

1.7 Obituary: In Memoriam Prof. Dr. Da Ruan



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Prof. Dr. Da Ruan

On July 30, 2011 our colleague and friend Dr. Da Ruan suddenly passed away in his home at the age of 50 due to a heart failure. I still cannot believe I have to write this in memoriam for one of the best human beings I ever met.

I met Da for the first time about 25 years ago when he joined my research group on Fuzziness and Uncertainty Modelling at Ghent University. That time every year China selected two excellent master students to go abroad in the framework of a bilateral cooperation between China and Belgium to work towards a Ph.D. degree. From the very beginning of our cooperation I was very touched by his competence and hard working to tackle completely new issues in the recently developed mathematics of fuzziness. Da obtained his Ph.D. in mathematics from Ghent University in 1990. After obtaining his Ph.D. he could get a post doc position at the Center for Nuclear Research in Mol, where he started his very

successful career as a researcher combining theoretical as well as applied contributions and especially as the project leader of his scientific child called FLINS (an acronym for Fuzzy Logic and Intelligent technologies in Nuclear Science). Indeed unbelievable success!

Da has authored about 120 peer-reviewed papers in leading international journals, five textbooks, about 100 book chapters and conference papers on different soft computing issues in decision support systems, aggregation operators, information management and nuclear systems, to call only a view of them. Indeed as Janusz Kacprzyk wrote in a recent email: “Da has been one of the most visionary people in our field who has always known how to combine theory and practice”.

Da has edited 20 research books for world publishers such as Springer and Kluwer and 17 special issues on artificial intelligence for top journals such as Fuzzy Sets and Systems, Information Sciences and International Journal of Intelligent Systems.

But as said before his major scientific achievement was the founding of FLINS with its international conference held every two years starting from 1994, first in Mol and later on in Gent, Antwerp, Blankenberge, Bruges, Genova, Madrid and Chengdu. Da was the main editor of the proceedings, not only responsible for its contents but also for the lay-out, including the design and colours of the cover. Da was an aesthete: everything is important, not only the contents but also the presentation.

It is hard to believe that the planned 2012 FLINS conference in Istanbul will not be opened by Da.

Because of his highly rated scientific achievements and management capacities Da passed very strong criteria to obtain a guest professorship at Ghent University in 2005. In 2007 he also became a guest professor at Hasselt University, as well as adjunct professor in the University of Technology in Sydney and different universities in Shanghai, where he was praised for his lectures on fuzzy logic and its applications. Despite his so young age he obtained already a honorary doctorate from the Nuclear Power Institute of China in Chengdu.

Dear friends, nobody can imagine the energy Da has put into these achievements. Quoting Lotfi Zadeh: “Da Ruan was a leading member of the fuzzy logic community worldwide. His passing away is an irreparable loss...”

Da was also a tender husband for his wife Greet and an excellent father for his two sons Alexander and Nicolas. He too stayed full of love and concern with respect to his Chinese relatives: his parents, his sister and brother.

Everybody could experience the enthusiasm he showed in praising the Chinese culture to his foreign friends. We all know his passion for the good Chinese food. He was an excellent cook. I lively remember his talks with Ron Yager about Chinese delicacies.

Dear Da, on behalf of all my colleagues I can tell you that saying goodbye to you is very hard. We will miss you so much: your true friendship, your optimism, your unselfish devoting with respect to all your commitments. I went to say goodbye to your body and I saw your face expressing pride as it was saying: “I did my very best, please continue my work and be friendly to each other.”

Thank you Da, for giving us so much love and friendship.

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Etienne E. Kerre

E-mail address: etienne.kerre@UGent.be