

IN MEMORIAM
Professor S.K. Dutta
(1935-2000)

The science of palynology suffered an irreparable loss in the sudden demise of Prof. Sisir Kumar Dutta. Research was an obsession to Prof. Dutta and his contributions not only enabled the major problems in the palynology, palynostratigraphy and palaeogeography of North-East India but also greatly influenced research in fields of geology, sedimentology palaeoclimatology and other areas.

Prof. Dutta was born on 28.02.1935 in Golaghat, Assam. He graduated his M.Sc. (Geology) degree from Gauhati University and joined the Directorate of Geology and Mining, Govt. of Assam. During this tenure he came to Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow to begin his research career in 1964 as a Research Scholar in palynology under the guidance of Dr. S.C.D. Sah and obtained his Ph.D. degree from Lucknow University in 1967. After completing his Ph.D. degree he returned to his parent department, The Directorate of Geology & Mining, Govt. of Assam, but his interest in research compelled him to shift to the Department of Applied Geology, Dibrugarh University, Dibrugarh (Assam). There he established the laboratory of Palaeopalynology which soon became a leading centre of research in North-East India. Since that time the data generated by him has been widely applied in stratigraphy, dating and correlation of surface and subsurface sequences of that region. On these contributions the Lucknow University awarded him the D. Sc. degree in Geology. Dr. Dutta continued relentlessly in research till his superannuation and after that the Oil India Limited honoured him with Keshav Dev Malviya Chair at the Department of Applied Geology which he adorned till he breathed his last on 24th **January 2000**.

Under his guidance and active participation studies on spora dispersae continued in Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. He guided a number of students leading to Ph.D. degree in Applied Geology. His major contributions include institution of several index fossil taxa characterising Theria and Cherra formations of Meghalaya, botanical affinities of various pteridophytic and angiosperm taxa, their stratigraphic implications, lithofacies, correlation, palaeogeography and depositional environments of coaliferous and petroliferous horizons of Meghalaya and Assam. His observations on recycled palynomorphs of Palaeozoic and Mesozoic age in Cenozoic sequences are widely cited even today.

Prof. Dutta was associated with many learned scientific bodies : Life Member and Fellow of the Palaeobotanical Society and Indian Association of Palynostratigraphers, The Palaeontological Society etc. He was also recognised by all the Universities in North-East India. He continued as a Member of Research Advisory Council of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow from 1991-1994 and monitored the growth of Palaeobotany during the period. He participated actively in Palynological Conferences in India and elsewhere.

Prof. Sisir Kumar Dutta, being a highly talented scientist, was equally kind and modest person, always ready to help everyone. This generosity won an affectionate memory among his followers and colleagues. In addition to these, Prof. Dutta was a devoted citizen and was always associated in various capacities in development of cultural heritage of Assam and its people

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I, Dr. H.P. Gupta, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

(Sd.) H.P. Gupta
Secretary
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