
Editorial: Thank-you speech at the opening ceremony of the 40th anniversary of the founding of grey system theory

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I am extremely grateful to Secretary Yong'an Zheng, president Zhongde Shan, Academician Haiyan Hu, Director Suping Hu, President Hong Chi and Director Xiaochang Ding for their enthusiastic speeches, as well as to Academician Baozhu Guo and Professor Yingjie Yang for their congratulatory letters! Greatly appreciate to all the leaders, guests, old friends and new friends who attended the opening ceremony of the commemorative exhibition offline and online!

Time flies like a shuttle, 40 years with a mere snap of the fingers.

At this moment, standing at the opening ceremony of the exhibition commemorating the 40th anniversary of the establishment of grey system theory, looking back on the past, I'm filled with emotions! Over the past 40 years, we have worked tirelessly to develop and disseminate the grey system theory. Although we had also encountered many difficulties and setbacks, at this moment, what emerges from the bottom of my heart is an inexhaustible gratitude.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Julong Deng, the founder of the Grey System Theory. With your extraordinary wisdom and courage, you pioneered the grey system theory, enabling millions of latecomers to cultivate and sow in this scientific field, achieving fruitful results.

Sincerely thank all colleagues at International Association of Grey Systems and Uncertainty Analysis (GSUA) and Grey System Society of China (GSSC), CSOOPEM. Thank you for your trust and strong support to IGSS, NUAA. The innovation, development and dissemination of the grey system theory, all the progress made is the result of everyone's joint efforts.

I acknowledge to friends from the publishing industry, such as Science Press, Huazhong University of Science and Technology Press, Springer-Nature Group, Emerald Group, and Research Information Ltd. Thank you for your insight and diligence in cultivating and caring for the seedling of grey system theory. A new theory has grown rapidly owe to your support and assistance.

Over the years, our research has been highly commended by many first class scholars, such as L. A. Zadeh, the founder of fuzzy mathematics; Hermann Haken, the founder of synergetics; Robert Vallee, former president of the World Organisation of Cybernetics and Systems; James Tien, former vice-president of IEEE and member of the American Academy of Engineering; K.W. Hipel, former president of The Academy of Science of the Royal Society of Canada; Jifa Gu, former president of the International Federation for Systems Research and Weixuan, Xu, former president of Chinese Society of Optimisation, Overall Planning and Economical Mathematics. And praised or cited positively by more than 100 academicians from academies of science and engineering all over the world, such as E. K. Zavadskas, A. Bernard, Guozhi Xu, Qun L in, Da Chen, Chunsheng Zhao, Haiyan Hu, Suzi Yang, Youlun Xiong, Wei Huang, Zhongtuo Wang, Shanlin Yang, Xiaohong Chen, Zhijie Chen, Zhicheng Zhou, Zhongde Shan and others. Xuesen Qian, the first winner of the National Highest



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Science and Technology Award of China, Jinpeng Huai, the minister of the Ministry of Education of China, Angela Dorothea Merkel, former German Chancellor have also praised us for the achievements in this area of research. Indeed, such positive feedback on our work has given us an inexhaustible motivation and driving force of continuous cultivation.

I am extremely grateful to the National Natural Science Foundation of China, the Chinese Association for Science and Technology, the China Centre for Advanced Science and Technology, and various national ministries, as well as UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Commission, the Royal Society of the UK, the Leverhulme Trust and others for their strong support for grey system research.

I would like to express my gratitude to all previous leaders and colleagues at the secretariat of the Chinese Society of Optimisation, Overall Planning and Economical Mathematics. The construction and development of the Grey System Professional Committee cannot be separated from your long-term support.

I personally would like to express my special gratitude to my colleagues and leaders from Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Henan Agricultural University and De Montfort University in the UK for their support and assistance in my work. I still remember that one time when I returned to Henan Agricultural University to give an academic report, Professor Jianping Jiang, a former president in his 80s, arrived at the lecture venue specifically. The leaders of the university and relevant departments and colleges of the NUAA have been paying attention and supporting to this commemorative exhibition from beginning to end. At today's opening ceremony, so many leaders of the university and relevant departments and colleges of the NUAA are present in person. Vice-President Yingdong Song presided over the meeting. Two main leaders, Secretary Yong'an Zheng and President Zhongde Shan, respectively, delivered heartfelt speeches. Deputy Secretary Yong Tao cares about every detail, from content design, exhibition board layout, to conference organisation. Members of the Standing Committee of the Party Committee, head Hui Wang and leaders of the Party Committee's Propaganda Department invited journalists from the media. Deep friendship, unforgettable forever!

Finally, I would like to express my special gratitude to the doctoral, master's, postdoctoral and visiting scholars who have studied and worked at the Institute for Grey Systems Studies, NUAA. You spent your youth on the beautiful campus of NUAA and have contributed your intelligence and talents. Many alumni still maintain close contact and cooperation with your alma mater and teachers many years after graduation. You have entered the teacher's life and become their loved ones, although you are not related by blood.

Thank you very much indeed!

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