EDITORIAL

A book on “Silent Stories” was gifted to me by Dr. Ren Dong, a Chinese entomologist whom I met in South Korea. The book by him, Prof Shih Chungkun and others is about insect fossils from the Dinosaur era from north-eastern China. Dr. Dong is a professor in the College of Life Sciences of the Capital Normal University (CNU) in Beijing. What interested me, was a paper on fossils presented by him and his student Dr. Zho Yu Yunyun (also from CNU), on fossilised insects at the 24th Entomological Congress. The fossils of insects and other animals are widespread in north-eastern China, close to Jinzhou city. What is the speciality of this area? The Chinese entomologists say that many geological events like volcanic eruptions with fine ashes, lake sediments, plate ketonic movements and uplifting of earths layers, have preserved fossils in this area as A treasure trove. Already 400,000 insect fossils have been unearthed including the wingless fossil of mayfly naids, *Epichar meropsis*. Here 18 orders have been found.

There are other fossil insect sites in the world- a Hot spring of Rhynie, Scotland, the Battery Point Formation in Gaspe, Bay of Canada, mudstones in Gilboa of New York, Iron stone concretions of Illinois, Oboro of Czech, Natal of South Africa, oil shale wells in Messel, Germany etc. I am not too sure of fossil sites of insects in India. As compared to the plant fossils, animal or insect fossil studies are still meagre. Plant related insect fossils like galls, eaten leaves, insect mining etc have been recorded especially from Maharashtra. However, needless to say that, this is an important area of investigation. Our current biosystematics is strongly linked to the ancient past and therefore it behoves well to have a strong programme on fossil study especially the extinct ones so that Indian insects which are extinct, though silent can still speak.

Hon. Editor

Dr. Abraham Verghese