

M. B. S.

MAHENDRA NATH BOSE

(1925 - 2011)

Elected Fellow 1982

Long before the first Indian Scientific Expedition landed on the Spitsbergen, it was Doctor Mahendra Nath Bose (MNB) who set his foot on this Arctic island during 1962 for exploring the plant life of the bygone era. He became the first Indian scientist to collect fossil plants and to study the floral past of this area. It was for the first time when I got an opportunity to see, know and hear MNB of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP) during 1963 at the Geology Department, University of Lucknow. In 1963, Professor R C Misra FNA, had invited MNB to share his experiences of the Spitsbergen expedition in a lecture at the Geology Department, University of Lucknow. We, post graduate students of the same department were spell bound by his talks on this island and its arctic beauty and more to see various geological features, fauna and flora of the past and present of the Spitsbergen through coloured transparencies. For me it was the first time when I got an opportunity to see, know and hear MNB of the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP). Little did I know then that I shall be settling for good in the BSIP after my post graduation? During the following four decades or even more, this gave me a chance know MNB and his qualities. After his retirement in 1985 from the BSIP and mine in 2004 from the same Institute, I got to know and understand him better.

MNB, along with his family, lived in a palatial bungalow in Mahanagar, a posh area of Lucknow. He shifted to this place during the early sixties from his ancestral home of old Lucknow. We were his neighbours for about seventeen years in Mahanagar before we moved out to our own house. MNB's attachment with Lucknow was strong, because of the seven or eight generations that his family had lived there. He reluctantly moved to Gurgaon, Haryana where he lived with his younger brother Dr. A N Bose from 2005, most probably for more comfort of his ailing wife, and for the fact that other members of his family residing in Delhi and nearby areas could also look after her. He lived there till he bid adieu to this world. During his time in Gurgaon he never lost the site of his roots and used to visit Lucknow every year and socialize with his near and dear ones including ourselves in New Hyderabad. He had also asked us to look for a flat for him in our building known as the Beverly Park Apartment in New Hyderabad. This was the level of his likings for this city of Lucknow.

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY EDUCATION (PERSONAL LIFE, DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH, DEATH; MARITAL STATUS/NUMBER OF CHILDREN ETC.)

MNB was born on March 3, 1925 to Dr. Satyendra Nath Bose and Mrs. Suprabha Bose at Jaingar-Mijilpore, 24 Parganas, West Bengal in an illustrious and affluent Bengali Kayastha family settled in Lucknow for many generations. His father occupied the chair of an Honorary Magistrate, remained the President of the Kali Bari Trust and also the Chairman of the famous Naya Mahabir Mandir Trust, Aliganj, Lucknow for many terms in recognition of his public and social services. Social recognition was bestowed on the family by naming two roads in the city. Priya Nath Bose Road and Moti Nath Bose Road in old Lucknow are known after MNB's great grand father and grand father respectively. Dr. A N Bose, younger brother of MNB is an educationist and academician of repute. He obtained his PhD in physical Chemistry from the University of Lucknow followed by another from the Oxford University, under a Nobel laureate Professor C N Hinshinswood. He has served the Chemistry Department of the University of Lucknow, the Education Department of Science and Mathematics in the NCERT, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, New Delhi with distinction. In between, he was associated with the Chemistry Department, University of Bahrain as its Chairman for many years. Presently, he is settled in Gurgaon, Haryana. His only son is works in the United Kingdom.

Young MNB had his High School and Intermediate from the Kanya Kubj College, Lucknow followed by B.Sc. (1944) from the University of Lucknow. After graduation, he had joined the Carmichael Medical College, Calcutta only to find that the medical science was not of his interest. Therefore, he left that college and did his M.Sc. (1947) in Botany from the University of Lucknow. He was deeply impressed by Sahni's oration skills and this had activated him to join research under him. After accepting him as one of his research students and appointing him as his Personal Research Assistant also, Sahni left for USA for about a year's stay there. After his return from America, Sahni became busy with the foundation stone laying ceremony of the new building of the Palaeobotany Institute. Unfortunately, just a week after the foundation stone laying ceremony, Sahni suddenly passed away on April 10, 1949. MNB in his absence had to seek help from his seniors and submitted his Ph.D. thesis under Dr. R V Sitholey, the then Senior Most Scientist and Officer-in -Charge of the BSIP. He got his doctorate degree in 1952.

