

Doc. RNDr. Vladimír Skalický has passed away . . .

The whole community of botanists and mycologists is only slowly getting aware of this fact. Somebody whose vitality and a rare talent for scientific, pedagogic, organizational and social activities was matter of course and whose private life was fully dedicated to rich professional activities, has gone. It could be said that his life did not belong to himself, because he was literally living for science, scientific organizations, students and all his colleagues botanists and mycologists. The source of his creative force laid in his extraordinary ability to lucidly evaluate the quality of the hitherto reached knowledge in botany and in mycology, to follow up with his own conception and to keep a large and in the same time detailed view in these branches. Two of his significant personal qualities can be added, and that is integrity and total unselfishness. Doc. Skalický could be explicitly called the "Czech botanist of the second half of the 20th century".

Already much had been said in details about his rich creative activities in the Czech mycology (*Česká mykologie* 45: 54-58) and *Preslia* (Preslia 62: 265-274) in 1990 when he celebrated his 60th anniversary. All of us who had the chance to



know him personally very well and were often in contact with him, cannot forget his incessant vigour, his interest in every problem, his smiling patience for our ignorance. It would be certainly useful, for younger colleagues and for the new generation of botanists, to record his style during consultations at the faculty, during lectures or excursions, the style which could be characterized as unique and unparalleled. We are well aware that a man of letters could have drawn a much better portrait of doc. Skalický. Nevertheless, we just feel bound to remember here some of his characteristic traits.

Working hours of doc. Skalický were absolutely unlimited, from early morning to late night time. Also Saturdays, Sundays and holidays were dedicated mainly to botany and mycology. When participating at different meetings, he managed not only to concentrate his attention to the theme treated, but he found the time to write down bibliographic data and other notes on his numberless little sheets.

His door was every day open for anybody who needed his advice and he was always ready to offer the maximum he was able. His lectures touched so many branches and contained so many details that they formed in fact an encyclopedical picture, sometimes only hardly accessible for his students. He often put his own scientific work aside to help those who needed his professional assistance and his kind advice. To knock at his door meant to obtain a lot of information that might sometimes seem to us excessive as we thought ourselves unable to grasp the problem in the proposed complexity. Vladimír's smile during explanation was nevertheless disarming, and it was necessary to share always his enthusiasm for the matter and to have a good dose of patience. After such busy days, it was natural for him to work and write late to the night, but it could be said that he wrote easily as he always had the theme thought over in advance. His excursions were quite an extraordinary experience: he was demonstrating botanic objects in the whole extent of accessible knowledge, he was deepening students' knowledge, as well as their view on nature in detail and in the whole. Many of us were taking part on his excursions to learn new things. There were places where nobody succeeded to find anything of interest, but he was always and everywhere finding number of interesting things and he managed even in a poor locality or in a dry period to pertinently characterize every place he was walking around. His knowledge in the field of systematics and floristics of vascular plants and cryptogamy were exceptional, and he was always adding ecologic, geographic and geologic notes. His numerous collections could only hardly be fully exploited, as several lives would be needed for the task. He was also an excellent hiker, no terrain was a problem for him. The same could not be nevertheless said about many of his students that were sometimes literally run down.

These short notes might create an impression that his life was easy and without problems. It would however be misleading. He, too, lived difficult moments, because he was a very sensitive person. Family problems, health troubles and unfortunately also political persecutions in the past were not very beneficial for him. The only thing which could be possibly reproached to doc. Skalický was his habit to give too often preference to others which was very time and attention consuming, so that he did not find the time to write the textbook of general and systematic mycology, work to which he was more competent than anyone else. But he certainly would have done so if more time of creative work had been given to him.

Doc. RNDr. Vladimír Skalický, CSc., has undoubtedly left a profound and original trace in the Czech botany and his extraordinary knowledge, working vigour and his human disinterested profile merit to be made a respectful compliment.

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