

Phyllis Granoff

Phyllis is by far the most adventurous Sanskritist I have known. She can read anything in Sanskrit (and another ten or twelve languages), and she has the explorer's tastes and instincts: she is drawn to the unknown, the unread, the unstudied, and therefore the most intriguing texts. If this taste requires learning another language, such as Assamese or Oriya, so much the better. She is a scholar of immense learning who sails into the wind, as courageous souls do.

Two stories from the early days of our acquaintance: It seems that a colleague once mentioned to her a method for learning vocabulary in Sanskrit (with its near-infinite lexicon). The idea is to leave a small pencil mark beside the dictionary entry for that word; if these marks accumulate, it's a sign that the item is important and should be remembered. Sanskrit words, by the way, tend to have multiple meanings. So the colleague asked Phyllis what she thought about this method. She said, "It sounds good, but why would anyone ever need to look up the same word more than once?"

And there was a time when I asked her about a Buddhist Maitreya-text in Khotanese. She knew of it, of course, but she apologized: "My Khotanese is a little rusty."

So you can see why Phyllis is a model for me, an example of what a true scholar (with a witty temperament and a discerning eye) can be. Aside from that, she is a true friend, as is the wonderfully irene and sagacious Koichi.

My thanks and blessings to both of you for health and joy for many years to come.

David Shulman