

DRILLING TO THE MANTLE

The Japanese deep-sea drilling vessel "chikyu" (Japanese term for earth) is getting ready to undertake the task of drilling to the mantle (Hornyak, Tim, 2005, The Biggest Dig, *Scientific American*, v.293(4), pp. 9-10.). The vessel is equipped with drill pipes that are 9.5 km long and is expected to penetrate through some 7000 m of the crust at the selected location of Nakai Trough off Japan's Pacific coast with a relatively thin veneer of crust and where the mantle is also higher due to tectonic reasons.

The technology of such drilling naturally incorporates all that is known about deep drilling in oil technology. Core-samples of the crust-mantle boundary and mantle will

provide the first opportunity to geologists to study the *insitu* mantle-rocks in contrast to all the earlier studies on such mantle rocks brought to accessible crustal levels by tectono-volcanic processes. The Centre for Deep Earth Exploration (CDEX) of Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology operates the ship and the project of mantle-drilling forms a part of the long term Ocean Drilling Program with the chief participants of Japan, the U.S. and the European Union.

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DEEMED UNIVERSITIES AND DOOMED UNIVERSITIES

"Recognizing research institutes as 'deemed universities', as some of them already have been, is a negation of the original objectives for which dual system of universities and research institutes was set in place in the first instance. None of the research institutes, even if their scientists are 'teaching' some courses at M.Sc. and/or Ph.D. levels, fulfil the classical requirements of a university having concourses of students and teachers in many diverse disciplines. Real breakthroughs in technologies can happen only when there is a close interaction among universities (source of basic knowledge), research institutes (application-oriented

research) and the industry (users of the technology). If really new technology has not been generated in the country, it is primarily because of the absence of such close interactions among the various components. The present mess in the system of higher education cannot be solved by the research institutes 'breaking away' from the university system and being recognized as 'deemed universities' with full freedom to undertake research in any area. One needs to assess where things have gone wrong and work to rectify the past mistakes. By creating more and more 'deemed universities' one would only help the other universities to be 'doomed'!"

(Extracted from the guest editorial on 'Deemed Universities and other Universities' by S.C. Lakhota in *Current Science*, v.89 (8), 25 Oct. 2005, p. 1304).

Announcement

LAKSHMESWAR RAMA RAO BIRTH CENTENARY RESEARCH GRANTS: 2006-2007

A sum of Rs.10,000 shall be made available during the financial year 2006-2007 to Young Research Scholars for carrying out laboratory and fieldwork in the field of Palaeontology and Stratigraphy.

Those interested in seeking assistance are requested to apply to the Society furnishing full particulars of academic qualifications, synopsis of the research project they are engaged in and the extent of assistance required. The application should be supported by their Research Guide and the Head of the Institution and reach the Secretary, Geological Society of India, P.B. No.1922, Gavipuram P.O., Bangalore - 560 019 on or before 31st March 2006.