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**Prof. Lotfi A. Zadeh**



I had the pleasure to meet Prof. Zadeh for the first time at the IIZUKA 1988 workshop in Japan. We also met on the same airport shuttle from Tacoma International Airport in Seattle to Washington University for the IFSA 1989 congress. I was pleasantly surprised when he started talking to me in the airport shuttle. He was always a friendly person to everyone. In the late 1980s and the early 1990s, Japan had a big fuzzy boom triggered by the successful start of the commercial operation of Sendai fuzzy subway system in 1987. During the fuzzy boom, he visited Japan many times. Fuzzy controllers were implemented in hundreds of consumer products such as rice cookers, washing machines and air conditioners by many well-known Japanese companies (e.g., Panasonic, Hitachi, Mitsubishi). According to the conference report by Prof. Mukaidono for the SOFT journal, the number of attendees for IFSA 1989 from Japan was 110, which was 42% of the total 261 attendees. Among the 110 attendees from Japan, 66 were from industry. These statistics showed that the fuzzy boom in Japan was strongly supported by Japanese companies. The fuzzy boom slowly spread out to some other countries in the 1990s.

When I attended international conferences on fuzzy systems in the 1990s, Prof. Zadeh was almost always a keynote speaker. I enjoyed his talk every year. His talk usually started with an explanation on the importance of fuzziness using an easy-to-understand example on estimating the travel time with a traffic jam in Istanbul. He then introduced his new ideas such as “computing with words” and “fuzzy information granules”. He also included new research trends by other researchers in his talk (e.g., neuro-fuzzy control in the early 1990s). His talks always strongly motivated me to do new research in the field of fuzzy systems. I also had the opportunity to enjoy his keynote talk at the IEEE SMC 2014 conference. At that time, he was 93 years old. He was an amazing researcher. I know I will be extremely happy if I am able to give international conference talks in my 70s.

The current CIM issue is a memorial special issue for Prof. Zadeh. This is actually a “special” issue, which has been edited in a totally different manner from the other regular CIM issues. The memorial special issue was proposed by the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the IEEE CI Society. The guest editors were selected by ExCom. Top researchers in the field of fuzzy systems were invited by the guest editors to submit their papers. The review of each paper was handled by the guest editors. Seven papers were recommended as special issue papers by the guest editors. All of them are included in the current CIM issue as feature articles. CIM usually publishes a wide variety of papers in various categories such as research frontier, application notes, survey, discussion forum and education forum but all the papers in the current issue are “feature” articles. I hope you all enjoy these memorial special issue papers by our top researches in the field of fuzzy systems.

*Hisao Ishibuchi*

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