

Thomas William Rhys Davids

Early life and education

Thomas William Rhys Davids was born in England, at [Colchester](#) in [Essex](#), the eldest son of a Congregational clergyman^[2] from Wales, who was affectionately referred to as the Bishop of [Essex](#). His mother, who died at the age of 37 following childbirth, had run the Sunday school at his father's church.

Deciding on a Civil Service career, Rhys Davids studied [Sanskrit](#) under [A.F. Stenzler](#), a distinguished scholar at the [University of Breslau](#). He earned money in Breslau by teaching [English](#).

Civil service in Sri Lanka

In 1863 Rhys Davids returned to Britain, and on passing his civil service exams was posted to [Sri Lanka](#) (then known as [Ceylon](#)). When he was Magistrate of [Galle](#) and a case was brought before him involving questions of ecclesiastical law, he first learned of the [Pāli language](#) when a document in that language was brought in as evidence.

In 1871 he was posted as Assistant Government Agent of Nuwarakalaviya, where [Anuradhapura](#) was the administrative centre. The governor was Sir [Hercules Robinson](#), who had founded the Archaeological Commission in 1868.

Rhys Davids became involved with the excavation of the ancient Sinhalese city of Anuradhapura, which had been abandoned after an invasion in 993 CE. He began to collect inscriptions and manuscripts, and from 1870-1872 wrote a series of articles for the Ceylon branch of the [Royal Asiatic Society](#) Journal about them. He learned the local language and spent time with the people.

Rhys Davids' civil service career and his residence in Sri Lanka came to an abrupt end. Personal differences with his superior, C. W. Twynham, caused a formal investigation, resulting a tribunal and Rhys Davids' dismissal for misconduct. A number of minor offences had been discovered, as well as grievances concerning fines improperly exacted both from Rhys Davids' subjects and his employees.

Academic career

He then studied for the bar and briefly practised law, though he continued to publish articles about Sri Lankan inscriptions and translations, notably in [Max Müller](#)'s monumental [Sacred Books of the East](#).

From 1882 to 1904 Rhys Davids was Professor of Pāli at the [University of London](#), a post which carried no fixed salary other than lecture fees.

In 1905 he took up the Chair of Comparative Religion at the [University of Manchester](#).

Rhys Davids attempted to promote [Theravada Buddhism](#) and Pāli scholarship in Britain. He actively lobbied the government (in co-operation with the Asiatic Society of Great Britain) to expand funding for the study of Indian languages and literature, using numerous arguments over how this might strengthen the British hold on India. He gave "Historical Lectures" and wrote papers advancing a racial theory of a common "[Aryan](#)" ethnicity amongst the peoples of Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Buddha's own clan in ancient times. These were comparable to the racial theories of [Max Müller](#), but were used to a different purpose. Rhys Davids claimed that Britons had a natural, "racial" affinity with Buddhist doctrine. This part of Rhys Davids' career is controversial.

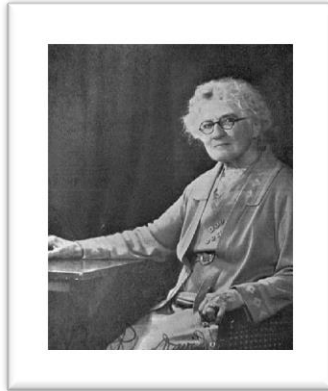
Personal life

In 1894 Rhys Davids married [Caroline Augusta Foley](#), a noted Pāli scholar. Unlike his wife, however, Rhys Davids was a critic and opponent of [Theosophy](#). They had three children. The eldest, Vivien, was involved in the [Girl Guide](#) movement and was a friend of [Robert Baden-Powell](#). Their only son, [Arthur Rhys Davids](#), was a [Royal Flying Corps](#) 25-victory fighter ace who was killed in [World War I](#).

Rhys Davids died on 27 December 1922 in [Chipstead, Surrey](#).

Works

- Rhys Davids, T. W. (1880). *Buddhist Birth Stories (Jataka Tales)*, London
- Rhys Davids, T. W., trans. (1890–94). *Questions of King Milinda, Sacred Books of the East*, volumes XXXV & XXXVI, Clarendon/Oxford, reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi [Vol. 1](#), [Vol. 2](#)
- *Rhys Davids, T. W. (1903). [Buddhist India](#). New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.*
- Rhys Davids, T. W., Stede, William (eds.) (1921-5). *The Pāli Text Society's Pāli–English Dictionary*. Chipstead: [Pāli Text Society](#). [Search inside the Pāli–English Dictionary](#), University of Chicago
- Rhys Davids, T. W. (1907). *Buddhism Its History And Literature*, G. P. Putnam's Sons . New York, Second Edition.
- Rhys Davids, T. W. & C. A., trans. (1899–1921). *Dialogues of the Buddha*, 3 volumes, Pāli Text Society, [Vol. 1](#), [Vol. 2](#), [Vol. 3](#).
- Rhys Davids, T. W.; Oldenberg, Hermann, trans. (1881–85). *Vinaya Texts, Sacred Books of the East*, volumes XIII, XVII & XX, Clarendon/Oxford; reprint: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi (Dover, New York) [Vol. XIII, Mahavagga I-IV](#), [Vol. XVII, Mahavagga V-X](#), [Kullavagga I-III](#), [Vol. XX, Kullavagga IV-XII](#)
- Rhys Davids, T. W. (1891). [The Sects of the Buddhists](#) By T. W. Rhys Davids. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 409–422
- Rhys Davids, T. W. (1901). [Asoka and the Buddha-relics](#) By T. W. Rhys Davids. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, pp. 397–410



Dr. Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids

Dr. Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids (1857–1942) was an English Pāli language scholar and translator, and from 1923-1942 president of the Pali Text Society which was founded by her husband T. W. Rhys Davids whom she married in 1894.

