

GEONEWS

PRESENTATION OF THE MYSORE GEOLOGISTS' ASSOCIATION GOLD MEDAL
TO
PROF. M. N. VISWANATHIAH



Professor C. S. Pichamuthu, President of the Geological Society of India in presenting the Mysore Geologists' Association Gold Medal to Prof. M. N. Viswanathiah for the year 1974 said:

It is not often that a Professor has the pleasure of honouring one of his old students. This is one such occasion. During the long span of my tenure as Professor, several hundred students have passed through the Department of Geology of the Mysore University, but I remember specially only those who were very good in their studies or those who were very proficient in games. Professor Viswanathiah was one of those rare persons who was outstanding in both.

Professor Viswanathiah has had a brilliant University career. He obtained a First Class in both the B.Sc. Honours and M.Sc. degrees of the Mysore University, and later took the Ph.D. degree of the London University.

Starting from scratch in 1961, he has built up a well-equipped post-graduate Department of Geology at Manasagangothri in Mysore, where research of a high order is being conducted in several branches of geology. Recently a hydrogeology section was also added. Great credit is due to Professor Viswanathiah for setting up a very fine geological museum which, both in the number and variety of Indian specimens and in the excellence of their display, ranks as one of the best in the Universities of India.

He has gathered round him a devoted band of research workers, and more than 100 original papers of a high order have emanated from the Department. Great

attention has been paid to the copper, manganese, and bauxite deposits of Karnataka. Special mention should be made of the investigations on the Kaladgi Group with particular reference to its sedimentation, stratigraphy, and tectonics. As a result of the concerted study of this region, a new post-Kaladgi stratigraphical unit named as 'Badami Group' has been proposed. The recognition of this group of rocks has helped in a great measure to unravel the complicated structure, as, for example, in tracing the unconformity between the Kaladgis and the Badamis. The occurrence of a number of stromatolite horizons have also been reported in the Kaladgis. I should like to make a special mention here of the discovery for the first time of Precambrian fossils in the Kaladgis, Badamis, and recently, even in the Sargurs.

Professor Viswanathiah has visited several foreign countries and represented India at International Conferences, Symposia, and Congresses. He was recently awarded the Kiev University Silver Jubilee Gold Medal.

As an educationist, he is closely associated with practically all the Universities in South India, both as Member of Boards of Studies and as an Examiner.

Professor Viswanathiah is a Fellow of several Learned Societies. He served for three years as Regional Councillor for Asia, having been sponsored by the International Association for Genesis of Ore Deposits. He was appointed as National Lecturer during 1971-72 by the University Grants Commission, and in this connection visited three Universities and delivered special lectures.

Another of his important achievements was the organisation of the Mineralogical Institute in Mysore which has now acquired several sophisticated instruments for Experimental Mineralogy. He was also responsible for developing the Mineralogical Society of India, now affiliated to the International Mineralogical Association, and has been for several years the Editor of the Journal of this Society.

In consideration of his outstanding achievements in organisational and administrative activities, and in special recognition of the contributions he has made to the investigation of geological problems in Karnataka, the Council of the Geological Society of India decided to award the Mysore Geologists' Association Gold Medal to Professor Viswanathiah. As President of the Society it gives me great pleasure now in presenting him the Medal.

Reply by Prof. M. N. Viswanathiah

I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to the Geological Society of India for conferring on me this coveted award of the Mysore Geologists' Association Gold Medal. I am indeed overwhelmed by the affectionate words of my beloved teacher, Professor C. S. Pichamuthu. I consider it a rare privilege to receive the award from my teacher, a doyen among geologists in the country. His enthusiasm and dedication to the cause of geology even at this age is something remarkable and an eye opener to younger geologists. His emphasis time and again that geology is essentially a field science and observations have to be based on field data, has been before me. 'Doctoral work is a prelude and not an end to one's research career'—these words used to be emphasised by late Prof. S. E. Hollingworth of University College, London, under whose guidance, I had the opportunity of learning advanced techniques of field mapping in southwestern part of Ireland.

After my appointment as Professor of Geology in the University of Mysore, I was looking out for a sedimentary area for intensive stratigraphic and structural studies and had almost fixed upon the study of the Cuddapah basin. It was at this stage Dr. B. P. Radhakrishna suggested taking up the study of the Kaladgi basin, an area which had not been examined in detail. He unhesitatingly went to the extent of sparing the services of a geologist and the departmental jeep for the reconnaissance survey of the area. This, I should say, was the turning point in the research activities of my department. If I have made any humble contribution to the existing knowledge of the Kaladgi basin, it is because of the sustained interest from time to time evinced by Dr. B. P. Radhakrishna to whom I am greatly indebted.

The Kaladgi basin considered to be consisting of gently dipping monotonous sequence of sandstones and limestones, has proved to be, after a systematic study, one of absorbing interest. A new lithostratigraphy worked out has enabled its correlation with similar formations in India. It has now been possible to recognise a new post-Kaladgi group, named the Badami Group. Recent palynological investigations leading to the identification of typical microfossils have enabled fixing the age of the Kaladgi and Badami groups precisely.

I would like to express my thanks to my research associates who have rendered assistance both in the field and in the laboratory.

I express my grateful thanks once again to the Geological Society of India for this award, which encourages me to pursue my line of research with unabated interest.