

Ján Hudák

27 February 1945 – 27 July 2010



*Professor Ján Hudák, a member of the Editorial Board of *Photosynthetica*, suddenly and once for all left his personal and scientific activities on July 27, 2010.*

Ján Hudák was born on 27th February 1945 in a small Slovak town Snina, former Czechoslovakia. As a graduate of the Forestry College in Prešov, he made his studies in biology at the Comenius University in Bratislava. He received his Master's degree in 1969 and his PhD (originally Scientiae Candidate, CSc.) in 1974. The very long-life basis of both research and teaching of Ján Hudák happened to be Department of Plant Physiology of the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Comenius University in Bratislava. There he habilitated in plant physiology in 1980 (associated professor). After having received the highest scientific grade (Dr.Sc.) he was appointed professor of plant physiology in 1998. Since then, he served as head of the Department of Plant Physiology of the Comenius University until his retirement made necessary by his illness in 2009.

Although Ján Hudák's permanent scientific position was in Bratislava, several long-term stages in laboratories abroad enabled him to introduce himself very effectively to the international community of plant biologists. Let me just recall his stay at the Institute of Botany, University of Stockholm (3 months in 1974 and repeatedly 9 months in 1991), Department of Genetics, Agricultural University of Copenhagen (1979), Department of Botany, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Department of Botany, A. Mickiewicz University, Poznan, and many short-term visits.

*"Structure and function of a plant cell" could be taken as the leading subject matter of Ján Hudák's research. As an expert in electron microscopy, he considerably contributed to our knowledge of plastids. His recent publications have considerably improved our understanding on the chlorophyll formation and plastid differentiation of some plant species in the dark, especially by elucidating factors affecting the activity of protochlorophyllid oxidoreductase. He summarized information on plastid morphogenesis in his monography "Plastids" (in Slovak). Slovak Society of Botany honoured this book with Holuby's Commemorative Medal. In addition to dozens of research papers published in international journals including *Photosynthetica*, he also wrote several chapters into monographs.*

Teaching activities included practically all fields of plant biology starting with general plant

physiology up to anatomy, cytology, and techniques of microscopy. His textbook “Plant Biology” (in Slovak) based on previously published lecture notes represented for many years the only and much appreciated course book in the former Czechoslovakia.

Success in both research and management of various both national and international projects legitimized him to leading positions in scientific structures. He served as a member of Organisation Committees of several international congresses, he presided many committees for defence of diploma and dissertation theses, etc.

Jan Hudák was decorated on several occasions by medals from the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Bratislava, from the Comenius University and also from the Faculty of Natural Sciences of the Charles University in Prague.

Myself, I was privileged to meet Ján Hudák for the first time some 30 years ago, already, when he invited me to write a chapter on photosynthesis for his textbook. Since then, I was often invited to take part at various scientific meetings, to present lectures or to participate at thesis defence. The scientific contacts enabled me to meet many Slovak colleagues from various universities and institutions as well as to meet Ján Hudák and his family in private. Let me share some of my feelings on the occasion of this last farewell to my friend.

At several occasions, I was privileged to visit Ján Hudák in his domicile, a small town Bernolákovo, not far from Bratislava, capital of Slovak Republic. Of course, he continued his scientific and teaching activities at home. But furthermore, he demonstrated to be an excellent wine expert. In his garden, he grew wine grapes and in his wine cellar, dozens of bottles of perfect wine invited the guests of Ján Hudák. Walking through the town, most of its inhabitants warmly greeted Ján. It was apparent that professor Hudák became a very well established and reputed citizen of this prevailing agricultural and viniculture place. I was impressed by the hearty incorporation of Ján Hudák's family into this community.

My experience witnesses the very nature of Ján Hudák: He was by far not only a good scientist and teacher, the very professor at a University, but also a kind-hearted, “simple” citizen, neighbour, husband and father. His optimistic attitude enabled him not only to manage scientific projects and Faculty teams, but also to be a welcome guest at meetings, discussions or parties.

I am very sorry for his ultimate and unexpected demise. His scientific achievements take part of the international achievements and his impact will continue for years also in publications of his students. However, all of his personal friends will hardly fill in the gap created in their lives by his departure.

Lubomír NÁTR (Praha)