

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR J. E. VAN LOHUIZEN-DE LEEUW

The sudden and unexpected death of Professor Johanna (Joan) Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw at the age of 64 was a grievous blow to all those interested in South and South East Asian Art studies. She was born in Amsterdam and studied at the Universities of Leiden and Utrecht where she gained a solid grounding in Sanskrit and Indian epigraphy. Her doctoral thesis, later published as *The "Scythian" Period*, was an exceptionally important contribution for a young scholar plunging into the most contested area of India's historical and artistic past, littered as it is with abandoned theories, hypothetical eras (Konow was particularly prone to invent them whenever a particular numerical date was difficult to account for) and the once impassioned argument as to whether Buddha images were first made in Gandhāra or at Mathurā, Professor van Lohuizen managed to dispose, once and for all, of much scholarly debris, while proposing new solutions which have stood the test of time remarkably well, to some of the most stubborn problems. Of these solutions, the boldest, that dropped hundreds accounted for the discrepancy between the late Kusāna style and low numbered dates of many, mostly Jaina, images has been widely accepted, although in slightly modified form. Professor van Lohuizen never lost her interest in the art and history of the Kushanshahr and recently, concurrently with an English numismatist, came to believe that the missing hundred theory, or at least a new era commencing somewhere near the hundred mark of Kaniska's, explained certain anomalous inscriptions from Gandhāra with low number dates.

Professor van Lohuizen's range of scholarly interest was wide and her articles almost invariably contributed a new and stimulating interpretation, archaeological, historical or iconographic, of the material. She wrote illuminating studies of the *stūpa* at Nandangarh and the Buddhist monastery at Paharpur. The sculpture and architecture of Eastern India remained one of her abiding interests. At the other end of the sub-continent, she wrote illuminatingly on the both neglected and misunderstood temples of the Salt Range. She made several important contributions to the proper identification of well-known reliefs in Sri Lanka, most notably in her recognition that the figure with the horse's head at Isurumuni, the subject of some very fanciful notions, was no other than the popular South India god Ayyanār. She also wrote extensively on the art of Thailand and of Indonesia, in the latter area following a long line of distinguished Dutch archaeologists and art-historians. Nowhere was her deep understanding of classical Indo-Javanese culture better displayed than in her article on the stele formerly in the Society's possession, entitled "An Indo-Javanese Garden of Eden".¹

Dr van Lohuizen had both a practical side and an aptitude for involvement in cultural projects affecting the monuments and great works of art of South and South-East Asia which were so dear to her. She was in constant demand as a consultant, by ICOM, by Unesco and a host of other bodies. The Unesco projects to save Mohenjodaro and Barodur greatly benefited from her unfailing support and the time she so generously gave to these causes. Her abundant energy led her into many activities, often at the cost of even as robust a constitution as hers. She took a leading part in organising numerous exhibitions and in writing their catalogues and contributed widely to encyclopedias and cultural organs. It must be remembered that until very recently in the field of South Asian art the harvest was very large and the labourers few, and Dr van Lohuizen was an admirable spokesman for us all. Her social gifts made her an excellent *animatrice* and she was at home in the most exalted circles. But all those who counted her as a friend, and a most generous, gay and enthusiastic one, always knew that it was their and her unflagging desire to know and make others aware of the priceless heritage of South and South East Asian culture which counted most with her.

With one exception — her students. Lecturer at Cambridge from 1951 to 1959, (where she planned to retire), and then Professor at the University of Amsterdam, a post which she held until her death. Professor van Lohuizen's devotion to her students and her unstinting efforts on their behalf were almost legendary. Sessions lasting far into the night working with research students on their theses, hours snatched here and there in her crowded schedule to straighten out some particular problem: the result being that, by her suggestions and unfailing enthusiasm, she managed to draw upon resources and ideas which the students were sometimes unaware of themselves. Splendid theses, with an exceptional number published, and not merely Dutch ones, where publication is mandatory, since she acted as supervisor for research students in many universities outside of the Netherlands, including Oxford, are her lasting memorial.

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¹ Stuart Simmonds and Simon Digby (eds.), *The Royal Asiatic Society: its history and treasures*, 1979, pp. 126–144.