MNB was married to Mrs. Smritikona Bose (nee Chowdhury) on January 25, 1951 at Suri, District Birbhum, West Bengal. Mrs. Bose was the only child of Babu Mohini Mohan Chowdhury, a well known, simple and affluent landlord of the area. She was a simple, highly religious, caring and devoted house wife, looking after her parent-in-laws, doting husband and children with all qualities of a perfect hostess. They had been blessed with three children, a son Pronab Bose (eldest), followed by

two daughters Shamoli and Mitali in that order. Pronab is in some business and lives in Delhi. MNB's eldest son-in-law has retired from the Indian Army as a Brigadier and now settled in Delhi with his family. The younger son-in-law is in service at the Foreign Ministry of Germany and lives in Berlin with family. Mahendra and Smritikona were also lucky to have seen their children, grand children and great grand children flourishing and progressing well in life. MNB's dear wife had left the world for heavenly abode exactly 60 years after their marriage. Passing away of his beloved wife was a major setback in MNB's life which otherwise was full of fulfilment, satisfaction, contention and achievements. This made him a fragile, heart-broken person with diminishing physical strength and vanishing urge to survive. The magnitude of his latent emotional binding was revealed as he lost his life partner and with it the essence of life. In spite of his growing age, he was at his best both mentally and physically.

AS A HUMAN BEING

He was an interesting conversationalist and a patience listener. During the last seven years of his life we used to talk almost daily on telephone about the early days of the establishment of the BSIP, about his expeditions and field works in India and abroad, and his keen observations and appreciation of many people known to him. He had a great obsession for cleanliness particularly against the spider net and therefore before inviting him we used to take care of our house to make it to his choice. For his frankness and straightforwardness, a few events experienced by his younger daughter are worth mentioning. During the first visit of her prospective father-in-law to discuss the marriage proposal of his son with her, MNB requested him to have a look in her wardrobe to assess her tidiness. MNB further added that his daughter was MA in English Literature, yet she still could made mistakes. The gentleman who himself was a Professor of the same subject asked him if he was really interested in getting his daughter married to his son. The proposal was immediately and happily accepted mutually. For his frank nature, MNB was always liked by his children. Another event relates to his strong concern for his well trimmed lawns when Mitali visited her parents for the first time after wedding. The newly married couple had invited friends for dinner and cocktail party in autumns. As these days are quite pleasant in Lucknow, they made the sitting arrangements on her father's lawns. MNB was very enthusiastic about this party; however, he did not appreciate having metal chairs on his lawns to leave deep holes in the turf. Sensing his displeasure, the young couple had shifted the arrangement up to the terrace facing the garden, which was appreciated by MNB. He also revealed an unknown side of his personality after having become grandfather. After retirement he used to visit his children regularly; thus he visited the younger daughter in Berlin almost every year. From Berlin, he used to go to Norway to meet his old associates and friends there. He used to spend much time with his grand daughters, enquiring

about their school, hobbies and friends, and would accompany them to the riding school. His indulgent attitude towards his five grand children was to have been heartier as compared to his own three. He was a strict father who allowed less freedom to his daughters than to his son. As son, MNB was responsible, caring and dependable; to his brother he was a friend, philosopher and guide. In spite of his heavy professional engagements, he had never neglected the needs of his family and took active part in the proper upbringing of the children. MNB was well known for punctuality, keen observation, straight forwardness, reserved nature, discipline, orderliness, mannerism, etiquette, sharp memory, thirst for knowledge etc. He demonstrated his good sense of humour at an introducing of Tom Harris to the audience of the BSIP during a lecture session, when said that Tom was the Totally Outstanding Man. MNB was conservative and orthodox and used to tell his children about the cultural values and traditions practiced in their family. He was always immaculately dressed in European style with beautiful neck ties or silken scarf in winters. We were surprised to see him in total traditional Bengali costumes during his children's marriage. He was an amalgamation of Indian and European cultures with bending towards European. MNB had great respect and love for his parents and always followed their instructions and advice. Only once, he went against the wishes of his parents when they wanted to get his daughters admitted to a traditional Indian School. MNB had rather strictly opposed this and finally got them admitted in a renowned Catholic Loreto Convent. He rightly thought that the English medium schooling would be useful to them in future.

