

# *The International Journal of East Asian Studies*

---

Vol. 17 No. 2

ISSN 0857-6033

September 2012 - February 2013

*The International Journal of East Asian Studies* Vol. 17 No. 2 September 2012 - February 2013

## **Article**

Management Philosophy of Hasegawa Kazuhiro and adaptation for preparing of AEC

*Chatnarin Metheekul*

## **Research Articles**

Prosper or inexistence: Path to Attaining Happiness in the Millennial Era from the Perspective of Eastern Philosophers and Students.

*Donrudee Suwankiri*

Action Research: An appropriate research methodology for improving health care practice

*Puangpaka Kongvattananon*

Comparison of Sino-Portuguese Building in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket in the Malayan Peninsula

*Punya Tepsing*

Mukdahan – Suwannakhet Sister Cities: the study of cultural factors that affect the appropriateness of the Sister City relationship-building policy between border towns in the Mekong sub-region

*Wichian Intasi, Watunyu Jaiborisudh,  
Ampa Kaewkumkong, Chawapon Chang  
klang*

Transnational marriage: Thai migrants and foreigners

*Sutin Saisanguan*

Attitudes and Satisfaction of Burmese Learners Studying Thai Language in Language School of Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Burma Foundation

*Tidarat Ngamnikorn*



## The International Journal of East Asian Studies

Owner: Institute of East Asian Studies, under the Patronage of Her Royal Highness Mahachakri Sirindhorn, of Thammasat University, Klong Luang, Pathum Thani, 12121

Issued time: 2 volumes per year (March – August and September – February)

Distributed to: 1) subscribers  
2) faculties and libraries in Thammasat University, public libraries and other educational institutions' libraries

Honorary Editors:

Editor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Manyat Ruchiwit

Associate Editor: Dr. Nopparat Plucktaveesak

Editorial Board:

Prof. Dr. Daehee Lee	Prof. Dr. Unsuk Song
Prof. Dr. Park Byoung Sik	Prof. Dr. Sunhyuk Kim
Prof. Woo-Soon Park	Prof. Dr. Han Chong Hee
Prof. Dr. Osama Akagi	Prof. Tadayuki Yamamoto
Prof. Dr. Yuri Ishi	Prof. Pei Xiaorui
Prof. Fu Zengyou	Prof. Dr. Phadungsak Rattanadecho
Prof. Surichai Wungaeo	Prof. Dr. Wanpen Chaicumpa
Prof. Dr. Chaiwat Khamchoo	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chanin Mephokee
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ake Tangsupvattana	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sakamon Devahastin
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chawin Leenabanchong	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Damrong Thandee
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kampol Ruchiwit	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malinee Dilokwanich
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Noppadol chartprasert	Assoc. Prof. Dr. Perapong Tekasakul
Dr. Thanyathip Sripana	

Managing team: Wachira Rodruai Netnapraporn Phetphung  
Watunyu Jaiborisudhi Napol Worapratheep

Published at: Thammasat University Publication

Printing at: Thammasat Printing House

All research articles have been undergone rigorous peer review by reviser in the field. It should be noted that all of the views expressed in this journal, except for editorial comments and so forth, are the view of the authors only. Please provide a piece of reference in case of reproduction.

## Scope of Policy

The *International Journal of East Asian Studies* is an international journal that provides a forum for exploring national and international issues related directly to ASEAN and East Asian countries through research and knowledge sharing. The journal invites original papers from multi-disciplinary perspectives in political, social, economic, geographical, legal, cultural, scientific and technological disciplines. The objective is to relate the Institute of East Asian Studies to national and international development wherever possible in order to disseminate knowledge about ASEAN and East Asian countries in all aspects, and to establish a network of scholars, practitioners, journalists, policymakers, and officeholders that will bring their perspectives to bear on knowledge sharing more broadly. All manuscripts, especially research articles, are edited by leading experts at Thammasat University and other renowned academic institutions both inside and outside the country.

As the journal is divided into three sections, *Research Articles*, *Commentary*, and *Book Reviews*, we welcome submissions in all three areas. The Research Articles cover a comprehensive range of topics related to ASEAN and East Asian countries. All research articles in this journal undergo rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and anonymous review by two referees. *Commentary* section includes analytical essays designed to bring fresh perspectives on ASEAN and East Asian issues. These pieces are closely edited by the editorial board but are not peer reviewed and address a broader audience. The *Book Reviews* include reviews of new books related to all aspects of ASEAN and East Asian issues from academic and highly-respected publishers. It should be noted that all of the views expressed in this journal are the view of the authors only.

# CONTENTS

**Vol. 17 No. 2**

*September 2012 - February 2013*

## **Article**

Management Philosophy of Hasegawa Kazuhiro and adaptation for.....1  
preparing of AEC

*Chatnarin Metheekul*

## **Research Articles**

Prosper or inexistence: Path to Attaining Happiness in the Millennial Era .....6  
from the Perspective of Eastern Philosophers and Students.

*Donrudee Suwankiri*

Action Research: An appropriate research methodology for .....19  
improving health care practice

*Puangpaka Kongvattananon*

Comparison of Sino-Portuguese Building in Malaka, Penang.....38  
and Phuket in the Malayan Peninsula

*Punya Tepsing*

Mukdahan – Suvannakhet Sister Cities: the study of cultural factors .....50  
that affect the appropriateness of the Sister City relationship-building policy  
between border towns in the Mekong sub-region

*Wichian Intasi, Watunyu Jaiborisudh, \*

*Ampa Kaewkumkong, Chawapon Changklang*

Transnational marriage: Thai migrants and foreigners .....66

*Sutin Saisanguan*

Attitudes and Satisfaction of Burmese Learners Studying Thai Language in .....85  
Language School of Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Burma Foundation

*Tidarat Ngamnikorn*

## Management Philosophy of Hasegawa Kazuhiro and adaptation for preparing of AEC

Chatnarin Metheekul

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Medicine, Thammasat University, Klong Luang, Pathum Thani, 12121,  
Thailand

---

### Background

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), established in 1967 under the commitment to establish cooperation in terms of politics, economics and sociocultural affairs has passed several eras of developmental milestones, in which Thailand, one of the founder of ASEAN has been securing the role as an important key player through cycles of governments. The move to AEC will be another challenging phenomena Thailand has to prove in terms of competency and competitiveness to maintain the “key player” status in ASEAN, regarding to the country’s infrastructures and human resources.

---

### AEC: A great leap forward of ASEAN

During the first decade after the establishment of ASEAN, there is no evidence in prominent role or action of ASEAN in both regional or global arena. Not until 1975 that the Indo-chine peninsula became communist, results in the mission of ASEAN partnership in resisting the communist’s propagandas. The surging

temperature in fighting communist in the “Cold War” by ASEAN came to an end after Thailand played “the key player” role in accommodating the release of Cambodia from the Vietnam’s military in 1989. After the Cold War, arrived the era of global trade competition, in which Thailand spearheaded the establishment of ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992. ASEAN,

in the beginning was comprised of three main pillars as the followings.

1. ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC)

2. ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)

3. ASEAN Socio – Cultural Community (ASCC)

In ASEAN nations, diversify political systems and demographic characteristic leads to decline progress in partnership under APSC and ASCC, in contrast to using the AEC blueprint which promise a win – win situation for all. The AEC blueprint is characterized by

- common or single market
- freely flowed movement of service
- Flow of capital and investment
- exchange and flow of skilled workers among ASEAN countries, in which will begin with 7 fields including Medical Services, Nursing Services, Dental Services, Accounting Services, Engineering Services, Architectural Services and Surveying Quantification Service.

### Hasegawa Kazuhiro Philosophy and Preparation for AEC

Hasegawa Kazuhiro started off as a business consultant at the age of 27. He has helped over 2,000 Japanese companies out of bankruptcy after several episodes of economic changes and crisis. In modern management, tacit knowledge is as important as explicit knowledge. His body of managerial knowledge and skills can be concluded in 3 domains, i.e. 1) leaders culture, 2) Human resources development and 3) Reflection and Transformative Learning which will therefore be discuss further.

#### A) Leadership culture

In Hasegawa's view, one have to develop his own leadership styles and concepts, which is logically true, referring to different leadership theories available, but there are certain things that differentiate between a good performer and a good leader, regardless of leadership theory's character. These things are

##### 1) *Be a mentor and facilitator*

.Many countries in ASEAN use the common leadership style or norm as controller in

order to reach the organization's goal, this may be a result of the roots of education system in many countries that are used to "rote learning" in which students (the future workers) are gradually getting used to being told what to do, leading to deprived skills when facing an unknown task or working environment.

In 2015, ASEAN countries will be more connected with corporates from neighbor countries, which they will have to adapt in order to encounter with different norms, values and culture. The freedom from being controlled helps to immunize the corporate's workers to cope better in terms of productivity, creativity and perseverance, in contrast to the model which leaders act as controllers.

## **2) Governance**

Governance will create an environment that fosters legal and ethical behavior in a nation or corporate. In response to "change" either minor or major, a sense of uncertainty or job insecurity spread like wildfire. In this same manner, the change to a single market model as in AEC will take the limelight to leaders asking for their clearness of

governance and accountability in taking responsibility for the corporate, community or self that the leader serves. The data from several researches support Hasegawa's beliefs that productivity will increase sharply in organization with a well govern moral compass. This brings up the worries that "governance" in ASEAN countries is far from being the priority strategy in managing business.

## **3) Adaptability**

Organizing a business model after the start of AEC will be full of trials and errors. Visionary leaders will be able to clearly distinguish facts and feels, in which the ability of not to resist "change" to a non – working system is the key to adaptability. Within the ASEAN nations lay the atmosphere of internal competitions, in which the establishment of AEC is certain that collaboration along with competition is inevitable. Hasegawa is a firm believer in the roles of leaders towards organizational adaptability, no matter how worse the situation, the Japanese guru believes in the motto "never say die".

## **B) Human Resource Development**

In Japanese culture, the sense of human resource development in organizations tend to be common. Hasegawa's body of knowledge was influenced by management gurus of the famous so – called "Shimura School" (e.g. Shimura Shin, Morita of Sony, etc.). In his idea, human resource must be a committed professional. "Professional" is therefore crafted by 5 factors and 3 characters. The factors are 1) dedication, 2) professional competency, 3) managerial skill, 4) good relations and 5) being healthy. These 5 factors must be added with other three characters including 1) self – reliance 2) experience and 3) enthusiasm towards success. The forming of AEC will lead to a more solid competition, either internal or external. Questions arose on the preparedness of human resources in ASEAN countries to a common market system. The production of human resources to the market faces many limitations at the beginning from the recruitment of the right personnel, the on – the – job training system and good governance in the organizations.

Hasegawa has pointed out that there are a variety of recruitment methods and difference in the level of governance among organization. Instead of sending the human resources to take courses in professional competency in all level of management, he proposes on on – the – job training. Each personnel must be able to organize his own operation plan which will include the followings

1. Identify the problems on the job.
2. Analyze the problems.
3. Set priority of problems.
4. Set objectives in solutions.
5. Set strategy to solve the problem.
6. Actions that have objective results.

The plan will be written in a single A4 paper, in which everyone can find it convenient and affordable. Hasegawa indicates that the importance of human resource development is so important that each corporate should not let it be just a lip – action, but should be truly supported.

#### C) Reflection and Transformative Learning

In ASEAN countries, the norm in giving reward to personnel lays upon

monetary issues such as bonus and rise in salary, with little concern on creating a healthy environment in organizations. For Hasegawa, the term “healthy working environment” does not only refers to good sanitation conditions, friendly relationships or appropriate ergonomic conditions, but also indicates on reflective observation of experiences and transformative learning in order to make the organization’s personnel’s routinely self – evaluate their working culture in the form of thoughts, actions and fulfillment, then consider to change or maintain this culture upon analysis until finally construct a model of learning or obtain knowledge of their own, in which will guide their actions. Organizational leaders must take action as facilitator of this process by encouraging and empowering personnel’s to consistently run this cycle.

The philosophy of transformative learning molded into the 3 characters for becoming “professional” according to Hasegawa as previously stated, i.e. self – reliance, experience and enthusiasm towards success and learning.

### Conclusion

The construction of Hasegawa Kazuhiro’s management philosophy is obviously the process of making tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge from his dedications in taking notes from his experience. These are the things that are not able to learn in management schools but are able to modify for usage in various conditions. ASEAN countries may try to develop their model of preparation for AEC by using his model which balances leadership culture, human resource development and transformative learning.

Prosper or inexistence: Path to Attaining Happiness in the Millennial Era from the  
Perspective of Eastern Philosophers and Students.

Donrudee Suwankiri

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Srinakharinwirot University, Bangkok  
10110, Thailand

---

**Abstract**

**Background:** The world we live in never ceased to be problematic even after the arrival of the new millennium. Technology has possessed and consumed people into state of emptiness, solitary and isolation. They began to suffer, become utterly mystified; they have nothing to hold on to. The only escape is to seek a way out of these conditions. Eastern philosophers are mankind's intellectual guidance of wisdom and the students of the millennium era are those who determine the course of the future. Both agents form a method adaptable to the mentality and livelihood of society, taking them to a place where peace is sustainable and eternal.

**Objective:** To research, compile, analyze, and synthesize the attitude on ways to attain happiness by eastern philosophers and students as a body of knowledge thereupon used as society's way of living and means to reach eternal and sustainable happiness.

**Result:** Identify ways to attain happiness conforming with the perspective and concept of eastern philosophers and students adaptable to the livelihood of the laypeople and society as a whole.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** For eastern philosophers and students, the core to attaining happiness lies in enriching of our spiritual level out of selfishness and adhering to religious principles, moral/ethical conducts, detachment from all defilement and desire,

the use wisdom to end suffering and attain peace of mind. Furthermore, it is about realizing the importance of harmonizing with nature and our surroundings.

**Keywords:** Happiness Philosophy Students Perspective

---

### **Introduction**

The futility of technological advancement and economic supremacy in today's world demise the path to true and sustainable happiness. As such, the success of materialism comes with a price. It's proven that humans' overreliance on science and technology brings about suffering. The outcome of being deeply infatuated with modernity is the relentless desires to the point of social and cultural failure (Arun Suntaree, 2009: 2).

The time has come for us to acknowledge the true happiness found in the enrichment of our mind and soul accorded with the methods of eastern philosophers and Asian mentality. The new millennium sees eastern progression reaching an equivalent stance with the western world yet retains the core of old traditions, cultures, beliefs, faith, mentality,

and livelihood, all of which signifies its identity. Anwar Ibrahim once said "Growth, development and the blossom of Asian society on the basis of good-will creates a society instilled with truth and the yearn for knowledge, justice, compassion, respect, perseverance, and freedom. It acts responsibly, with faith, and the practice of religion not limited to individuals but spreads to all walks of life. It is the power of religion and nothing else that makes this continent endless in diversity". (Anwar Ibrahim, 1996: 34)

This research is the result of the clash of valuable ideas between the students, leaders of creative thoughts in this new generation, and principles of eastern philosophers, representatives of the intellect and mental sublimity. We will find that the components of human cognitive lie in or resulted from human

emotions. Despite our knowledge from factual methods and evidences, subjective thinking is inevitable, and as such hinders us from understanding the truth of existence, led astray, and forever searching for answers. (Timothy Williamson, 2007: 279)

To this note, the researcher combined the ideas of both groups as a basis for research, study, analyze, differentiate, and distill of overlapping main points until a way to bring people to true and sustainable happiness is found.

#### Methodology

Data collection methodology involves primary and secondary sources. For primary sources the researcher employed purposive sampling approach, using five 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> year students from Srinakharinwirot University for semi-structured interviews. The questions are in line with the research objective while the analytical methodology is qualitative analysis in the form of content analysis.

#### Attaining Happiness

**1. Humans should enrich their souls to attain true and sustainable happiness.**

People nowadays experienced failures and frustration so repeatedly it has become part of us, or they are unable to fix everything that they had to put up facades and tell themselves the life they are living is normal. Most students viewed that society is experiencing mental crisis. Humans have become so materialistic, selfish, narrow-minded, and competitive. They should enrich their souls from such defilements that are devouring them. Only by finding mental or spiritual happiness is considered finding the true happiness. Saint Augustin likewise amplified the notion of spirit so profoundly and interestingly that humans are obliged to enrich their souls to reach God so that our spirits will be blessed and powerful by Him and He shall ignite the light of life and reveals sustainable happiness (Stanley Rosen, 2003: 127).

Such statement conforms to informant no. 1 who believe that soul enrichment means developing our conscience or what we are born with but can't control. For instance, bad people might have horrible souls, think negative thoughts, and defame others. Souls are part of what defines who we are so we

must enrich our souls into behaving and thinking positively. Despite not being 100% defining factor of our behavior, we still must enrich our souls so we can live in peace. If everyone has a good soul, I think we can become a civilized society. Buddhism is the method chosen to employ as it is able to change us into a good person from inside out. Buddhism teaches us to think and act positive and act as a spiritual anchor so we won't be led astray. If everyone practices Buddhism in their everyday life, I think that it is able to bring about an ideal society.

This is in line with the teachings of the Buddha on end of suffering by soul enrichment that worldly beings are full of suffering. The duty of human beings is to attain nirvana as it is a way to be unchained from suffering. Those drowned by worldly pleasures are considered fools and blinded. The Buddha advised us to avoid suffering entirely and walk in the path to nirvana. Despite Buddhist wisdom arises from pessimistic viewpoint, the ending is always about optimism and true happiness. Humans experience defilements every day. It is what drives us to exist in this world.

The Buddha stated that "Worldly beings are consumed by fires of lust, hatred, suffer, senility, and death". He compared humans beings immolated by fires of suffering like a person poisoned by a poison arrow. The teaching of the Buddha therefore is the Four Noble Truth (Boonmee Tankaw, 2002: 90-91).

Lao Tzu dictates the importance of peaceful mind by soul enrichment. Taoism is a cult that acknowledges the value and meaning of attaining the state of peaceful mind. To reach such state, first step is to restrain one's senses namely eyes, ears, noise, tongue, body from all emotions. Uncontrolled senses causes agitation and chaos instead of peace. Lao Tzu viewed that a peaceful mind is everything as it leads to state of Tao. When Tao is reached, one possessed inhumane abilities. Understanding Tao, one will be able to destroy the walls of frustration, deprivation, slave of materialism, endless desires, infatuation and obsession with illusions. Tao will bring about true happiness (Sakol Nilawan, 1980: 180).

**2. Abiding religious principles and religion as spiritual anchor**

Setting oneself free from rules, disrespect of religion, living above the teachings of the wise, indulged in sinful thinking, acting under influence of desires will, in the end, be filled with confusion and emptiness in life. Pojman placed importance in religion that no art is able to better explain the true of all things in this world than religious teachings. Such teachings elaborate the universe to exhaustive extent and bestow humans the body of knowledge of the universe and the world (Louis P. Pojman, 1997: 68).

Furthermore Horne and Westacott incited on religion as a spiritual guidance and pillar of livelihood that philosophical religion differs from religion in the same way that philosophical science differs from general science. The destination of philosophical religion lies not in praying but the understanding of human civilization (Chris Horne and Emrys Westacott, 2003: 216).

Such statement agrees with the informant no. 2 who put value and awareness in the necessity of religion. The information viewed that modernists might perceived religion as unimportant and

unnecessary, only laws and regulations suffice for peaceful society. In truth that is not the case. If religion is in fact unnecessary, countries without national religion such as Japan where majority of the population have no religion but uphold "cult" practices, proved that religion holds the soul together. It differs from laws which are simply enforcement procedures with no sentimental value. Religion is imperative to the livelihood and the survival of humans because as long as humans exist, be it alone or as a society, religion is inevitable. Religion exists as an indicator of what is considered merit, sinful, right, wrong in the similar fashion as having a standard of measure in living. Such standard is set by scientific methods and assumed as a well-accepted universal standard. Likewise with good and bad, humans must have a universal standard acceptable by all, and a standard that measures justice or differentiate good from bad. No such standard can exceeds better than that of religion.

Humans not only desire materials but they also have mind and soul necessary for satisfying such desires. As

such apart from matters such as living, humans are trouble-minded creatures in that they question things such as “what is life?”, “why are we born?”, “where do we go after we die?”, “what is afterlife like?”, “who created the world?”, and many more. These questions hitherto unanswered by science, at least not to our satisfaction. However, they are answerable by religion.

