

AN APPRECIATION TO PROFESSOR LESZEK M. STARKEL

At the outset, it is a great pleasure to get this opportunity to write a few words about the contribution of Professor L.M. Starkel to geomorphological studies in India. His work from the 1960's till today spans the entire era of change in approaches and techniques. At the international arena Professor Starkel had staged himself in a large domain (Gregory, *Geographia Polonica*, Vol 73 No.2 ,2003). Professor Starkel is noted for his close links with geographers in India through his work on floods and landslides in the Darjeeling Himalaya and extreme meteorological events in Meghalaya.

He addressed problems of environmental processes and more specifically on the development of landscape in extreme meteorological conditions, especially that of the Himalayas and Meghalaya. His experience of understanding human impact in different climatic regions of the world proved beneficial for the studies in India. The choice of analytical procedures adopted by him for such studies was eye openers for us who were associated with him. It is very interesting that he brought the idea of short term hydrological changes to India also, though reconstruction probably still hid as an underlying agenda. Paleo-geographical work in India and notably Cherrapunji were started but could not be completed due to several reasons. This unfinished task lies dormant and needs to be accomplished.

It was through his enthusiasm that the Indo-Polish Inter-Governmental Collaborative Research efforts in Meghalaya had achieved the present state. The initial years of the project started in 1996 and continued for more than ten years and in November, 2006 an Indo-Polish Joint Seminar on 'Environmental Changes and Geomorphic Hazards' was hosted in Shillong associated with a field exposure in one of the world's heaviest rainfall area, Cherrapunji. This Seminar was participated by fifteen scientists from Poland and India respectively. The research collaboration provided a base for the publication of the most needed research literature about this famous but least researched area of the world (not less than 10 research papers, 4 monographs and a Seminar Proceeding).

Besides these, Prof. Starkel initiated new ideas and research directions which gave new life to research activities in Eastern India and Meghalaya in particular. His vision for furthering research is full of zeal. His visits to the eastern most parts of the Himalayas and efforts for construction of geomorphologic maps in these areas were thwarted by the unforgiving time. It is our wish to join together with everyone to celebrate what Professor Starkel achieved till this moment and appreciate his contribution to the subject matter of landscape systems and development.

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