

Preface

I was fascinated by the Fourier Series when I learned about it during my sophomore year at Seoul National University in 1958. When I learned functional analysis in the United States, I found that some professors did not know the difference between Schwarz and Schwartz. This lack of awareness surprised me and contributed to my interest in the in academic genealogy of mathematicians.

Selecting approximately 750 mathematicians for this book proved extremely difficult. The American Mathematical Society has 33,000 members. The great MacTutor Archives list more than 2,100 mathematicians. And the Mathematics Genealogy Project run by the University of North Dakota has 126,000 records on mathematicians. Consequently, this book omits many, many tremendously accomplished men and women mathematicians. All of the decisions about whom to include were mine.

Since I am interested in academic genealogy, mathematicians are not strictly grouped by their nationality. Instead, they are organized by the nation in which they received their doctoral degrees with a few exceptions. For example, Sofya Kovalevskaya is included in the German School but not in the Russian School; and Alfred Haar is included in the German School but not in the Hungarian School. Heisuke Hironaka is listed in the American School although he is a Japanese.

While writing this book, I had the pleasure of meeting Professors John J. O'Connor and Edmund F. Robertson, developers of the MacTutor Archives, at the University of St. Andrews in March 2007, I also had the privilege of meeting many of the mathematicians listed in this book; Jack Milnor, Stephen Smale, Jacques Louis Lions, Jean Christoph Yoccoz, Efim Zelmanov, John Coates, Paul Butzer, Victor Sadovnichy, Peter Swinnerton-Dyer, Domokos Szasz, Bélla Bollóbas, Benoit Mandelbrot, Rimhak Ree and Heisuke Hironaka.

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I would be happy to hear of any criticisms and corrections, in the hope of publishing a better second edition.

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