### **3. Humans should live life adhering to moral and ethical conduct**

Humans, past and present, took part in creating a chain reaction of a social issue revolving moral and ethical aspect. We are responsible for the crisis we created, knowingly or not. Humans are smartest of all creatures. We are free to make decisions we desire, by our greed or actions, keeping in mind the right and wrong, ethical and morality of it. Likewise, Jean Paul Satre explained that if we are nothing but what others make of us, the first principle of existentialism we see that if we are assumed like all other creatures we simply become nothing more than a rock or table (Lawrence Cahoon, 1996: 259).

The statement is similar to informant no. 3 who reflects this issue very

clearly. The informant contemplated that those who attained enlightenment and created a social morality is a good thing as it help restore and develop a once decadent society. Enlightenment will bring about destruction of competition, crimes, corruptions, or even uncontrollable disasters. This is because enlightened individuals professed only love to all existence, be it humans, animals, or non-living things. When love is born, destruction dies. People will lend each other’s hand as we are mutually depend on each other and are equal. We oversee each other’s hardships. Such phenomenon only occurs when every individual is enlightened in wisdom and morality.

This concept conformed to that of Confucius who stated that “external appearance is nothing more than an internal expression. What is expressed outside only reveals what is inside. The wise only take interest in oneself”. Confucius believed that any path, be it heaven or human, is the path of morality which includes love, justice, propriety, and wisdom. These are path that humans should seek. Not only path that the heaven

bestow upon humans, but also nature. That is, humans are able to train themselves along such path. Confucius foresees the importance of self-improvement through morality. Confucius mentioned that the wise is wise as he endeavors to preserve his true nature and the fool does not feel appreciative towards any beauty. Confucius believed that a perfected person is a habitually decent person. That is, no longer the need to try or think to behave decently. Therefore behavior of a person with morale is automatic and frees (Panthip Supanakorn, 1999: 11-12).

#### **4. Humans should eradicate endless defilements and desires**

To release people from poverty and social crisis one is required to relinquish oneself from never-ending defilements, greed, and desires. He or she must also enrich the soul and bring about revolution and change in the way of thinking and behavior. It is necessary also to form an idea, a social value as a mean to find the meaning and purpose of life without greed, anger, and misguidance. Socrates, the Greek philosopher, once advised his people that a perfect life is a

life where people argue about human perfection on a daily basis, through inspection of each other, as without inspect life has no meaning (William Irvin, 2004: 7).

Similarly, informant no. 4 reflected on how the world today is possessed materialism and defilements. One of the causes of suffering is that world has changed. We live in the world where we are the victim of material progression and allurements. We must look back at ourselves. If we all practice the path of enlightenment and attain to such status we will be able to understand and accept the truth of such condition. We will understand that no existence is permanent. It can exist just as it be inexistence. Nothing is ours, nothing we can feel attached to, nothing is permanent, and everything is suffering. We leave everything in this life when we die. The only thing we can bring with us is our merits and our sins. With that in mind we can be able to let go of all the objective materials and let go all subjective emotions, reaching a state of de-suffering and attain enlightenment.

When those who are enlightened or able to let go live together in a society,

that society will be peaceful and prosper. People will aid in improving a life without deception, demerit, immorality, and learn to be compassion. There will be no quarrel or disagreement as we feel love for one another, always lending hands, giving and generous, and no exploitation as we know that nothing is ours. We only strive for a peaceful and harmonic society.

Zhuang Zi previously elaborated on the aforementioned that we should always be up-to-date with the truth and should study and attain Tao. Only then will we be able to escape deception and illusions, no longer under the influence of defilements, fame and recognition, or pressured and chained by social norms. There won't be any comparison namely social classes. Comparison only leads to frustration which is not the truth.

Zhuang Zi also stated that a true happiness life is a life without comparison, be it high or low, wide or narrow, beauty or ugly, etc. If we perceive all things as equal, worldly emotions won't be of nuisance to us because in fact all existence is united and has Tao as a base. However, we saw it as a nuance as we have yet to attain Tao. As

such we are deceived by outer appearances such as high and low. Zhuang Zi saw that there is no such thing as high or low in truth. It exists only in space meaning a mountain is high as long as we are beneath, yet can be beneath us if we are at its peak. Another example is a woman's beauty can be mesmerizing to society but can be just as meaningless to forest creatures. True beauty or ugliness does not exist and is a matter of preference (Sathien Bhodhinantha, 1989: 188-189).

The world eager to grasp whatever can provide them with convenience. I (Zhuang Zi) is baffled whether such convenience is true happiness or a false. I consider what the world desires and realize it is nothing more of a suicide attempt. Such happiness comes from pressure yet universally accepted as the true happiness. For me it is not happiness and it doesn't matter if it isn't. Does our world already have true happiness or nothing but counterfeited happiness? I, myself, consider living isolated and detached from everything is true happiness. Unfortunately such happiness is considered a great suffer for

majority of the world. Therefore I concluded that "true happiness must not come from physical matter, true honor must be rid of admiration and glorification". (Sathien Bhodhinantha, 1989: 187-188)

#### **5. Human should employ wisdom to distinguish happiness from suffering**

Wisdom and knowledge on life in actual sense, and the conduct based on wisdom, is the best way to enrich our soul and take us to true happiness and happiness for society as a whole. Pojman gave insight that we must find a way to access the truth and use of reason that we believe is true. We must learn how to distinguish truth from false as well as finding a reason to back up ambiguous beliefs (Louis P.Pojman, 2000: 41).

Informant no. 5 believed that wisdom and knowledge can change the world. There is reason and genesis attached to all phenomenon, and that all problems have a solution. The day every human uses wisdom and attain enlightenment they will think and act in conformity. Problems that occurred from differences will diminish as we realized the origin of such problem and how to fix it. If

we all have identical belief, albeit different viewpoint at times, we will not be led astray as we have the same base to hold on to. The world will be at peace as it is filled with decent men and women. The social gap and disparity will vanish. Covetousness and desires will not arise. Our lifestyle will greatly transform. Once a person loving nothing but himself will learn to love others more. We will feel ashamed and fear of committing indecency. We will know right from wrong. We will have the same life destination which is the enrichment of a human soul.

Wisdom as a tool to foresee the truth of happiness and despair is the art eastern philosophers take great interest, and used by them as a cognitive guidance for society to see the truth and fused into their livelihood. Zhuang Zi has found the actual cause of happiness and suffering, and taught us that it is conclusive that the first type of happiness is worldly happiness formed from satisfactions and getting what we desire namely good health, wealth, fame, recognition and so on. This is also known as gratification. Worldly happiness is impermanent and ever-changing. It isn't

pure and mixed with suffering. It is vehement, rough, and ardent. It is inconsistent. We feel happy when our hope is fulfilled but the more we put our hopes up the more we suffer when it turns into a disappointment. Happiness out of comparison, when someone has a higher position, can also cause suffering. Relative happiness relies on other occurrences or material happiness. Happiness dependent on material doesn't spontaneously form.

The second type of happiness is dharma happiness. It is formed through peace of mind and awareness of the truth. It is smooth, calm, and independent from material things (immaterial happiness). This is deemed absolute happiness. According to Zhuang Zi "I consider living in peace, detached from all things, is true happiness. It does not come from bodily matters or worldly honors, but from honors deprived of recognition. Dharma happiness thus aims from peaceful mind and consider better and purer than worldly happiness (Fuen Dokbua, 1992: 166).

**6. Humans should realize the importance and harmony of nature and surroundings.**

Live while seeking a way to become happy empowers our mind and soul. Living in peace and aware of the importance of nature that surrounds us, we feel as if the meaning behind living is discovered. According to Moore and Bruder, philosophy and knowledge of nature is beneficial to our livelihood. We discover a profound systematic thinking process, expanding the territory of the knowledge of arts by way of observing and learning the principles of nature and the entirety of all living things (Brooke Noel Moore and Kenneth Burder, 2004: 64).

Informant no. 3 gave an interesting insight. Technology progression allows us to control nature and build facilitations and entertainment to our heart's content. This is a two-edge sword that backfired on the creator. The more we are infatuated by the facilitations and entertainment and the power to control nature, we lost sight that we come from nature. We are not God who created all things. We are soaked with defilements and desires. The more we are comfortable the more sensuality grows in us, to the point where we left behind all morale and act as if omnipotent (eventually

all things ends in nothing). When we have everything, there is nothing to strive for, nothing to live for, as we are clouded by the growing comfort and sensuality. If we look back we will realize that this is not true happiness and are blinded from the value of life. All the comfort and entertainments are taken for granted. All the things we created to satisfy our desires left us in a state of dejection, blinded from the value of our destination or even ourselves.

Conforming to the concept of Lao Tzu who viewed humans originally happy but become despair through the changes brought about by society. The truest way of happiness is detachment of civilization that has been assumed up until present. Live in peace and in harmony with nature. Live amongst the forests, streams, and mountains. Such viewpoint clearly distinguishes knowledge from Tao. Returning to nature is achieved by seeking knowledge and Tao on a daily basis. Those who neglect its benefits will lose their benefits every day until they have reached a peaceful state.

Furthermore, Lao Tzu viewed that we tend to live in contrast with the way of

Tao. We act in defiance with nature. Humans are merely part of what exists in nature yet we separate ourselves from the laws of nature. This is the reason why the universe process smoothly and accordingly while we must face suffering endlessly. Lao Tzu perceived humans as originally happy but through time endures suffering as they strive to control their own fate. Such endeavor impeded the natural phenomenon. The best way to seek happiness is to live with our natural self and adjust to ordinariness in its true form (Sakol Nilawan, 1980: 181).

### Conclusion

Francis Bacon forecasts that knowledge is power. He sees beyond that human beings can use knowledge to determine the fate of all existence. As such if we know how to attain happiness by means of perspective integration of eastern philosophers and students, we will possess a certain body of knowledge. We will be able to use them as a living code of conduct. That moment is when happiness is created in individual and society level.

Ways to attain happiness can be divided into main points as follow:

1. We should enrich our souls out of selfishness, defilements, greed in order to attain true and sustainable happiness

2. We should adhere to religious principles in our livelihood; perform merit and avoid sinfulness; use religion as a spiritual anchor

3. We should adhere to moral and ethical conduct and act meritoriously to the point where it entirely ingrained into our habit

4. We should dispose of defilements and endless desires; unchained from deception and illusion hidden under power and fame and recognition or possession

5. We should employ wisdom to contemplate the truth and ways to end suffering and attain true peace

6. We should be aware of the importance and live in harmony with nature as we are part or a condition of nature.

### **Recommendation**

If our purpose is supreme happiness and macro happiness, we should walk the path of enlightenment. Such path leads to the management of our lives and the society we live in whilst fully acknowledging the valuable principles and ways to attain happiness. Such can be taken from this research to be adapted in individual level, community level, and national level. Such body of knowledge can also be a starter for expanding education in the fields of social sciences and philosophy, to be further implemented in the livelihood of modern generation.

### **Acknowledgement**

This work was funded by the Faculty of Social Science, Srinakharinwirot University.

**References**

- Anwar Ibrahim.(1996). The Asian Renaissance Singapore: Times Books International.
- Brooke Noel Moore and Kenneth Bruder.(2004). Philosophy The Power of Ideas. Sixth edition.New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
- Bunmee Teankeaw.(1998).Philosophy.Bangkok: Pimlug Publishing.
- Chris Home and Emrys Westacott (2003).Thinking through Philosophy.Cambridge: University Press.
- Lawence Cahoon.(1996).From Modernism to Postmodernism an Anthology. Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Louis P.Pojman.(1997).Philosophy, The Pursuit of Wisdom.London: Thomson Publishing Inc.
- Louis P.Pojman.(2000).Introduction to Philosophy.Second Edition.Belmont: Wordsworth Thomson Learning.
- Panthip Supanakorn.(2009).Chinese Philosophy.Bangkok: Ramkhamhaeng University Printing House.
- Puen Dokbua.(1992).Chinese Philosophy.Bangkok” O.S.Printing House.
- Sakon Nilawan.(2009).Chinese Philosophy.Bangkok: Pirapattana.
- Sathien Pothinantha.(1989). Eastern Philosophers. Bangkok: Prabpim Design&Printing Co, Ltd.
- Stanley Rosen.(2003).The Philosopher's Hand Book.Essential Reading from Plato to Kant.Random House.Inc.
- Thawatchai Pengpinij and Sangarun Smtree.Sufficiency Economy Pattern of Local Philosophers in Agriculture.(2009).Bangkok: Ramkhamhaeng University.
- Timothy Williamson.(2007).The Philosophy of Philosopher.Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- William Irwin, (2004).Seinfeld and Philosophy.Illinois: Carus Publishing Company.

## **Action Research: An appropriate Action Research: An appropriate research methodology for improving healthcare practice**

Puangpaka Kongvattananon<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Nursing, Thammasat University, Klong Luang, Pathum Thani, 12121, Thailand

---

### **Abstract**

**Aim** To describe action research and to discuss why it is an important and appropriate methodology for improving health care practice, compared with other methodologies.

**Key Issues** While the definition of action research varies, it encompasses four basic themes: empowerment of participants, collaboration through democratic participation, acquisition of knowledge, and individual & social change. It, therefore, incorporates the concepts of participation, equality, collaboration, reflection and emancipation. Three types of action research include the scientific-technical view of problem solving, interpretative-collaborative action research, and critical-participatory action research. Variety philosophies in action research depend on typology. Pluralism provides the philosophical basis for most action research, and qualitative and quantitative approaches are used to answer research questions.

Action research focuses on working with people that are stakeholders in real situations, to access and identify problems, to implement and action the research process and ultimately, to achieve change that is sustainable. Ethical issues are an important component of action research because it is carried out in real-world circumstances. Researchers accept, respect, and negotiate with all participants involved in the action research process, and accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.

Current health care practices call for increased collaboration between interdisciplinary health professionals and stakeholders, in an environment of equality. Action research is a bridge in the theory-practice gap and provides a feasible means of

---

\* Corresponding author : [chpuang@tu.ac.th](mailto:chpuang@tu.ac.th)

conducting research in real situations. The results of action research benefit all stakeholders, including researchers, theorists, practitioners, and patients.

**Conclusion** Action research requires imagination, thought, collaboration, and participation to affect sustainable change and to improve health care practice.

**Keywords:** Action Research, health care practice, systematic review

## **Introduction**

Research is a process that answers questions to uncover existing realities and to generate new knowledge. Action research is employed currently in a diversity of fields and settings. In the mid 1940s, it was used in working groups of industry, and then in education, business management, social care, and health care practice and services (Lewin, 1946; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003). Current health care researchers, particularly those in nursing management and primary health care service, are more interested in using action research to improve service and practice (Hampshire, 2000; Morrison and Lilford, 2001; Kelly, Simpson, & Brown, 2002). Although action research has proven to be useful in many situations, it has also been criticized for its lack of rigor and weakness in generalization. Action research, however, adds value to the specific contexts and settings in which it is applied.

Most researchers and practitioners believe that action research can decrease the gap between theory and practice (Webb, 1989; Meyer, 2000; Hampshire, 2000; Badger, 2000; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003) and therefore, deserves credit for its hand in the development of health care practice.

The aim of this article is to describe action research and to discuss why it is an important and appropriate methodology for improving health care practice, compared with other methodologies. The definition, epistemology and typology, evolution, and principles and process of action research are described and discussed. Stories demonstrating the successful use of action research, and its importance to health care practice and service, are described. Finally, ethical considerations in conducting action research in real life situations are explored.

## **Materials and method**

This paper summarizes the findings of a systematic review of published research that relates to action research methodology and the use of action research in health care service and practice, for the period from 1998-2011. Papers published in journals, textbooks, and electronic databases, such as Blackwell Science Ltd., Pubmed, Proquest, Sage Publications, Medline, and Google scholar, etc., were considered eligible for inclusion. We sought and obtained helpful comments on a draft of this article from two people; both academic and practical health care practitioners that are active in the field of action research, for validity.

### **What is action research?**

Academics and practitioners in a variety of areas have defined the concept of action research diversely based on their experiences. Action research was first used in 1946 by a social psychologist, Kurt Lewin, who emphasized its three-step spiral process of planning an action, which involves reconnaissance, taking action, and fact-finding, or determining the result of the action (Lewin, 1946; Dickens and Watkins, 1999; Meyer, 2000; Hampshire, 2000). Hart and Bond (1995) described action research in health and social care as an appropriate way to identify problems in clinical practice

and to develop potential solutions to improve practice.

Action research has also been described as a methodology. Meyer (2000) argued that action research is a style of research rather than a specific method, and that there are three important elements which comprise action research: the participatory character of action research, its democratic impulse, and its simultaneous contribution to social science and social change. Morrison and Lilford (2001) studied the use of action research in health services. They found that the five key tenets of an idealized action research approach are: flexible planning, an iterative cycle, subjective meaning, simultaneous improvement, and unique context. These tenets are congruent with Lewin's concepts, which emphasize a participatory approach and a spiral cycle.

Ladkin (2004) summarized four key features of action research from an action research workshop, as: the undertaking of a cycle of action and reflection, the practice of collaboration, developing sensitivity to action research as an emergent process, and going "public". Reason (2005) described action research as follows:

*“Action research is a participative and democratic process that seeks to do research with, for and by people; to redress the balance of power in knowledge creation; and to do this in an educative manner that increases participants’ capacity to engage in inquiring lives”*

*(Reason, 2005, p.5)*

Reason similarly described four characteristics of action research as: worthwhile practical purpose, democracy and participation, many ways of knowing, and emergent developmental form (Reason, 2001, 2005).

While the definition of action research varies depending on the context and field of study, each variation emphasizes an action focus, a process focus, and a local focus. Definitions of action research also commonly encompass four basic themes: empowerment of participants by iterative cycles and reflection, collaboration through democratic participation, acquisition of knowledge, and individual and social change. These themes, in turn, incorporate the concepts of participation, equality, collaboration, reflection, and emancipation.

## **Epistemology and typology of action research**

The nature of knowing in action research is rooted in the experiences of practice that occur in daily human life. There are different schools of thought about practical research, so there are many ways of knowing. Action research originated from Lewin’s critical social theory (Kelly and Simpson, 2001; Reason, 2005) at a time when positivism was failing to explain all social or scientific phenomena. Some research questions cannot be explained only by one philosophy. Reason (2005) claimed that action research is based on many philosophies and theories that include liberal humanism, pragmatism, phenomenology, and critical social theory. Ladkin (2004) suggested that the epistemology of action research should include experiential knowledge, practical knowledge, and presentational knowledge. Qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied to explore knowledge of truths in action research. We considered multiple ways of knowing in action research, with pluralism as the philosophical basis.

Typology illustrates action research as a methodology that depends on epistemology. Holter and Schwartz-Barcott (1993) identified three types of approaches to action research: a technical collaborative

approach, a mutual collaborative approach, and an enhancement approach. Similarly, McKernan (1991) described the scientific-technical view of problem solving, practical-deliberative action research, and critical-emancipatory action research (McKernan, 1991 cited in Masters, 1995). Kemmis and McTaggart (2003) identified five types of action research: the first type (practice as individual behavior) emphasizes the scientific perspective, the second types (practice as social and systems behavior) emphasizes the objective perspective which are similar to the technical approach, the third type (practice as international action) stresses on interpersonal relation, the fourth type (practice as socially structured and shaped by discourses and tradition) accents the subjective perspective which resemble the practical-collaborative approach, and the fifth type (practice as reflexive) highlights the reflexive-dialectical view of subjective-objective relation which close critical- emancipatory action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003).

Not all authors recognize the same three types of action research. Hart and Bond (1995), for example, identify four action research approaches as a respective methodology, based on the evolution of thought and context, from experimental to social constructionist by empowerment:

*“First, the experimental type is most closely associated with the early days of action research and the scientific approach to social problems, which characterized Lewin’s change experiments and his concern to discover general laws of social life to inform policy-making. Second, the organizational type represents the application of action research to organizational problem- solving, including such problems as restriction of output and absenteeism, and has at its core a concern to overcome resistance to change and create more productive working relationships. Third the professionalizing type is informed by an agenda grounded in practice which also reflects the aspirations of the new professions, such as nursing, teaching and social work, to enhance their status on a par with the established professions, such as law and medicine, and to develop research- based practice. Forth the empowering type is most closely associated with community development approaches and is characterized by an explicit anti oppressive stance to working with vulnerable groups in society”*  
(Hart and Bond, 1995, p.39, 44)

Meyer (2000) explained the same four types of action research and noted that the scientific claims of action research are based on a different philosophy.