MNB respected his teachers and professors whose photographs were always displayed on his writing table. His early influences and inspirations were his father, Birbal Sahni FRS, T M Harris FRS, O A Höeg, O H Selling and L Cahen. Few of his close friends were R C Misra FNA, K R Surange FNA, B S Trevedi FNA, S B Manum, S C Agrawal FNA, S C D Sah, R P Rastogi, D D Pant FNA, B B Sharma, D D Awasthi FNA, R N Lakhanpal FNA, and many others of a similar reputation. He was a member and frequent visitor at the Lucknow University Staff Club.

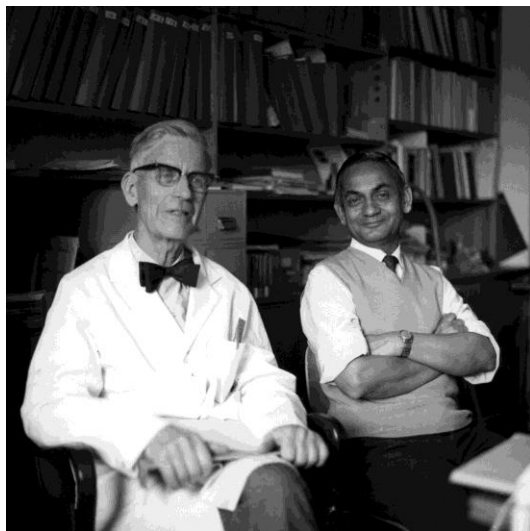
MNB was soft spoken, seldom using hard words, but still able to convey anger or dislike when he felt it appropriate. He had a remarkably sharp memory and could recall incidents from the long past. He used to tell us the details of the foundation stone laying ceremony for the new building of Institute of Palaeobotany. Just a week before his demise, he overheard his attending doctor telling to his brother that MNB was slightly confused. MNB reacted spontaneously by telling the young doctor that he could still narrate the very old incidents correctly. MNB was quite formal and never addressed people without a title. He never used the official vehicle like his predecessor did for coming to the Institute and returning to his residence. He used his own chauffer driven car for this purpose. MNB expressed two major regrets in life, the first one was to have left Lucknow to settle in Gurgaon, second was not to

have continued research in Europe for good. He had a strong feeling that he could have achieved still more abroad.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER

