

K. R. Norman: 1925–2020

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Professor Kenneth Roy Norman died peacefully on 5 November 2020 at the age of ninety-five. With his death, the world of Middle Indo-Aryan philology, also known as the study of Pali and Prakrit, has lost one of its most eminent scholars and one of its clearest voices ever.

Roy Norman, as he preferred, was born on 21 July 1925, the son of Clement and Peggy Norman, in Wellington in Somerset where he was educated at Taunton School.

After military service in India and Malaya, he was admitted to Downing College, University of Cambridge, where he read Classics, obtaining his Cambridge MA degree in 1954. He was a Fellow and Tutor in Downing College from 1952 to 1964.

In 1953 Roy Norman married Pamela Raymont, who was to become his lifelong partner. Pam predeceased him by a year and a half. They are survived by a son, Matthew, and a daughter, Felicity.

Roy Norman studied classical philology, which in his student days included the study of the relationship between Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages. He went on to focus on Sanskrit and the dialects associated with Sanskrit—the Prakrits, or Middle Indo-Aryan—and in 1955 was appointed Lecturer in Middle Indo-Aryan Studies in the University of Cambridge, where he remained for his entire academic career.

These were still times when a PhD was not a necessity if you wanted to get on with your research and titles didn't matter much to him ('Mr Norman' would do), but Roy Norman was promoted to Reader in 1978 and Professor of Indian Studies in 1990, and retired as Professor Emeritus in 1992.

He was made a Foreign Member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in 1983, and elected a Fellow of the British Academy (FBA) in 1985. Notably, Roy Norman was the longest serving member of

the Council of the Pali Text Society (1959–2010) and also served as its President from 1981 to 1994. He was editor of the *Journal of the Pali Text Society* from 1985 to 1994.

Roy Norman's contribution to Pali studies was immense. He was editor of the *Pāli Tipiṭakam Concordance* (vol. II, fascicles 4–9) from 1963 to 1973, and of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* (vol. II, fascicles 11–17) from 1981 to 1990. The latter office took him several times to Copenhagen, and he also had lecturing and other engagements from Japan to California over the years.

A bibliography of Roy Norman's published work (mostly under the signature K. R. Norman) appeared in *JPTS* in 2009. Even with the customary abbreviations, it is 36 pages long (*JPTS* 30 (2009): 99–135) and lists 490 items, covering Middle Indo-Aryan in all its manifestations, including the Aśokan inscriptions and Jain studies, so I shall not go into details here. However, the last of the 152 articles listed, 'On translating literally' (*JPTS* 30 (2009): 89–97), brings to mind some of Roy Norman's outstanding, meticulously annotated translations of major metrical texts in Pali, including the *Theragāthā*, *Therīgāthā*, *Suttanipāta* and *Dhammapada*.¹

Among his works two monographs stand out and deserve special mention. One is the monumental *Pāli Literature: Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of all the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, 1983.² The other is *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*,³ which contains Roy Norman's Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Lectures at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1994. They give a vivid and very accurate picture of what Roy Norman's work was all about. In a sense, this became his testament to the study of Buddhism and its inseparable and intimately dependent relationship with philology.

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- 1 *Elders' Verses*, vol. I. Translation of the *Theragāthā*, 1969; reprinted 1990, 1995; 2nd edn 2007; revised translation of the verses: *Poems of Early Buddhist Monks* (*Theragāthā*), 1997). *Elders' Verses*, vol. II. Translation of the *Therīgāthā*, 1971; reprinted 1992, 1995; 2nd edn 2007; revised translation of the verses: *Poems of Early Buddhist Nuns*, 1989. *The Group of Discourses*. Translation of the *Sutta-nipāta*, 1984; revised translation with introduction and notes published as vol. II, 1992; reprinted 1995; 2nd edn (not called vol. II), 2001. *The Word of the Doctrine*. Translation of the *Dhammapada*, 1997; reprinted with corrections 2000. All published by PTS.
 - 2 *Pāli Literature: Including the Canonical Literature in Prakrit and Sanskrit of all the Hīnayāna Schools of Buddhism*, *A History of Indian Literature*, vol. VII, fascicle 2 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1983).
 - 3 *A Philological Approach to Buddhism* (The Bukkyō Dendō Kyōkai Lectures 1994), *Buddhist Forum*, vol. V (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1997; 2nd corrected edn, Lancaster: PTS, 2006).

Roy Norman also leaves us with an outstanding collection of his scholarly output in eight volumes of *Collected Papers* (vols I–VIII, PTS, 1990–2007) which will have a lasting effect on Pali and Prakrit Studies.

Roy Norman's university post was specified as Middle Indo-Aryan, but before his retirement in 1992, it was decided to readvertise it in Sanskrit, so when I became his 'successor' in 1989, Roy was still in post for three more years, due to a short-lived arrangement at the time. Some commission had decided that university faculties or departments could apply for someone to be replaced three years before their retirement. In my case this was extremely beneficial, and in due course we read all the Aśokan inscriptions (in the end twice), lots more epigraphy, Jain texts in Ardha-Māgadhi, the Gāndhāri *Dharmapada*, and literary texts such as the *Sattasai*.

Roy's presence also added significantly to my understanding of how my new work-place worked (or didn't work). His characteristic generosity and support revealed a heart of gold.

In the Faculty of Oriental Studies, coffee at 11 a.m. was one of the things that did work and kept people connected, even if they were from disciplines as diverse as Japanese Studies and Assyriology, and Roy Norman was a regular participant. Whether it was at morning coffee, PTS Council meetings in London or Faculty Board meetings in Cambridge, Roy Norman was always a voice of reason.

In the autumn of 1989, I was still fairly new to computers, whereas Roy was already quite into them and had seen their possibilities for our subjects. Sometimes Roy would knock on my door and say: 'Shall we play?' And we went down to the Faculty's 'computer room' on the 1st floor and 'played'.

When Roy Norman realised that my Sanskrit colleague John D. Smith and I had decided to retain some Pali and Prakrit texts, including some Aśokan inscriptions, as part of the Sanskrit undergraduate syllabus, he was delighted. Some years later, probably in 1995, I was about to teach Rock Edict XIII and realised a few days before the class that I had some questions for Roy. Brushing the questions aside for the moment, his immediate and enthusiastic reaction was: 'Would you like me to teach it?' This he did, and came all the way in from Shepreth for the two-hour class. When I raised the possibility of tape recording him, Roy replied: 'I anticipated that,' and handed me eighteen pages of notes, neatly typed out single-spaced.⁴ There were just three students in the class, and they loved it.

4 The notes were subsequently published in *Indologica Taurinensia* as 'Aśoka's Thirteenth Rock Edict', *IT*: 23–24 (Gregory M. Bongard-Levin Felicitation Volume), 1997–98 [1999]: 459–84 (*Collected Papers*, VIII, no. 135: 45–69).

Roy Norman was also exceptionally able handed, whether it involved mending his car, or more creatively in the realms of pottery or carving things from wood, or creating a real wood full of wonders in his and Pam's fairytale garden in Huttles Green in Shepreth.

Roy Norman's funeral became a limited affair, due to the pandemic restrictions at the time. I watched it online at the invitation of Roy's daughter, Felicity, who brought it a quiet dignity through her speech, reminiscent of Roy. She had also made ninety-five origami butterflies which she distributed at the end of the service, a fitting tribute to a scholar whose work was disseminated far and wide and shall continue to be read all over the world for generations to come.

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