

## Report of my contribution to the Biogeography of Southeast Asia 2000 Congress.

First to all, I would like to thank the Rennie Committee for awarding me a travel cost to attend the Biogeography of Southeast Asia 2000 Congress. The conference was between 4 to 9 of June 2000 in Leiden, The Netherlands. It has been a very successful and impressive meeting, with almost a hundred participants, from leading geologists and biologists working in Southeast Asia region, both Western and SE Asian people, to PhD students from the region. I have made relationship with these people and will develop collaboration with them when I am working in Thailand.

My contribution for the congress was to give an oral presentation and present my poster to the conference, in the topic "High intra-individual variation in ITS sequences in *Aeschynanthus* (Gesneriaceae): implications for phylogenetics". Although it was the first time I had a chance to give a talk in a high-profile international meeting, my presentation went very well within an expected time and received many attentions from the audiences. Many of them, especially other biologists from the United State of America, went to comment my presentation as a clear, well-organised, and interesting one.

My talk also reported the major clades of the plant genus *Aeschynanthus* that reflect the biogeographical boundary of Wallace's Line, which is one of the most important biogeographical boundaries in Southeast Asia. This meeting then gave me a great opportunity to discuss my research with leading biologists and geologists working on SE Asian biogeography. Mrs. Lynne Parenti, an expert in cladistic biogeography from Smithsonian Institution, USA, showed her interest in that result and encouraged me to continue my works on *Aeschynanthus* for a clearer historic view of its evolution.

Furthermore, because my presentation was the only one that showed the plant molecular systematics and how to interpret the phylogenetic tree to biogeographic knowledge, this made some geologists expressed their interest in using my data for their geological works. In vice versa, I have also learned from presentations of those geologists about a better understanding of plate tectonics, climate and seawater level changing in SE Asia through the past time, which are very important to discuss my results in the future. The talks on biogeography and biodiversity of other plants and animals, and the discussions on methodology also provided me many helpful ideas for my research.

Moreover, because my talk is about the problem of intra-individual sequence polymorphism, at the internal transcribed spacer (ITS) region of nuclear ribosomal DNA, which is often used for plant phylogenetics. Thereafter, I had a discussion with Mr. Charles Cannon from Duke University, USA, who had got the same problem with this DNA region in another plant. This let us sharing our ideas on that problem and will exchange our information about it in the future. At the end of the meeting, I also discussed with a botanist from Kew Garden about how to prepare a silica gel dried-specimen properly, which is crucial for my experiment on *Aeschynanthus*.

Not only participating in the conference, I also took this chance to go to Amsterdam Hortus Botanicus (Botanic Garden) and Leiden Botanic Garden for visiting their plant collection from SE Asia. In the garden of Leiden I studied *Aeschynanthus* and other Gesneriaceae collection over there. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has a close relationship with Leiden's and we have helped them identified their specimen for several times . This visiting also gave me an opportunity to meet Mr. Ed de Vogel who is an expert

of SE Asian botany, and learned about his contribution to Flora of Thailand project, especially the current research in Orchidaceae.

For conclusion, I have used my time in Leiden to a best effect. My participation in this congress was very successful, both from my presentation and also a network I could establish with other researchers in the field of SE Asian biology. Eventually, the experience from this conference should give me an achievement in my future career.