MNB served as Personal Research Assistant to Sahni from October 1947 at the Botany Department of the University of Lucknow. Sahni was then heading the departments of Botany and Geology of the University. With Sahni's sudden demise in April 1949, the newly established BSIP experienced a serious setback in its further development. UNESCO was requested to find a palaeobotanist of high international reputation to serve as the BSIP's director for an interim period, and in 1951 Professor O A Höeg of the University of Oslo, Norway, accepted an UNESCO assignment as the Director of the BSIP, and MNB, became his Research Assistant. Like Sahni, Höeg also became impressed by the performance of MNB in their short association. MNB served the BSIP in positions starting from Lecturer (1949) to Senior Scientific Officer (1956) to Assistant Director in 1962. Finally, MNB was appointed as the Director of the BSIP in May 1980 and served successfully in this position till his superannuation in March 1985. He was considered to be the foremost expert in Mesozoic Palaeobotany in India and had established an active school of Mesozoic Palaeobotany at the BSIP. During his long innings as the Head of the Mesozoic Palaeobotany (1955-1980) at the BSIP, he supervised many Ph.D. students who subsequently made significant contributions in this field including palynology. They include Sukh Dev, S K Roy, K P Jain, M L Kasat, Shyam C Srivastava, B N Jana and a few more. As the Director, he had the credit for making a major reorganization of the research projects in the BSIP. He was all for against the tinkering with the very nature and mandate of the BSIP. He introduced the sciences of Dendrochronology and Archaeobotany at the BSIP and deputed young scientists abroad for advanced training in Dendrochronology. During his regime additional constructions of Administrative Block, Maceration Rooms, Canteen, Auditorium, Guest Rooms with a VIP Suite and a well furnished kitchen in the guest house, etc. were added. MNB took personal interest in these constructions and could be seen supervising and inspecting the progress of the work at odd hours. He had been a doer and knew well the art of getting the job done in his own way. His office room was one of the most meticulously maintained in the Institute. From his vast collection of literature from all over the world, he could find the reprints within seconds. He was quick in making decisions and taking action. He acted as the convener of various internal committees of the BSIP from time to time. Major improvements as popular in those times were achieved in the Museum, Library, Garden, Building etc. during his tenure. Under his convener ship of Museum Committee during Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the BSIP in 1971, I had the privilege and pleasure of watching his working closely. He was also a great help to me for the updating of the Museum during the 4th International Palynological Conference (1976-77) held at the BSIP.

After retiring from the BSIP, he spent August 1986 to December 1990 working with Professor Svein B Manum in the Geology Department of the University of Oslo as a visiting scientist. Back in India, he took keen interest in founding the BSIP Pensioner's Welfare Society which is fully grown up now and helpful in many ways to the pensioners. In the early stages of the formation of this Society, one could see him visiting individuals personally in the BSIP to collect the contributions for the budding society. Having been associated with the BSIP since its inception, MNB was always concerned for the development and progress of the Institute. He often submitted critical and constructive suggestions for this to the authorities concerned. However, as happens, these were mostly neither entertained nor appreciated at all.



M N Bose with Professor O A Hoeg in Hoeg's Office, Botany Department, University of Oslo, Oslo. 1974

SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

Mahendra Nath Bose is well known for his outstanding and major contributions to the Mesozoic Palaeobotany of India and Palaeozoic and Mesozoic Palaeobotany of Belgian Congo (Zaire). Already his PhD thesis contained significant contributions. His paper on a new species of the bennettitalean genus *Bucklandia* from the Jurassic of the Rajmahal Hills, Bihar was well accepted. He also showed that the genus *Homoxylon* described by Sahnii as an angiospermic wood was in fact bennettitalean. It provided an example of the parallel evolution of wood structure in the vascular plants that occurs here and there through out their history. Other papers from his thesis were on petrified bennettitalean leaves and some coniferous remains from the Rajmahal Hills. Angiospermic remains belonging to *Guttiferae* were also described from Rajasthan. Remains of *Guttiferae* were subsequently found from all over India.

Soon after his Ph.D., MNB worked with Professor T M Harris FRS at the Reading University, with Professor Hamshaw Thomas FRS at the Cambridge

University, with Professor O.H. Selling at the Riksmuseum, Stockholm and with Professor Ove Arbo Höeg at the University of Oslo, Norway. At Reading, he published a paper on *Pachypteris* followed by two on conifers (*Farndalea* and *Taxulus*) from the Jurassic of Yorkshire. At the Riksmuseum, he described *Araucaria haastii* from the Upper Cretaceous of New Zealand which was shown to have a surprising resemblance with the extant species of *Araucaria klinkii*. MNB also studied the shoots and cones of *Athrotaxites* from the Eocene of Queensland, Australia.

