

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS AVADH KISHORE NARAIN

Avadh Kishore Narain, an internationally renowned historian, archaeologist, numismatist, and authority on Buddhism in ancient India and Central Asia, passed away on the 10 July 2013, at his home in Varanasi, Bihar, India. During a long and distinguished academic career, he shaped the study of Indo-Greeks around the world, attracting, influencing, and mentoring generations of scholars and forging life-long scholarly linkages and personal friendships with scholars on several continents. His later research, focused on peoples of Central Asia who followed the Yavanas (Indo-Greeks), especially on the Indo-Sythians (Sakas), Indo-Parthians, and the Yue-Zhi or Kushanas during the reign of Kanishka, was path-breaking, both empirically and conceptually, providing new ideas for current and future research.

Narain was born in 1925 in Gaya, Bihar – near Bodh-Gaya, the birthplace of Buddhist Enlightenment – and grew up on Sarnath and Varanasi, about 160 miles east, where he spent most of his adult life. In 1947, he was awarded his first Post-Graduate Degree in Ancient Indian History, Culture, and Archaeology by Banaras Hindu University (BHU), securing the first of the University and Dayaram Sahni Gold Medal. In 1954, he completed his Ph.D. at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, under the direction of A. L. Basham. His most famous work, *The Indo-Greeks* (OUP, 1957), challenged ideas of Sir William W. Tarn (d. 1957). His long association with his alma mater in Varanasi continued for the rest of his life. He held the Manindra Chandra Nandi Chair of Ancient Indian History & Culture (AIHC) & Archaeology at BHU; became Head of the Department of AIHC&A; Principal of the College of Indology; Dean, Faculty of Arts; and Director of Archaeological Excavations and Explorations. He also had visiting research fellowships and professorships at, SOAS, London; Macalaster College, MN; Visvabharati, Shantiniketan, W. Bengal; the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton; the Institute for Research in the Humanities, UW-Madison; Columbia University and New York University. Other awards and honors included the Holkar Fellowship; the Chakravikrama Gold Medal; Campbell Gold Medal for Life Time Achievements in Ancient History; grants from the Ford, Guggenheim, and Rockefeller Foundation; elections as Life Fellow of Royal Numismatic Society, Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and Honorary Member of the International Association of Buddhist Studies.

A.K. Narain's earliest connection with UW came in 1964, with his help, collaboration and sponsorship of the UW College-Year-In-India at BHU, Varanasi. In 1971, he was appointed Professor of History & South Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. During the next seventeen years, he inspired and trained generations of graduate students, many of whom themselves went on to occupy professorships in prestigious universities. He also served as Chair of the Buddhist Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After taking early retirement in 1988, he was made Professor Emeritus of History and of Languages and Cultures.

Returning to Varanasi, Professor Narain founded and served as first director of the Bikkhu J. Kashyap Institute of Buddhist and Asian Studies at BHU. Among manifold contributions to organizing research his field throughout the world, he became editor, or founder-editor, of seven academic journals: (1) *Bharati: Research Bulletin of the College of Indology* (BHU); (2) *Puratattva: Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of India* (which he founded); (3) *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (which he co-founded); (4) *Journal of Indian Buddhist Studies*; (5) *The Indian Journal of Asian Studies*; (6) *Asia Prashant: Journal of the Indian Congress of Asian and Pacific Studies*; and (7) *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies*. During his last years, he was engaged in work on his most ambitious project: *Kurush to Kanishka – A Millennium of Early History of Asia without Nation-State Boundaries: Movements and Interactions of Peoples, Ideas, and Institutions*. Some volumes of documentary history in this project are

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complete and at various stages in the publication process. He strongly believed in “connected histories” and his writings all exhibit a marked tendency toward a focus that blend elements both Indian and non-Indian.

During his long academic career, Professor A. K. Narain’s knowledge and scholarly expertise left an imprint both deep and wide. His influence on scholars and students was such that some have banded together to produce two commemorative volumes. The first, a special 2014 issue of the *Indian Journal of Buddhist Studies*, is being organized and edited by Dr. Roger Jackson, John W. Nason Professor of Asian Studies & Religion, Carleton College, MN, and Dr. Lalji ‘Shravik’, Professor of Pali & Buddhist Studies, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. The second volume reflects Professor Narain’s interest on “*India and the ‘Other’*” (scheduled for 2015), is being produced by Dr. Kamal Sheel, Professor of Chinese Studies a BHU; Dr. Charles Willemen, Professor and Distinguished Fellow of the Belgian Royal Academy of Overseas Sciences and (currently) Vice-Rector of the International Buddhist College, Sogkhla, Thailand; and Dr. Kenneth Zysk, Professor and Head of Indology, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

Preceded in death by his first wife, Sudha, who passed away early, his parents, and four sisters, A.K. Narain is survived by his second wife, Usha, two sisters, five children and nine grandchildren: (1) son Kamal Sheel (at BHU, Varanasi), Kamal’s wife Ranjana Sheel, and grandchildren Siddhath Sheel and Aditi Sheel; (2) daughter Madhu Saxena Madhu Saxena (Atlanta, Georgia), Madhu’s husband Ashok Saxena (Univ. of Arkansas) and grandchildren Rahul Saxena and Anjali Saxena; (3) Anand Sheel (Saratoga, CA), Anand’s wife Vandana Sheel, and grandchildren Sonali, Nikhil, and Shreya; (4) daughter Madhunanda Prasad (San Jose, CA), her late husband Madhurendra Prasad and grandchild Ruchi Prasad; (5) daughter Madhukanta Kumar (New York City), her husband Birendra Kumar, and A.K.’ s grandchild Gautam Kumar.

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE