

Appreciation

I am delighted to learn that the Asian Journal of Physics is bringing out a special issue in honor of our dear friend and colleague Professor Kehar Singh – an honour that he so richly deserves. Professor Kehar Singh is an outstanding physicist and a great researcher. I have had the privilege of knowing Professor Singh since 1966 when I had joined IIT Delhi. I was always very impressed by his dedication in the study of optics and also relentlessly contributing (along with his students and colleagues) to numerous areas related to optics. Because of his outstanding contributions in the general areas of Optics and Photonics, he has received numerous awards. I will just mention 2 of them:

The first one is India's most coveted award: The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award which he received in 1985 and the citation read: ***For his significant work in applied optics, in particular, on coherent and partially coherent imaging of diffuse objects and incoherent imaging. His work has direct applications in the areas of adaptive optics, holography, optical testing and microlithography.***

The second award that I should mention is the prestigious 2025 Emmett N. Leith Medal by OPTICA (formerly Optical Society of America) recognizing ***his significant contributions to the field of optical information processing.***

My grateful thanks (and hearty congratulations) to Professor Maria Calvo and Professor Vinod Rastogi for putting in very hard work to bring out a special issue in honor of Professor Kehar Singh.

Ajoy Ghatak
Honorary Professor
Optics & Photonics Center, IIT Delhi, India



Kehar Singh (left) and Ajoy Ghatak(right): Sharing moments of happiness & pleasure

Appreciation



Professor Kehar Singh (right) and Professor Anurag Sharma (left) in a discussion during the Release Function of the Book 'Those Were The Days' edited by Professor Singh.



Professor Kehar Singh (extreme right) was honoured during Photonics-2018. Seen in the picture with him are Professor Joby Joseph (middle) and Professor Anurag Sharma (first)

I joined IIT Delhi in 1972 to do my M Sc in Physics. In those days, there was no course in optics in the M Sc programme; however, Professor Kehar Singh took some classes on multiple beam interferometry as part of a course on spectroscopy. That was my first introduction to Professor Singh. Thus, to us in M Sc, he was the face of optics in Physics Department of IIT Delhi. Later, I got interested in holography (the Nobel Prize was awarded in 1971 only) and I wanted to do my major project in this subject. He readily agreed to supervise me for the project. The work on the project got me interested in optics. Later I joined M Tech (Applied Optics) programme which he was coordinating. He taught several courses and supervised the laboratory in

the programme. I learnt much of my optics under his tutelage and made it my career. I came to know him more closely during these years. Later, when I joined the Department as a faculty member, I was associated with the M Tech. (Applied Optics) programme. So, I began my teaching profession also under his tutelage. In all these interactions, he came across as a very serious and dedicated researcher, teacher and professional. He takes even a small aspect of any activity very seriously giving full attention it deserves. I have learnt a lot through my interactions with him and through observing the way he conducts himself.



Professor Kehar Singh addressing the gathering during the 'Honour the Mentor' programme organized to honour him by his students, including Professor Anurag Sharma.

He is a well known researcher and has won many awards and laurels. The breadth and depth of his knowledge in optics is phenomenal. He would guide you and point to the relevant sources and literature in any topic in optics. He also has up-to-date knowledge about the published work of all his colleagues and coworkers. His capacity to read and absorb amazes all of us around him. He continues to be engaged in updating his knowledge about the goings-on in optics and photonics, and of course continues his research and publishing activities. I have requested him many times to write up the history of optics in India, but he expressed his inability due to the lack of time as 'there is so much to read and learn'. However, he did accept my request, during the Golden Jubilee of IIT Delhi, to compile and edit a book containing memoirs of senior professors. It is not easy to persuade one to write such memoirs, but Professor Singh managed to collect and edit a number of such write-ups and produced an excellent book entitled '*Those Were The Days*' which is a collectible item. I continue to benefit from his advice and support. I wish him a long and healthy life and wish to have his continued guidance and support.

Anurag Sharma

Honorary Professor, Optics and Photonics Centre, IIT Delhi, India.