

Essay

Project X: the birth of TNI



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It is my pleasure to introduce my long year experience through planning, founding and managing Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology (TNI, see the details at <http://www.tni.ac.th>) to all of you, covering the background and scheme of evolution. I wish that younger generation researchers and students would know the importance of collaborative global academic activities and be encouraged through my experience.

I was awarded the Monbusho scholarship to study in Japan from 1967, for a duration of seven years. During that time, Thailand was governed by a military dictatorship. Thai students who were awarded the scholarship stayed together in two main dormitories, one in Inage and one in Komaba. Leaving the tight control of our homeland into a free society like Japan stimulated our young and energetic minds to observe the difference between the two countries. Night after night we used to gather in a dormitory room to discuss a wide range of issues, most relating to the situation of our mother land. The discussions revolved around questions such as why Japan's society was much more advanced compared to Thailand despite the facts that we started westernization during the same period – i.e., the Meiji restoration in Japan and King Rama V's reform in Thailand.

Eventually the discussions would lead to similar conclusions, the main reason was the different characteristics between people of the two countries. We recognized that Japanese people were very well educated and highly disciplined. Through the repeated and heated discussions, we came to understand the importance of “human resource” and the necessity to invest in Thailand's education system to achieve sustainable development. We became very passionate about human resource development in Thailand, and were eager to contribute to the development of our beloved country.

After graduation and return to Thailand, we went on to work in our different fields, however, we periodically gathered to regenerate and keep alive our passion for human resource development. We gained a common platform to realize our passion with the establishment of “Technology Promotion Association (Thailand-Japan)”, briefly TPA (<http://www.tpa.or.th>) in 1973. TPA's ultimate goal is to assist in the transfer of technology, mainly from Japan, to Thailand's industrial sector, in order to enhance its international competitiveness. Working full-time jobs during the day, we met in the evening or even late into the night to discuss, plan and prepare activities for the association. The activities include, for example, organizing technical training and seminars, publishing technical books and journals, and providing calibration services for measuring instruments. We all worked voluntarily to support TPA and to

help promote new production and management technologies from Japan to Thai technicians and engineers.

Starting with a mere minimum of 5-6 full time staffs, while receiving financial support from Japan's former Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) through the Japan-Thailand Economic Cooperation Society (JTECS) – TPA's supportive and understanding partner in Japan, the Association has gradually evolved to be one of the most recognized technological human resource development organizations in Thailand. The Association has around 320 employees as of 2009, with the revenue of about 430 million baht in 2008. TPA's activities in 2008 cover more than 2,000 courses of technical and management training, with almost 70,000 participants, publication of new and reprinted technical and management books more than 120 titles in total, calibration of almost 40,000 working standards for the industrial sector, and so on.

While, TPA's founders had other ambitions, we knew that the accumulation and transfer of knowledge would not suffice for sustained development, that we also needed an institute to stimulate and promote the creation of new knowledge. It was the dream and vision of TPA's founders, to set up an institute for higher education, specializing in technical disciplines. This vision has been seriously discussed and debated throughout TPA's existence over the 36 years or more. However, the project was forced to be delayed, again and again, due to limited financial resources and the financial crisis in 1997.

In early 2004, the time was ripe for our long-standing dream to become a reality, as the demand for technical manpower had surged due to the rapid expansion and growth of Thailand's industrial and service sectors. During the years financial resources available for the project had increased considerably, however, it was still insufficient to fund the entire project. The TPA board of directors held a series of meetings to discuss the future of the project. In the final meeting, during our usual heated discussions, one board member pointed out that though TPA had accrued *only half* the funding required for the project, it would be still difficult to endorse the project. Another board member had a different perspective and he said “We all were moved and motivated by watching NHK's Project X, weren't we? Why not leave a monument to move and motivate our children? We *already have half* the funds needed, let's do it.” At the end of the meeting, the board unanimously endorsed the project.

The new institute was named Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology to symbolize over the three decades of collaboration under strong mutual trust and respect between TPA and JTECS.



Fig.1 At Opening Ceremony of TNI (from right, HRH, myself, the former PM of Japan)

The institute was officially opened on August 1, 2007 with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn presiding over the opening ceremony, and the then Prime Minister of Japan, His Excellency Yoshiro Mori, one of the guests of honor (Fig.1, Fig.2).

In June 2009, the institute



Fig.2 Evolving TNI

comprises three faculties and a department for graduate studies. The faculties are the faculty of engineering, the faculty of information technology, and the faculty of business administration. The number of enrolled students has been rapidly enlarged over the past three years and

it will be further enlarged due to the planned admission (Fig.3).

Thus, I think you could know how TNI was born, with the strong passion and determination of many Monbusho scholars and TPA staff and board members, together with the help, understanding and generous support of JTECS. But this is only the beginning of TNI, through generous support, strong cooperation and collaboration with institutes of Japan. I believe TNI will become a leading university in science and technology in the near future, and be a symbol of cooperation, understanding and friendship between Japan and Thailand.