We described action research based on the philosophy of three typologies: The first is scientific technical action research that is natural science or post-positivist perspective, beliefs in objective matter. The second is interpretative collaborative action research that is interpretative or phenomenological perspective, beliefs in subjective and experience of human. The third is critical participatory action research that is critical social theory and pluralism, beliefs in capacity of human and multiple perspectives. However, the underpinning philosophy of the researcher and the research questions determine typologies, which typology of action research is best used.

### **Action research principles and processes**

The principle of action research developed from Lewin's principles. Lewin explained the process of action research in a spiral of steps: planning, action, and finding the result of the action (Lewin, 1946). Kemmis and McTaggart (2003)

similarly explained that action research is "generally thought to involve a spiral of self-reflective cycles of planning a change, acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then re-planning, acting and observing, reflecting, and so on..." (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2003).

Many authors have claimed to use action research in a variety of fields, particularly in health care services, and most have adapted Lewin's principles and process. Webb (1989) described the process of action research as being similar to nursing process; that is, in term of assessment, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation.

Action research focuses on working with people that are stakeholders in real situations, to assess and identify problems and implement the research process to ultimately achieve change that is sustainable. It usually involves participants sharing in a group, reflecting and providing feedback on data, and then empowering participants to take part in the research process. However, Hampshire (2000) noted that completing the action research process is a difficult undertaking when working within a short time frame, often leading to pressure on researchers. Furthermore,

action research does not occur within a specific time frame. The research process ends when all stakeholders have agreed that the goals of the research have been

achieved, or that the project is sustainable. We demonstrated the process of action research in health care practice in Figure 1

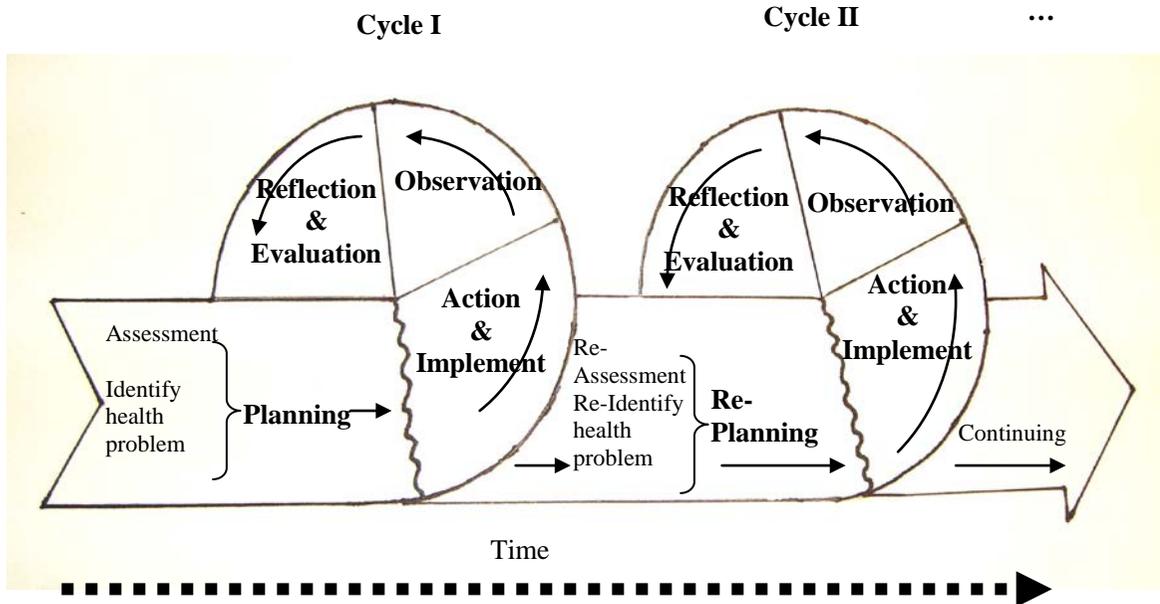


Figure 1 Action Research model for health care practice

### How do we use action research?

Using action research depends on the underpinning philosophy of the researcher and the research questions. The underpinning philosophy is the researcher's belief about the truth which exists in the world. For example, a researcher that believes that humans have abilities and are able to solve problems by themselves may be led to use critical participatory action research. Action research is applied in real situations, rather than in contrived,

experimental research situations, because its focus is on solving real problems. It is commonly used when circumstances require flexibility and participation, and when change is a goal (Reason, 2005).

In addition to the four types of action research, which we have previously described, Hart and Bond (1995) have noted seven distinguishing criteria which are present in all types of action research. Each criterion, which has been similarly

described by Meyer (2000), is summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2** Action research typology and seven criteria (Hart and Bond, 1995 p. 40-43; Meyer, 2000 p. 179)

Action research type: distinguishing criteria	Consensus model of society Rational social management	←—————→		Conflict model of society Structural change
	Experimental	Organization	Professionalizing	Empowering
1. Educative base	Re-education	Re-education or training	Reflective practice	Consciousness raising
	Enhancing social science or administrative control and social change towards consensus	Enhancing managerial control and organizational change towards consensus	Enhancing professional control and individuals' ability to control work situation	Enhancing user control and shifting balance of power; structural change towards pluralism
	Inferring relationship between behavior and out - put; identifying causal factures in group dynamics	Overcoming resistance to change or restructuring balance of power between managers and workers	Empowering professional group; advocacy on behalf of patients or clients	Empowering oppressed groups

	Social scientific bias, researcher focused	Managerial bias or client focused	Practitioner focused	User or practitioner focused
2. Individuals in groups	Closed group, controlled, selection made by researcher for purposed of measurement, inferring relationship between cause and effect	Work groups or mixed groups of managers and workers, or both	Professional(s) or (interdisciplinary ) professional group, or negotiated team boundaries	Fluid groupings, self - selecting or natural boundary or open/closed by negotiation
	Fixed membership	Selected membership	Shifting membership	Fluid membership
3. Problem focus	Problem emerges from the interaction of social science theory and social problems	Problem defined by most powerful group; some negotiation with users	Problem defined by professional in group; some negotiation with users	Emerging and negotiated definition of problem by less powerful group(s)
	Problems relevant for social science or management interests	Problem relevant for management/social science interests	Problem emerges from professional practice or experience	Problem emerges from members' practice or experience
	Success defined in terms of social sciences	Success defined by sponsors	Contested, professionally determined definitions of success	Competing definitions of success accepted and expected

Puangpaka Kongvattananon

	Defined in advance	Defined in advance	Defined in situation	Defined in the situation based on values clarification
4. Change of intervention	Social science experimental intervention to test theory or generate theory, or both	Top down, directed change towards predetermined aims	Professionally led, predefined, process led	Bottom up, undetermined, process led
	Problem to be solved in terms of management aims	Problem to be solved in terms of management aims	Problem to be solved in the interests of resolved of research based practice and professionalization	Problem to be explored as part of the process of change, developing an understanding of meaning of issues in terms of problem and solution
5. Improvement	Toward controlled outcome and consensual definition of improvement	Toward tangible outcome and consensus definition of improvement	Toward improvement in practice defined by professionals and on behalf of users	Toward negotiated outcomes and pluralist definitions of improvement account taken of vested interest

6. Cyclic processes	Research components dominant	Action and research components in tension; action dominated	Research and action components in tension; research dominated	Action components dominant
	Identifies causal processes that can be generalized	Identifies causal processes that are specific to problem context or can be generalized, or both	Identifies causal processes that are specific to problem or can be generalized, or both	Changes course of events; recognition of multiple influences upon change
	Time limited, task focused	Discrete cycle, rationalist, sequential	Spiral of cycles, opportunistic dynamic	Open ended, process driven
7. Research relationship, degree of collaboration	Experimenter, or respondents	Consultant or researcher, respondent or participants	Practitioner or researcher, collaborators	Practitioner researcher, or co- researchers, or co-change agents
	Outside researcher as expert or research funding	Client pays an outside consultant- "they who pay the piper call the tune"	Outside resources or internally generated, or both	Outside resources or internally generated, or both
	Differentiated roles	Differentiated roles	Merged roles	Shared roles

Action researchers use either qualitative or quantitative methods, or both, depending on the type of action research that is applied by the researcher. Almost all action research uses qualitative methods. Meyer (2000) suggested that confidence in the trustworthiness of the data collected in action research can be accomplished through triangulation, reflexivity, and member checks. Triangulation consists of data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, methodological triangulation, and multiple triangulations (Foss and Ellefsen, 2002). The use of quantitative data demonstrates validity and reliability in data collection, while using both quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates the rigor and trustworthiness all steps of the action research process.

#### **Why is action research important?**

Health is important for all aspects of human life; however, many health problems cannot be solved with biomedical knowledge alone. Action research usually involves the sharing of ideas and knowledge between researchers and participants that are confronted with problems in real situations. While health care providers, which include physicians, nurses, psychologists, pharmacists, nutritionists, etc., possess a wealth of

biomedical knowledge, they alone or in collaboration cannot solve all health problems. To achieve successful solutions, clients, with their experiences and knowledge of their lives, must also participate and share, as stakeholders, in solving problems with the health care team.

Action research provides opportunities for clients to express their feelings, thoughts and needs, so that effective treatments and solutions to health problems can be achieved. Therefore, unlike qualitative research, which cannot represent in generalization and depend on user, action research focuses on the participants, stakeholders and researcher. Furthermore, unlike quantitative research, this occurs in controlled settings, and is driven by the researcher; action research occurs in real life contexts and is conducted with the agreement and commitment of stakeholders. Action research is therefore, more likely to achieve solutions that are sustainable and beneficial to those involved.

#### **Success stories using action research**

Action research has been used successfully to develop health care practice in many areas, such as nursing and primary health care, hospital organization, health promotion, and general medical

practice. Morrison and Lilford (2001) have described practical examples of the use of action research in health services in general medical practice, hospital inpatient medical services, hospital nursing, hospital organization, and health promotion, while Hampshire (2000) noted Donabedian's success in quality assurance programs in health care. There are many successful stories of the action researches in hospitals and community settings. For example, "Development of Transitional Care Model for the Elderly with Chronic Illness" demonstrates successful outcomes for learning patients and care givers (Teeranute, 2005). *The KwaZulu – Natal Health Promotion Model* is a successful project that creates the health promotion model through emancipation knowledge, empowerment of participants and action for change. (Uys, Majumdar, & Gwele, 2004)

#### **Ethical consideration in action research**

Action research is a process that involves lifestyle in each context. Ethical issues enter into all phases of action research, so researchers should be sensitive to ethical issues in situations involving participants and be able to recognize an ethical issue when it emerges so that it can be taken into consideration

(Kelly and Simpson, 2001; Herr and Anderson, 2005).

Action researchers must be aware of human rights and welfare and must take responsibility for the protection of participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Furthermore, researchers must accept and respect the decision of participants to take part or withdraw from the research process. Meyer (2000) noted that "action researchers need an ethical code of practice to be negotiated between participants and the action researcher, and action researchers need to be aware of participants' values, beliefs and power relations and sensitively work between differing agendas." Action researchers should do their best to foresee the things their participants might confront in the research process and impose the least amount of risk to the participant (Herr and Anderson, 2005).

#### **Conclusion**

Action research is the process of knowing, creating knowledge, and leading to change in real situations. Action research requires imagination, thought, collaboration, and participation between the researcher and participation to bring about sustainable change and improve health care practice. It therefore incorporates the concepts of

participation, equality, collaboration, reflection and emancipation. We summarized the typology of action research based on the philosophy that there are three typologies: scientific technical action research, interpretative collaborative action research, critical participatory action research. However, the best typology depends on the researcher's underpinning philosophy and the research questions.

Ethical issues are an important component of action research because it is carried out in real-world circumstances. Researchers accept, respect, and negotiate with all participants involved in the action research process, and accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.

Action research focuses on working with people that are stakeholders in the contexts, to assess and identify problems, implement the research process and ultimately, to achieve change that is sustainable. Health care providers should work as multidisciplinary healthcare teams along with clients to create opportunities for clients to express their feelings, thoughts and needs, within a democratic environment, so that effective treatments and solutions to health problems can be achieved.

Action research has been an important research methodology for health

care practice. Current health care practices call for increased collaboration between interdisciplinary health professionals and stakeholders, in an environment of equality. Action research is a bridge in the theory-practice gap and provides a feasible means of conducting research in real situations. The results of action research benefit all stakeholders, including researchers, theorists, practitioners, and patients.

## References

- Avison, D., Lau, F., Myers, M, & Nielsen, P.A, (1999). Action Research: To make academic research relevant, researchers should try out their theories with practitioners in real situations and real organizations. *Communications of the ACM*, 42 (1), 94-97.
- Badger, T. G. (2000). Action research, change and methodological rigour. *Journal of Nursing Management*, 8, 201-207.
- Baillie, L. (2000). Preparing adult branch students for their management role as staff nurses: an action research project. *Journal of Nursing Management*. 7, 225-234.
- Baskerville, R.L., & Wood-Harper, A.T. (1996). A critical perspective on action research as a method for

- information systems research. *Journal of International Technology*, 11, 235-246.
- Bate, P. (2000). Synthesizing Research and Practice: Using the Action Research Approach in the Health Care Setting. *Social Policy & Administration*, 34 (4), 478-493.
- Bennett, B. (1998). Increasing collaboration within a multidisciplinary neurorehabilitation team: the early stages of a small action research project. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 7, 227-231.
- Bryman, A., & Burgess, R. G. (Eds.). (1999). *Qualitative Research*. London, Sage Publications.
- Chassin, M.R., & Galvin, R.W. (1998). The Urgent Need to Improve Health Care Quality: Institute of Medicine National Roundtable on Health Care Quality. *JAMA*, 280 (11), 1000-1005.
- Checkland, P., & Holwell, S. (1998). Action Research: Its Nature and Validity. *Systematic Practice and Action Research*, 11 (1), 9-21.
- Choudhry, U.K., Jandu, S., Mahal, J., Singh, R., Sohi-Pabla, H., & Mutta, B. (2002). Health Promotion and Participatory Action Research with South Asian Women. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 34 (1), 75-81.
- Coghlan, D., & Casey, M. (2001). Action research from the inside: issues and challenges in doing action research in your own hospital. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 35 (5), 674-682.
- Cowley, S., & Billing, J.R. (1999). Implementing new health visiting services through action research: an analysis of process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 30 (4), 965-974.
- Decbriro-Mariro, A.E., Jordan-Marsh, M. Traiger, G., & Sualo, M. (1999). Nurse-Physician Collaboration: Action Research and the Lessons Learned. *JONA*, 31 (5), 223-232.
- DenZin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. California: Sage.
- DenZin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2003). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. California: Sage.
- Dickens, L., & Watkins, K. (1999). Action Research: Rethinking Lewin. *Management Learning*, 30 (2), 127-140.
- Dickson, G. (2000). Aboriginal Grandmothers' Experience with Health Promotion and Participatory Action Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10 (2), 188-213.
- Dickson, G., & Green, K.L. (2001). The External Researcher in Participatory

- Action Research. *Educational Action Research*, 9 (2), 243-260.
- Flood, R.L. (1999). Action Research and the Management and Systems Sciences. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 11 (1), 79-101.
- Hampshire, A.J. (2000). What is action research and can it promote change in primary care. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 6 (4), 337-343.
- Hampshire, A., Blair, M., Crown, N., Avery, A., & Williams, I. (1999). Action Research: a useful method of promoting change in primary care? *Family Practice*. 6 (3), 305-311.
- Hart, E., & Bond, M. (1995). *Action Research for Health and Social Care: a Guide to Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Herr, K., & Anderson, G.L. (2005). *The Action Research Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*. California: Sage.
- Holter, I.M., & Schwartz-Barcott, D. (1993). Action research: What is it? How has it been used and how can it be used in nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 128, 298-304.
- Hope, K.W., & Waterman, H.R. (2003). Praiseworthy pragmatism? Validity and action research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 44 (2), 120-127.
- Hyrkas, K. (1997). Can action research be applied in developing clinical teaching? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 25, 801-808, 1997.
- Kelly, D., & Simpson, S. (2001). Action research in action: reflections on a project to introduce Clinical Practice Facilitators to an acute hospital setting. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33, 403-410, 2001.
- Kelly, D., Simpson, S., & Brown, P. (2002). An action research project to evaluate the clinical practice facilitator role for junior nurses in an acute hospital setting. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 11, 90-98, 2002.
- Kesby, M. (2000). Participatory diagramming: developing qualitative methods through action research. *AREA*, 32 (4), 423-435.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2000). Participatory Action Research. In N.K. DenZin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp. 567-602). California: Sage.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (2003). Participatory Action Research. In N.K. DenZin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds)

- Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (pp. 261-291). California: Sage.
- Koch, T., & Kralik, D. (2001). Chronic illness: reflections on a community-based action research programme. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 36 (1), 23-31.
- Koch, T., Selim, P., & Kralik, D. (2001). Enhancing lives through the development of a community-based participatory action research programme. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 11, 109-117, 2001.
- Ladkin, D., Action Research. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J.F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds). (2004). *Qualitative Research Practice*. (pp. 536-548). London: Sage.
- Lauri, S., & Sainio, C. (1998). Developing the nursing care of breast cancer patients: an action research approach. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 7, 424-432.
- Lewin K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues* 2, 34-46.
- Lilford, R. J., Jecock, R., Shaw, H., Chard, J., & Morrison, B. (1999). Commissioning health services research: An iterative method. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 4 (3), 164-167.
- Lindsey, E., Shield, L., & Stajduhar, K. (1999). Creating effective nursing partnerships: relating community development to participative action research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 29, 1238-1245.
- McKay, J., & Marshall, P., The dual imperatives of action research. *Information Technology & People*, 14 (1), 46-59, 2001.
- Minkler, M., Fadem, P., Perry, M., Blum, K., Moore, L., & Rogers, J., (2002). Ethical Dilemmas in Participatory Action Research: A Case Study from the Disability Community. *Health Education & Behavior*, 29 (1), 14-29, 2002.
- Morrison, B., & Lilford, R. (2001). How Can Action Research Apply to Health Services? *Qualitative Health Research*, 11 (4), 436-449.
- Phelps, R., & Hase, S. (2002). Complexity and Action Research: exploring the theoretical and methodological connections. *Educational Action Research*, 10 (3), 507-524.
- Quinlan, E. (2010). New action research techniques Using Participatory Theatre with Health Care Workers. *Action Research*. 8 (2), 117-133, 2010.

- Reason, P., & Bradbury, H. (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*. London: Sage, 2001.
- Reason, P. (2003). Pragmatist philosophy and action research: Reading and conversation with Richard Rorty. *Action Research*, 1 (1), 103-123.
- Reason, P., & McArdle, K. L. (2005). *Brief notes on the theory and practice of action research*. Retrieved April 22, 2006, from <http://www.bath.ac.uk/~mnsprw/paper/s/BriefNotesAR.html>
- Reason, P. (2006). Choice and Quality in Action Research Practice. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 15 (2), 187-203.
- Robertson, J. (2000). The Three Rs of Action Research Methodology: reciprocity, reflexivity, and reflection-on-reality. *Educational Action Research*, 8 (2), 307-326.
- Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J.F., & Silverman, D. (Eds.). (2004). *Qualitative Research Practice*. London, Sage.
- Soh, K.L., Davidson, P.M., Leslie, G., & Abdul Rahman, A.B. (2011). Action research studies in the intensive care setting: A systematic review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 48 (2), 258-268.
- Sturt, J. (1999). Placing empowerment research within an action research typology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 30 (5), 1057-1063.
- Taylor, B. (2001). Identifying and transforming dysfunctional nurse-nurse relationships through reflective practice and action research. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 7, 406-413.
- Waterman, H., (1998). Embracing ambiguities and valuing ourselves: issues of validity in action research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 28 (1), 101-105.
- Webb, C., (2000). Action research: philosophy, methods and personal experiences. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 33 (5), 652-659.
- Winter, R. (1998). Finding a Voice—Thinking with Others: A conception of action research. *Educational Action Research*, 6 (1), 53-68.
- Winter, R. (2002). Truth or Fiction: Problems of validity and authenticity in narratives of action research. *Educational Action Research*, 10 (1), 143-154.
- Uys, L.R., Majumdar, B., & Gwele, N.S., (2004). The KwaZulu – Natal Health

Puangpaka Kongvattananon

Promotion Model. *Journal of Nursing  
Scholarship*, 36 (3), 192-196.

