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In memoriam

J.W. de Jong

(15.2.1921-22.1.2000)

MINORU HARA

Professor J.W. de Jong, the Emeritus Professor of South Asian and Buddhist Studies at the Australian National University and co-founder with F.B.J. Kuiper in 1957 of the *Indo-Iranian Journal*, died of cancer on 22nd January 2000 at the age of 78. In September 1999, he had undergone a major operation which did not, however, cure the ailment that had been afflicting him since January 1998. His death was announced to the world by his pupil Royce Wiles, who wrote an obituary in the Canberra Times of 4 February 2000.

Born in Leiden on 15 February 1921, J.W. de Jong was educated in the University of Leiden during the period 1942-1945, reading Chinese as his main subject, and Japanese and Sanskrit as his secondary ones, under such renowned scholars as J.J.L. Duyvendak, J.Ph. Vogel and F.D.K. Bosch. However, the period when he was at the University was during the Second World War and the research atmosphere in the Netherlands was not entirely favourable to his course of study. Therefore, immediately after the war, he went to Harvard (1946), where he studied under W.E. Clark and began a life-long friendship with D.H.H. Ingalls. Later, he spent three years (1947-1950) in Paris with Paul Demiéville where he learnt, among other subjects, Tibetan. Having obtained his Ph.D. in 1949 in Leiden, he also learnt Mongolian and was thus fully equipped for the philological and textual study of Buddhism. The fact that he was gifted with linguistic talents is best illustrated by the legendary story that the young de Jong mastered Danish because he needed to read a single reference work in Buddhism written in Danish. In the same way he proceeded to learn Italian and Russian. As a matter of fact, he wrote a lengthy article, entitled "Recent Russian Publications on the Indian Epic" (*Adyar Library Bulletin* 39 (1975): 1-42). His command over various languages, both Eastern and Western, was the basis for his critical attitude to the study of original texts.

In 1956 he was appointed to the newly established professorial chair in Tibetan and Buddhist studies based in the Kern Institute, but in 1965 he moved to Canberra, when the Faculty of Asian Studies of the Australian National University invited him from Leiden and A.L. Basham from London. He taught there until his retirement in 1986. Under his academic supervision, Buddhist scholars such as A. Yuyama, G. Schopen, P. Harrison and A. Saito completed their doctoral dissertations.

His scholarship as a specialist of Buddhist philology seems to have been already prefigured in his Leiden doctoral thesis of 1949, which was later published in book form, entitled *Cinq chapitres de la Prasannapadā* (1949). As D. SEYFORTH RUEGG remarks (*Indo-Iranian Journal* 43 (2000): 314), it is a philologically meticulous and philosophically well-informed translation, accompanied by an edition of the Tibetan version, of chapters xviii-xxii of Candrakīrti's great commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamakakārikās*. In the same way, his later writings for fifty years were characterized by strict text-critical scholarship, occasionally based upon manuscript material, but always fully equipped with bibliographical information, and often testifying well-balanced philosophical insight. However, his critical scholarship is best illustrated by the enormous number of reviews he wrote, which amount to 700 out of his 870 writings. He used to extensively read research monographs, as soon as they were published, with remarkable rapidity and accuracy, and wrote reviews furnished with critical remarks and additional information. Some of the reviews extended to almost 20 pages (i.e. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 11 (1968): 36-54 etc.); they were more important than the original and became indispensable for further scientific research.

De Jong's extensive reading also resulted in his writing and re-writing historical surveys of Buddhist studies, surveys which took final form in his book, entitled *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America*, published in 1997 by the Kosei Shuppan, Tokyo (pp. 1-183). There he surveyed Buddhism, known for the first time to the West in the writing of Clement of Alexandria of 200 AD, and becoming an object of scientific research in the eighteenth century. His description extended to the present day, ending at 1990. With his command of many languages, classical as well as modern, he produced similar sorts of surveys of the *Mahābhārata* and the cultural contact between Greeks and Indians. The former took form in a lengthy article entitled "The Study of the

Mahābhārata, A brief survey” (*Hokke Bunka Kenkyū* 10 (1984): 1-19 and 11 (1985): 1-21), and the latter in “The Discovery of India by the Greeks” (*Asiatische Studien/Études Asiatiques* 27 (1973): 115-142).

De Jong is also recognized as a unique figure who was able to mediate Buddhist studies, Eastern and Western. As he learnt Japanese in Leiden as a secondary major, he was able to read with remarkable speed and accuracy a number of Japanese publications of Buddhist Studies. His contribution in this respect was immense, for he regularly introduced Eastern Buddhist achievements to the West, while training East Asian Buddhist students along the lines of the age-honoured philological tradition of the West. In a sense he is to be compared to such scholars as G. Bühler and H. Lüders in Sanskrit and Indian Studies who, while themselves studying Indian texts, trained eminent Indian scholars in the methodology of Classical Philology. In effect, he was able to continue and enhance, in the second half of the twentieth century, the tradition established by the French school as it was represented by S. Lévi, L. de La Vallée Poussin and É. Lamotte in the first half. As these scholars in the past had J. Takakusu and S. Yamaguchi as their collaborators in Japan, de Jong was lucky to have similar counterparts such as N. Tsuji, G. Nagao, Y. Ojihara and M. Hattori in Japan.

