

## NIKOLAI P. YUSHKIN: THE FOUNDER OF THE SYKTYVKAR MINERALOGICAL SCHOOL

**Prof. Vladimir I. Pavlishin,**

Taras Shevchenko National University of Kiev, Honorary Fellow  
of the Russian Mineralogical Society, v.i.pavlyshyn@gmail.com, antvi@ukr.net



Nikolai Pavlovich Yushkin (1936–2012).

Since his youth until his demise in 2012, Nikolai Pavlovich Yushkin (1936–2012) possessed a very important feature: he was always eager to be cognizant of the natural world, including mineralogy and minerals, as thoroughly as possible. Thereby he also was a world-class scientist and outstanding organizer. He was the most benevolent person among all researchers of such a high academic rank that I ever knew. As such, only two years after completing (extramurally) his higher education, he became the youngest (at the age of 31) Doctor in mineralogy in Russia and established a vigorous mineralogical school in Syktyvkar, the capital of Komi Republic. I am fully confident to write this as N.P. Yushkin was an acquaintance and then friend of mine for about half a century, and I've devoted several essays to him, one of which (on 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth) was titled "*The Living Classic of Mineralogy*".

Nikolai Pavlovich Yushkin, one of the leaders of modern mineralogy, was born on May 20, 1936, in the Ivangora village, Kalinin (now Tver) Oblast. When a school-boy, he took much interest in the nature of his native land and started collecting and studying minerals. This hobby became even stronger in the years of his study at the Kirov Mining and Chemical Technical College in the Kola Peninsula, from which he graduated in 1955. His career started at the Shorsu Geological Exploration Branch of the *Sredgasgeokhimrazvedka* Company in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, as a technician, and he simultaneously launched mineralogical studies on his own. His first paper "*On the Role of Flotation in Mineral-Forming Processes*" was published in 1960 and became the first serious work of the would-be genetic mineralogist. His work at the Shorsu deposit, which was, and is, famous for large and splendid crystals of sulfur, calcite, celestine, gypsum, and others minerals, further whetted Nikolai's interest in the morphology, anatomy, and genesis of crystals and led him to develop an ontogenetic style of mineralogical thinking. At that time he became acquainted with two prominent Soviet researchers, Dmitrii P. Grigoriev and Illarion I. Shafranovskii, with this acquaintance evolving into a long-term fruitful scientific collaboration.

In 1961 N.P. Yushkin started to work at the Komi Geological Institute, Komi Branch, Soviet Academy of Sciences, and simultaneously studied by correspondence at the Tashkent Polytechnical Institute, from which he graduated in 1965 having already published 41 research papers.

N.P. Yushkin's thesis was devoted to the mineralogy of endogenic sulfur deposits and was highly rated, first and foremost for the extensive chapter on the genesis of sulfur. This chapter was then estimated by a specialist as deserving a Candidate of Science ("junior" PhD) degree and was recommended to be rewritten and prepared as such. The manuscript was soon ready and presented for a thesis defense before the Scientific Council of the Leningrad Mining Institute; the defense was held in 1967. At the suggestion of the reviewer, Prof. Illarion I. Shafranovskii (a leading

Nikolai Pavlovich Yushkin and his tutor Prof. Dmitrii P. Grigoriev and their colleagues (*left to right*: Vladimir I. Pavlishin, Ninel' Z. Evzikova, Dmitrii P. Grigoriev, Nikolai P. Yushkin, and Arkadii G. Zhabin), Alupka, Crimea, USSR, 1988.



world-class scientific results. N.P. Yushkin was elected a corresponding member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1987 and an academician in 1990. In 1985–2008 he headed the Geological Institute of the Komi Research Center of the Soviet, and then Russian, Academy of Sciences at the Syktyvkar City, with this institute becoming one of the leading geological institution under his leadership.

N.P. Yushkin paid much attention to science-organizational activities and social work in various structures of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Komi Republic, International Mineralogical Association, and particularly, the Russian Mineralogical Society. He worked as the Vice-president of the latter starting in 1999 until his last days. Under the auspices of this Association, he held some two dozen mineralogical conferences and seminars. Illarion I. Shafranovskii once remarked that Syktyvkar had become a mineralogical Mecca for many national and foreign mineralogists and crystallographers. N.P. Yushkin also actively participated in many international geological and mineralogical meetings, conferences, and congresses.

Popular scientific papers and books by Nikolai P. Yushkin and his works on the history of mineralogy have received wide recognition, and his colossal editorial, science-organizational and teaching activities at the Syktyvkar State University are broadly known and highly esteemed. Nikolai Pavlovich was a member of the editorial boards of a number of scientific journals, including the Ukrainian *“Mineralogical Journal”*.

I remember N.P. Yushkin as a talented and brilliant scientist with “extraordinary” organizational skills, always fostering and overflowing with new scientific ideas and cherishing wide-ranging research projects. In spite of his high academic and other positions and ranks and his worldwide recognition, Nikolai Pavlovich was always a democratic, modest, and charming person, a brilliant scientist and a simple but great man.

Editorial thank you Patricia Gray for improving English style of this article.