Comparison of Sino-Portuguese Building in Malaka, Penang, and  
Phuket in the Malayan Peninsula

Punya Tepsing\*

Research Center for Asia Pacific Development Studies , Faculty of Liberal Arts,  
Prince of Songkla University, Had yai, Songkhla 90112

---

**Abstract**

*This article aims to study the comparison traditional building of commonly referred "Sino-Portuguese" style in Malaka, Penang ,and Phuket by studying the sample buildings in each places, and use the comparative analysis in 3 issues, which are: 1) Name of building; 2) Origin of building; 3) Characteristic of building facade*

*The study found that the term "Sino-Portuguese" was normally used in referral to the colonial buildings in Thailand, but in Malaysia especially in Malaka and Penang These buildings would called by other names. In term of the origin of buildings, it was found that western arts had influenced to the building in both of Malaka Penang as well as Phuket. Malaka was the first place to adopt western arts which then spread to spread to Penang and Phuket respectively. In Malaka, most of the buildings were of Baroque, Rococo, and Islamic styles. In Penang, most of the buildings were of the Neo-classic. future more, during the nineteenth century, due to the spread of Eclecticism in Penang, the arts of the western, Chinese, India and Local Malayu peoples in Penang were blended into a new style, identical to that in Phuket. The characteristic of the buildings in Phuket was that of row buildings or "shop houses" with narrow width front. The early period building had a door in the middle of building, and braced with window.*

---

\*

Email: punya.t@psu.ac.th

*The later period building would have open-spaced lower floor for conducting business. The component of building had been set divisibly, and there were footpaths underneath the buildings. In Malaka, the Chinese influence was strong, but dwindled in Penang and Phuket.*

**Keywords:** Comparison      Sino-Portuguese      Malayan Peninsula

---

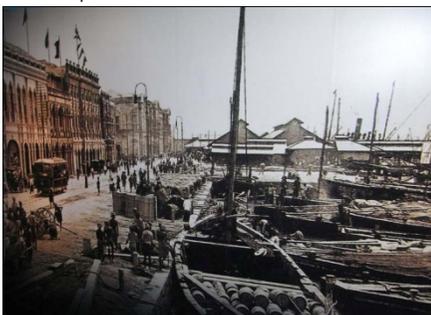
## Introduction

The term “Sino-Portuguese building” refer to those with an architectural pattern that combines Chinese and Western styles. This combined styles has proliferated in Southeast Asian countries that were once colonized by Western empires and was also settled by the Chinese, and also in Southern in cities such as Macau and Guang Zhou. The outstanding, values of the Chinese arts have been found in Malayan peninsula, from peninsula Malaysia up to Southern Thailand.

The reason of for numerous presence of these “Sino-Portuguese” in the Malayan peninsula was because the area is located in the strait of Malacca, a

shipping route between the western world and the China. The arrival of foreign countries to the Strait of Malacca since the early centuries CE to the thirteenth century resulted in Hindu and Buddhist influence from India. Local people traded most commonly with the Indians and the Chinese. In late thirteenth century, the Arabs came to the land with the Islamic religion. Afterwards, the Chinese came to establish their communities. In the early sixteenth century, then the Western came to the Malayu region (Widodo, 1996: 2-3). There were many large communities on the coast such as Malaka, and Penang, in Malaysia, and Phuket, in Thailand. These places were the centers of commerce, and there were various ethnic groups in area.

The western people came to the region as the merchants and the missionaries, and the Chinese people migrated to the region as laborers to work with the local people (Wee Hock Chye, 2003: 25-30). The uniqueness of the blend cultures in Malay peninsula result in the Sino-Portuguese building in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket. (Thanarach tawarogn, 2004: 442) summarized his research that the old buildings located in the central business district was not only referred to as the commercial architecture, but also referred to as the living culture which showed the combination of cultures and also could described the history and time which were the important factors of the development of the pattern



**Figure 1** Port of Penang : show traders among colonial building style.

Photograph : Malaysia nation museum

#### *Research Objective*

This article aims to study the comparison traditional building of commonly referred "Sino-Portuguese" style in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket by studying the sample buildings in each places, and use the comparative analysis in 3 issues, which are:

- 1) Name of building
- 2) Origin of building
- 3) Characteristic of building facade

#### *Research Methodology*

As follows: Researcher used methodology from the primary document, secondary document, and field survey by observation, recording video tape, and interview in those 3 areas. After that, analyze the data to find the difference and the similarity of the Sino-Portuguese Building in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket city. This study has set the scope of the comparison into 4 categories which are names of building, origin of building, characteristics of building façade, and ornaments on building facade. In the characteristic and decoration of Sino-Portuguese building facade issues, the research has studies 31 of buildings in

Malaka, 41 of buildings in Penang, and 50 of buildings in Phuket by selecting the sample which is significant and outstanding in each area.

## Results

### 1. Name of building

In Malaysia, it is rarely to find the word "Sino-Portuguese", though there are lots of Sino-Portuguese building. Moreover, the building has been found in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Taiping, Yaho Baru. Malay people usually use other word to refer to that building. By the way, in Thailand widely use this word especially in Phuket city. From the document review in Malaysia, there are many aliases of the building, but it is rarely to find the name "Sino-Portuguese" to use formally. There are other words such as (Khoo Joo Ee, 1998: 25) ( The content is extended by writer)

#### - Sino - Malay - Colonial Style

This name originates from the combination of three styles which are Chinese (Sino), Malay, and Western (Colony).

#### - Sino - Malay - Palladian Style

This name originates from the characteristic of building of the Chinese millionaire. The house has been designed based on the symmetric style. The entrance (Portico) is on the middle of the house. There are wings of building as same as the European house. The name "Palladian" comes from the Italian architecture in Renaissance era (the last sixteenth century.). His name is "Andrea Palladio". He is the first one who built this style. In addition, this style had been restored in Neo-Classicism era (the last eighteenth century) by the English architecturer, and then adapted with the Malay style.

#### - Towkay Italianate Style

"Towkay" means the Chinese millionaire or "Taukae" in Thai word, and "Italianate" means Italy. This name is called because of the design which similar to the Classic architecture in Italy. Fro instant, the mansion of Lim Lean Teng on the Sultan Ahmed Shah street in Penang. The house has a renaissance dome, stained glass which was used in Venice. Moreover, many types of design had been taken from Italy.

#### - Chinese Palladian Style

The meaning of this word is similar to the Towkay Italianate. The house is the Palladian style, and mix with the Chinese art.

**- Chinese Baroque**

This name referred to the European era (the seventeenth century). This era usually decorated the building extravagantly. It was the era of the extravagant ornamentation of art based on High-society taste, so the style like this was called "Baroque". The Chinese building which decorated extravagantly had been called "Chinese Baroque" as well.

**- Tropical Renaissance**

This word means the renaissance style in Europe which appeared in the tropical zone such as the arch, the pillar head decoration, rustic wall, the capital of column, the pilaster, festoon. These techniques had been adapted with the local taste in the tropical zone and the evacuated Chinese in Malayan peninsula.

**- Straits Eclectic Style**

This word means the combination of various designs which appeared in the Malaka channel. This word covers to all in Malaka channel, so it is widely used in

Malayan peninsula and Phuket city also.

From the names above, name of Sino is used to refer to the Chinese style, and the Colonial, the Palladian, the Boroque, the Italianate are used to refer to the Western style. By the way, there is no a word "Portuguese" in the said names.

**2. Origin of building**

The beautiful Sino-Portuguese buildings in Malaka which survive in the present, mostly built in the late nineteenth century – the early twenties century. The year of build had appeared on the building facade. From the English era which is the booming era of mining industry and rubber tree, the era helped the evacuated Chinese upgraded themselves to be the millionaires. They had the beautiful and modern houses to live. By the way, the arts in Malaka was influenced by the Baroque and Rococo styles which are broadened by the Dutch (Knapp, 2010: 20-22). Western style buildings in Malaka had established in the Dutch era in the seventeenth – the early eighteenth century. The building components usually form

fantastic plane, meandering concave, artistic grace. This style then had settled down in Malaka for long time, and later got the influences of Neo-Classic or Victorian from Penang and Singapore. The origin of Sino-Portuguese building in Malaka then caused from the promulgation of the Western people to the evacuated Chinese society since the seventeenth century – the early twenties century. (the Dutch era to the English era).

The Sino-Portuguese building in Penang, had long history since the late eighteenth century, but most of buildings were constructed in the late nineteenth century – the early twenties century. due to the booming of economic on mining industry and rubber tree. Penang had been established as the permanent British post, so this caused the British style influenced to the area. By the way, the British style building in Malaka had been adapted with the Indian taste because India was the British post before Malaka, and later adapted with the Malay style (The Encyclopedia of Malaysia : volume 5, 1998: 94). The art from Victorian era had influenced in Malaka also. This was an era

which usually restored the old arts such as the Neo-Classic. In other word, the Neo-Classic was very popular in Penang, and the Greek and Roman arts also had restored to use in the Penang construction. In addition, the Victorian era also expanded the restoration of the middle age art, the Baroque and Rococo arts, and the exotic art. So the origin of Sino-Portuguese building in Penang came from the propagation by the British people to the Chinese Society. The arts in Penang then were mixed and matched since the late eighteenth century. in Neo-classic style to the late nineteenth century. in Victorian style which combined many types of art in the past with localism art. This pattern of the art was called “Eclecticism” (Chareomput, 2538: 110) and “Art Nouveau” style which was the modern style at that time, and Art Deco in the early twenties century.

In Phuket, the Sino-Potuguese mostly constructed in the nineteenth century – the early twenties century. as same as in Penang. Phuket and Penang both were the center of mining industry and mining trade market at that time. There was

a big mining market located in Singapore. The Chinese-Penang people and Phuket People often visited each other. Phuket received the culture from the Chinese people in Penang to use a lot because Penang at that time was the most modern city in the region and not far from Phuket. Phuket people also hired Penang people to construct and decorate their house. By the way, the Sino-Portuguese building in Phuket originated from the relationship between people of both cities, the copying of various architecture styles from Penang.

### 3. Characteristics of the Building facade

There are some interesting points in the designation of the Sino-Portuguese building facade in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket. From the analysis of the top floor found that the component on the top of building has the same characteristic that is; the constructor would lay the brick out of the building as the ornamental glass. It looks like the pilaster which appears on the window side and the corner of room wall. This component uses for dividing the space and window. By the way, it is rarely

to see the pilaster in Malaka, but there are a lot in Penang and Phuket. In addition, the façade usually had constructed by putting two windows on the wall. There is wide space between the windows for the decoration. The designer would not mold the cornice out of the wall too much. They mostly mold the cornice shallowly around the window. The top arch is not chunky, so it is not necessary to build the pilaster to support the arch. The molding of the arch cannot be done too much chunky because of the weight problem. To make the pilaster to divide the windows usually have been found in case that the top arch is chunky as the semicircle or the crescent shape. But in some cases, the pilaster does not support any weight. Due to the Malaka preferred the Baroque and Rococo design, a space between windows then had been left for decoration. The arch which has a balance shape based on the Neo-classic style usually had been seen in Penang and Phuket. The façade must attach the great importance of the luxurious with the arch. The pilaster would elaborate the arch more outstanding, and become the window frame implicitly. Consequently, the space,

which uses for decoration between the windows, had to use the technique of decoration on the pilaster to decorate as well.

In addition, the Sino-Portuguese row building in Penang would outstanding than other place. The house had been drilled the circle over the window on the top floor. This pattern had been rarely found in Malaka, but none in Phuket. This characteristic affirmed to the Neo-classic style that Penang received. In other words, this was the influence of Palladian style which usually drilled the circle on the gable of the house. The Chinese designer thought it was a good thing for the ventilation, and matched with the flower design perfectly.

On the ground floor, there was same characteristic in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket that was position of the door. The door would put in the middle, and braced with the windows. This was similar to the house in the rural area in Southern China. By the way, this pattern in Malaka was tidier than in China. The window frame had the simple square shape or the window was bended a little. The iron bar

was flat to refer to the previous window style that the evacuated Chinese created. They did not like the perforated design in Penang, but the perforated design had been found mostly in Penang and Phuket. In addition, buildings in Malaka did not like to drill the loophole over the window. They preferred to decorate the window with picture or the alphabet.

The drilling of loophole over the window on the ground floor had not found in China. This can assume that there were two reasons why this style was popular in Penang by the Chinese designer.

First, the building in Penang was higher than the old building in Malaka from the influence of Anglo-Indian architecture style they received, so there was the space over the window a lot. Chinese designer then drilled the wall to add the loophole, and to ventilate the air. Chinese designer usually drilled the loophole to receive the sunlight through the inside of the building. Second, Chinese usually drilled the loophole over the window because of the luck. Mostly the Chinese usually drilled the Bat-shape because they believed that the

bat was the lucky animal (Sung, 2002: 34). Thus to drill the bat-shape loophole means to bring the luck to the house. This bat-shape loophole had been found in Penang and Phuket.

The door in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket always built with two layers. When opened the front door, we would see the back door. The front door was opened by pulling, but the back door would be opened by pushing to avoid the clashing of two door panel when opened the same time. The decoration would appear on the front door panel most. By the way the front door panel in Malaka would be opened only half, as well as Penang and Phuket. This referred to the influence of Malay house style, however, it now was found a full panel more than half panel. the front door panel would be decorated on the front and back sides of the front door. The perforated design was drilled on the front door panel at the same position, but the design on the front and back of the front door were different impressively. In addition, in Malaka, the characteristic of main pillar on the ground floor of the row building was simple, but more complicated

in Penang and Phuket. They preferred to reduce the size of the angle or corner to add the ornamental glass pillar, and decorated pillar by putting the cornice which was very popular in Victorian era. Especially in Penang, they would like to decorate the plant design or the Chinese lucky design at the pillar on the ground floor also. Moreover, people usually made the awning out of the building in Malaka. They decorated the awning with the traditional Chinese design on the circle-shape tile and the triangle-shape tile. The building thus looked like the joss house or the shrine of clan house. This referred to the influence of Chinese art to the House style in Malaka in the first period of evacuation, but there were some in Penang because the joss house in Penang usually constructed like the row house mixed with the living house. By the way, there was no this building style in Phuket because of Thai belief. They did not like using the religious symbol to use with the living house. In addition, there were many kinds of the decoration on the façade of Sino-Portuguese building in Puket, but there was on Thai painting style on the facade

because they preferred using this painting in the temple or honor places.

### **Conclusion**

From the comparison on the name of Sino-Portuguese building in Malaysia and Thailand, found that Thai people in Phuket called this kind of building that the Sino-Portuguese building, but it was not popular in Malaysia. Even Malay people would understand in the name "Sino-Portuguese", but the building was called in other name in the official record such as Straits Eclectic Style. They called in other name because this building was the combination of the arts from various countries not only the Chinese and Portuguese. Considering from the origin of building, the age of building in Malaka was older than in Penang, and in Penang was older than in Phuket. Malaka was the first port city in Malayan peninsula. When the Westerner arrived to do business, the relationship had occurred with local people, Chinese people, and Indian people. Most of Chinese people did trading. They constructed the narrow row building (shop house) to do business, and

took the Western art to mix with the local art. The outstanding Western influences were the Baroque art and Rococo art in the seventeenth century. In Penang, the Sino-Portuguese building had been constructed because Penang was a new port city replaced Malaka city. Penang took the influence of the Neo-classic art in the late eighteenth century. By they way, when the trade in this region was more glorious in the late nineteenth – the early twentieth century, rich people then started constructing the luxurious house and the luxurious row building. Many building referred to the influence of the notion of combination which was popular in the Victorian era by combining the beauty of various arts. This pattern of building appeared in Malaka and Penang. For the building in Phuket, the Sino-Portuguese building in Phuket received the influence from Penang. Lots of Chinese people evacuated to live in Phuket after the opening of the tin mining. They had the relationship with Penang, and then they hired the designer from Penang to design and decorate the building in Phuket.

The aspect of Sino-Portuguese building façade, in overview, quite be similar that is; the combinations of Chinese, Western, and Localism, but different a little in the origin of building. The row building in three places were also similar. The wall in each block was higher than the roof. The door was in the middle, and braced with the windows. The arches had been constructed in a row, and were supported with the pilaster. The front was narrow, but opened the used-space inside. The building also opened some parts of the roof. About the singled-house, the similarity is; the house had the balance as the Palladian style. The difference was the details in the decoration. The arch in Malaka was designed in the curve-shape like the Islamic style and left a space for the decoration. In Penang, the outstanding point was the loophole over the window. By the way, there was none in Phuket. For the ground floor of the building, they preferred to spread the eaves, and decorated the building looked like the joss house. They did not put the cornice on the pillar too much comparing with in Penang and Phuket. Most of the designs were the

Chinese auspicious designs. The design was blended with the structure of building façade. In Penang and Phuket, the design in Penang was more natural then in Phuket. The design in Phuket was quite artificial. The Sino-Portuguese buildings in Malaka, Penang, and Phuket had been constructed due to the trend of modernity at that time. This modernity hid the desire to raise themselves compare with the powerful countries that time. In the same time, they still kept their culture closely and had the oriental aesthetics, but they were willing to receive new things from the west. This reflected to the way of life in the multicultural society through the Sino-Portuguese building.

The study also discuss that the difference of the design still related to many contexts. Thus this comparative study still lack of the other related contexts which are more important than the art history of the Sino-Portuguese building such as economic, politic, social, and belief. This problem should be studied on the next research to explore the knowledge continually.

In the future. The local leaders of the three towns (Penang Malaka Phuket) and the government of Thailand and Malaysia must cooperate to study management and develop arts of town history which focus on sustainable and negotiate with other national areas. In the present. Penang Malaka have the status of world heritage site, but phuket does not yet have this status. In my opinion, Penang, Malaka Phuket are historically

and socially similar although in difference countries. However Sino-Portuguese building is not highly regarded by Thai government in comparison with other ancient places. Whenever the three towns change to be world heritage sites, It will increase tourism and interest in Sino-Portuguese architecture in the peninsular, tourists could get a view of former times and appreciate its aesthetics

#### Reference

Chareomput, W. (2538). *Western Architecture*. Bangkok : Chulalongkorn University.

Khoo Joo Ee. (1998). *The Straits Chinese: A Cultural History*. Kuala Lumpur: The Tepin Press.

Knapp. Ronald G. (2010). *Chinese House: of Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.

Koo Su Nin. (2001). *Streets of Geogrtown Penang*. Penang: Janus Print & Resourse.

Sung, V. (2002). *Five-Fold Happiness*. San Francisco: Chronicle Book.

Thanarach Tawarogn. (2004). *The Study on shop-house of old commercial districts of in eastern seaports on Thailand's Southern peninsula*. Bangkok: department of Art and Architecture, Gradated school, Silpakorn University.

*The Encyclopedia of Malaysia : volume 5*. (1998). Kuala Lumpur : Archipelago Press.

Widodo, Johannes. (1996). *The Urban History of the Southern Asian Coastal Cities*. Tokyo : University of Tokyo.

Wee Hock Chye. (2003). *Malacca* Consultant Ltd  
aways. Kuala Lumpur: Purple PR

Mukdahan – Suvannakhet Sister Cities: the study of cultural factors that affect the appropriateness of the Sister City relationship-building policy between border towns in the Mekong sub-region

Wichian Intasi<sup>1</sup>, Watunyu Jaiborisudhi<sup>2</sup>, Ampa Kaewkumkong<sup>2</sup>, Chawapon Changklang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Social sciences, Narasuan University

<sup>2</sup>Researcher of institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University

---

**Abstract**

**Background:** Since 1990, Asian Development Bank has funded the initiation of the economic cooperation among the six Greater Mekong countries, including Cambodia, China, Myanmar, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand, under the policy of “The Greater Mekong Sub-regional Economic Cooperation: GMS-EC”. This policy has resulted in various forms of cooperation in the region. Another important framework is the Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) which aims to bridge the economic development gaps or differences and creates sustainable cooperation between member countries. Under the cooperation frameworks with that aim in mind, many projects have been implemented and one of them is the development of the relationship between different countries in the form of Sister Cities, which is an international city twinning that aims to achieve a mutual development goal.

