

**Obituary**  
**Professor Kailash Chandra Misra**  
**(1915-2009)**



Professor Kailash Chandra Misra, a well known plant ecologist and a highly respected teacher of Botany at the Banaras Hindu University, breathed his last on Sunday, the 19th April, 2009 at the ripe age of 94 at his Varanasi residence. He leaves behind three sons and four daughters. In his death a void has been created in the International Society for Tropical Ecology, which he nurtured and served from its inception for nearly half a century. For several terms he served as ISTE Secretary and currently he was an elected member of the Executive Committee.

Professor K.C. Misra was born on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> May 1915. From his village Dobhi (Khetasarai, Jaunpur, U.P.) he moved to Varanasi for education and passed B.Sc. and M.Sc. (Botany) examinations from the Banaras Hindu University. After serving as lecturer in colleges for a few years, he joined his *alma mater* Banaras Hindu University as lecturer in Botany in 1947. Subsequently, he sailed to Canada to work under

the famous grassland ecologist, Professor R.T. Coupland, at the University of Saskatoon on 'Geography, Morphology and Environmental Relationships of Certain *Stipa* species' for which he was awarded Ph.D. degree. On return, he became Reader in 1961 and served the Banaras Hindu University with distinction till his superannuation in 1975 after attaining 60 years of age. During his service career, Dr. Misra held many offices, including N.C.C. officer, first coordinator of the BHU National Service Scheme, faculty member of several summer schools and coordinator of Botany Book Writing Programme in Hindi. After his retirement he served Mithila University, Darbhanga, Bihar until 1978 as a Visiting Professor.

Dr. Misra had a wide interest in different disciplines of botany, which he taught with ease and distinction. He was very popular with students for his helpful nature. He was innovative in his approach and modified the sampling nails of

point centred quarter method employed for community analysis. Dr. Misra co-discovered a rare liverwort *Riella vishwanathii* (sp.nov. S.K. Pande, K.C. Misra & J.N. Misra). Dr. Misra was an active member of the ecology research group led by Professor R. Misra and had participated in PL/480 and MAB research projects on weeds, and forests and derived ecosystems. He trained 25 Ph.D. scholars on different aspects of ecological research such as grassland and agroecosystems, ecology of medicinal plants, weeds, bryophytes, pteridophytes and forest trees, and nutritional competition in cropland and grassland species using tracer technique. He published research papers in national and international journals, authored and edited several books, including three editions of "Manual of Plant Ecology" published by Oxford-IBH Publishing Co. for the National Book Trust, India. He co-authored "Ecology, Study of Ecosystem" (A.H. Wheelers) and edited "Ecology and Resource Management in Tropics" (Bhargava Book Depot). Dr. Misra organized book writing programme under the aegis of the U.P. Granth Academy and produced 12 books in Hindi in different disciplines of Botany.

Dr. Misra was appointed the first Secretary (Botany) of the International Society for Tropical Ecology in 1962 when the Headquarters of ISTE was shifted from Allahabad to the Department of Botany, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi and held the post of Secretary from 1967-1989. From 1990 till his death, he was the elected member of the Executive Committee of the Society. During his long association he dedicatedly nurtured the Society and established it as a premier and vibrant

academic body promoting research in ecology and environment not only in India but in the entire tropics. He was an organizer *par excellence*. First International Symposium on Tropical Ecology organized by ISTE at Varanasi in 1967 under his Secretaryship was the milestone in the progress of research and teaching of ecology in India. Thereafter the Society regularly organized International symposia at New Delhi, India (1971), Caraca, Venezuela (1973), Lubumbashi, Zaire (1975), Panama, Canal Zone (1977), Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1979), Bhopal, India (1981), Lagos, Nigeria (1984) and at Varanasi, India (1987) during his tenure as Secretary.

Dr. Misra epitomized the finest qualities of a gentleman. Always smiling, he never got depressed in adversity and took things with ease and patience. He was a man possessed of amazing positive energy which rubbed off on any person who came in his contact, be it students, colleagues or friends. His undaunted and indefatigable qualities were the key to the success in all endeavors of life. He was a very amenable person with cool and composed temperament. He spread bliss and wiped off frustrations and instilled confidence and self esteem in students and friends during moments of distress. Because of the excellent human qualities and caring nature he was loved and respected by his students, members of the faculty and staff of the university and the Society.

We, on behalf of the Botanists, ISTE fraternity and students, pay our respectful tribute to this great soul. May his soul rest in eternal peace!

**H.N. Pandey**

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