

## **Resources for the Study of Thai/Siamese Manuscripts (pigments, collections, material/paper, and meaning)**

In Thailand, there are individual manuscript libraries in every province in the country. Most of these are small and uncatalogued collections, but some are larger, like those found in Lampang, Phrae, and Lopburi (to name a few). Manuscripts are also kept in protected archives in Chiang Mai, Ubon Ratcha-thani, Bangkok, London, Paris, Washington, DC, as well as at the National University of Singapore, the University of Michigan, Cornell University, and the University of California at Berkeley. There has been no comprehensive catalogue for these manuscripts. Henry Ginsburg, whose life is described by Jana Igunma in her article on British collections of Thai manuscripts, was not the first western scholar to be interested in Thai manuscripts, but he was certainly the first person to make them the subject of his scholarly life's work. He wrote two major books on Thai illuminated manuscripts: *Thai Manuscript Painting* (1989) and *Thai Art and Culture: Historic Manuscripts from Western Collections* (2000). He was actively working on studying collections of Thai manuscripts and paintings abroad before his sudden and untimely death in 2007, when he was only sixty-six years old. Ginsburg was a mentor to many, including me, and I am sure that he would have been thrilled to see greater attention paid to the surveying and historicizing of major collections like the Fogg Collection, studied here. David Wharton and Harald Hundius have begun to combine catalogues of Thai manuscripts as well as digitize the massive collections in order to create a master list and make the manuscripts available online. I was honored to help fund their online project, The Digital Library of Northern Thai Manuscripts (DLNTM; now online at [www.lannamanuscripts.net](http://www.lannamanuscripts.net)), with funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, the State Library of Berlin, and the University of Pennsylvania. The extremely useful DLNTM is a monumental achievement. This project would not have been possible without the work of Singkha Wannasai, Rujaya Abhakorn, and their teams in Chiang Mai who have tirelessly documented manuscripts in the region for decades. Excluding the catalogues of inscriptions and reference works that are useful for studying local manuscripts, a partial list of catalogues of the major manuscripts in Thailand includes: *Raichuenangseueboran lan na ekasan maikrofilm khong sathapan wichai mahawithyalai chiang mai, 2521–2533* [1978–90] (Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, 1990); *Banxi maikro-film khwaeng luang phrabang lae ho phaphitaphan khwaeng luang phrabang lae hongsamut haeng xat lao* (printed at the National Library of Laos in 1999 and updated periodically [the German Foreign Office, Chiang Mai University, and Chulalongkorn University also have copies of these catalogues]); *Balee Buddharaksa, Pali Literature in Lan Na: Catalogue of 89 Manuscripts with Summaries [Thai]* (Chiang Mai: SRI, 2543 [2000]); and (Phra Maha) *Athi-son Thirasilo, Prawat Khamphi Bali* (Bangkok: Mahamakut Monastic