In Oslo, Höeg had an extensive collection (1929-30) of Palaeozoic fossil plants from Belgian Congo (now Zaire) and Zambezi (now Mozambique). This was jointly worked out by Höeg and MNB. The result was the most extensive monograph on fossil plants ever published from Zaire. Megaspores with peculiar inner body (mesosporium) were discovered from the shale samples of the Palaeozoic sediments of Luena and other localities. A paper on these megaspores with double walls opened a new line of research in the megaspore studies; it was published with Höeg and Manum as co-authors.

MNB's well recognised work on the fossil flora of Congo, led to an invitation to him from the Director of Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, Tervuren (Belgium) to visit Zaire to make fresh collections. MNB worked on these collections ranging in age from Palaeozoic to Upper Cretaceous, resulting in the publication of several monographs. Based on this palaeobotanical work, the stratigraphy of Lukuga Group and some Mesozoic formations of Zaire were revised. While he was in Oslo from 1954 to 1955, MNB published a paper on some *Sciadopitys*-like leaves from the Cretaceous of Arctic of Canada. Later, during his stay in Oslo 1986-1990, MNB worked with Svein B Manum on a great diversity of such leaves, resulting in a monographic treatment of their morphology, taxonomy and stratigraphy. MNB masterly technique of bulk maceration of carbonaceous shale contributed essentially to these results.

After returning to India, MNB confined himself mainly to Mesozoic plant fossils ranging in age from Lower Triassic to Late Cretaceous. Many new plant fossil localities were discovered. In the Triassic, three distinct floral assemblages were distinguished, belonging to Lower, Middle and Upper Triassic respectively. Earlier, the genus *Dicroidium* was taken as a Triassic marker in India. However, their work showed that the genus *Lepidopteris* was actually the Permo-Triassic marker in India. Two interesting cones were described from Nidhpur, Madhya Pradesh. One of these (*Nidia*) had resemblance with the female cones of the extant genus *Zamia*. Many plant fossils new to Kachchh, Saurashtra, Gardweshar (Gujarat), South Rewa and Satpura Basins, Rajmahal Hills and East Coast Gondwanas were described with comments on the age wherever found possible. Lower Cretaceous beds were recognised on the basis of *Weichselia* and *Onychiospis* at Bansa, Himmatnagar and

Than. A monograph on the Mesozoic fossil flora of Kachchh was published including others on pteridophytes, cycodophytic leaves; bennettitalean leaves like *Otazamites*, *Ptillophyllum* & *Dictyozamites* and bennettitalean male and female fructifications like *Weltrichia* & *Williamsonia*. *Amarjolia dactylota* described by MNB was the only bisexual bennettitalean flower known from India till then. A paper on the *Pentoxylon* plant has changed some of the older concepts about these plants. MNB had also worked extensively in Extra-Peninsular India. This includes significant plant fossil studies from the Upper Palaeozoic Formations of the Kashmir Himalayas which showed that this Lower Carboniferous flora was similar to those known from the Northern Hemisphere and other parts of the world. Similarly the Permian Flora had the elements of Chinese flora. Mesozoic plant fossil studies from Bhutan, Nepal and Ladakh have shown that the Bhutan and Nepal assemblages were somewhat similar to those known from the Rajmahal Hills and the Jabalpur Formations (Peninsular India) whereas the Ladakh assemblage (Extra-Peninsular India) resembled those known from the Northern Hemisphere.

MNB did field work in areas extending from the equatorial forests of Zaire to Spitsbergen about 10° south of the North Pole and from the plains of the Peninsular India to an elevation of about 18000 ft in the Himalayas (Extra-Peninsular India). He enjoyed field work for collecting plant fossils and used to visit many areas of India almost every year during his service at the BSIP. One month before his retirement from the BSIP, he had even been to Kachchh. MNB undertook many expeditions in India and abroad like the Pindari Glacier and Rupkund Hills (with anthropologists), Spiti (with Höeg) in search of early land plants, to Jongri-Sikkim Himalayas with Japanese scientists, to Spitsbergen and other Arctic islands with Norwegian palaeobotanists & geologists and to Zaire with African geologists. He had also collected plant fossils from England, France, Austria, Sweden, Nigeria, Australia and Tunisia.

