

Preface

IAU Symposium 214 had its origins in the joint feelings of Profs. Wang Zhen-ru (Nanjing University) and Virginia Trimble (University of California, Irvine and University of Maryland) that IAUS 125 (on neutron stars, in Nanjing, in May, 1986) had been a very productive meeting and that it was time for another high energy astrophysics gathering somewhere in China, whose delegation to the International Astronomical Union is one of the fastest growing in the world. The broad topic was predicated on the recognition that a wide range of sources, generally thought of as part of the subject (active galaxies, X-ray binaries, cosmic rays, supernovae and their remnants, gamma ray bursters) have in common both a good deal of underlying physics and many observational techniques.

The Suzhou location was selected for its ancient beauty, relatively easy access, and outstanding conference facilities. We believe that the participants (63 astronomers from Chinese institutions and 72 from other countries) would agree that all of these proved to be correct. About a dozen of the overseas participants from relatively poor countries and a couple of young astronomers from developed countries were supported by the IAU funds.

The program of invited and contributed talks was assembled by a Scientific Organizing Committee consisting of Guenther Hasinger (Germany), Li Tipei (China), Richard McCray (USA), Felix Mirabel (France), Stephen Murray (USA), Juri Poutanen (Finland), G. Srinivasan (India), Yoji Totsukja (Japan), Virginia Trimble (USA, co-chair), Zhen-ru Wang (China, co-chair), Yang Ji (China), and Andrzej Zdziarski (Poland), all but two of whom also participated in the Symposium. The Local Organizing Committee consisted of Ji Yang (Chair), Xiangdong Li (Co-Chair), Bao Mei, Jun Yan, Yi Wang, Guoxuan Dong, Hongling Chen, Yi Xia, Xiaoyuan Xie, and Keming Gao.

Of the 70 papers in these proceedings, 54 appear as talks presented in Suzhou, as 16 do posters (which all participants were invited to present, and which remained up for the duration of the meeting). For the scientific highlights, you are referred to the proceedings themselves, but the first speaker, Roger Blandford, set the tone by emphasizing, first, that high energy astrophysics is a multiwavelength enterprise, in which radio and non-photon astronomy are as important as X-rays and gamma-rays, and, second, that indeed the physics of collapse, accretion, acceleration, collimation, radiation mechanisms, and so forth are shared by many different kinds of high energy sources and phenomena.

The editors