of these objects were purchased in and around the Darjeeling bazaars, or in the Buddhist monasteries in the area. Taylor’s collection includes a bundle of incense (NMS A.1897.320.22) said to be used in ‘the Palace of the Great Lama’. This may either be the Jokhang Temple or the Potala Palace, both in Lhasa – the two most important buildings in Lhasa and, at that time, never entered by a westerner.

Darjeeling),¹⁷⁹ collecting from monks, or indeed from monasteries, shows something of the more personal (and sometimes ambiguous) relations that could form between individual monks and missionaries. Away from the missionary institution rhetoric, which focused on devil worship and evil spirits, individual missionaries were in a position to actively, and positively, engage with Tibetan monks. As noted earlier, Ridley had been to Kumbum Monastery in 1910 to attend the annual butter festival. Not only did he attend, but apparently met the Dalai Lama, and formed 'a deep personal friendship with a living Buddha over a number of years. The latter had a genuine respect for Christianity, and accepted a Tibetan New Testament in 1910'.¹⁸⁰ Several objects are provenanced to Kumbum, including three 'priests' outfits' and a woollen covered holy water bottle belonging to an itinerant monk (Figure 14).¹⁸¹ The personal nature of these items, and the detailed knowledge Ridley gained about which outfits were worn on different occasions, suggest that he did indeed form a more lasting friendship with a least one member of the monastic community at Kumbum, or at the very least took a more informed interest in their practices.

¹⁷⁹ As noted above, Waddell was studying the 'fixtures and fittings' of Tibetan Buddhism (Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 44-47). He notes in the preface to *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* that 'realising the rigid secrecy maintained by the Lamas in regard to their seemingly chaotic rites and symbolism, I felt compelled to purchase a Lamaist temple with its fittings; and prevailed on the officiating priests to explain to me in full detail the symbolism and the rites as they proceeded' (viii).

¹⁸⁰ I have found no evidence to corroborate the suggestion that he met with the Dalai Lama, nor am I convinced that such a meeting would have taken place at this time. Miles, "My Great-Great Grandfather, Missionary to China (Part Two)".

¹⁸¹ The three sets of apparel are noted as being for a monk whilst travelling, at prayer and as 'ordinary costume' (NMS A.1912.190-192).

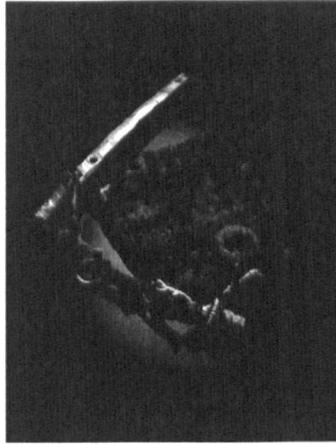


Figure 14: Holy water bottle belonging to an itinerant monk, Ridley collection. © National Museums Scotland.

The water bottle was presumably used much as an ewer would have been within a temple.¹⁸²

Such relationships may have appeared contrary to the CIM principle of working from the bottom up but, as Austin notes, missionaries generally found members of other religious sects to be their most attentive listeners, as they were already on a spiritual journey.¹⁸³ A less refined version of this sentiment appears in the diary of Annie Taylor who found 'in the monasteries... some intelligent lamas, free from the grosser superstitions'.¹⁸⁴ The LMS missionary Reverend W. E. Macfarlane found himself, like Ridley, very isolated from Europeans in his missionary posting. Macfarlane was a doctor (later a surgeon), astronomer and a member of the RGS, who worked in solitude in Inner-Mongolia between 1892-4. As part of a more extensive Central Asian collection, Macfarlane acquired a five-piece outfit for a Gelugpa monk.¹⁸⁵ Whilst

¹⁸² Water bottle (NMS A.1912.203).

¹⁸³ Austin, *China's Millions*, 11.

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, *Pioneering in Tibet*, 12.

¹⁸⁵ Monk's outfit (NMS A.1896.162+A-D). Unlike the outfits that come via Ridley, this is in excellent condition, and parts look hardly worn. Buddhism in Mongolia was heavily indebted to Tibetan Buddhism, and the Gelugpa sect dominated. Thus it is likely that Macfarlane met Gelugpa monks and may have visited monasteries.

Macfarlane's exact movements during this time are unknown, one could speculate that he, like Ridley, took the opportunity to engage with a more elite, educated class of people, with whom he could find a personal connection and relieve the loneliness of his posting.

Of course not all missionaries were able, or willing, to create such positive connections. Innes-Wright's descriptions of objects associated with monks give a very clear picture of his attitude, although how he acquired his information is less obvious. For example, in describing a thigh-bone trumpet he notes,

'trumpets prepared from the bones of criminals are preferred and, as it is necessary, when preparing them that part of the skin is eaten by the lamas as otherwise the hair would not be strong enough'.¹⁸⁶

The suggestion here, that a religious institution was routinely involved in cannibalistic activities, is damning to say the least, and implicates 'religious' Buddhist practices as part of the category of 'absurd and harmful' ideas that Tylor tied to superstitions.¹⁸⁷ Tylor warned prospective students of anthropology that missionaries had a 'tendency to view native religions as essentially projects of imposters and wickedness, instead of as representative stages of theological and moral development in the course of civilisation'.¹⁸⁸

However, a fashion for collecting Tibetan objects made of human remains was

¹⁸⁶ Thigh-bone trumpet (Liverpool 11.10.98-26). *Accession Register 1898*, 119, National Museums Liverpool Archive. The last part of this statement, referring to hair, does not appear to make sense, but this is an exact transcription of Innes-Wright's notes.