He had mutually beneficial professional contacts with Geological Survey of India, Oil and Natural Gas Company Limited, Oil India Limited, Botanical Survey of India, Indian Statistical Institute, French Institute in Pondicherry, Centre for Earth Science Studies etc. including various universities in India and abroad.

ASSOCIATION WITH NORWAY: MNB's association with Norway and Norwegian starts with the UNESCO assignment of Professor O A Höeg of the University of Oslo, Norway as the director of the BSIP during 1951 following Sahni's demise. MNB, who had been a Research Assistant to Sahni, became a Research Assistant to Höeg. In this capacity he had accompanied Höeg to Spiti for field work in 1952. At that time logistics were difficult in that area. Höeg was impressed by MNB's performance both in the field and in the laboratory, and on his return to Norway; he arranged a grant for MNB to work under him for one year. The grant was from the Foreign Ministry of Norway under a cultural exchange program, and

he became the first Indian citizen ever to benefit from this program. MNB thus joined the University of Oslo as a visiting scientist from 1954 to 1955. During his stay in Oslo, he shared the laboratory facilities with Svein B Manum who was then a Research Assistant to Höeg. This became the starting point of a scientific cooperation between MNB and Svein lasting into late 1980's, with numerous visits to Oslo since 1955 and a friendship lasting to MNB's demise.

During 1962, MNB joined Svein and others on a field expedition to Spitsbergen. Spitsbergen had no regular air connection in those days. The party went to this arctic island by a Norwegian Air force amphibian plane from Northern Norway and returned by a seal hunting vessel. With a geology student as field assistant, MNB and Svein camped and worked under midnight sun conditions for two months. For weeks, the party was left to themselves without any communication with the outside world. On a fixed date the Polar Institute ship would pick them up and move to another locality on the island with their camping gear and provisions. They had a dory with outboard engine for local transport at sea. Working days could be quite long because of the constant daylight; they used to end with a good meal, beer and playing of cards which was a favourite pastime of MNB as well. MNB immensely enjoyed this field experience and often used to talk about Spitsbergen and Norway. He was the first Indian ever to work in this high arctic isolated area.



M N Bose wearing a traditional Norwegian homenet sweater at a Skiing Resort in the vicinity of Lillehammer, Oslo. Winter 1955

During MNB's stay in Oslo University as a visiting scientist from August 1986 to December 1990, Svein B Manum had planned to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their 1962's expedition to Spitsbergen by revisiting and working further at some of the localities. His proposal to do so was promptly accepted by the Polar Institute of Norway. They therefore, undertook the second expedition to Spitsbergen during 1987 and made fruitful collection from there. Transport facilities had vastly

improved since 1962 and Spitsbergen had an airport now. A huge collection of late Mesozoic to early Tertiary plant fossils and rock samples for palynological studies were collected during their two field seasons on Spitsbergen. Plants from modern vegetation were also collected from all visited localities for the herbarium of the Botanical Museum of the Oslo University. The fossil collections were worked out jointly with Svein during MNB's visit to Oslo from 1986 to 1990. During this period, he had cooperated with Svein on a number of publications on Jurassic to Lower Cretaceous floras of the Spitsbergen, Greenland, Arctic Canada and Norway. MNB's masterly bulk maceration of early Cretaceous shale had yielded a high diversity of double veined "Sciadopitys-like" leaves. Their study was extended to collections made by the Swedish, Danish and British expeditions to arctic during late 1800's and early 1900's. This resulted in a monograph published in 1990 dealing with four genera, three of which were new and the fourth redefined and twenty species (seven new) of this type of leaves. Enigmatic fragments recovered from the maceration were recognised as cocoons of clitellates. After getting many complete specimens and studying the morphology of the extant cocoons, a paper was published jointly with an expert on modern clitellates.



