

INTRODUCTION

The Bosscha Observatory in Lembang, Java, Indonesia, celebrated in 1983 its 60th anniversary. Since its foundation, the physical properties of binary systems have formed a major research topic of this observatory. Until 1970, the study of visual binaries and the determination of orbits received most emphasis. Since then, also the evolution of close binary systems, such as X-ray binaries, Wolf-Rayet binaries and binary pulsars, has been researched with priority in Lembang. It seemed thus appropriate that a Colloquium devoted to the study of binary systems be held in Lembang at the time of the Observatory's anniversary.

In the Colloquium, the role of wide double (and multiple) systems received special emphasis – not only because of the long tradition of visual binary research at Lembang; but also because their role in documenting stellar evolution has been largely overlooked in recent decades, and needs to be brought into focus with the information forthcoming from close binaries.

The Colloquium covered the physical properties of visual as well as close binary systems, and their generic relations, in the broadest possible sense. It was sponsored by the International Astronomical Union as IAU Colloquium No. 80 ('Double Stars, Physical Properties and Generic Relations').

After the official opening ceremony, the meeting started with a discussion on the future of astronomy in Asia. The scientific sessions began with the 'V. Bappu Memorial Lecture on the Evolution of Binary Systems', presented by Z. Kopal. Subsequent sessions were divided into four following parts: (1) Physical properties of double and multiple stars; occurrence of binaries in different stellar systems; new observational methods; (2) Wide systems and their evolution; (3) Close binaries; new observations and their interpretation; close binary evolution; (4) Generic relations between wide and close systems.

The Scientific Organizing Committee consisted of K. D. Abhyankar, A. H. Batten, J. Dommaget, O. G. Franz, E. P. J. van den Heuvel, K. A. van der Hucht, J. Ibrahim, Y. Kondo, Z. Kopal, D. C. Morton, J. Rahe (chairman), D. Sugimoto, W. Sutantyo, A. R. Upgren, and B. Warner. Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee was B. Hidayat. The meeting took place in Bandung, Java, from June 3 to 7, 1983 and was attended by about 60 astronomers from 16 different countries.

Shortly after the Colloquium, a solar eclipse of several minutes' length occurred on Java, and astronomers attending the meeting had the chance to experience this 'once in a lifetime' astronomical event.

Most memorable of IAU Colloquium No. 80 are the many interesting presentations and stimulating – often spirited – discussions, the generous hospitality of the Bosscha Observatory, and – last but not least – the observation of the solar eclipse in the fascinating Javanese surroundings.

BAMBANG HIDAYAT, ZDENĚK KOPAL, and JÜRGEN RAHE