**Objective:** To present an explanation for the appropriateness of the relationship-building policy at city level in the form of Sister Cities between border cities in the Mekong sub-region. This article will use the Sister Cities of Thailand's Mukdahan and Savannakhet of Lao People's Democratic Republic, which are two border cities in the Mekong sub-region as a case study.

*Results: cultural factors were important factors that made Sister City relationship-building policy appropriate for the area. This was because when people shared the same identity, they would also feel that they shared a common fate and had the ability to determine their shared value. This identity came from cultural factors, and these cultural factors are the foundations that led to the success of the implementation of the relationship-building policy that aimed to enhance better understanding between cities, which would in turn, resulted in economic, social and cultural cooperation.*

**Keyword:** Mukdahan – Suvannakhet, sister city, cultural factors

---

## Introduction

The Sister Cities have been widely established in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. It can be seen that Thailand has established Sister Cities with the neighboring countries including Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos. Sisters Cities between Thailand and Laos are, for example, Savannakhet - Mukdahan, Ton Pheung – Chiang San, Huay Sai - Chiang Khong, Tha khak - Nakhon Phanom, Pakse - Ubon Ratchathani, Muang Ngern – Huay Kon, and Vientiane - Nongkhai.

The widespread implementation of Sister City policy in the Mekong sub-region occurring under the influence of

cooperation framework on economic development has linked the explanation for the appropriateness of the policy with external factors, namely, the economic factors. For example, the trend of economic integration at regional or global level through the concept of Transnationalism under globalization process and this process of globalization has triggered the flow or movement of 5 factors with no fixed pattern or continuity, namely, the flow of people (Ethnoscape), media (Mediascape), technology (Technoscape), capital (Financialscape), and ideas (Ideoscape). This back and forth movement of the five factors has resulted in

the deteriorialization or dissolution of boundary between the two states, societies or cultures.

The dissolution or lessening of state boundary has led to a change of cross-border control under new trade strategy that develops new strategies to support free trade and enables the private sector to carry out smooth economic activities, while ensuring that the cross-border flows of people, goods and information are more convenient and complying with free trade principles of the new era. This strategy aims to maintain the authority of the state under a stream of the aforementioned global trend. The attempt to support free trade in the Mekong sub-region subsequently leads to the establishment of Sister Cities which is seen as an appropriate policy in the area.

However, for the Mekong sub-region which is the group of countries in Southeast Asia, the explanation for the appropriateness of the Sister City policy that linked with economic factor may ignore the common historical and cultural characteristics which are the important fundamentals that coexist in the border

town of the Mekong sub-region. This uniqueness in the border cities of Southeast Asia, where each country hold Nation State characteristic, were drawn and determined by the West through the lines and the boundaries of the sovereign during colonization period.

This article, thus, would like to present an explanation for the appropriateness of the relationship-building policy at city level in the form of Sister Cities between border cities in the Mekong sub-region. It is argued that the economic factors and the economic integration at regional and global levels may not solely explain the appropriateness of the implementation of such policy in the area. There are also cultural factors that are important and these cultural factors make the Sister City policy appropriate for the area. This article will use the Sister Cities of Thailand's Mukdahan and Savannakhet of Lao People's Democratic Republic, which are two border cities in the Mekong sub-region as a case study. The next paragraph will describe a Sister City framework and determine cultural factors presented in the province of Mukdahan

and Savannakhet, as well as evaluate how these cultural factors make Sister City relationship-building policy appropriate for the area.

### **Conceptual Framework of Sister City relationship-building policy**

The Sister City relationship-building policy is a conceptual framework influenced by the concept of Town Twinning in the West. Such concept tries to promote cultural and commercial ties between towns or cities which share some common features such as the geography, politics, society, or culture. However, the two cities are not necessarily located near each other, or located in different countries.

The earliest form of Town Twinning was between the German city of Paderborn and the French city of Le Mans in 836. Moreover, Keighley, West Yorkshire, England had a "Sister City" arrangement with Suresnes and Puteaux, France starting in 1905, whereas, Saddleworth in South Australia with the Saddleworth Parish of the United Kingdom in 1941 (The City of Inverness Town Twinning Committee,

2012). However, the concept became concrete practice in Europe since 1951 and in America since 1956. The reason behind this concrete practice of Town Twinning was the establishment of the so-called Council of European Municipalities and Regions in Europe and the Sister Cities International in the United States of America, which were the organizations responsible for promoting such concept. This resulted in the prevalence of Town Twinning which could be seen as citizen diplomacy in many areas.

However, the emergence of the two organizations that are responsible for promoting the concept of Town Twinning in Europe and America have resulted in diverse applications and practices of the Town Twinning. For example, in Europe the term "Twin Cities" was used to refer to such concept while "Sister Cities" was used in North America. Nevertheless, in practice, the two terms have no significant differences.

On the one hand, twin cities, a form of town twinning in Europe, was defined in 1951 by Jean Bereth, one of the founders of the Council of European

Municipalities and Regions, as a matchup of two cities which aimed to operate under a common practice, promote closer relationship ties (Council of European Municipalities and Regions, 2012). However, city twinning would have to depend on each city's characteristic, for example, the geography, main economic activities, local cultural activities or sports. It can be said that city twinning in Europe emphasized the differences between the two cities; therefore, Twin Cities in Europe did not necessarily have similar cultures.

On the other hand, the term "Sister Cities" was used to describe a form of town twinning in North America, Asia and Australia. The term was originated in the USA. during President Eisenhower's historic September 11–12, 1956 White House conference on citizen diplomacy, the Post World War II climate when American People wished for Freedom and world peace. President Eisenhower rhetorically stated that "the establishment of Sister Cities will make the world population realize and understand the new challenges as well as achieve the solutions to some of the world problem". This was the core of

citizen diplomacy which consequently led Civic Committee to develop many projects based on the Sister City concept during 1950s and 1960s.

However, the term Twin Cities is used in the USA to describe the cities which are geographically and economically connected. Moreover, it is often referred to town twinning of major metropolitan areas such as Minneapolis and Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA. These Twin Cities do not necessarily have the same population or size, but they must be able to geographically and potentially help each other to grow and develop other kinds of cooperation. For example, Twin Cities may lead to the development of infrastructure projects such as road building, improvement of transportation or other inter-city assistance. Therefore, Sister Cities as a cooperative agreement between countries or cities in geographically distinct areas to establish special relationship and ties (Kanokwan Manorom, Pianwadee Srisuphan and Sakulphan Phothijak, 2011).

In the USA, the purpose or goal of Sister City concept in the early period focused on establishing peace and

harmony, as a result of social and economic reconstruction after World War II. In Europe, on the other hand, Twin City concept focused on cultural exchange. Therefore, the relationship building in the form of Twin Cities in Europe highlighted the differences and they did not necessarily have similar culture. Moreover, Twin Cities can be town twinning of more than 2 cities. However, during the post World War II, the establishment of Twin Cities in Europe appeared to focus on cooperation in building peace and harmony, namely, the relationship-building between Coventry, England and the Dresden, Germany, which was seriously damaged from the Second World War.

At present, the Sister City relationship-building policy often focuses on town twinning to promote economic development, tourism, city publicity, education, cultures and sport activities. A more obvious example includes Exchange students program and Educational assistance from more developed countries. Furthermore, the official twinning of the cities is usually established through the signing of an agreement between the local

governments or conducted through international organizations which are responsible for promoting intercity activities. The unofficial town twinning often involves the matchup of two tourist cities.

Building a Sister/Twin City relationship between Thailand and other countries has been first established more than 20 years ago. The evidence of the official Sister/Twin City relationship presented in the Memorandum of agreement between Chiang Mai of Thailand and Uozu, Toyama of Japan on August 8, 1989. The primary purpose of this signing was to seek out mutual collaboration in accordance with changing economic and social situation at both regional and international level in order to make each country more dependent on each other. On January 10, 2006, a draft of standard rules and regulations on the establishment of Sister Cities was created and by October 5, 2006, Thailand has signed 40 official memorandums of cooperation (Royal Thai Embassy in Lao PDR, 2012).

In summary, the concept of Sister City relationship-building is a conceptual

framework that aims to promote mutual understanding between cities and countries. City twinning resembles friendship and partnership which has been more successful in terms of the relationship building between cities, rather than establishing political relations between countries. The most important role of this concept is to promote "citizen diplomacy", education, culture, sports, trade, tourism, as well as Exchanges student program which gives people of the two countries the opportunity to learn more about each other and to develop together.

**The cultural factors of Mukdahan and Savannakhet that affect the appropriateness of the establishment of a Sister City relationship policy.**

Mukdahan is one of the 77 provinces of Thailand. It was separated from Nakhon Phanom province in 1982. Savannakhet, on the other hand, is one of the 17 districts of the Lao PDR. The origin of the name "Savannakhet" is still debatable, some said that during the French colonial, French government chose the name "Suvannakhet" which meant

golden land or abundant land. However, the word "Suvan" and "Savan" sounded very similar and most people understood the meaning of the "Savan" more than "Suvan" and thought that they had the same meaning. Later on, the state consented to an official name of Savannakhet (Suppachai Singyaboot, 2003).

The relationship between the two communities reflected shared culture, society and ways of life. Although this was unwritten, unlike the history of feudal government and the ruling class, the story of this relationship was told through the word of mouth, and presented in form of symbols that reflected the shared memories, friendship, kinship, beliefs, ways of life, as well as conflicts.

**Common Cultural Characteristics based on historical fundamentals.**

The legend of the two communities along the river clearly showed a strong bond and long-lasting relationships of the people in this area. Both communities shared similar traditional religious beliefs and culture, including, the

beliefs in Ghost, Brahmin and Buddhism, which not only reflected in architecture, sculpture and traditional rituals, but also appeared in the myth of various ethnic communities along the Mekong river. These beliefs did not only exhibit in Thailand or Lao PDR, but also appeared in other countries and ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. For example, many ethnic groups along the Mekong River in Southeast Asia believed that "Tan" was a spirit or god that generates natural disaster as well as natural abundance. Bottle Gourd was another myth related to the origin of different ethnic groups in Southeast Asia including Lao, Tai, Mon-Khamare hill-tribe Khmu, Vietnamese, as well as Whites and Chinese (Pranee Wongthes, 2000). It can be seen that each local community shared similar myths. Even now, based on these beliefs and legend, agriculturalists in Mukdahan and Savannakhet still have Rocket Festival to ask for more rain from the "Tan".

Since prehistory, many communities across Southeast Asia, especially those along the Mekong River, including the southern Yunnan province of

China, the Mekong River mouth, the Au canal, and the Ping, Chee, Mun River Basin, believed that there were sacred animals such as snakes, mermaids and Naga, living in the underworld of the Mekong River. These animals were believed to create natural abundance, as well as drought and disasters. In addition, it is believed that the Naga were their ancestors (Suchit, Wongthes. 2003). Since Naga was often associated with native ethnic group in Southeast Asia along the Mekong River (Srisak Walipodom, 1990) Its story thus, clearly existed in the history of native communities in Southeast Asia, as well as in the areas of Mukdahan and Savannakhet.

However, the history of various communities in Southeast Asian was mostly unwritten. The history was passed on as legends through word of mouth, which could create discrepancy or errors in the details including location and the people's name, the prominent example would be the similarity of the Legend of Suwankhomkham City and the Urangkhathat Legend. After the information was gathered and the stories were

recorded in writing, it could be seen that their plots were similar and contained the story of Naga, as much as the story of Buddhism, which was an imported religion from India. Later on, Buddhism became more influential than old belief of Naga. The Urangkhatat Legend told a story of Buddha who came to Mekong sub region and performed miracle by defeating the group of Nagas with supernatural power who refused to pay him respect. This event symbolized the socio-cultural revolution of the communities in Mekong sub region when tribal people who formerly believed in spirit turned to believe in Buddhism.

When Buddhism came to have more influence on the social culture of the Mekong sub region, it also created unity between communities on both sides of the Mekong River. They shared the same religious prophets and religious place, namely, the Buddhist monastery of the Savannakhet, Phra That Ing Hang and Chayaphum temple in city of Kaysone Phomvihane., Chayaphum temple was built around same time as Ban Tha Hae community, and it was meant to be the center of the community where Buddhist

ceremonies such as Boon Pa Wate ceremony, Rocket festival or Visakha Bucha of the community of the Lao Loom were hold. The history of Phra That Ing Hang may not clearly show the close relationship between Mukdahan and Savannakhet despite their similar Buddhist myths and beliefs, especially the belief that Phra That Pagoda contained the holy relics. Many communities and tribes along the Mekong River made “Phra That” their sacred place, such as Phra That Ya Kru, Phra That Cheng Chum, Phra That Phu Phek, Phra Phra That Na Dun, Phra That Si Khottaboon and Phra That Phu Chom Si (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000).

Moreover, the historical characteristics of Mukdahan-Savannakhet community: they shared the long history and legend. The people migrated from Vientiane leading by Lord Chandrasuriyawongse, settled down and built their homeland at Ban Luang Phonsim, the Ing-Hang Stupa, currently situated in the Savanakhet. Lord Chanthakinnaree later ruled the community, and expanded the territory along the Mekong River. At Huay

BangMuk, he built Sri Mongkhon temple (Sri Mongkhon is now in Mukdahan Province). There was a story that at mid night, there was a transparent and glittering object emerge from the top of the seven sugar palm trees and floated over the Mekong River banks, Lord Chanthakinnaree then named such object "Keo Mukdahan" or the Pearl Crystal" and thus called the city "Mukdahan" (Pises Jearchanphong, 1994). This story implies the shared history of both communities along the river banks. Other communities also shared similar history as Mukdahan-Savannakhet one.

#### **Common cultural characteristics based on customary tradition**

"Heat" means customary tradition which has been strictly practiced in the Larn Chang community. "Heat Sib Song" was a traditional monthly ritual of all 12 months regarding religion and agricultural lifestyle (Piyachat Sintusaard, 1997). "Kong" meant morality or convention, as well as ethical ways of life of the people believing in Buddhism. Kong can be divided into two types; convention for the ruled – villagers, family, spouses, parents, children; and

convention for the ruler - the king. It was seen as a doctrine or social norms that people follow, and meant to control people's behaviors. However, it had no penalties or punishment if people fail to comply with but they will be "Ka Lam" or offended by the society (Piyachat Sintusaard,1997). "Heat-Sib Song Kong-Sib Si" or Kong" or "Heat. - Kong " was, therefore, a very important practice in the Mekong sub region. For example, during the Buddhist lent, which was a very important religious ceremony, the people of Mukdahan or Savannakhet would have to return to their hometown to participate in this ceremony their jobs if the employers did not let them go home, which could lead to unemployment issue in Northeast region, especially in the area connected to Lao PDR. Furthermore, the "Heat" was a ritual that occurred in every month (Adisorn Semyam, 2011).

Since 1353, Mukdahan and Savannakhet has been part of "Larn Chang Society" which was a large society with complex regime. Many tribes treated their beliefs in Buddhism, spirit and "Heat - Kong" as their rules and behavioral

framework in order to systematically live together (Piyachat Sintusaard, 1997). These became the cultural heritage that portrayed in many traditions of the two areas, for example, new house ceremony, which the senior male would be moving in first then the owners of the house would bring their belongings and move in later. (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000). Although, there are laws and regulations to control people's behavior today, the "Heat-Sib Song Kong-Sib Si" still has social organization mechanism in Mukdahan and Savannakhet, and this mechanism has adapted to the changing social contexts as time goes by (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000).

Since the two communities shared similar informal histories including Naga belief, religious belief (Buddhism), "Phra That" (Buddha Relics) and "Tan" belief. (Piyachat Sintusaard, 1997), their folk legends were also similar, for example, The Legend of Urangkhatat, the legend of King Burichan Uay Luay, the Legend of Merchant Chantapanitsa, Legend of Usa-Barot. Moreover, the "Legend of Nong Han City", "Nong Han Lom" or "King Padaeng Nang Ai", which perceived Nong Han as a

spiritual water source for the society and tribal people, in the same way as Phra That Panom (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000). Different tribal groups shared the resources from the rivers, swamps, canal and lakes as they would go hunting and fishing together. Moreover, they exchanged their cultures through narrative (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000). Many people from Mukdahan and Savannakhet believed that the accidents occurred during and after the construction of the Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge was a result of the disturbed Naga, the sacred and mythical animal in the legend.

As can be seen that the people in the Northeast of Thailand and Lao people have similar culture, for example, their staple food is sticky rice, their speaking languages or language tones are very similar, they have similar narrative (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000) and they both eat pickled fish (Piyachat Sintusaard, 1997). Moreover, Mukdahan and Savannakhet have a common folklores such as King Hung Khun Juang, Katchanamkumman, King Bae, King Lin Tong, Nang Tang on, King Kulu Nang aua, King Padang Nang Ai, as well as scriptures, medical textbook,

and folk play, namely, "Paya", which people improvise poems in response to one another (Sutin Sanongphan, 2000).

**The common cultural characteristics of Mukdahan and Savannakhet that affect the appropriateness of the Sister City relationship-building policy**

The common history and culture of Mukdahan and Savannakhet, reflected the special characteristics of border towns in Southeast Asia. Before colonialism, Southeast Asia was not familiar with the concept of "border". They never knew how to set boundaries or think about "territory" and had no idea about territorial waters, territorial sky and sovereignty. Moreover, the people in Southeast Asia have had reverence for the Holy Spirit following their ancestor's belief and they would pay homage to the sacred objects or places, regardless of their locations or territory. It can be argued that before colonialism, the prominent concepts in Southeast Asia were "Cultural Community" and "Cultural boundary" of which culture directed the use of power of the people in the area. These concepts were completely different from

modern concept of Nation State, which required important components such as the whole population, territory and sovereignty over the territory. Many states in Southeast Asia, thus, adhered to this modern concept of Nation State, and used it to "reborn" from their Western colonizers who drew the boundary line between the states in the region in order to divide resources among colonizers during the colonial time.

As a result, the border areas in Southeast Asia, particularly in the area of the Mekong sub-region, shared common characteristics in terms of history and culture, as can be seen in Mukdahan of Thailand and Savannakhet of Lao PDR. The "Cultural Community" was one of these common characteristics before the areas were divided by the borderline of nation states.

If culture is a kind of value that has important implications on the prosperity of the society and humanity, and if culture is the social standard that is used to determine people ways of life and social civilization, then culture should also be able to create unity among the people in

the society. Therefore, culture could resemble the soil that nurtures unique ways of life of the people in each community, enhances the vision to the world, as well as create different cultural practice. Thus, it could be argued that "Cultural Community", which was perceived as common cultural characteristic of Mukdahan and Savannakhet, had an effect on people's lifestyle and was employed as a master key of living together in the community.

However, if the expression of the individual's identity in each society was presented through cultural forms, then culture would also define and create the concreteness of this "identity". Thus, the common cultural characteristics that Mukdahan and Savannakhet shared would appear to be the foundation of the identity that reflected the harmony and unity of the people in the area.

If the relationship-building policy in the form of Sister Cities between Mukdahan in Thailand and Savannakhet in the Lao PDR aimed to enhance better understanding between the two communities and create the basis for economic, social and cultural collaboration,

and if Mukdahan and Savannakhet shared a common cultural foundation which resulted in the identity that reflected harmony and unity of the people, then this identity would be a factors that well explained the appropriateness of the Sister City policy. This identity which was a result of common cultural factors would be a good foundation that enabled people in those areas to connect through thoughts, beliefs, traditions, rituals (i.e. the idea of kinship, Friend-Making (Pook Siew) Rituals, and "Heat Sib Song"), history and folk wisdom. These were the foundation that would bring the people in this area together, connected their idea of common fate and determined their shared values and the differences in values of the insiders and outsiders, as well as established the role and pattern of a relationship between people with the same and different identity.

Thus, an identity obtained as a result of shared cultural factors in Mukdahan and Savannakhet would be a foundation that helped enhancing close ties of the people in these areas. The feeling of harmony and shared fate would strengthen mutual understanding between

the cities which would in turn, lead to economic, social and cultural collaboration between countries. These were main purposes of the implementation of the Sister City relationship-building policy in Mukdahan and Savannakhet.

