

Govindjee's visit, during Jan-March, 2015, in the School of Biotechnology (SBT) at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi, India

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I have written a brief report on Govindjee's visit to the School of Biotechnology, JNU, New Delhi during January—March, 2015; it includes 2 photographs. I would very much like the students around the World to know about it. Thus, I request that it be linked to Govindjee's web site.

Govindjee, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois, USA, was invited by the School of Biotechnology (SBT), JNU, as a Visiting Scientist for three months during the 2015 winter semester. He is a world-renowned scientist who has devoted many decades to teaching and popularizing the area of photosynthesis across the globe and is popularly known as 'Mr. Photosynthesis'. Govindjee has had a long time association with JNU as he was the PhD thesis advisor of Late Prasanna Mohanty of the School of Life Sciences (SLS) and has visited JNU on many occasions, both formal and informal. Since SBT has initiated a Master's course in Plant Biotechnology, Govindjee was invited to give a short course on photosynthesis; it was considered to be an essential first step for our students in view of its importance in Biotechnology, and Govindjee's reputation of communicating difficult topics with ease and clarity. During his stay at JNU, Govindjee taught the basics of photosynthesis to M.Sc. students from both SBT and the School of Life Sciences (SLS). His unique style, enthusiasm, breadth of knowledge and dedication earned him the affection and respect from the students who flocked around him at all times. He freely gave his time to students and also donated several books to the school libraries of both SBT and SLS. His un-conventional style of teaching outside the classroom in the form of a drama on the Z-scheme of photosynthesis, performed by M.Sc. students, helped them understand the entire electron transport and proton transport processes in photosynthesis in a highly interactive manner. With this kind of approach, Govindjee ensured that the students do not easily forget this complicated pathway and understand the intricacies and complexity of the electron transport as well as how herbicides inhibit this process. Apart from his lectures on *Photosynthesis*, he had students make presentations on any area of photosynthesis they chose. Govindjee provided his constructive comments and criticism to each student in a way that was a lesson in the art of positive criticism to many.

In addition to his lectures on photosynthesis, Govindjee's concern about writing led him to give tutorials on English writing skills, often using "Elements of Style" by Strunk & White. While these classes were primarily for Pre-Ph. D. students, many Ph.D and post-doc students attended these sessions. His vast experience as author and editor of many books and papers clearly showed in his lectures and benefited also the faculty who attended these lectures.

Govindjee has a keen interest in the history of science and he is the founder editor of the 'Historical Corner' of '*Photosynthesis Research*'. He uses this interest very effectively in his lectures by weaving seamlessly stories and personal anecdotes about many pioneers in the field, thus making his lectures extremely interesting even for those not working in the area of photosynthesis. Govindjee's use of props and drama as a teaching tool makes a lasting impression on students. His generosity, humility as well as his friendliness was evident during the lunch he hosted for his

class. The event was attended and enjoyed by students and faculty of SBT and SLS, JNU. For an earlier detailed report on Govindjee's teaching in 2014, at Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, India, see K. Mohapatra and N.R. Singh (2015) *Teaching the Z-Scheme of Electron Transport in Photosynthesis: A Perspective*. *Photosynth Res* 123: 105—114.

I end this brief report, provided to JNU, by showing 2 photographs.



Govindjee (extreme left, 1st row) and his wife, Rajni Govindjee (in brown jacket; 4th from left in 2nd row) with some of the students in the class at JNU, in March, 2015



Govindjee (sitting in front, in a light blue shirt and Rajni Govindjee (1st from right, 2nd row) with students (the molecules) at the Z-scheme drama performed at the Parthasarathi amphitheater at JNU in March, 2015. The author (Swati Tiwari) is in the front row (extreme left)