

Obituary



B. VISHNU PADA
(1938 - 1985)

Bhimachar Vishnu Pada, aged 47 years, died under tragic circumstances when the Air India flight 182, on its way from Montreal to London, crashed into the Atlantic Ocean on the 23rd June 1985 killing all the 329 passengers and crew on board in the worst aircraft disaster at sea. Vishnu's two teenage daughters Brinda and Arati also perished with him in that disaster. His wife Lata, had reached Bombay a week earlier. She is inconsolable, and the precious memories of those departed must be agonising in the extreme. We extend our heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathy to Mrs. Lata Vishnu Pada in her irreparable personal loss in one shocking moment of irretrievable fate. May she be granted the inner strength, fortitude and the spiritual sustenance to bear this great sorrow. Our heartfelt sympathy and condolences go out also to Vishnu's widowed mother and all his loved ones of the gracious and closely-knit family.

Vishnu Pada was born on the 17th January 1938 in a highly cultured family. His father, the late Dr. B. S. Bhimachar was an outstanding fisheries expert and at the time of his retirement from the Central Government service, was occupying the post of Director, Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute at Calcutta.

Vishnu carried out his graduate studies in geology at the Central College, Bangalore. He took his B.Sc. degree of the Mysore University in 1956 and the M.Sc. degree of the Patna University, Bihar, in 1958. He obtained the Masters Degree in Geology of the University of Toronto, Canada in 1962, having specialised in economic geology.

In 1959, Vishnu joined the Indian Bureau of Mines, Nagpur, as a Junior Geologist and served that organisation for a short period. In 1961, 1962 and 1963 during his post-graduate studies at Toronto, he worked as a field exploration geologist on short contracts during summer employment with F. R. Joubin and Associates, Ontario. It was in 1964 that he was appointed on the technical staff of the

International Nickel Company (INCO), and until his tragic demise, he served the parent organisation or some of its subsidiaries.

Vishnu worked as the Senior Mine Exploration Geologist in Inco-Canada Thompson, Manitoba from 1964-69. He was assistant to Regional Manager, Field Exploration from 1969-71 of the P.T. Inco Indonesia, Malili and later (1971-72) worked as Supervisor, Special Projects and Mines Exploration of the same concern. Between 1972-78 he functioned as their Chief Mine Geologist at Soroako (Indonesia) and from 1979 onwards he held the position of Senior Staff Geologist of the Inco Metals Company's copper cliff field project.

During this period Vishnu was also closely associated with uranium investigation of the Athabasca Sandstone in Saskatchewan, and the lead-zinc exploration project in Quebec. Recently his efforts were also directed towards the evaluation and project development in the greenstone belt of the Abitibi orogen which is the largest single continuous Archaean greenstone belt in the Canadian shield and known to contain several ore deposits including copper, gold, zinc, nickel and certain others in interesting metallogenic associations. Vishnu was looking forward to active participation in these projects on his return to Canada.

Vishnu has left excellent professional record of active service with the International Nickel Company and its associated concerns in Canada and Indonesia. His tragic end leaves a void in the professional world of exploration and mining geologists.

Vishnu Pada was a member of several learned bodies besides the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada. He was a Fellow of the Geological Society of India. Having worked throughout his professional career with a commercial concern with world-wide interests, opportunities for publishing the results of his investigations were very limited.

Vishnu adopted Canadian citizenship a few years back, but the love for the land of his birth and its rich cultural and religious heritage remained as steadfast as ever, at the same time developing a deep understanding of the values and cultural developments of his country of adoption. One aspect of his estimable artistic taste is displayed in the Spanish-style house that he built in Koramangala (Bangalore) with an exquisite front garden. I recollect the time when Vishnu and Lata showed me round their fine house during one of their periodic visits to India. Vishnu had a flair for collecting rare old books and maps and his collection stored at his residence in Sudbury (Canada) is worth special mention.

In his life style and personal philosophy, he tried to synthesise the best of both the east and the west. He made zealous efforts to introduce Canadian audience to aspects of Indian art and music. He always remained highly respectful of other people's belief and faiths. His love for humanity was strong and deep and this governed most of his actions. Indeed he was never too busy to extend sympathy and re-assurance to those passing through times of stress and strain.

As I write these lines, Lata's young face bravely straining to control her inconsolable deep sorrow and anguish, caused by the sudden stroke of remorseless fate, drifts before my eyes. May she find peace and solace and the fortitude to bear her personal tragedy in the passage of time.