



स्मारिका

हीरक जयन्ती विशेषांक

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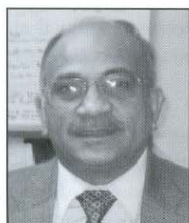


हंसराज कॉलेज
दिल्ली





My Reminiscences of Hans Raj College (1979-82)



After my 12th from CBSE, I had applied to only two colleges, Hindu and Hans Raj, in Delhi in case I did not make it to the above. However, as expected, based on my marks I got admission to Hans Raj College in **July 1979 in the B.Sc (Hons) Chemistry** course. I did not apply to Physics (Hons) though that was the norm those days (Honours in Physics, chemistry, Maths followed by B.Sc. (General)). I had this unusual interest in chemistry, subconsciously kindled by a school teacher. I chose Hans Raj College, as I considered it a more serious college, (or less of distractions) compared to the two other colleges of repute at that time, St Stephens and Hindu. As I was (or I considered myself to be) from a typical middle class background, I had a bit of dislike or disdain for the stephanian types which however melted away as I matured.

Hans Raj probably had the best teaching faculty in chemistry in those days with the likes of Dr. P L Soni, Dr. P S Jaiswal, Dr. G S Manku, Dr. Dinesh Pandey, Dr. P S Sindhu, Dr. R K Trikha and many others who did not teach me. In addition, our teachers of Maths and Physics, who used to take subsidiary (not used these days probably) classes were equally good and were as committed as the chemistry teachers, though we had to only get through the subsidiary courses. They were very punctual and never missed any classes and I owe it to them for contributing to a firm foundation for my academic future. The classes on differential equations and statistics were really useful in my later years. The physics teachers were reputed, several had books to their credit.

Apart from the teachers and their punctuality, the college had a very good library system. We had a departmental library which was well-stocked with all the well-known books in chemistry. In addition we had a main library which had some books which I think even the university library did not possess. These are books by Pauling & Wilson, E S Gould etc (I hope people still read them). We also had good laboratory facilities and they were well-maintained. There were teachers who took interest to initiate us to experiments which other colleges were not doing but was part of a larger list of experiments. These small things helped us stay ahead when we went for our Master's program.

I still remember the nomenclature of organic molecules was my first class at Hans Raj by Dr. P L Soni. The classes on phase rule by Dr Jaiswal were so lucid and efficiently planned. It was from Dr Manku that I got the clear concept of electron spin (ye lattu nahi hai). Dinesh Pandey tore through castellan during the 2nd year on thermodynamics and Dr Sarpal taught us natural product (limonene and all that). Dr Sindhu was ahead of his time, since no one followed including me why he is saying that when h tends to zero (but it is a constant, we thought!) Much later we got the essence of his lectures, like any good food, it takes some time to recognize and appreciate the fine flavor. I use many of the examples when I teach my students that I learnt from my teachers at Hans Raj.

I was a great follower of our badminton stars. Our badminton players were among the best and some played for the Indian team. We used to follow them to different colleges during the matches and cheer for them. The college canteen had the great samosas and bread pakoras with hot tea (a bit watery). But the greatest asset was the chhola bhaturas around the corner in Malkaganj and then the one behind Kirori Mal college. I survived for three years on chhola bhatura and thanks to DTC I still was around 45 Kg (Don't even guess what I am now).



गरिमामयी परंपरा के 60 वर्ष

Whenever I have chhola bhature (may be once or twice a year) it reminds me of the days at Hans Raj . I made great friends at Hans Raj, many among them I still meet. But there are several whom I have lost contact after 1982. It would be really nice to know what they are doing and how they look today.

I missed (bunked) classes only to see a football match (DCM or Durand cup) and several teachers knew that. So whenever a section of crowd was missing that included me, some teachers used to say that a football match must be on.

For some reason I took a long time (nearly 25 years) to return to Hans Raj in 2007 when I was happy to deliver a lecture for the Chemical Society. I am proud to be a student of Hans Raj College, I bow to my alma mater and my teachers . I especially thank the then principal Sh. G P Chopra for maintaining the high academic standards and sense of service and discipline among students and teachers. I pray that the college grows in strength and numbers, but maintains the academic excellence and discipline among both students and teachers for which I was motivated to join the college.

— **Professor Ashok K Ganguli**
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