¹⁸⁷ Tylor, "Superstitions", 50

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

already in existence by this time and Innes-Wright, with his commercial know-how, may have equally been playing to the market and its needs.¹⁸⁹

Whilst many missionaries had reservations about the 'religions' they encountered, Innes-Wright seems to have been a particularly scathing critic. The greatest effort appears to have gone into the construction of the descriptions of these 'religious' objects. In another description, of a *Kapala* (cup made from a human skull), he comments that 'It is sometimes filled with wine and sometimes with blood, and used by some lamas as a begging bowl'.¹⁹⁰ Again, Innes-Wright plays on well-rehearsed commentary regarding degenerate and inauthentic beliefs and practices that were known as 'Tibetan Buddhism', but also played into the concurrent criticisms of Catholicism; these were some of the very practices that Huc and Gabet assumed had roots in Catholic ritual. Unlike Ridley and Macfarlane, whose objects suggest some form of personal encounter, the objects Innes-Wright collected with Tibetan Buddhist associations could actually have been purchased from markets, bazaars and dealers, and there is no suggestion in any of the articles written for *Bright Words* that he set foot in a monastery, despite purposefully living a short distance from several in the area.¹⁹¹

Evangelical Christianity contributed in many ways to the imperial ideologies of the nineteenth century, cementing certain class, racial and

¹⁸⁹ For a further examination of this early interest in the display of human remains see Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 38.

¹⁹⁰ *Kapala* (accession number 11.10.98-19), *Accession Register 1898*: 117, National Museums Liverpool Archive.

¹⁹¹ The idea behind living in Sukhia Pokhira was to catch the hundreds of Nepalese and Tibetans who crossed the border for the Friday Bazaar and to make pilgrimages to the three large monasteries in the area.

'religious' prejudices, whilst reshaping concepts of gender and female agency within the Empire. Yet, as the work of these missionaries and the processes by which they accumulated their collections show, individuals continually worked with, against, and in spite of, formal policies on contact with local communities, and produced a range of reactions to Tibetan Buddhist practices, from those who embraced the possibilities of what Tibetan Buddhist practitioners could teach them (MacFarlane and Ridley) to those who responded with distrust and assumed a fundamental western superiority (Innes-Wright). However, the historical shift from Catholic to Protestant missionary encounters, and the changing mode of accessing Tibetan Buddhist followers, created a visible and generally negative response amongst missionaries, both in their writings and collections.

2.6 Case study: The Reverend James Thomson

The missionaries examined thus far show a largely cohesive group for several reasons. They were mostly involved in a particular type of faith mission work with a relatively high level of personal autonomy; they collected mainly from nomadic and peasant groups; those in Darjeeling were in an area already highly saturated with Europeans, and all these missionaries had a clear purpose for their collections, based around the monetary and educational needs of the missionary enterprise.¹⁹²

¹⁹² With the exception of Ridley and MacFarlane, who worked in extremely remote areas and were likely to have been the only Europeans for miles. Taylor was remote as the only European across the border in Tibet, but the people of Yatung were likely to have travelled along the

This case study examines a very different type of collector, to see whether alternative temporal, spatial and social circumstances are reflected in a collection. James Thomson was born in 1854, the son of a warehouseman in Aberdeen and, as such, was born into far less salubrious circumstances than most of the other missionaries examined above. Despite this, he graduated from Aberdeen University in 1875 and was ordained in 1878, the same year he married Anne Dundas Glover.¹⁹³ The couple sailed to India that year, where Thomson took up the position of Missionary Professor at the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta. Thomson remained in post until 1882, during which time he made several trips to the missions at Darjeeling and Kalimpong, including one trip of several weeks into Sikkimese territory with the pioneering missionary the Reverend William Sutherland.¹⁹⁴ It was during this trip that we must assume Thomson undertook his collecting activities.¹⁹⁵ Not only was his wife (the donor of the collection) quite specific in mentioning this trip in her correspondence with Glasgow Museum, but there is no evidence that he was

Lhasa-Kalimpong trade route (on which Yatung could be found) and subsequently met many Europeans in India. Innes-Wright and any CofSFM missionaries in Kalimpong worked amidst a strong European community, even though Innes-Wright's writings often suggest he worked in deep isolation.

¹⁹³ Early biographic information on Thomson, FamilySearch Community website, accessed 17/05/13, <http://histfam.familysearch.org/getperson.php?personID=1478&tree=Fasti>. Unlike the wives of Ridley and Innes-Wright, I have been unable to find any information about Anne Dundas Glover or her background. The only evidence of her existence comes from Church of Scotland records, now transcribed onto the FamilySearch website, which note her relationship to her husband and her son (also a minister).

¹⁹⁴ Information for this trip can be found in a letter, *Anne Thomson to Glasgow Museums*, 14/05/1940, [Reference 2/5/82], Glasgow Museums. With thanks to Patricia Allan, Curator of World Cultures at Glasgow Museums for access to this collection and assistance with research.

¹⁹⁵ There is no exact date for collection. Sutherland took a trip to Sikkim in 1880 and another in 1883 that was more substantial and was more specifically aimed at spreading an interest in Christianity. This trip occurred after Thomson left Calcutta, but there is no evidence that he immediately returned to Scotland, and therefore this is the most likely time for his collecting activities, due to the trip's more extensive timetable and ambitions. For Sutherland's journey to Sikkim see McKay, *Their Footsteps Remain*, 92-93.

actively involved in itinerant missionary work other than on this occasion, when he and Sutherland took a series of lanternslides with them and gave lectures, titled 'On the Road to Lhasa', as they travelled.¹⁹⁶ Some of the pieces in Thomson's collection may have been collected within the Kalimpong or Darjeeling bazaars, which Waddell had noted as being active and vibrant through the late nineteenth century.¹⁹⁷ However, the quality of objects collected by Thomson, when compared with those of Innes-Wright and Taylor who were known to collect from curio dealers, suggests that other items may have been collected directly from monks and monasteries.

