

A Tribute to the Sixty Fifth Anniversary of Prof. Peter D. Gunin

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Peter Dmitrievich Gunin, one of the leading scientists in the field ecology of arid lands and desertification processes in the Central Asia is reaching the 65th year of his life. He is one of the many Russian scientists who have made major contributions to the development of collaboration between scientists of two countries and to the study of biological resources, as well as ecological conditions of Mongolia through his academic and organizational activities. Not only his activities are focused on the research of ecosystems of Mongolia, but also he is one of the talented teachers to educate young generations of scientists in the field of biology and geography.

P. D. Gunin was born in 7 June 1942 in the Uvarovo city of the Tambovsk province of Russia (former USSR). In 1964 he graduated from the Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov, and afterwards he has worked for eight years at the Repeteksek National Park, Turkmenistan as a researcher.

Between 1972 and 1975 he served as a research scientist at the Faculty of Geography, Moscow State University, and subsequently he moved to the Institute of Ecology and Evolution, Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), where he is working to date. P. D. Gunin received his PhD degree in 1969 from the Moscow State University, and in 1991 he defended the dissertation for the degree of DSc. at the Institute of Ecology and Evolution, RAS.

Currently Prof. P. D. Gunin is leading a Laboratory of Ecology of the Arid Lands, Institute of Ecology and Evolution, RAS as a head of this research unit. He is also the chairman of the Russian part of a Joint Russian-Mongolian Complex Biological Expedition organized by RAS and Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

The main area of his research is diagnostics of degradation and anthropogenic effects on ecosystems of Mongolia and Asian parts of Russia. Prof. P. D. Gunin is a well known scientist in the field of ecology and functioning of the arid landscapes and desert ecosystems. He evaluated the patterns of intensification of desertification processes in harsh ecological conditions of Mongolia with increased impacts of human activities. Under his supervision, an investigation on the effects of aridization or droughts on plant and soil communities in the forest-steppe and steppe ecosystems has been implemented. Based on results of his research, Prof. Gunin together with his research team revealed the main factors, which lead to the interference or expansion of alkalic shrub and grass species in the forest-steppe and steppe ecosystems, and the formation of less productive, ecologically less significant plant communities for the forest and pastureland functioning.

During his 45 years of scientific career, he has published more than 350 scientific articles in the Russian and international peer-reviewed journals with addition of more than 10 scientific monographs in Russian and English (e.g. Gunin, 1990; Gunin & Vostokova, 1995a, b; Gunin *et al.*,