### Conclusion

If taking into account the Greater Mekong Sub-regional Economic Cooperation: GMS-EC, which was established in 1990, the explanation to the appropriateness of Sister City relationship-building policy would then relate to the economic factors and the economic integration at the regional and global level through the concept of Tran-nationalism under globalization process. However, for border town in the Mekong sub-region, the appropriateness of Sister City relationship-building policy could also be explained by cultural factors.

As Nation States in this region were established during colonial period when colonizers drew boundary line that determined the state territory and sovereignty, "Cultural community", the initial fundamental characteristic that border

towns shared, thus was separated by the Nation State framework. In other words, this framework focused mainly on territorial integrating power. Therefore, the cultural factors, which based on shared cultural community, could be seen as influential factors that clearly made Sister City relationship-building policy in border towns appropriate for the area.

Mukdahan in Thailand and Savannakhet of the Lao PDR are border towns in the Mekong Sub-region which have built a Sister City relationship. The two communities shared common cultural characteristics in terms of history, traditions, thoughts, beliefs and rituals. Moreover, these cultural characteristics resulted in identity that reflected harmony and unity of the people in the area.

All in all, cultural factors were important factors that made Sister City relationship-building policy appropriate for the area. This was because when people shared the same identity, they would also feel that they shared a common fate and had the ability to determine their shared value. This identity came from cultural factors, and these cultural factors are the

foundations that led to the success of the implementation of the relationship-building policy that aimed to enhance better

understanding between cities, which would in turn, resulted in economic, social and cultural cooperation.

### Reference

- Adisorn Semyam. (2011, July 6). *Interview*. Researcher. Institute of Asia Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- Kanokwan Manorom, Pianwadee Srisuphan and Sakulphan Phothijak. (2011). "Ubon ratchathani-Champasak Twin Cities: The roles of trans-nation contract framing" in Kanokwan Manorom (Ed). *Isan border and neighbor countries, the finding and policy significance*. Ubon ratchathani: The Mekong Sub-region Social Research center Ubon ratchathani University.
- Khanlasy Keobounphanh. (2011, July 22). *Interview*. Counselor of Economic and Commercial. Embassy of the Lao PDR. In Thailand.
- Pises Jearchanphong. (1994). *Urang-katit (That-phanom Legend)*. Bangkok: Reunkeaw Printing.
- Piyachat Sindhusa-ad. (1997). *Lanchang Social: 21-23 B.E.* Master's thesis, Department of History, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University.
- Pranee Wongthes. (2000). *Socio-Cultural in Southeast Asia*. Bangkok: pikanet printing house.
- Prasit Viriyaboonma. (2011, April 26). *Interview*. Director. Savan ceramic co.ltd.
- Sila Viravong. (1997). *History of Laos*. Bangkok: pikanet printing house.
- Srisak Walipodom. (1990). *Civilization of Isan basin*. Bangkok: pikanet printing house.
- Suchit Wongthes. (2003). *Naga in Southeast Asia history*. Bangkok: pikanet printing house.
- Supachai Singyabuth. (2002). *Southern Laos*. Bangkok: Krongkran-anaboriwansuksa-ha bhumipark.
- Sutin Sanongphan. (2000). *Socio-Historical of Mekong River Banks 1349-*

1827. Muban Chombueng Royal Thai Embassy in Lao PDR, (2012).  
Rajabhat University. (Last update on March 21, 2012)  
[Online]  
<http://vientiane.thaiembassy.org/vientiane/>.
- Thongsay Sychanh. (2011, July 30).  
Interview. Lecturer. Champasak  
University, Chapasak province,  
Lao PDR. The City of Inverness Town Twinning  
Committee, (2012). (Last update  
on March 11, 2012) [Online]  
<http://www.highland.gov.uk/>
- Website**  
Council of European Municipalities and  
Regions, (2012). "*A Europe of  
Citizens: Tomorrow's Europe*"  
(Last update on February 11,  
2012) [Online]  
<http://www.ccre.org/>.

# Transnational marriage: Thai migrants and foreigners<sup>1</sup>

Sutin Saisanguan

Researcher, Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University

---

## Abstract

A transnational marriage, or an international marriage, is a marriage between two people from different countries. It is a by-product of the movement and migration of people. Currently, there are around 300,000 Thai women emigrants married to foreign men. Its trend is increased. The objectives of this study were to investigate demographic variables and socio-economic status of transnational marriage Thai migrants (TMTMs); and to examine the impact of cross-cultural marriage on the migrants, community and society as a whole. Research methodology was qualitative method. Both documentary and structured & in-depth interview 5 case studies were employed. Descriptive analysis was performed. Findings were (1) the majority of these TMTMs were women, adulthood, had primary schooling, previously married Thai men but divorced them; had a child prior married to their foreign husbands who paid them a monthly income, and, an economic stability and a quality of life concerned were common reasons why they got the marriage; however, the minority of these women were single, well educated, met their spouse at work or closed relations and have their own income; and also, (2) TMTMs' quality of life and high income due to the marriage create the social bonds of reciprocity. The 5 case studies reveal the same pattern as literature reviewed. Societies are now face with intensifying debates on the pros and cons of transnational marriage, however. The finding suggested that not only the TMTMs but also population at risk should be accessed needed information and tangible measures to improve QOL. To exchange information

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is the brief of the research on Transnational marriage: Thai migrants and foreigners. The project of research has supported by the Institute of East Asian Studies, Thammasat University, 2011.

among governments, NGOs, the media, and UN agencies was a key factor. Both research and investigative journalism can contribute to improve governance.

**Keywords:** Transnational marriage; International marriage; International couple;  
Cross-cultural marriage; Cross-cultural wedding; Intercultural marriage

---

## I Introduction

*Que.: "I have problems with my foreign husband due to causes of many difficulties, intention to separate. Could you give me some advices on the right in the case of marriage registry under the laws of Thailand? Ans.: The cases of divorce problems regarding to the Laws of Thailand, are as follows...etc." (Office of International Peoples' Rights Protection-OIPRP, 2009. p. 13)... "Nowadays, there are many Thai people in various countries. Majority of them go to foreign lands to work as labor workers, employees in various businesses, housekeepers, or some of them run retail shops or do businesses. Some are married or living as spouse with foreigners. And many of them had faced with legal issues, etc.... Office of the Attorney General realized the importance of the above issues, and had*

*ordered to set the OIPRP to protect the rights and provide legal assistance for the Thai people and those foreigners." (OIPRP, 2009. p.3)*

The description, shown above, reflected both problems and contribution of a governmental sector. This article was concern about how Thai women migrants married foreigners has increased dramatically and its consequences. The contents are as follows; introduction, background & statement of problems, objectives, literature review, methodology, results & discussions, and conclusion & recommendations.

## II Background & Statement of Problems

In general, the factor affected Thai women migrants married foreigners was economic motivation. But transnational marriage have complicated reasons. There

are a lot of Thai women married foreigners and its trend is increased. In 2010, it was estimated that there were more than 300,000 Thai women married foreigners. And they live in various countries over the world. With the help of globalization- the worldwide spread (of information) that anyone lived in any place of this world community could perceive, touch or be affected by incidents quickly and broadly - encourages people of all races, all languages around the world to have social network easily, fast and it is economical, including roles of transnational Medias, information technology, and online internet<sup>i</sup> social website and so on. It is seen that currently there are about a million people with Thai race/ nationality have resided in various countries around the world, such as approximately 250,000 people in the United States of America, 70,000 people in Taiwan, 50,000 people in Germany, and 40,000 people in Japan etc. Meanwhile tourists from international worldwide travelled in Thailand more than 10 million people per year in the last decade. Whereas Thai tourists, including businessmen, entrepreneurs, labors, students, and governmental staffs, go abroad annually. As the mentioned above,

whether it could say in overall that any women and men around the world have the opportunity to flirt, choose his or her spouse, or step into the cycle of family life every day and everywhere, and how? This article aims to answer two questions: 1) how demographic and socio-economic statuses of Thai migrants married foreigners are, and 2) how the socio-economic impacts are.

### III Objectives

The objectives of this study were: (1) to investigate demographic variables and socio-economic status of TMTMs; and (2) to examine the socio-economic impact. It is to be hope that the findings of this research may be used as supportive information in the There were around 1,800 million people used internet worldwide and approximately 19 million people were internet users in Thailand which was the 25<sup>th</sup> in the rank of this world in the year 2009. Communication via the internet is the one of channels to promote international marriages increasingly, including the marriages of TMTMs. training of social sciences, such as sociology, demography, criminology, social psychology, and social work etc., including in the course of family

demography, family changing, transnational migration of woman labors with reproductive ages etc. It may motivate all stakeholders to realize involvement of possible suggests in practical measures to prevent and resolve adverse effects, such as doing real estate business of foreigners hidden in transnational marriage, the flow of consumerism and materialism through simulating behavior of cross-cultural spouse could be victims of crime etc. As the result of the findings, this will lead to policy recommendations in possible practice and to strengthen good citizens.

#### **IV Literature Review**

A good marriage is created with a profound sense in value, purpose of life together and standing side by side to face this world (Thongrungrroj, 2004, p. 128). In sociology, human was born with society because by nature human cannot stay alone, they must live together as community, have relationship as well as interdependence under the same regulations, and be as family, community and society. Family is a very significant institution of humans. The cycle of family life starts from courtship, choosing spouse, marriage, nurturing children until they grow

up, separate and have their new families, and finally, the end of its cycle is the death of spouse or divorce. And it also depends on society, value, culture and traditions of the various nations (Vasikasin & Haemaprasit, 2002, pp. 3-4)

The cross-cultural marriage, or transnational marriage, means the marriage<sup>ii</sup> of woman and man who comes from different traditions, different cultures, different races, different religions, and different local or different countries. The transnational marriage may be occurred due to transnational migration, industrial development, process of becoming an urban society, calling and travelling to see each other, temporary visit, or living in other countries because of study, work, travelling, holidays, political asylum, or relocation of immigrant family etc. (Sue, Lung & Chen, 2011). Those conditions may cause the close affinities and then lead to courtship and choose spouse etc. as in the cycle of family life, and macro-level factors influenced the increased number of transnational marriage more; including globalization made the world to become as one village, transnational media, transportation, information

technology. Aforesaid factors support people to contact each other worldwide easily, quickly and economical. In additions, the other factors are international tourism and business related to the spread of culture, international values such as value of democracy, values of human rights, and values of gender equality etc.

The spread of international values such as awareness of the inequality of female due to gender determined by social or cultural condition to act the role of woman or man, the values are extremely significant to change relationship of family in some societies unexpectedly; including women do not work chores anymore in some societies, voluntarily remain single, delayed marriage, and rate of divorce is increased (Weeks, 2005, pp. 409-410). As a result, some societies have to import foreign women from developing countries to do chores considered as the household tasks of married woman who is his wife. And then, there are businesses of dating companies, matchmaker agencies or others that man can order from them to import transnational wife or bride from oversea. And since the 1970s it was seen that transnational brides or wives via postal

services migrated from developing countries, such as Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, and Thai etc. for transnational marriage of foreigners lived in industrial countries; such as U.S.A., Canada, and in Europe; such as Germany etc. Later 1990s, the import wives via postal services were expanded to new industrial countries; including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Singapore (Kawaguchi & Lee, 2012; Pirazzi & Vasant, 2004). In the same time, the needs of transnational labor both men and women are increased in the new industrial countries. As a result, woman labors from developing countries are pushed to transnational labor markets given opportunity for the labor both men and women to have relationship with different cultural men and women in workplaces, and then it can lead to transnational marriage (Prompukping, 2011; Lapanun, 2010). It could be seen that there were many transnational marriages in advances industrial countries, such as South Korea. During the years 1990 – 2004, there were 197,634 cases of transnational marriages or about 3.5 percent of the total marriages: 5,568,489 cases and the number were increased 4,710 cases compared with the

year 1990 (1.2 percent of the total marriages). And in the year 2004, it was increased to 35,447 cases (11.4 percent of the total marriage). Similarly, during the year 1993 – 2009 in United Kingdom the total number of migrated spouses from different culture was increased around 30,000 cases compared with the year 1992, and later it was about 80,000 cases in 2009 (Charsley, et. al., 2011)

*Transnational migration of Thai people married a foreigner:* It was found that women preferred to marry foreigners, including German (50,000 people), French (30,000 people), American (30,000 people only from California State), English (10,000 people) and Taiwanese (8,000 people). However, the period of 1961 – 1970 there were approximately 5,000 Thai people migrated to settle in the United States and the proportion of women to men was 3 to 1. Those of them consisted of wives of American soldiers who stationed at a military base of the U.S. located in Thailand during the Cold War for Indo-China War as well as the soldiers rested at tourism location in Thailand, and professionals, especially physicians and registered nurses, businessmen, and entrepreneurs. And later, there were many types of Thai

women travelled to the Federal Republic of Germany for sex services, marriages, or other works. It was expected that those Thai women used the method of marrying German for transnational migration since 1975 and it was increased every year. In 1996, there were total 23,870 Thai women resided legally in Germany (Juntavanich, et. al., 1999; Lapanun, 2006). And afterward, in 2006 the total of Thai people who lived in this country were 49,952 consisted of 42,952 female, and 7,143 male. Especially, in the period of 1993 – 2003 Thai women was the first rank of Asian countries that women married Germans (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2006, pp. 7-8). In addition, during the years 1980 – 2000 there were more than 80 percent of Thai-American citizens who were migrants settled in the U.S. and increased from 45,000 people (1980) to be around 111,000 people (2000). And particularly, in 2000 Thai migrants who moved to the U.S. were 40% male and 60% female. Roughly, 1 over 3 of women was spouses of American soldiers (Hidalgo & Bankston, 2010). From a survey of the Office of the Nation Economic and Social Development identified that a period of years 2003 –

2004 there were not less than 15,284 Thai women from North-east of Thailand travelled to oversea for marrying foreigners especially Europeans and Americans (Vanichavaroj, 2004). The findings from the study of Vongthanavasut, Nivasavut and Nuntabutra (2005) were as follows; the average age of Northeast women married foreigners was about 35 years and more than 70% of them finished grade 4. At the same time, there was still a group married Thai men previously but divorced them, and majority of these women had a child of the family. And then, they started their new lives with foreign husbands, especially Europeans such as German, British and Scandinavians. For the age of foreigners with whom Northeast women preferred to marry, the average age was 50 – 60 years upward, and the average income was around 600,000 Baht per month.

As a result of transnational marriage of Thai and foreigners, there were pros and cons as follows; Thai migrants who married foreigners remitted to their home, such as in the period of 2003 – 2004 there were remittances of the cases of Northeast Thai women married foreigners, the average remittance was more than 122 million Baht per month or about 1,464

million Baht per annum (Vanichavarot, 2004) etc. These remittances enhanced the economic status and upgraded well-being of their families, and created their good image of being foreigners' wives or having Caucasian husbands likewise some provinces in Northeast, such as people in Srisaket province would celebrated Thai blessing ceremony to welcome "Caucasian son-in-law". This ceremony was set to be annual event in each year, such as in March 2007. International spouses of Thai women and Caucasian husbands will be invited to join this ceremony. The wrist-binding ceremony "Caucasian son-in-law" is honored by the province. It is shown that the Caucasian sons-in-law are the important persons for the province because the benefits from their remittances make Thailand have economic growth. Although transnational labors worked in overseas have remitted quite a lot back to Thailand as well, but they never had such the honor or they were not invited to the ceremony from the province same as the Caucasian sons-in-law (Prompakping, et. al., 2005, p.1). The other hand, some of Thai migrants married foreigners got failure, disappointment, suffering, problems and they asked for help such as illegal

transnational migration, transnational human trafficking, various transnational crimes, and disguise marriage etc. Sometimes the cross-cultural marriages of Thai migrants and foreigners are used as a strategy for other purposes such as migration for working oversea, disguise agent i.e. disguise spouse married with Thai people who is right of land ownership, whereas the rights of land benefits or real estate still belong to the foreigners (Potananichom, 2011) etc., and those events occurred instead of the marriage that was built to be a family as an oldest social institution and essential existence of human society. In additions, some of them got stress due to adjustment in daily life, communication, language, culture and unfamiliar environment, such as cold weather, pollen allergies, depression etc. The accumulated stress could cause problems with foreigners and lead to quarrel until assault and divorce finally. Some foreign husbands want only children, and then the problems of divorce raised and they sued their wives for divorce and took legal proceeding, and so on. It was seen that there were pros and cons for transnational marriage, and it was a complex phenomenon affected people and

society widely at both national and international levels. Therefore, it should do research on cross-cultural marriage continually and all aspects of the marriage to apply the findings of the study to be various options for developing country.

## **V Methodology**

Data collection was taken from secondary data and case studies with in-depth interviews by structured interview. The method was started with literature review to get an overview of the phenomenon, and then case studies were recruited to be representatives covered the studied variables. The data was collected by in-depth interviews with a structure interview that allowed the interviewees to express their opinions and sharing freely. And the criteria of selected documents for the research related with the purposes was accuracy and reliable of the documents. So, the documents could be used as representatives of the population, and they were recruited with clear and understanding, including essence conclusion and implications. The case studies of this research were spouses of Thai migrants married foreigners. The Thai informants were migrants who resided or

used to live with foreign spouses more than 1 year counted from the date of interview. There were 5 cases joined in this study. The research design of the in-depth interview was a structured interview or guideline of questions which consisted of questions about background of the spouse including age, marital status, educational level, and occupation; questions about the marriage to foreigners including how to know her foreign husband, her husband's nationality, her husband's age, occupation, the highest of educational level, the main factors affecting the decision making to marry, marital status, how many children, sponsorship of husband, and the questions about changes after marriage, including occupation, income, property, career, adjustment and participation in the community activities. The data was analyzed by descriptive analysis.

## VI Results and Discussions

The related literature review and 5 case studies of this research could answer the research questions and achieve all purposes. The research found about (1) demographic characteristics, socio-economic status of Thai migrants had cross-cultural marriage with foreigners and

(2) the socio-economic impacts on the Thai migrants. The conclusions were, as follow;

*Demographic and Socio-economic Status:* Key findings from *literature review* are *summarized* that TMTMs could be classified into 3 groups, regarding to the table 1, group 1, Thai wife were under 35 years old who usually were single, graduated with bachelor degree, had just completed degree, were looking for job, needed to further study, or make a living in overseas or started to work. Their foreigner-husband- ages were similar, and their decisions making on marrying foreigners were closeness and sense of deeply impression. There were many channels of Thai migrants married foreigners, including self-contact, meeting at workplace or academic institution, parent roles in making decision and wedding ceremony. Group 2 were 35 – 44 years of age and most of them were widows with children. They had burdens of taking care parents and raising their children. Their educational levels were primary school, and their family backgrounds came from rural area. Before marrying foreigners, they worked in agricultural sector or secondary labor markets, such as working in restaurant,

housekeepers, hair dressers etc. So, they were labors, transnational woman labors, insufficient incomes and burdens. Whereas their foreigner husbands were aged retirement, very different age, and it might

be likewise being rented wife or American soldier's wife in the period of Vietnam War, 1960s or wife via postal services in 1980s.

**Table1:** Cross-cultural spouse between Thai wife and foreigner husband by age

		Husband (Foreigner)		
		< 35 yrs	>35 yrs	>35 yrs
Wife (Thai)	age < 35 yrs; Education: Bachelor	Group 1	-	-
	age 35- 45yrs; Education: almost Under Bachelor	-	Group 2	-
	age >45 yrs; Education: Bachelor and higher	-	-	Group 3

Source: *Summarized from literature review*

And the last, group 3, were Thai women aged 45 years and above. Their educational levels were usually bachelor degree and higher. They had security jobs, regular incomes, professionals, or some of them were known in the society or they were Thai who lived with family in overseas, and some of them were born in foreign countries. Therefore, they often met their spouses during study abroad, doing research, field trips in overseas, business which had to contact with foreigners,

travelling abroad, or being professionals in a foreign country or between countries. In additions, they might be introduced to their spouses by relatives or friends, seeking via internet, or dating companies.

*Data Analysis from Case Studies:*

The findings were in brief, Table 2, as follows;

*Gender and Age:* 5 Thai cases studies were all female. During interviewing, they were 27 – 30 years old

and their marriage period was 2 – 15 years.

