

# Buddhist manuscript: Vinaya-pitaka

Southeast Asian Collection

Accession Nr.: **6121** 

Type: **books and manuscripts; manuscript**

Date of production: **early 19th century**

Place of production: **Myanmar (Burma), Southeast Asia**

Materials/Technique  
s: **wood, textile, lacquered, gilt, painted**

Dimensions: **length: 57 cm  
width: 12 cm**

The Vinaya-pitaka is the shortest of the three books of the Tipitaka (Pali Canon), the collection of texts of Theravada Buddhism. Meaning: basket of disciplinary rules - it deals with the ordination and initiation of monks and the regulations for monastic life. The production of this type of manuscript was considered a meritorious act, and was usually undertaken when the son of a family entered the order.

The book in the picture is of the kamawa-sa (Burmese; Pali: kamma-vaca) type, usually consisting of sixteen pages between two lacquered wooden boards. The manuscript in question, however, is incomplete, consisting of only ten pages. The base material of the sheets, which can be thin metal, wood or ivory, is in this case a thick, multi-layered cotton textile, coated with an orange-red lacquer and gilded. The text, which here consists of six lines per sheet, is written in black lacquer and in an angular script (magyi-zi, 'tamarind seed'). The front and back of the pages are decorated with leafy vines, birds and celestial creatures, which are repeated on the lacquered covers.

