

Memories

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In 2013 my colleagues and I started working on developing some characterization based tests and exploring their asymptotic properties. While looking for some references on that topic we found out that this was a field of expertise of professor Nikitin, and decided to contact him. After requesting an article, I got a very kind answer emphasizing that he would be on disposal to make us things more comprehensible for us, and also the reference to his book *Asymptotic efficiency of nonparametric tests*. That is how our scientific journey started.

On the road, my colleague Marko and I jointly created many beautiful memories, both personal and professional. While walking on Belgrade and St Petersburg's streets, we got to know professor Nikitin's poetic side, good knowledge of history, attitude about the importance of the family and women's role... Open communication channel and friendship also boosted our professional relation.

I will never forget a couple of remarkable moments that I find essential for the development of our careers.

Soon after we started working in the domain of characterization based goodness-of-fit testing, we discovered that both of our research teams were working on the same characterization. Although we were ready to change the topic and let professor Nikitin finish what he had started, being much more experienced and well-established scientist, he kindly suggested joining efforts to complete the project. I think that he felt how much we would learn during it. He constantly promoted scientific discussion, which was very important for developing critical thinking and new ideas.

The second important moment happened during our next joint project. We faced with entirely unexpected test statistics behaviour and were not able to employ previously used methodology. In one of many e-mails dedicated to this topic, he cited academician Sakharov: "Imagine two skiers. The first is far ahead but the second quickly overtakes him. Who will reach first the finish? The answer: impossible to predict, because the first had to overcome snow wildland, and this is much more difficult than using the ski-track as did the second", and wrote: "In our case I have overcome the

first difficulties in tests based on characterizations and almost solved the case of non-degenerate tests. You and Marko used this, partially with my help, and soon caught me up. Now together we are attacking the degenerate case. It is plain that we cannot move forward as quickly as before because we should partially overcome the wild-land”.

That reflects his attitude towards young scientists, how much he respected what was done by his young colleagues in general, that young minds and their potential should not be underestimated. Sharing it with us clearly demonstrates that he knew that sometimes kind words mean a lot and that you should not be reserved about it when somebody deserves it. It might initiate a significant push forward further.

This attitude and the fact that he did not have any prejudice about women’s scientific potential (at least I did not feel that) are what I will never forget.



Ya. Nikitin, Bojana Milošević, Marko Obradović. Belgrade, May 2016