

ความเป็นไทย : การปลูกฝังจิตสำนึกความเป็นไทยแก่เยาวชนไทย  
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THAINESS: THE INCULCATION OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF  
DESIRED THAINESS AMONG THAI YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT  
OF CONTEMPORARY THAI SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to examine the inculcation of the consciousness of desired Thainess among Thai youth in the context of contemporary Thai society, explore the role of education in this regard, offer viable options on the arrangement of educational approaches for this particular purpose. Methodologies were documentary, quantitative and qualitative researches, while the data collection tool is questionnaires. They were distributed to Thai youth studying in 3 tertiary institutions of Thailand: Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Burapha and Naresuan Universities in the upcountry as well as to the faculty of those 3 universities. In addition, indepth interview, focus group discussion and delivering presentation on the arrangement of education approaches to experts were also used as data collection instrument.

The results were:

1. Most of the students and teachers recognized the Thainess values and realized the appropriate Thainess characteristics. The Thainess characteristics which should be inculcated in Thai youth the most in the context of Thai society at present were: being devoted to the nation, religion and the king. Secondary placed values were: gratitude and honesty.

2. Most of the students and teachers realized that education took an important part in implanting the Thainess, beginning with the teachings from family institution, classes provided by educational institutions, including, enhancing learning process from every part of the society, especially in mass-media institutions.

3. Most of the students and teachers recognized that the most important educational provision guidelines for inculcating the Thainess were: an inculcation of Thainess to Thai youth

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so they will be aware of the Thainess values, a cultural integration in society, a co-operation and development of families, educational institutions, communities, society and organizations from every part of the society together with the development in learning process in order to preserve and pass the Thainess on forever.

**Keywords :** Thainess, inculcation, consciousness, Thai youth, Thai society

## Background and Rationale

In midst of the stream of globalization and borderless communication world, Thailand has been flooded with foreign cultures, both western and eastern (Korean and Japanese). One can say that those cultures currently become a popular trend among Thai young generation. It thus is essential for Thailand to properly adapt to global mainstream as well as to prevailing cultural changes. However, Thai culture and awareness of Thainess should be upheld to signify the uniqueness of Thainess.

It can be argued that Thainess was an integral factor in the unity and survival of Thailand throughout her long history. According to the Address of His Majesty King Bhumibol (2521: 195), delivered during Conferral Ceremony to graduates of Prince Songkhla University, Pattani Campus, on 22 September B.E. 2521 (1978):

...Nation can be comparable to a human being. In fact, human consists of body and mind. They control each other. If one part is destroyed, our life will be dead because the other part will also be ruined. Our country consists of landmass and subjects that can be deemed as the body. Meanwhile, arts, custom and culture as well as belief and faith in the solidarity of the nation, or being dubbed "**Thainess**", are mind. Thailand is

still strong and unified because we still have our country and Thainess in one piece. If Thainess is vanished one day, our nation will also fall...

Currently, one can say that global communication networks via cutting-edge information technologies have greatly facilitate diffusion and penetration of foreign cultures and fashions. Such intrusions may ultimately render to the loss of typical Thai traditions and cultures as well as the uniqueness of Thainess.

Thus, the inculcation of the consciousness of Thainess should be recognised by all Thais; meanwhile they should also be aware that Thainess can be preserved by means of Thai culture. This means that Thai culture had interwoven and unified all Thais to collaboratively create civilization and prosperity of the country. Hence, Thai culture should be maintained by taking into account the awareness of Thainess. According to the Speech of His Majesty King Bhumibol delivered to Thai Students' Association in Japan (TSAJ) under Royal Patronage on 27 September B.E. 2537 (1994):

... The best and most suitable person to maintain Thainess is no one else but Thais. Accordingly, wherever they dwell, Thais will always be responsible for the preservation of their Thainess ...

Praphasri Siha-amphai (2539: 15) has argued about meaning and significance of "Awareness of Thainess" that

... The awareness of Thainess means the sense of Thainess; bond and pride in the prestige of Thailand. The relation and tie with relatives in home country may be diminished, while being away from the component of the nation: territory, people, government and administration, religion, monarch and culture. The persuasion by the Principles of Buddhism may instill the sense of pride in the prestige of Thailand in preserving the independence and sovereign as well as the attachment to the institute that is the identity of Thailand...

Nonetheless, Thais always attach to those signifying Thainess namely religion, monarch and culture. Particularly, one can argue that Thai culture obviously reflects Thainess. Hence, identity of Thainess, especially in light of culture should be instilled among Thai young generation. Chapter 1, Section 6 of National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) (2545: 5) stipulates that:

... Education shall aim at the full development of the Thai people in all aspects: body and mind, intellect, knowledge, morality, integrity and culture as part of their way of life as to enable them to live in harmony with other people...

In addition, This Act (2542: 13-14) also pays attention to culture. This is in accordance with Chapter 4 Section 23:

...Education through formal, non-formal,

and informal approaches shall give emphases to knowledge, morality, learning process, and integration of knowledge on religions, arts and cultures, depending on the appropriateness of each level of education...

Hence, educational approaches under this Act may possibly imply that academic institutions should also play an active role in arranging educational approaches that maintain and instill culture among Thai young generation.

The arrangement of educational approaches on maintaining and promoting Thai culture and Thainess for Thai young generation living in Thailand thus can be possible if all concerned parties do it collaboratively. Thai young generation then will receive a full opportunity in this regard from families, educational institutions and communities. In addition, all Thais should have also the participation. This conforms not only to National Education Act B.E. 2542 (1999) but also to the Constitution of Thailand B.E. 2550 (2007), Part 12 (Community Right), Section 66: *"Persons assembling as to be a community, local community or traditional local community shall have the right to conserve or restore their customs, local wisdom, arts or good culture of their community and of the nation and participate in the management, maintenance and exploitation of natural resources, the environment and biological diversity in a balanced and sustainable fashion."* (Constitution of Thailand, 2007, 18-19).

The author had a particular interest in

conducting a research *"Thainess: The inculcation of the consciousness of Desired Thainess among Thai Young Generation in the Context of Contemporary Thai Society"* because all Thais should play an active role in maintaining Thainess and rich cultural heritage, promulgating Thai culture to the world as well as inculcation love, esteem and awareness of Thainess among Thai young generation. This aims to make an examination on the inculcation of Thainess and factors relevant to the inculcation of Thainess among Thai young generation. Moreover, certain suggestions pertinent to the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai young generation are also given in this present research. These suggestions then may become a model or a guideline for the development of viable educational approaches that may render eventually to long-term inculcation of the awareness of Thainess.

### Objectives of the Research

1. To explore the inculcation of the consciousness of desired Thainess in the Context of Contemporary Thai Society
2. To examine the role of education in inculcation the consciousness of desired Thainess among Thai Young Generation in the Context of Contemporary Thai Society.
3. To present viable options on the arrangement of educational approaches for the purpose of the inculcation of the consciousness of desired Thainess among Thai Young Generation in the Context of Contemporary Thai Society.

### Scope of the Research

The population includes:

1. Tertiary students from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Burapha and Naresuan Universities in the upcountry.
2. Teachers from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities

### Methodologies

In order to meet those specified objectives, this present research has been conducted according to the following steps:

#### Step 1: Documentary Research -

Definition of Thainess, factors relevant to the inculcation of Thainess and the role of education in the inculcation Thainess among Thai youth are analysed.

#### Step 2: Quantitative Research -

This aims to reflect the opinions on the consciousness of Thainess, the recognition of the value of Thainess, the method (s) for the inculcation of Thainess, factors relevant to the inculcation of Thainess and the role of education in the inculcation Thainess among Thai youth.

Simple Random Sampling is used with the following population:

1. 100 students from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each
2. 25 teachers from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each

**Total population: 375**

**Research Tools:** the questionnaires consisting of 2 versions:

Version 1 is for t students.

Version 2 is for teachers of those universities.

### Research Tool Development Methods

The author has drafted the questionnaire according to issues to be included in this research. The draft is then submitted to 3 advisors and experts for reviewing and editing purpose.

The questionnaire contains 3 parts:

Part 1 - General profile regarding the respondent

Part 2 - Open-ended Questionnaires with Rating Scale; this is to explore the method (s) to be used for the inculcation of Thainess, the recognition of the value, the consciousness in preserving and maintaining Thainess and the role of education in the inculcation of the consciousness of Thainess.

