

4.8 The Memories That Long Last

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My last meeting with Da Ruan was in Spring 2011 at Tsinghua University, where we were talking about his plan for the next visit to us in Fall 2011 for a bit longer stay on campus to have more chats and thoughts on some future research ideas. As a matter of fact, this last meeting had been one of many gatherings with him during 23 years since we first met in 1988 when I visited Professor Etienne Kerre in Gent right prior to my doctoral studies at Catholic University of Leuven (KUL).

The heartfelt shock of Da's passing away made me to recall many memories..... his passion, hardworking and heartedness, as well as the achievements in the fields. It is hard to express our sorrow feelings in words, and what I could write at this juncture is a collection of a few pieces of memories that will long last.



Da and Guoqing is SCK in 2004

The professional life of Da could be seen by many of us as to be of a passion nature. Over years his strong spirit and devotion in pursuit of his career and desire impressed me greatly, from our early discussions at his dorm in Home-Astrid of RUGhent for his FIO (fuzzy implication operators) exploration and its future prospects in his doctoral research, to his presentations facing a group of Chinese scholars in Belgium for launching the FLINS symposium series with high excitement, to his enthusiasm in applying fuzzy logic to control systems at SCK-CEN, and to his frequent contacts and visits with numerous Chinese scholars in China and overseas for various activities and events. More noteworthy was his continuous effort and sense to proceed ahead for novel ideas and initiatives.

Moreover, hardworking is a characteristic of Da, which I believe many would agree with. For nearly two decades, Da had been engaged in many proceedings, special issues and edited volumes, where he was fully committed in all aspects of the publication process, not only in content but also in format. I remembered for several times he mentioned to me that he had worked overnight in Gent, Mol, China, etc. at home, office and/or hotels for editorial handling and even typesetting tasks. We often chatted, sometimes with Etienne, for how and when we could slow down the pace of working, which we had found to be an extremely difficult goal to reach, if not impossible.

Furthermore, Da had a heartedness personality. He had been very sincere in helping people. Since mid 1990's, he had started to host young scholars such as post-docs and visitors at SCK-CEN, of which many were Chinese researchers. In recent years, he visited a number of Chinese universities and provided a great amount of guidance and advice to the students and faculty in support of their research and disciplinary development. In my previous international cooperative projects (namely the China-Flanders Cooperative Program) with Ghent University and Hasselt University, where Professors Kerre and Wets were respective principal investigators on the Belgian side, Da was involved in hosting and guiding, in Gent or Mol, some of the Chinese scholars who paid their academic visits under the projects. In addition, his heartedness was also evidenced, as an example, in the FLINS conference series where he gathered a large group of international scholars, many of which are world-renowned ones, in a way that well combined high-quality research with close relationship.

Importantly, having the passion, hardworking and heartedness, coupled with other talents, his academic achievements were outstanding. In addition to the contributions to fuzzy reasoning and applications, his research had been extended to a broader realm, such as intelligent techniques, computational intelligence, risk management, traffic decision making, etc., resulting in a significant amount of impactful outcomes in many ways that range from publications, to invited speeches, to roles on journals' editorial boards, and to chair-ship in international conventions. It is worth mentioning that the FLINS conferences were well received by the fuzzy logic and related communities, in which he was the leading figure, and that the ISKE (International Symposium on Knowledge Engineering) conferences, originated from the China-Flanders Cooperative Program, had been

successful in previous years as a series, to which Da contributed greatly in the course of its development. In particular, Da devoted considerably his energy to the new journal IJCIS (International Journal of Computational Intelligent Systems) as the Editor in Chief during the past years, with remarkable progress made in its well-being.

Hereby in this memorial episode, what I could conclude now briefly is that we have a reflection on how a scholar like Da strives to achieve his goals in the whole career, which others respect.