

## **An acceptance speech for ATS award 2016 in environment**

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It is my honour to receive the Anglo-Thai Society academic excellence award in environment. I am grateful for the Royal Thai Government scholarship under the DPST program for support throughout my Master's and Ph. D. in the UK.

I studied tropical forests, which are well known for their high biodiversity and importance in stabilizing the world climate. Tropical forests are changing because of climate change and their conversion to agriculture. My Ph. D. research was on a climate change experiment in Panama, a 'hot-spot' for tropical ecology research. I studied roots in particular – most people have studied leaves and trunks, but these all depend on roots. My most interesting result is that tropical trees are continuously producing roots which last for only a few days – this changes our understanding of how trees grow – I am the first to discover this in tropical forests, but it is likely to be true throughout the tropical world – it is just that no-one has looked for it. My new results will be used in the models of forest growth and the generation of climate.

My research in Panama changed fundamental understanding of how tropical forests function, which can be applied to future multi-disciplinary research in Thailand and will benefit forest resource management. I hope to build a strong research group in tropical forest ecology in Thailand and encourage national and international collaboration in tropical forest research. Importantly we also need to narrow the gap between academia and the public using 'science communication' that will increase understanding of the importance of tropical forests.

Finally, I would like to thank my sponsors again the Royal Thai Government scholarship, as well as the University of Cambridge, the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute and of course my supervisor Dr. Tanner. And thanks to the judging panel and to you, the audience for participating.