

Preface

The China-U. S. Seminar on Boundary Integral and Boundary Element Methods in Physics and Engineering held in Xi'an Jiaotong University, Dec. 27, 1987-Jan. 1, 1988 represented both an end and a beginning. It was the end of a long and complicated planning process and hopefully the beginning of a series of such conferences.

Although the seeds of the meeting were planted early in 1984 when we contacted Prof. Feng Kang, those seeds would not have grown to bear fruit were it not for the efforts of Prof. Li Kai-tai. Of course, many people contributed to the eventual success. Any complicated organizational effort depends on three main contributors: the primary organizer, who must bring immense stores of energy, dedication, and determination, in this case a position filled so admirably by Li Kai-tai; those whose support helps turn concept into reality, here we should mention Professors Feng Kang, Shi Zhong-ci, Du Qing-hua, and Zhu Jia-lin from the Chinese mathematical community and President Shi Wei-xiang, Vice President Wang Ying-luo and Mathematics Department Chairman You Zhao-yong of Xi'an Jiaotong University whose encouragement was invaluable in gaining Ministry of Education support; and finally those people who ensure that the reality will be successful and here particularly noteworthy are the extraordinary efforts by Prof. Huang Aixiang and the many colleagues and students of Profs. Li and Huang who oversaw each detail of the conference. All of these people combined to create a meeting they can be proud of and the participants will long remember.

The technical level of the seminar was extremely high as witness this issue of the Journal of Computational Mathematics devoted to written versions of the talks. But the printed page cannot capture the spirit of friendship that characterized the lively scientific exchanges. All of the foreign visitors were

overwhelmed by the kindness of the reception accorded by our Chinese hosts. We carried away many lasting memories, friendships both new and renewed, spectacular views of the past at Banpo and Lintong, vivid scenes of present day Xi'an, an unforgettable New Year's eve dinner hosted by President Shi and much more.

But the real success of the meeting will be measured in terms of the links that were forged that lead to future exchanges and collaboration. Our hope is that this China-U. S. seminar is not an isolated event but one of a sequence which will build ever stronger bonds of friendly scientific cooperation. However, no matter how many future meetings there may be, this first one will live in the memories of the participants as a truly special event.

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