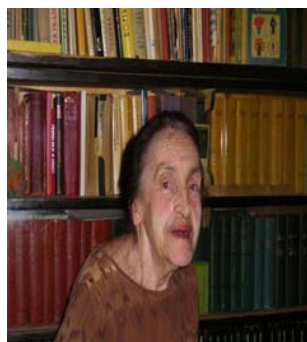


OBITUARY



Maria Evgen'evna Raaben
(1920–2012)

Maria Evgen'evna Raaben, a leading Precambrian palaeobiologist and an authority on stromatolites passed away on October 27th, 2012 as a result of massive heart attack at the age of 92. She was fondly remembered as Maria among the stromatolophiles world over. In her passing away the world has lost a renowned expert on the taxonomy and biostratigraphy of Precambrian stromatolites. She was an ardent Indophile and visited thrice this country and undertook long field visits to different geological sections in Himalaya, western and central India. Maria Raaben was born on 3rd November 1920 in Moscow. She entered the Moscow Geological Prospectors Institute named after Ordzonikidze in 1939 and graduated in 1945 as a geologist. From 1945 to 1949, she worked in Polar Ural Expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the erstwhile USSR as a junior research worker and in 1949 joined the Geological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. She got her Ph.D. degree in 1954 and D.Sc. in 1973. She remained associated with the Geological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences until 2009. AKS had a proud privilege to work with Prof. Raaben during his student days (1966-72) and also during his doctoral work at Moscow Friendship University and Doctor of Science thesis at Moscow State University (1981-82). She took keen interest in the study of stromatolites from Himalayas collected by AKS. A new species *Jurusania himalayica* was discovered and described jointly with her. Through her studies on the Aravalli Jhamarkotra phosphorite stromatolites she established two new types of stromatolites and named them after two Indian geologists: *Minicolumella barmanea* (after G. Barman, GSI) and *Minicolumella chauhanae* (after D. S. Chauhan, Jodhpur University). In 1988 she led a Russian delegation of leading stromatolite workers to the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehradun to attend Indo-Soviet Stromatolites Conference. She continued her interest in Indian stromatolites under Indo-

Russian scientific collaboration. The results of long association with Indian stromatolite workers fructified in a book co-authored by M. E. Raaben, A.K. Sinha and Mukund Sharma entitled *Precambrian stromatolites of India and Russia*. It was published in 2001 by the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow. The monograph is a testimony of joint collaborative work between India and Russia under ILTP Programme of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. She was fond of latest developments in science and tried to acquaint herself with latest gadgets. After active research career she learned computers for word processing and for making diagrams and use to process manuscripts herself.

She was an excellent host and the visitors from around the world enjoyed her hospitality. Besides, she used to discuss the problems related with the taxonomy and genesis of the stromatolites. She also used to provide copies of the Russian scientific literature as a parting gift to all visitors. Both of us had opportunities to be her guest during our visits to her Geological Institute. Some of the classical papers written with her under Indo-USSR/Russian collaboration programme are widely cited *viz.*, Lower Cambrian stromatolites from the Deoban Limestone of Lesser Himalaya (Himalayan Geology, 1979); Classification of stromatolites (Himalayan Geology, 1989). She is survived by her son and a daughter in Moscow and many friends and admirers in India and all over the world.

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