

# The Applied Model of Creating the Youth's Gratitude:

## Case Study of the Phuan People at Pak-Phli District, Nakhon Nayok Province, Thailand

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### ABSTRACT

This research has the objective to study the traditional heritage of the Phuan people and the applied model of the tradition in creating the virtue of gratitude with the youths in Thailand. This is a qualitative research, consisted of 3 sample groups of people: 1) The Thai Phuan youths of less than 20 years old and parents who are older than 25 years old 2) A group of people involved in developing the virtue of gratitude of the youths 3) A group of specialists involved in promoting cultural tradition and national values. Totaling 38 persons of key informants. The data collected was done by document analysis technique, observation and in-depth interview. The results were analyzed by context analysis technique.

It is found that: 1) One of the important Thai Phuan traditional events is when the Thai Phuan people make the Krayasart sweet (whole grain sweetened rice) and food to offer in a traditional religious ceremony of dedication to the rice producing guardian angels and to the Thai Phuan ancestors who are spirits with no relatives (Yee and Jiang spirits). The offering is held at the fork-intersection of the public road in the area, representing the expression of gratitude 2) the applied model of the Phuan traditional event, strengthening the morals of gratitude for youths, is organized by the Thai Phuan network in Pak-Phli district of Nakhon Nayok province. There are 2 main designed cultivated socialization activities: Activities of House, Temple, School (HTS), and activities during the traditional event, that both activities are related to one another. It is found that the activities held during the traditional event have a direct effect in creating gratitude while the activities of HTS have an indirect effect towards creating the gratitude of youths.

**KEYWORDS** Gratitude, Phuan people, cultivating socialization

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### Introduction

Phuan is an ethnic group of people who originally settled in the city of Xieng Khwang, northeastern of Laos, near Vietnam Republic. The Phuan group of people has migrated into Thailand many times since the end of Krung Thonburi period, during the reign of Phrabat Sondej Phra Buddha Yodfah Chulalok (King Rama 1<sup>st</sup>), the reign of Phrabat Sondej Phra Nangklao (King Rama 4<sup>th</sup>) and during the reign of Phrabat Somdej Phra Chulachomklao (King Rama 5<sup>th</sup>) (Pradit Silabutr, 2015; Yaowananon, et al., 2019; Pornputtkul, et. al., 2020). They scattered around and settled in 23 various provinces of Thailand (Yaowananon, et al., 2019). A part of the groups has settled down in Pak-Phli sub-district of Nakhon Nayok province during the time when Sondej Phraya Maha Kasat-suek led the army to attack Vientiane around 1778-1779, by entering to settle in the areas of Baan Tha-Daeng, Baan Nong-Saeng, Baan Koh-Tawai, Baan Nong-Ling, etc. (Hussadin, 2016; Pornputtkul, et. al., 2020).

The Phuan folks or Thai Phuan who settled in Pak-Phli district is one of the ethnic groups in Thailand who maintains the traditional cultural heritage of the Phuan people and preserves the relics and historical items in the outstanding Folk Museum (Siam Museum, 2019), situated at Fangklong Temple, Nakhon Nayok province (Punyopashtambha and Marpraneet, 2015), where arts and culture of Phuan people are collected and the identity of the Thai Phuan ethnic group is restored (Nadee, 2017). It is also a continuous learning center for the youths to learn during their whole life time (Kojaranont, 2005; Pluemsamrungsit and Wilaikum, 2018). The preservation of the cultural heritage for the community, is an academic and cultural resource center, building moral supports and stability of the minds, to be proud of the identity of local wisdom and supporting the tourism industry (Office of National Museum, 2005). Apart from this, the preservation of Thai Phuan traditional cultural heritage is through the continuous traditional practices of ceremonial events throughout

the year. In order to preserve the arts and culture and creating the morality and ethics with the new generation of Phuan youths (Yaowananon, et al., 2019), such as, Phuan tradition of promoting the virtue of gratitude (Pornputtkul, et. al., 2020).

Gratitude is, realizing the value of the others, of the people, of the animals and of the environment that affects them both directly and indirectly and act in return when there is an opportunity without selfishness (Sampetchalern and Nuntaput, 2017). Therefore, creating the virtue of gratitude is an important moral ethic of the Thai people, because it is a process of socialization and to build the immunity for the society in living together harmoniously (Wattanabut, et al. 2018). Gratitude could be categorized into 2 types: Gratitude towards a person and gratitude to organization/ institution or to ethnic groups (Buddhadhaspikkhu, 1993; Sukawattako, 2013; Wattanabut, et al. 2018).

