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## In memoriam: Ming-Li Zhang (1959–2017)

X.-C. Zhang, B. Han

*State Key Laboratory of Systematic and Evolutionary Botany, Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS),  
Beijing, 100093, China. E-mail: zhangxc@ibcas.ac.cn*

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**Summary.** This work is dedicated to the memory of our friend, colleague and teacher Professor Ming-Li Zhang, a recognized expert in botany in such groups as Fabaceae, Polygonaceae, Tamaricaceae, Nitrariaceae. He made a great contribution to the study of the Flora of China and Central Asia. He used not only the traditional methods of research, but also showed great interest in cladistics, DELTA programs and other methods of systematics throughout his research. Professor Ming-Li Zhang trained many excellent students. In addition, we attach a list of published papers related to his research.

## Памяти Жана Мин-Ли (1959–2017)

С.-Ч. Жан, Б. Хан

*Государственная ведущая лаборатория систематики и эволюционной ботаники, Институт ботаники,  
Китайская Академия наук (КАН), Пекин, 100093, Китай*

**Ключевые слова:** биогеография, кладистика, методы систематики, филогения, *Caragana*, Fabaceae.

**Аннотация.** Сообщение посвящено памяти нашего друга, коллеги и учителя – профессора Жан Мин-Ли, признанного эксперта в области ботаники по таким группам, как Fabaceae, Polygonaceae, Tamaricaceae, Nitrariaceae. Он внес большой вклад в изучение флоры Китая и Центральной Азии. В своих исследованиях Жан Мин-Ли использовал не только традиционные методы исследования, но и проявлял большой интерес к кладистике, программам DELTA и другим методам систематики. Профессор Жан Мин-Ли подготовил много прекрасных учеников. Также приводится список опубликованных научных работ учёного.

Dr. Ming-Li Zhang, Professor of Institute of Botany of Chinese academy of Sciences (CAS) and Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of CAS, died on December 13, 2017, at the age of 58. He was a famous scientist and had a great enthusiasm in plant systematics and plant geography. He studied the flora of arid regions in central Asia and put forward a new perspective of space-time evolution through the molecular phylogeny and biogeography studies based on important taxa, such as the taxa in the Fabaceae, Polygonaceae, Tamaricaceae, Nitrariaceae. He was also one of the foremost Chinese scientists who recognized the importance

and experiences in the methods of taxonomy and systematics such as numerical taxonomy, cladistics, DELTA, etc. He was an authoritative expert on *Caragana* (Fabaceae) in the world. He edited and completed over 400 species in Papaveraceae, Capparaceae, Cleomaceae, Fabaceae in “Flora of China”. He was one of the associate editors of “Higher plants of China”, which is an important work to identify Chinese higher plants.

Ming-Li Zhang was born on October 10, 1959, in Fufeng county, Baoji city, Shaanxi Province, China. He studied mathematics from 1978 to 1982 and got his bachelor's degree from Lanzhou University

in Gansu Province. Then he was assigned to teach mathematics in Yangling middle school in the same town with the former Northwest Institute of Botany of CAS. However, he had a strong interest in botany and two years later he was invited to the Northwest Institute of Botany to conduct botanical research. He got his master's degree of botany in 1992 from Wuhan University and doctor's degree of botany from Northeast Forestry University in 1995. During 1995 and 1997, he was a post-doctor researcher cooperating with the famous botanist Zheng-Yi Wu at Kunming, and after joined the Institute of Botany of CAS in Beijing since 1998. In order to promote the development of botanical research in northwest China, he went to Xinjiang to carry out systematic and geographical study of Central Asian flora from 2008 to 2017 and he was appointed as the deputy director of Key Laboratory of Biogeography and Bio-resource in Arid Land of CAS since 2009. In Xinjiang, he made a series of gratifying achievements and educated many students in systematics. In view of his academic contributions, dr. Ming-Li Zhang was promoted from Professor Level IV to Level II in 2016. During his short scientific career, he had visited the United States (10. 2001 – 02. 2002), Australia (06. 2001 – 07. 2001), Russia (09. 1999 –



**Fig. 1.** M.-L. Zhang during the XIX international Botanical Congress (China, 2017).



**Fig. 2.** M.-L. Zhang at work during a visit to the Komarov Botanical Institute of the RAS, Russia (2016).



**Fig. 3.** M.-L. Zhang during the field work in Xinjiang (2015).

11. 1999, 07. 2012 – 10. 2012, 08. 2016 – 11. 2016), and Germany (10. 2002 – 10. 2004) for herbarium studies, filed trips and scientific cooperation.

Dr. Ming-Li Zhang was a caring son, husband and father. He was concerned for fairness and justice in governing his behavior to every person. He paid a great attention to details both in life and scientific research and had exceptionally high standards of performance. As an adviser, he was demanding, but he was also a close friend to all of his students and often invited his students to have dinner at home. He introduced his students to a systematic step-by-step truly botanically scientific way for working. He trained more than 30 students throughout his academic career, and most of his students have

conducted botanical research in different scientific research institutes and universities.

He was diagnosed with cancer in 2013. However, illness did not stop his enthusiasm for work. His papers were still published with high frequency in various botanical journals after 2013. He not only supervised students to research and publish papers, but also wrote his own first-author papers. He participated in the International Botanical Congress in July 2017 in Shenzhen and gave us a wonderful academic presentation. He continued to work until December 10, 2017, only three days before his last breath. Dr. Ming-Li Zhang will be deeply missed, and his scientific contributions will also leave a long-lasting impression.



Fig. 4. M.-L. Zhang a walk in the park with their students (Beijing Botanical Garden, 2015).

**Appendix: Publications of professor Ming-Li Zhang /  
Приложение: Публикации профессора Жан Мин-Ли**

Yu Z. Y., Zhang M. L. 1985. A preliminary research on the Fuzzy mathematics analysis of specific sect. of the *Salix* from China. *Acta Bot. Boreal.-Occid. Sin.* 4: 286–290 [In Chinese].

Yu Z. Y., Zhang M. L. 1986. A numerical classification on the genus *Salix* of the Chinlin and the construction of minimal spanning tree. *Acta Bot. Boreal.-Occid. Sin.* 6(4): 235–244 [In Chinese].

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Zhang M. L. 1986. The popular methods for numerical taxonomy of plant. *Acta Bot. Boreal.-Occid. Sin.* 6(1): 67–80 [In Chinese].

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