

## Obituary Notice of Professor Doctor Alex Wayman

Alex Wayman, renowned scholar of Indology, Buddhist studies and pioneer Tibetologist, dies at 83. He passed away very peacefully at his home while holding a volume of the Manjushri-nama-samghiti. Born in Chicago, Illinois on January 11, 1921, he died in New York, NY on September 22, 2004. He is survived by his wife Hideko, age 93, and her niece, currently living in Japan.

## Education:

B.A. in 1948, UCLA (Mathematics)

M.A. in 1949, UCLA (Mathematics)

Ph.D. in 1959, UC Berkeley (Sanskrit and Tibetan languages)

Honorary degree, 1978, Nalanda University, Bihar, India

A volume of essays in honour of Prof. Alex Wayman, entitled *Researches in Indian and Buddhist Philosophy*, edited by Ram Karan Sharma, was published in 1993 to commemorate the many years that Prof. Wayman devoted to scholarly research on Indian topics. Information from the "biographical sketch" of Prof. Wayman in this volume (pp. xiii-xxi), aided the writing of this obituary.

In the early 1940's, Alex Wayman served as a stenographer in the U.S. Civil Service. Prior to and during his appointment in Death Valley National Monument, CA, he explored Hindu and Buddhist writings on meditation and yoga. Thereafter, he served in the U.S. Army where he spent over three years in the Phillipines, Okinawa, and Australia. He managed to set aside time while in Australia to complete a course in Metaphysics at University of Queensland.

At UC Berkeley, Wayman was introduced to Buddhist scholarship under Prof. Ferdinand Lessing, (professor of Oriental Languages — Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese), whom he assisted in the translation and annotation of "Fundamentals of Buddhist Tantras," a 15th century treatise by Mkhas grub rje, one of Tsong kha pa's two main disciples. This annotated translation was published by The Hague in 1968, and reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass in 1978. During his studies under Lessing, Wayman also began translating the *Lam rim chen mo*, encouraged by the visiting Mongolian Lama Dilowa Hutukhtu. In 1952, Wayman began studying Sanskrit under Prof. Murray Emmeneau. This laid the foundations for his doctoral dissertation on the *Śrāvakabhūmi* manuscript, as well as future research on Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmi* and Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo*. In 1956, three years prior to finishing his dissertation, Alex married Hideko Shimomaki, whose dedication, kindness, and intelligence proved to be to a tremendous boon to Alex's career as well as to his students who were always warmly welcomed to their home.

After finishing his Ph.D., Wayman taught at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1960-61) and the University of Wisconsin, Madison, (Assistant/Associated Professor, 1961-1967). In the fall of 1966, he was invited to Columbia University as Visiting Associate Professor of Religion, and in July of 1967, he was appointed by Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures as Professor of Sanskrit with tenure. He continued in this position until his retirement in June 1991, when he was awarded the title Professor Emeritus of

Sanskrit, a title that he held from July 1991 until Sept. 2004.

During his tenure as a Columbia Professor, Wayman taught classes in classical Sanskrit language, Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit, Indian Philosophy, the Vedas, Hindu and Buddhist Tantra, Indian Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Tibetan Civilization, and History of Astrology. He served as main advisor to 17 doctoral students in Religion and 5 doctoral students in Indian Languages and Cultures.

Over the course of his life time, Prof. Wayman authored 12 books (three of which were co-authored), and wrote over 100 articles published in scholarly journals. During his years at Columbia and after his retirement, he served as senior editor of "The Buddhist Traditions Series" (with 55 volumes published to date) published by Motilal Banarsidass in Delhi, India.

One of the books Wayman co-authored with his wife Hideko was a translation of the third-century Buddhist scripture Lion's Roar of Queen Śrīmālā. published by Columbia University Press- under the auspices of the Translation Committee on Asian Classics at Columbia. Hideko's Sanskrit and Tibetan sources. In addition to Śrīmālā-sūtra, and Fundamentals of Buddhist Tantras, Prof. Wayman collaborated with Dr. Lozang Jamspal on a three volume edition of the edited text, English translation, and index of the Viśvālocana Sanskrit-Tibetan lexicon. His other works include:

- 1) The Buddhist Tantras (a collection of essays on Buddhist Tantra)
- 2) Yoga of Guhyasamaja-tantra (The Arcane Lore of forty verses)
- 3) Buddhist Insight (collection of articles dealing with topics in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism)
- 4) Calming the Mind, Discerning the Real (partial translation of Tsongkhapa's Lam rim chen mo)
- 5) Chanting the Names of Manjushri
- 6) Ethics of Tibet (bodhisattva section of the Lam rim chen mo)
- 7) Vishvalocana — A Sanskrit-Tibetan Lexicon and English translation (3 volumes)
- 8) Enlightenment of Vairocana (study of the Vairocana-abhisambodhi tantra)
- 9) A Millenium of Buddhis Logic
- 10) Untying the Knots in Buddhism (a collection of 24 articles on various topics)

Shri N.P. Jain, shares his condolences with the Buddhist community, stating, "Our House, Motilal Banarsidass and its Directors, were known to Prof. Wayman some time in the year 1975, which was the beginning of our relationship, when we published his first book: *YOGA OF THE GUHYASAMĀJATANTRA*: The Arcane Lore of forty verses (A Buddhist Tantra Commentary). Prof. Wayman served as an Editor of Buddhist Tradition Series — under which we have published 55 volumes, beginning in 1987. There is absolutely no doubt that his passing away is a great loss, not only to his friends, students and colleagues but also to the entire Buddhist scholarly community for which he worked all his life. He was so close to me that whenever he visited India he used to stay with me. We

will remember his contribution for the years to come.”

Harvard Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies, James Russel, [former Professor of Zoroastrianism in the MEALAC dept. at Columbia], wrote, “Prof. Alex Wayman was a scholar revered, not only by Western scholars of Hinduism and Buddhism, but by Eastern practitioners to great insights but also to the anecdotes about Alex than enlivened the Middle East Department at Columbia for years ... When I was gathering materials for a course on Shamanism, he gave me all sorts of rare off-prints by Heising and others, mostly on Mongolia and the eastern Turks, which proved crucial to my work ... During my last two years at Columbia, Alex’s unfailing humor and always love him and never forget him; and I thank God that my life intersected with his and that of his students. We were the real Columbia.”

Dr. Collette Cox, University of Washington’s Prof. of Asian Languages and Literatures, writes, “I still have a vivid visual memory of my first undergraduate lecture class on Indian Buddhism with Professor Wayman — walking with a stack of books at least two feet high. He put them down, smiled at the assembled students and turned around to begin writing on the board. What came out was a list — the five aggregates of *skandhas*, and then another — the 12 sense spheres of *āyatana*s, and then another = the 12 members of dependent origination or *pratītyasamutpāda*. Professor Wayman then turned around and began to go through each of the terms, comparing, other traditions. It all came in such a flurry that my hand ached trying to get it all down. I then realized that I had to be patient - one could only get a certain percentage of what Professor Wayman had to offer in any one sitting ... We have been the beneficiaries of his brilliance, his unflagging support, and his friendship ever since.”

Many of those who were graduate students of Prof. Wayman benefited from his vast knowledge of Sanskrit and Tibetan sources, and well as his humor, skillful guidance, patience, kindness, and brilliantly unique approaches to explaining subject matter. Despite his productivity as a scholar, Prof. Wayman never neglected his duties as a dissertation advisor, and was quite exemplary in his commitment to overseeing advisees’ dissertation projects to their completion. As he leaves behind such a sizeable legacy of research and writings, he will be sorely missed by colleagues and students.

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Susan S. LANDESMAN