It was in 1963 that de Jong first visited to Japan and attended the annual meeting of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, where he gave a special lecture on the history of Indian asceticism and another with P. Mus on Borobudur. From that time on, he came to Japan once every ten years, that is, in 1973, 1983 and 1993; his last visit was in the autumn of 1996 as a guest professor at the International College of Advanced Buddhist Studies. In gatherings of Japanese Buddhist scholars he kept insisting on the need for a critical edition of the *Taishō Tripitaka*, citing several example passages. Such an edition is only possible in this country; it is to be regretted that few of our Buddhist specialists appreciated his proposals.

Since the present writer has had another opportunity to write in detail about de Jong’s writings (*Tōhōgaku* 100 (2000): 301-309) and an excellent outline of de Jong’s scholarly contributions has been written by the Tibetologist and Mahāyāna Buddhist specialist, David SEYFORTH RUEGG (*Indo-Iranian journal* 43 (2000): 313-317), below we will only give a list of his publications in their original book form in chronological order.

His publications written either in English or French amount to 871 according to our calculation; they can be broadly classified into the following five categories: books (17), articles (86), reviews (700), translations (2) and others (contributions to *Bibliographie bouddhique* and *Revue bibliographique de Sinologie*, various obituaries, prefaces to his friends' books, etc.). Nonetheless it is not always an easy task to ascertain the exact number of his writings, for the same books were sometimes published twice in different parts of the world (India and Japan) and his books have been translated into various languages. Furthermore, some of his articles and reviews have been twice collected and published in book form. Thus, we have *Buddhist Studies* by J.W. de Jong edited by G. SCHOPEN (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press 1977) and *Tibetan Studies* (Indica et Tibetica 25, Swistal-Ordendorf 1994) by DE JONG himself. Of these, the former contains 27 articles and 39 reviews and the latter consists of 6 articles and 25 reviews with an obituary of G.N. de Roerich. Again, his own bibliography was published twice in the *Hokke Bunka Kenkyū*, first in vol. 14 (1988), nos. 1-532, and then in vol. 25 (1999), nos. 533-824. But we also have the *J.W. de Jong Bibliography 1949-1973* published by the Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University (date not given), which we find again at the end of Hirakawa's Japanese translation (pp.162-208) of de Jong's *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo 1975).

Books

1. *Cinq chapitres de la Prasannapadā* (Paris: Paul Geuthner 1949).
2. *Mi la ras pa'i rnam thar: texte tibétain de la vie de Milarepa* (s-Gravenhage: Mouton 1959).
3. *Nāgārjuna Mūlamadhyamakakārikāḥ* (The Adyar Library Series 109) The Adyar Library and Research Centre 1977.
4. *The Story of Rāma in Tibet: text and translation of the Tunhuang manuscripts* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner 1989).
5. *Textual Remarks on the Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (Pallavas 42-108) (Tokyo: Reiyukai Library 1979).
6. Lin Li-kouang, A. Bareau, P. Demiéville and J.W. de Jong: *Dharmasamuccaya: compendium de la loi*, Pts 1-2 (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve 1946-69), Pt 3 (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve 1973).
7. *A Brief History of Buddhist Studies in Europe and America* (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing Company 1997). Its earlier versions were translated

into Japanese by A. HIRAKAWA (Tokyo 1975) and reprinted in India twice under the same title (Varanasi: Bharat Bharati 1976 and Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications 1987).

8. *Buddha's Words in China* (Canberra 1968) (The 28th G.E. Morrison Lecture in Ethnology).

As is evident, among these eight, 1,3,5,6 are related to Buddhist texts and 2,4 are more concerned with Tibetan Studies proper. Beside these, we have two volumes of his articles as we have mentioned above, and in 1982, his colleagues in Canberra compiled his felicitation volume, to which 35 of his colleagues and friends from all over the world contributed articles:

9. *Indological and Buddhist Studies, Volume in Honour of Professor J.W. de Jong on his sixtieth Birthday*, edited by L.A. Hercus, F.B.J. Kuiper, T. Rajapatirana, E.R. Skrzypezak (Canberra 1982).

All these academic activities of J.W. de Jong as described above should be remembered by all Buddhist scholars, Eastern and Western, whose task consists in continuing and furthering the line which was cultivated by the doyen of international Buddhist scholarship.

Minoru Hara

International College for the Advanced Buddhist Studies
5-3-23 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tokyo