



Sofus Christiansen

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From 1962 Sofus Christiansen has been employed at the Institute of Geography, University of Copenhagen - since 1975 as professor 'with special reference to ecological human geography'. He has been external consultant to DANIDA (the official Danish International Development Assistance) since 1976 and to UNDP since 1988. On a leave in 1986-1988 he was principal technical adviser to UNSO. He has been a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Science since 1979 and of the Danish National Committee for the International Geographical Union since 1982 - at present as secretary general. Sofus Christiansen has been secretary general to the Royal Danish Geographical Society since 1992 and is at present its vice-president.

Sofus Christiansen began his professional career as a geomorphologist. The subject of the master thesis in 1955 was coastal-morphology, and the year after he was awarded a gold medal for further work on coastal-morphology. However, his training was quite broad with supplementaries in geology and biology, and the participation in the Noona Dan Expedition 1962 to the Pacific made him change his scientific interests. In focus came the interaction between nature and man - the physical resources and human utilization. During the 1960s he made several field trips to the island of Bellona, and this fieldwork became the basis for the thesis as doctor of philosophy (1975). Since then a main field of interest has been shifting cultivation and later also infield-outfield systems. He has for example studied the swidden practice through field trails including the fires' influences on the soil profile (the Gulstav project). Infield-outfield systems have been studied at fieldtrips to the Faeroes. In the Hjerl Heath Project he has contributed to the study of historical infield-

outfield systems, which aims at providing a background for heath-management strategies.

At the University of Copenhagen, geography has maintained strong interest in the multi-disciplinary nature of the science. Geography is organized under the Faculty of Science, but put equal emphasis on socio-economic aspects of the issues addressed. Sofus Christiansen has played a very active role in formulating the direction and development that geography has followed at the Institute of Geography. An important part of geography is the study of relations man-nature, and in the latest decennia a school of human ecological geography has virtually existed. Especially important is the study of agricultural systems, their flows of energy and matter, their organization and the attached cultural landscapes.

Sofus Christiansen has devoted much of his enthusiasm to this field of research and teaching as indicated above. He has furthermore seen it as an important task to link resource management and ecological functioning of agricultural systems together with the corresponding cultural landscape.

An "enquete" among colleagues and students lead to a quite flattering characterization of the personality of Sofus Christiansen: broad-minded, charming, communicating, controversial, critical, creative, diplomatic, entertaining, enthusiastic, humorous, interested, inspirative, kind, megamemory, obliging, open-minded, optimistic, polymathic, positive, wide-reading, witty. - He has been an appreciated mentor for master students as well as ph.d. students. He has been an esteemed and stimulating lecturer, and his lively, humorous lectures will be difficult to replace. Hopefully his encouraging support is not lost for his colleagues by his retirement.