



In Memoriam

Remembering Hubert Decleer

(KA 1 lat Gr. 1958) - researcher and digger into Buddhist texts who lived and died in Kathmandu

These past weeks I have been thinking a lot about Hubert Decleer, who died a year ago at age 81. I vividly remember when he related his cancer diagnosis via video call in early 2021, his remarkable wife, poet Nazneen Zafar, sharing the cramped screen and the awful news.

But Hubert was happily himself when we spoke that day, me in Washington, DC, and Hubert and Nazneen at home in Chhauni in Kathmandu. As I teared up, Hubert was gently pragmatic. (...) Hubert was absolutely an old-school intellectual, researcher and digger into texts. But his feet firmly planted on the ground, and he loved a good yarn being himself a master storyteller. He used that gift as an educator: in print, in formal lectures and in private conversations with students. (...) Hubert also had a profoundly tender side, and either it grew over the years or he let me notice it more: memories of him feeding huge rhesus mama monkeys, his head slightly turned away, arm extended with a bit of old potato, as the whole troupe surrounded him (photo: Sierra Gladfelter)

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