

Professor George Marx: An Obituary

Professor Marx was born in Budapest (Hungary) on 25 May, 1927 and died on 2 December, 2002. He got his education in the capital city and got Ph.D. degree from Roland Eötvös University in Budapest in 1950. He served the University department of Physics in various capacities for more than 50 years. He was head of the Department of Atomic Physics for 22 years and Professor Emeritus since 1997. Professor Marx never retired and continued his teaching and research activities till the last day of his life. He was acknowledged the best teacher of Quantum Physics in Hungary. He received the Bragg Prize and Medal of the Institute of Physics (UK) in 2001 in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in physics education. He wrote 40 books and published 100 scientific papers, 60 papers on science education and 80 papers on history of science. His books have been translated in about 18 European and Asian languages.

Professor Marx was a pioneer in the field of Neutrino Astronomy and organized the first International Conference in Budapest. He attended the XXth meeting held at Munich (Germany) in May 2002. I saw his photograph in CERN Courier of November 2002, and got news of his death in December while I was writing a letter to congratulate him on his achievements. Neutrino Astronomy and Astrophysics is a 'hot' field for researchers and has revolutionised the field of cosmology. Professor Marx's seminal paper, 'Neutrino Rest Mass from Cosmology' has been cited 250 times, including four Nobel Laureates in physics. It has been confirmed in recent experiments that neutrinos have mass and may explain the existence of dark matter in the universe. He could not get a Nobel Prize but his ideas helped others to win the Nobel.

Professor Marx was honoured by various universities in Europe and America, offering him Visiting Professorships, fellowships of national academies and medals. He wrote books for high school students in Hungarian language. He pleaded for nuclear power as a substitute for fossil fuels to meet the energy demands of the world. He was proud of his Hungarian origin and wrote a book on Hungarian scientists, "The Myth of the Martians".

Professor Marx had a great love for India. He was a visiting Professor in Delhi University and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar for many years. Despite his age and failing health, he always undertook expeditions to Himalayas to collect data on radon and its health hazards. I was privileged to work in his group at Budapest and Matradrescke, the Hungarian village he adopted alongwith Ester Toth, his student who served the Professor with utter devotion till his last moment. I enjoyed his immense love and hospitality for many years. Indian Science Cruiser published Professor Marx's two papers and he felt happy and obliged.

- (i) New Moral Responsibilities in Science Education for All. Ind. Sci. Cruiser, Vol 15 (3) , pp. 20-25 (2001).
- (ii) Life through the Nuclear Valley. Ind. Sci.. Cruiser, Vol. 16 (1), pp. 22-37(2002).