Alexander Duff had founded the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta in 1830 to promote the principles and teachings of the Church of Scotland within India. When Thomson arrived in the late 1870s, the College was well established and the CoSFM was quickly spreading its influence out of the cities and into the Indian hinterland. William Sutherland and Archibald Turnbull had been sent by the CoSFM to assist William Macfarlane, the first CoSFM missionary in Darjeeling. The three men consolidated Scottish missionary work in the area through the establishment of SUMI, the CoSFM school at Kalimpong (later Dr. Graham's Homes) and itinerant work amongst more outlying communities.¹⁹⁸ When Thomson arrived in Kalimpong to assist Sutherland on his journey to Sikkim, there was a small but well-established network of Scottish missionaries working in the Kalimpong-Darjeeling area.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Waddell, *Among the Himalayas*, 40-50

¹⁹⁸ Website for Scottish University Missions Institute (SUMI), "Our Story", accessed 1/10/2012, <http://sumi.in/ourstory1.htm>.

Thomson's experience of frontline mission work was quite different to those of the faith missions. The CoSFM was run directly by the Church of Scotland from its headquarters in Edinburgh, which gave it a more cohesive, powerful and expedient system of administration than other societies operating in the area. Additionally, this grounded missionary work far more in the static masonry of schools, universities, churches and hospitals, all of which fixed the CoSFM's work to a specific location. This was in stark contrast to the largely itinerant and autonomous work carried out by Ridley, Taylor and Innes-Wright, or the LMS missionaries Cormack and MacFarlane. Therefore, although Thomson's time in Kalimpong came at the earliest stages in the development of the CoSFM settlements, he was not undertaking solitary work and had a developing network of support.

However, Thomson's visit to the Himalayas did occur relatively early on in Darjeeling's history as a hill station, and Kalimpong's as a European trading post and mission station. His collection was made as Annie Taylor first sailed for China with the CIM (long before she took an interest in Tibet) and nearly fifteen years before the other missionaries examined in this chapter began collecting. Additionally, he was collecting from inside Sikkim's borders before British interests in Tibet and Nepal had brought Sikkim fully under British authority.¹⁹⁹ It can be presumed, therefore, that at the time Thomson entered Sikkim, there was still relatively little contact between non-military British personnel and

¹⁹⁹ A period of unrest through the 1880s saw disputes between Nepali settlers and indigenous Nepalese, which led to British intervention. In 1888 the British helped repel an invasion of Sikkimese territory by the Tibetans. This effectively sealed British control over Sikkim.

Sikkimese inhabitants, particularly positive contact that actively sought to engage with local practices.

Buddhism is thought to have entered Sikkim from Tibet in the seventeenth century, but it was in the nineteenth century that a great number of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, known as *Gompas*, were built across Sikkim.²⁰⁰ Therefore access to Sikkim in the early 1880s gave interested parties an insight into the mysteries of Tibetan Buddhism that were physically inaccessible within Tibet itself. Although Sutherland's main intention was to gain permission for the establishment of mission stations within Sikkim's territory, Thomson appears to have had an eye for, and interest in, local practices and material culture.

Glasgow Museum not only houses Thomson's object collection, but also the two maps he took with him on that journey, which include annotations of the route taken. From these maps we can ascertain that Thomson and Sutherland were travelling at least as far as Tumlong, the Sikkimese capital at the time, although the pencil lines drawn onto the map suggest they may have intended to travel further (see Appendix E).²⁰¹ The route passes numerous large monasteries as well as the smaller settlements where the men were likely to have held their lanternslide shows. Therefore, although Thomson's missionary practices were largely sedentary, his collecting practices were in fact more itinerant than other missionaries who generally collected from the areas local to their mission stations, even if their work took them further afield.

²⁰⁰ For a brief history of the introduction of Buddhism from Tibet into Sikkim, see Kumar, "A Study of Buddhism in Sikkim", 43-45.

²⁰¹ The marked route may be evidence that Thomson accompanied Sutherland in 1883, when Sutherland went to Tumlong specifically to speak to the Chogyal of Sikkim. Map (Glasgow A.1940.22.ck).

Why then, on a short trip through a relatively inhospitable part of the world, did Thomson choose to make a collection? The logistics of moving over sixty items through the dense Sikkimese forest, some of which were of substantial size or fragile in nature, was inefficient.²⁰² Innes-Wright's use of market stalls local to his mission station was a cost effective means of collecting when monetary remuneration was the primary concern, and the Ridley's collection of clothing was made in tandem with their work amongst a range of ethnic communities, from whom collecting was relatively easy. In other words, Thomson appears to have been the only missionary examined here who went out of his way to collect for reasons that apparently did not link directly to his missionary work. The collection is also one of the only missionary collections not to be sold, and to be kept within the missionary's family after their return to Britain.

The actual content of the collection does, of course, also offer indications as to Thomson's reasons for collecting. Thomson's objects can be nominally divided into three types; those perceived as relating to Tibetan Buddhism (both 'popular' and 'monastic'), objects of warfare, and everyday utilitarian items.²⁰³ Whilst objects relating to Tibetan Buddhism form the largest of these three groups, they account for less than half the objects in total, and within that category there is a greater mix of items of 'popular' Tibetan Buddhism and items which are likely to have come from monasteries, than can

²⁰² The collection includes, for example, a fragile Bhutanese stringed instrument known as a *dramyin* (Glasgow A.1940.22.cw) and a large prayer wheel mounted in a wooden frame (Glasgow A.1940.cx.1-7), which would have taken several people to carry.

