

Jørgen Hylleberg as university teacher and colleague: a talk given by the institute leader

By Jørgen Bundgaard

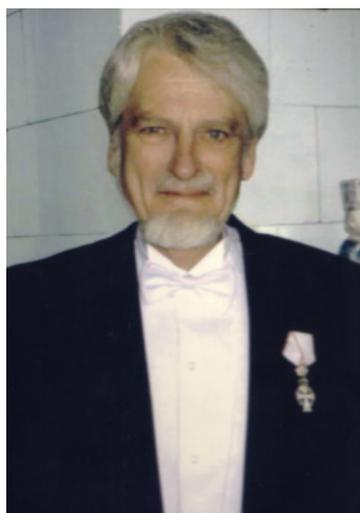
*Department of Ecology and Genetics, Institute of Biological Sciences, University of Aarhus,
Ny Munkegade, Building 1540, DK-8000 Aarhus C, Denmark.
Email: joergen.bundgaard@biology.au.dk*

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Jørgen Hylleberg was born on October 28, 1935. After school he completed his education as teacher at the training college in Ranum, Denmark. Despite outstanding pedagogic talents, he did not have such a burning interest for biology that he started to study biology at University of Aarhus and completed the studies with a M.Sc. degree from University of Copenhagen. The research area of the thesis was marine biology and the famous Professor Gunnar Thorson was his supervisor. One year of the M.Sc. studies was spent at Kristineberg Marine Biological Station in Sweden, a field station he often returned to during the following years. In 1970 Jørgen Hylleberg was invited to University of Aarhus by Professor Tom Fenchel in order to participate in the work of building up marine biology in Jutland, and he was employed as Associate Professor in 1972. He has been teaching and writing several text books in marine biology since this date. Jørgen Hylleberg was on research sabbatical at University of Washington, USA, in 1973–74, and defended his doctoral degree at University of Gothenburg in 1995.

Jørgen Hylleberg's scientific output comprises more than 150 scientific papers and five books. He has also been the supervisor of a large number of M.Sc. and Ph.D. students at the University of Aarhus. Furthermore, he has been a diligent debater in spoken and written media as well as disseminating marine biology in the form of a large number of popular science articles. He has also been a member of a large number of commissions and been the organizer of more than 25 symposia and workshops within the area of marine biology.

At the end of 1979 Jørgen Hylleberg was stationed as DANIDA advisor during a period of 3



years at the Phuket Marine Biological Center in Thailand. His research and teaching has since this period been very much centred on Thailand and other parts of Southeast Asia. During the period 1983–94 he was engaged by DANIDA and stationed in Thailand for 3 months per year. Since 1991 he was the leader of a large research and development project financed by DANIDA, the Tropical Marine Mollusc Programme – TMMP. A goal of this project was to study the biology of selected tropical molluscs in Southeast Asia and develop aquaculture methods for them.

Jørgen Hylleberg's work in Southeast Asia can be divided in two parts, teaching and research. During all the years he has given high-class teaching to the Thai students and foreign guests at the Phuket Marine Biological Center, but he also took the initiative to develop International M.Sc. & Ph.D. Programmes in Marine Sciences at University of Aarhus supported by DANIDA. He was the course director of this program from 1990 to 1999. Altogether, 67 students from Southeast Asian countries have passed a two-year education in modern marine biology, crowned by an M.Sc.

degree. Most of them have continued with Ph.D. studies at many universities all over the world. Jørgen Hylleberg's enthusiasm and deep knowledge about Southeast Asia, biological as well as cultural, has been a crucial condition for the great success of the programme and the following cooperation between scientists in Denmark and Southeast Asian countries. We must not forget the importance of the entire Hylleberg family here, particularly Mrs. Karen Hylleberg, for the unequalled hospitality and care of the foreign students and scientists. The programme could not have been the same success without this grand achievement. The programme was consolidated enough to continue successfully when Jørgen Hylleberg left his position as course director in 1999 in order to concentrate on other tasks, primarily TMMP.

An important part of Jørgen Hylleberg's research has been to build and develop the reference collection at Phuket Marine Biological Center. For this work he did, in 1990, receive the mark of honour *Royal Thai Order: Commander (3rd Class) of the Most Noble Order of the Crown of Thailand*. The reference collection is, for example, an important resource during studies of the biodiversity of the marine environments in this tropical area and is very much visited and utilized during research projects in the region. Jørgen Hylleberg has been a member of the editorial committee since 1981, and between 1990–1994 was the editor of *Phuket Marine Biological Center Research Bulletin*. He has spent much effort and energy in creating a scientific journal that is of great importance for the research in the region.

The enthusiastic work and great knowledge of Jørgen Hylleberg has been of crucial importance for the scientific cooperation in marine biology between Denmark and the Southeast Asian countries. For all this, he was, in 2002 decorated by the Royal Order *Ridder af Dannebrogordenen* (Knight of the Order of Dannebrog) [Dannebrog is the formal name of the flag of Denmark].

I have known Jørgen Hylleberg since we started our studies at the University of Aarhus in 1963. Together we continued our studies at the University of Copenhagen in 1965 after we had

passed the examination in Aarhus. Our colleagues Mogens Gissel Nielsen and Jørgen Mørup Jørgensen also continued their studies the same way. Jørgen Hylleberg was a little older than us, and had the teacher education as his background, which was beneficial, particularly at the examination. In particular I remember how he got the question "explain the life cycle of the medusae" during the lottery draw at the examination. Professor Harald Thamdrup was the examiner and Professor Karl-Georg Wingstrand from Copenhagen was external examiner. Jørgen Hylleberg overwhelmed them with a storm of enthusiasm. With a stentorian voice he explained about the fascinating life cycle of these organisms without being interrupted at all. It resulted in the top mark and we, the other students, were immensely impressed. The talent to tell stories and keep the audience spellbound has also later been valuable during teaching, and many students have much enjoyed his great knowledge and enthusiasm. Jørgen Hylleberg has also been a diligent teacher and supervisor during subsequent biological studies which has resulted in 10 Ph.D. and about 80 M.Sc. students.

I can't resist the temptation to include a few details about Jørgen Hylleberg as a political actor. His burning engagement has given us many brilliant results but he has sometimes exceeded the limit in his eagerness to reach a goal that for him was the only right one. I remember, for example, some cases where he got a clear no (!) from me being his superordinated department head, which only motivated him to go one step higher in the hierarchy, to the institute leader, and if this did not help, to our dean and finally to the rector. It was very irritating for some of us, and luckily for us, seldom led to any results for Jørgen Hylleberg.

As a summary I must say that Jørgen Hylleberg has all reasons to be proud of his career. He has been diligent, put his footprints on many fronts, and in particular educated a large number of persons in marine biology. The marine biologists as well as the Institute of Biological Sciences would like to express their sincere thanks for the one-man-work to keep marine biology alive for

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many years. Today we have a strong group of marine biologists and many students. It is possible that without the effort of Jørgen Hilleberg we could have been completely without marine biology at the Institute of Biological Sciences today. It is our hope that Jørgen Hilleberg, after retirement, would like to continue with research at the Department of Marine Ecology.

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