University Press, 2541 [1998]). Catalogues for the Center for the Promotion of Art and Culture (CPAC) are produced and updated periodically for each of the seven Thai provinces. They are available at the CPAC and have not been published or distributed. For a relatively complete list of catalogues in which Central and Northern Thai manuscripts appear, see the “Abbreviations and References” section in the first two volumes of the *Materials for the Study of the Tripitaka*, compiled, translated, and edited by Peter Skilling and Santi Pakdeekham (vol. 1: *Pāli Literature Transmitted in Central Siam* [Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, 2002]; vol. 2: *Pāli and Vernacular Literature Transmitted in Central and Northern Siam* [Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, 2004]). Skilling and Santi reproduce with commentary and an introduction a list of Pali texts. Prince Damrong’s edition of the *San. gītyavam. sa phongsawadan ruang sanggayana Phra Dhammawinai Somdet Phra Wanaratana Wat Phra Chetuphon nai Ratchakan thi 1 thang phasa Magadha* (Bangkok: Hang hun suan camkatsiwphon, 2421 [1923]). See also François Lagirarde, “Les manuscrits en Thai du Nord de la Siam Society,” *Journal of the Siam Society* 84, no. 1 (1996): 91–155; J. Liyanratne, “Pāli manuscripts from Sri Lanka in the Cambridge University Library,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 18 (1993): 131–48; Sommai Premchit, *Lan Na Literature: Catalogue of Palm Leaf Texts in Wat Libraries in Chiang Mai* (Chiang Mai: SRI, 1986), updated from Sommai Premchit with Puangkham Thuikaeo’s catalogue of 1975 in Thai. The Siam Society in Bangkok produces several short catalogues of their manuscript holdings (*Banchi ekasan boran*) that can be read at the library. Several texts by Supaphan na Bangchang are useful for the study of Thai (especially Northern Thai) manuscript traditions. To carry out research and consult Thai collections, the permission of the National Research Council of Thailand is often necessary. The sixty-three-volume *Saranukhrom wathanatham Thai* (Encyclopedia of Thai Culture), published by Thai Wanich beginning in 1999, is useful for some background on individual manuscripts and texts. Volker Grabowsky has worked closely with German collections at the Museum für Völkerkunde (Berlin, Germany), the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, and the Museum für Indian Art in Dahlem. Examining various lists and indirect information compiled by the late Klaus Wenk and the late Heinz Bechert (Wenk, *Laotische Handschriften* [Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1975]; and Bechert, *Abkürzungsverzeichnis zur Buddhistischen Literatur in Indien und Südostasien* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990]), and with additional information being compiled by Baas Jarend Terwiel, there could be at least 138 Thai and Lao manuscripts spread across these three collections. However, these have not been properly catalogued, and few have any photographic or digital record. There are also collections at Det Kongelige Bibliotek of Copenhagen for which a descriptive catalogue was compiled by Georges Cœdès and published in 1966 (*Catalogue des manuscrits en pali, laotien et siamois provenant de la Thaïlande*). These manuscripts were collected between 1911 and 1935 and published as part of the *Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Xylographs*

etc. in Danish Collections (COMDC; vol. 2, part 2). Bhikkhu Nyanatusita made available online in 2014, but has not published, “A Preliminary Survey of Pali Palm Leaf Manuscripts in Leiden.” In Paris, the Bibliothèque Nationale (Oriental Division—long housed in the old Richelieu library) has a large collection, and the initial lists are found in Antoine Cabaton’s *Catalogue sommaire des manuscrits sanscrits et pâlis, 2e fascicule-manuscrits pâlis* (Paris: BnF, 1908). He produced several other smaller catalogues, including *Catalogue sommaire des manuscrits indiens, indochinois et malayo-Polynesiens* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1912); and “Fonds indochinois de la Bibliothèque nationale,” “Manuscrits laotiens,” and “Manuscrits siamois,” *Un supplément manuscrit donne les notices des manuscrits Indochinois* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1912). Other resources include *Au Chieng’s Catalogue descriptif des manuscrits du fonds pali de la Bibliothèque nationale* (Paris: BnF, 1956 [updated]); Francis Xavier Tessier, “Catalogue des manuscrits siamois de la bibliothèque Impériale,” compiled in 1858 with comments from Mgr. Pallegoix and Hermann Zotenberg, *Indochinois 512* (Paris: BnF, 1912); and Petrus Voorhoeve’s “Additions et corrections au catalogue de Cabaton” (an insertion placed in the Cabaton catalogue in 1952 in the BnF). The short book by Annie Berthier (*Manuscrits, xylographes, estampages: Les collections orientales du département des manuscrits* [Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 2000]) has additional, but not comprehensive information. Jacqueline Filliozat has produced a number of useful catalogues, including “Catalogue of the Pali Manuscript Collection in Burmese and Siamese Characters Kept in the Library of Vijayasundararamaya Asgiriya,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 21 (1995): 135–92; and “Survey of the Burmese and Siamese Pāli Manuscript Collections in the Wellcome Institute,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 19 (1993): 1–42. She also provides a helpful guide: “Documents Useful for the Identification of Pāli Manuscripts of Cambodia, Laos and Thailand,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 16 (1992): 13–55. Additional information is given in Ernst Haas, *Catalogue of Sanskrit and Pali Books in the British Museum* (London: Trübner & Co., 1876); L. Barnett and D. Barnett, *A Supplementary Catalogue of Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit Books in the Library of the British Museum Acquired During the Years 1906–1928* (London: British Museum, 1988); and Cecil Bendall, *Catalogue of Sanskrit, Pali, and Prakrit Books in the Library of the British Museum Acquired During the Years 1876–1892* (London: British Museum, 1893). Japanese scholars Kazuko Tanabe, Yohei Shimizu, and Toshiya Unebe have worked extensively with the Nittaiji in Nagoya and the Otani University Library’s collection of Thai manuscripts and have produced a *Catalogue of Palm Leaf Manuscripts Kept in the Otani University Library* (Kyoto: Otani University, 1995). I am grateful to my friend Yohei Shimizu for providing me with a copy of this beautifully produced catalogue. I thank him, Tanabe, and Unebe for guiding me in Nagoya in 2014. There are also a few manuscripts (undocumented) included in the very large (160,000- book) Thai collection at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University. Many of these resources and the history of their development are described in