²⁰³ There are thirty-two items relating to Tibetan Buddhism, fourteen items associated with warfare and twenty-three items of utilitarian or everyday use.

be seen in any of the other missionary collections. For example, Thomson collected several *damaru*, drums used as an aid to certain Tibetan Buddhist practices. Three of these *damaru* are undecorated and similar to those collected by Innes-Wright and Taylor, but the fourth is very different, being painted with a sequence of heads of wrathful deities and skulls, with the addition of a series of charms and cowrie shells attached to the centre (Figure 15). Although now badly damaged, the decoration shows a skilled painter and the overall quality of the piece is higher than others in missionary collections such as Innes-Wright's, which are known to have been bought in a market. As the drum was damaged and shows other signs of repair (the skin covering and the central band of red felt have been replaced at some time), a monastery may have been willing to sell it to Thomson in return for the cost of a new one, a common practice through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²⁰⁴ The contents of markets and bazaars, as noted in Waddell's *Among the Himalayas*, did also contain items that no longer had a place within monasteries, although he notes that the majority of items in bazaars were made specifically for sale to tourists and travellers.²⁰⁵

Other items likely to have come from a monastery include a pair of telescopic copper trumpets, a trumpet made from a human thigh-bone with copper decoration, and a smaller copper trumpet with a bell shaped like a

²⁰⁴ Lilian Le Mesurier, who collected from Ladakh's monasteries in 1903, noted the fact that monks often considered older items that had been damaged redundant. See Le Mesurier, "Tibetan Curios", 261-273.

²⁰⁵ Waddell, *Among the Himalayas*, 42.

makara head.²⁰⁶ These items all show a very dark patina, meaning they were of some age and had been used extensively by the time Thomson acquired them. Whilst this may in part be attributed to the conditions within the monastery,²⁰⁷ it also suggests that Thomson, a decade before missionaries were collecting Tibetan material in earnest, was acquiring far older pieces than were available later, and probably acquiring them directly from the monasteries that had been using them.²⁰⁸ The large prayer wheel contained within a wooden box, of a type commonly found as part of a 'wall' of prayer wheels in monastery courtyards, is the only object mentioned specifically by Anne Thomson in her letter to the Glasgow Museum in 1940: 'a large Tibetan praying wheel which a band of coolies carried over the mountains, from Lhasa long before Younghusband's expedition'.²⁰⁹ How Thomson knew of its provenance is unclear, but its connection to Lhasa, and the fact that missionaries were making such links before military power forced an encounter, is clearly recorded in the detail of the letter.

²⁰⁶ Telescopic trumpets (Glasgow A.1940.22.m-n), thigh-bone trumpet (Glasgow A.1940.22.j), small copper trumpet (Glasgow A.1940.22.be). A *Makara* is a water monster, often sculpted with its mouth open, either as a trumpet bell or devouring the blade of a ceremonial knife, known as a *phurba*.

²⁰⁷ Yak butter, which is burnt in lamps, can cause a residue on objects and may be a cause of some of the patination.

²⁰⁸ Tibetans themselves were unlikely to view these items as 'antiques' that were worthy of veneration because of their age. Instead, as noted above, objects that lost their functionality were more commonly replaced.

²⁰⁹ Letter, *Anne Thomson to Glasgow Museums*, 14/05/1940, [Reference 2/5/82], Glasgow Museums.

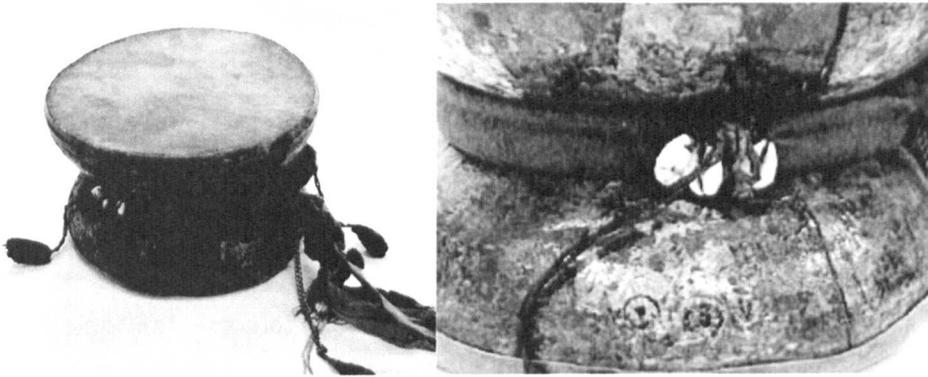


Figure 15: *Damaru* from Thomson's collection. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection.

This is a far more ornate version of this object than collected by any other missionary. The detail on the right shows the contrast of the repaired material and the flaking, older paint work.²¹⁰

Along with these objects, which offered evidence of the Tibetan Buddhism encountered in the monastic setting, Thomson's collection includes many of the more 'popular' items found in other missionary collections, such as printing blocks, prayer flags, a hand held prayer wheel and a *gau*. Although most missionaries collected *tsa-tsa*, Thomson appears to have been the only one to acquire the actual mould, in the form of a quite detailed *chorten*.²¹¹

In addition to this collection of items – of the types acquired by the bulk of missionary collectors – Thomson acquired a number of weapons and associated paraphernalia. His foray into Sikkimese territory came at a time of increased tensions in Sikkim, both from Tibetans who were unhappy at British attempts to secure a trade route into Tibet, and from Nepal, which objected to the way in which Nepalese settlers in Sikkimese territory were being treated. Anne Thomson suggests in her letter to Glasgow Museum that some of the

²¹⁰ *Damaru* drum (Glasgow A.1940.22d&e).

