

handwritten letters addressed to my modest laboratory at the Pasteur Institute, where I was at that time a guest investigator in an unrelated field of cancer transmission in laboratory animals. Other data, particularly those referring to the discovery by Yersin of the plague bacillus in human patients and also in rats, I collected from personal notes and records of Yersin, kept at the Pasteur Institute, and my conversations with Dujardin-Beaumetz. A bacillus similar to that discovered by Yersin, isolated from bubonic plague, was also observed in the same year by Kitasato³.

Another interesting story. Dujardin-Beaumetz showed me a tube filled with live bacilli of plague. He told me that not only humans and rats but also monkeys, guinea pigs, mice, and many other species are susceptible to the plague bacillus. But not the chicken. Among the species resistant to plague, is the chicken. 'Look at this tube full of live bacilli of plague' said Dujardin-Beaumetz to me, taking out of a cabinet

a small tube marked with a red pencil B. P. 'This small tube contains sufficient quantity of live plague bacilli to infect and kill the population of an entire district of Paris,' he continued. 'We injected a similar quantity of live plague bacilli into the peritoneal cavity of a young chicken in our laboratory,' Dujardin-Beaumetz told me, 'and the chicken remained in good health; in fact, the next day she laid an egg. Surprisingly, the chicken got lost, presumably flew out of a small open window in the adjoining laboratory. We were frantic and looked for this animal all over, afraid that it may spread the deadly disease but we could not find the chicken. Only several days later did we learn that the chicken was caught by a house superintendent, residing on a street adjoining the Institute, on rue Falguiere; not realizing the chicken came from our laboratory, he roasted the chicken and consumed it, sharing the unexpected meal with his family. The plague bacilli were presumably destroyed

by roasting the chicken. Nothing happened to them. They all remained alive and well.'

At present, plague is well controlled. The transmitting rat, predominantly the black rat (*Rattus rattus*), is very seldom around in our climate. The transmitting insect, *Xenopsylla cheopis*, is limited to rats. Other fleas seldom transmit the disease. We have antibiotics to treat plague, if needed; in fact, this is the routine treatment method of unexpected cases of plague recognized in animals and in man. Other antimicrobial agents, such as those of the sulfa group, are efficient, and today we also have preventive vaccines against plague.

1. Yersin, A., *Ann. Inst. Pasteur*, 1894, 8, 662-667.
2. Simond, P.-L., *Ann. Inst. Pasteur*, 1898, 12, 625-687.
3. Kitasato, S., *Lancet*, 1894, ii, 428-430.

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ORISSA BIGYAN ACADEMY

SAMANTA CHANDRA SEKHAR AWARD FOR 1995.
(FOR ORIYA SCIENTISTS WORKING OUTSIDE ORISSA)

The Government of Orissa, Department of Science and Technology has instituted one Samanta Chandra Sekhar (SCS) Award to be given each year for outstanding research contributions, during the five years preceding the award year by Oriya scientists, working outside the State of Orissa, in any area of (1) Physical Sciences, (2) Life Sciences, (3) Engineering and Technology. Persons to be eligible for consideration for this award (a) should be Oriya by birth or domicile, (b) should have passed at least one of the following examinations from any recognized Institution/Board/University in Orissa.

- (i) Higher Secondary.
- (ii) Graduate degree in any branch of Science, Engineering and Technology.
- (iii) Post-graduate degree in any branch of Science, Engineering and Technology.

The value of the award is Rs 15,000 (rupees fifteen thousand only) and this is to be awarded through the Orissa Bigyan Academy. Nominations for this award for the year 1995 are invited from Heads of Research Institutions/Laboratories/Universities/Colleges/Heads of concerned P.G. Departments in Universities or Colleges in public or private sector, inside/outside the State of Orissa and from S.C.S. Award winners. Nominations from other responsible citizens/Government Departments may also be considered subject to their acceptance by the Executive Council of the Academy. Five copies of the duly filled-in nomination proforma, along with other particulars stated therein, are to be sent to the Secretary, Orissa Bigyan Academy, Type-4R/25, Unit-IX(F), Bhubaneswar 751 007, Orissa, India. The undersigned may please be contacted, either by post or in person for obtaining nomination proforma and other particulars. The last date for receiving nominations for this award is 16 August (Friday), 1996.

**Secretary, Orissa Bigyan Academy,
Type-4R/25, Unit-IX(F),
BHUBANESWAR 751 007, Tel: 413468.**