Early life and education

Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids was born on 27 September 1857 in Wadhurst, East Sussex, England to John Foley and Caroline Elizabeth Foley (maiden name Caroline Elizabeth Windham).

Caroline was born into a family with a long ecclesiastic history—her father, John Foley, served as the vicar of Wadhurst from 1847–88; her grandfather and great grandfather had served as rector of Holt,

Worcestershire and vicar of Mordiford, Herefordshire, respectively. She studied at University College, London studying mainly economics,

philosophy, and psychology. While studying there, she also began studying Sanskrit under Reinhold Rost. As a student,

she was already a prolific writer and a vocal campaigner in the movements for poverty relief, children's rights, and women's suffrage.

She completed her BA in 1886 and her MA in 1889.

Marriage and career

A mutual friend introduced Caroline and her future husband T. W. Rhys Davids, knowing that they both shared an interest in Indic studies,

and they married soon afterwards. T. W. Rhys Davids encouraged Caroline to pursue Buddhist studies and do research about Buddhist psychology

and the place of women in Buddhism. Thus, among her first works were a translation of the Dhamma Sangani,

a text from the Theravāda Abhidhamma Piṭaka, which she published under the title *A Buddhist manual of psychological ethics: Being a translation, now made for the first time, from the original Pali, of the first book in the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, entitled: Dhamma-saṅgaṇi (Compendium of States or Phenomena)* (1900); a second early translation was that of the *Therīgāthā*, a canonical work of verses traditionally ascribed to early Buddhist nuns (under the title *Psalms of the Sisters* [1909]).

She obtained the position of Lecturer in Indian Philosophy at Manchester University in 1910 and held that position until 1913.

Between 1918 and 1933 she worked as Lecturer in the History of Buddhism at the School of Oriental Studies (later renamed the School of Oriental and African Studies). While teaching, she simultaneously acted as the Honorary Secretary of the Pali Text Society which had been started by her husband to transcribe and translate Pāli Buddhist texts.

She held that position from 1907 until her husband's death in 1922; the following year, she took his place as President of the Society.

Her translations of Pāli texts were at times idiosyncratic but her contribution was considerable. She was one of the first scholars to attempt translations of Abhidhamma texts,

known for their complexity and difficult use of technical language. She also translated large portions of the Sutta Piṭaka, or edited and supervised the translations of other PTS scholars.

Beyond this, she also wrote numerous articles and popular books on Buddhism; it is probably in these manuals and journal articles where her controversial *volte-face* towards several

key points of Theravāda doctrine can first be seen. Although earlier in her career she accepted more mainstream beliefs about Buddhist teachings, later in life she rejected the concept of *anatta*

as an "original" Buddhist teaching. She appears to have influenced several of her students in this direction, including A. K. Coomaraswamy, F. L. Woodward, and I. B. Horner.

Influence of Spiritualism

Unlike her husband, C.A.F. Rhys Davids became strongly influenced by Spiritualism and possibly by Theosophy. Of the two, it was probably spiritualism and her own education in psychology under

George Croom Robertson at University College London which most influenced her later reinterpretation of Buddhism. She seems to have had little actual interaction with Theosophical groups until

very late in her career, and can even be seen to criticize Theosophical belief in some works. She became particularly involved in various forms of psychic communication with the dead, first attempting

to reach her dead son through seances and then through automatic writing. She later claimed to have developed clairaudience, as well as the ability to pass into the next world when dreaming.

She kept extensive notebooks of automatic writing, along with notes on the afterlife and diaries detailing her experiences, which are held by the University of London.[1]

Family

Arthur Rhys Davids. He died in action on 23 October 1917.

Caroline and Thomas had three children, Vivien Brynhilda (1895), Nesta Enid (1900) and Arthur Rhys Davids (1897), a fighter ace pronounced as having been killed in action during an aerial battle in 1917.

Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids died suddenly in Chipstead, Surrey on 26 June 1942. She was 84.

Works and translations

Library resources about

Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids

Resources in your library

Resources in other libraries

By Caroline Augusta Foley Rhys Davids

Online books

Resources in your library

Resources in other libraries

Books[edit]

Buddhism: A Study of the Buddhist Norm (1912)

Buddhist Psychology: An Inquiry into the Analysis and Theory of Mind in Pali Literature (1914)

Old Creeds and New Needs (1923)

The Will to Peace (1923)

Will & Willer (1926)

Gotama the Man (1928)

Sakya: or, Buddhist Origins (1928)

Stories of the Buddha : Being Selections from the Jataka (1929)

Kindred Sayings on Buddhism (1930)

The Milinda-questions : An Inquiry into its Place in the History of Buddhism with a Theory as to its Author (1930)

A Manual of Buddhism for Advanced Students (1932)

Outlines of Buddhism: A Historical Sketch (1934)

Buddhism: Its Birth and Dispersal (1934) – A completely rewritten work to replace Buddhism: A Study of the Buddhist Norm (1912)

Indian Religion and Survival: A Study (1934)

The Birth of Indian Psychology and its Development in Buddhism (1936)

To Become or not to Become (That is the Question!): Episodes in the History of an Indian Word (1937)

What is your Will (1937) – A rewrite of Will & Willer

What was the original gospel in 'Buddhism'? (1938)

More about the Hereafter (1939)

Wayfarer's Words, V. I-III – A compilation of most of C. A. F. Rhys Davids articles and lectures, mostly from the latter part of her career. V. I (1940), V. II (1941), V. III (1942 – posthumously)

Translations[edit]

A Buddhist manual of psychological ethics or Buddhist Psychology, of the Fourth Century B.C., being a translation, now made for the first time, from the Original Pāli of the First Book in the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, entitled Dhamma-Sangaṇi (Compendium of States or Phenomena) (1900). (Includes an original 80 page introduction.) Reprint currently available from Kessinger Publishing. ISBN 0-7661-4702-9.

