

# Joseph F. Rock Ethnographic and Exploration Films, 1928-1932

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Title</b>	Joseph F. Rock Ethnographic and Exploration Films
<b>Dates</b>	1928-1932 (inclusive) 1928 1932
<b>Quantity</b>	4 films : 4 reels (1325 feet): silent, black and white; 16mm
<b>Collection Number</b>	201502
<b>Summary</b>	Contains films shot between 1928 and 1932 by Dr. Joseph F. Rock on his numerous expeditions into the remote border region between China and Tibet. Subjects include religious ceremonies of the Naxi people, and exploration. The films were compiled with intertitles added in 1954 by the Department of Anthropology and the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington.
<b>Repository</b>	<a href="#">University of Washington Libraries, Media Archive</a> University of Washington Libraries Media Archive University of Washington Box 352900 Seattle, WA 98195-2900 Telephone: 206-543-6051 <a href="mailto:medialib@uw.edu">medialib@uw.edu</a>
<b>Access Restrictions</b>	Due to preservation concerns, original reels are not available to the public. Access copies are available through the Libraries' catalog and streaming versions are available. Please contact the Media Archive at <a href="mailto:medialib@uw.edu">medialib@uw.edu</a> with any questions.
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Sponsor</b>	A 2016 NFFP Basic Preservation Grant was awarded to this collection for the creation of new film prints and scans.

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## Biographical Note

Joseph Rock was born in Vienna in 1884 to servants of a nobleman. From a young age he was insatiably curious about the world, teaching himself Chinese by using books from his father's employer's library. Even though his father intended for him to join the clergy, upon graduating from school in 1905 he signed on as a steward on a ship bound for New York. Arriving in America with no possessions, he sold his steward's uniform and began supporting himself by working various odd jobs. Suffering from Tuberculosis he decided to leave the North East for warmer climates, and wound his way to Hawaii by 1907. Despite never having attended college, in Hawaii he assumed the title of Dr. Rock and was able to teach himself the science of botany quickly enough to become the first Botanical Collector in the US Division of Forestry in the Territory of Hawaii, and ultimately a professor at the College of Hawaii (now the University of Hawaii). He was naturalized as an American Citizen in 1913.

It was in his role as botanist that he was first contracted to go to China in 1922 by the US government, and it was in China where he would stay for the better part of the next twenty-seven years. He established his base of operations in the remote Yunan Province, from which he conducted expeditions to study the geography and flora of the area, which was at the time little known to western nations. Rock also was fascinated with the culture and religion of the local Naxi people and devoted decades to creating the only existing dictionary of their pictographic language.

## Content Description

Collection consists of four films created with footage shot between 1928 and 1932 by Dr. Joseph F. Rock on his numerous expeditions into the remote border region between China and Tibet. The films were compiled with intertitles added in 1954 by the Department of Anthropology and the Far Eastern and Russian Institute at the University of Washington.

Three of the films portray religious ceremonies of the Naxi People who practice a form of Tibetan Buddhism. They revolve around dances representing deities, spirits and demons as well as showing scenes of processions and the Naxi People. The fourth film documents an early exploration of Mi-nyag mountain (better known as Mt. Gongga).

## Use of the Collection

### Alternative Forms Available

The films in this collection have been digitized, and are available through the [UW Libraries Internet Archive page](#).

## Administrative Information

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Reel		
JFR 1	Na Khi Har La Llu Dances 1 film(400 feet) : silent, black and white; 16mm The people of Na Khi Village (at the foot of the Li-Chiang snowrange in Yunan province) demonstrate the dance for the propitiation of suicide, performed specifically for Dr. Rock to film. The ceremony features dancers moving around an alter containing paper dolls representing suicides and doing ritual battle with demons. Title cards explain the steps of the ceremony.	1928
JFR 1	Feast of Tsong Kha Pa	1928

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	1 film(250 feet) : silent, black and white; 16mm Depics a Tibetan Buddhist religious celibration with processions and dancers representing spirits.	
JFR 1	Expedition to Mi Nyag 1 film(450 feet) : silent, black and white; 16mm Documents a journey into Sikang Province, China, and a first exploration of Mi-nyag mountain (now known as Mt. Gongga). Rock's expedition was the first western expedition to this mountain. Shows scenes of camp life and river crossings with pack animals.	circa 1930
JFR 1	Na Khi Dances 1 film(225 feet) : silent, black and white; 16mm Ho Hua-t#ing, Na-khi dto-mba (shaman) from west of the Li-chiang snow range in Kunming demonstrates dances of the various Na Khi deities during which the particular enemy of each god is vanquished.	1932

## Names and Subjects

### Subject Terms :

Naxi (Chinese people)--Religion

### Personal Names :

Rock, Joseph F. (Joseph Francis), 1884-1962

### Geographical Names :

China

China--Asia--East Asia

Sino-Tibetan Border Peoples--Asia--East Asia

Tibetans--Asia--Central Asia

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