

on the history of remote sensing, further rob the volume of its relevance to the specialized theme and could well have been avoided. Visuals are normally the heart of such remote sensing studies. But the photographs printed in the volume (B and W and colour, both) leave a great deal to be desired. Pasting of photographs attempted in some places is preferable to such printing, as it, at least, serves in driving home the desired point.

On the whole, the book is useful in providing a broad idea of various vistas in environmental studies that are being searched using remote sensing methods. It is, however, hard to justify the price tag of Rs. 300/- for the volume.

*CSRE, Indian Institute of Technology
Powai, Bombay 400 076.*

A. B. INAMDAR

HIMALAYAN GEOLOGY, Volume 13, Proceedings of The Indo-Soviet Symposium on Stromatolites and Stromatolitic Deposits, K. S. Valdiya (Ed), Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, Dehra Dun, 1989, 289 p.

A workshop on 'Stromatolites and Stromatolitic Deposits' was held with the objective of assessing the utility and value of stromatolites in biostratigraphic classification and in evaluating their role in bio-mineralization. A number of papers presented at the workshop, (26 from the Indian side and 9 from the Soviet side) have been collected together in the present volume. Subjects chosen are at random. Except that they all deal with some or the other aspects of stromatolites, there is no attempt at synthesizing our knowledge about this highly intriguing life forms which flourished in the Precambrian.

It is well-known that there was a time when there was virtually no oxygen in the earth's ocean and atmosphere. The only trace of life was a primordial slime floating in the ocean. About three million years ago, certain bacterial members of this primordial slime invented photosynthesis which released oxygen as a waste product. These filamentous oxygen-producing microbes then multiplied and began to dominate the world. Wherever the seas were warm and not deep, they built bacterial communities of different shapes and sizes. They flourished between 2500 and 600 m.y. ago and were practically wiped out of existence by the commencement of the Cambrian. It is these fossil-mats of that early age which are called 'Stromatolites'.

This story of the evolution of early life is of absorbing interest. Here, in India, we have a number of sedimentary basins both in the Himalayan and the Peninsular Indian regions spanning the time interval 2500 - 600 m.y., a period in which microscopic life was abundant.

Surely fuller details of the drama which was enacted during that ancient period can be gathered through patient study of sediments of that age so well exposed in India. Isolated studies of stromatolites from here and there are just not enough. What is now necessary is a connected monographic account of Indian stromatolites and their evolution. We do trust a serious attempt will be made by our stratigraphers and palaeontologists at such a study and thereby help in establishing the biostratigraphic value of these life forms. The present volume is elegantly produced and emphasizes the need for carrying out further intensive studies of stromatolites, according to a well-coordinated plan with clearly set goals.

B. P. RADHAKRISHNA