



"Discourse, Authority, Demand: The Politics of Early English publications on Buddhism."

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Though his work has now, as Charles Hallisey puts it, sunk into well deserved obscurity, the first two books on Buddhism by Wesleyan missionary to Ceylon, the Rev. R. Spence Hardy, (*Eastern Monachism*, 1850, and *Manual of Buddhism*, 1853) were immensely influential in the early formation of Western knowledge of Pali Buddhism, and therefore of how 'real' Buddhism, Modern Buddhism, is still generally understood. Since they predated academically authorized texts by almost 3 decades, the crucial decades of emerging public interest, they stood as the one readily accessible source of knowledge, read for example, by American Transcendentalists Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott, providing the basis for Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, for Barthlemy St Hilaire's *The Buddha and His Religion*, and extensively quoted in T W Rhys Davids *Buddhism*.

The paper revisits Hardy's work, describing the political imperatives that shaped its interpretation of Buddhism, its widespread circulation and acceptance in the mid nineteenth century, and its later obscurity. The paper is an examination of the processes of discursive control in the formation of knowledge.