



DOI. 10.1515/anpm-2017-0025



Jaroslav Vacek (26 July 1943 – 23 January 2017)

It has been nine months since Jaroslav Vacek, a gracious person and pedagogue, internationally recognized mongolist and indologist, left this world.

Jaroslav Vacek studied Tamil, Sanskrit, Hindi and English at the Faculty of Arts, at Charles University in Prague. He was a talented linguist; speaking fluent English, Russian, German, Mongolian and Tamil. He also mastered Sanskrit. Jaroslav Vacek was a student of famous indologists Kamil Zvelebil and Ivo Fišer with whom he led expert disputations at the time of his studies. After their emigration it was he, who continued in persistent and surely demanding work, with an aim to preserve Indian studies. Refusing cooperation with the regime at the time of normalization, he was forced to leave to Mongolia to be allowed to remain in scholastic and linguistic circles. The goal was to open the Mongolian studies at the Faculty of Arts after his return. Eventually, this experience was fruitful; he became fluent in Mongolian, he knew the local culture in detail and in 1976 he founded Mongolian studies, which has been highly recognized till today.

Although we would anticipate a relief after revolution, it was not professor Vacek's case. His workload was very demanding. In 1993 he became a professor and director of Indological seminar, and later became the director of the Institute of South and Central Asia (2006–2014). During these years the institute has been enriched by many specializations (Indian studies with individual languages: Sanskrit, Bengali, Tamil and Hindi, Mongolian studies, Tibetan studies and Indonesian studies), as well as by many publications and contacts with international departments. It was unambiguously him, who has huge merit in the international prestige of Czech Indology and Mongolian studies. He is the father of an international project Pandanus connecting European Universities from Milano, Krakow, Warsaw and Cagliari. This project focuses on the study of natural symbolism in Indian literature, culture and art. He also founded magazines Pandanus and Mongolica Pragensia. Professor Vacek was also active in the academic field. From 1994 till 1997 he was the vice-rector for foreign affairs. From 2003 till 2007 he was the dean of the Faculty of Arts.

The main scholarly subject of his research was Dravidian-Altai relations of the idioms and Tamil Sangam literature and its language. For this research he was awarded the prize of Indian president Kural Peedam Award in 2013, and the National honor of Mongolian republic, Nairamdal (Friendship) medal in 2010 as well as many other

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivs 3.0 License

accolades during his career. He is also an author of many publications and translations. After the recent changes at The Faculty of Arts, and exhausted by affairs at his alma mater; Jaroslav Vacek decided to accept an offer from India to pursue linguistic research. Nevertheless, he did not get much rest in India either. He was invited for many conferences by universities, as well as by the media. India; a country where he was allowed to travel liberally only after 1989, became fatal for him. After an unfortunate injury and complicated transport back to the Czech Republic he left this world. We lost a great scientist, teacher, linguist, indologist, mongolist, but far and foremost a wonderful person and friend. As his legacy lives on, there will always be an empty place in our lives.

Soňa Bendíková