

Bombay; Prof. A.B. Roy, Udaipur, Rajasthan; Prof. A.T. Rao, Andhra University; Dr. R.N. Hota, Orissa and scientists of National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad attended the symposium.

The untiring efforts of Prof. M. Yoshida, Prof. A. Yao, Prof. M. Santosh, Prof. W. Maejima, Miss Kiyoko Kuwahara of Osaka City University, Japan ensured the success of the symposium.

On this occasion a special volume of "Gondwana Research" on "Assembly and Breakup of Rodinia and Gondwana and Growth of Asia" was brought out, assembling

some three hundred contributions which were presented in the symposium. The volume was edited by Prof. M. Santosh of India, presently working in Japan.

This symposium, it is hoped will give a new fillip to further research on the evolution of Gondwana by adopting an integrated and interdisciplinary approach.

*P.G. Department of Geology,  
Khallikote Autonomous College  
Berhampur - 760 001  
Orissa*

B. MISHRA

## REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON FORAMINIFERA (FORAMS-2002), PERTH, AUSTRALIA

An international conference of micropalaeontologists working on foraminifera is held every four years. This year it was organized by David Haig and Steffen Revets at the University of Western Australia, Perth from 4-8 February 2002. More than a hundred papers and nearly seventy five posters were presented by micropalaeontologists from over thirty countries. The symposium also included a mid-conference field excursion to Rottnest Island and a post-conference seven-day trip to Shark Bay.

If the papers presented in the symposium are any indication of the current trends in foraminiferal research, the thrust areas of research are experimental studies in foraminifera, environmental proxies, molecular taxonomy and phylogeny, deep-sea foraminifera and sequence stratigraphic modelling using foraminifera. A number of researchers highlighted the importance of *in situ* or cultural studies on foraminifera as related to their growth and calcification, feeding, respiration, symbiosis, life-cycle, reproduction and microhabitat characterization. Some of the findings on biomineralization process in foraminifera are likely to have implications in palaeoceanographic interpretation of stable isotope and trace element data. A workshop on experimental approaches to Foraminiferal Biology also underscored the importance of understanding the isotopic and elemental signatures in foraminiferal shells in view of the non-equilibrium composition, ontogenetic variation, distribution coefficients different from inorganic calcite and variability between and within the species.

The little known foraminifera from marsh, mangrove and deep-sea have caught attention of workers in the past few years. Some of them are trying to understand the biological aspects of deep-sea foraminifera using tracer experiments

and find that benthic foraminifera are important remineralizers of organic matter. Molecular taxonomy and phylogeny of foraminifera, though still confined to a few laboratories, are generating lot of interests among the foraminiferologists. Their agreements and conflicts with classical approach were debated. The intriguing observations are report of foraminiferal DNA from a soft-walled granuloreticulosean from Australian rainforest and similar sequence from some lake sediments which otherwise contained no evidence of the presence of foraminifera by traditional microscopic methods. The cryptic species are being examined using molecular approach. The symposium also deliberated on the use of foraminifera as environmental tracers and pollution monitoring. A workshop on this topic stressed close interaction between geologists and governmental agencies and the need to educate the government officials and NGO's on what foraminiferologists can deliver in pollution monitoring.

There were plenary lectures of topical interests including those on molecular techniques in foraminiferal studies, the biometry of foraminiferal shells, benthic foraminiferal ecology, foraminifera in sequence stratigraphy and foraminifera as environmental tracers. As a mark of bicentennial celebration of the birth of Alcide d'Orbigny, an excellent lecture was aptly delivered by Marie-Therese Venec-Peyre on "Beyond Frontiers of Time: The Scientific and Cultural Heritage of Alcide d'Orbigny". The next symposium is planned to be held in 2006 in Brazil.

*Department of Earth Sciences  
Indian Institute of Technology  
Powai, Mumbai - 400 076*

P.K. SARASWATI