Age at marriage were 24 – 32 years .

**Table 2** Spouses of case studies: age and period of their marriage

Case Study	Current Age		Age at marriage with a foreigner husband		Period of marriage (years)
	Thai wife (years)	Foreign husband (nationality, years)	Thai wife (years)	Foreign husband (years)	
1 Mrs A	50	Japanese, 65	35	50	15
2 Mrs B	27	Japanese, 29	25	27	2
3 Mrs C	32	American, 40	24	32	8
4 Mrs D	42	English, 76	34	68	8
5 Mrs E	27	Norwegian , 26	25	24	2

Source: Research's Analysis

*Marital status, occupation before-after marriage, and number of children with foreign husband:* For the case studies, 4 cases were single before marrying foreigners, and 1 case was widow with one child: Mrs. D. There were 3 cases that had regular incomes during in Thailand as well as before marriage- Mrs. A, Mrs. D & Mrs. E. The other two, Mrs. B studied foreign language in Australia and Mrs. C worked in

the project of cultural exchange in the U.S.

For Mrs. A and Mrs. E, each of them has one child with her foreign husband, whereas the rest of them have no child yet. The case of Mrs. D, it is sure that she has definitely no child with her husband who is now 76 years.

*Information about foreign spouse:*

Mrs. A's and Mrs. B's husband are Japanese. Both Mrs. A and Mrs. B graduated bachelor's degree, and worked

as employees of Japan Company. Both of them were close and knew their husbands at the workplaces. They were deeply impressed their husbands who were smart and security economic status. While Mrs. C's husband is American who has Master in accounting and lawyer, and is rich. She was close and impressed deeply her husband. She wished to make a living in oversea as well. Mrs. D's husband is Scottish whose aged 76 years. Due to his sincere effort, keeping on meet her for the needs to have her to take cares him during elderly, so that she married to him because of her gratitude. And, Mrs. E, her husband is a European with Norwegian ethnically. He graduated with a bachelor's degree. His career is an employee of a company. Pattern or channel to know each other was near by the workplace, and the main factors affected her decision to marry him were his handsome, similar age and living in oversea.

Either literature review or case studies reveal that the main reasons affected Thai women migrants' decisions to marry the foreigners were expectations of economic security and upgrade their living standards. There are many channels of the process of their marriage, as follows: self-

contact, meeting at workplace or tourist attraction, and being introduced by their relatives and friends had relationship with foreigners. For their parents, they did not involve the decisions, just only perception of their marriages. They did not pay attention for wedding ceremony, only emphasized the legal marriage. They expected incomes and upgrade their living standard from their foreign husbands. And the western husbands did not mention their backgrounds, chastity of women, and they treated their Thai wives with respect their woman dignities and had responsibilities higher than Thai man husbands. In additions, there are some Thai women impressed on marrying to foreigners because of neighbors. While most of foreign husbands understand their wives' responsibilities to help their parents and relatives, and they realize how their differences are but they still need their wives to take care them during their elderly. In rural Thai society the marriage of spouse with very different age is common, and in the case of foreigner married Thai woman is the benefit of the women's family. Majority of the elderly who divorced and lost their wives due to passing away feel loneliness, and they are

fulfilled by Northeast or Isaan community. The relationship of both sides complements each other, or it should say that the western husband with elderly adulthood expects to be served, have cares from gentle Asian wife who is follower, and pleases him while Thai wife expects economic security, and upgrade income, living standard in material including upward mobility of social class.

*Economic and Socio-Cultural Impacts:* Regarding to literature review and case studies, the economic and socio-cultural impacts of Thai migrant's marriage to community and Thai society in overall could be summarized as follows;

*Economic Impact:* After marriage, there were many significant changes in household material resources. Majority of women married to foreigners has got regular incomes from their husbands. Due to the marriage, the flow of revenues is increased, and affect to other resources as well. The main reasons of the cross-cultural marriage of women are economic aspect and focus on upgrade economic status from marrying foreigners according to the attitude- "To be married to a foreigner will upgrade the living standard". Their expectations are to raise their incomes and

to upgrade their living standards. In addition, some provinces have got governmental funds to support activities such as many hundred transnational couples were invited to join in the traditional ceremonies which were formed by province and villagers, and then the ceremonies were organized in the village as the center of the community. The research on the life of Thai women in overseas by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development stated that in the period of year 2003 – 2004, there were more than 15,284 Isaan (Northeast) Thai women married foreigners, particularly Europeans and Americans. And those women remitted in average more than 122 million Baht per month or around 1,464 million Baht per year to Thailand (Vanichavarot, 2004).

*Social Impact of Acceptance Caucasian Son-in-Law:* The family members of women had cross-cultural marriage or relatives in community encouraged the women to marry due to the significant economic. For the cases of Isaan women married foreigners, majority of them finished primary school. They were poor, and they had been married including having children from the previous

marriage. While their spouses were Western men, particularly Europeans who were mostly well educated and rich. Until today, some of local communities in Thailand have accepted increasingly to enter the context of migration of woman labor as well as the upgrade of economic status and society of the Thai women after marrying foreign husbands (Vongthanavas, et. al., 2005).

*Some cases were victims of crime:* Due to being blind to the situation, the cross-cultural spouse may sometimes become “disguise agent” who means legal representative may be as a man or juristic person instead of an agent who could not do the legal act legally or aims to avoid the law, for example, Thai spouse who is a holder of ownership rights in property in Thailand or establishes a company to hold shares on instead of a foreign spouse for keeping status as a Thai person. So, the authority in administration or dominant enterprise still belongs to the foreigner (Potavanich, 2011).

*Impact on Thai Society in overall:* In the past, the overall of Thai women who married foreigners were poor and did not usually disclose them because they thought that they would be looked down as

a mistress, a rented wife, or a concubine. At present, however the overall of Thai women who married foreigners are brave to fight and have challenges in lives, including being ready to face the future that is different from the original. In additions, they brave to break the tradition, culture, beliefs and habits, and they feel that they are valuable (Ngamvun, 2005). The 5 case studies of Thai women who faced problems of cross-cultural marriage were, as follows; 1) Thai woman married a New Zealander had two children. She disappeared after coming back to visit Thailand; 2) Thai woman married a Greek, and then moved to live with husband's family in Athens. She was forced to work as labor and was not allowed to go out from the house for more than 5 years. After that, the Embassy of Thailand helped her and sent her back to Thailand; 3) Thai woman married Japanese, and everything was fine in the period of 2 first years of their marriage. And later, her husband did not work, and forced her to work as sex worker at night until she got HIV infection. The Embassy of Thailand sent her back to Thailand; 4) Thai woman married a retired Swedish and they lived in Thailand. Later, her husband got sick with elderly and

cancer. Thai wife looked after him very good until he passed away. She paid for the cost of medical treatment more than 1.5 million Baht but she could get reimburse from the medical benefits only 200,000 Baht; And, the last, Thai woman and her Pakistan boyfriend were cheated to travel and stay at hotel in Hong Kong, and then her boyfriend disappeared. She had not money to pay the hotel cost. Consulate General of Thailand sent her back to Thailand.

*Results of Case Study Analysis:*

The changes and adjustment after marriage, the findings were, as follows; Mrs. A had to leave her job, and to do house work, take care and serve children as well as husband, in the same way Mrs. D had to stop her business to take care husband. Whereas Mrs. B, Mrs. C and Mrs. E still worked because they had just married, were still young and in the working age. It is obvious that everyone established family, the security properties were supported by their husbands, and they had to adjust themselves to language, culture and living after migration to overseas which were domicile of husbands except Mrs. B moved back to live in Thailand.

## VII Conclusions & Recommendations

*In conclusion, the main factors affected TMTMs are, including economic motivation, family debt, failure of marriage, beginning of new life, simulation and value.* The most popular group 2, 35 – 44 years of age, almost of them were widows with children, had burdens to raise children and parents, finished primary school, and their family backgrounds came from rural area. While foreign husbands were retired and they need someone to take care of them in elderly. Likewise group 2, most of them was aged men who divorced or their wives passed away. So, they felt loneliness, and they expected their Thai women to take care and serve him during his elderly. For Thai women, they expected the security life, spent their lives in foreign countries, and they were excited as well as they relax during their appropriate age. It is clear in the case study of Mrs. D who is now 42 years and is widow with children. She was a migrant got married to Scottish, and then followed husband to live in oversea to serve and take care of her husband with 76 years. The next question was in her own family in Thailand; her mother was 64 years, and who looked after

her parents. The answer was whether her sibling was the person. Finally, Mrs. D was the person who was sponsor in finances, felt proud to do that, built the properties, was pride of family, but she had to be far away from her old mother and lived in the other part of this world. If to compare with the quality of life, mother lived in Thailand could not the elderly benefits enough form Thai government, whereas social welfare from government provided for foreigners was perfect. If it was imaginary that Mrs. D's husband passed away, how she continued her living in abroad or came back to Thailand. Whatever she chose, Thai society got impact both directly or indirectly. That issue may be the issue of discussion, analysis, critics, or research further.

*Transnational marriage is pros and cons, success and failure.* If the society choose to perceive [Some information is perceived due to selection (selective perception), so people tend to select to perceived only the interested or related information and ignore the information that they are not interested even though it is benefits for them. That is one of error perception], particular the spouses who are successful or extend

positive outcome aim only the excellent result, and then they ignore the failure. Due to the impacts which are not considered to cover all aspects, the reality of image or overall picture can be distorted. And then, it can lead to values that do not relate to the reality, and it may cause long-term damage unexpectedly. Societies have intensified debates on the pros and cons of transnational marriage. Therefore, it should use scholarly articles as an instruction, such as the study of the guideline of preventing and assisting to protect Thai women worked in overseas (2011), the migration of Thai women to Germany: causes, living conditions and impacts for Thailand and Germany (1999) and so on, which reflected the role of social science research for developing country.

*Recommendations for implementation:* 1) Measures of continuity prevention of exploitation or exploiting the cross-cultural migrants such as orientation of Thai migrants aimed to be cross-cultural spouse, legal counseling services collaborated with NGO about wedding agreement, marriage contract, Visa regulation etc. And, 2) The exchange of information between government, NGO,

media organization and governmental sectors of various countries.

*Recommendations for further researches:*

- 1) Research on a secret agent who transnational spouse may involve in situation innocently, research on the real properties and the authority to make decision on transaction of properties got from transnational marriage. And also,
- 2) Social science research on the study of ways to strengthen the good values about family and marriage, relationship pattern of the family members of cross-cultural spouses due to the family is the oldest and significant social institution for the existence of human society.

## References

*Thai*

Federation of Thai and Foreign Spouse Networks Association of Thailand. (2010). Articles of

Federation of Thai and Foreign Spouse Networks Association of Thailand.

<http://www.thaiforeignspouse.com/Module/About/>

International Labor Office. (2007). International Labor Standards on the Rights of Migrant workers:

Guidelines for policy makers and practitioners in Asia and Pacific. Bangkok.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/library/download/pub08-01.pdf>

Juntavanich, S.; Ratanaroran-Mixz, P.; Ruankaew, P.; Nitayanunta, S.; and Khemkruit, A. (1999).

*A Study of the migration of Thai women to Germany: causes, living conditions and impacts for*

*Thailand and Germany.* Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.

Lapanun, P. (2006). Dynamics and Research Approaches: A Study of Cross-Cultural Marriage of Women

in Esaan Society. *Journal of Mekong Societies.* 2 (3), 1 – 33

Lapanun, P.; Mettarikanon, D.; and Apichartvullop, Y. (2008). Cross-cultural Marriage: A Study of

Knowledge. Khon Kaen: Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region, Khon Kaen University.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Protection of

the Interests in Thailand and Abroad, the Consular Isaan Department of the Embassy, Seoul, (2012). Think carefully before marrying a South Korean. <http://protectthaicitizen.blogspot.com/2012/10/blog-post.html>

Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, (2006). *Survey, Compilation, Synthesis and Interpretation of Literature Related to the Issues of Human Trafficking in the Federal Republic of Germany*. Bangkok: Bureau of Standards Social Development and Human Security.

Ngamvan , S. (2005). *Thesis on Dynamic of stereotype of Thai women's who married the foreigners*. Master of Arts Program in Women's Studies. Graduate Volunteer. Thammasat University.

Office of the Attorney General, Office of International Peoples' Rights Protection (OIPRP). (2008). *Law should be known for Thai married foreigners*. Bangkok: Department of Peoples' Rights Protection and Legal Aid.

Potavanich.Piyanuch. (2011). *Disguise Agent. Research Report*. Submitted to Office of the Ombudsman Thailand. <http://www.ombudsman.go.th/10/documents/public/Apreport.pdf>.

Prompakping , B.; Plonbumrung, A.; Prompakping, N.; and BoonJua, S. (2006). *Cross-cultural Marriage of Rural Women in Isaan*. Research Report. Submitted to Office of the National Culture.

Punvanich, K. (2004, June 4). *Import Husband: To Create Deviate Cultural Values*. *Matichon*, p. 310.

Supap , S. (1993). *Society and Culture: Values, Family, Tradition*. Bangkok: Thaiwattana Panich.

Thongrungrroj , J. (2004). *Art of Living*. Bangkok: Ruam Duay Chauy Kun Press.

Vanichavarot, D. (2004). *Life of Thai Women in Abroad. Research Report*. Office of the Northeast Economic and Social Development. Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board.

Vasikasin, V. and Haemaprasit, S. (2002). (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *What does Thai society expected women?*

- Bangkok: Thammasat University Press.
- Vongthanavasun, S.; Nivasavat, V.; and Nuntabutra, K. (2005). *Impact on Marriage Migration on the Family in Northeastern Thailand*, Khon Kaen: Prathamakhun Press.
- English*
- Charsley, K., Hear, N.V., Benson, M., & Storer-Church, B. (2011). Marriage-related migration to the UK. Home Office. Occasional Paper 96.
- Hidalgo, D. A. & Bankston, C.L. (2010). Blurring Racial and Ethnic Boundaries in Asian American Families: Asian American Family Patterns, 1980-2005. *Journal of Family Issues* 31: 280-300.
- Kawaguchi, D. & Lee, S. (2012). *Brides for Sale: Cross-Border Marriages and Female Immigration*. Harvard Business School. Working Paper, 12-082. <http://eprints.lib.hokudai.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2115/20498/1/KULP-RANGTHONG.pdf>
- Sue, B.C., Lung, F.W. & Chen, C.H. (2011). Mental health of female foreign spouses in transnational marriages in southern Taiwan. *BMC Psychiatry* 2011, 11:4. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-244X/11/4/>
- Weeks, J. R. (2005). *Population: An introduction to concepts and issues*. (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

---

<sup>1</sup> June 30, 2012, there were around 2,400 million people used internet worldwide and approximately 20 million people were internet users in Thailand. (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm> ; <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm>) Communication via the internet is the one of channels to promote international marriages increasingly, including the marriages of TMTMs.

# Attitudes and Satisfaction of Burmese Learners Studying Thai Language in Language School of Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Burma Foundation

Tidarat Ngamnikorn<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Graduated Student, Department of Teaching Thai as Foreign Language,  
Faculty of Humanities, Srinakharinwirot University

---

## Abstract

**Background:** *The language school of Thai allied committee with desegregated Burma foundation, Ratchathewi district in Bangkok, had opened in order for teaching Burmese Thai language for ten years. There were many Burmese labors attending in class but many obstacles still occur. The educational efficiency and learning achievement in studying Thai language was not good as it should be. Therefore, a researcher was interested in studying about the attitude and satisfaction of Burmese learners for the purpose of taking the result of this research to be direction in educational development which was appropriate with students. It could be benefits for schools, students and be an example for other Thai language school teaching in this way.*

**Objective:** *The purpose of this study was conducted with attitudes of Burmese learners studying Thai language in five aspects, for instance, the importance of learning Thai language, the subject, the method of teaching, teaching and learning activities, learning and teaching materials. Moreover, there are three aspects of satisfaction of Burmese learners studying Thai language such as the subject, learning and teaching activities, and teachers. The sample group was Burmese in language school of Thai Allied Committee with Desegregated Burmese Foundation, Rachatewee, Bangkok were selected the purposive sampling of 50 participants.*

**Result:** *1) Burmese learners had great attitudes toward learning Thai language. The greatest attitude was learning and teaching activities and the second was the importance of learning Thai language, the subject, learning and teaching material, and the method of teaching respectively. 2) Burmese learners had very high level in satisfaction*

---

\*Corresponding author: tidarat\_nga@nationgroup.com

toward learning Thai language. The highest satisfaction was teachers and the second was the subject and learning and teaching activities respectively.

**Discussion and conclusion:** 1) The greatest attitude of Burmese Thai-language learners was teaching and learning activities especially listening skill for the purpose of practicing pronunciation and developing skill. Because listening was very important skill which lead to other skills such as speaking, reading, and writing. A second order was the importance of learning since it was used in work and relation between employer and employee. For subject matter, learners were good attitude in content which could be used in everyday life and communicate with Thai people. Moreover, in aspects of learning and teaching materials, learners were good viewpoint with books, textbooks, exercise books created by teachers which could make learners more understanding in education. The last one was method of teaching. Burmese learners were great attitude on teaching method which emphasized practicing 4 skills. It made learners known their level and could practice 4 skills effectively. 2) Satisfaction of Burmese Thai-language learners shown that the most satisfied was teacher because this foundation had a good teacher with good personality and human relations. The second was the subject which could be practiced 4 skills and apply to the real event. The last one was teaching and learning activities especially the activities focus on reading-writing and listening-speaking skills.

**Keywords:** Attitudes, Satisfaction, Burmese, Teaching Thai Language for Foreigners

## Introduction

At the present moment, there are many labors from Burma migrating to work in Thailand. An exploration shown that most of them incurred with many troubles such as uninformed Thai law, obtaining health service, adaptation and communication problem. These problems gave tendency to make other problem

occurring. (Sammajivasilpa Mulnidhi. n.d.: Online)

The unknowing Thai language of labors was obstacle at work as the Thai Labor Solidarity Committee (TLSC.) (2008: Online) said that labors who couldn't speak Thai always be designated salary by their entrepreneur according to this reason. Therefore,

migrant country labors we're difficult to find a good job that was cause why they were interested in studying Thai language for the purpose of development themselves communicating with Thai people and make more understand in coexistence.

Information from language school of Thai allied committee with desegregated Burma foundation, Ratchathewi district in Bangkok found that it had been appended to Burmese labors for ten years. There were many Burmese labors attending in class, about 700 persons. Besides, observation by researcher found that most learners had satisfaction in studying Thai language at this school. The researcher had a chance to interview teacher about education, books and educational materials, which made us know about many problems and obstacle in educational of Burmese labors, it was found that the efficiency and

achievement were not good as it should be although learners satisfied studying Thai language but they couldn't response the real requirement and expectation of themselves. As Shuichi Sano (2008: 57) said in his research that for educational management, if teacher known attitude and satisfaction of learners, it would had made teacher taking result of this research to be direction in educational development with more efficiency.

Hence, a researcher was interested in attitude and satisfaction of Burmese Thai-language learners for the purpose of taking the result to be direction in learning and teaching development which was appropriate with students. This will be benefits to school of Thai allied committee with desegregated Burma foundation and be an example for other Thai language school teaching in this way.

### **Objectives**

1. To study private information of Burmese learners studying Thai language and educational surroundings in language school of Thai allied committee with a desegregated Burma

foundation which affect to the attitude and satisfaction of learners.

2. To study the attitude of Burmese learners studying Thai language in five aspects, for instance the

importance of learning, the subject, the method of teaching, teaching and learning activities and teaching and learning materials, and student

satisfaction in three aspects as the subject, learning and teaching activities, and teachers.

## **Methods**

**1. Set population and sample group.** The population in this research was Burmese learners studying Thai language level 1 to level 5 amount 700 persons in language school of Thai allied committee with a desegregated Burma foundation, Ratchathewi district in Bangkok. The sample group was 50 Burmese learners studying Thai language from Purposive Sampling chosen by the institute include level 3 to level 5 in term of March to May 2012.

school were closed-ended questionnaires that respondents had to choose the answer which corresponding to their characteristic. The third procedure was questioned about attitude in studying Thai language separated in 5 aspects, such as the importance of Thai language studying, the subject, the method of teaching, learning and teaching activities and educational materials, which had 5 altitude levels for choosing as most agree, agree, not sure, disagree and most disagree. The last one was questioned about satisfaction in studying Thai language in 3 aspects, for instance the subject, learning and teaching activities and teachers , which had 5 levels to choose that was most satisfying, very satisfy, moderately satisfy, less satisfy and least satisfy.

