



AIT

Graduation Address

Professor Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, AIT President,

123rd Graduation Ceremony

22nd May 2015

- H.E. Dr. Subin Pinkayan, Chairman of AIT's Board of Trustees
 - Graduation Speaker and Prominent AIT Alumnus Mr. Kit Teong (Pote) Lee (or Pote Narittakarn)
 - Graduation Speaker and Prominent AIT Alumnus Dr. Yanyong Phataralaoha, Managing Director of Thai Pipe Industry Co. Ltd.
 - Members of AIT's Board of Trustees and Executive Committee
 - Excellencies, Honored Guests and Partners
 - Members of the AIT Alumni, Faculty, Staff
 - Dear Graduands, and Family Members
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Good morning and a very warm welcome to AIT's 123rd Graduation Ceremony.

At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all graduands. This is a very proud moment and a befitting recognition of your hard work, efforts and accomplishments.

Graduation is a day when you should look back, as well as look ahead.

As you rise to receive your degree, please look back at the wonderful time spent at AIT. Graduation is a solemn occasion to pay tribute and respect to all your professors who have mentored you throughout your studies at AIT. For most of you, your graduation may not have been possible without the generous support of donors. So, it is a fitting occasion to express our grateful appreciation to AIT's partners and friends for their continuous support to AIT. Last, but not the least, the support of your family and loved ones has been equally important. Many of them are here with you today, and many more are watching the live telecast of the day's proceedings. It is indeed a proud moment for them too.

Just like all of you today, on the Graduation Day, one young man rose to the stage to receive his degree.

(MORNING SESSION): Today, 4 decades later, one of them has returned to AIT – to witness your graduation. That young graduate of the 1974 batch is our Graduation Speaker today.

Dear Graduands, we are honored to have with us our graduation speaker, a prominent AIT Alumnus, Mr. Pit Teong (Pote) Lee.

Mr. Lee, who graduated in 1974 with a Master's degree in Water Resources Engineering, is a successful entrepreneur, who found the iGROUP (Asia – Pacific),



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which is a global leader in information products, and library technology. He is also the owner of the talk-of-the-town restaurant chain called "the Water Library".

Born in Myanmar and now a naturalized Thai citizen, Mr. Lee serves as a member of the International Advisory Committee of the AIT Library project. He brings to AIT his three decades of expertise in the field of information management services, library automation, e-book publishing and e-resources for our library. He has offered his assurance to help converting our flood-damaged library into a digital-age learning space.

Mr. Lee embodies the true AITian spirit reflected in his very own words "AIT has to make the library beautiful, or not do it at all," which inspired members of the Library Modernization Committee to create a high-tech library facility that will capture people's attention and imagination.

AFTERNOON SESSION: Today, 3 decades later, he has returned to AIT – to witness your graduation. That young graduate of the 1986 is our Graduation Speaker today.

We are honored to have with us our Graduation Speaker and Prominent AIT Alumnus Dr. Yanyong Phataralaoha who completed his doctoral degree in Industrial Engineering & Management from AIT in 1986. Dr. Yanyong has the unique distinction of being one half of an alumni couple, the other most important half is his wife Madam Gantasiri Phataralaoha, whom Dr Yanyong met at AIT when she studied at Environmental Engineering program.

As the Managing Director of Thai Pipe Industry Co. Ltd. Dr. Yanyong took the helm of the family business, founded by his father, after a highly successful career in the military, and steered it into a regional power house in recent decades.

In recent years, AIT has been putting a lot of effort to strengthen its industrial partnership, to complement the existing donor-driven model. Worthy of special mention is the pioneer partnership model, established with the Thai Pipe Industry Co., Ltd. (Thai Pipe), under the great vision of Dr. Yanyong. As the largest producer of PVC pipes in Southeast Asia, Thai Pipe has earned tremendous goodwill due to its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. Aimed at human resources development for the region, Thai Pipe has established the Thai Pipe Scholarship (TPS) Fund at AIT, which shall be used to support students from rural Thailand, Indochina and Myanmar.

In addition, being alumnus of Virginia Military Institute (or VMI), Dr. Yanyong also provides one full scholarship for VMI graduate to pursue a master's degree at AIT. This must be the first time in AIT's history that a full scholarship is awarded to an American citizen. Serving as a gesture of appreciation to his U.S. alma mater, this scholarship will provide an opportunity for a young American to experience postgraduate study in the context of Asia and networking with a broad range of Asian students.