²¹¹ Mould (Glasgow A.1940.22.q) and *tsa-tsa* from mould (Glasgow A.1940.22.r)

weapons were 'captured during the Sikkim Wars of about 1880-1883',²¹² referring to some of the earlier skirmishes before the Tibetans were finally defeated in 1888. The collection is, therefore, particularly representative of the historical moment in which it was made, and includes Tibetan matchlock guns and gunpowder holders, a bullet mould from Nepal and a quiver filled with Tibetan barbed arrows, representing both sides of the conflict. Whilst the collection of weaponry is commonly associated with male collectors,²¹³ within the context of these missionary collections Thomson's interest in weapons and warfare is rare. Annie Taylor, also in a location where a significant number of soldiers were stationed, had the only other missionary collection to include weaponry, suggesting its collection was more a matter of physical and temporal accessibility, and less about gender divides or vocational concerns within collecting.

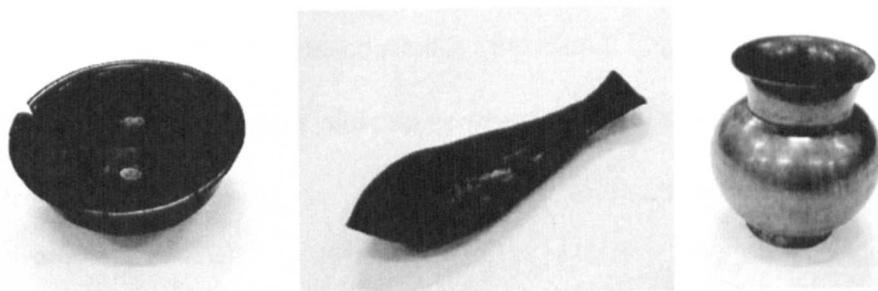


Figure 16: Three of the utilitarian items, Thomson collection. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection.

A wooden bowl for eating *tsampa*, a copper spoon and a brass vessel. These are the sorts of objects that occur across all the missionary collections examined in this chapter.²¹⁴

²¹² Letter *Anne Thomson to Glasgow Museums*, 14/05/1940, [Reference 2/5/82], Glasgow Museums.

²¹³ Pearce, *On Collecting*, 212.

²¹⁴ Bowl (Glasgow A.1940.22.bk.3), spoon (Glasgow A.1940.22.bw) and vessel (Glasgow A.1940.22.br).

The third part of the collection can be characterised as a mixture of utilitarian and souvenir items. This includes a selection of metalwork vessels, wooden bowls and a milk pail or churn similar to those collected by Taylor and Innes-Wright (Figure 16).²¹⁵ Other noteworthy inclusions are the two maps, a framed newspaper clipping from 1889 about the use of prayer wheels, and a photograph of Tibetan monks taken at a British photography studio.²¹⁶ The photograph, depicting Tibetan monks holding prayer wheels, was taken in a manicured garden setting by a member of Johnston and Hoffman staff in Darjeeling.²¹⁷ Johnston and Hoffman ran one of the foremost photographic operations in India, with studios firstly in Calcutta and later in Darjeeling. Much of their work depicted ethnic 'types', such as in this photograph (Figure 17), and their images were sold to largely European audiences.²¹⁸

The newspaper clipping, dated January 4th 1889, was clearly a later addition to the collection, possibly to accompany the large prayer wheel that Thomson had collected. The description is interesting; beginning with the suggestion that 'the Thibetan [sic] prayer wheel is one of the strangest contrivances for religious purpose ever invented', and ending by saying that 'the

²¹⁵ Metalwork vessels (Glasgow A.1940.22.br and A.1940.22.cc), wooden bowls (Glasgow A.1940.22.bk.1-3) and milk pail (Glasgow A.1940.22.cg)

²¹⁶ Maps (Glasgow A.1940.22.ck-cl), newspaper clipping (no accession number), photograph (Glasgow A.1940.22.dl)

²¹⁷ Although the photograph itself is printed with the name of Johnston and Hoffman Calcutta, Clare Harris has established that this particular image was actually taken at their Darjeeling studio set up in 1890 by Hoffman (discussion with Clare Harris 04/09/2013). This being the case, Thomson must have acquired the photograph at a later date after his departure from the area, as the studio had not been established during his stay there.

²¹⁸ Harris has undertaken a detailed investigation of the Darjeeling photographic studios and the ethnic 'types' who sat for them. She argues that these images were not only suggestive of the diversity of cultural groups within the area and the desire to capture them through modes of anthropological photographic practice, but were used by Tibetans for their own means, to assert their status within local society. See Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World*, 86-96.

Thibetans [sic] are the most pre-eminently praying people on the face of the earth. They have praying stones, praying pyramids, praying flags flying over every house, praying wheels and praying mills'.²¹⁹ Written about fifteen years after the wheel had been collected, it is evidence of the growing curiosity that surrounded Tibetan Buddhism as a 'religion' and its relation to Christian practices; in this case the act of prayer.

Thomson's collection not only captures the essence of the historical moment in which it was collected – when the hill-stations were in their infancy and encounters between British and Tibetan culture were more fluid, even positive –²²⁰ but is one of the few missionary collections examined in this thesis, along with that of Annie Taylor, to really provide a sense of the personal. This collection has many of the attributes of the souvenir. A souvenir, according to Susan Stewart, is an object that has the capacity to serve as a reminder or trace of an authentic experience. Souvenirs, therefore, often relate to events that are reportable, but not repeatable and are the conduits through which the retelling of those events can occur.²²¹ Thomson, unlike Taylor or Innes-Wright, had only a brief stay in the Himalayas before going on to spend the majority of his career serving the parishioners of Central Glasgow. The maps, a tourist's photographs and the newspaper clipping are not authentic 'Tibetan' items, but allowed Thomson to create 'a romantic life history by selecting and arranging personal memorial material to create what might be called an object autobiography,

²¹⁹ Newspaper clipping, (dated 04/01/1889), associated with prayer wheel (Glasgow A.1940.22).

