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Deep mourning with the loss of Professor Youchong Hong—a pioneer palaeoentomologist of China

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Prof. Youchong Hong
15.11.1929–04.07.2019



FIGURE 1. Prof. Youchong Hong. **A**, Prof. Hong and his PhD student Zhijun Zhang collect fossil insect at Lushangfen, Southwestern Beijing at 1999. **B**, Diying Huang visiting Prof. Hong on Spring Festival in 2015 at Hong's home.

Professor Youchong Hong, a well-known palaeoentomologist of China passed away in Beijing on July 4, 2019, at the age of 89.

Youchong Hong was a Research Professor at the Beijing Museum of Natural History and the former Director of the Institute of Natural History. He is the one of pioneers of Chinese palaeoentomologists and a specialist of the Mesozoic stratigraphy of China. He was known to many paleontologists around the world and the sad announcement of his passing was sent to his many colleagues. Fossil workers from Poland, the United States, Russia, France, Germany, Lebanon, Australia and other countries expressed their condolences.

Prof. Hong was born on November 15, 1929. He graduated from the Beijing Institute of Geology in 1953 and worked on graptolites at the beginning of his career.

He was sent to the Institute of Hydrobiology of the USSR Academy of Sciences to study mollusk fossils from 1958 to 1960. Later, due to the blank state of the fossil insects in China, he began to learn palaeoentomology. After returning to China, he worked at the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, the Tianjin Institute of Geology and Mineral Resources, and the Beijing Natural History Museum.

Prof. Hong's research on Chinese insect fossils began more than 50 years ago with his first fossil insect paper on a new genus of dragonfly (Hong, 1965). He is considered one of the founders of palaeoentomology in China and made great contributions to the establishment and development of the Chinese fossil insect discipline. During his celebrated career, he published 154 research papers, 6 single-authored monographs and 17 co-authored

monographs. He is the pioneer of Fushun amber research and published several important monographs that have made an indelible impact on our knowledge of the insect inclusions and formations of Fushun amber (e.g., Hong, 1979a, 1981a, 2002a, b; Hong *et al.*, 1974). He first established the Yanliao entomofauna in 1983, pointing out that this is an insect assemblage distributed from northern China to Central Asia, equivalent to the insect fauna from the Middle Jurassic Haifanggou Formation and the equivalent layers, represented by the Haifanggou Formation in Beipiao and the Jiulongshan Formation in northern Hebei Province (Hong, 1983). He also studied the distribution and diversity of insect fossils in the Early Cretaceous Jehol biota, especially those from the Laiyang Formation in Shandong Province and the Jehol biota from the northwestern part of China (Hong, 1982; Hong & Wang, 1990). In his later years, he focused on the insect fossils of the Middle Triassic Tongchuan Formation in Shaanxi, filling many research gaps in China (e.g., Hong, 1980b, 2007). He conducted extensive research on Mesozoic insect fossils in northern China (Hong, 1998). In addition to the above studies, he has also discovered a series of fossil localities in northern China, such as the Lushangfen entomofauna in western Beijing (Hong, 1981b; Fig. 1A). Additionally, he studied insect fossils in the Miocene Shanwang biota in Linqu, Shandong (Hong, 1985). His research group also discovered and studied the Carboniferous insects in China, which filled an important gap in the study of Paleozoic fossils (Hong & Peng, 1995). He contributed significantly to the study of fossil tadpole shrimps and other invertebrate fossils (e.g., Hong, 1979b, 1980a); he had also made great achievements in the study of the Mesozoic strata in China.

Professor Youchong Hong made great advances in the research of insect fossils in his past fifty years, making significant contributions to furthering the continuing advancement and development of ancient Chinese entomology (Fig. 1B). The special issue of “*Palaeoentomology*” ‘Prof. Hong and Palaeoentomology in China’ to celebrate Professor Hong’s 90th birthday was originally scheduled to be published as the 5th issue of 2019 (planned for release at the end of October). Professor Hong’s sudden death was unexpected and is a great loss for us all. However, despite his loss, we know his spirit is strong and will remain with us forever.

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