Part 3 - Open-ended Questionnaires; this is to explore the respondent's opinions and suggestions with respect to the inculcation of Thainess.

### Step 3: Qualitative Research

1. Indepth interview is conducted to gather details related to the inculcation of the consciousness of Thainess, factors relevant to the inculcation of Thainess and the role of education in the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

There are 2 groups of important respondents:

Group 1 - 5 students from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each or total of 15

Group 2 - 5 teachers from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each or total of 15

2. Focus Group Discussion is conducted to explore opinions, experiences and feelings on the method (s) to be used for the inculcation of Thainess, factors relevant to the inculcation of Thainess and the role of education in the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

Participants in Focus Group Discussion

Group 1 - 10 students from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each

Group 2 - 5 teachers from Chulalongkorn, Burapha and Naresuan Universities each

**Step 4: Interviewing experts** - Data collected from the interviews is used in the preparation of a presentation on the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

5 experts were interviewed. The selection criteria is on the basis of

1. Those who played an active role and be responsible for the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

2. Those who had experience on the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

3. Those who promoted and supported the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.



**Step 5: Presentation on the arrangement of educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess** - It was delivered to experts to review the completeness of the analysis of initial data and of how to arrange educational approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai youth.

#### **Step 6: Data Analysis**

Document-based Data Analysis - content analysis was used in order to analyse primary and secondary documents.

Quantitative Data Analysis - the data from questionnaires were analysed quantitatively by means of basic statistics namely percentage and mean.

Qualitative Data Analysis - qualitative research methodology was applied in this regard. Furthermore, the data from observations, interviews and focus group discussion are analysed by means of content analysis. The results then were included in the conclusion, which was reviewed by the expert afterward.

Analysis of data from interviewing experts - content analysis was used in this regard. Concluded data was then examined and incorporated with the presentation on approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai young generation. It was then presented to the expert for consideration.

Suggestions from experts were analysed by means of content analysis as well. This aims to achieve possible conclusions on the approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai young generation.

**Step 7: Conclusion** - The research results and approaches for the inculcation of Thainess among Thai young generation were presented accordingly.

#### **Results**

1. Most of the students and teachers recognized the Thainess values and realized the appropriate Thainess characteristics. The Thainess characteristics which should be inculcated in Thai youth the most in the context of Thai society at present were: being devoted to the nation, religion and the king. Secondary placed values were: gratitude and honesty.

2. Most of the students and teachers realized that education took an important part in implanting the Thainess, beginning with the teachings from family institution, classes provided by educational institutions, including, enhancing learning process from every part of the society, especially in mass-media institutions.

3. Most of the students and teachers recognized that the most important educational provision guidelines for inculcating the Thainess were: an inculcation of Thainess to Thai youth so they will be aware of the Thainess values, a cultural integration in society, a co-operation and development of families, educational institutions, communities, society and organizations from every part of the society together with the development in learning process in order to preserve and pass the Thainess on forever.

## The Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

The data from questionnaires were analysed quantitatively by means of basic statistics namely percentage and mean.

According to the quantitative data analysis through questionnaires asking college students and teachers from 3 institutions, which were Chulalongkorn University, Burapa University and Naresuan University, the conclusions of this research were:

1. The Thainess characteristic in the current Thai society, which college students from 3 institutions placed in the first rank was: being devoted to the nation, religion and the king(=4.85), in the second rank, the characteristic was gratitude(=4.78) and in the third rank, the characteristic was honesty(=4.73). The Thainess characteristic in the current Thai society, which college professors from 3 institutions placed in the first rank was: being devoted to the nation, religion and the king(=4.87), in the second rank, the characteristic was honesty(=4.83), in the third rank, the characteristic was gratitude(=4.77).