²²⁰ Darjeeling was not connected to India's railway network until 1881 and was still relatively small when Thomson would have travelled there. See Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj*.

²²¹ Stewart, *On Longing*, 133-136.

where the objects are at the service of the auto-biographer'.²²² As we know that Thomson kept the collection with him for the rest of his life, this seems a reasonable way understanding how he related to his collection of Tibetan artefacts. The inclusion of a greater range of objects is also a sign of a collection without the particular drive of purpose (educational or commercial) that is visible elsewhere, for example in Innes-Wright's four different museum collections, each of which mirrors the others (see Appendix D).



Figure 17: Photograph of Tibetan monks from the studio of Johnston and Hoffman (date unknown). Thomson collection. © CSG CIC Glasgow Museums Collection.

The photograph depicts the variety of monastic dress and Tibetan Buddhist paraphernalia, most noticeably the prayer wheel which, as noted, was particularly symbolic of the mechanics of Tibetan Buddhist 'superstition'. Despite this, the monks are positioned in the typical stance (along two rows) of European portraiture.²²³

²²² Pearce, *On Collecting*, 32.

²²³ Photograph (Glasgow A.1940.22.dl). The same photograph appears in L.A. Waddell's book *Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism*, in his description of the Lamas of Sikkim. See Waddell, 1895(1894): 45.



Figure 18: Photograph of a Tibetan Priest. © National Museums Scotland.

By comparison to Figure 17, this photograph of a Tibetan priest that appeared in William Carey's 1902 *Travel's in Tibet* (including Annie Taylor's diary), shows the Tibetan religious figure as wild and unkempt, more in keeping with attitudes to Tibetan Buddhist practitioners in the last years of the nineteenth century. Interestingly, this photograph also highlights the development of studio photography for the capturing of cultural 'types', as the priest stands against a classical, archaic, studio backdrop.²²⁴

Perhaps the biggest clue as to the personal nature of the collection is the fact that Thomson was the only missionary to keep hold of the collection throughout his lifetime. All other missionary collections came into Scottish museums as soon as the collector returned to Britain, whether they were sold or donated.²²⁵ The collection remained with the Thomson family for nearly forty years, with Anne Thomson only donating it to Glasgow Museum in 1940, two years before her death.

James Thomson's financial security was, I believe, crucial to the process of collecting. His position as a salaried teacher within a well-established school in the Indian capital was quite different from the arrangements of Annie Taylor, Harry Ridley or J.W. Innes-Wright, and created a difference in the process of

²²⁴ Photograph from Carey, *Travel and Adventure in Tibet*, opp 266.

²²⁵ Even Dr. James Grieve Cormack, the only other missionary to donate a large collection rather than sell, did so on his furlough to complete his medical studies in 1904.

collecting. As the CoSFM gave an official focus to work in Sikkim, Thomson's travels with Sutherland were likely to have been funded as well. He was able to pay for a range of items, to pay for transport, which probably included a number of local servants to carry objects such as the large prayer wheel, and the collection did not have to be confined by the needs of the missionary who required it take on certain public roles at a later date. Thomson was a very different type of missionary, working far more indirectly with indigenous communities, but also working for an institution which was constructed in a fundamentally different way from the CIM. Having spent only four years in India, Thomson returned to Edinburgh, and then Glasgow where he was minister of St. Andrews Parish Church from 1894 until his death in 1926. Unlike Ridley, Taylor and Innes-Wright, who all dedicated a long expanse of time to overseas missionary work, Thomson's collection was not a tool within a lifetime's work, but a record of a moment that stood out within a lifetime.

2.7 A missionary 'type' and a missionary vision of Tibet

This chapter has outlined how a group of missionary collectors created specific roles for Tibetan material culture. Through the appropriation of these objects, they were able to construct a vision of Tibet that aided both the needs of missionary organisations and wider imperial concerns, although this sometimes came at the cost of individual aspirations. The primary roles of missionary collections were education, commerce and, more ambiguously, the bringing together of missionary representations and an 'external reality' – whereby

objects acted as tangible proof for the verbal information relayed to home audiences about missionary encounters in the field. Such representations used material culture to carefully curate understandings of Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes in contention with the missionaries' lived experiences and the personal relationships that they formed with individual Tibetans. There was an extensive use of 'simple' utilitarian items with limited aesthetic charm, shown alongside images of wild Tibetan priests and tales of living conditions reminiscent of Britain's working class poor. Within Victorian society, this fixed an image of Tibet as simple, deprived and sometimes depraved, and in need of enlightenment through the compassion and knowledge of western Christianity.

John Bray argues that there was no single missionary image of Tibet shared by the many missionary societies who worked along Tibet's borders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²²⁶ Bray draws from missions' own historical records and the approaches different societies and individuals used to promote Christianity and ultimately conversion. My analysis of missionary collecting suggests relatively cohesive collecting processes and a more unified approach to the use of material culture. Missionary constructions of Tibetan Buddhism, both popular and monastic, appear particularly uniform. This is largely due to the fact that missionary collections in Scottish museums were mostly associated with evangelical missionary societies, predominantly

²²⁶ In addition to the Societies examined in this chapter, work with Tibetans was carried out by the U.S. Christian Missionary Alliance, the English Roman Catholic Mill Hill Mission and the Scandinavian Missionary Alliance (who offered temporary accommodation to the Innes-Wright's when they first moved to Sukhia Pokhiri). Bray, "Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Missionary Images of Tibet", 21.

those working under the influence of Faith Missions, which gave a very particular slant to their work. However, it is when the personal experiences of missionaries can be recovered from within the biographic detail of collections, that Bray's argument for a heterogeneous missionary vision is clearly revealed. I would argue that this is evidence of the tensions that existed between imperial and organisational ideologies, and personal motivations and intent. Collections became the places in which personal experiences could be embedded, when they could not be articulated publicly.

