

Supriya Roy (1931–2013)

Supriya Roy, a geoscientist, researcher and academician of international repute passed away on 22 August 2013 at the age of 82 after a brief illness. In the post-renaissance era of Bengal, a galaxy of scholars, mainly from the Presidency College of the University of Calcutta spread across the country and nucleated several small intellectual centres, glowing like isolated stars in different institutions. Roy was one among those academic personalities during the early sixties, who ventured out for a new direction in geological studies.

After completing B Sc (Geology Hons) in 1950 and M Sc (Geology) in 1952 from the University of Calcutta, Roy joined Jadavpur University in the mid-fifties of the last century as a research scholar. He was awarded D Phil degree of the University in 1957. After finishing his post-doctoral work in the National Research Council, Canada he returned India, and joined as a member of permanent faculty in Jadavpur University in 1959. He was awarded D Sc degree of Jadavpur University in 1963. He served the Geoscience Department of Jadavpur University in different capacities till his retirement in 1996. After retirement he continued his research studies and other academic activities at the University as Indian National Science Academy Senior Scientist till 2001, and thereafter as Professor Emeritus till his last days.

At the time when Roy joined Jadavpur University, the geoscience centre was still on board, yet to crystallize in the form of a well-structured department. He played a key role in the development of a complete academic department, equipped with advanced laboratories, course curricula and a good research ambience. His efforts perhaps laid a pathway for the faculty of later generation to reach the world of geosciences as we see today. A broader framework of his academic mind greatly facilitated the earth sciences in India to achieve a global visibility, as reflected from his leadership in many international meetings and symposia. He was the first Indian geologist who initiated a research school of economic geology with an analytical approach. In the beginning, his interest was aimed at

understanding the genesis of iron ores based on their mineral chemistry and textures. Later he focused his research exclusively on different aspects of manganese ore deposits, a subject that remained his great passion till his last breath. His main intent was to understand the genetic aspects of the manganese ore deposits keeping in mind the pristine depositional environments of synsedimentary deposits controlled largely by the effects of tectonically related sea level and climate changes. He tried to work out the cause-and-effect relationship between the evolution of the atmosphere–hydrosphere system and the



global metallogeny of synsedimentary manganese deposits in different stages of geological history. Making a little digression from his studies on terrestrial deposits, he successfully determined the post-depositional changes in deep sea transition metal-bearing ferromanganese nodules of the Indian Ocean to explain the growth history of the nodular manganese deposits. The models he worked out constituted the subject matter of a number of his erudite publications. Some of his landmark publications are: (1) Syn-genetic manganese formations of India (Jadavpur University, 1966); (2) Manganese deposits (Academic Press, London, 1981; translated in Russian by MIR Publication, Moscow, 1986); (3) Manganese metallogenesis: a review (*Ore Geology Reviews*, 1988, 4); (4) Genetic diversity of manganese deposition in the terrestrial

geological record (*Geological Society of London, Special Publication*, 1997, 119); (5) Late Archaean initiation of manganese metallogenesis: its significance and environmental controls (*Ore Geology Reviews*, 2000, 17) and (6) Sedimentary manganese metallogenesis in response to the evolution of the Earth system (*Earth-Science Reviews*, 2006, 77). It is hard to find till this day any good work on manganese without citation of Roy's book *Manganese Deposits*. His denting research on the manganese deposits of India will be remembered by generations to come.

His life-time dedication to research on manganese deposits placed Roy in the list of global leaders in economic geology. He received a host of awards and honours for his contribution in Earth science. He was elected a fellow of the Indian National Science Academy in 1972 and the Indian Academy of Sciences in 1986. He was invited to deliver Sir L. L. Fermor Lecture at the Geological Society of London in 1994, and the D.N. Wadia Medal Lecture of INSA in 1998. He has also left a mark in the field of academic leaderships as (i) Chairman, UGC Geoscience Panel (1980–82); (ii) Chairman, Research Council of National Institute of Oceanography, Goa (1989–91); (iii) President, Commission on Manganese, International Association of Genesis Ore Deposits (IAGOD) (1994–82) and (iv) Global Leader of UNESCO-IGCP Projects No. 111 & 226 (1978–90) on the genesis of manganese deposits.

Being a person from a family of long academic heritage, where one can feel the essence of education and culture at every corner, Roy developed a multifaceted academic constitution, displaying his deep interest in literature, art and philosophy. He was an elegant speaker and would design thought-provoking deliberations with his sonorous voice. This special quality worked so nicely in the classroom teaching and enabled students to grasp a picturesque presentation of the scientific content through his lectures. On many occasions Roy used to share light moments with his colleagues, especially with Subir Kumar Ghosh, a renowned structural geologist who had

long association with him since student days at the Presidency College. Their informal discussions over a cup of tea covered serious topics, like contemporary literature and music as well as day-to-day mundane affairs, such as the results of cricket matches played in the Eden Garden.

Roy had a fine sense of humour, which could be explored only through personal interactions on close quarters. He was a

very friendly person and was affectionate to young teachers, helping them in varied issues, either family problems or applications for research projects. Over the years he earned a place of deep love and respect amongst his colleagues, which will probably last for a long time. Supriyo Babu, as he was popularly known to all near and dear to him, is survived by his wife (Chitra), daughter (Sucharito), son-in-law and grand-daughters.

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HISTORICAL NOTES

Cartoon humour on Nobel Prizes

Sachi Sri Kantha

To celebrate Alfred Nobel's munificence of 33 million Swedish kronor (approximately US\$ 9.2 million) in his signed will of 27 November 1895 to posterity, I provide a brief overview on how scientists as well as other members of the society are portrayed by two American cartoonists, Sidney Harris and Jim Berry, on Nobel's 180th birth anniversary. Three cartoon categories are identified: (1) pseudo-hopes of scientists, (2) mockery of humorous achievement and (3) prestige enhancement. Apart from their recognized role as serving as a gold standard for gauging exceptional creativity, Nobel Prizes also possess the merit as a source for cartoon humour.

'A cartoon is a drawing, representational or symbolic, that makes a satirical, witty or humorous point.'

– David Low

This year marks the 180th birth anniversary of Alfred Nobel (1833–1896), who is universally recognized as the foremost philanthropist for trend-setting scientists in the disciplines of chemistry, medicine or physiology and physics^{1–9}.

David Low (one of the elite cartoonists of the 20th century) recorded that though the targets of cartoons are predominantly in the field of political or public affairs, cartoons may also depict 'social customs, fashions or sports events or personalities'¹⁰. The annual Nobel Prizes which began to be awarded since 1901, had become an established social custom within a few decades drawing attention to the achievements of scientists. Apart from scientists, even mass media and public look forward to the announcement made in October of each year and to the pomp of ceremonies held in Stockholm in December for a week^{11,12}.



Figure 1. a–d, Four cartoons by Sidney Harris (used with permission).