

## OBITUARY

PROFESSOR LAKSHMISWARA RAMA RAO, M.A., F.G.S., F.N.A., F.A.SC.  
(1896-1974)

By

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**I**N the death of Prof. Lakshmiswara Rama Rao on November 11, 1974 at the age of seventy-eight the country has lost a great *acharya*, a renowned geologist, and an able administrator of cardinal virtues.

After declining the offer by the Government to join the Civil Service soon after coming out successfully with the 'CROMARTY PRIZE' at the degree examination of the Madras University in 1917, he took to his teaching career at the Central College and never regretted for the same. He perfected the art of teaching with his inborn talent and no superlatives will suffice to describe him as a teacher. Prof. Rao took to his research in right earnest at the very beginning of his career on the Upper Cretaceous rocks found along the east coast in South India and continued till to the last minute of his life, for over half a century! The discovery of identifiable remains of Dinosaurs, the discovery of microfossils such as Radiolarians in the rocks of the Utatur division, the algal genus *Archaeolithothamnium* in the Niniyur rocks, the identification of a larger foraminifer in the Pondicherry rocks as *Discocycliha* formed the main lines of his early investigations.

In his Presidential address to the Geology section of the Indian Science Congress Association in 1940, he reviewed the investigations on "Cretaceous-Tertiary Boundary" and the topic became a subject of investigation in all the continents by leading geologists. He presided over the section on Cretaceous-Tertiary Boundary at the 22nd International Geological Congress in New Delhi, and his review appeared in a special publication of the Mysore Geologists' Association. He was invited in 1972 on behalf of the International Union

of Geological Sciences by the Soviet Academy of Sciences to take part as a member of the Commission on Cretaceous-Tertiary Boundary, a fitting tribute to his sustained and serious pursuit of his chosen and choicest investigation! This coincided with the award of a medal by the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the same year.

Professor Rama Rao laid the foundation for micropalaeontological research in India. Thanks to his vision, the country has come of age in this field. It was a great day for him when the First Indian Colloquium on Micropalaeontology was inaugurated by him in Bangalore in 1971. His ambition was to organise an association of micropalaeontologists and it would be a fitting memorial to him if this Association is established on a permanent basis.

Prof. Rao played a leading and vital role in the founding of almost all the prestigious and national scientific associations, academies and the institutes including the *Current Science Association*. A special mention, however, must be made here of the great effort he made in founding the Geological Society of India and in steering the same to its present status and in bringing credit to its journal which he edited till he breathed his last.

As the Principal of Central College and as the Head of the Department of Geology, Central College with a long innings Prof. Rao has left his footprints of perfection, purity, unbiassed approach, great integrity and unimpeachable acts.

May his soul rest in peace and may his spirit inspire all those who want to work for the cause of Geology.