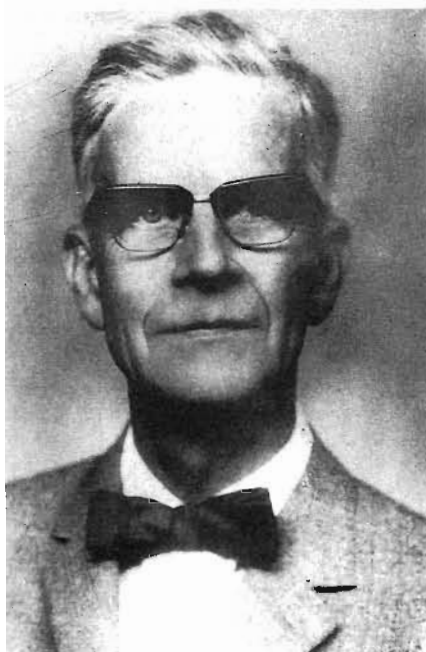

A tribute to Professor Ove Arbo Høeg (1898-1993)



PROFESSOR OVE ARBO HØEG (1898-1993)

Professor Ove Arbo Høeg, one of the leading palaeobotanists, died peacefully on Wednesday, July 7, 1993 at the age of 95. He was born on November 25, 1898 in the town of Larvik (Norway).

After a youth that involved a growing enthusiasm for natural history, he entered Oslo University, Norway for graduate study and was conferred the degree of Dr Philos. in 1942. Even as a graduate student, Dr Høeg's interests for research were wide, ranging from the subjects like lichenology, mycology, pollination in Arctic plants, palaeobotany-palynology, dendrochronology to ethnobotany. Thus, he soon acquired international reputation as a versatile botanist in the scientific world. He was actively engaged in research with remarkable devotion and conspicuous ability throughout his career and published over one hundred papers on different aspects of botany, about one third of them on fossil plants.

Dr Høeg will always be remembered for his outstanding palaeobotanical contributions on Devonian

floras and early land plants of Spitsbergen, Norway. His monumental monographic work on "*The Devonian and Downtonian flora of Spitsbergen*" which he produced in 1942 stands as a testimony to his memory and a unique guide to Devonian palaeobotanists as well. Dr Høeg's palaeobotanical investigations started in the 1920's on Palaeozoic algae, but field expeditions to Spitsbergen between 1924 and 1939 developed his keen interest towards Devonian plants. It was also in the year 1929-30 he conducted notable expedition to central and South Africa and made extensive collections of Permo-Triassic plants. The "*Glossopteris flora of Belgian Congo*" (1960 with M.N. Bose) in itself was the most valuable contribution of Dr Høeg. After 1945, he published only a few research papers on palaeobotanical findings. But he wrote several review papers and short notes, such as "*Ordovician algae in Norway*" (1961) and many articles dealing with the advancements in early land plant studies, in which he kept himself well updated.

It is no exaggeration to say that the palaeobotanical research of the highest order in Norway really started with Dr Høeg. He was responsible for establishing a palaeobotanical section in the Institute for Geology in Oslo (inaugurated in 1958). He had also been a pioneer in pollen analysis to make such studies in Norway in 1920. Ethnobotany became his main occupation during the last 30 years of his life. This resulted in a major monograph on "*Plants and traditions*" (1974) and four smaller ones on more special topics, last one (1991) being on children's games with plants.

The doyen of Norwegian Botany—Dr Høeg served in many botanical academic positions. He was the Curator at the Palaeontological Museum, Oslo University (1924-1926), Keeper of the Botanical Section of the Museum of the Trondheim Academy and Lecturer of Botany at the University of Trondheim. From 1947 until his retirement (in 1967) he was the Professor of Botany in the Department of Pharmacy in Oslo, where he also directed a major dendro-chronological research project in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, he also had opportunity, following Professor Sahni's untimely death, to serve as the first Director of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow (India) from 1951-

1953 under Technical Assistance Programme of UNESCO. He thus supervised the building of the Institute during the critical early years after its establishment (on 3rd April, 1949). The classical Museum of the Sahni Institute was planned by Dr Høeg who personally supervised the setting of panels, paintings and geological exhibits. He organised an expedition to Spiti during his stay at Lucknow, which was a great adventure in those days. From 1958-1964 Dr Høeg was the Director of the Botanical Museum and Garden in Oslo.

He was an Honorary Member of the International Organization of Palaeobotany and Corresponding Member of the Botanical Society of America.

Apart from the greatness of his accomplishments as a scientist/teacher, Dr Høeg's human qualities of kindness and friendship were really unique. A noble gentleman left behind his only daughter and vast circle of fellow botanists and palaeobotanists. In his demise the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany has lost its well wisher, and supporter of great prominence. We all miss an eminent palaeobotanist and human par excellence. A void thus created is hard to be filled.

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