

Viking long boat and sailed from the Dvina River in northern Russia down the Dnieper River that flows into the Black Sea (*La Route De L'ambre – De La Baltique À La Mer Noire Dans Le Sillage Des Vikings*, 1992). This 2400 km, 53-day long seafaring was intended to recreate that of the Rus people (a group of Nordic Varangians), who founded the Russian kingdom in the 9th century.

In 1994, Peissel and his crew explored the source of the Mekong River, Asia's third longest rivers originating in eastern Tibet. Peissel followed the more difficult and historical Dza Nak (Black Mekong) branch of the river reaching the homeland of nomadic tribes whom the Chinese sometimes sarcastically call 'the last barbarians' (*The Last Barbarians: The Discovery of the Source of the Mekong*, 1997). A decade later, however, a Japanese–Chinese team demonstrated that the White Mekong (Dza Kar) was about 4 km longer and was thus the primary source. Nevertheless, it was Peissel's work that contributed to our knowledge of the little-known landscape and tribal

cultures of upper Mekong as featured in a documentary film (*Source of the Mekong*, A&E, 1998) sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute.

From 1995 to 1999, Peissel spent several seasons in Tibet, studying the Tibetan breeds of horses, mapping caves and salt routes, and filming wildlife on the Changthang Plateau in western Tibet; and finally in 2000, he visited the Amdo region in northeast Tibet to document the 50 m tall drystone towers which have survived earthquakes for centuries, and whose origin and builders remain a complete mystery.

Throughout his life, Peissel showed great fond and friendship toward the Himalayan-Tibetan people, culture and history. In one of his last books, *Tibet: The Secret Continent* (2003), Peissel summed up his life-long explorations of the world's highest plateau and mountains.

As a young boy, Peissel liked to draw prehistoric animals. In his expeditions he drew sketches and created watercolour paintings, some of which were exhibited in Paris and New York. During the last

decade of his life, as his travels were reduced, Peissel focused more on his artworks. He published nearly 100 of his watercolour paintings of Tibetan monasteries and cliff-top buildings in *Tibetan Pilgrimage* (2005). Before his death, Peissel had just completed his first children's illustrated book about Tibet and was scheduled to promote it at the Book Fair in Frankfurt, but a heart attack at night put an end to the wonderful and fruitful career of this great explorer. His contributions and legacy will be cherished.

Peissel, who characterized himself as 'an adventurer with lots of curiosity', was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of London and a member of the Explorers' Club of New York. He married three times and had five children.

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L. S. Srinath (1927–2012)

Laxmipuram Srinivasachar Srinath, born on 15 March 1927, passed away in Bangalore on 13 September 2012. He was a celebrated teacher and an educationist par excellence.

Srinath started his career as a Fellow at the Confederation of British Industries in UK (1953–55), then moved to the Illinois Institute of Technology as Assistant Professor of Engineering Mechanics (1958–59). He returned to India to join the Aeronautical Development Establishment in Bangalore as Senior Scientific Officer (1959–60) before joining the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, where he worked as a Professor between 1963 and 1971. In 1971, he joined the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore as Senior Professor of Mechanical Science (1971–84) and continued after superannuation as Emeritus Professor until 1995. He was Director of IIT Madras from 1984 to 1989.

Srinath was elected Fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineering, Indian Academy of Sciences, Society of Experimental Mechanics, Aeronautical Society of India and Fluid

Power Society of India. He has made major fundamental research contributions in the areas of experimental mechanics photoelasticity, photothermoelasticity, and stress wave propagation in solids and has over 160 publications to his credit.



He took keen interest in writing books in diverse areas and wrote 10 books in all ranging from linear programming, opera-

tions research and experimental stress analysis. His books *PERT and CPM – Principles and Applications* and *Advanced Mechanics of Solids* have become classics each running into 4 editions and more than 30 reprints!

Methods developed by Srinath in the areas of photoelasticity, holographic stress analysis and scattered light photoelasticity are standard reference books among practising engineers and have today formed the basis for many non-destructive analyses of stresses in solids. Several equations that are used are named after him. He was the first to demonstrate the potentialities of scattered light in the non-destructive analysis of stresses in solids. He was invited to deliver special lectures on his methods in photoelasticity, to practising engineers and professionals in India and abroad.

Srinath took keen interest in continuing education activities that span the domain of college teachers as well as serving professionals. Full credit should be given to him for his efforts to make the QIP schemes an effective instrument of change in transforming significantly

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the quality and standard of technical education in our country. He was the first to implement the scheme at IIT-Kanpur with the support of the then Ministry of Education.

The sequential summer school programmes for serving teachers that Srinath devised in 1968 increased the number of teachers having postgraduate qualifications in our technical institutions from a mere 15% (1968) to a respectable figure of 40–50% in a few years. As a national coordinator for 10 long years, he put QIP activities on a firm footing which convinced other IITs and NITs to become partners in this effort. Today, QIP schemes are the major activities of AICTE and the Indian Society for Technical Education (ISTE) to upgrade the quality and standards of teachers in degree colleges and polytechnics.

Srinath was the first to set up a Centre for Continuing Education in India at IIT-Kanpur in 1969. One of the major activities he initiated was curriculum development. A majority of curricula in technical institutions were of cut-and-paste type, comprising mostly outdated material. His three-pronged attack, namely (a) modernize the curricula reflecting newer developments; (b) train teachers to upgrade their subject competence through short-term summer programmes and (c) encourage Indian authors to write suitable textbooks in the newer areas, helped in raising the quality and standards of our teachers, and we also have a large

number of good quality text/reference books written by Indian authors. The above activities of the Curriculum Development Centre at IIT Kanpur became a model for other institutions, and today majority of activities of QIP Centres in IITs and NITs are in the above three areas.

At IISc in addition to starting the Centre for Continuing Education, Srinath initiated the highly successful and reputed PROFISCIENCE programme in collaboration with 12 professional societies for working professionals in industries and R&D establishments. The evening courses which are offered under this programme are of the same standard and level as those given to regular students at IISc at the postgraduate level.

Since there was no forum available for teachers of technical institutions to mutually exchange and express their views on teaching methods, curricular contents, laboratory developments, etc. Srinath founded the *Indian Journal of Technical Education* in 1971 and was its editor for 13 long years. This was a much needed avenue and a channel of communication among the teaching community. Even today, this is the only journal in India dealing with technical education and is run by Indian Society for Technical Education as an international journal under the Indo-Canadian programme.

Though design is the essence of engineering, the curricula of all our technical institutions were mostly analysis-oriented without much design content.

As a Jawaharlal Nehru Fellow, Srinath organized a series of seminars, workshops and national conferences in collaboration with COSTED to promote and inculcate design culture among the student and teaching community. Today, as a result of these efforts, a course on engineering design has become a common subject of study for all disciplines of engineering. To promote the teaching of design-oriented courses, Srinath authored several relevant books like *PERT and CPM*, *Reliability Engineering*, *Mechanical Reliability*, *Design Essentials of Engineering Systems*, etc. These textbooks have greatly assisted the teachers to gain confidence in teaching design-oriented courses. Srinath was the editor of *Engineering Design* journal of the Institution of Engineers from 1973 to 1977.

Srinath would be fondly remembered by his students for his clarity in presentation, and impeccable board work. He is considered a model teacher and one of the best in the profession. His teaching methods have also been unique. Many of his students today occupy important academic and administrative positions.

Srinath is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

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