a fine camera, he had taken a large number of colour slides which he used for popular lectures in colleges and universities. He kept in touch with leading botanists of the world and had invited several experts as Visiting Professors to Delhi to give special courses.

Even after crossing the age of 90, he regularly attended academic meetings in the University and at the Indian National Science Academy and would make pertinent and brief remarks when called upon. He had a prodigious memory for facts, names of students and references to literature. His old students were astounded by his computer-like capacity and speed for information retrieval. The organizations with which he was closely associated were the Delhi University Botanical Society (DUBS) and the International Society of Plant Morphologists (ISPM) where he served as Secretary–Treasurer from 1950 to 1964, as Vice-President (1965–1966) and as President (1966–1970). He also edited its official organ *Phytomorphology* for some years.

Johri has left behind his devoted wife Raj, three illustrious sons, two daughters and a large family of ten grand children and two great grand children. Johri enjoyed robust health and lived a long, active life. We are grateful to him for his perpetual efforts in advocating the value of pursuing the study of plant sciences. We admire his indefatigable spirit and for enhancing the academic profile of his students. In our culture old age is not *vardhakhya* but a stage of fulfilment. Johri attained it with a single-minded purpose.

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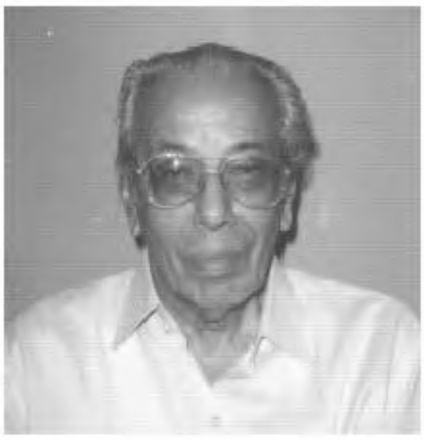
Santimay Chatterjee

Writing the history of modern science is a virgin field. In Europe, it was started by emeritus professors who wrote their own reminiscences. Today, it has become a special subject in itself, and many universities offer degrees. In most of the cases, the students have to have a degree from natural sciences, before he/she is allowed to enter the terrain.

In India, we are following the same pattern, though, a bit slower. One of the pioneers of the older generation was Santimay Chatterjee. He was not only a high ranking nuclear physicist and historian but also a science popularizer. I believe young and old readers can learn from his biography. My motivation is to give a rather scant biographical sketch of the person who, after a brief stay in a nursing home in Kolkata, breathed his last on 17 January 2003.

Santimay Chatterjee was born on 26 January 1924 in Calcutta. After schooling he joined the University College of Science and Technology; a well-known name associated with our great physicists C. V. Raman, S. N. Bose and M. N. Saha. Chatterjee earned a M Sc degree from the University of Calcutta in 1946. Later he joined the Institute of Nuclear Physics in the University of Calcutta and obtained a D Phil in 1952. He was one of the students of Meghnad Saha and worked under him as Palit Research Scholar from 1947 to 1951. From 1951 to 1955 he was a research Fellow and later Reader at the Institute of Nuclear Physics. Chatterjee had expertise on low energy nuclear physics and medium energy accelerators. He was one of the pioneers in nuclear instrumentation in India.

During September 1968–August 1971, Chatterjee stayed as visiting Professor of Physics at the University of Illinois, Urbana, USA. He played a major role in building the Variable Energy Cyclotron in Calcutta during 1968–76. He



occupied important positions like Honorary Directorship of a Physics Study Group of National Council for Education Research and Technology (NCERT), New Delhi. From January 1969 onwards he was Associate Professor at the Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics (SINP), Calcutta. Later he transferred his services to the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India. There he worked as Project Officer until his retirement on 31 December 1983.

Chatterjee could have lived a comfortable life after his retirement as most of the scientists do, by going for walks or by going to temples; but that would not have been the life for a socialistic-minded person. For him a second and new life started. A 'hard-core physicist', as he preferred to call himself, Chatterjee became a full-time historian and not without success. Most probably under the influence of his wife Enakshi Chatterjee (Banerjee) who is a renowned journalist and science popularizer, Chatterjee came 'to the right side of the fence', that is, history of science. The couple, one with physics knowledge and the other with history and journalism complemented each other. The results can be seen in the form of their joint publication *Paramanu Jijnasa*, for which the Government of West Bengal awarded them the *Rabindra Puraskar* in 1974.

From 1968 to 1991, Chatterjee was editor of *Science and Culture*, a Calcutta-based journal that was founded by Saha. This experience was certainly beneficial for his historical works.

From July 1985 till March 1987 Chatterjee was a Visiting Fellow of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta. When the Indian National Science Academy planned a scheme about 'Meghnad Saha and his time at the SINP', the choice fell

on Chatterjee and he was appointed as principal investigator. He did this job remarkably well from July 1992 to September 1994. In the next year he took the position of Honorary Co-ordinator for a one-year course at the Asiatic Society in the Faculty of History of Science.

The list of his publications is long. His *Paramanu Jijnasa* (Orient Longman, Calcutta, 1971) in Bengali was reprinted in 1977, 1986 and 1991. Some of his other masterpieces are listed in the end.

He was an unchallenged authority on Saha and Bose. As a consequence, he became popular among the historians within India and abroad. Any historian interested in Bose and Saha ultimately landed in Lake Gardens, where Chatterjee lived. Strangely enough, a man of this rank, took time off for others and gave hints to 'dig out' research material, a habit not quite common among scientists.

Like other famous physicists and historians, Chatterjee received many honours from different institutions. In 1953, the University of Calcutta awarded him the Premchand Roychand Scholarship. The next year he received the Mowat Gold Medal from the same University. In 1958, a Fulbright Travelling Scholarship was given to him. In 1998 for his services in the field of popularization of science, the Indian National Science Academy gave him a unique distinction, namely, the Indira Gandhi Prize and Bronze Medallion. In 1999 another great honour, i.e. the Kalidas Nag Memorial Medallion was handed over to him.

Apart from writing books and articles, for about 20 years Chatterjee served as a member of the Executive Council, Birla Technological and Industrial Museum Calcutta. Also for five years he was a member of the Advisory Board of All India Radio, Calcutta; Member, Science and Technology Committee, West Bengal State Planning Board. In the last *circa* five decades he contributed to the popularization of science.

Chatterjee, being a physicist and historian, was associated with many Societies. He was Life Member of the Indian National Science Academy, the Asiatic Society Calcutta, Indian Physics Association and Indian Science News Association.

Strangely enough, in spite of all these achievements, Chatterjee was a simple and very modest person. I came in contact with Chatterjee only by chance, while searching for material on C. V. Raman. During my personal visit he informed me that he was the referee of a paper by a co-author (Falk Riess) and me, that appeared in *Science and Culture* in 1999. He found the story regarding 'Meghnad Saha's nomination for the Nobel Prize' interesting for more than one reason. However, the main cause was, as he disclosed to me, that one of Saha's nominators D. M. Bose (C. V. Raman's successor for Palit Chair of Physics at the University of Calcutta) was very close to him and that they worked together in the editorial office of *Science and Culture*; but Bose never revealed this story.

Later, I contacted him very often, whenever I had a question regarding S. N. Bose or M. N. Saha. During all these years, Chatterjee was kind and helpful, and never disclosed to me his achievements. All the information quoted regarding his life were sent to me by his wife Enakshi Chatterjee to whom I am thankful.

Some of the important historical works of Santimay Chatterjee

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