

In Recognition of Life-time Contributions to Academic Exchanges and Promotion of Friendly Relationship and Mutual Understanding between Thailand and Japan

Wiwut Tanthapanichakoon (WTP for short) was born in Bangkok, Thailand, on 1 December 1949. After finishing high school at Triam Udom Suksa in Bangkok, he won a Monbusho Scholarship to study one-year intensive Japanese language and culture in Chiba University (1968-1969) and Chemical Engineering in Kyoto University (1969-1973). He happened to be the second foreign undergraduate student since the establishment of this Chem. Eng. Dept. After earning his B. Eng. degree, WTP was offered a Research Assistantship to simultaneously do research and study for his MS and PhD degrees in Chem. Eng. in the University of Texas at Austin (1973-1978). Upon his graduation he immediately joined the Dept. of Chem. Eng., Chulalongkorn University (CU), as an instructor and rose to full professorship in 1993. CU is the oldest and most prestigious university in Thailand. From 2003 to 2004, WTP served as Acting Executive Director, National Nanotechnology Center (NANOTEC), National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). In 2004 he resigned from CU in order to serve as the first Executive Director of NANOTEC (2004 - 2008). Next he joined SCG Chemicals as full-time Senior Research Advisor (2008 - 2011). Approached by Prof. Emer. Hiroo Niiyama, WTP decided to leave SCG and become a regular Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Tokyo Institute of Technology (April 2011 to March 2015). During his years in TokyoTech, he was invited to teach a 2-credit International Graduate course at Dept. of Chem. Eng., Kyoto University, for 4 consecutive years. At present, WTP is a full-time Technology Advisor of SCG Chemicals (since April 2015), Prof. Emeritus of Tokyo Institute of Technology (TokyoTech) and Chulalongkorn University, and Associate Fellow of the Academy of Science (Petrochemical Technology), The Royal Society of Thailand (since 2007). Surprisingly WTP is the first and only Thai citizen to become a tenured full professor and emeritus prof. of TokyoTech and he considers them to be a great honor.

Since 1979 WTP also joined the relatively new Technology Promotion Association (Thailand-Japan) (TPA), a not-for-profit association in Bangkok which was established on 24 January 1973 through the determination, commitment and cooperation of Japanese university alumni and former trainees in Japan funded by Asia Bunka Kaikan (ABK) and Association of Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS) with financial assistance from then

Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), Japan. The mission of TPA is to promote and support advancement of technology and innovation for its members, to disseminate them to the general public and Thai industry, to promote technical training and Japanese language education, and to support the people who perform activities of learning and teaching language and culture. Needless to say, a key mechanism and critical success factor is technology transfer from Japan. Working with the Energy Conservation Center (ECC) Japan, TPA is a pioneer in, and promoter of, energy conservation technology in Thailand. TPA is instrumental in the introduction and promotion of numerous Japanese technologies and management tools such as Quality Control Circle (QCC), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Diagnosis of Enterprises (Shindan). As a result of the success of these pioneering activities, TPA currently organizes and bestows several nationally recognized awards such as Thailand 5S Award, Thailand Quality Prize, Thailand Kaizen Award, Kano Quality Award (patterned after Japan's Deming Prize) and Thailand Lean Award. TPA has held nationwide Robot Contests at university, vocational and middle school levels for over 20 years. In collaboration with Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and relevant Japanese agencies, TPA sets up Thailand-Japan Business Alliance Center (JSMEs) to promote and facilitate the entry of Japanese SMEs to Thailand and vice versa.

In 2006 TPA established Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI) to produce Japanese-speaking engineers familiar with "MonoTsukuri" and businessmen familiar with Japanese style management. WTP served as a counselor of TNI Institute Council since its inception till 2010 and also its Vice Chair (2010-2011). As of 2016, its total student enrolment is about 4,400 and the latest batch of MS and BS graduates totals 706 in number. TNI graduates are in high demand and their employment record has been essentially 100% since the first batch of graduates. As of 2015, TPA has total membership of over 28,000 including over 3,000 juristic members. In 2015 alone, more than 28,500 persons make use of its various services, which amount to 3,754 training courses, seminars, language classes, and publications. *In recognition of TPA's 4-decade-long contributions and achievements, it was conferred the highly prestigious JAPAN FOUNDATION AWARD for Organization in 2013.* In addition to serving on numerous TPA committees and executive board since 1979, WTP is also a TPA ex-President (2009-2011) and has been involved in a large number of activities as seminar speaker, course lecturer, technical interpreter, book author, study mission leader to Japan, and so on.

During his academic career with CU, WTP has been involved in numerous academic/research collaborations and exchanges with Japan. For example, he was Thai-side leader of the NRCT-JSPS Research Cooperative Program in Petrochemical Engineering between Thailand and Japan (Phase One 1985-1989 and Phase Two 1990-1994). NRCT and JSPS stand for National Research Council of Thailand and Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, respectively. The late Prof. Tomoyuki Inui of Kyoto University and subsequently Prof. Hiroo Niiyama of Tokyo Institute of Technology were Japan-side leaders. From 1985-1996 he also received 7 timely research project grants from the Asahi Glass Foundation (AGF) Tokyo in the area of petrochemical reaction engineering. These generous grants nicely complemented the on-going NRCT-JSPS Program which had no budget for procuring lab instruments and equipment, thereby creating great synergistic effect.

With technical and financial support from the Association of Powder Process Industry and Engineering (APPIE) Japan and Society of Powder Technology Japan (SPTJ), WTP was instrumental in establishing Thai Powder Technology Center (TPTC) in CU in 1992. His key supporters in Japan include the late Prof. Koichi Inoya (Kyoto University) and Prof. Kanji Matsumoto (Yokohama National University). WTP was twice appointed TRF Senior Research Scholar which is accompanied with Research Team Award by The Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Prime Minister's Office (1996-1999 and 2002-2005). In short, WTP has carried out close and extensive research collaboration with his Japanese counterparts in Kyoto University, Tokyo Institute of Technology, Kanazawa University, Osaka University, the University of Tokyo, Himeji Institute of Technology, National Institute for Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) and so on. In fact, together with his Japanese collaborators, WTP has co-authored a large number of international journal articles as well as numerous technical books in Thai. He is also an active member of Society of Chemical Engineers Japan (SCEJ), Society of Powder Technology Japan (SPTJ), Japan Association of Aerosol Science and Technology (JAASST) and so on. In recognition of his professional achievements, WTP was conferred Science and Technology Award by Thailand Toray Science Foundation (1998) and ASEAN Outstanding Engineering Achievements Award by ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organization (AFEO) (2010).

In the meantime, WTP has also been actively involved in the training and cultural activities of Asia Bunka Kaikan (ABK) and Association of Overseas Technical Scholarship (AOTS). The latter is now part of The Overseas Human Resources and Industry

Development Association (HIDA). He served as a Vice President of FOSAAS (Federation of Southeast Asian AOTS Alumni Societies) and finally became President of ABK-AOTS Alumni Association (Thailand) (1994-1996, 1996-1998). During his years in TokyoTech, WTP also served as a Founding Councilor of the newly established ABK College (2012-2015). In this way, his long-time contributions to the promotion of friendly relationship and mutual understanding extend beyond Japan to major countries in Southeast Asia. In addition to the latest Decoration from Japan, WTP has been conferred 3 high-level Royal Decorations from H.M. The King of Thailand, the highest of which is the Knight Grand Cordon (Special Class) of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant in 2004.



Prof. Wiwut and his wife at a Farewell Party held by Thai students in TokyoTech in 2015