

## NALINI BALBIR

### COLETTE CAILLAT (1921-2007)<sup>1</sup>

Prof. Dr. Mrs Colette Caillat passed away on her eighty-sixth birthday, 15th January 2007. Her personality and career have already been described in several obituaries of varying length, published or in the press<sup>2</sup>. But how could it be possible not to remember her in the *Indologica Taurinensis*, considering how close she had become to her Turin colleagues over the years, especially Prof. Dr. Oscar Botto and Dr. Mrs. Irma Piovano – the founders and soul of this journal and of the CESMEO? It was in Turin that, as early as 1970, Colette Caillat presented a lecture entitled *Pour une nouvelle grammaire du pali*, which was published as a booklet in the University series. The modest size of this publication should not disguise its importance. In this manifesto the author speaks with conviction in favour of a real linguistic approach to Middle Indian in which phonetics are not the only means

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1. I am thankful to Dr. Peter Skilling for reading through this text and improving its style.

2. Those that I know of are: *Le Monde*, 24 January 2007, p. 29 (by Nalini Balbir and Georges-Jean Pinault); *Jaina Studies* (Newsletter of the Centre of Jaina Studies, SOAS, University of London), March 2007, Issue 2, p. 14 (by Nalini Balbir); *Bulletin d'Etudes Indiennes* 22-23 (2004-2005, published in June 2007) pp. 23-70 with full bibliography (by Nalini Balbir); Motilal Banarsi Dass Newsletter, May 2007, p. 15; *Journal Asiatique* 295.1 (2007), pp. 1-7 (by Nalini Balbir); *The Journal of Jaina Studies* (Japan), vol. 13, September 2007, pp. 77-90 (by Nalini Balbir); *Indo-Iranian Journal* (by Minoru Hara); *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 2008 (by Oskar von Hinüber); *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (by Georges-Jean Pinault); *Tohogaku (Eastern Studies)* No. 115, February 2008 (by Hideaki Nakatani).

to explain innovations and in which morphology, analogy and stylistic constraints are also taken into account. As a member of the Committee of the very active CESMEO and of the board of the *Indologica Taurinensis*, Colette Caillat followed the development of this journal with great pleasure as it progressively attained international status in the field of indology. The *Indologica* is also the official organ of the International Association for Sanskrit Studies, of which Colette Caillat was Treasurer and Vice-President. The editors of the *Indologica*, in turn, have largely returned the interest she had shown. The *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Jain Canonical and Narrative Literature* organized in Strasburg in 1981 were published as vol. XI (1983) of this Journal, while the *Felicitation Volume* presented to Colette Caillat when she retired from the University was published as vol. XIV (1988). In 2002, she was elected a foreign member of the Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. She also participated in the Scientific Committee of the *Corpus Juris Sanscriticum*.

If we were to describe Colette Caillat's scholarly activity in brief, we could say that she was, in the first place, a specialist in the languages, literatures and cultures of Jainism and Buddhism in their early stages. Like many indologists of the time in France, she reached Sanskrit through the studies of humanities, classical languages (Latin and Greek) and comparative Indo-European linguistics. Her guides were Louis Renou (1896-1966), and Jules Bloch (1880-1953), whose teachings and interests complemented each other. The former emphasized on the Vedas and classical Sanskrit with its literary genres. The latter, author of *L'indo-aryen: du Véda aux temps modernes* (1934), opened the minds of students to Pali, Prakrit, Apabhramṣa, and modern Indo-Aryan languages, and to the *realia* of Indian culture in its contemporary aspects (benefiting from interaction with Indian students who attended his classes). Colette Caillat was never reluctant to pay her tribute to them, and she contributed to the posthumous publication of their works<sup>3</sup>.

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3. J. Bloch, *Application de la cartographie à l'histoire de l'indo-aryen* (with Pierre Meile), Paris, Société Asiatique, 1963; J. Bloch, *Recueil d'articles (1906-1955)*, Paris, Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1985; L. Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāṇinéennes*, vol. 17, Paris, Institut de Civilisation Indienne, 1969.

Beside Sanskrit and Middle Indian, she learned Hindi at the School of Oriental languages (“Langues orientales”) in Paris. As was expected from those who passed the prestigious competitive examination known in France as *Agrégation*, which meant financial security but full commitment in teaching activities, Colette Caillat taught in various secondary schools (1947-1952), until she could find a position at the National Centre of Scientific Research. She was then free to devote herself to Indian studies full time, starting with a *Mémoire* on nominal derivation in Middle Indian (unpublished) which led her to read Jain texts. Since no one in France was proficient in these texts, Renou introduced her to Walther Schubring (1881-1969) in Hamburg. The meeting was decisive for her subsequent career: Schubring led her firmly to the path of Jain studies and encouraged her to participate in the *Critical Pāli Dictionary*, to which she contributed regularly<sup>4</sup>. In India, which she visited for the first time in 1963, she established close contacts with Prof. A.N. Upadhye (1906-1975), Pandit D.D. Malvania (1910-2000), Prof. H.C. Bhayani (1917-2000)<sup>5</sup>, Pandit Sukhlalji (1880-1978), Muni Punyavijaya (1895-1971) and Ācārya Vidyānandjī Mahārāj. She often worked in Mysore and in Ahmedabad, at the L.D. Institute of Indology, a place she continued to visit regularly over the years, attracted by its scholarly and family atmosphere.

