

Prof. An Yin (1959-2023)

Om N. Bhargava

Honorary Professor, Geology Department, Panjab University, Chandigarh
103 Sector 7, Panchkula - 134 109, India

E-mail: onbhargava@gmail.com

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It is with great sorrow I report the sudden demise of Prof An Yin on 12th July 2023. He was driving as a part of field teaching. Not feeling well, he pulled over and had a heart attack. Soon after getting to the hospital he was declared dead. Prof An Yin was born in 1959 in the city of Harbin, northeastern China. During the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, Yin was shifted to a small village. His experience during this period profoundly shaped his later life. He completed B.S. (1982) from Beijing University, and M.S. (1982-1983) at the Beijing University under Prof. Xianglin Qiang remained incomplete as he shifted to the University of Southern California. He pursued his Ph.D. degree in geology at the University of Southern California (UCLA) under the supervision of Professor Gregory A. Davis. In 1987, he was offered an Acting Assistant Professor position at UCLA – one year before he officially got his doctoral degree from USC. He was appointed as an Assistant Professor in 1988, promoted to Associate Professor in 1993, and a Full Professor since 1996.

His early work was on the mechanical origin and kinematic

evolution of low-angle normal faults and thrust systems. Yin's research has been focused on studying the creation and destruction of mountains on Earth and other solar-system bodies. His work on Earth is field-based, which starts with making detailed geologic maps and ends with the construction of kinematic and mechanical models for the evolution of Earth's lithosphere. Yin proposed a hypothesis that a primitive form of plate tectonics, expressed as local plate boundary processes involving thermal-boundary-layer recycling by impact-induced slab rollback, may have been responsible for the formation of the Tharsis rise on Mars. His proposed primitive plate tectonics differs from the modern plate tectonics on Earth, which operates over the entire planet.

He is best known for his contribution to the tectonic evolution of the Himalaya and Tibetan plateau. His study in recent years also included slow-earthquake mechanics, early Earth tectonics, and planetary studies.

19 students pursued Ph.D degrees under Prof. Yin, and Prof. Alexandra Webb was one of them.