

Date: Thu, 16 Aug 2001 08:52:40 +0700
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To: msm@wjh.harvard.edu
Subject: Greetings

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Dear Mat,

Nearly two decades have passed since we last met. The memory of having an opportunity to working with you on the "yellow rain" is still vivid on my mind. I like to think that the work had contributed in someway in the ending of the cold war.

After the field work with you and Tom, and subsequently a field work with the US Chemical/Biological Warfare Team led by a person name "Don"(no last name!), I spent a three and a half year stint with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Most of the time, I stationed in Jakarta, Indonesia. The work took me to a few interesting places e.g. Poland in 1988, traveled "on-the-road to Mandalay in 1989, and in early 1990 spent nearly a month in Hanoi during the period when the cold war wasn't quite end yet. I also met with Tom a couple of times. Last May, I visited Cornell and had a home-made pizza and a wonderful evening at his place. I learned from him that you are in good health. Does French wine has anything to do with it?

After my interlude with FAO in Java, I was fortunate that the Kasetsart University, rightly or wrongly, decided to take me back. Apart from my not-so-heavy teaching load, I have been given some odd assignments from the university. Currently, I am directing the university's Center of Agricultural Biotechnology. We in Thailand are trying to catch up with a genomic era too, although it seems to me that there are a lot of catching up to do. Our center has also been given a task by the government to run a consortium for agricultural biotechnology which consists of five major public universities. Since I am not a molecular biologist by training, I am very much handicapped and have been trying very hard not to look like a know-nothing science administrator. Not too much success, methink.

Anyway, a representative of the US Trade Commission found out that our program has a few million dollars to spend on scientific equipment, so I have been invited to participate in "Orientation Visit" to the US. Most of the OV program is centering around Boston. Since I have never been to Boston before and I have not seen you for nearly two decades to hear good stories, I gladly accept the invitation. I think. I'll be in Boston ca 3-10 October. I do hope that I will have an opportunity for a visit with you, if the program allow me and you are free, that is.

With warm regards, I remain
Pongthep