Psalms of the Early Buddhists: Volume I. Psalms of the Sisters. By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. London: Pali Text Society, 1909, at A Celebration of Women Writers

Points of controversy; or, Subjects of discourse; being a translation of the Kathā-vatthu from the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, Co-authored with Shwe Zan Aung (1915)

Articles[edit]

The Patna Congress and the "Man" By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Journal Of The Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain And Ireland. (1929) pp. 27–36

The Soul-Theory in Buddhism By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1903) pp. 587–591

Buddhism and Ethics By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Buddhist Review Vol. 1 No. 1. (1909) pp. 13–23

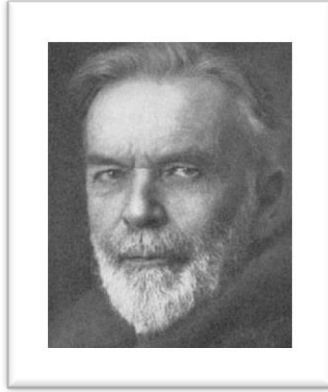
Pali Text Society By Shwe Zan Aung and C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. (1917) pp. 403–406

Original Buddhism and Amṛta By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. Melanges chinois et bouddhiques. July 1939. pp. 371–382

Intellect and the Khandha Doctrine By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Buddhist Review. Vol. 2. No. 1 (1910) pp. 99–115

Notes on Early Economic Conditions in Northern India By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. (1901) pp. 859–888

On the Will in Buddhism By C. A. F. Rhys Davids. The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. (1898) pp.



Wilhelm Ludwig Geiger

Wilhelm Ludwig Geiger (1856-1943) was a German Orientalist in the fields of Indo-Iranian languages and the history of Iran and Sri Lanka. He was known as a specialist in Pali, Sinhala language and the Dhivehi language of the Maldives. He is especially known for his work on the Sri Lankan chronicles Mahāvamsa and Cūlavamsa of which he made critical editions of the Pali text and English translations with the help of assistant translators.

Life

He was born at Nuremberg, the son of an evangelical clergyman, and was educated especially at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg under the Iranian scholar Friedrich von Spiegel. During his studies, he joined the fraternity Uttenruthia. After completing his Ph.D. thesis in 1878, he became a lecturer on ancient Iranian and Indian philology and then a master at a gymnasium. In 1891 he was offered a chair in Indo-European Comparative Philology at the University of Erlangen, succeeding Spiegel. His first published works were on ancient Iranian history, archaeology and philology. He travelled to Ceylon in 1895 to study the language. He appeared on a stamp in Sri Lanka, in 1989.

The physicist Hans Geiger, inventor of the Geiger counter, was his son.

English Works

The Age of the Avesta and Zoroaster, co-authored with Friedrich Spiegel, translated into English by Dārāb Dastur Peshotan Sanjānā, London 1886.
Civilization of the eastern Iranians in ancient times, with an introduction on the Avesta religion, translated into English by Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana, London 1885–1886.

Zarathushtra in the Gathas, and in the Greek and Roman classics, co-authored with Friedrich Heinrich Hugo Windischmann; translated into English by Dārāb Dastur Peshotan Sanjānā, Leipzig 1897.

The Dīpavaṃsa and Mahāvāṃsa and their historical development in Ceylon, translated into English by Ethel M. Coomaraswamy, Colombo 1908.

The Mahāvāṃsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon, English translation assisted by Bode, Mabel Haynes, Pali Text Society, London 1912.

Maldivian Linguistic Studies, Colombo 1919.

The Language of the Vāddās, Calcutta 1935.

A Grammar of the Sinhala language, Colombo 1938.

Pali Literature and Language, translated by Batakrishna Ghosh from the German original, Calcutta 1943. Revised by K. R. Norman under the title A Pali Grammar, Oxford 1994.

Cūlavāṃsa : being the more recent part of the Mahāvāṃsa, English translation assisted by Christian Mabel Duff Rickmers, Colombo 1953.

Culture of Ceylon in mediaeval times, edited by Heinz Bechert, Wiesbaden 1960.

German Works

Wilhelm Geiger: Ceylon. Tagebuchblätter und Reiseerinnerungen, Wiesbaden 1898.

Wilhelm Geiger und Ernst Kuhn (Hrsg.): Grundriß der iranischen Philologie, Trübner, Strassburg 1896.

Wilhelm Geiger: Dipavamsa und Mahavamsa, die beiden Chroniken der Insel Ceylon, Erlangen, Leipzig 1901.

Wilhelm Geiger: Dīpavāṃsa und Mahāvāṃsa und die geschichtliche Überlieferung in Ceylon, Leipzig 1905.

Wilhelm Geiger und Magdalene Geiger: Pāli Dhamma vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur, München, 1920.

Wilhelm Geiger: Elementarbuch des Sanskrit, de Gruyter, Berlin und Leipzig, 1923.

Wilhelm Geiger: Besprechung zu Heinrich Junker, Arische Forschungen, um 1930.

Wilhelm Geiger: Singhalesische Etymologien. Stephen Austin and Sons, 1936.

Wilhelm Geiger: Beiträge zur singhalesischen Sprachgeschichte, Bayerischen Akad. der Wiss., München 1942.

Wilhelm Geiger: Kleine Schriften zur Indologie und Buddhismuskunde, hrsg. von Heinz Bechert. Steiner, Wiesbaden 1973.

