

D.C. BHARADWAJ

(1923-1995)

The Palaeobotanical Society suffered an irreparable loss in the demise of Dr. Dinesh Chandra Bharadwaj on Thursday, the 9th February, 1995. Born on 13th December, 1923 in a small hamlet Biswan, now a tehsil head-quarter, in the district of Sitapur in eastern Uttar Pradesh (India) Dr. Bharadwaj graduated in agricultural sciences from Agra University with several distinctions: Irwin Gold Medal, 1943 for excellent work in Experimental Agriculture, Hercourt Butler Medal, 1943 as a Best Student, Subir Sinha Medal, 1943 for being the Best Student in Agriculture. Soon after post-graduation he started working with Professor S.K. Pandey at the Botany Department, Lucknow University and was awarded Ph.D. degree in Botany on Bryophytes in the year 1952. He was honored with Ruchi Ram Sahni Research Award, 1953 for his excellence in Research in Botany. Meanwhile, his genius was soon identified by Professor Birbal Sahni, the founder of the Palaeobotanical Society, who appointed him as a Research Assistant (1947-1949) in the newly established Institute of Palaeobotany, which after the untimely demise of Professor Sahni was renamed as the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow. Thus, the association of Dr. D. C. Bharadwaj with the Palaeobotanical Society was established right since its inception and continued till he breathed last.

Dr. Bharadwaj proceeded to Germany, after obtaining the doctorate degree, to work with the eminent palynologist Dr. Robert Potonié at Geological Survey, Krefeld on German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Fellowship in the year 1953. Through this visit he was trained in the science of spores and pollen grains and was admitted to the degree of *Dr. rer. nat.* in 1955 by the Bonn University. Fully charged with enthusiasm and a receptive mind Dr. Bharadwaj made a breakthrough in Indian coal-palynology and became a pioneer in Carboniferous to Tertiary palynology. He worked extensively on systematics, evolution and classification of spores and pollen. During 35 years of active scientific career he guided 18 students leading to their Ph.D. degrees and simultaneously rose through Junior Scientific Officer to the rank of Deputy Director. It is a rare honour to note that two of his disciples, Drs. B.S.

Venkatchala (1985-92) and Ram Shanker Tiwari (1992 - present) adorned the coveted post of the Director Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow.

Gondwana, the coal-bearing Indian Lower Gondwana in particular, was the special interest in which he specialised on various aspects: palynostratigraphy, correlation of coal seams, migration of palynofloras, phytogeography and continental drift based on palynofossils. The concept of three glaciations during Permian advocated by him was later accepted by many workers. However, his passion for Bryophytes continued undauntedly irrespective of his occupation in other disciplines and he instituted a new extant genus *Folioceros* (Anthocerotales) in the year 1971 and distinguished it to be a separate taxon other than *Anthoceros* on the basis of uniform thickening in their elaters. This genus is now fully accepted by the present bryologists.

Dr. Bharadwaj was a leading world figure in palaeopalynology and was honoured at several occasions: Member, International Botanical Congress, Paris, 1945; Sessional President, International Palynological Congress, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1966; Invited Speaker, International Congress on Carboniferous and Geology, Sheffield, 1967; Sessional President, 3rd International Palynological Congress, Novosibirsk, USSR, 1971; CIMP International Symposium, France, 1973; American Association of Stratigraphic Palynologists, California, 1973. His popularity among the palynologists accredited him to be the general President of the 4th International Palynological Congress, Lucknow, 1976-77, in the organisation of which Dr. Bharadwaj played a vital role.

He was also associated with several academies in one capacity or the other: Member; International Sub-commission on Carboniferous Stratigraphy (IUGS) 1955-68; Secretary, International Commission on Palaeozoic Microfossils 1965-68; Member, International Society of Palynologists 1962; International Commission of Palynologists 1966-76; Member, Scientific Society of IGCP (UNESCO, IUGS) since 1978.

All these multifarious activities could not detract, however, the attention of Dr. Bharadwaj from the Palaeobotanical Society. He strived hard to develop the

same in the capacity of Secretary (1969-77, 1981-82) and also Chief Editor (1978-80). He was a good planner in science and during this period the Society organized to publish a new journal, *Geophytology*, to project palaeobotanical researches in India on international scenario. The first volume of the journal was published in 1971. The Society also decided to hold "Indian Geophytological Conference" every alternate year in order to provide a common platform to all scientists engaged in palaeobotanical researches as well as in other related branches of Botany and Geology. He organised four such conferences (1975, 77, 79 and 81) and three symposia, viz., i. *Climatic Vicissitudes in India during the Gondwana times*, ii. *Soil-Plant Relationship* (1975) and iii. *Recent Advances in Cryptogamic Botany* (1981).

Dr. Bharadwaj also started to publish a journal *Biological Memoirs* in 1976, to accommodate large original research works, monographs and reviews, under the aegis of the International Publishers and continued as its Chief Editor for many years.

Dr. Dinesh Chandra Bharadwaj, though he is not amongst us today, will ever be remembered through his contribution to the science, and personal and affectionate relationship with colleagues and friends.

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