Colette Caillat first taught Sanskrit and Comparative grammar at the University of Lyon (1960-1966). In 1967 she was appointed to Sorbonne University (later University of Paris-3) as successor to Louis Renou, who had died suddenly, and she taught there until 1988, when she retired. As professor of Indology, she had to teach several subjects. Jain and Middle Indo-Aryan linguistics and philology were meant for advanced students only. Several of her articles (on Aśokan inscriptions, on the *Mrcchakaṭika*, on the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada*, on the *Uttarādhyayanasūtra*, and on the *Daśavaikālikasūtra*, etc.) are the

4. II,7 (Copenhagen, 1971), pp. 311-317 – II,10 (1979), pp. 447-457 – II,13 (1985), pp. 587-588, 590-592 – II, 14 (1987), pp. 593-594, 607-608, 610-613, 626, 627 – II, 15 (1988), pp. 634-636, 647-648, 652-657, 661-662.

5. See Colette Caillat (and Nalini Balbir), ‘Deux savants indiens du Gujarat: Harivallabh C. Bhayani (1917-2000), Dalsukh D. Malvania (1910-2000)’, in *Bulletin d’Etudes Indiennes* 17-18 (1999-2000): pp. 7-18.

outcome of detailed investigations undertaken for these classes. She was elected member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1987. She was a member of several academies and scholarly associations. She often took an active part in the organization of the World Sanskrit Conferences connected with IASS. For instance, she was asked to organize the panel on Middle Indo-Aryan and Jaina Studies at the 7<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference in Leiden (1987) and the Jain panel of the 12<sup>th</sup> World Sanskrit Conference held in Helsinki<sup>6</sup>.

She was also the President of the International Association of Buddhist Studies (1999-2002).

The linguistic contributions of Colette Caillat to Middle Indian mainly concern Pāli and Prakrit morphology, vocabulary, phraseology, and style, and the transmission of texts through the examination of grammatical variants. Her studies are marked by the imprint of the French school of historical linguistics. Often starting with the examination of a single word, these contributions throw light on cultural aspects and the history of mentalities.

As a Jainologist, Colette Caillat's works focus on the transmission and understanding of important Śvetāmbara works belonging to the oldest strata of canonical literature (especially Ācārāṅgasūtra, Sūtrakṛtāṅgasūtra, Daśavaikālikasūtra, Uttarādhyayanasūtra). Several of her articles deal either with selected sections of these works, with major themes (violence, rules for speech), with the meaning of difficult words or expressions, with their morphology and derivation, and with the relationship between Middle Indian and Vedic. On the other hand, her DLitt. thesis (*Les expiations dans le rituel ancien des religieux jaina*, Paris, 1965, translated into English as *Atonements in the Ancient Ritual of the Jaina Monks*, Ahmedabad, 1975, L.D. Series 49) is a lucid analysis of the Śvetāmbara monastic

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6. See respectively *Middle Indo-Aryan and Jaina Studies*. Panels of the VIIth World Sanskrit Conference, Kern Institute, Leiden: August 23-29, 1987 (General editor Johannes Bronkhorst), vol. VI, Leiden, 1991, ed. by Colette Caillat and *Jaina Studies* (Proceedings of the 12th World Sanskrit Conference, vol. 9), ed. by Colette Caillat & Nalini Balbir, Delhi, Motilal BanarsiDass, 2007.

