

OBITUARY

PROF. SUNIRMAL CHANDA

1932 - 2015

First President, East Himalayan Society for Spermatophyte Taxonomy, 2007 - 2010



Becoming student of a great teacher is always enjoyable! **Prof. Sunirmal Chanda** was a great teacher, who taught us not only some subjects in the class or in the research laboratory but lessons to become a human was there in his every activity, instruction and advice. For a student, it becomes a fulfillment of his/her dream when he/she gets an opportunity to work under the supervision of a teacher of such great repute in the world but who become a caring family head in the laboratory.

It is really impossible to capture his widely illustrated life in this small document. Born in 1932, he did his M.Sc. (Botany) from Calcutta University and obtained Dr. rer. Nat (Environmental Science) from the University Goetingen, Germany. His areas of research are Palynology, Aerobiology, Paleobotany, Pollen Chemistry, Immunobiology, Plant Ecology & Biodiversity.

Dr. Chanda was recognized almost round the world and received numerous National and International assignments at various times from: German academic exchange service

Photos: 'Sir' in 2012 Conference of the East Himalayan Society for Spermatophyte Taxonomy held at Nagaland University, Lumami, Nagaland

(DAAD), Bonn, Germany; UNESCO, Paris, France, Stockholm, Sweden; Norwegian Science Research Council, Oslo, Norway; The British Council, London, U.K; French Academy of Sciences, Paris, France; Soviet Academy of Sciences, Moscow, USSR; National Science Foundation, Washington DC, USA; Overseas Development Administration, London, U.K, German Association for Technical Co-operation, GTZ, Eschborn, Germany; German Society for Advanced Research Deutsche Forschungs-Gemeinschaft, Bonn, Germany; Japanese Science Foundation, Kyoto, Japan, and others. He has received numerous National grants from various Government agencies and attended many Indian and International scientific conferences all over the world at various times.

He was honored with Distinguished Fellowships from: Indian College of Allergy and Applied immunology, Delhi; The Palaeobotanical Society, Lucknow; Palynological Society of India, Lucknow; Indian Aerobiological Society, Calcutta, West Bengal Academy of Science and Technology, Kolkata

For research he worked with numerous famous personalities and in laboratories in India and abroad at various times including Dr. J. Sen, University of Calcutta; with Prof. F. Firbas, University of Goettingen, Germany; with Prof. G. Erdtman, Palynological Laboratory, Swedish Museum of Natural History, Stockholm, Sweden; with Prof. K. Faegri, University of Bergen, Norway; with Dr. Joes Iversen, Geological Survey of Denmark, Copenhagen, Denmark; Bose Institute, Kolkata, India; University of Bordeaux, France; Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, Herts, U.K; Wayne State University, Detroit, USA; North Carolina Central University, Durham, USA; Landesanstalt fuer Bienenkunde, University of Hohenheim, Germany and others.

Through his academic achievements and extremely pleasing personality Prof. Sunirmal Chanda obtained numerous distinctions, among others: Member of the Executive Council of International Federation of Palynological Societies, Member of the Executive Council of INQUA, Birmingham, General President of International Association for Aerobiology, Founder President, Indian Aerobiological Society, Recipient of Prof. Gunnar Erdtman International Gold Medal, President, Indo-German Association, Kolkata, Chairman, International Commission on Aerobiology, President, National Botanical Society, Kolkata, Recipient of first Dr. D.N. Shivpuri Memorial Oration and Award instituted by Indian college of Allergy and Applied Immunology, President, Indian College of Allergy and Applied Immunology, Adviser to the Ministry of Health, Govt. of Kuwait, on the matters of Environmental Biopollution, Recipient of Prof. A.K. Ghosh Memorial Oration award and many others.

He has published over 350 research papers and edited eight reference books on various disciplines. A special "Prof. Sunirmal Chanda 60th Birth Anniversary Felicitation Volume" entitled "Current concepts in Pollen- Spore and Biopollution Research", edited by N.M. Dutta, S. Gupta Bhattacharya, S. Mandal and K. Bhattacharya was published in 1998 by Research Periodicals and Book Publishing House, Houston, USA.

When the *East Himalayan Society for Spermatophyte Taxonomy* [nee: *TaxoClub*], with its H.Q. at the University of North Bengal, was launched on 27th May 2007 Prof. Sunirmal Chanda was the natural choice by the founder members as their first President. The Society started working and successfully continue to publish its journal *Pleione* and organizing a series of seminars in different Universities in different states. As per Kew records, *Pleione* is the only running botanical journal that is entirely devoted to Himalayan plants.

His baton bearer students are now working as leading teachers and/or researchers in India and abroad in numerous famous Universities and Institutes and are spreading his ideologies among their students.

Prof. Sunirmal Chanda followed strong scientific tradition and ethics in his professional life. He leaves behind his daughter (Sayanti) and son (Sayantan), friends and a large circle of students who would cherish the memory of Prof. Chanda. In Sunirmal Chanda's death on 18th January 2015 India has lost a celebrated scientist and an extremely popular teacher.

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[Ph.D Students of late Prof. Sunirmal Chanda]