

The Younghusband-Waddell Collection and Its People: the Social Life of Tibetan Books Gathered in a Late-colonial Enterprise.

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The Younghusband-Waddell Collection and Its People: the Social Life of Tibetan Books Gathered in a Late-colonial Enterprise

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[« Previous Article](#) | [Table of Contents](#) | [Next Article »](#)

[Abstract](#)

[Full Text](#)

[Media](#)

[References\(o\)](#)

[Cited By \(o\)](#)

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In this paper I follow the social life of the Tibetan books belonging to the Younghusband-Waddell collection. I show how they can transform from ritual objects into loot, into commodities and into academic treasures and how books can have networks and shaping identities. Exploring connections between books and people, I look at colonial collecting, Or

visions from an unusual perspective in which the social life and cultural biography of people and things intertwine. By following the trajectory of these literary artefacts, I show how their traces left in letters, minutes and acquisitions functioned in the functioning of academic institutions and their relationship to imperial governing structures and individual aspirations in the lives of a group of scholars who were involved with this collection in different capacities and whose deeds are unexplored. This is a new perspective to the study of this period, which has so far been largely focused on the deeds of key individuals and the institutions in which they operated. Finally, I show how the books of this collection have continued to exercise their attraction on twenty-first-century scholars, both Tibetan and international, linking them through digital technology and cyberspace.



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