The case study of James Thomson highlights this by offering a contrasting view of missionary practice and its effects on collecting processes. The needs of missionaries working for the CoSFM were so radically different, as was their working environment, that collecting as an activity was more disassociated from missionary working methods than it was for other missionaries. Despite the prominence of the CoSFM in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, and their extensive work amongst Tibetans, Thomson's collection is the only known CoSFM collection in a Scottish Museum.²²⁷ His situation allowed his collection to be made predominantly for his own interest, without the needs of either his own welfare or the greater missionary enterprise influencing his collecting activities. It is that difference in collecting processes (which for the other missionaries encountered in this study followed a similar pattern of collection, presentation, display, and then sale to a museum within a short

²²⁷ In 1998 the Church of Scotland donated a set of eight Tibetan outfits to NMS, mostly collected far later than Thomson's objects, in the mid twentieth century, which were likely to have formed part of the prop department. This is the only other known connection between the CoSFM's work with Tibetans and a Scottish museum.

amount of time), which is likely to account for the absence of CoSFM collections in museums and the general cohesiveness of the other missionary collections. There may have been many collections of Tibetan objects made by CoSFM missionaries, but as they did not enter museums quickly, their links to missionary activity have been lost.²²⁸

The relationship between Scotland and evangelical missions (which included faith missions) is reflected in the types of objects that form the basis of these missionary collections. Evangelical missionaries worked 'from the bottom up', and thus the objects they were able to, and chose to, collect were of modest manufacture and on the whole representative of nomadic and peasant communities.²²⁹ Collecting, for missionaries, was not just influenced by imperial ideologies, but a particular set of theological concepts as well. The epistemological spaces in which missionaries constructed Tibet through material culture were markedly different from other spaces of knowledge production and learning inhabited by other imperial agents. Though Taylor spoke at the Royal Scottish Geographic Society in Glasgow in 1894, these missionaries were operating on the edges of an intellectual discourse dominated by learned societies and government agents.

²²⁸ In fact Dr. Graham, who ran the school and children's home for the CoSFM in Kalimpong had an extensive collection of Tibetan metalwork that he wished to be retained within the homes after his death and turned into a small museum. On his death his children gave many of the pieces to friends and supporters, and the rest have since been lost. Notes and Letters, [Acc. 6073 - 1. F.1], Reverend John Anderson Graham Papers. With thanks to Desmond Myers, Dr. Graham's Homes, for both his hospitality and a lengthy discussion about the potential locations of Graham's collection.

²²⁹ In comparison to, for example, Anglican missionaries working in India, who believed that working amongst higher castes was more advantageous. Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 4.

The missionary reaction to Tibetan Buddhism and the ambiguity and hostility that developed during the late nineteenth century towards the problem of ascribing it the title of 'religion' suited the missionary discourse. By characterising practices as idolatry, or using terms such as 'devil worship', Tibetan Buddhism could be objectified as false religion, and could be abstracted from its context as a legitimate part of Tibetan culture, thus making room for Christian truth.²³⁰ Even Thomson, whose collection shows a more open interest in Tibetan Buddhism, and Tibetan culture more generally, includes signs of such attitudes, such as the labels on two of the *damaru*, which state 'drum used in lamaistic and demon worship'.²³¹ I would argue that the lack of items within these collections which are likely to have come from monasteries and which may have, aesthetically at least, been more reminiscent of scholarly perceptions of Tibetan Buddhist material culture, was as much about a concern with theological principles as it was a matter of practicality. Though 1904 is assumed to be the moment that the secrets of the Tibetan Buddhist monasteries were blown open, in reality there were plenty of monasteries in India, China and Mongolia that missionaries had access to: they merely chose not to engage extensively with them.

As Orientalist scholars in European libraries attempted to come to terms with the tensions between textual Tibetan Buddhism and the 'lamaism' being encountered along India's borders, missionaries were some of the first imperial agents to engage with that tension, and look for a means of resolving it, often in

²³⁰ Cf. Thomas, *Entangled Objects*, 153-156.

²³¹ Label for *damaru* drum (Glasgow A.1940.22d&e).

quite personal ways. Innes-Wright clearly subscribed to broader racial stereotypes that were bound up in imperialist discourse and Ridley found a way of satisfying both his personal and working needs within acceptable boundaries of encounter with Tibetan people – including encounters within the walls of a monastery. By contrast, Annie Taylor was feared to have ‘gone native’, and was assumed to have taken the CIM’s understanding of integration too far, for which she was returned to Britain and institutionalised.²³² Certainly her collection shows the clearest connection between the missionary as an individual and Tibetan material culture as part of a way of missionary life, through the inclusion of many items known to be personal to Taylor herself. If she did in fact have a nervous breakdown, then she may have been less concerned about how her relationship to Tibetans and Tibetan culture was outwardly projected. Taylor as a collector is far easier to ‘read’ within her collection, which highlights personal experiences, than either Ridley or Innes-Wright, whose collections show closer connections to imperial and organisational ways of thinking.