**2. Create materials used in research.** The instruments used in this research was attitude and satisfaction questionnaire with 4 procedures. The first procedure was closed-ended questions about the information about Burmese learners who had to choose one answer corresponding exactly to their characteristic. For the second, questions about learning and teaching of

**3. Compile the information.** Researcher compiled many results by

doing follow method as 1) Contacted Thai language school manager for the purpose of asking cooperation in researching

2) Sent an application form from the graduate school of Srinakharinwirot university to manager of Thai allied committee with a desegregated Burma foundation language school follow the determination in the scope of research to ask for cooperation in compiling questionnaires.

3) Researcher compiled information of questionnaires in May 2012 follow date and time which made an appointment.

#### **4. Analyze information.**

Researcher compiled information by

collecting questionnaire distributed to Burmese learners studying Thai language and and brought them to check the completeness of every questionnaires gotten back after that put password of the questionnaires and saved it into the computer. Then information was assessed by computer program. The result was analyzed by using Descriptive Statistics in order to analyze from sample group and interpreted to explain an aspect of information such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation.

### **Results**

1. Basic information about the sample group found that majority of the samples were 37 females (74%) and 13 males (26%), their age were 20 - 30 years old (72%), their class level was the level 3 amount 31 persons (62%), level 4 amount 10 persons (20%) and level 5 amount 9 persons (18%), their

educational level was high school (46%), housekeeper amount 21 persons (42%), duration staying in Thailand was between 1 - 5 years (42%) and duration studying Thai language less than a year (54%).

<b>Personal Data</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
1. male	13	26.00
2. female	37	74.00
<b>Age</b>		
1. less than 20 years old	5	10.00
2. 20 - 30 years old	36	72.00
3. 31 - 40 years old	8	16.00
4. 41 - 50 years old	1	2.00
<b>Class Level</b>		
1. Level 3	31	62.00
2. Level 4	10	20.00
3. Level 5	9	18.00
<b>Educational level</b>		
1. primary school	12	24.00
2. high school	23	46.00
3. vocational school	2	4.00
4. bachelor	5	10.00
5. non education	4	8.00
6. nonspecific	4	8.00
<b>Occupation</b>		
1. agriculture	2	4.00
2. vendor	10	20.00
3. services	4	8.00
4. housekeeper	21	42.00
5. factory worker	2	4.00
6. employee	7	14.00
7. etc. (interpreter, sewer, officer)	3	6.00
8. nonspecific	1	2.00
<b>Duration staying in Thailand</b>		
1. less than 1 year	2	4.00
2. 1 - 5 years	21	42.00

<b>Personal Data</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
3. 6 - 10 years	20	40.00
4. more than 10 year	7	14.00
<b>Duration studying Thai language</b>		
1. less than 1 year	27	54.00
2. 1 - 5 years	23	46.00

2. Basic information about learning and teaching of school found that all three levels had textbook but only level 5 had exercise books. About the subject, all three levels had the same method of teaching include the lecture, homework/test, reviewing last time, introduction to new subjects and giving a chance for asking questions but only level 3 and 5 had suggested over the topic in the subject. About learning and teaching materials, only all three levels had a class documentation but level 5

had used other various materials including CD/DVD, picture, television and newspaper. There were reading aloud, oral presentation/speak following teachers, writing following the speech and insertion Thai culture in every level but only level 5 had various teaching activities were learning from songs or fables, reading advertisement/news and writing stories from the pictures. Other learning and teaching such as editing sentences had been in level 3 and level 5

<b>Basic information about learning and teaching of school</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Class Level</b>
<b>Textbooks</b> textbooks	50	100.00	every level

<b>Basic information about learning and teaching of school</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Class Level</b>
exercise books	9	18.00	level 5
<b>Method of teaching</b>			
lecture	50	100.00	every level
reviewing last time	24	48.00	every level
introduction to new subjects	21	42.00	every level
homework/test	50	100.00	every level
suggested over the topic in the subject	20	40.00	level 3 & 5
used other various materials	9	18.00	level 5
<b>Materials</b>			
document	50	100.00	every level
CD/DVD	9	18.00	level 5
picture	9	18.00	level 5
television	9	18.00	level 5
newspaper	9	18.00	level 5
<b>Learning and teaching materials</b>			
Reading aloud	50	100.00	every level
learning from songs	9	18.00	level 5
learning from fables	9	18.00	level 5
oral presentation/ speak following	50	100.00	every level

<b>Basic information about learning and teaching of school</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Class Level</b>
teachers reading advertisement/news	9	18.00	level 5
field trip	9	18.00	level 5
writing following the speech	9	18.00	level 5
fill in the blank	9	18.00	level 5
writing stories from the pictures	9	18.00	level 5
insertion Thai culture	50	100.00	every level
etc.(editing sentences)	12	24.00	level 3 & 5

3. The results from studying the attitude of Burmese learners who studied Thai language shown that the majority of learners had a great attitude in studying Thai language. The greatest attitude was learning and teaching activities and the

second was the importance of learning Thai language, the subject, learning and teaching material and the method of teaching which had the average 4.46, 4.28, 4.19, 4.18 and 3.98 per 5.

<b>Attitude</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Level of attitude</b>
1. Learning and teaching activities	4.46	greatest
2. Importance of learning Thai language	4.28	greatest
3. Subject	4.19	great
4. Learning and teaching material	4.18	great
5. Method of teaching	3.98	great

4. The results from studying was teacher with average 4.41, the satisfaction of Burmese learner who second was subject with average 4.12 studied Thai language shown that the and the last one was learning and majority of learners had a very high level teaching activities with average 4.10. of satisfaction. The highest satisfaction

<b>Satisfaction</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Level of satisfaction</b>
1. Teacher	4.41	very high
2. Subject	4.12	high
3. Learning and teaching activities	4.10	high

## **Discussion and conclusion**

From studying attitude and satisfaction of Burmese learners studying Thai language in language school of Thai allied committee with desegregated Burma foundation found that

1. Attitude in aspect of the importance of learning Thai language found that learners had a great attitude in studying Thai language. Majority of sample group known the importance of studying Thai language in the purpose of communication in every day life and the second was to use in their work. The consideration from general information shown that most of them were housekeepers and inferior was occupation about trade which had highly to use Thai language. Therefore, it was necessary to studying Thai language. The consideration from information about duration of learners staying in Thai and studying Thai found that most learners had a duration in staying between 1-5 years but most of them had duration in studying less than a year. It could be observed that even Burmese learners had been in Thailand for a long time but they couldn't communicate with Thai people or develop themselves in other skills as reading or writing. That was the reason why Burmese was interested in studying Thai language to learn how to use

language and developing 4 skills for instance listening, speaking, reading and writing. Although it was a short time, if Burmese had studied Thai language continuously at higher level, it could be benefits in work and good relationship between employer and employee.

2. The attitude in aspect of the subject found that learners had a great attitude on the subject. Most of sample group had a great attitude at a topic which could be used in communicating with Thai people such as buying things, asking the way, ordering food, or exchanging money. The second was the subject which could develop 4 skills as listening, speaking reading and writing. Because the subject about something used in every day life could help learners in the real world and could communicate with Thai people. Moreover, the subject for develop 4 skills could help learners developing themselves into better work and life as the word of Thitiya Saengmanee (2003: 65) said that the subject should be the things interested by learners, according with learner's requirement and used in the way of life.

3. The attitude in aspect of teaching method found that learners had a great attitude in method of teaching. Most of sample group had the best attitude in method concentrating on practicing 4 skills

as listening, speaking, reading and writing which could see from the attitude about subject described above as the great attitude of learners about the subject developing 4 skills in the same time with method of teaching concentrating 4 skills. The second was teaching shared with learners that teachers had to give a chance for learners to discuss, show opinion, choose an interesting topic and create educational activities relating real life. That made learners found themselves, understood their requirement, known level of their ability and could practice 4 skills effectively.

4. The attitude in aspect of learning and teaching activities found that learners had a great attitude in learning and teaching activities. Most of sample group had the best attitude in practicing listening skill for developing pronunciation and skills. For studying language, basic skill began from listening until understand and speaking pronunciation correctly after that studying reading and writing be started. As speech of Duangduen Sangchai (1987: 13) said that listening was the important skill leading to other skills in other steps which were speaking, reading and writing. Beside, the results from the research shown that learners had the best attitude in practicing writing the words to

increase vocabularies and memory because writing would lead to be good in remembering vocabularies, speaking and easy to explain to other people. The second was practicing speaking frequently to develop every skill at the same time which could help learners studying Thai language as much as they need.

5. The attitude in aspect of teaching media and materials found that learners had a great attitude in educational materials. Most of the sample group had the best attitude for educational materials in type of the books, textbook, documents used in studying which made more knowledge. By considering the book of three level found that only level 5 had exercise books but level 3 and level 4 didn't have exercise books. From that reason, teachers had to make more documents such as writing exercise or reading exercise to made more knowledge and understanding of learners. The second was picture which made more remembering vocabularies as learning and teaching activities described above about writing to increase vocabularies and memorization. As same as speech from Pattaya Jittmetta (2007: 5) said that the best documents and books should come from the creation by teachers because they known how the

subject should be and could be flexible follow the situation.

6. The satisfaction in aspect of the subject found that learners had a great satisfaction in the subject. Most of the sample group had the highest satisfaction in the subject which could apply for using in the real situation. From considering the books of every level shown that the exercise was found in level 5 but was not found in level 3 and level 4. Therefore, learners could not practice all 4 skills. Moreover, the books always concentrated on reading skill and dropped the conversation which affect for learners not applying in real situation. However, teachers in every level had found other documents to increase other skill not be found in the books such as listening exercise, writing exercise and conversation in various conversations which this could help the subject covering 4 skills. From all of reason above made learners satisfy to the subject.

7. The satisfaction in aspect of learning and teaching activities found that learners had a great satisfaction in learning and teaching activities. Most of the sample

### **Acknowledgements**

This research was a part of thematic work of education in Master of Arts Degree in Teaching Thai as a Foreign

group had the highest satisfaction in activity focus on reading-writing skill because the books which used in every level concentrated on reading and writing skill. The second was activity focus on listening-speaking skill. From considering information about the educational of school found that all level had speaking out loud and oral presentation/speaking follow teacher which could help learners practicing and developing skills. Therefore, the reading-writing activity and listening-speaking activity were activity satisfied by learners.

8. The satisfaction in aspect of teachers found that learners had a great satisfaction for teachers. Most of the sample group had the highest to teachers who had a good characteristic appropriate with occupation. The second was having a good relationship as a suggestion from the questionnaire answered by learners referring to teachers that the teachers had knowledge ability and Thai language skills teaching learners could develop writing skill, relationship, speaking politely.

Language which researcher would like to thank you for Aj. Pattaya Jittmetta in being advisor and committee who gave suggestion including all of professions,

verifying quality and giving the way to improve material used in compiling information, and every person who was a part of making this research completely.

## References

Bloom, B. (1976). *Human characteristics and school learning*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Duangduen Sangchai. (1987). *Teaching English in Primary Level*. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Demonstration Elementary School Press. (in Thai).

Gibson, J. L. (2000). *Organizations: Behavior, Structure, Processes*. 10th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Good, C. V. (Ed.). (1973). *Dictionary of education (3rd)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pattaya Jittmetta. (2007). *Teaching Methods and Techniques by Thai Language. Material, How to be Professional : Thai Language Teachers for*

Foreigners. Bangkok: Srinakharinwirot University Press. (in Thai).

Sammajivasilpa Mulnidhi. (n.d.). *The Project Supported of Thai Language and Cultural Knowledge for Immigrant Workers*. Retrieved April 4, 2012 from <http://www.sammajivasil.net/news12.htm>

Sano Shuichi. (2008). *Research of Satisfaction in Japanese Language Learning of Learners at Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology*. Bangkok: Thai-Nichi Institute of Technology.

The Thai Labour Solidarity Committee (TLSC). (2008). *Immigrant Workers Situation in Thailand*. Retrieved April 4, 2012 from <http://www.trclabourunion.com/d536.doc>

Thitiya Saengmanee. (2003). *State of Problems and Guideline in Teaching and Learning Thai Subject for Foreign Students at International Schools in Chiang Mai*. (Master's thesis, Chiangmai University, 2003).

Wallerstein, H. (1971). *A dictionary of psychology*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.

## Instructions to Authors

A manuscript containing original materials, which can be in the form of *Review, Research article, Article, Commentary or Book review*, is accepted for consideration if neither the article nor any part of its essential content has been or will be published or submitted elsewhere for consideration. However, this restriction does not apply to those abstracts or short communications published in connection with academic meetings and/or conferences. Copies of any closely related manuscripts in question must be submitted along with the manuscript that is to be considered by the Journal. Please be informed that the Journal adopts a double-blind review procedure and, therefore, all articles, except for invited papers and *Book reviews*, will be converted into a PDF format with the *Author List* and *Affiliation* removed prior to being sent to selected reviewers.

A manuscript should contain the following elements: *Article Title, Running Title, Author List, Affiliation, Abstract, Keywords, Article Main Body, Conclusion* and *References*. A manuscript should be submitted as a standard word-processing electronic file. A single-column, double-spaced format must be used throughout the text. *14pt- Browallia New* font should be used to prepare the manuscript. Greek letters (if any) should be typed in *Symbol* font. The details pertaining to each part of the manuscript are listed below.

1. *Article Title*: The title should clearly state the key content of the manuscript. All first letters of the title words except for articles (a, an, the) and prepositions, should be capitalized. The title should be centered.
2. *Running Title*: A heading printed at the top of every page must be given (maximum 40 characters).
3. *Author List*: The first name (written in full), middle name(s) (initials, if any) and surname (written in full) of each author should be listed. Job titles, academic titles and academic degrees should not be included. The list should be centered.
4. *Affiliation*: Current affiliations of all authors, including the names of the department and institutions with full postal addresses, should be listed below the Author List, and indicated by Arabic numerals placed as superscripts after the appropriate author's names. Affiliations should be centered. An e-mail address of the corresponding author should be listed as footnotes and indicated by asterisk (\*) next to the name.
5. *Abstract*: An abstract written in English (maximum 250 words), briefly summarizing the purpose of the work, significant results and conclusions, is required for *Review, Research articles* and *Articles*. No abstracts are required for the "Book Review" and "Commentary". The abstract should contain the following: *Background, Objective, Result and Discussion and Conclusion*.
6. *Keywords*: At least three to a maximum of five keywords must be given. The keywords must be provided by the author and appear after the *Abstract*.
7. *Article Main Body*: All text, references, figure legends, and tables should be in single-column, double-spaced format. Place each figure or table on a separate page (one page per figure/table) after the text – please do not insert the figures or tables in the text. In-text citations should be made using the following format: [first author's last name, et al. (if any), year]. For peer review, it is permissible to send low-resolution images, although the authors will be asked for high-resolution files at a later stage. Main text should not exceed 5,000 words; the maximum numbers of figures and tables are 4 and 2, respectively. *Highlight*: A list of Highlights indicating the most important feature of an article must be given with the maximum of 5 bullets. Each bulletin should not exceed 30 words.
8. *Double-blinded review method*: To allow for such review, the title page and main manuscript should be submitted as two separate files.
9. *References*: References must ONLY be in English and must be listed in alphabetical order by authors. If an item has no author, it should be cited by title, and indicated in the alphabetical list using the first significant word of the title. Select the American Psychological Association (APA) style as reference's output style when reference management program like Endnote or Mendeley is used. The list uses "hanging indent" format, i.e., the first line is flush along the left margin, and subsequent lines for an entry are indented one-half inch. When a reference is in other language

than English, the language should be indicated in parenthesis at the end of the reference (e.g., (in Thai)).

i. In-text citation format:

- Use an “author-date” style for in-text citations, which usually require the name of the author(s) and the year of publication.
- Use quotation mark around the quote and include the page number.
- For one to two authors, cite all author(s)’ family name separated by “&” mark.
- For three or more authors, cite just the family name of the first author followed by “et al.”
  - > Sophisticated searching techniques are important in finding information (Berkman, 1994).
  - > Attaching meaning to symbols is considered to be the origin of written language (Samovar & Porter, 1997).
  - > Alternately, “Language involves attaching meaning to symbols” (Samovar & Porter, 1997, p.188).
  - > It was argued that ... (Johnson et al., 2005).

ii. Format of full bibliographic information for each source:

- a. *Journal Article*: Author (Year). Title. *Journal’s title*, Volume (No), Page number(s).  
Cho, Y. (2011). *Desperately seeking East Asia amidst the popularity of South Korean pop culture in Asia*. *Cultural Studies*, 25(3), 383-404.  
Emmers, R., & Ravenhill, J. (2011). *The Asian and global financial crises: consequences for East Asian regionalism*. *Contemporary Politics*, 17(2), 133-149.  
Li, D. et al. (2011). *Late holocene paleoenvironmental changes in the Southern Okinawa trough inferred from a diatom record*. *Chinese Science Bulletin*, 56(11), 1131-1138.
- b. *Book*: various formats depending on type of book.  
Innsom, L. (2006). *History of Thai language*. London: Springer.  
  
Kenjai, N. (2009). *Chinese imigrants: the new revolution (3rd ed.)* Bangkok: Siam Publisher. (in Thai).  
Parker, F. M. & Longman, O. B. (1993). *Psychiatric care of ethnic elders*. In A. C. Gaw (Ed.), *Culture, ethnicity, and mental illness* (pp. 517-552). Washington DC: American Psychiatric Press.  
Seetanate, S. L., & Yong, T. D. (Eds.). (1999). *Measuring environment across the life span: Emerging methods and concepts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- c. *Book*: book with two to five authors.  
Krause, K.-L., Bocher, S., Duchesne, S. (2006). *Educational psychology for learning and teaching (2nd ed.)*. South Melbourne, Vic., Australia: Thomson.
- d. *Book*: book or report by a corporate author e.g. organization, association, government department  
University of Waikato. (1967). *First hall of residence (Information series No. 3)*. Hamilton, New Zealand: Athor.
- e. *Thesis*: Author. (Year of preparation). Title. (Award, Institution, Year).  
Amarthkul, C. (2007). *Thailand in the 21st Century (Master's thesis, Thammasat University, 2007)*.  
Khondee, M. (2010). *Modernization: the trends in urban development of East Asian countries. (Doctoral dissertation, Thammasat University, 2010)*.
- f. *Newspaper*: Author(s). (Year, month day). Title of article. Title of Newspaper, p. page number(s).  
Khonkaw. P. (2003, March 14). *Thai politicians: Will we get better than this?* Bangkok Post, p. A5.

- g. *Webpage: Author. (Year page created or revised). Title of page. Retrieved month day, year of retrieval, from web address.*  
Miller, J. et al., (2007). *Military Defense: Lessons Learned in Korea War. Retrieved January 3, 2009 from <http://www.apastyle.org/manual/index.aspx.html>*  
Thailand's Perspectives. (2010). Retrieved May 1, 2010, from <http://www.onestopenglish.com/community/teacher-talk/teachers-letters/thailand-two-perspectives/145883.html>  
Society of Clinical Psychology. (n.d.) *About Clinical Psychology. Retrieved January 28, 2009, from <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div12/aboutcp.html>*
- h. *Conference/Symposium/Meeting/Seminar: Author. (Year, month of conference). Title of paper. Paper presented at the Conference Name, Conference Location.*
- i.
- Bhate, S. (2010, April). *Sanskrit Cosmos-Asian Empire-Pune Fortress. Paper presented at the Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, Escada Hotel, Sao Paulo, Spain.*
- Mendel, K. et al., (2009, June). *Cultural Differences in Visual Attention: An Eye-Tracking Comparison of Us and Indian Individuals. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, Bangkok Convention Center, Thailand.*

References to personal communications, unpublished data, or manuscripts either “in preparation” or “submitted for publication” are acceptable only if they are incorporated at an appropriate place in the text. However, the authors do not need to list these references in the “Reference” section.