Aside from this, Dr. Yanyong has also made a very generous contribution towards the AIT Library Modernization project. We are truly heartened by Dr. Yanyong's reason for his generous support to AIT - quoting his own words - "I am indebted to AIT, and it's time to give back."

Dear Graduands, as we mention about the library modernization project, this is an opportune time to express our sincere gratitude to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha



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Chakri Siridhorn for graciously patronizing the Library Modernization in this auspicious year of HRH's 60th year anniversary.

We should also recognize "the collective show of spirit" of numerous donors who have come forward with their unstinted support of AIT's Library Project. In particular, we are grateful for the generous supports of many big corporates, including SCG, Red Bull, iGroup, PTT, Bangchak Petroleum, Thai Pipe, AIS, Amata, and Nawarat Pattanakarn among others. For the first time in AIT history, a fundraising campaign has been successful, as it has exceeded not only the target and but also the expectations of the AIT Community.

I am confident that the AIT Library Modernization coupled with the ongoing campus renovation will make our AIT campus, "a home away from home" for all international students. However, I may take this occasion to apologize for any inconveniences that may have been caused by the renovation work. I wish to thank you for your kind understanding and patience. As AIT alumni, you are always most welcome to visit your alma mater, and experience first-hand the newly renovated campus and the modern Library once it is complete.

As a residential campus, AIT aims to be a "Global Village for Future Leaders". By exposing and learning diverse cultures on a day-to-day basis, AIT students naturally learn to appreciate diversity. This rare experience helps AIT alumni become "not only" competitive in their professions, "but also" very constructive in their interactions with other human beings. As AIT graduates, you have a high chance to be "who's who Success Stories" in both the public and private sectors. Our alumni continuously make a mark all over the world. To quote just two instances, presently the Premier of Taiwan and Thailand's Governor of the Bank of Thailand are AIT's alumni.

Although many scientific and engineering developments of the region were groomed at AIT, yet, we did not see AIT appearing in global university rankings. The fact is -- AIT was never included in all major world-university rankings because AIT is not a comprehensive university, and it does not operate under the ambit of any country.

However, with the determination of the present Administration, for the first time in its history, AIT has participated in a major international university-ranking, the so-called U-Multirank. This is very exciting. U-Multirank is the newest independent ranking system of universities, supported by the European Union. U-Multirank applies a methodology that reflects a wide variety of dimensions in an international context. The result - in the international dimension, AIT tied for the top rank with other 41 universities, out of more than 1,200 universities around the world. In fact, it emerged as the only university in Asia to receive full scores under 'international orientation'. In addition, AIT also received full scores in two other categories, *the size-normalized number of publication* and *the external research income*. In this occasion, I would like to recognize the contribution of our faculty, staff and all students. This positive outlook that we are enjoying today would not have been possible, without their cooperation and hard work.

On a sadder note, as you are aware, Nepal has been devastated by the massive earthquake that struck the country on 25th April, followed by subsequent aftershocks. Our heart goes out to Nepal, which is our valued partner. AIT is proud to have reached out to Nepal, and is working very closely with the Nepalese government, our Nepalese partners and alumni. One key contribution that AIT is sharing is our Habitech technology, which helps build affordable eco-friendly houses. This can emerge as a critical component in Nepal's reconstruction plan, especially in light of AIT's past experience with similar housing and community projects in Thailand after the Tsunami, and in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis.



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In addition, our schools and various centers also provide post-earthquake relief work in the areas of remote sensing and digital imaging, water, sanitation and hygiene, and emergency communications. Faculty, staff and students from AIT have visited Nepal, and are making meaningful impacts in earthquake-affected areas. All in all, AIT remains committed to assist Nepal in its long-term reconstruction.

MY DEAR GRADUANDS, I stated earlier: "Graduation is a day when you should look back, as well as look ahead." It is time to look forward.

Life is a journey, and all accomplishments you have achieved during your precious period at AIT should be taken as a starting point for further achievements. Graduation is not an end in itself; it is a part of the larger journey of your life. You will soon join other AIT alumni who are shining examples of success stories in more than 90 countries around the world. When you actually leave AIT, you will always treasure the fond memories of your quality time, especially of your hard work, and your association with your professors and fellow students.

Like many alumni, and like some members among you, who donated to our library project, one day, the rest of you will also discover that giving back to AIT is not only great, but also makes you feel really great. It helps this great institution continue to serve the future generations of world-class citizens.

Thank you and congratulations once again!