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## Choose Your Love, Love Your Choice

*Attorney Suebsiri Taweepon and his Passion for Intellectual Property Law*

By [Yen-Chia Chen](#)

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### Suebsiri Taweepon *Attorney-at-Law, Tilleke & Gibbins*

**Tilleke & Gibbins Int'l Ltd., Thailand**  
Attorney-at-Law, IP Division, 2004 - present

**Duke University School of Law**  
LL.M. (emphasis on IP & Info. Tech.), 2009

**Thammasat University**  
LL.M. in Int'l Trade Reg., 2007

**The Supreme Court of Thailand**  
Legal Officer, 2002 - 2004

**Chulalongkorn University**  
LL.B., 2001



## A Career of Personal Interests

The rapid change of technological innovation in the globalization era has not only changed the landscape of intellectual property law, but also redefined the practice of intellectual property law. It has also brought new challenges to worldwide legal professionals in their daily work. But for [Suebsiri Taweepon](#), an attorney in the Intellectual Property Department at [Tilleke & Gibbins International Ltd. \(Tilleke & Gibbins\)](#) in Thailand, the

evolving intellectual property law is where his passion lies. “I am passionate about new technology, various aspects of design, good music, arts, and brand strategy, all of which coincidentally and perfectly fit the area of intellectual property law,” said Suebsiri. Suebsiri’s interest in intellectual property law accompanies his career development and turns his practice into an enjoyable job that fits him. As an intellectual property lawyer, Suebsiri handles a wide range of matters relating to intellectual property law in his daily work. He serves clients from all over the world and helps his clients to protect their intellectual property rights. In 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011, the “Asialaw Leading Lawyers Survey” identified Suebsiri as one of Asia’s leading business lawyers in the area of intellectual property law.



Suebsiri emphasizes the importance of gaining hand-on practical experience because such experience helps him to develop his interest in intellectual property law. “It is not easy to know what area of law you are really keen on while you are in school,” said Suebsiri. “You need to have a chance to practice it.” Today Suebsiri primarily practices in intellectual property law. However, Suebsiri did not plan to practice in this area when pursuing his bachelor of law degree at [Chulalongkorn University](#) in the early stage of his life. It was until Suebsiri studied in the LL.M. program at [Thammasat University](#) did he take his first intellectually property law class in his life ever. Nevertheless, what helped Suebsiri develop his interest in intellectual property law was when he worked as a legal officer at the Supreme Court of Thailand.

Working as a legal officer at the Supreme Court of Thailand was an important stage in Suebsiri’s life as it helped him realize what area of law he wanted to practice in the future. “I began my career as a legal officer at the Supreme Court of Thailand, where I was responsible for researching and assisting with the preparation of Supreme Court decisions,” said Suebsiri. According to Suebsiri, a unique and practical feature of working as legal officers at the Supreme Court of Thailand is that all legal officers are required to rotate in assisting several different Supreme Court judges in every quarter of the year. “Fortunately, I was frequently appointed to assist several Supreme Court judges whose major areas of responsibility are intellectual property practices,” Suebsiri noted. “Their professionalism and approach to jurisprudence played an important role in inspiring my interest in intellectual property law,” Suebsiri added. It was also during this work experience that Suebsiri began to realize that intellectual property law was his choice of legal practice for the future. Later when Suebsiri began his private practice at the Intellectual Property Department at Tilleke & Gibbins, he was glad he made that choice. Suebsiri knew that practicing in the area of intellectual property law was the right choice for him because, “I have the chance to practice intellectual property law every day,” said Suebsiri.

## Pursuit for Success in the Global Marketplace

After years of private practice, Suebsiri decided to pursue an advanced legal education in the United States (U.S.) in order to prepare himself for his pursuit of success in today’s global marketplace. “The U.S. intellectual property law system has a profound and undeniable impact on the Thai intellectual property system,” said Suebsiri. “Studying the U.S. approach provides me a valuable opportunity to gain new perspective on both systems.” In 2008, Suebsiri went to the LL.M. program at [Duke University School of Law](#). “My decision to apply for the LL.M. program at Duke Law was motivated by its famous program in intellectual property law,” he noted. The advanced legal education that Suebsiri received in the U.S. has had a positive impact on his career development as an intellectual property lawyer. “By expanding my knowledge of U.S. intellectual property practices, I positioned myself to more effectively engage in the type of comparative analysis that is essential for success in today’s global marketplace, particularly for serving clients from all over the world,” Suebsiri emphasized.

Other than personal intellectual pursuit, Suebsiri also missed his student life when studying abroad. “There are a lot of things I miss about my life as a student at Duke LL.M. program such as the nice and cozy library, the well-developed legal environment of the law school, the friendly atmosphere, several outstanding professors ... etc.” “Most importantly,” Suebsiri noted, “my good friends from all over the world.” “They proved to me that true friendship can really happen even when getting to know each other in just a few months.”



