

Preface

The first international congress of algebras and combinatorics (in short, ICAC) was held in Hong Kong dated 17-23 August 1997. The aim of the congress was to celebrate the re-unification of Hong Kong to China and to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Southeast Asian Mathematical Society. Also 1997 was the 100th anniversary of the International Mathematical Union (IMU). On this very special occasion, the congress was initiated by Professor Earl Taft, the former chief editor of *Communications in Algebras* and Professor Zhe-xian Wan, the chief editor of *Algebra Colloquium*. There were over 350 participants attended this congress from over 24 countries.

The experts who were invited to give main lectures in the congress include B. H. Neumann, L. A. Bokut, E. Zelmanov, A. V. Mikhalev, P. Solé, J. M. Howie, Z. Arad, H. J. Hoehnke, K. Saito, M. M. Deza, V. Dlab, L. J. Carbone, A. M. Hinz, C. P. Milies, H. J. Vogel, R. Wisbauer, P. Vamos, O. Grösek, A. Cherubini, K. Denecke, B. Piochi, M. Ito, S. Cohen, M. Harada, Nguyen Van Sanh, R. Gonchigdorz, K. H. Kim, A. C. Kim, B. Schein, Y. H. Xu, M. Cohen, M. K. Sen, M. Tokizawa, J. C. Meakin, J. P. Zhang, N. Q. Ding, etc. Professor Stephen Hill, Regional Director of UNESCO, specially came to Hong Kong address the opening ceremony of ICAC97.

The ICAC97 in Hong Kong was regarded as a great success. Professor B. H. Neumann who was 88 at 1997 said in the closing ceremony that he hoped the participants in ICAC to keep up their momentum for more activities and he expected that the second ICAC to be held again every 10 years with more participants. In fact, since August 1997, there were many international conferences in algebra and combinatorics being held in Manila, Bangkok, Yujarkata, Hanoi, Chongqing, Moscow, Dennison, Kyoto, Islamabad, Tirupathi, Calcutta, Taipei, Pusan, Tainan, Kashan, Fruitful results in this area were produced by many young mathematicians.

The second ICAC2007 was first initiated by President Li Wei of Beihang University, that is, Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and President Xu Delong of Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology.

In particular, Professor Li Wei was very keen to host ICAC2007 because he realizes that algebras and combinations have extensive applications in coding theory, in the design of computers, in electronic communications and even in space technology. Moreover, Beihang University has helped China to develop the project of launching the moon in 2007. He thinks that this would be an excellent occasion to hold the ICAC, 2007 at their university. On the other hand, Professor L. A. Bokut has been appointed by the South China Normal University as the research chair and to help the establishment of a center of combinatorial algebra in the university. On the occasion of his 70th anniversary, President Wang Guo-jiang was more than happy to host a conference for his birthday. This idea was strongly applauded by Professor E. Zelmanov, one of the former students of L. A. Bokut. Hence, with such a background, the ICAC2007 was composed by three chapters. The first chapter was held in South China Normal University at Guangzhou, 2-4 July; the second chapter was held in Beijing, 6-11 July; and the third chapter was held in Xi'an, 12-15 July.

There were over 150 participants coming to Guangzhou. The main speakers included Professors E. Zelmanov (Chairman, Scientific Committee), Lance Small, L. A. Bokut, A. V. Mikhalev, B. Schein, K. Kalorkoti, S. H. Ng, Y. M. Wang, W. J. Shi, W. B. Guo, X. Y. Guo, N. Q. Ding, Z. F. Hao, Q. H. Zhang, Michel Jumbu, K. Denecke, etc. A boat tour along the Pearl River at night was arranged. For the second chapter in Beijing, there were around 350 participants. Professor M. Br oue, the chief editor of *Journal of Algebra* has made a special effort to come to the congress for giving a special plenary talk. The other main speakers included Professors Zvi Arad, Susan Montgomery, A. V. Mikhalev, A. A. Mikhalev, Pavel Kolesnikov, Li Wei, Agata Smoktunowicz, Ivan Shestakov, Ts. Dajdorj, A. P. Pojidaev, A. Kemer, A. Yu. Olshanskii, V. A. Artamonov, N. A. Vavilov, Kenji Ueno, V. K. Kharchenko, G. O. H. Katona, Jan Okninski, Yong-Chuen Chen, Jiping Zhang, Tasuro Ito, Ilias Kotsireas, Leslie Hogben, Simone Rinaldi, M. R. R. Moghaddom, Das Dorz, Shangzhi Li, P. H. Lee, T. K. Lee, Y. Q. Zhou, W. S. Cheung, Ling Long, George Szeto, M. R. R. Moghaddam, A. R. Moghaddamfar, Wanida Hemakul, L. Sabinina, L. Sbitneva, etc. A tour to Great Wall was arranged. For the chapter in Xi'an, there were over 400 participants, including many graduate students. The main speakers in Xi'an included Professors Claus Ringel, Victoria Gould, Stephen Pride, Masami Ito, L szl  M rki, J. C. Meakin, S. K. Jain, Pal Domosi, V. Bovdi, K. C. Chowdhury, Nguyen Van Sanh, Masami Ito, Y. Kobayashi, K. B. Nam, Le Anh Vu, Y. Q. Guo, G. C. M. Gomes, H. France-Jackson, K. P.

Shum, etc. A tour to visit Terre Cotta was specially arranged. There were over 600 participants in total in the ICAC2007, coming from 27 countries. This congress is in fact one of the largest scale international conference held in China in recent years. We all hope that the quality of research in algebras and combinatorics will be further improved and promoted after the ICAC2007.

To organize an international conference is not an easy task. Apart from inviting the eminent main speakers, there are many arranging difficulties to be overcome. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staffs and students, especially, the main organizers Professors Yuqun Chen, Shangzhi Li and Xueming Ren, in South China Normal University, Beihang University and Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology for their help and effort. Without them, the congress will not be so successful.

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K. P. Shum
Chairman, Organizing Committee

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