Wilhelm Geiger: Die Reden des Buddha : Gruppierte Sammlung, Saṃyutta-nikāya, translation of Saṃyutta-nikāya, Beyerlein-Steinschulte, Stambach, 1997.



Isaline Blew Horner

Life

On 30 March 1896 Horner was born in [Walthamstow](#) in [Essex](#), [England](#). Horner was a first cousin once removed of the British [Theravada](#) monk [Ajahn Amaro](#).^[2]

Cambridge years

In 1917, at the [University of Cambridge](#)'s women's college [Newnham College](#), Horner was awarded the title of a [B.A.](#) in moral sciences.^{[3][4]}

After her undergraduate studies, Horner remained at Newnham College, becoming in 1918 an assistant librarian and then, in 1920, acting librarian. In 1921, Horner traveled to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India and Burma where she was first introduced to [Buddhism](#), its literature and related languages.^[5] In 1923, Horner returned to England where she accepted a Fellowship at Newnham College and became its librarian. In 1928, she became the first Sarah Smithson Research Fellow in [Pali](#) Studies. In 1930, she published her first book, *Women Under Primitive Buddhism*. In 1933, she edited her first volume of Pali text, the third volume of the *Papancasudani* ([Majjhima Nikaya commentary](#)). In 1934, Horner was awarded the title of an [M.A.](#) from Cambridge. From 1939 to 1949, she served on Cambridge's Governing Body.

From 1926 to 1959, Horner lived and traveled with her companion "Elsie," Dr. [Eliza Marian Butler](#) (1885-1959).^{[6][7][8][9]}

PTS years

In 1936, due to Butler's accepting a position at Manchester University,^{[8][9]} Horner left Newnham to live in [Manchester](#). There, Horner completed the fourth volume of the *Papancasudani* (published 1937). In 1938, she published the first volume of a translation of the [Vinaya Pitaka](#). (She was to publish a translation of the last Vinaya Pitaka volume in 1966.)

In 1942, Horner became the Honorary Secretary of the Pali Text Society (PTS). In 1943, in response to her parents' needs and greater PTS involvement, Horner moved to [London](#) where she lived until her death.^[8] In 1959, she became the Society's President and Honorary Treasurer.

Honors

In 1964, in recognition of her contributions to Pali literature, Horner was awarded an honorary [Ph.D](#) by Ceylon University.^{[3][6]}

In 1977, Horner received a second honorary Ph.D from Nava Nalanda Mahavihara.^[6]

In 1980, [Queen Elizabeth II](#) made Horner an Officer of the [Order of the British Empire](#) (OBE) for her lifelong contribution to [Buddhist literature](#).^{[6][8]}

Books

Horner's books (ordered by first identified publication date) include:

- *Women under primitive Buddhism : laywomen and almswomen* (1930/1975)
- *Papañcasūdani: Majjhimanikāyaṭṭhakathā of [Buddhaghosācariya](#)* (1933)
- *Early Buddhist theory of man perfected : a study of the Arahan concept and of the implications of the aim to perfection in religious life, traced in early canonical and post-canonical Pali literature* (1936/1975)
- *Book of the discipline (Vinaya-pitaka)* (1938), translated by I. B. Horner
- *[Alice M. Cooke](#), a memoir* (1940)^[10]
- *Madhuratthavilāsini nāma Buddhavaṃsaṭṭhakathā of Bhadantācariya Buddhadatta Mahāthera* (1946/1978), ed. by I.B. Horner.
- *Living thoughts of Gotama the Buddha* (1948/2001), by [Ananda K. Coomaraswamy](#) and I.B. Horner
- *Collection of the [Middle Length Sayings](#)* (1954)
- *Ten [Jātaka](#) stories* (1957)
- *Early Buddhist poetry* (1963)
- *[Milinda's questions](#)* (1963), translated by I. B. Horner
- *Buddhist texts through the ages* (1964/1990), translated and edited by [Edward Conze](#) in collaboration with I.B. Horner, David Snellgrove, Arthur Waley
- *Minor anthologies of the Pali Canon (vol. 4): [Vimānavatthu](#) and [Petavatthu](#)* (1974), translated by I. B. Horner
- *Minor anthologies of the Pali Canon (vol. 3): [Buddhavamsa](#) and [Cariyapitaka](#)* (1975), translated by I. B. Horner
- *Apocryphal birth-stories ([Paññāsa Jātaka](#))* (1985), translated by I.B. Horner and Padmanabh S. Jaini



Richard Gombrich

Early life and education

Gombrich is the only child of the classical pianist [Ilse Gombrich](#) and the Austrian-British art historian Sir [Ernst Gombrich](#). He studied at [St. Paul's School](#) in [London](#) from 1950–55 before attending [Magdalen College, Oxford](#), in 1957. He received his B.A. from Oxford in 1961 and his DPhil from the same university in 1970. His doctoral thesis was entitled *Contemporary Sinhalese Buddhism in its relation to the Pali canon*. He received his M.A. from [Harvard University](#) in 1963.