As a group, these missionary collections produce a mosaic of objects, arising from interlocking, though not always parallel, concerns. They display a picture of the broader trends in missionary collecting that generally adhered to

²³² Taylor appears to have had some sort of nervous breakdown as a result of the 1904 Expedition, which saw many Tibetans, with whom she had increasing empathy in light of the British advancement, unnecessarily killed. Charles Bell recorded in his diary that during the 1904 Expedition ‘Younghusband had offered to send an escort to bring her to safety, saying that he could not be responsible for her safety if she stayed at Yatung... she declined and gave out that Colonel Younghusband had planned to have her murdered by the sepoy’s’. Notebook (n.d.), *Charles Alfred Bell Chumbi Valley*, 111, Private Collection. In 1907 Taylor’s sister travelled to Yatung and brought her back to Britain, where she was institutionalised in Otto House, Fulham, until her death in 1922.

the worries and intentions of missionary organisations, as well as wider imperial concerns of the late nineteenth century. Concurrently, the detail within these collections points to the role of individuals; as emissaries of European culture and of Christianity, and as British agents using the opportunities presented to them through missionary work for travel, exploration and a challenging working environment.

In many ways Scottish missionary collections appear to have fostered an image of Tibet that fitted into a well-established imperial construct. The opening line of William Carey's introduction to Taylor's 1893-1894 diary (published in 1902) states 'this book takes nothing for granted except the general ignorance of so remote a subject [as Tibet]'.²³³ Most missionaries viewed themselves as the 'advanced guard' to imperial expansion, even if they were located in areas of relatively dense European population. Although projecting more empathy than people such as Waddell, critically their methods for presentation of those nineteenth century encounters promoted the alien aspects of Tibetan culture just as much as other imperial agents.²³⁴ The change in understanding from Thomson to Innes-Wright shows how, at the end of the nineteenth century, such attitudes quickly became more fixed and bound up in imperial ideas of race and culture.

The missionary construction of Tibet through material culture was less focused on portraying Tibet as a geographical space or Tibetan people and their culture. Rather, material culture provided a set of tools, and the discussions

²³³ Carey, *Travel and Adventure in Tibet*, 18.

²³⁴ Bray, *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Missionary Images of Tibet*, 33.

around those objects provided the context for the development of particular aspects of missionary work.

2.8 Conclusions: missionaries as collectors

Imperial and organisational ideologies, as well as personal experiences, were foundational to missionary constructions of Tibet. The use of Tibetan material culture not only changed missionary practice, but had a wider impact on Victorian understandings of Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism. Though evangelical Protestantism dominated the working practices of most missionaries, the establishment of hospitals and clinics and a continued, though subtle, interest in commercial activities, linked missionary and imperial needs.²³⁵ Moreover, the history of the missionary enterprise was largely a story of mutual negotiations, between missionaries and other imperial agents as well as between missionaries and indigenous communities, which included many tensions, created by the Empire's huge diversity of interests and requirements.²³⁶

What missionaries collected and how they collected was of significant interest to a wider British audience, even if their verbal and textual accounts were sometimes viewed with trepidation. By the late nineteenth century, when

²³⁵ For example, Dr. J.G. Cormack went on to operate a series of fee-paying medical practices and training schools across China, which was very much a commercial, as well as caring, enterprise.

²³⁶ Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines*, 18. In the context of Kalimpong, a study of the relationship between Dr. Graham and other imperial agents in the vicinity (including Lord Carmichael, Charles Bell and a host of tea-plantation managers) would provide significant insight into these networks and negotiated relationships.

most of these collections were made, missionaries were losing their privileged position as people 'on the spot', as anthropology, geography and the natural sciences professionalised and formed networks that would exclude the amateur. Despite this, the fact that these objects formed the basis of the Tibetan collections in both the EMSA and Glasgow Museum, show that not only did missionary collections actively feed into the Scottish public's construction of Tibet, but provided the very foundations for it. Whilst missionaries collected primarily for their own needs, their objects fitted into the late nineteenth century scramble for the production of information and a desire to 'complete' British imperial geographic knowledge.²³⁷ Waddell's 'scholarly' work in 1894, along with a substantial series of travelogues (some written by missionaries), helped put Tibet on the map just at the moment missionary the enterprise's focus on Tibet exploded. Whilst a major thrust of missionary writing (and collecting) all over Asia was to condemn Hindus and Buddhists and any practices or groups that linked to them (monks, the caste system, 'superstition'), the by-product of such activity was a significant, if under appreciated, contribution to the empirical study of Indian, Tibetan and Chinese societies.²³⁸ That so few missionaries are known to have brought over 500 Tibetan objects into Scotland, suggests that an even greater number did so unrecorded.

As pioneers of collecting, missionaries were not just constructing the foundations of British understandings of Tibetan culture, but the very position

²³⁷ The maps that Thomson took on his journey through Sikkim are a powerful symbol of this obsession; where Tibet is left completely blank, contrasting to the heavily lined cartography of Sikkim and neighbouring Nepal. See Appendix E.

²³⁸ Cohn, *An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays*, 145.

of Tibetan material culture within British scholarly and aesthetic circles. These tangible objects brought Tibet out of the books of the British Library and into the public domain. Not only were these objects making their way into the treasure houses of the Empire – Britain’s civic museums – but missionary societies were establishing their own collections and exhibitions, thereby actively engaging in the same processes of display and interpretation as scholarly societies and other imperial agents.²³⁹

This process of ascribing a place for Tibetan culture within Britain’s understanding of the greater world ‘out there’, moved forward rapidly through the late nineteenth century, bound up in ideas of race, culture and the potential relations between Britain and people beyond the boundaries of empire. When the 1904 Expedition finally gained access for the British to Tibetan territory, the encounter changed again, and challenged the construction of Tibetan culture that missionaries had cultivated over several decades. How those changes effected the collection and interpretation of Tibetan material culture, and the new ways in which Tibetan objects were given public roles by their collectors, will be the focus of the next chapter.

²³⁹ For further information on the relationship between missionary societies and their institutional collections see Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 148-177 and for the London Missionary Society specifically, see Wingfield, “The Moving Objects of the London Missionary Society”.