books of discipline (the so-called *Chedasūtras*). Her “second” thesis, a minute philological study of one portion of a text of this class, was in part published in *Drei Chedasūtras des Jaina-Kanons – Āyāradasāo Vavahāra, Nisiha*, bearbeitet von Walther Schubring mit einem Beitrag von Colette Caillat, Hamburg, 1966. Colette Caillat’s outstanding study of atonement (*prāyaścitta*) has become the standard reference. She presents the subject in its general Indian context, through confrontations with Brahmanical and Buddhist counterparts, respectively in the Vinaya and the Dharmasāstras, and as a component of Jain monastic life. Thus her discussion of atonements, the central one of which is confession (Skt. *ālokanā*, Pkt. *āloyanā*), is preceded by an exposition on the hierarchical organization of the community as depicted in the *Chedasūtras*. The important idea is that atonements are not meant as a punishment, but rather as a form of guidance to help the culprits to improve. Like all of Colette Caillat’s contributions, this one is sympathetic towards its object of study and full of humanity. The problematic category of the so-called *Prakīrṇakas* also detained her considerably. This term refers to a “miscellaneous” group of texts which are on the border of the Śvetāmbara Canon and are not universally recognized as authoritative. Her critical edition of the *Candāvejjhaya* (*La Prunelle-cible*. Introduction, Edition critique, Traduction, Commentaire, Paris, 1971), its French translation and the learned notes are a testimony of sound scholarship in lucid style. “Fasting unto death” (*samlekhana*), for which the *Prakīrṇakas* are of primary importance, was one of her major themes of investigation, and was the topic of her last published article (*Marañasamāhipainṇa*, 2007, see below). Moreover, Colette Caillat was strongly attracted to Digambara literature in Apabhramṣa, as is shown by her translations of Yogindu’s *Yogasāra* (1998) and *Paramātmaprakāśa* (1999), and of Rāmasimha’s *Dohāpāhuḍa* (1976, in French and in English)<sup>7</sup>. Linguistic features of Apabhramṣa as well as the expression of mysticism specific to these

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7. Following the generous initiative of Mr. Manish Modi, a new Hindi translation of the *Yogasāra* published by his Hindi Granth Karyalay (Mumbai, 2007) is distributed free of charge in memory of Colette Caillat, to whom it is dedicated (Ācārya’s Joindu’s *Yogasāra*. Translated by Dr. Jaykumar Jalaj. Ed. by Satyanarayan Hegde, Pandit Nathuram Premi Research Series Vol. 10; ISBN 978-81-88769-12-4. Available on request from [nalini.balbir@wanadoo.fr](mailto:nalini.balbir@wanadoo.fr)).

texts, with their strongly exhortative, concise, and convincing style, could not but appeal to a refined linguist and person of conviction and aspirations like Colette Caillat. In France, she contributed to a better acquaintance of the general public with Jainism through articles published in volumes devoted to the religions of the world, or through her French translation of the “Jain Declaration of Nature”. As an international specialist of the field she was often asked to contribute to encyclopedias or general books on Jainism outside of France (see, for instance, C. Caillat, A.N. Upadhye and Bal Patil, *Jainism*, Delhi, 1974-75). Colette Caillat helped interested readers to find their way through the complexities of Jain cosmology through *La cosmologie jaina*. Paris, 1981 (*The Jain Cosmology*. English rendering by K.R. Norman, New Delhi; revised and enlarged edition, New Delhi, 2004), an elegant and detailed publication based on Jain manuscripts of the *Kṣetrasamāsa* and the *Samgrahāṇīs* from the private collection of Mr Ravi Kumar.

Colette Caillat did not live in isolation in an ivory tower. She was too much preoccupied by her fellow humans for that. Apart from training and advising students and colleagues, always for their best advantage, in her own vigorous and lucid manner, she was especially keen to keep herself informed and to inform others about the advances in knowledge. Her publications include several well-documented reports on conferences. Writing reviews of a wide range of books, always in a positive and benevolent manner, was an important aspect of her work. The bibliographical chronicles that she wrote for *Journal Asiatique* are noteworthy in the field of Jain studies, embracing as they do both Western and Indian publications, and including informative and moving obituaries of two important figures: Walther Schubring and Muni Punyavijaya<sup>8</sup>. Her reviews of fascicles of *A Critical Pāli Dictionary* published in the *Indogermanische Forschungen* are replete with useful

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8. Notes de bibliographie jaina et moyen-indienne, in *Journal Asiatique* 260, 2, 1972, pp. 409-414. See also Notes de bibliographie jaina, in *Journal Asiatique* 256, 1968, pp. 145-155; Notes de bibliographie moyen-indienne et jaina, in *Journal Asiatique* 264, 1976, pp. 221-243; Notes de bibliographie jaina, in *Journal Asiatique* 271, 1983, pp. 409-419.

comments. In France, she regularly wrote reviews for the *Bulletin d'Etudes Indiennes* or for the *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (1988-2006), and earlier for the *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris*.

Colette Caillat will be remembered for her numerous contributions which advanced and enriched the field of Indology for nearly four decades, and for her active encouragement of others in the field. She will be remembered as a human being of rare qualities, an energetic, lively and free individual who valued independence more than anything else, a true lady of the twentieth century.

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9. Abbreviations: *BEI* = *Bulletin d'Etudes Indiennes*; *CRAI* = *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*; *IIJ* = *Indo-Iranian Journal*.

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