detail in the articles in the special collection I edited, especially in the introduction called “Illuminating Archives: Collectors and Collections in the History of Siamese Manuscripts,” published in the *Journal of Manuscript Studies* (vol. 2.1, 2017) with articles by Claudio Cicuzza (on Italian collections), Toshiya Unebe (on Japanese collections), Barend Jan Terwiel (on German collections), Jana Igunma (on British collections), Peter Skilling (on Thai collections), Susanne R. Kerekes and Justin McDaniel (on American collections), and McDaniel (on Irish collections). Recently, Jana Igunma and San San May published the beautiful overview *Buddhism Illuminated: Manuscript Art from Southeast Asia* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018). Igunma’s regular blog posts and website at the British Library are also excellent sources of information on new discoveries in manuscript studies. See <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-andafrican/>. Volker Grabowsky’s work and mentorship has helped Hamburg University’s Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures to emerge as one of the leading research centers in the world for the study of Southeast Asian manuscript cultures, especially in Laos and northeast Thailand. See regular updates here: [https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/index\\_e.html#termine](https://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/index_e.html#termine). Recently, there have been excellent studies of single manuscripts in the Siam/Thai tradition. For example, see the excellent study by Naomi Appleton, Sarah Shaw, and Toshiya Unebe, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha: An Illustrated Chanting Book from Eighteenth Century Siam* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013), which describes a single, late eighteenth-century Siamese manuscript held in Oxford’s Bodleian Library (MS Pali a. 27 (R)). This manuscript includes illustrations of parts of the last ten jātaka, followed by the Life of the Buddha. Manuscript illustrations of the Life of the Buddha are extremely rare even though they are common on monastery murals, making this manuscript a rare find. This book will become a model for future studies of manuscripts in Southeast Asia and inspire codicologists, art historians, paleographers, and scholars of the history of the book in Europe, the Islamic world, and East and South Asia. It is also an ideal book to use in introducing students to Siamese Buddhism and manuscript studies. Pattaratorn Chirapravati’s *Divination au royaume de Siam: Le corps, la guerre, le destin* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011) is another close study of a single manuscript. It looks at a manuscript dated to around the 1830s in the collection of the Bodmer Museum in Geneva (Switzerland). The single manuscript has three different texts: *Tamrā phichaisongkhram* (Treatise on the Art of War), *Tamrā nuat* (Treatise on Pressure Massage), and *Phrommachāt* (Divination Manual). Chirapravati provides a full facsimile edition in the creative form of a leporello book and a descriptive study of the text. Although it is primarily a study of Cambodian manuscripts, Trent Walker’s monumental and magisterial dissertation, “Unfolding Buddhism: Communal Scripts, Localized Translations, and the Work of the Dying in Cambodian Chanted Leporellos” (2018) at the University of California at Berkeley is an extremely detailed,

thorough, and clearly written resource for students of Buddhist manuscripts in Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. It sets the new standard in the field.