

was held for the couple on January 16 at the Fairlington United Methodist Church, Alexandria, Virginia.

WARREN TSUNEISHI  
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### MINOR LEE ROGERS (1930–1991)

Minor Lee Rogers, a specialist on Japanese Buddhism and Jessie Ball Dupont Professor of Religion at Washington and Lee University, died on August 25, 1991, in New York City. He died of complications of metastatic cancer, diagnosed in early July. An avid runner, he was still at it until the end of May, when he began to feel unwell. A man with a strong sense of duty, he was glad that he had completed the school year, and during the summer wistfully spoke of returning to the classroom in the fall, "perhaps with one class of twenty students."

At the time of his death, Minor and his wife, Ann, were just completing a work long in progress on Rennyō Shōnin (1415–1499), a key figure in the Honganji branch of the Pure Land Shin Sect (*Jōdo Shīnshū*), the most widespread and influential Buddhist movement in Japanese history. The book, *Rennyō: The Second Founder of Shin Buddhism*, includes a translation of his letters. It will be published by Asian Humanities Press in the spring of 1992.

Rogers had a fascinating and varied life. As the years went by, his closest friends were constantly surprised at some new, previously undisclosed chapter or event in his life. Born in London, England, where his father (a native of Lexington, Virginia) was head of the European office of the Baldwin Locomotive Works (and later of his own firm, Whitelegg and Rogers, Ltd., locomotive engineers), Rogers received his secondary education at the Felsted School in Essex. During World War II, he was one of those "English" children evacuated to the U.S. for safety, only in his case he was coming home. In 1948, he enrolled at the Virginia Military Institute, where in 1952 he earned a B.S. in physics. At VMI, he was president of the Honor Court, class valedictorian, winner of the Cincinnati Society medal, and captain of the tennis team.

As in the case of so many before him, it was the American military that introduced him to Japan. During the Korean War, he was stationed in Hokkaido as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army (Armor). Following this service, he entered the Virginia Theological Seminary, where he received the bachelor of divinity degree. He was ordained to the Episcopal priesthood in 1958. His first ministry was a parish in Southwest Virginia.

Following his marriage in 1958 to Ann T. Rogers, now an assistant professor of Japanese language and literature at Washington and Lee, they traveled to Japan, where he served as a missionary with the Episcopal Church in Japan (*Nippon Seikokai*) from 1961 to 1965. After studying Japanese, he was posted to Okuchi in central Kyushu. At the time, he and his family were the only Americans in the city, and he was one of a very small number of American missionaries in Kyushu.

During 1965 and 1966, he did graduate work at Princeton University before moving on to Harvard, where he entered the program in comparative religion at the Center for World Religions. He served as a teaching fellow en route to receiving his Ph.D. in 1972.

All this seemed but a prelude to his work at Washington and Lee, where he quickly established himself as one of the finest teachers on campus and an energetic

and forceful leader in the development of East Asian Studies. When he arrived, a course or two in the Chinese language were the only offerings in this area; at the time of his death, both the Japanese and Chinese languages, as well as two dozen other courses, were included in the curriculum. He was a fervent believer in sending students to Asia to study, and he devoted a large portion of his energies and time to making this possible. He singlehandedly created exchange programs with Rikkyo University in Tokyo and Kansai Gaidai in Hirakata. He loved his students, and was always available for conferences, whether they needed help with their academic work or with personal problems. He was a "chaplain," although without the title. Yet, he refused to relax his academic standards, and demanded the best of his students in all of their work and writing.

His students returned that affection and respect. "Those of us who studied Asian religions with Professor Rogers," recalled one young man, "were often impressed by the eccentric reverence he always brought to the conversation. He would often stop thoughtfully when a student made a particularly insightful comment. A smile would come across his face, with the realization that the Buddha and the Wheel of Samsara were also real and alive in his students. It was then that he was most happy."

Rogers received a number of awards, testifying to his standing among specialists on Japanese Buddhism. In 1979–80, he was awarded a Japan Foundation Fellowship for research at Ryukoku University in Kyoto. He was also the recipient of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for work at the Center for World Religions at Harvard in 1984–85, as well as National Endowment for the Humanities grants. In 1989, he received a Fulbright Scholar Grant for further research at Ryukoku for his book on Rennyō.

He was the author of a number of journal articles, and presented papers at both national and international conferences on Japanese Buddhism. Fluent in Japanese, he translated many Japanese sacred texts into English. He was a devoted member of the Association for Asian Studies, as well as the American Academy of Religion and the International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies. He believed in religious pluralism; hence, it was fitting that a bishop of the Episcopal Church, a former bishop of the Buddhist Churches of America, and a Jewish colleague participated in his memorial services. A kind and gentle person, who always made time for other people despite his own busy life, he will be sorely missed by his many friends at Washington and Lee and in the profession.

ROGER B. JEANS  
*Washington and Lee University*

## Erratum

In the production of the November 1991 issue (50.4), the editors added an incorrect identification of the Shih-tsung Emperor mentioned in John Shepherd's review of Ann Waltner's *Getting an Heir: Adoption and the Construction of Kinship in Late Imperial China*, p. 927. The Shih-tsung discussed by Waltner and Shepherd was the Ming ruler, whose reign title was Chia-ch'ing (1522–1566), and not the Ch'ing period Emperor of a similar dynastic title, who reigned as Yung-cheng (1723–1736).