

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership

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The partnership between the Southeast Asian Geotechnical Society (SEAGS) and the Asian Institute of Technology dates back to 1967. Both SEAGS and the Geotechnical Program at AIT was the brain child of Dr. Za Chieh Moh with the help of a large number of individuals and organizations contributing in the developments. As we are coming to the end of 2012, it is good to look back on the positive side of this partnership. I was fortunate to have worked with a large number of Distinguished Presidents of SEAGS.

The General Committee of SEAGS in 1987 and those played a key role in the development of SEAGS are presented below.



Southeast Asian Geotechnical Society

It is a most rewarding experience to have associated with SEAGS since 1973. The Presidents I worked with as Secretary General are the late Tan Sri Prof Chin from Malaysia, the late Prof. Peter Lumb from Hong Kong, the late Dr. Tan Swan Beng from Singapore, Dr. Ted Brand from UK, DR. Ting Wen Hui from Malaysia, Prof. Seng Lip Lee from Singapore, Dr Ou Chin Der from Taiwan, Dr. Ooi Tiek Aun from Malaysia, Dr. Surachat Sambandaraksa from Thailand, Dr. John Li from Taiwan. I have also worked with Prof. K. Y. Yong from Singapore and Dr. Chung Tien Chin from Taiwan, as a G.C. Member. I am greatly indebted to all of them.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)

SEAGS has always sought international co-operation and is also a strong arm of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering (ISSMGE). Our Society conferences always had very distinguished Geotechnical Experts and Professors giving Guest Lectures and also participating. The First Conference had Prof. Lambe from MIT as the Guest lecturer. The second conference in Singapore had Prof Ralph Peck as the Guest lecturer.



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In the third conference in HK, the late Prof. Victor de Mello was the Guest lecturer. Prof. Lambe was named as the Hero in Geotechnical Engineering by the Geo-Institute of ASCE. My first attendance in a Geotechnical Conference was the 4th SEAGC in the Equatorial Hotel in KL. We all went from AIT to participate in this event and that team included Drs. Moh, Brand, Peter Brenner and myself. There, I met Prof. Harry Poulos who was described to me as the most famous Geotechnical Personality. The 9th International Conference in Tokyo organised by Prof. Masami Fukuoka was truly an exceptional Event. He lined up all the Geotechnical Personalities from Prof. Peck, Prof. Meyerhof, Prof. Skempton, and so many others. Just before that Conference we had the 5th SEAGC in Bangkok. We had Prof. Morgenstern as the Guest Lecturer; also the late Prof. Chin, the late Dr. Arthur Penman, and Dr. Ian Donald from Australia. The most memorable event associated with that was the Soft Clay Symposium organised by Drs Brand and Peter Brenner. We had personalities from Nils Flodin, Ove Eide, Elmo Dibiagio, Bengt Broms, Sven Hansbo, and Harry Poulos. Dick Parry, the late Peter Wroth, George Pilot, Mike Duncan, Wayne Clough and many others. Prof. Jamiolkowsky also attended in the event. In the above picture you can see them revisiting us in Bangkok and in KL, Taipei, Singapore as well. Prof. Fukuoka became the ISSMGE President in 1977 after Prof Kerisel. Prof de Mello in 1981, Prof. Bengt Broms in 1985, Prof. Morgenstern in 1989, Prof. Jamiolkowsky in 1994, Prof. Ishihara in 1997. The subsequent Presidents were William Van Impe, Prof. Pedro Pinto and now Prof. Jean Louis Briaud. Dick Parry who was a teacher of mine at Cambridge was the Secretary General of ISSMGE succeeding the late Prof. Kevin Nash and for a brief time Prof. John Burland.

Prof. John Burland was a Guest Lecturer in the 12th SEAGC in KL. Over a thousand geotechnical experts visited AIT and attended the conferences in Bangkok. The late Prof. Harry Seed, the late Pierre Londe,

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)

Prof. Walter Wittke, Prof. Jim Mitchell are just a few names. The Kevin Nash Award was given to the late Prof. de Beer, the late Prof. Harry Seed, Prof. John Burland, Prof. Jim Mitchell, Prof. Harry Poulos and Prof. Sven Hansbo.



Asian Institute of Technology

On the AIT side there were many memorable activities. The gold medal Award to HM the King on the occasion of the sixth cycle celebrations as arranged by Prof. Prinya our Colleague was a remarkable event. Also, the 9th Southeast Asian Regional Conference chaired by HR Princess Sirindhorn was also a grand success. During the 40th Year Anniversary we had a grant event at AIT. Most of the former AIT Faculty attended this event from the Civil & Environmental Engineering side. The Milton Bender Lecture Series was also a great success. The First Lecture in the series was given in March 1993 by Professor Andrew Schofield, a Fellow of the Royal Society of London on the most admired fields of Centrifuged Model Tests and Critical State Soil Mechanics. The 1994 Lecture was given by Prof. Ray W. Clough, a pioneer in the Development of Finite Element Analysis. Prof. Clough has also been outstanding in the fields of dynamic analysis of structures, experimental research in structural behavior during earthquakes, and the development of the Earthquake Research Center at Berkeley with its shake table and other related facilities. The 1995 lecture, third in the series, was given by Prof. Kiyoshi Horikawa, President of Saitama University and Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo. Prof. Horikawa, again a pioneer researcher in Coastal Engineering, brought to AIT his contributions and experiences in expanding the knowledge on the Coastal Engineering discipline, particularly the near shore dynamics and coastal transport mechanism.

