

OBITUARY



Professor S. K. Shah
11/05/1937 – 23/04/2022

It is with a saddened heart that we are paying homage to Prof. Som Kishan Shah, an educationist par excellence, committed researcher, administrator, a visionary, a great institution builder cum a nobleman who left us on 23rd April 2022, leaving behind his wife, son, daughter, grandchildren and a treasure of knowledge. Prof. Shah was born in Srinagar (Kashmir), and he completed his M.Sc. with distinction and Ph. D. from the erstwhile University of Jammu and Kashmir, from the Jammu Campus, and post-doctoral studies in the United Kingdom and France. Prof. Shah started his career as a petrologist and geochemist. He has been on the teaching staff of the postgraduate Department of Geology of the University of Jammu and Kashmir and later at the University of Jammu for more than four decades, teaching stratigraphy, palaeontology, and regional geology of India. He served as the Head of the Department and retired as a senior professor while raising the academic profile of the department to greater heights. He also worked as a Senior Scientific Officer at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology. His passion for Himalayas impelled him to explore the Stratigraphy and Palaeontology of the Himalayan regions. During his tenure at Wadia Institute, the first expedition to Malla Johar region on Kumaun-Garhwal was undertaken. Later, he continued his research in the Himalayan Stratigraphy and Paleontology till his last days. Professor Shah was instrumental in shaping the career of several students, most of whom are highly accomplished and successful globally. I am fortunate enough that he trained me as a Himalayan Paleontologist and Stratigrapher, and I am trying my best to carry his legacy forward.

Professor Shah has published seventy-five papers in standard refereed national and international journals and books, including a textbook on the Paleontology and Historical Geology and the Story of Fossils. Professor Shah supervised thirteen students for the degree of Ph. D. and over twenty-five for M. Phil. in the field of Palaeontology and Stratigraphy. His special interest was the Palaeozoic sequences of the Himalayan Successions. It was he who started working on invertebrates and trace fossils of the Himalayan regions in the Jammu University. He was the Voting Member of the Cambrian Sub-Commission of the International Union of Geological Sciences for ten years, representing Asia. Prof. Shah was a Fellow of the Palaeontological Society of India

and a Fellow of the Geological Society of India.

Professor Shah undertook research in various universities and institutes in the UK under the INSA-Royal Society exchange of Senior Scientists Scheme. He was also a visiting professor at Oregon University (USA). He has been a member of the Project Advisory Committee of the Department of Science and Technology (GoI), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), and Governing body and Research Advisory Committee member of many Institutions, including the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology. He was the President of the 24th Indian Colloquium on Micropaleontology and Stratigraphy held at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology and an active member of the Editorial Committees of Palaeontological Society of India, Geological Society of India, Current Science, Himalayan Geology, etc.

Among the many recognitions that Prof. Shah received was the naming of a fossil genus *Shahaspis* after him in the journal *Palaeontology* (London). He also received the L. Rama Rao Centenary Lifetime achievement award for outstanding research work in Palaeontology and Stratigraphy from the Geological Society of India and Prof. R. C. Misra Memorial Lifetime achievement award for outstanding work in Geological Sciences from the Palaeontological Society of India.

Some of his major books include *Himalayan Fossil Fraud*, published by the Palaeontological Society of India, the *Elements of Palaeontology*, published by the Geological Society of India, and the *Historical Geology of India*, published by Scientific Publishers, India.

We are proudly paying homage and respect to a committed Geoscientist who has rendered unparalleled service in promoting knowledge through his teaching and research in fulfilling the role of a real 'guru.' Certainly, his numerous scientific contributions will continue to inspire young students and researchers in the exploration of the Himalayan, Stratigraphy and Palaeontology.

Prof. Shah succinctly captured his views on life in his will, wherein he said that "*people give a message to their descendants thinking that they have to communicate pearls of knowledge and what they communicate is important. I have no such notions. My "pearls of wisdom" are a lot more primitive because there is a large generation gap (between me and then next generation) and I am a firm believer in evolution. There are lots of new things that you know better than me. Your generation has many challenges that I did not have, but you have a lot more opportunities than I ever had. It will continue like that from generation to generation, albeit at an accelerated rate.*"

The Palaeontological Society of India condoles his sad demise and conveys its regards and support to the bereaved members of his family. Professor Shah's legacy lives on and will inspire generations to come. May his noble soul rest in peace.

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Ashok Kumar Srivastava
01/06/1960 – 19/02/2022

Prof. Ashok Kumar Srivastava, a contemporary field geologist and a popular teacher of Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University Amravati, left us on February 19, 2022 after more than four long months fight against life. He met an accident on October 2, 2021 at his own residence in Amravati, Maharashtra. The unfortunate accident caused brain haemorrhage that leads him to deep coma.

Prof. Srivastava was born on June 1, 1960 and had his initial studies at his native place Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. He did his under-graduation, post-graduation from University of Lucknow in 1980 and 1982 respectively followed by Ph.D. on the Triassic succession of Malla Johar area in 1991. During his Ph.D. work under the supervision of Prof. Surendra Kumar, he carried out extensive field work in the tough terrain of Thethys Himalaya and did in-depth studies on the sedimentology and trace fossils of different stratigraphic horizons of the Tethyan succession. In 1991, he joined the Geology Department, Sant Gadge Baba Amravati University Amravati in its formative years as a lecturer and founder Head of the Department from 1991 to 1996.

During his academic journey, he established himself as a hard core field geologist and a very popular teacher and carried out a systematic research in Gondwana and Lameta rocks of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra besides, working the quaternary sediments of the area. His area of interest included carbonate petrology, ichnology, study of megafloreal and faunal remains. Besides, he also worked on the hydrogeomorphology, morphometry and water quality of Purna Alluvial basin. He was a member of the 21st Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica, led to understanding the basic sediment characteristics of the Schirmacher Oasis region of eastern Antarctica. During his entire tenure, Prof. Srivastava successfully discharged administrative responsibilities. During his headship, he created the basic facilities of research and teaching in the department. Being Chairman of research cell, he immensely contributed to the various academic bodies. In 2017, he successfully organised the 34th convention of Indian Association of Sedimentologists. He completed 5 major and 2 minor research projects and guided 8 Ph.D. students besides being mentor to several M.Sc. dissertations.

After his superannuation, he decided to settle down in Amravati and showed keen interest in natural farming. He is survived by two sons Utkarsh and Shadwal who have made their career in the fields of Mechanical engineering and Electronics and Telecommunication respectively. He will always be remembered by his friends and students as an honest person with deep conviction, devotion and dedication.

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