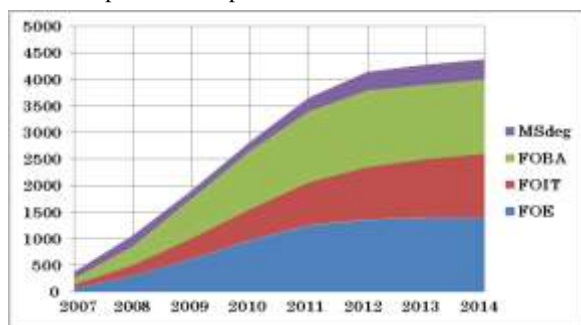


Fig.3 Growing number of students (FOE:Faculty of Eng., FOBA:Faculty of Business Admini., FOIT:Faculty of IT)

News Flash

Prof.Tomonori Aoyama, President of IEICE awarded IEEE ComSoc/KICS Exemplary Global Service Award

IEICE Communications Society

Prof.Tomonori Aoyama, Keio University who serves IEICE as President has received the IEEE ComSoc/KICS Exemplary Global Service Award at IEEE GLOBECOM'09 held in Hawaii on December 5, 2009. This prize was commenced by IEEE in 2007, to foster successful partnerships between IEEE ComSoc and its Sister Societies and to encourage a spirit of mutual support and respect in the international communications community, and Dr. Stephen B. Weinstein, IEEE Life Fellow and Prof.Maurizio Dècina, the Politecnico di Milano, Italy received the same award in 2007 and 2008, respectively. Then, a signing ceremony of Sister Societies was held by IEEE ComSoc, IEICE Communications Society and Korea Information and Communications Society (KICS). Details will be reported in coming issue. (covered by IEICE-TFIPP)

Useful Remarks

Information of International Conferences

APSITT 2010 by IEICE Communications Society

The 8th Asia-Pacific Symposium on Information and Telecommunication Technologies (APSITT 2010) : at Kuching in East Malaysia on June 15-18 in 2010. See details at <http://www.ieice.org/cs/in/APSITT/2010/>.

APARM 2010 by IEICE Engineering Sciences Society

The 4th Asia-Pacific International Symposium on Advanced Reliability and Maintenance Modeling (APARM 2010) at Wellington in New Zealand on December 2-4, 2010. See details at <http://msor.victoria.ac.nz/Events/APARM2010/>.

Through Participation in Database Development Activities on Japanese Excellent Technologies



Hisato Fujisaka, Asse Prof. Dr. Graduate School of Information Sciences, Hiroshima City University Director for Electronic Publication, IEICE Engineering and Sciences Society

Five Japanese academic societies of electrical, information and communication Engineers (IEICE, Information Processing Society of Japan, Institute of Electrical Engineers of Japan, Institute of Image Information and Television Engineers of Japan, Illuminating Engineering Institute of Japan) set up a committee in 2003 where they commenced a project of collecting the details, excellence, social contribution, references, museum pieces and so on, of electrical, information and communication technologies awarded by each institute and systematically making up a database of archives. The five institutes and the Secretariat of Database on Noteworthy Japanese Contributions to Electrical Technologies entrusted by National Institute of Informatics manage the Web site at the moment, to systematize and publish the database. The construction of the database has been supported by JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) "Grant-in-Aid for Publication of Scientific Research Results". The primary purpose of this Web site is to have excellent technologies which Japanese society has created, understood widely by the younger generation.

You can overview quite many technologies which have been contributing the evolution of electrical, information and communication technologies over the past 50 years so that you will surely learn the historical background of technologies leading to your current research topics. Let's visit the site at <http://www.dbjet.jp>.

The IEICE Engineering Sciences Society has provided the information of about 50 representative technologies out of prize winners' research activities which have been awarded with Achievement Award or Best Paper Award since 1970, so far. I was elected as Secretary for Electronic Public Relations of the Society in 2008. Simultaneously devoted to the construction of database covering about 30 technologies of them. Here, I am in charge of selecting people who can amend the technological description of the information packages which the Secretariat of Database on Noteworthy Japanese Contributions to Electrical Technologies has systematized and add more references and completing the information packages with the people. For the time being, the most of selected people are prize winners.

We have learned the personality, passion put out for research activities and a sense of mission in collaborations through communication with each of them. It is difficult to upload these meaningful issues behind the history, into the specified database, we have been much impressed with their talks. It will take much time and need laborious works to complete quite a lot of information packages and deliver them to the Secretariat, on the other hand, we fortunately have the valuable experience of learning something impressive. I am looking forward to getting a chance to talk about it.

Message from TFIPP Secretariat

This issue is delivered also by a free mail magazine "IEICE Global Plaza on Line" with updated IEICE conference calendar, news of scholarships and ICT trends in Asian countries. Whenever you want to receive it, contact Prof. Kenzo Takahashi, TFIPP at global@ieice.org. Back numbers are available at http://www.ieice.org/eng/global_plaza/index.html/.