

FIRST RECORD OF CHAROPHYTA FROM CHINJI BEDS OF RAMNAGAR (J & K)

The present communication places on record for the first time the occurrence of Charophyte fructifications from the Chinji Beds of Ramnagar (J & K). Chinjis exposed at Ramnagar (32° 49' N--75° 22' E) in Jammu and Kashmir State have earlier yielded well preserved fossils of the order Primates and other mammalian, reptilian and piscine groups. Recently, while engaged in the systematic collection of vertebrate fossils, rock samples from different stratigraphic horizons were also being collected by the authors for the micropalaeontological investigations. The dark pinkish clay samples collected from a locality about one and a half kilometres SSE of Ramnagar have yielded for the first time a rich and well preserved assemblage of charophytic gyrogonites in association with a few partly preserved gastropod opercula. The fossiliferous clay stratum is conformably underlain by a thick bed of greyish to greenish coarse grained sandstone with frequent occurrence of undecomposed sedimentary and metamorphic rock fragments.

The present microfloral remains have been referred to two taxa of the genus *Tectochara* viz. *T. meriani meriani* and *T. meriani huangi*. Genus *Tectochara* is earlier known to occur in the Tatrot Formation (BHATIA & MATHUR, 1970) and Pinjor Formation (TEWARI & SHARMA, 1972) of the Upper Siwalik Subgroup also.

Biostratigraphically, the present discovery suggests that the Ramnagar beds belong to *Tectochara meriani meriani* Range Zone (Tortonian-Pontian) of BHATIA AND MATHUR (1976). They (*op. cit.*) restrict *Tectochara meriani huangi* Subzone to Chinjis, in the above Range Zone. In this way, the present investigations are suggestive of a Chinji age for the strata exposed in the area under study.

Moreover, the present discovery further confirms earlier contention of WANGSHUI (1965) that *Tectochara meriani huangi* is generally found associated with *T. meriani meriani* complex.

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