Prof. Jorg Imberger from the University of Perth, Australia and an eminent environmentalist who has participated and directed high-level projects on Water Quality and Environmental Management throughout the world from the Bay of Venice to the lakes of Chile and Japan, gave the Fourth Lecture in 1996. In 1996, Prof. Jorg Imberger was awarded the Stockholm Water Foundation Prize for his outstanding contributions to the Water Industry. Professor Douglas Wright, a distinguished Structural Engineer and a University Professor and Administrator at the University of Waterloo in Canada, gave the Fifth Lecture in 1997 on "Engineering the New Economy".

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)



Asian Institute of Technology

Professor Amir Pnueli, a Science Mathematician cum Computer Scientist at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, gave the 1998 Lecture. Professor Amir Pnueli recently received the world's most prestigious Turing Award in Computer Science dubbed as the "Nobel Prize in Computer Science". Prof. Pnueli developed sophisticated methods for verifying the correctness and the reliability of computer systems, including software and hardware. These innovative systems control crucial aspects of contemporary life, such as the operation of nuclear power stations, missile launching, aircraft navigation, functioning of medical equipment and communications.

Professor Cham Tao Soon, a past-President of the Institution of Engineers, Singapore (IES) and the President of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will be the Year 2000 Bender Lecturers at AIT on the occasion of the Information Technology Conference August 1-4, 2000. The title of Prof. Cham's Lecture is "The Impact of Information Technology on University Education". The Asian Institute of Technology introduced the prestigious Milton Bender Lecture Series in Engineering, Science, Technology and Management to honor the first AIT President, Dr. Milton E. Bender. The lecture is given at the Institute once a year by distinguished University Professors selected on a global basis. Educated at Raffles Institution and a Singapore State scholar at the University of Malaysia, Prof. Cham was also a commonwealth Scholar at the Cambridge University, where he received his Ph.D. Prof. Cham, a former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at the National University of Singapore was the founder-President of NTU in 1981. Under his able leadership, NTU has become one of the finest universities offering higher education. Prof. Cham, a foreign member of the Royal Academies of Sweden and UK is an Honorary Fellow of St. Catherine's College in Cambridge. He has also received honorary Doctorate Degrees from many Universities in UK and Japan.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)



Asian Institute of Technology

The last Milton Bender lecture was given by Dr. Za Chieh Moh; concurrently he was also given an Honorary Doctorate Degree by AIT.

Dr. Za-Chieh Moh had his undergraduate education at National Taiwan University in 1953, graduated with the Sc.D. degree from MIT in 1961, and since has maintained a continuing relationship with Prof. Lambe and other eminent geotechnical engineers in all parts of the world.

Dr. Za-Chieh Moh joined the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in 1965 and was given the special task of establishing a field of study in Soil Mechanics. This he was able to accomplish within a year. The period that followed constituted the formative years for geotechnical engineering in Asia. Over the years, several leading geotechnical engineering professors have joined the Institute, and the Institute is now well known in geotechnical engineering circles all over the world. Nearly 1000 graduates of AIT with post-graduate education in geotechnical engineering are working in many parts of Asia and elsewhere; many of these graduates hold key positions in universities, government, and the private sectors.

In early 1976, Dr. Za-Chieh Moh moved to consulting practice, and soon established himself as a leading geotechnical consultant in Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. Some of the important projects carried out by him include: geotechnical and seismic study of the Kaohsiung Cross Harbour Tunnel; geotechnical study for the reclamation of an abandoned river channel for development in Taipei; design and instrumentation of a 30-m retaining structure; and instrumentation for deep excavations and geotechnical studies for mass rapid transit systems. **There are a large number of other projects as well.** In the international field, Dr. Moh made notable contributions when he served as the Vice-President for Asia of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Foundation Engineering (ISSMFE) in 1973 to 1977. Additionally, he has served as a panelist, a general reporter and session chairman in many international and regional conferences. To be able to contribute significantly in geotechnics demands the virtues of good sense and sound judgement, both possessed abundantly by Dr.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)

Moh. In consequence, he has been called upon to serve on a very large number of technical committees of ISSMFE and its national societies.

The late Dr. Chai Mukthabant was also awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree and so was Khun Kasame Chatikavanich the former Governor of EGAT. Prof. Worsak Kanokkulchai organised the AIT Hall of Fame during the 50th Anniversary of AIT.



The AIT Hall of Fame really brought great prestige to AIT. It would be nice if this event can be continued in the future as well. Unfortunately, AIT was badly affected by the floods. This was a tremendous set back to AIT. However, AIT was able to recover back and have a grand graduation ceremony in December this year.

The astonishing recovery of AIT and the 118th Graduation Ceremony. Thanks to Prof. Irandoust the President of AIT and the most valued contribution by the Faculty, Staff and most importantly the alumni.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN GEOTECHNICAL SOCIETY, THE PAST, SEAGS – AIT Partnership (Continued)



The success of SEAGS-AIT and the new AGSSEA is mostly due to the international co-operation and goodwill. This trend must continue. Both SEAGS and AIT enjoyed

Very strong support, while we cannot single out any one of them, the contributions from Japan, Thailand, Taiwan and indeed a very large number of countries within and without Asia and the international and national organizations are worthy of mentioning. The current picture of AIT before graduation is remarkable indeed.