

Editorial

Many happy returns to Teuvo Ahti

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It is no exaggeration to say that the Finnish professor, world renowned lichenologist, Teuvo Ahti is a friend of Yakutian botanists. The history of this friendship goes back to when Leena Hämet-Ahti (1970) published the catalogue of vascular plants collected by A.K.Cajander who was collecting plants in the valley of the Lena River in Yaukutia in 1901. As Cajander, three times the Prime Minister of Finland, was a famous Finnish botanist, professor of forestry and forest ecology and made important contributions to the flora of Finland and northeastern Russia, the identification of plants from his unique



Verkhoyansky Mountain Range
above Tuostakh



Discovering a new species, *Cladonia jacutica* Ahti, in
Verkhoyansky Mountain Range

collection was important and generated a great interest among both Finnish and Russian botanists. The collaborative work started with correspondence between Leena Hämet-Ahti and Yakutian botanists. Following this long-lasting collaboration, the joint Finnish-Yakutian expedition was organised during summer of 2002 to commemorate the centenary of Cajander's journey along the middle course of the Lena. The expedition

surveyed the vegetation in the valley from the Lena Pillars to the mouth of the Vilyuy River, following Cajander's route of 1901 and making seven collecting stops. The participants, 16 Finnish and 12 Yakutian scientists, represented various fields of botany. Teuvo Ahti was one of the organisers of this trip from the Finnish side and was also responsible for the lichenological part of the expedition.

Along with the expedition, a conference was held to discuss the research in botany and forestry in Yakutia and Finland. The proceedings of this conference were later published (Ahti, 2004). Yakutian and Finnish botanists became friends while working together in difficult field conditions. Especially cordial friendships started then with Teuvo Ahti, whose help to



Making a wish

Yakutian lichenologists and other botanists was invaluable. Teuvo generously shared his wide



Receiving a certificate of visiting Yakutia

experience and vast botanical knowledge while consulting and advising his Yakutian colleagues and presented a large number of books to our Institute's library.

During the same year Teuvo organised a trip to Finland for a large group of Yakutian botanists. The participants were excited to see all of Finland from south to north, to meet many Finnish specialists in forestry and botanical science and to learn about their methods and the results of their work. A workshop organised during this trip provided an opportunity to discuss urgent problems in botany and forestry. Teuvo and his wife Leena then hospitably invited the Yakutian visitors to their home.

Teuvo visited the Sakha Republic once again in 2006 to participate in a survey of the vegetation in the Verkhoyansky Mountain Range. This journey yielded discoveries of lichens new for the region (Timofeev *et al.*, 2006).

The author of this note is very grateful to Teuvo for his influence on her scientific career and especially for inspiring her interest in salicology, which started from the description of a new willow hybrid, *Salix ×zhataica* Efimova, Shurduk & Ahti (Efimova *et al.*, 2009). The natural hybridisation of willows in Lapland and Yakutia has been a topic of our discussion with Teuvo during the last 12 years. Thanks to Teuvo, many scientists studying Salicaceae have become connected and continue collaborations on the pages of this journal.

Happy Birthday, Teuvo, and many happy returns!

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