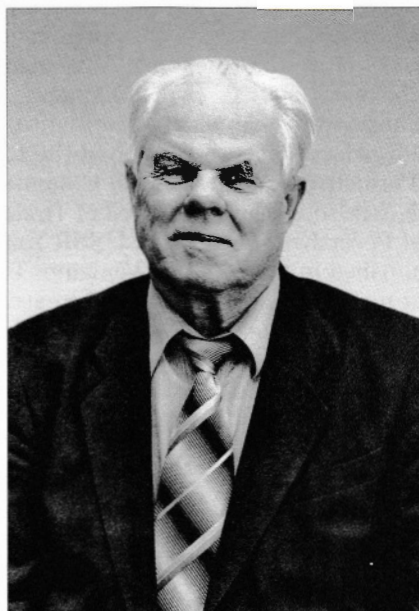


CHRONICLE

Balobaev Veniamin Tikhonovich
(02.01.1930–04.09.2011)



Veniamin Tikhonovich Balobaev passed away suddenly on 4 September 2011, at an age of 81. He was research advisor of the Russian Academy of Sciences at Melnikov Permafrost Institute (Yakutsk), veteran of work, honored worker of the national economy of Yakutia (Sakha Republic), Doctor of Geology and Mineralogy, Correspondent Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS).

Veniamin Balobaev was born on 2 January 1930 in the town of Tula. Having finished high school in 1948, he became student at Leningrad State University, Department of Physics.

In 1953 he was placed on research job at Ob-ruchev Institute of Permafrost in Moscow but a few months later in October of the same year, Pyotr F. Shvetsov, RAS Correspondent Member, suggested to recruit him for a newly organized Yakutsk Permafrost Research Station. Thereon, all his life and research activity remained linked with Yakutia, permafrost science, and Permafrost Institute which stemmed later from the Yakutsk Research Station. While working for the Institute, V.T. Balobaev had achieved a great success in science having become a brilliant expert in permafrost issues, renown in Russia

and abroad, and a holder of many titles, positions, and awards.

The working carrier of Veniamin Balobaev began in southern Yakutia where he participated in geophysical exploration of permafrost with a survey group at the Council for Productive Forces of the USSR Academy of Science.

When diamond production was initiated in Yakutia in 1956, Veniamin Tikhonovich was appointed vice-director of Geological and Geophysical Surveys at the Permafrost Institute which aimed at permafrost exploration for development of the Mir kimberlite pipe.

In 1962 Balobaev founded a laboratory of geothermal studies and headed it till 1994. It was at that time when a device for calibrating thermistors was built under his leadership, new techniques and instruments were designed for measuring thermophysical properties of frozen ground and various existing methods were brought to a single standard, and when investigation of terrestrial heat flow began in permafrost and subpermafrost zones. Theoretical and field studies with his participation yielded a geothermal model and a heat flow map of North Eurasia.

From 1994 to 2001 Veniamin Balobaev was associate director of the Institute responsible for research management. In that hard time when funding for science from the government was severely cut down all over the country for problems in national economy, great credit must go to Balobaev who had preserved all principal lines of research the Institute was running, as well as all its human and logistic resources.

V. Balobaev's 58-years work in science was overwhelmingly fruitful. He has developed a new field of geothermics for frozen ground and created exceptional models for paleoreconstructions and predictions of permafrost behavior. He is the author of more than 150 publications, including such fundamental books as "General Permafrost Science", "Thermophysical Studies of Permafrost in Siberia", "Subsurface Thermal Field of Siberia", "Temperature, Permafrost, and Radiogenic Heat in the Crust of North Asia", etc. The fundamental treatise "Geothermics of Permafrost in the Lithosphere of North Asia" he published in 1991 contained an important inference that negative temperatures in the upper crust resulted uniquely from heat exchange conditions on the surface whereas deep heat flux was the only control of permafrost thickness in places where it is large. In that study Balobaev proved, theoretically and experimentally, the broad extent of transient frozen ground in North Eurasia and modeled the lithospheric paleothermal field. The book has become a reference one for everybody engaged in permafrost research: for experienced scientists as well as for undergraduate or postgraduate students.

V. Balobaev has contributed a lot to education: he has brought up many skilled researchers and was

scientific advisor of numerous candidate and doctor theses in geosciences. He was member of international and Russian associations in permafrost and geothermics, member of Cryology Scientific Council of the Russian Academy of Sciences, vice chairman of the Dissertation Council at the Permafrost Institute in Yakutsk, editor in scientific journals.

In recognition of his accomplishments in science and elsewhere, Veniamin Balobaev was awarded several medals, orders, and prizes, namely Order of People's Friendship; four medals, among which Medal for Great Service to the Country, Second Class; two bronze prize medals of VDNKh (Exhibition of Economic Achievements); award badge of Golden Sigma with Diamond; numerous certificates of merit from different institutions (Russian Government, Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, CPSU Central Committee, USSR Supreme Soviet, Central Council of Trade Unions, and from Central Committee of USSR Young Communist League).

Veniamin Tikhonovich was a charming personality, full of creative spirit, passionate for the nature of severe North, a keen scientist, and patriot of the institute he worked for. He possessed worldly wisdom and exceptional encyclopedic knowledge, being always ready to share it with everybody around. He was distinctive and enthusiastic in everything he was doing in his everyday life: motoring, hunting, fishing, gardening, or mushrooming. People knew him as a wonderful family man, a head of a large united family.

The life of Veniamin Balobaev is a glowing example of excellent expertise, dedication, diligence, and creativity. Anybody who met him will keep memory of the prominent scientist and remarkable personality.

Friends and colleagues