

In memory of Professor Antonio Zampolli

Makoto Nagao

It was really sad news that Antonio Zampolli deceased. He was a very frank and friendly person whom I first met many many years ago, I cannot remember exactly when.

My memory is vague, but if he was at the First International Conference on Computational Linguistics in New York, 1965, I had surely met him there. I was 29 years-old, the same as Professor Zampolli, but we became aware of it only afterwards.

He totally devoted his life to the promotion of Natural Language Processing researches, particularly lexical and text processing researches and their related activities. He often went to Brussels and Luxembourg to persuade European Commission policy-making people in R&D about the importance of Natural Language Processing (NLP), as no other person could do. He always vanished away in the middle of conferences to meet EC people. He was always busy. Japanese activities in NLP were often stimulated by his actions for NLP projects in Europe.

He came to Japan several times, often with the best Italian wines, which he made me convinced of. I never knew whether he enjoyed Japanese food, as he clearly did not like to eat Sasimi, the raw fish. He invited me several times to his cottage near Cortina d'Ampezzo, where we enjoyed peaceful quiet atmosphere and wonderful mountain walkings on the Dolomites Mountains. Once Martin Kay and myself were invited there to walk through complicated tunnels in the Dolomites, which were dug at the time of the First World War. From a peak of the Dolomites we saw a small village in a deep valley of Auronzo, which was his native village. He accompanied me twice to chat with his old friends in the village. There I could believe that his simple, jolly and benevolent character came from his child life in this small village.

I think that we, all people involved in NLP all over the world, must appreciate Professor Zampolli's devotion to NLP research and development activities.

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