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Obituary

Paul Demiéville

With the disappearance of Paul Demiéville not only France but the world has lost a truly great scholar. His influence in the field of Oriental Studies was immense and he was universally respected and admired. His erudition was prodigious. As a Sinologist, a Buddhologist and a "Tun-huang-ologist"—his own expression—his contribution was both massive and humanising; and his mastery was as much appreciated in Tokyo as in Paris. As a teacher of Chinese, as an interpreter of Chinese poetry to the West, as a *grand maître* whose lectures on Ch'ân Buddhism at the Collège de France opened up new vistas of research, his activity was many-sided and seminal. As Rédacteur-en-chef of the *Hôbôgîrin* and as Director and Co-Director of the *T'oung Pao*, he occupied for several decades a commanding professional position; yet he also wrote admirable articles for the general reader.

At this moment, to praise his work or to enumerate the honours and distinctions conferred on him seems frivolous. What must be emphasized is the big-ness of the man, his lack of *petitesse*. One does not only think, in this perspective, of the time and energy he devoted to revising and publishing the posthumous works of Chavannes, Pelliot, Maspero, Jean Escarra and Étienne Balazs; of his revision and publication of the work of his friend Lin-li Kouang on the *Saddharmasîrñyupasthâna-sûtra* and of the publication, with the help of André Bareau and J. W. de Jong, of the three volumes of the *Dharma-samucçaya*. What must be stressed is the sympathy and encouragement he extended to younger and more ignorant fellow-workers, his genuine and generous interest in the work of others. He was not just a great figure at whose feet several generations
of students learned to take their first, hesitant steps in fields he knew so well. Even if he had never written a line, Paul Demiéville would still have been an exceptional, an exemplary human being. Chuang Tzu, Lao Tzu and Lin-chi . . . Demiéville was a man of their *trempe*.

Paul Demiéville: a brief sketch of his career


An excellent bibliography, prepared by Gisèle de Jong and checked by P. Demiéville himself, was published in *Choix d'Études bouddhiques* and in *Choix d'Études sinologiques*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1973, p. IX-XXXII, and covered the years 1920-
1971. A complementary bibliography, prepared by Yves Hervouet, will appear shortly in the *T'oung Pao*. Below are listed a few of Paul Demiéville’s more important books and articles on Buddhist subjects.


20: *Airs de Touen-houang (Touen-houang k'iu)*. Textes à chantes des VIIIe-Xe siècles

BEFEO = Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient
BMFJ = Bulletin de la Maison Franco-Japonaise
JA = *Journal Asiatique*
TP = *T'oung Pao*