

4.19 Da Ruan in and with Aachen

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When I met Da Ruan the first time in 1990, serving on his PhD committee, I was impressed by the quality and insight of his thesis and his argumentation. I did not expect, however, what a long and fruitful cooperation would follow. His PhD thesis focussed on a topic that was of basic importance to fuzzy inference and in which I was personally very interested. Very soon after this Da became an author of the leading international journal in the area of fuzzy sets, *Fuzzy Sets and Systems*, and very soon afterwards already an esteemed referee in *Fuzzy Sets and Systems*, and also for the *European Journal for Operations Research*, on whom I could always rely.

Already in 1995 he himself became the Guest Editor of a special issue of *Fuzzy Sets and Systems* on uncertainties and the application of fuzzy technology in nuclear engineering, which contained contributions of leading scientists in this area. This special issue was connected with the now-a-days well known stream of conferences called FLINS (Fuzzy Logic and Intelligent Technologies in Nuclear Science) the first of which Da organized in 1994 in Mol (Belgium). I had the honour and pleasure to be invited to this 1994 conference, which started an intensive and long lasting cooperation between Da Ruan in Mol and myself at the Aachen Institute of Technology. The proceedings of this first FLINS conference, the first of a series of prominent international conferences that took place in Mol and still takes place in several countries and continents was published –co-edited also by Ruan Da – as a book under the title “Fuzzy Logic and Intelligent Technologies in Nuclear Science”, published by World Scientific in Singapore. Only two years later Da edited the book “Fuzzy Logic Foundations and Industrial Applications” in the International Series in Intelligent Technologies, published by Kluwer Academic Publishers, and kindly dedicated it to me. Many thanks again for this honour!

In parallel to these conferences in Mol, Da Ruan supported strongly the EUFIT conferences in Aachen by contributing to EUFIT 1993, 1994, 1995 and 1997. He not only supported these conferences, but, in spite of all his other obligations, he also edited a book in Chinese that contained some of my major publications and had the title “Fuzzy Sets and Operations Research for Decision Support”. Obviously this book could never have been published without the active support of Da Ruan! Thanks again, Da!

Even though not directly related to the Aachen-Mol relationship I would also like to point to the facts that Da became a member of the editorial board of *Fuzzy Sets and Systems*, edited further special issues of this journal and co-authored additional papers in it.

I am, of course, aware of the many of the other things Da achieved in his life. Be it the many conferences that he contributed to, be it his many publications or

the many universities that he was affiliated to. Compared to that, our common activities may seem minor. For me, however, they have become a very important part of my life.

Looking back to my first meeting with Da Ruan I cannot but realize how he developed from a young and promising PhD scholar to an internationally recognized scientist and practitioner, not only in the area of fuzzy sets but much beyond it. He also had become a very esteemed colleague and friend of mine and it leaves me with a deep feeling of sadness that he passed away that early, much too early! Thank you very much, Da, for all you have given me!



The jury of Da's PhD with E. Kerre, P. Smets and H. Zimmermann in 1990