

STANISŁAW GODZIŃSKI

Stanisław Godziński was born on August 22nd 1939 in Pewel Wielka in the Żywiec region of southern Poland. His parents were farmers and were running a farm. This resulted in his love towards nature and in two of his greatest life passions: gardening and tourism.

As the Second World War was over, the family of a 6-year-old Stanisław Godziński moved to the village of Komorowice near Bielsko-Biała, where his parents bought a small farm. In the years 1946–1953 Stanisław Godziński attended a primary school in Komorowice. After graduating in 1953, he began the second stage of his education in a high school (Liceum Ogólnokształcące) in nearby Bielsko-Biała.

In 1957 he passed his final maturity exams and in the autumn of the same year he entered the University of Warsaw. From his early years Stanisław Godziński showed skills for languages. As he once said, he knew that he was able to learn the European languages. But it was the “exotic languages” that became a challenge and seemed genuinely interesting to him. Being in high school he started learning Chinese by himself. That was the reason, why Stanisław Godziński planned to study at the Institute of Oriental Studies. However, due to certain circumstances he took up Altaic studies offered to him by Professor Ananiasz Zajaczkowski, Head of the Institute at that time.

In June 1962 Stanisław Godziński completed his M.A. studies. Immediately after graduating, he was offered the position of an assistant to Professor Stanisław Kałużyński, a well-known Altaist, Mongolist and Turcologist. In October 1962 he started working at the Institute of Oriental Studies. Three years later, in 1965, he obtained a scholarship and went for over five months to Budapest, Hungary. There he studied under the guidance of an eminent Mongolist, Prof. Lajos Ligeti. While in Budapest, he became acquainted with the Hungarian language, country and people. In 1968, two years after visiting Hungary, Godziński obtained the title of the Doctor of Philosophy in Mongolian studies. Prof. S. Kałużyński was his supervisor, while Professor Ligeti and Professor Eugeniusz Słuszkiewicz acted as his opponents. His dissertation *Sufiksy imienne we współczesnym języku mongolskim* [Nominal suffixes in the Modern Mongolian Language] was awarded the prize of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Poland in 1971.

From 1971 to 1986 Stanisław Godziński worked as an adjunct professor at the Institute of Oriental Studies. During that time Godziński actively fulfilled his duties in the academic organization and worked for the sake of the academic society of University of Warsaw. He was a member of several University's bodies such as the Council of the Faculty of Modern Philologies (Rada Wydziału Neofilologii) as well as the Admission Committee of the Institute.

In 1985 Stanisław Godziński submitted his habilitation thesis which concerned the structure and grammar of the Middle Mongolian language: *Język Średniomongolski. Słownotwórstwo. Odmiana wyrazów. Składnia* [The Middle Mongolian Language: Word Formation, Morphology, Syntax] (Rozprawy Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Warszawa, 1985). In 1986 Stanisław Godziński obtained the title of Assistant Professor (*docent*). Soon afterwards he received a one year scholarship (1987–1988) to the University of Beijing, China. During that stay he went for over a one-month journey to Tibet.

Besides his scholarly activities, Godziński was involved in the activities of the Polish democratic underground movement. In the years 1981–1991 he was a member of "Solidarność". He was one of the fathers of the "Solidarność" movement at the Institute of Oriental Studies. For a short time Godziński was also a member of the Polish Oriental Society and the Polish Linguistic Society.

Apart from all these, Professor Godziński also fulfilled high rank duties in Polish diplomacy, as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Poland to Mongolia (1991–1995). Soon after coming back from Mongolia (in 1997), Godziński took the post of Head of the Department of Turcology and Inner Asian Peoples at the Institute of Oriental Studies. In recognition of his academic work and scholarly achievements, Godziński was awarded the title of university professor at the Faculty of Modern Philologies in December 1999.

The scholarly interests of Professor Stanisław Godziński are reflected in his numerous publications. Most of them concern Mongolian linguistics, history and culture as well as the Tibetan language and religion. His works on Mongolian languages include: "Nowo odkryte języki mongolskie" [Newly discovered Mongolian languages] (*Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, 1968, nr 3), "Raz jeszcze o imiennych częściach mowy w języku mongolskim" [Once again about the nominal parts of speech in the Mongolian language] (*Acta Philologica*, 3, 1971), "Deux contes dagours de la region de Kouldja..." (*Mongolian Studies*, Budapest, 1970), "Observations sur quelques suffixes formant les noms en mongol contemporain" (*Rocznik Orientalistyczny* XXXIII z. 2, 1970), "Pisma używane przez Mongołów dawniej i współcześnie" [Scripts Used by the Mongols in the Past and Today] (*Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, 1971, nr 2) and *Współczesny język mongolski* [Modern Mongolian Language] (Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa, 1998). His interests in literature and arts are expressed by: *W kręgu lamajskich legend i mitów* [In the Circle of the Mongolian Legends and Myths] (Iskry, Warszawa, 1981), "Sztuka mongolska" [Mongolian Art] (*Etnografia Polska*, 24, 1980). He also translated into Polish *Dzieje Mongolii* [History of Mongolia] (Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, Warszawa, 2005) written by the Mongolian politician, B a a b a r. His Tibetan studies started from

the need to invent a Polish transliteration of Tibetan “Transliteracja czy transkrypcja wyrazów tybetańskich” [Transliteration or Transcription of Tibetan Words] (*Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, nr 2, 1979) while consulting the Polish translation of G. Cybikov’s *Buddyjski pielgrzym w świątyniach Tybetu* [A Buddhist pilgrim to the holy places of Tibet] (PIW, Warszawa, 1975). Prof. Godziński translated into Polish: D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson’s, *Tybet. Zarys historii kultury* [A Cultural History of Tibet] (PIW, Warszawa, 1978); R. Barraux’s, *Dzieje dalajlamów* [*Histoire des Dalai-lamas*] (Amber, Warszawa, 1998), M. Craig’s, *Kündün. Dusza Tybetu* [*Kundun. The Spirit of Tibet*] (Alfa, Warszawa, 1999), M. Rerich’s, *Altaj-Himalaje* [*Altai-Himalaya*] (PIW, Warszawa 1980) and other books.

There is no doubt that Professor Godziński contributed to promote Mongolia and Tibet in Poland. In recognition of his achievements Mongolian Government honoured him with a special medal for a Distinguished Scholar in 2003. In 2005 he received the doctorate of *honoris causa* from the School of Mongolian Studies, National University of Mongolia. In 2008 he was awarded the Kubilai Khan’s Medal of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

Professor Godziński has acted not only as a scholar but also, or perhaps mainly, as an excellent teacher. Till today he promoted over fifty M.A. and four Ph.D. students. Although Professor Godziński formally retired in 2006, he is still actively involved in the academic work, by conducting lectures and seminars at the Department of Turkish Studies and Inner Asian Peoples of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw.

Jan Rogala