MNB and S B Manum in Spitsbergen 1987

In recognition of MNB's contributions to the palaeobotany in Norway and his collaboration with Norwegian palaeobotanists, he was elected a Member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in 1987. In an interview to Jenny Lippestad, a senior journalist in *Aftenposten* (February 27, 1989), MNB had emphasized to say that Norway had given him the best five years of his life. Jenny Lippestad was responsible for the column "The name of the day" in *Aftenposten*, the leading Norwegian newspaper in those days. MNB expressed excitement and euphoria with reverence of 35 years of cooperation with Norwegian scientists and many visits to his colleagues at the University of Oslo and many other friends that he had made on his visits.



BSIP Director MNB, T M Harris (Reading), Dr. R N Lakhanpal (BSIP) and Dr. Vishnu Mittre (BSIP) at the BSIP during 1982

MEMBERSHIP, AWARDS AND HONOURS AND ASSOCIATION WITH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIETIES

MNB had chaired many sessions of various International and National conferences, symposia, meetings etc. He has delivered many invited lectures at various universities in India and abroad. The main memberships, awards and honours received by MNB are:

Fellow of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi.

Fellow of the Indian Academy of Science, Bangalore.

Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad.

Member, National Working Group for IGPC.

Fellow of the Palaeobotanical Society of India.

Secretary of the Palaeobotanical Society of India.

Recipient of Ruchi Ram Sahni Award.

Member of the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters.

Fellow, Correspondent de l'Academic Royale de Sciences, Belgium.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

MNB had many hobbies which kept him fully occupied throughout his life. He loved gardening to the extent of calling it as an ardent passion. He had acquired rare plants from all over the world and had them planted in his garden which he had nurtured himself. He would get up in the morning and walk carefully over his well-groomed lawns to the budding flowers, plucking ailing leaves, relishing site of some growing exotic fruits or plucking out unwanted wild grass (weeds) from the turf. A voracious reader, he has special liking towards arts, culture, customs, tradition, heritage and music of class. On field trips in India when he was joined by foreign scientists, he was anxious to show Indian culture at its best. An avid skier, he has skied

extensively on the slopes of India and abroad. He was equally at ease with trekking and mountaineering. He was fond of watching foot ball matches, playing cards and keeping pets specially the dogs. He had a German Pomeranian till his last days. He used to visit the heritage sites and museums across the world in pursuit of knowledge and understanding. He used to visit Museums in Germany and Norway all alone using public transport or walking through the streets even at the age of 85.

LAST DAYS

MNB maintained a regular life style throughout and consequently suffered no illness in spite of keeping himself busy with office and other extracurricular activities. He was a keen letter writer, particularly since retirement. Svein's file contains more than 100 letters, all in his hand writing. During MNB's last visit to Lucknow from Gurgaon in November 2010, we had invited him for lunch. Quite different from past visits, MNB was showing his age now. Before MNB and his wife left back for Gurgaon, I went to his Guest House just to say goodbye to them. I was surprised to see him on the first landing when I told him that there was no need for him to wait for me there. He politely told me that it was just to help me to locate his room. This was the standard of courtesy he always used to extend. We were then talking about his still missing Lucknow feelings, about the BSIP and many other topics of mutual interest. And at one stage I told MNB that his wife would be feeling uncomfortable listening to our conversation. MNB then said that Mrs. Bose cared for him, for his health and for his happiness only. Hardly four or five days before his passing away, he was not able to take my call. It was then attended by his younger brother Dr. A N Bose on his behalf who told us that MNB was in critical stage, bedridden and under medical treatment. We therefore, went to Gurgaon on April 26, 2011 and felt sorry to see him in a condition so different from his very active earlier life. We had a brief talk with him when he asked about Lucknow particularly the BSIP and our welfare. Next day, on April 27, 2011, we again visited him when he did recognise us but was unable to talk. While coming back from his place we knew that he was no more. This became a great loss to his friends, colleagues, family and academic world. Personally, I have lost somebody who used to recognise me as a good human being.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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due to Dr. Mukund Sharma of the BSIP for useful suggestions. Lastly, thanks to my better half Dr. Shaila Chandra for helping me in various ways in finalising the present work.

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