Early work

Gombrich's first major contribution in the field of Buddhist Studies was an anthropological study of contemporary [Sinhalese Buddhism](#) entitled *Precept and Practice: Traditional Buddhism in the Rural Highlands of Ceylon* (1971). This study emphasized the compatibility between the normative Buddhism advocated in canonical texts and the contemporary religious practices of Sinhalese Buddhists. Contemporary Sinhalese religious practices often include such elements as sorcery and the worship of [yakshas](#) and Hindu gods; previous scholars of Buddhist Studies had interpreted these practices as contradictory to or corruptions of the orthodox Buddhism of the [Pali Canon](#). Gombrich argues in *Precepts and Practice* that, rather than being the mark of later corruptions of Theravada Buddhism, these practices can be traced to early periods in Buddhist history. Furthermore, since the worship of deities and rituals involving sorcery are never explicitly forbidden to lay people in the Pali Canon, Gombrich argues against viewing such practices as contradictory to orthodox Buddhism. It is also in *Precept and Practice* that Gombrich lays out his distinction between Buddhism at the cognitive level and Buddhism at the affective level. At the cognitive level, Sinhalese Buddhists will attest to believing in such normative doctrines as [anatta](#), while, at the same time, their actions indicate a supposed affective acceptance of, for example, a transmigrating soul. Gombrich's notion of a cognitive/affective divide in Sinhalese Buddhism has since come under criticism, perhaps most famously by [Stanley Tambiah](#), who considered it simplistic and insupportable.^[1]

Major contributions and concepts

Gombrich has gone on to become one of the 20th century's important scholars of Theravāda Buddhism. His recent research has focused more on Buddhist origins.

Gombrich stresses the importance of relating Buddhist texts and practices to the rest of Indian religion. Rather than studying Buddhism, Jainism, and Vedism in isolation, Gombrich advocates a comparative method that has shed light on both Buddhist thought and Buddhist early history. He has been an active contributor to an ongoing discussion concerning the date of the Buddha's death, and has argued that data supplied in Pali texts composed in Sri Lanka enable us to date that event to about 404 BCE.

Whilst an undergraduate, Gombrich helped to edit the volume of papers by [Karl Popper](#) entitled "Conjectures and Refutations". Since then, he has followed this method in his research, seeking the best hypothesis available and then trying to test it against the evidence. This makes him oppose both facile scepticism and the quest for a method which can in any way substitute for the simple need for critical thought.

He was general editor of the Clay Sanskrit Library from its founding until February 2008.

Meaning of the term "Gombrichian" in Buddhist studies

The term [Gombrichian](#) had already been coined in reference to [Ernst Gombrich](#) for some decades, and continues to be used in the context of art history with that denotation (e.g., "...a Gombrichian willingness to appeal to experimental evidence"),^[2] *however*, the use of "Gombrichian" in reference to Richard Gombrich has an entirely different denotation. In a review of 2003, Jon S. Walters defended the "Gombrichian" approach to textual tradition against the view attributed to Anne M. Blackburn that "colonial/Orientalist" scholarship is "epitomized here by Richard Gombrich".^[3] Whereas the earlier usage of "Gombrichian" seems to indicate a theory specifically set out by Ernst Gombrich in *Art as Illusion*,^[4] the usage of Gombrichian in the context of Buddhist Studies refers more vaguely to an emphasis on working with comparative reference to primary-source Pali texts found throughout Richard Gombrich's career.

Personality and influence

Gombrich has taught at Oxford for over 40 years and continues to do some teaching in retirement. He has supervised about 50 doctoral theses, most of them in Buddhist studies, and taught a wide range of Indological subjects. His students include several members of the Sangha.

He was instrumental in Numata Foundation's endowing a chair in Buddhist Studies at Oxford. On taking mandatory retirement in 2004 he founded the [Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies](#) and, with Geoff Bamford, the Society for the Wider Understanding of the Buddhist Tradition.

He holds strong views on higher education. In 2000, at the invitation of the Graduate Institute for Policy Studies at Tokyo University, he delivered a lecture "[British Higher Education Policy in the last Twenty Years: The Murder of a Profession](#)" and in 2008 he participated in the "Rally of the Impossible Professions: Beyond the False Promises of Security" hosted by the London Society of the New Lacanian School.^[5]

Awards

The [Asiatic Society of Calcutta](#) awarded Gombrich the SC Chakraborty medal in 1993. The following year, he received the [Sri Lanka Ranajana](#) decoration from the [President of Sri Lanka](#).

Publications

- 1 Precept and practice: traditional Buddhism in the rural highlands of Ceylon. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- 2 Teach yourself Sanskrit: an introduction to the classical language. (Editor: Coulson, Michael) London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1976.
- 3 The perfect generosity of Prince Vessantara. (Co-author: Cone, Margaret) Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- 4 On being Sanskritic: a plea for civilized study and the study of civilization. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- 5 Balasooriya, Somaratna, André Bareau, Richard Gombrich, Siri Gunasingha, Udaya Mallawarachchi and Edmund Perry eds. Buddhist studies in honour of Walpola Rahula. London: Gordon Fraser, 1980.
- 6 Bechert, Heinz and Richard Gombrich eds. The world of Buddhism: Buddhist monks and nuns in society and culture. London: Thames & Hudson, 1984. Paperback ed. 1991.
- 7 Dhammapala, Gatara, Richard Gombrich and K.R. Norman eds. Buddhist studies in honour of Hammalava Saddhatissa. Nugegoda, Sri Lanka: Hammalava Saddhatissa Felicitation Volume Committee, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, 1984.
- 8 Theravāda Buddhism: a social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988.
- 9 Gombrich, Richard, and Gananath Obeyesekere. Buddhism transformed: religious change in Sri Lanka. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988. Paperback ed. 1990.
- 10 Editor. Indian ritual and its exegesis. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- 11 Buddhist precept and practice. (Revised edition of 1. above.) Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1991.
- 12 How Buddhism began: the conditioned genesis of the early teachings. London: The Athlone Press, 1996.
- 13 Religious experience in early Buddhism? Eighth Annual BASR Lecture, 1997. British Association for the Study of Religions Occasional Paper 17. Printed by the University of Leeds Printing Service, Leeds [1998].
- 14 Kindness and compassion as means to Nirvana. (1997 Gonda Lecture) Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1998.
- 15 Translation of 9 above into Japanese, trsln Iwao Shima, Kyoto: Hozokan, 2002.
- 16 Translation of 8 above into Japanese, trsln, 2006.
- 17 Theravāda Buddhism: a social history from ancient Benares to modern Colombo. 2nd rev. ed. London: Routledge, 2006.
- 18 How Buddhism began: the conditioned genesis of the early teachings. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2006.
- 19 Gombrich, Richard and Cristina Scherrer-Schaub, ed.: Buddhist Studies: Papers of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, vol.8, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008

