

Key Note Speech on Japan's Role in Technology Transfer in ASEAN Countries

by

Korn Dabbaransi*

Professor Noranit Setabutr, Miss Yoko Sakamoto, Distinguished friends from the ASEAN Countries and Japan, Ladies and Gentlemen.

First of all I would like to thank the Japan Foundation and Thammasat University for extending the invitation to me to make it possible for me to be with you this morning, and I would like all of you to make a correction in the program. I understand that the program still specifies me as a minister of the Prime Minister's Office. It was in that capacity that the invitation was sent out to me and if the organizing committee keeps postponing the seminar until August I could be in that position again. (audience laugh)

There was political unrest during 18-21 May which led to the dissolving of the Parliament. Anyway I was trying to communicate to the organizing committee in an attempt to tell them to find somebody else to come and preside over this very important seminar. But I had to admit that the organizing committee was quite stubborn. They just refuse to accept my request. So that is why I am with you here this morning. I have to admit also that the subject of this seminar has very special place in my heart, because as a former minister in charge of *industrialization* of the country, as a former minister in charge of the *Board of Investment* on behalf of the government of Thailand, I attended so many meetings and seminars both in Thailand and in foreign countries and most, if not all, meetings concerning investment, technology transfer seemed to be raised as a most interesting subject. But none of the participants, including government officials and individuals from the private sector, really touched upon one aspect of the subject that has been in my mind all along. When we say the word "technology transfer", on the surface, it means the transfer of technology from one country to the other, but I always look for a much more deeper aspect of that particular meaning. Now I am very pleased to hear Miss Sakamoto touch upon that particular point which was the first time that I have heard anyone from Japan or expatriates working (living) in Thailand mention this point. That is, when we say "transfer technology," what do we really mean by technology transfer? The success of Thailand's economic growth, the success of export industry and the enormous success of Thailand's investment scenario in the past five years have contributed so much to the enormous amount of Japanese confidence in the Thai economy. We have to give credit to the Japanese firms and their sincere interest to come to invest here. But the word "technology transfer" is still at the back of our mind all along. Miss Sakamoto mentioned technology transfer in two senses. First, the transfer of hardware and, second, the transfer of human technology. I would like to say that the transfer of hardware or any other mechanical or related equipments is nothing new. It has been taken place

* Mr. Korn Dabbaransi was a Former Minister of the Prime Minister's Office in the Chatchai Chunhawan Cabinet.