

Eightieth Anniversary of the Birthday of Prof. Osoryn Shagdarsuren

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Osoryn Shagdarsuren, one of the leading and senior biologists in Mongolia is reaching the 80th year of his life. He is one of the scientists who led to the development of modern biological sciences in Mongolia through his academic and organizational activities. His activities are limited not only to research, but also he is one of the most talented teachers to educate young generations of biologists in the country.

O. Shagdarsuren was born in 1929 in Dund Khavtsal area of the Matadkhan Mountains in the Matad sum of Dornod aimag, eastern Mongolia. As his parents were nomadic herders like majority of Mongols of that time, he spent most of his childhood years in the countryside, helping his family and herding livestock in the field. His father was a well-educated person in that time through self-education, who led to study O. Shagdarsuren in the primary school of Dornod aimag's center.

His fascination with the nature that started when he was very young and his sighting of various

wildlife species such as enormous population of the Mongolian gazelle, black-tailed gazelle, Siberian marmot etc. in the vast plain steppe of Eastern Mongolia, made him stop pursuing a career in the field of natural sciences.

After graduation of the primary and secondary schools in late 1940s he went to the capital city, Ulaanbaatar of Mongolia to be enrolled at the Mongolian State University (currently National University of Mongolia), the first and only higher educational institute of that time in Mongolia. The university had been established just a few years before his entrance, by the support of the former Soviet Union, and therefore, most of teaching staff were Russian scientists. As such, besides of his major fields, biology and chemistry, O. Shagdarsuren intensively studied Russian language during his studentship.

In 1955, after graduating from the university he remained at the Department of Biology (currently Department of Zoology) of the same university as a lecturer. Since then his academic career is initiated and continued over a half century. Having graduated from the university, he went on several ornithological expeditions to the central, eastern, southern and south-western regions of Mongolia with well-known ornithologists from the former Soviet Union, G. P. Dementev, N. P. Naumov etc. While on expedition, he studied many birds in the regions and upon his return he started to analyze the data on distributional patterns and population structure of different predator bird species, which became the foundation of his dissertation research.

Between 1961 and 1964 he studied at the Faculty of Biology, Moscow State University as a postgraduate student, and completed his Ph.D thesis on the topic "*Fauna of the Birds of Prey in Central and Southern Regions of Mongolia and Their Practical Importance*", becoming first scientist of Mongolia in the field of ornithology.

In 1964, O. Shagdarsuren moved to the Mongolian Academy of Sciences (MAS), where he has worked as the founding director of the newly established Institute of Biology, MAS