

**EIT-JSCE Joint International Symposium 2009  
- Geotechnical Infrastructure Asset Management -  
Participation Report**

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1. Introduction

The EIT<sup>1</sup>-JSCE<sup>2</sup> Joint International Symposium 2009 - Geotechnical Infrastructure Asset Management - was held on September 7 and 8, 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand. Of the two-day symposium, September 7 was dedicated to general presentation sessions, and September 8 to students' and young researchers' presentation sessions.

This was the eighth holding of the symposium, which started in 2002 as a joint event by faculty members in fields related to rock engineering at universities in Japan's Kansai region led by Kyoto University, and those at universities in Thailand led by the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). As shown in Table 1, a variety of subjects ranging from rock engineering, geotechnical engineering and resources engineering to related fields have been discussed as main themes over the course of the eight joint events.

Table 1: History of Symposium Themes

No.	Year	Title
1	2002	EIT- JAPAN-AIT Joint Workshop on Rock Engineering
2	2003	EIT- JAPAN-AIT Joint Workshop on Modern Computer Methods, and Modern Technology on Computer in Rock Engineering
3	2004	EIT- JAPAN-AIT Joint Workshop on Geo-engineering in Groundwater, Land Subsidence, Exploration Geophysics and Underground Excavations
4	2005	EIT- JAPAN-AIT Joint Workshop on Geo-Risk Engineering & Management
5	2006	EIT-Japan-AIT Joint Seminar on Geo-Risk Engineering - Monitoring and Geo-Exploration -
6	2007	EIT-JSCE Joint Seminar on Rock Engineering 2007
7	2008	EIT-JSCE Joint International Symposium 2008 - Monitoring & Modeling -
8	2009	EIT-JSCE Joint International Symposium 2009 - Geotechnical Infrastructure Asset Management -

<sup>1</sup> EIT: Engineering Institute of Thailand

<sup>2</sup> JSCE: Japan Society of Civil Engineers

Through these eight joint events, it goes without saying that exchanges in relative education and research fields have deepened between Thai and Japan. But in addition to this, participants from Japan have also gained an array of priceless experiences. The fifth symposium (2006) was held under declaration of martial law following a coup d'etat to displace then-Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, which is today the cause for ongoing political instability in Thailand. Despite the declaration of martial law, New Bangkok International Airport (Suvarnabhumi Airport) opened during this symposium, and many participants chanced upon the rare experience of entering the country at then-Bangkok International Airport (Don Mueang International Airport) and departing from New Bangkok International Airport. The seventh symposium (2008) was held under decree of a state of emergency triggered by a clash between the anti-government force People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) and the pro-government People's Power Party (PPP) just before the symposium.

In addition to the general presentation sessions which have been held since the first symposium, the students' and young researchers' presentation sessions have been held since the sixth event (2007) to provide Japanese and Thai students and young researchers and practitioners an opportunity to give presentations in the English language.

## 2. Symposium content

As indicated in Table 1, the main theme of this symposium was Geotechnical Infrastructure Asset Management. This topic is related to the GCOE<sup>3</sup> project (Global Center for Education and Research on Human Security Engineering for Asian Megacities; see <http://hse.gcoe.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>) currently carried out by Kyoto University. Below is a summary of the content of the program.

### (1) General presentation sessions (Day 1; September 7)

On Day 1 of the symposium, Dr. Noppadol Phienwej (AIT) and I gave addresses at the opening ceremony as representatives of Thailand and Japan respectively (see Photo 1), followed by a keynote speech by Prof. Kittetep Fuenkajorn (Suranaree University) titled "An Overview of Rock Mechanics Researches in Thailand" in which projects related to rock



Photo 1: Opening address (left: Dr. Noppadol; right: writer)

<sup>3</sup> GCOE: Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Global Center of Excellence program

engineering and research trends in related fields in Thailand from the past up to the present were introduced. Since rock engineering is positioned as a relatively new field in Thailand, as Dr. Noppadol has explained at the joint events many times before, some participants were under the impression that research in the country fell behind compared with Japan. However, data is being compiled on the various experiments vigorously conducted in Japan in the past which can be interpreted as basic research, and young researchers are being fostered – for example, Prof. Kittetep's has 24 graduate students in his research team. In contrast to the situation in Japan, where poor energy in fields related to rock engineering is being pointed out, I felt envious of the lively situation in Thailand.

In the general presentation sessions following the opening ceremony, a total of 14 oral presentations were given (4 from Thailand; 10 from Japan) and an active question and answer session was carried out.

(2) Students' and young researchers' presentation sessions (Day 2; September 8)

A total of 27 oral presentations (14 from Thailand; 13 from Japan) were given at the students' and young researchers' presentation sessions on Day 2. The Thai speakers came from three universities: the AIT, Kasetsart University and Suranaree University.

In the first students' and young researchers' presentation sessions two years ago, I had the impression that the English language proficiency of Japanese speakers fell behind that of Thai speakers in the presentations and the question and answer sessions. In the third sessions this year, however, although Japanese speakers were unable to fully keep up in the question and answer session, this was apparently due to a lack of experience and might have been the same had the session been carried out in the Japanese language. With regard to the presentations themselves, I feel that Japanese speakers are improving each year.

Participating Japanese faculty members act as judges and select excellent speakers in the students' and young researchers' presentation sessions each year. In this symposium, six speakers were awarded as excellent speakers at the closing ceremony (see Photo 2).

### 3. Conclusion

As mentioned in 1., the symposium welcomed the eighth holding since it started in 2002. While the Thai-Japanese joint symposium is already established as a regular event, with the number of Thai speakers



Photo 2: Awarding of excellent speakers  
(left: Mr. Kitaoka (Kansai University))

surpassing that of Japanese speakers this year, the students' and young researchers' presentation sessions are also starting to gain the cooperation of Thai education and research institutions related to rock engineering and geotechnical engineering, in addition to the AIT.

As I quote the Japanese proverb in the introduction of the joint event each year: "perseverance is power." And with this basic concept, I hope to continue these activities into the future.

I wish to thank all participants and ask for their cooperation in upcoming events.