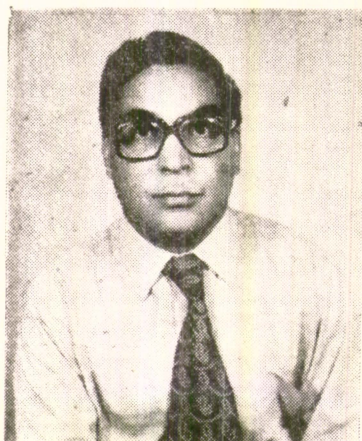


PRESENTATION OF THE PROFESSOR L. RAMA RAO GOLD MEDAL  
TO  
PROFESSOR S. B. BHATIA



*Dr. Kurien Jacob, Vice-President, Geological Society of India, in presenting the Prof. L. Rama Rao Gold Medal to Prof. S. B. Bhatia, Professor of Geology, Punjab University, said :*

Professor Bhatia has made many significant contributions to Indian stratigraphy and palaeontology during three decades of active research. His valuable research in palaeontology mostly covers the invertebrate groups, foraminifera, ostracoda and the charophyta, and his contributions have considerably enriched our knowledge. His pioneering work on the Tertiary and Quaternary ostracoda of the Indian sub-continent is noteworthy. Professor Bhatia's biostratigraphic studies, based primarily on ostracoda and charophyta of the Karewa Formation of Kashmir, have produced important results, and so also his careful investigations of the ostracoda and charophyta of the Intertrappean beds of Peninsular India.

Professor Bhatia has made substantial contributions to the stratigraphy of the lesser Himalayan formations. The much debated stratigraphy of the poorly fossiliferous Blaini-Krol-Tal sequence of the lesser Himalaya was brought to effective focus by Professor Bhatia. His recognition of the passage beds between the Subathu and the Dagshai Formations of the Simla Hills is of significance, negating the earlier held view of an unconformable contact between the two formations.

Professor Bhatia was the first to report Carboniferous foraminifera from the basal Gondwana of Central India and to shed new light on the palaeogeography of the sub-continent.

In view of Professor Bhatia's valuable contributions to Indian stratigraphy and palaeontology, the Council of the Society unanimously decided to award the Professor L. Rama Rao Gold Medal to Professor Bhatia. On behalf of the Fellows of the Society, and on my own behalf, I warmly congratulate Professor Bhatia and express our expectations of further valuable contributions from him in future years. I have great pleasure now in presenting the award to him.

*Reply by Professor S. B. Bhatia:*

*Dr. Jacob, distinguished members of the Geological Society, and friends:*

I deem it a great privilege and honour to have been awarded the Professor L. Rama Rao Gold Medal by the Council of the Geological Society of India. I consider this award more as a recognition of my long association with the Centre of Advanced Study in Geology at Panjab University, Chandigarh, where I have been working for more than two and a half decades, and also of my earlier association with my *alma mater*, the University of Lucknow, both of which are recognized as great seats of learning and research in palaeontology and stratigraphy, rather than my own humble contributions in these two fields of specialization.

While accepting this award, my thoughts go back to the year 1969, when as a member of the Committee for the celebration of the 75th Birthday of Professor L. Rama Rao, I and other members discussed appropriate ways and means of honouring the doyen of Micropalaeontology in India. In my discussions with the late Professor S. Sambe Gowda, the Convener of the Committee, I mooted the idea of bringing out a suitable commemoration volume and having a medal in his honour. While the commemoration volume was brought out in 1971 as *Micropalaeontologica Indica*, the idea of instituting a Gold Medal in his honour finally took shape in the year 1974, when the first medal was awarded by the Geological Society of India to Mr. M. V. A. Sastry of the Geological Survey of India. I am recalling these events not because of what little role I played in them but, because when I mooted the idea of a Gold Medal in informal discussions with Professor Gowda, little did I realize that I myself would one day, be the proud recipient of the same.

I had the privilege of meeting Professor L. Rama Rao only once during my visit to Bangalore to attend the first Indian colloquium on Micropalaeontology and Stratigraphy in 1969. As post-graduate students of Geology, however, we had read and heard about his contributions to the palaeontology and stratigraphy of the Cretaceous-Tertiary rocks of the Trichinopoly-Pondichery areas. In fact, as students of Geology at Lucknow University, where I had my baptism in the fascinating realms of palaeontology and palaeobotany during the course of inspiring lectures by late Professors Birbal Sahni and S. R. Narayan Rao, only three names (all incidentally happened to be Raos) were mentioned to us in the field of micropalaeontology—those of Professor L. Rama Rao, Professor S. R. Narayan Rao (my teacher and mentor at Lucknow) and of Professor K. Sripada Rao.

However, my personal contact with Professor Rama Rao developed much later when, in 1958, he invited me to contribute a paper for the Inaugural Number of the Journal of the Geological Society of India. I felt greatly honoured at this invitation and readily agreed to it, as at that time, I had some important findings to communicate on microfossils from the Umaria Marine Bed, from which none had been reported till that time. Our association with each other, and my regard for him subsequently, grew over the years through correspondence on editorial matters. The present high standard of the Journal and its regularity of publication are a tribute to the initial rigid editorial policy followed by Professor Rama Rao.

In one other context, I feel I can claim to have some links with Professor Rama Rao, and this concerns our independent work on the Cretaceous-Tertiary

sequence of the Trichinopoly area. One of Professor Rama Rao's significant contributions in this connection is his work on the age and fossil algae of the youngest formation of this sequence—The Niniyur Formation. His pioneering contributions on this Formation led to its establishment as a separate stratigraphic unit. Our own humble work at the Panjab University (Bhatia and Jain, 1969) also helped to establish another new stratigraphic unit of Aptian-Albian age in the same area—viz. the Damiapuram Formation on the basis of ostracodes and other microfauna. Our findings have since been independently confirmed on palynological data by the workers of the ONGC and the Palaeobotany Institute.

In these and other works of mine, which, apart from dealing with biostratigraphy, deal with diverse groups of microfossils like smaller foraminifera, marine and non-marine ostracoda and charophyta, I have always endeavoured to avoid treading the beaten path and taken up the challenge of working on new areas and neglected groups of microfossils in our country. The vistas are vast and deep, and we, in India have only touched the fringe of the problems, particularly with respect to the economic and applied aspects of micropalaeontology. It has always been my sincere endeavour to try and put India on the micropalaeontological map of the world—be it through my humble scientific contributions or through my capacity as the last correspondent for MICROPALAEONTOLOGY published by the AMNH or through my present assignment as the correspondent in India for the International Ostracode Newsletter CYPRIS, now being published from USA. In these efforts, I have always been inspired by my *gurus* and drawn strength from the affection and encouragement of my colleagues and well-wishers.

I once again thank the Council of the Geological Society of India for bestowing this great honour on me.