

## Bhaskar Maiya

Bhaskar G. Maiya, an eminent chemist and teacher, passed away on 21 March 2004 in Hyderabad. This sudden and untimely death stunned his students, colleagues, friends and the community of chemists across the globe.

Born on 20 June 1956 in the South Canara (Dakshina Kannada) District, Karnataka, he completed his school and college education in Udupi. He joined Manasagangotri, University of Mysore in 1977 to pursue his postgraduate degree in chemistry. In 1979, he joined the Department of Inorganic and Physical Chemistry, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore as a Research Scholar and completed his Ph D degree in 1986. After a brief stint at Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai he spent two years as a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Houston and University of Texas at Austin. He came back to India to join the University of Hyderabad as a Lecturer in 1989 and rose to the rank of Professor in 2001.

Maiya, a disciplined chemist, made significant contributions to the field of bioinorganic chemistry, supramolecular chemistry and photochemistry. Using porphyrin molecule, more popularly known as pigments of life, as a probe, Maiya addressed many complex issues involving photoinduced electron transfer, donor-acceptor interactions and cation-induced dimerization reactions as a part of his thesis work. As a postdoctoral associate in Houston, he mastered the application of electrochemical techniques to follow the electron-transfer reactions of various porphyrin systems. At Austin, he mainly worked on photochemical reactions using ultrafast kinetic techniques and gained

experience in the use of porphyrins as photosensitizers for photodynamic therapy for the treatment of cancer.

As an independent researcher at Hyderabad, Maiya was responsible for creating state-of-the-art facilities required to carry out fundamental and applied research in the area of porphyrin and supramolecular chemistry. He developed the concept of axial building blocks to generate supramolecular systems capable of recognizing specific anions and cations. His papers on axial dimers involving metal-ligand



axial interactions received a lot of attention and in recognition of this contribution, he was invited to organize a microsposium on 'Molecular recognition' at the International Conference on Porphyrins and Phthalocyanins held in Dujon, France, during 2000.

Another area of expertise of Maiya was in the medicinal applications of porphyrin systems, essentially as photosensitizers for photodynamic therapy. In this endeavour, many photosensitizers based on porphyrins linked to another aromatic

dye molecule and some Ru-bipyridyl complexes were evaluated for their photosensitizing activity and some of them showed excellent binding properties. His excellent research contributions are evident from his 80 publications in reputed international, peer-reviewed journals, three patents and about 8 Ph D theses supervision.

In addition to his research and teaching activity, he was also interested in popularizing science and with untiring zeal, inculcated scientific spirit and temper among young students. He organized several scientific workshops and his general articles on principles of photodynamic therapy in *Resonance* were popular. He was fond of teaching young students and his amazing inspirational ability could ignite the imagination of even an average student.

A warm-hearted, generous human being, Maiya lived a simple life. He was Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore, Fellow of the Andhra Pradesh Academy of Sciences, Editorial Board Member of *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences (Chemical Sciences)*, Bronze medal winner of Chemical Research Society of India and a member of many professional scientific societies. He served as an expert member in many scientific committees and was a regular reviewer for many international scientific journals. He leaves behind his wife and two sons.

T. K. CHANDRASHEKAR

*Regional Research Laboratory,  
Thiruvananthapuram 695 019, India  
e-mail: tkchandrashekar@rediffmail.com*