堆積学を初めて大学での研究機関にした Percival Allen 教授を悼む

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Memorial: Professor Percival Allen

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現在、堆積学 (sedimentology) は世界の重要な学問分野になっているが、この領域を初めて地球科学と地質学の重要な部門にしたのはイギリスのロンドンとオックスフォードの中間に位置するレディング (Reading) 市にある University of Reading の Percival Allen 教授 (図 1, 2) であった。この教授は 1961 年に世界の地質学機関の大学で始めて Sedimentology Research Laboratory (図 3) を作り、現在に至っている。この世界で最初に堆積学を大学に導入した Percival Allen 教授が 2008 年 4 月始めに自然急逝された。91 歳であった。

Percival Allen 教授の名称はイギリスでは Perce Allen 教授と呼ばれている。この Perce Allen 教授は第二次世界大戦後最初の国際地質学会が 1948 年にイギリスで開催されたとき、全世界の堆積学組織作成を提案して、1952 年から “International Association of Sedimentologists, IAS” が形成された。この詳細な状況は拙著 (岡田, 1966, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2006; Okada with Kenyon-Smith, 2005) の中で詳しく述べている。

Perce Allen 教授の研究は一貫してイギリスの白亜紀初期堆積物である非海成層 Wealden Beds の研究に大成果を挙げってきた。こうして、この研究は当初から多数の業績を上げてきたが、とくに 1971 年の Geological Society of London からの Lyell Medal, 1973 年の Fellow of the Royal Society の栄誉に輝いた。また、1978 年には IAS Honorary Membership に輝き、1978-1980 年には Geological Society of London 会長となり、2006 年には Association of European Geological Societies (AEGS) の Percival Allen Medal が作られた。

ここでは、Perce Allen 教授の現役時代にレディング大学

堆積学研究所の重要な教官であった Prof. John R.L. Allen と Dr. Andrew Parker から戴いた Percival Allen 教授のご追慕の様子を記したい。

図 1 Percival Allen 教授 (1965 年, レディング大学提供)。

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図 2 レディング大学の Percival Allen 教授 (1975 年, 岡田撮影)。

Professor Percival Allen, FRS

Perce (as he was universally known) Allen was without doubt one of the leading international figures in the development of the branch of geology known as sedimentology. During a long and distinguished career — he was still contributing to geological research at the age of 91 — he helped to establish the subject as the principal record of past environments and also to quantify the processes which lead, *inter alia*, to the formation of hydrocarbon deposits. In 1959 he published a prophetic paper emphasising that the best bet for the oil industry would be in the North Sea, and advocated a programme of exploration there.

Allen was born in 1917 at Brede, near Hastings, East Sussex, and attended Rye Grammar School. He took his BSc at Reading University in 1939, and went on to a PhD (1943) there on the Cretaceous sediments of the Weald District in his beloved Sussex. His PhD was Reading's first to be awarded in geology, and was written largely on the train between his RAF station (where he worked during the war in the Photographic Interpretation Unit) and the Weald. During that time he married Margaret Hepworth, who was to remain at his side until her death in 200x. In 1946 he went to a lectureship at Cambridge, returning to Reading in 1952 to take over as Head of Department. He was to spend the rest of his academic career at Reading, and became an Emeritus Professor on his retirement in 1982. He was awarded an honorary DSc in

図 3 レディング大学堆積学研究所 (1965 年, レディング大学提供)。

1992.

Over seven decades, Allen published and contributed to more than sixty scientific papers, articles and books on aspects of sedimentology and the reconstruction of ancient environments. This was a remarkable feat, considering his administrative and teaching commitments, and busy family life. Wealden rock formations of south-east England remained a passion for Allen, not least the sandstone beds at Philpots Quarry, West Hoathly, West Sussex, that would keep him occupied in the field and laboratory for many years. Arguably, his most influential paper was published in 1975, overturning his earlier interpretation of the ancient Weald with a revised model, that stands as a benchmark today after three decades of further investigation.

Perhaps Allen's most important geological achievement at Reading was probably the foundation of the Sedimentology Research Laboratory (SRL) in 1962. He worked tirelessly to raise funds for this groundbreaking institution, largely from the oil industry (which subsequently benefited hugely from the output of sedimentology PhDs from there). The SRL attracted a continuous flow of visiting scientists from overseas and its international profile became very high in the field. In 19xx another new geology building at Reading was named the Allen Laboratory.

Allen was also very active externally in the subject. At the opening ceremony of the SRL he founded the British Sedimentological Research Group, which still flourishes as the main UK forum for the subject, and he proposed the formation of the International Association of Sedimentologists at the International Geological Congress (IGC) in 1948. This Associa-

tion was formally launched at the subsequent IGC in Algeria (1952) and now is a major society with members in over 100 countries, its own journal, and a large international congress every four years. He was also a member of the Natural Environment Research Council.

The 7th International Sedimentological Congress was held in Reading and Edinburgh in 1967 under Allen's leadership and was a huge success. His opening speech, in five languages (all with a Sussex accent), was a well-remembered classic. With typical elan, Allen hired a train to transport the delegates between countries, and an extremely convivial time was had on the journey.

Allen had the ability to attract a very talented staff to the SRL, (including his namesake J.R.L.Allen FRS), and many of the large number of PhD graduates went on to academic careers, both in the UK and overseas. He would go to endless trouble to help students and colleagues with either professional or personal problems. Although he was an adept academic politician, one always left his office feeling better than when one went in.

One of Allen's most important achievements outside Geology occurred while he was Dean of Science at Reading. He foresaw the increasing importance of meteorology as an academic subject, and persuaded the University to appoint Professor R C Sutcliffe FRS, recently retired from the Met. Office, to establish a fledgling department. After a first year lodged in a small office in the SRL, Meteorology has now risen

to be probably the best department in Western Europe, supplying two members to the IPCC, which recently shared a Nobel Prize.

Allen served as President of the Geological Society of London from 1978 to 1980 (and received their Lyell Medal in 1971), and was elected to Fellowship of the Royal Society in 1973, and was a Vice-President from 1977-79. He held honorary membership of the Society of Economic Palaeontologists and Mineralogists, the International Association of Sedimentologists, and the Geologists' Association. Most recently, the Association of European Geologists has instituted the Percival Allen Medal, which has just been awarded for the first time. This is to reward geologists who have done most to foster international relationships in the Earth Sciences, a particular interest of Allen.

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