

Primoz Pecenko¹

1947–2007

Dr Primoz Pecenko died suddenly following a heart attack on the evening of the 1 August 2007 while out walking with his family and dog. This was a few days short of his 60th birthday.

Primoz was Senior Lecturer in Eastern Religions and Co-Director of the Centre for Buddhist Studies at the University of Queensland; he was also an Executive committee member of the Australasian Association of Buddhist Studies (AABS), a friend to many of us, and an important contributor to that organization.

Primoz, who completed a Masters degree at Pune in India and a PhD at the Australian National University, was a major figure in Buddhist studies in Australia and his passing represents a great loss to our discipline. He and his wife, Dr Tamara Ditrich, with whom he shared the positions at the University of Queensland, have worked tirelessly to maintain Buddhist Studies at the University of Queensland and to promote Buddhist Studies in Australia.

Primoz's specialization was in Pāli commentarial literature, particularly the sub-commentaries (*ṭīkā*s), a field that has been little researched. One of his major contributions to this field is his edition of the sub-commentary on the Aṅguttara-nikāya (*Aṅguttara-nikāya-ṭīkā*, three volumes to date (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1996, 1997, 1999)). A fourth volume was in progress. This represents only the second critical edition of a Pāli sub-commentary. Primoz also contributed to our understanding of this class of Pāli literature through several important articles, including “Sāriputta and His Works” (*Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. XXIII (1997), pp. 159–79) and “Linatthapakāsinī and Sāratthamañjusā: The *Purāṇaṭīkā*s and the *ṭīkā*s on the Four Nikāyas” (*Journal of the Pali Text Society*, Vol. XXVII, (2002) pp. 61–113).

¹Adapted from an obituary first posted on H-Buddhism on 6 August 2007.

Primoz presented a stimulating paper in the AABS seminar series on Pāli commentarial literature, entitled “Pali Texts and Their Manuscripts: A Case of ‘Lost’ Manuscripts Mentioned in old Pali Bibliographic Sources,” in April, 2006.

Many of Primoz’s publications are in his native tongue, Slovenian. This includes numerous Slovenian translations of Pāli texts, such as the Dhammapada (2001) and Milindapañha (1989, 1990), plus translations of individual suttas, such as the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna-sutta (1988).

At the time of his death, Primoz was engaged in several important and interesting research projects. One entailed editing a Pāli commentarial text that was previously thought to have been lost, but was discovered by him in Burma.² Apart from making this text available to scholars in the form of a critical edition, this work promised to throw light on the creation of commentaries, the nature of the commentarial project, and other hitherto little understood aspects of this field. Another research project entailed the study of the Kuthodaw Pagoda Inscriptional Complex in Burma, which would have helped to establish the relationship between this “edition” of the Pāli canon and other versions current in the Theravada Buddhist world. It further promised to contribute towards our understanding of textual authority in Buddhist communities. Primoz was also working on Buddhist meditation in theory and practice and Pāli bibliographic texts.

Much of Primoz’s research was funded by grants from such prestigious bodies as the Pali Text Society, the Australian Research Council, and ANU and University of Queensland research fellowships.

At the University of Queensland Primoz taught Pāli, Sanskrit, and courses on Buddhism, Hinduism, and World Religion, and supervised numerous postgraduate students including many international students. He was well-respected and liked by his students and will be greatly missed.

²The Pali Text Society hopes to publish Dr Pecenko’s edition of the *Manorathapūraṇī-purāṇa-ṭīkā* in 2010.

Primoz's premature death robs us of a wonderful colleague, an admired teacher, and a great Pāli scholar, who undoubtedly would have gone on to improve our understanding of Pāli texts, specifically Pāli commentarial literature.

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