



Manoj Shukla
(1951-2006)

A lovable person, a noted palaeobotanist, a good human being and a close friend of mine, Dr Manoj Shukla tragically passed away in a road accident on 6th June, 2006. On this fateful day he was driving his car when it collided with a stationary truck on the highway near Allahabad. The incident proved fatal.

Born on 12th November, 1951, Dr Shukla graduated in 1971 from Lucknow University and after completing M. Sc. in Geology from same university in 1973 he joined Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany in the year 1974. During the initial stages of his career in this Institute Dr Shukla carried out palynological studies on Gondwana sequences of Hutar Coalfield, now located in Jharkhand. Biostratigraphic and lithostratigraphic works from this area fetched him the Doctorate degree in the year 1979. While working for his Ph.D. dissertation, Dr Manoj Shukla also initiated studies on Precambrian fossils. In addition to making detailed observations on carbonaceous mega-remains attributed to Chuarids, he also described various kinds of microfossils, acritarchs and cyanobacterial remains from different localities of India. Dr Shukla's studies on enigmatic fossil - *Chuarina* are amongst his most popular and widely referred works.

Dr Shukla undertook a very challenging task in the year 1986 when he joined a mega-project initiated jointly by BARC, BSIP and NGRI. This project was formulated with an objective to search and study the microfossils in Indian Archaean sediments. Untiring efforts put in by him resulted into the discovery of microfossils and stromatolites from Dharwar Craton.

Some of these findings are referred in recently published books on Precambrian palaeobiology. His other significant contributions are from Cuddapah, Kaladgi, the Vindhya, Bhima, Kurnool and the lesser Himalayan belts. Dr Shukla shall ever be remembered for the discovery of fossil insects in Tertiary ambers. He, along with co-authors, bagged the prestigious **H.S. Pareek Award** of the Geological Society of India for the best publication in the year 2000.

Dr Shukla published many research papers covering diverse fields. His latest paper appeared in June 2006 issue of Journal of Geological Society of India. He co-authored a book – **Plant fossils: A link with the past** and also published a catalogue on Archaeozoic and Proterozoic fossils. With his scientific contributions, Dr Shukla made a distinct mark in the field of Precambrian biology which established him as one of the leading scientists of the country in the area of his specialisation.

Dr Shukla was the fellow of Geological Society of India, The Palaeontological Society of India and The Palaeobotanical Society, Lucknow. He was Editor of the journal Geophytology, Treasurer of The Palaeobotanical Society and Member of the Executive Council of The Palaeontological Society of India. He also had been member of several IGCP National Working Groups.

Dr Shukla had a very pleasing personality and was known for his cheerful posture. Always ready to help, he took extra pains to see that the jobs assigned to him or his team are completed in time and that too with

perfection. The impending task before Dr Shukla till the preceding days of the sad incident was to organise a field workshop during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of BSIP. As per his nature, he took this assignment with great seriousness and was thoroughly engaged in coordinating this trip.

Doubtlessly, we will miss a generous man, an enthusiastic worker and a good human being who not only befriended people by his sincere and kind virtues but also made a memorable place in our hearts. Behind

him, he left his wife, two loving sons and too many friends. May God rest his soul in peace and give courage to the family members and friends to bear this irreparable loss.

S.K.M. Tripathi

*Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany,
53 University Road,
Lucknow 226 007, India*