Personal recollections on Prof. Jan Stankowski and his legacy - Snapshots from APES'04 in Bangalore and the current status of the Polish EMR (EPR/ESR) community

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At the very beginning of my scientific carrier in the early 1970's, there were heated debates among young assistants in Prof. L. Kowalewski's group in the Institute of Physics, A. Mickiewicz University, Poznań, on the foundations of electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) of transition ions. Especially, we were tackling intriguing questions concerning the effective spin Hamiltonian, fictitious spin, the microscopic spin Hamiltonian theory, and the generalized spin Hamiltonian. Across the town in the Institute of Molecular Physics, Polish Academy of Science, Prof. Jan Stankowski was heading vigorous efforts to study experimentally various materials by the then novel EPR spectroscopy techniques. Prof. Stankowski was a pioneer of research based on EPR spectroscopy and related techniques in Poland. His achievements in this and other areas of science have brought him an international acclaim. Prof. Stankowski was not only an excellent experimenter and manager. He was a true leader and encouraged his younger colleagues to study theoretical aspects involved in their experiments. For this purpose Prof. J. Stankowski has invited a budding theoretician to lecture his EPR group members on the theoretical foundations of EPR. In this way Prof. Stankowski had shaped and reinforced my early interest in EMR (EPR/ESR) spectroscopy of transition ions, which has continued throughout my whole scientific carrier.

Many years have passed before Prof. Stankowski and I have met in a very different setting and personal roles in Bangalore, India. The events described above have prompted me to include in the Welcome Address as the President of the Asia-Pacific EPR/ESR Society given at the Fourth Asia-Pacific EPR/ESR Symposium [APES'04] a 'thank you' note also for Prof. Stankowski. In this presentation, I will share with you some memories of Prof. Stankowski during the Symposium as well as during the official sightseeing trips and, most interestingly, our 'private' sightseeing and shopping escapades around Bangalore. Selected 'snapshots' include some photos taken by Prof. Stankowski himself and kindly sent to me after APES'04.

The history of the Asia-Pacific EPR/ESR Society [APES] and the Asia-Pacific EPR/ESR Symposia are also briefly outlined. This serves a double purpose. First purpose is to provide a background for the nomination by the outgoing President of the Polish EPR Society, Prof. Stankowski, of the new President for the election during the last RAMIS (*XXII International Conference on Radio and Microwave Spectroscopy*) held in Będlewo in April 2007. Second purpose is to utilize the tested experiences concerning the organization and structure of the APES to work out ways for revival of the Polish EPR Society.

This short presentation will show us Prof. Stankowski not only as a scientist, who always liked to tackle new problems in emerging areas, but also as a human person and a keen traveler, who enjoyed exploring the world. I do also hope that the background information revealed would enable a better understanding of the proposals for continuation of the Polish EPR Society [PES] traditions, which had been presented during the First Forum EMR-PL held in Rzeszów, Poland, on 19th – 21st May 2010. These proposals have led to the transformation of the PES and continuation of activities for the betterment of the EMR (EPR) community within the Polish EMR Group [PEG].

Prof. Stankowski's legacy is most evident in the Special Issue of Current Topics in Biophysics online (CTBo): *"Current status and perspectives of EMR (EPR/ESR) research in Poland"*, to appear later in 2010, which contains not only most of the papers presented at the First Forum EMR-PL but, importantly, also more contributions. This Special CTBo Issue may serve as an overview of Polish activities and contributions to the EMR research.