Selected Recent Articles

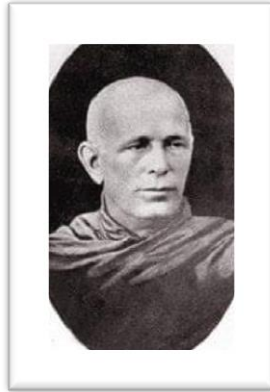
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- Why has British education gone so wrong, and why can't we stop the rot? Popper's nightmare. *Hurly-Burly* (Intl. Lacanian Jnl of Psychoanalysis), (1) Mai 2009, pp. 185–192.

Academic appointments

- Harkness Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund (1961–1963)
- Lecturer, [University of Oxford](#) (1965–76)
- [Boden Professor of Sanskrit](#) (and fellow of [Balliol College](#)), [University of Oxford](#) (1976–2004)
- Visiting Professor, [University of Bristol](#) (1981–82)
- Visiting Professor, [École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales](#) (1982)
- Visiting Fellow, [Princeton University](#) (1986–87)
- F. D. Maurice Lecturer, [King's College London](#) (1994)
- Jordan Lecturer, [SOAS](#) (1994)
- Co-editor, *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (1996–2002)
- Gonda Lecturer, [Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences](#) (1997)
- Edmund Perry lecturer, [Northwestern University](#) (1998)
- Visiting Professor, [Dongguk University](#), Seoul (2008)
- Visiting Professor, [Hong Kong University](#) (2008)



Nyanatiloka Mahathera

Nyanatiloka Mahathera (19 February 1878, Wiesbaden, Germany – 28 May 1957, Colombo, Ceylon), born as Anton Gueth, was one of the earliest westerners in modern times to become a Bhikkhu, a fully ordained Buddhist monk.

Early life and education

Nyanatiloka was born on 19 February 1878 in Wiesbaden, Germany as Anton Walther Florus Gueth. His father was Anton Gueth, a professor and principal of the municipal Gymnasium of Wiesbaden, as well as a private councillor. His mother's name was Paula Auffahrt. She had studied piano and singing at the Royal Court Theatre in Kassel.

He studied at the Königliche Realgymnasium (Royal Gymnasium) in Wiesbaden from 1888 to 1896. From 1896 to 1898 he received private tuition in music theory and composition, and in playing the violin, piano, viola and clarinet. From 1889 to 1900 he studied theory and composition of music as well as the playing of the violin and piano at Hoch'sches Conservatorium (Hoch Conservatory) in Frankfurt. From 1900 to 1902 he studied composition under Charles-Marie Widor at the Music Academy of Paris (Paris Conservatoire).

His childhood was happy. As a child Nyanatiloka had a great love of nature, of solitude in the forest, and of religious philosophical thought. He was brought up as a Catholic and as a child and adolescent he was quite devout.

He went to church every evening and absorbed himself in the book *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. As a child he wanted to become a Christian missionary in Africa and as an adolescent he ran away from home to become a Benedictine monk at Maria-Laach monastery but soon returned. From then on his "belief in a personal God gradually transformed into a kind of pantheism" and was inspired by the prevailing atmosphere of *weltschmerz* (world-weariness).

From the age of seventeen he was a vegetarian and abstained from drinking and smoking.

Around the age of fifteen he began to have an “almost divine veneration for great musicians, particularly composers, regarding them as the manifestation of what is most exalted and sublime” and made friends with musical child prodigies. He composed orchestral pieces and in 1897 his first composition called “Legende” (“Legend”) was played by the Kurhaus Orchestra of Wiesbaden.

At about the same time he conceived a great love for philosophy. He studied Plato’s Phaedo, Descartes, Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason, von Hartmann and especially Schopenhauer. He also had a great interest for languages, foreign countries and peoples. While visiting a vegetarian restaurant he heard Theosophical lecturer Edwin Böhme give a talk on Buddhism which made him immediately an enthusiastic Buddhist. The following day his violin teacher gave him Buddhist Catechism by Subhadra Bhikshu and another book on Buddhism that gave him the desire to become a Buddhist monk in Asia. After studying composition with the well-known composer Charles-Marie Widor in Paris, he played in various orchestras in France, Algeria, and Turkey. In 1902, intending to become a Buddhist monk in India, he travelled from Thessaloniki to Cairo by way of Palestine. After earning the necessary money by playing violin in Cairo, Port Said and Bombay, he travelled to Sri Lanka.

Early years as a Buddhist monk

In 1903, at the age of 25, Nyanatiloka briefly visited Sri Lanka and then proceeded in order to Burma to meet the English Buddhist monk Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya. In Burma he was ordained as a Theravada Buddhist novice (samanera) at the Ngda Khi Pagoda under Venerable U Āsabha Thera in September 1903. As a novice he first stayed with Ananda Metteyya for a month in the same room.