## Dedicated to Education

Suebsiri personally believes that everyone has responsibility in serving his or her home country and society. It is also his belief to be dedicated to education and seek to pass on his knowledge and experience to the next generation of Thai law students. Therefore, in addition to practicing as a lawyer, Suebsiri is also a part-time lecturer teaching intellectual property law at his alma mater, Chulalongkorn University. “Working as a part-time lecturer certainly fulfills my social obligations and personal belief,” said Suebsiri. “I have always aspired to something to serve the public by utilizing my legal experiences.” “Teaching at Chulalongkorn University is one of my dream jobs,” he noted. “After completing my study in the U.S., I planned to serve as a part-time lecturer for intellectual property law at Chulalongkorn University and/or other universities so that I could share the knowledge and experience I gained from my work with the next generation of Thai law students.” “This also facilitates me to play a role in the development of the standardization of Thai intellectual property laws, directly and efficiently.”

In addition, Suebsiri further mentioned that teaching is also learning at the same time. “The best way to judge one’s understanding of a subject matter is to try to help someone else to understand the topic,” he noted. Suebsiri has always input many hours of preparation before delivering each of his classes. “I find it very helpful for brushing up some basic knowledge that sometimes I missed,” said Suebsiri. “Sometimes some brilliant students will ask me demanding questions that I did not expect,” he added. “That helps me to sharpen my skill and knowledge in intellectual property law.”

## Enhancing Public Awareness of Intellectual Property’s Importance

Over the years, Suebsiri has persistently given speeches in different forums to enhance public awareness of the important role of intellectual property. In Suebsiri’s practice so far, he has observed that many of his Thai clients have not yet perceived the consequences of failing to properly protect their own intellectual property. “Many of them view the comprehensive protection of intellectual property as an expense, rather than as an investment to protect or defend them in the future,” said Suebsiri.



Being aware of this situation, “Tilleke & Gibbins has continuously attempted to educate the Thai public about the important role of intellectual property in fostering an economy based on innovation – a goal that Thailand is trying to achieve,” Suebsiri noted. “This commitment to educate the public has led to my appointment as a speaker in several intellectual property forums, where I have emphasized the important role of intellectual property,” he added. “These have been valuable opportunities for me to exchange opinions about Thai intellectual property law with my peers and meet people in the same industry.”

## Volunteer in Promoting Peace Education & Cross-Cultural Friendship

Other than legal practice and teaching, in the past 14 years Suebsiri has been consistently dedicated to volunteer work in promoting peace education and cross-cultural friendship. Over years he has persistently engaged in the activity of the [CISV](#), a charitable and volunteer organization which promotes cross-cultural friendship and peace education.

According to Suebsiri, the objective of CISV is to develop cross-cultural understanding in children, youth and adults from around the world with an aim of a more peaceful world. "To me, CISV creates an ideal experience for those involved," he said. "It's the type of ideal place that we have been always looking for - a place where we can laugh all the time, a time when we can share our good moments and experiences, an experience which we will never forget in the future, and a future with limitless possibilities in which we can disseminate this ideal and create a just and peaceful global society."



## Advice for Students

When asked to provide advice for law students regarding pursuing a career in law, Suebsiri encourages students to discover what they are passionate about. "You need to find your passion," Suebsiri noted. "I will admit that there was some luck involved in finding my favorite subject/area of law at the early stage of my career," said Suebsiri. "But it was not just luck. I also put in a lot of effort to keep learning new things all the time." "Be confident and be honest with yourself about exactly what you like or what area of law you feel most comfortable working on." Suebsiri also suggests students to avoid being drawn to certain areas simply out of personal financial expectation. "Some people might just be drawn to an area because of the expected financial outcome," he said. In Suebsiri's opinion, "this is not a path to success." "Doing what you like and liking what you do is the best ideal for pursuing your own career," he emphasized.

Moreover, Suebsiri encourages everyone to think positively with common sense. "I once came across a quote saying 'positive thinking without common sense is like operating your computer without anti-virus software,'" he said. Thus, "using common sense is also very important as a human being." "You really need both of them to pursue your career goals." In Suebsiri's opinion, this is particularly critical to lawyers because a lawyer's daily work has a problem-solving focus, and the output of a lawyer's work is not a product but a service. Thinking positively with common sense helps lawyers to develop solutions that can best serve clients' interests and achieve clients' objectives.

In addition to advice on pursuing a career in law, Suebsiri also suggests that students maintain a good life attitude and be sincere to themselves and others as well. "Treat others as you would want to be treated," he said. "Most importantly, never stab people in the back." "Once you lost someone's trust, whether intentionally or unintentionally, it is very difficult to win it back."