

Eightieth Anniversary of the Birthday of Prof. Osoryn Shagdarsuren

Badamdorj Bayartogtokh

Department of Zoology, Faculty of Biology, National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar 210646, Mongolia, E-mail: bayartogtokh@num.edu.mn



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



Figure 1. The pictures show different activities of Prof. O. Shagdarsuren who has conducted numerous field research, laboratory investigation and attended scientific conferences and meetings.



Figure 2. Besides his research works and teaching at the university, Prof. O. Shagdarsuren involved with the organization and management of scientific activities of the National University of Mongolia and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

until 1982 over 18 years to establish the research teams on different fields of biology. He is a co-founder of the Mongolian-Soviet Complex Biological Expedition by Academy of Sciences of Mongolia and Russia that initiated in 1970, and running over 40 years continuously to explore the biological diversity and ecological characteristics of ecosystems in Mongolia. He is a chief editor of the serials “*Natural Conditions and Biological Resources of Mongolia*” published upon the results of this expedition, and the first *Red Data Book of Mongolia*.

From 1972 to 1974 he studied again at the Moscow State University to obtain his second scientific degree, D.Sc. on the theme “*Game Animals, Current Situation and Perspectives of the Hunting Farm in Mongolia*”.

From 1982 till 1983 he served as scientific secretary of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and between 1983 and 1989 he worked as the president of the National University of Mongolia. After his retirement he never stopped working, and until now he is working as professor emeritus at the Department of Zoology of the same university. Prof. O. Shagdarsuren is also well known in Mongolia for his works on different aspect of nomadic pastoral animal husbandry.

He published several books on theoretical aspects of biology, ecology of mammals and birds, biology of livestock and pastoral animal husbandry, more than 200 articles, attended scientific conferences and gave seminars (e.g. Shagdarsuren, 1966, 1969a, b, c, 1970, 1971a, 1971b, 1980, 2004, 2005, 2007). He edited the Mongolian translation of the Charles Darwin's work, “*On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*”. As a leading evolutionary biologist and writer in the field in Mongolia, he is also well-known publicist with broad audience.

Prof. O. Shagdarsuren supervised the dissertation studies of more than 20 graduates. He is a fellow (academician) of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, has received an award “Honorary Teacher of Mongolia” in 1997 for his contributions to the development of science in Mongolia and long-term effort in educating young generations of biologists. In 2002 he won the Government Award of Mongolia for

his achievements and advancement in science. His enormous career and influential works have always inspired the generations of biologists in Mongolia.

References

- Shagdarsuren, O. 1966. Biological aspects of the thermal metabolism of livestock. *Mongolian Journal of Agriculture*, 3: 5-16. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1969a. Artificial selection and some aspects of breeding biology. *Science and Life*, 1: 41-49. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1969b. Artificial selection and some problems of the animal husbandry. *Science and Life*, 2: 50-56. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1969c. Traditional methods of the animal selection by Mongols. *Mongolian Journal of Agriculture*, 1: 117-127. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1970. An astronomical year and its biological significance. *Proceedings of the Institute of Biology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences*, 5: 178-188. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1971a. *Natural Selection and Pastoral Animals Husbandry*. Ulaanbaatar, State Press. 60 pp. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1971b. Some important aspects for the estimation of the biomasses in Mongolia. *Proceedings of the Institute of Biology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences*, 6: 104-114. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 1980. *Pastoral Animal Husbandry and Some Aspects of Theoretical Biology*. Ulaanbaatar, State Press. 158 pp. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 2004. *Fundamentals of Ecology*. Ulaanbaatar, National University of Mongolia Press, 176 pp. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 2005. *Biology of Mongolian Pastoral Livestock and Characteristics of Nomadic Animal Husbandry*. Ulaanbaatar, National University of Mongolia Press, 304 pp. [in Mongolian]
- Shagdarsuren, O. 2007. *Some Research Results on the Experiences of Pastoral Animal Husbandry Organization by Nomads*. Ulaanbaatar, National University of Mongolia Press, 40 pp. [in Mongolian]