In January or February 1904 he received full acceptance into the Sangha (upasampadā) with U Kumāra Mahāthera as preceptor (upajjhāya) and became a bhikkhu with the name of Ñāṇatiloka. Although his preceptor was a renowned Abhidhamma reciter, he learned Pali and Abhidhamma mostly by himself. Later in 1904 he visited Singapore, perhaps with the intention to visit the Irish monk U Dhammaloka. Having first stayed with U Dhammaloka, with whom he was not impressed, he then stayed for a fortnight with a friendly, but married, Japanese priest. While having to wait for his ship back to Burma, he stayed for a month in an unoccupied Sinhalese temple in Kuala Lumpur. At the end of 1904 he left Rangoon to go to Upper Burma together with the Indian monk Kosambi Dhammānanda, the later Harvard scholar Dhammananda Kosambi. In a cave in the Sagaing Mountains they practised concentration and insight meditation under the instructions of a monk who was reputed to be an arahant.

Desiring to deepen his study of Pali and the Pali scriptures, he went to Sri Lanka in 1905. In 1905–06 Nyanatiloka stayed with the Siamese prince monk Jinavaravamsa, (layname Prince Prisdang Jumsai, who had earlier been the first Siamese Ambassador for Europe) in palm leaf huts on the small island of Galgodiya near Mātara, which Jinavaravamsa called Culla-Laṅkā (“Small Lanka”). Pictures of Nyanatiloka and Jinavaravamsa taken at this monastery suggest that they were doing meditation of the nature of the body by way of observing skeletons or were doing contemplation of death.

Sīlācāra, Dhammānusāri, and Nyanatiloka, Burma, 1907

At Culla-Laṅkā Nyanatiloka ordained two laymen as novices (samanera). The Dutchman Frans Bergendahl, the troubled son of a rich merchant, was given the name Suñño. The German Fritz Stange, training to be a Postal Department official, was given the name Sumano. In the summer of 1906

Nyanatiloka returned to Germany to visit his parents. Sumana, who was suffering from consumption and had to get treatment, also went with him. They returned to Sri Lanka in October.

At the end of 1906 Nyanatiloka returned to Burma alone, where he continued to work on translating the Aṅguttara Nikāya. He stayed at Kyundaw Kyaung, near Rangoon, in a residence built for Ananda Metteyya and him by the rich Burmese lady Mrs Hlā Oung. He also stayed in Maymo in the high country.

At Kyundaw Kyaung he gave the novice acceptance to the Scotsman J.F. McKechnie, who got the Pali name Sāsanavaṃsa. This name was changed to Sīlācāra at his higher ordination. He also gave the going forth (pabbajjā) to the German Walter Markgraf, under the name Dhammānusāri, who soon disrobed and returned to Germany. Markgraf became a Buddhist publisher and founded the German Pali Society (Deutsche Pāli Gesellschaft), of which Nyanatiloka became the Honorary President.

In 1906, Nyanatiloka published his first Buddhist work in German, *Das Wort des Buddha* (The Word of the Buddha, published in English in 1927) and had started on his translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Nyanatiloka gave his first talk, in Pali, in 1907. It was given on a platform in front of the Pagoda of Moulmein with a Burmese Pali expert as interpreter. It was on the Four Noble Truths.

Plans for a Theravada Buddhist monastery in Europe

Upon returning to Germany, Markgraf planned to found a Buddhist Monastery in the southern part of Switzerland and formed a group to realise this aim. Enrico Bignani, the publisher of *Coenobium: Rivista Internazionale di Liberi Studi* from Lugano had found a solitary alpine hut at the foot of Monte Lema Mountain, near the village of Novaggio overlooking Lake Maggiore, and Nyanatiloka left Burma for Novaggio at the end of 1909 or the beginning of 1910. The architect Rutch from Breslau

had already designed a monastery with huts for monks, and the plan was that Bhikkhu Sīlācāra and other disciples were to join Nyanatiloka there.

Nyanatiloka's stay and plans drew a lot of attention from the press and several journalists visited him to write about him and the planned monastery. However, Nyanatiloka suffered heavily from bronchitis due to the cold weather, and also from malnutrition, and after half a year left Novaggio with the German monk candidate Ludwig Stolz, who had joined him at Novaggio, to try to find a better place in Italy or North Africa. In Novaggio he worked on his Pāli-grammatik (Pāli Grammar) and his translation of the Abhidhamma text called Puggalapaññatti (Human Types).

Italy, Tunisia, Lausanne

In Italy, Nyanatiloka first stayed with a lawyer in a town near Turin. After the lawyer tried to persuade Nyanatiloka and his companion Stolz to make harmoniums to make their living, they left to Rome, where they stayed with the music teacher Alessandro Costa. From Rome they went to Naples and took a ship to Tunis, where they stayed with Alexandra David-Néel and her husband for a week. Then they went on Gabès, where they were told to leave Tunisia by policemen. Nyanatiloka and his companion were reluctant to do so because they felt at ease with the Arabs, who according to Nyanatiloka, had a lot of trust in them. After visiting David-Néel again, they left for Lausanne, where they stayed with Monsieur Rodolphe-Adrien Bergier (1852-?) in his Buddhist hermitage called "Caritas." At Caritas, the glass painter Bartel Bauer was accepted by Nyanatiloka as a novice called Koṇḍañño. Soon after Koṇḍañño left to Sri Lanka for further training, the American-German Friedrich Beck and a young German called Spannring came to Caritas. After two more unsuccessful visits to Italy in search of a suitable place for a monastery, Nyanatiloka, Spannring, Stolz, Beck, and perhaps also Bergier, left to Sri Lanka from Genoa on 26 April 1911 to found a monastery there.

Founding of the Island Hermitage

After arriving at Sri Lanka, Nyanatiloka stayed in a hall built for Koṇḍañño in Galle. Ludwig Stolz was given novice ordination at a nearby monastery and given the name Vappo. From Koṇḍañño, Nyanatiloka heard about an abandoned jungle island in a lagoon at the nearby village of Dodanduva that would be a suitable place for a hermitage.

