

Introduction: Special issue dedicated to the memory of professor Wenqi Huang

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Professor Wenqi Huang was a noted educator and computer scientist in China. He is best known for his quasi-physical and quasi-human approaches to solving a large set of optimization problems. His publications extend across a variety of topics, including recursive analysis, factorization of multivariate polynomials, approximation algorithms for NP-hard problems, and bioinformatics. Huang was born on December

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5, 1938, and passed away on April 24, 2013, at age 75. He is survived by his wife Wenfei Li, his son Jiachun Huang and daughter Jiayuan Huang.

Huang began his academic career in 1964 as a researcher in the Northwest Branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, after graduating from Peking University with a Bachelor of Science degree from the Department of Mathematics and Mechanics. In the early years of his research, he had the honor of being mentored by renowned scholars, including theoretical physicist Peiyuan Zhou, mathematician Minde Cheng, and computer scientist Wenjun Wu. In 1973, he joined the faculty of Huazhong University of Science and Technology (HUST), where he was a professor of computer science from 1986 till his death. From 1981 to 1982, he was a visiting scholar in the Department of Mathematics at Cornell University, where he researched on advanced recursive theory under the supervision of Professor Anil Nerode and collaborated with Nerode and Professor Yixing Bao. In 1982 and 1992, he was invited to work with Professor Hao Wang in the Laboratory of Mathematical Logic at the Rockefeller University. Huang served on the Standing Committee of Theoretical Computer Science in China and founded the Institute of Theoretical Computer Science at HUST in 1996. He headed the institute from that time until his retirement in 2012. Today, his research group still contributes significantly to the theoretical studies of computer science in China.

Huang's contributions are well represented by his innovative work on three topics: Quasi-physical and quasi-human algorithms for solving challenging optimization problems; the study of the complexity of resolution; and modern recursive analysis. His seminal work on the first topic was published in 1979, in which he designed the first quasi-physical method for solving the packing problem, opening the door to a class of quasi-physical, and later quasi-human, methods to solve a variety of NP-hard problems. In Huang's quasi-physical emulation of the packing problem, the objects and the boundary of the container are viewed as elastic bodies. Packing a set of objects into the container will result in an elastic potential energy among the objects and the container boundary. A solution to the packing problem would be some arrangement of the objects so that the elastic potential energy thereof is zero. A heuristic to obtain such a solution is to find the zero energy equilibrium positions of the objects within the container. Those positions correspond to the global optimization solution to the emulated elastic dynamic system and hence can be obtained through straightforward numerical calculation. In 1990s, Huang proposed quasi-human methods, drawing upon human's cognitive and behavioral experience in doing the similar jobs to the problems under consideration. Following the philosophy and techniques of these methods, Huang and his students have designed rather effective algorithms for five typical classes of NP-hard problems, i.e., packing problems, scheduling problems, covering problems, SAT, and protein folding prediction problems. Their algorithms were shown empirically to be almost the best algorithms compared with existing algorithms at that time. Huang's contribution to the second topic is evident from the paper he published with his student in the *SIAM Journal on Computing* in 1987. By that time, a problem asked by Tseitin and mentioned by Galil had remained unsolved for over 20 years: Is one of the shortest paths (from the root to empty) in a resolution tree necessarily a regular one? Huang and his student gave a negative answer to this problem in terms of the consensus method. They proved that there is a DNF such that every shortest consensus path is necessarily

non-regular. Huang's contribution to the third topic is reflected in the paper he published with Anil Nerode in 1985. In that paper, they designed an approach to obtaining various new results in constructive analysis by using modern pure recursion theory and gave new definitions for computable real numbers, computable real functions, and degrees of uncomputability. Their definitions are more natural and intuitive than those given previously in literature. Furthermore, their definitions are convenient to use and thus profitable for constructive mathematicians.

This special issue includes eleven papers in Professor Wenqi Huang's memory. These articles represent a good selection of areas in which Huang made his contributions, though not all of those areas. The paper "multi-neighborhood based iterated tabu search for routing and wavelength assignment problem" by X. Wu, S. Yan, X. Wan and Z. Lü presents efficient local search based algorithms to solve both the routing and the wavelength assignment problems simultaneously. They obtain competitive results with the best heuristics in the literature. In "multi-neighborhood based path relinking for two-sided assembly line balancing problem", Z. Yang, G. Zhang and H. Zhu devise a new solution that has the best performance for almost all the benchmark instances. The article "quasi-human algorithm for the two dimensional rectangular strip packing problem" by L. Wang and A. Yin includes an interesting quasi-human algorithm with very good computational efficiency. T. Zhou, Z. Lü, Y. Wang, J. Ding and B. Peng obtain, in "multi-start iterated tabu search for the minimum weight vertex cover problem", an innovative heuristic algorithm which is based on the tabu search methodology and incorporates several other novel strategies. The clique partitioning problem studied by Y. Zhou, J. Hao and A. Goëffon in their paper "three-phased local search approach for the clique partitioning problem" is of long standing significance, and their new method is highly innovative. In the article "tabu search for the real-world carpooling problem", D. Zhang, C. Huang, Y. Si and S. Leung investigate a real-world problem where a group of people, some of them are chosen as drivers, share cars from different locations to a common destination. The authors formulate the problem as an integer linear programming problem and then solve the latter with tabu search. In the paper "solving the maximum vertex weight clique problem via binary quadratic programming", Y. Wang, J. Hao, F. Glover, Z. Lü and Q. Wu transform the classical optimization problem into a continuous, nonconvex quadratic optimization problem and then design a tailored tabu search algorithm that is supported by excellent computational results. An improved constructive heuristic is proposed to solve the strip packing problem by D. Zhang, Y. Che, F. Ye, Y. Si and S. Leung in their paper "hybrid algorithm based on variable neighborhood for the strip packing problem". The computational results show that the new algorithm has better performance than the algorithms previously known. The paper "online tradeoff scheduling on a single machine to minimize makespan and maximum lateness" by Q. Liu and J. Yuan improves the previous work on the competitive ratio of a single-machine problem with the objective of minimizing maximum delivery time by adding the makespan as a secondary criterion. In the paper "Euclidean movement minimization", N. Anari, M. Fazli, M. Ghodsi and M. Safari investigate four movement problems on Euclidean plane and prove an inapproximability result on geometrical grounds. Given a set of black and white points, S. Ehsani, M. Fazli, M. Ghodsi and M. Safari want to find a set of convex polygons with maximum total area that cover all white points but none of black points in "optimal

space coverage with white convex polygons.” They obtain an polynomial solution if polygons can overlap. When polygons cannot overlap, they prove that the problem becomes NP-hard and then derive two approximation algorithms.

We are indebted to Professor Ding-Zhu Du for supporting this special issue, to the reviewers of these articles and many more submissions, and to Mr. Venkat Ganesan and other staff at Springer Journals Editorial Office for their tireless efforts in seeing this special issue to completion. We are most grateful to each contributor to this special issue for taking the time and caring to honor the memories of a truly good man who, in his forty years of teaching, had produced twenty one Ph.D. students and supervised fifty six postgraduate research students; cared about his students and was most indefatigable in teaching them. Many of his words have been circulated over the Internet and touched numerous readers. He is a good scholar and a good model for us and for the world he lived in. He will be forever remembered.

Publications by Wenqi Huang

Book

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Journal Papers

A. Augur methods

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E. Quasi-physical and quasi-human methods

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E.6. Others

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