2. The role of education in inculcating Thainess, which college students from 3 institutions placed in the first rank was family as place of learning and implanting Thainess(=4.63), in the second rank, family and educational institutions took an important part in functioning as indoctrinating youth to recognize the values of Thainess(=4.61), in the third rank, civil organizations needed to support and to expand more learning places for inculcating and strengthening Thainess(=4.60). The role of education in inculcating Thainess, which college professors from 3 institutions placed in the first rank was family and educational institutions as taking important

role in enhancing the learning of Thai language, Thai etiquette and Thai culture(=4.85), in the second rank, family and educational institutions took an important part in functioning as indoctrinating youth to recognize the values of Thainess(=4.84), in the third rank, family was as place of learning and implanting Thainess(=4.81).

## The Results of Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative research methodology was applied in this regard. Furthermore, the data from observations, interviews and focus group discussion.

### The Being Thainess Qualities Needed in the Social Context at Present were:

- Devotion to The Nation, Religions and The King
- Showing High Respect and Gratitude to Others
- Using Thai Language as the National Language

### The Values of "Thainess" in the Social Context at Present were:

- the National Distinction
- to tie all people in the nation together

### The institutions which cultivate and transmit the Being Thainess Qualities needed in Thai youth in the social context at present were:

1. Family Institution
2. Educational Institution
3. Mass-Media

**Educational Provision Methods aiming to cultivate Thainess Qualities needed in Thai youth in the social context at present were:**

- to include the knowledge of the Being Thai Consciousness in several subjects
- to provide activities strengthening the knowledge of the Being Thai Qualities needed in Thai youth
- to campaign all types of cooperation which helps enhancing the Being Thai Qualities needed in Thai youth

**The guidelines of cultivating the Being Thai Qualities needed in Thai youth in the social context at present were:**

- Co-operation from all aspects of the society
- Media reformation
- Place/Announce/ Promote as a national agenda

**Suggestions for the guidelines of cultivating the Thai Consciousness were:**

1. To cultivate/promote "Being Thai" consciousness and pride
2. To provide projects of extra activities in curriculums or activities for college students with the goal of cultivating the Thai Consciousness
3. To provide an action conference between college professors and students
4. To include the subject of "Being Thai Quality" in educational curriculums at all levels
5. To create the "Thai Youth Ambassador" project
6. To provide more community cultural learning centers

7. To ask for cooperation from all types of Media

In conclusion, Most of the students and teachers recognized the Thainess values and realized the appropriate Thainess characteristics. The Thainess characteristics which should be inculcated in Thai youth the most in the context of Thai society at present were: being devoted to the nation, religion and the king. Secondary placed values were: gratitude and honesty. Most of the students and teachers realized that education took an important part in implanting the Thainess, beginning with the teachings from family institution, classes provided by educational institutions, including, enhancing learning process from every part of the society, especially in mass-media institutions. Most of the students and teachers recognized that the most important educational provision guidelines for inculcating the Thainess were: an indoctrination of Thainess to Thai youth so they will be aware of the Thainess values, a cultural integration in society, a co-operation and development of families, educational institutions, communities, society and organizations from every part of the society together with the development in learning process in order to preserve and pass the Thainess on forever.

**"Thainess" as relates to the Reconciliation and Unity in the Nation**

In the past, Thai people in all kinds of different races, religions and culture cloud live



together with peace because of the dominant good aspect of "Being Thai" characteristics. These characteristics were: honesty, showing high respect and gratitude to others, living with harmony, giving, being kind and compromise. Thus, Thai people were able to live with different races, religions and be able to include and pay respect to different cultures. These characteristics represent the "Thainess" which is rooted in the consciousness in most of the Thai people. Aspects of this distinct good character enable Thai people to live in multicultural society without conflicts. Also, even though Thai people still acculturate fine culture of others, Thai people ultimately remains their identity with its only good aspects.

Thus, "Thainess" relates Thai people to live with reconciliation and friendship among the rushing in of western culture and

globalization together with the political conflicts and violence in Thai society at this moment. All aspects of Thai society should change this crisis to opportunity by making Thai youths to realize the values and the importance of "Thainess". Also all Thai people should help cultivating the consciousness and pride of Being Thai together with bring back the characteristics of living with harmony, giving and being kind to Thai youths. All these characters are the identity of Thai people which is very unique and hard to find in other cultures. This is in order to remain the "Thainess" quality in the social context at present and to maintain harmony among Thai people of all races and religions, which will bring peace back to the country again.

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