After inspecting the snake-infested island and getting approval of the local population, five simple wooden huts were built. Just before the beginning of the annual monk's rainy season retreat (vassa) of 1911 (which would have been started the day after the full moon of July), Nyanatiloka and his companions moved to the Island.

The hermitage was named Island Hermitage. The island was bought by Bergier in 1914 from its Burgher owner and donated to Nyanatiloka. In September 1911 Alexandra David-Néel came and studied Pali under Nyanatiloka at the Island Hermitage while staying with the monastery's chief supporter, Coroner Wijeyesekera.

Visitors such as Anāgārika Dhammapāla and the German ambassador visited the Island Hermitage during this period. Several Westerners—four Germans, an American-German, an American, and an Austrian—were ordained at the Island Hermitage

between 1911 and 1914. In 1913 Nyanatiloka started a mission for the Sri Lankan “outcastes”, rodiya, beginning in the area of Kadugannava, about 20 km west of Kandy. Some of the rodiya lived and studied on the Island Hermitage. The son of the Rodiya chieftain was accepted by Nyanatiloka as a novice with the name Ñāṇāloka. After the death of Nyanatiloka he became the abbot of the Island Hermitage. Nyantiloka mentions that there were reproaches because of the caste egalitarianism at the Island Hermitage

Sikkim

Nyanatiloka travelled to Sikkim in 1914 with the intention to travel on to Tibet. In Gangtok he met the Sikkimese scholar translator Kazi Dawa Samdup and the Maharaja. He then travelled on to Tumlong monastery where Alexandra David-Néel and Sīlācāra were staying, and returned to Gangtong the next day. Because of running out of finances

Nyanatiloka had to return to Ceylon. He returned to Sri Lanka accompanied by two Tibetans, who became monks at the Island Hermitage.

World War I

In 1914, with the outbreak of World War I, Nyanatiloka was interned by the British in Sri Lanka, deported to Australia (1915), released, travelled to China, interned in China (once China joined the war against Germany), repatriated with Germany in 1919.

Japan

In 1920, after being denied re-entry into British ruled Sri Lanka, Nyanatiloka taught at Japanese universities for five years, including at Taisho University where he was assisted by the legendary eccentric Ekai Kawaguchi, and at Komazawa University where he taught with President Yamagami Sōgen (山上曹源), who had also studied Pali in Sri Lanka. He also met with Japanese Theravada monks. He lived through the 1923 Great Kantō earthquake, which destroyed Tokyo, but was surprised to see universities reopen just two months later.

Return to Sri Lanka & Island Hermitage

In 1926, he was allowed to return to the Island Hermitage.

World War II

In 1939, with the British declaration of war against Nazi Germany, Nyanatiloka and other German-born Sri Lankans were again interned, first in Sri Lanka and then in India (1941). In 1948, he was permitted to return to Sri Lanka.

Sixth Council

In 1954, Ven. Nyanatiloka and Ven. Nyanaponika (one of Nyanatiloka's disciples) were the only two Western-born monks invited to participate in the Sixth Buddhist council (Burma).

Death

He died 28 May 1957, in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and was given a state funeral.

Biography

The English translation of Nyanatiloka's German autobiography — covering his life from his childhood Germany to his return to Ceylon in 1926 after banishment; finished by Nyanatiloka in 1948, but probably based on a draft written in 1926 – was published as part of *The Life of Nyanatiloka: The Biography of a Western Buddhist Pioneer* (written and compiled by Bhikkhu Nyanatusita and Hellmuth Hecker, BPS, Kandy, 2009 [View online](#).) This comprehensive biography contains an introduction, large bibliography, list of disciples, biography of Nyanaponika, photographs, and detailed information on the early history of early German and Western Buddhism.

Work

English titles by Nyanatiloka:

Word of the Buddha: an Outline of the Ethico-philosophical System of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon (1906, 1927, 1967 (14th ed.), 1981, 2001)[2], also freely available online

Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka (1938, 1957, 1971, 1983, 2009)[3]

Buddhist Dictionary : Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines (1952, 1956, 1972, 1980, 1988, 1997, 2004)

Buddha's Path to Deliverance : a Systematic Exposition in the Words of the Sutta Piṭaka (1952, 1959, 1969, 1982, 2000)

Fundamentals of Buddhism: Four Lectures (1994)

Autobiography and biography

The Life of Nyanatiloka: The Biography of a Western Buddhist Pioneer Bhikkhu Nyanatusita and Hellmuth Hecker (Kandy, 2009)[View online](#).

Nyanatiloka also translated traditional Theravadin Pali texts into German including:

the canonical Anguttara Nikaya

the paracanonical Milindapañha

the post-canonical Visuddhimagga.

Buddhism in Germany

Notes

Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, p. 25, endnote 26

^ Jump up to: a b Bullitt (2008).
 Jump up ^ Turner et al. (2010)
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.13–15
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, p.15–16, 20
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, p.17
 ^ Jump up to: a b Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, p.18
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, p.19
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.23–24.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.24–25.
 ^ Jump up to: a b Harris (1998).
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.27. Nyanatiloka wrote that Dhammaloka had a “dubious reputation” (“zweifelhaftem Ruf”), probably referring to controversial actions of Dhammaloka, such as his campaign against Christian missionaries, and appearing in Japanese monk’s robes. See Turner, Alicia, Brian Bocking and Laurence Cox.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.27.
 Jump up ^ ‘Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.25–27, picture plate 2.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.25–27.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.30–31.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.31–35, endnote 71.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.35–39, 193.
 Jump up ^ Bhikkhu Nyanatusita & Hellmuth Hecker, pp.40–44.
 Jump up ^ Buddhist Annual of Ceylon (1929).
 Jump up ^ Pariyatti (2008).

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www.paliresearchinstitute.com