

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

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A NEED FOR A PROPER 'MALAYSIAN CODE OF STRATIGRAPHIC NOMENCLATURE' - ITS FORMULATION, ADOPTION AND ADHERENCE

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Many of us have been, are, and will be, involved in geological mapping and in logging and describing sedimentary, metasedimentary and associated rocks on the surface and in the subsurface, both on land and offshore. As in any other field of research, we need to refer to available literature to find out if such areas of research have been undertaken before, how much have been done, and how much more or what other aspects of the subject we can go into. In geological mapping work, we need to at least know if such areas have been mapped before, what aspect of the geology has been mapped, and for lithostratigraphic work, what geological formations have been recognised or erected, what their geological description and where the type/reference sections areas are.

Many of the geological mapping work, especially those by the Geological Survey Department, the Geology Departments of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Universiti Malaya, involved lithostratigraphic mapping. A scan through the work done give the impression that not only many of us did not adhere to a 'stratigraphic guide' but some of us may not even be aware that one needs such a guide in stratigraphic practice, though we do have 1968's 'Malaysian Code of Stratigraphic Nomenclature' and we voted 'yes' to adopt the International Subcommission on Stratigraphic Classification's International Stratigraphic Guide (Hedberg, 1976 ed.).

The importance of a stratigraphic guide, proper stratigraphic practice and the maintenance of a proper record for reference need no extra emphasis. Such a need was felt way back in 1967 when a 'Malaysian Code on Stratigraphic Nomenclature', based on the Australian Code (4th Edition, 1964) was drafted and provisionally accepted by the Council of the Geological Society of Malaysia at that time. A revival of that feeling arose again in 1974 when Dr. Thomas Yancey, then a lecturer at Universiti Malaya, found it difficult to locate proper description of type sections and or proposed type sections that one could refer to even though there were many named lithostratigraphic units in publications. A subcommittee, with representatives from the Geology Departments of the two universities together with the Director General of the Geological Survey Department as the chairman, was formed to look into the matter. Unfortunately this subcommittee did not live long.

Many of us, especially foreign geologists and foreign-trained local geologists, have had similar experiences as Dr. Thomas Yancey had. It is therefore still not too late, though it may have been quite late, for us to start make a proper record of stratigraphy and to start practise stratigraphy in accordance with proper stratigraphic code. The 1968 provisional 'Malaysian Code of Stratigraphic Nomenclature' need be revised and formalised in line with latest stratigraphic guide, for example that of 1982's North American Stratigraphic Code and the 1985's Field Geologist's Guide to Lithostratigraphic Nomenclature in Australia.

The present state of our lithostratigraphic nomenclature will be discussed.