

OBITUARY



DR. SULTAN AHMAD
(1910-1983)

Dr. Sultan Ahmad, an eminent mycologist, died of heart attack on 11th November 1983 in Lahore after a long illness. He was a chronic patient of diabetes melitus. In the later part of his life he developed retinopathy, suffered from renal failure and remained on dialysis before breathing his last. May God Almighty shower His blessings upon the departed soul and may his soul rest in eternal peace in heaven. Amen.

Dr. Sultan Ahmad was born on 6th June 1910 at Ladhar, Sheikhpura, Punjab, now Pakistan. He obtained his M.Sc degree in 1932 from the University of the Punjab, Lahore where he worked with Prof. S.R. Kashyap on *Aithisoniella himalyensis* Kash. He also obtained the B.Ed. degree from the Punjab University, Lahore in 1934 and served as a teacher in a High School in Gujrat and then as a Lecturer in Biology at Rohtak. After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, he returned to Lahore and joined the Government College, Lahore. He obtained his Ph.D. degree in 1950 for his work on Gasteromycetes of West Pakistan which he submitted under the supervision of Professor Dr. Ahmad Ali Qureshi and later D.Sc in 1957 from the University of the Punjab. Dr. Sultan Ahmad retired as Professor and Head of the Department of Botany, Government College Lahore in 1970. The University of the Punjab appointed him as Professor Emeritus in 1972 and Dr. Sultan Ahmad continued to involve himself in research work on the fungi of Pakistan.

From his very early days, Dr. Sultan Ahmad had a fancy for the collection of plants. He used to go to the deserts of Rohtak for the collection of botanical specimens especially the Gasteromycetes, with Dr. Kashyap he travelled in the Himalyan range and Tibet, and then with his students to the Northern areas of Pakistan. Apart from the Sedges and Grasses of Lahore (1954), Grasses of the Punjab (1958) which he published with Dr. R.R. Stewart, Dr. Sultan Ahmad has been an eminent contributor to the study of fungi of Pakistan where descriptions of over 2500 species of fungi have been recorded by him in his monumental works on Gastromyctes of Pakistan (1952), Fungi of West Pakistan (1956, 1969), Basidomycetes of Pakistan (1972), Uredinales of West Pakistan (1956), Ustilaginales of West Pakistan (1956), Pezizales

of West Pakistan (1955), Ascomycetes of Pakistan (1978), besides a series of research papers on fungi which he published with B.B. Mundkur, E. Müller, J. Boidin, L.W. Wehmeyer etc., in *Lloydia*, *Farlowia*, *Sydowia*, *Biologia* and other scientific journals of international repute. He is botanically remembered by names of different taxa of fungi and mosses viz., *Gimmia ahmadiana* Noguchi, *Amphididmyella ahmadiati* Müller, *Xylospheeria ahmadii* Petr., *Dictyoportha ahmadii* Petr., *Humaria ahmadii* Cash., *Leptostroma ahmadii* Petr., *Cercospora ahmadii* Petr., *Mycothyridium ahmadii* (Boidin) Boidin, *Helminthosporium ahmadii* M.B. Ellis *Coniothyrium sultanii* Abbas, *Phyllosticta sultanii* Abbas and *Phyllosticta Ahmadii* Abbas which have been named after Dr. Sultan Ahmad. Scientists tend to make extensive use of his descriptions of the fungi of Pakistan. His vast collection of fungal specimens have since been deposited in the Mycological Herbarium of the Department of Botany, University of the Punjab, Lahore, and also duplicates in Herb. I.M.I, Kew, Surrey, England and also in the Mycological Herbarium of USDA, Beltsville, MD, USA.

Dr. Sultan Ahmed, in 1953, founded the Biological Society of Pakistan and served as Editor of *Biologia*, an official publication of the Society from 1955-83 until his death. In recognition of his significant contributions to scientific research, the government of Pakistan awarded him the Tamgha-i-Quaid-e-Azam and the Pakistan Academy of Sciences elected him as Fellow of the Academy in 1974.

Dr. Sultan Ahmad was an amicable person. He always nurtured his students and his associates with love and affection and encouraged them to make contributions to the study of the subject. He generally shared his vast knowledge and experience with many of us, this certainly was one of his greatest attributes. He would make witty remarks and often indulged in telling many anecdotes and entertaining the young botanists with experiences of his career and about the colleagues he had known.

A six feet tall Dr. Sultan Ahmad was a unique person in the sense that he always worn a Pakistani dress, Shalwar, Kameez and Sherwani with Jinrah cap. Although he had several research associates out side Pakistan but it was in 1979 that he went outside Pakistan on a visit to USA to meet his son.

Apart from members of the family, Dr. Sultan Ahmad has left behind a large number of his students and colleagues which are now holding responsible positions in teaching and research institutions at home and abroad to mourn the loss.

(A. GHAFAR AND S.I. ALI)

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