The traditional Phuan event does not take place just as a traditional event but there is a process for youths to participate in the activities where they show the gratitude towards the parents, to the benefactors and to the ancestors, handing down from generation to generation to the present time (Pornputtkul, et. al., 2020).

Therefore, it is of the researcher's opinion that the creating and instilling the virtue of gratitude for the youths of the Phuan people is an interesting practice because the modern day youths have less attribute in gratitude (Sampetchalern and Nuntaput, 2017). It is of the researcher's opinion to study the applied model of the Phuan people's tradition in creating the virtue of gratitude with the youths, case study ((The Phuan People) Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand, which will be useful and beneficial to the educational institutions, institutions or organizations related to education and cultural departments in the promotion of morality and ethics, building up and instilling the virtue of gratitude for the youths in the other areas further.

### Objective

1. To study the organizing of the Phuan traditional event in Pak-Phli district of Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand
2. To study the applied model of the Phuan traditional heritage in creating the virtue of gratitude with the youths, case study (The Phuan People) Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand.

### Methodology

This is a qualitative research. The researcher has made the study with 3 sample groups consisted of 1) With 2

groups of Thai Phuan people in the area: Younger than 20 years old youths and parents who are older than 25 years old, totaling 45 persons 2) A group of people involved in developing the virtue of gratitude of the youths such as, abbots of the temples, community administrators, educational executives, totaling 12 persons 3) A group of specialists involved in promoting cultural tradition and national values such as, administrators of cultural and local wisdom, specialists in creating the morals of ethic in gratitude, totaling 6 persons. A total of 38 key informants. The data was collected during October 2019 – February 2021 by document analysis, observation and in-depth interview. The results of the interview which passed the Triangular test will be analyzed by context analysis and concluded further.

### The findings

The findings from the study are as followed:

#### 1. Organizing the Phuan traditional event in Pak-Phli district of Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand

The study of Phuan traditional event in Pak-Phli district is done by document analysis, participated observation and non-participated observation and in-depth interview, it is found that:

##### 1.1 Characteristic of the Phuan traditional event

The Phuan's heritage tradition is a traditional event which all the Phuan people living in 7 sub-districts of Koh-Wai, Ta-Rue, Nong-Saeng, Koh-Po, Kok-Grud and Na-Lad-Hin, are still maintained and practiced, inherited and handed down from ancestors until today. It is an important tradition as any others practiced in the area such as, the tradition of harvesting rice together (Hao), merits making events such as Boon Khao Jee, eat Khao Mao, Boon Khao Lam or the tradition of Au-Huen (house warming celebration).

The purpose of organizing the traditional events is not just a practice that has been passed down since ancient times but having an important objective of dedicating the merits to the ancestors, returning the gratitude of their inspiration to lead a good life. It is also to create the awareness to the Thai Phuan youths to realize the value of gratitude to the benefactors, and find an opportunity to repay without being selfish.

This Phuan traditional event is held yearly on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon (Lunar Calendar) of the 9<sup>th</sup> month. The Thai Phuan people will take the prepared sweet, Krayasart, together with other food to make merits by offering the food and sweets to the monks at the temple first. Apart from this, the other monks from neighboring villages are also invited to participate in the event. After the offering, the wrapped rice packages

and food would be carried to be offered to the spirits Yee and Jiang in the rice fields.

## 1.2 The Phuan traditional event in Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province

Organizing the Phuan traditional event is done in 2 phases: Activities before the traditional day and activities on the day.

The activities before the traditional event day consisted of members of the family, all help in the preparation to make the special sweet, Krayasat together. Starting on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon (Lunar Calendar) by soaking the glutinous paddy for 2-3 nights until the 10<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon, the soaked paddy is pounded (becomes Khao-mao) and roasted (becomes Khao-tok). The next 2 days (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon) are the days to roast the pounded rice, roast the nuts and sesame seeds. Then on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon, all the roasted materials are stir together to become the sweet, Krayasart.

The activities on the traditional event day is to make merits of expressing the gratitude, are done in 2 parts:

1) Making merits at the temple: The Thai Phuan people together with their families will go to make merits at the temple by offering food and Thai Phuan sweets including Krayasart to the monks. After the meal, the monks would give the blessing to all.

2) Merits making in the rice field and outside the house Each house-hold of Thai Phuan people will take 5-6 wrapped packages of rice, food and sweet to make merits in the rice field by offering to the guardian angels, in paying respect and gratitude of the cultivation of the crops and harvesting for their living.

Apart from this, Thai Phuan people will put prepared food such as, rice- noodles, rice, other food and Krayasart sweet, other sweets and fruit (boiled taro or sweet potatoes) into the Mor Tarn (in the earthen ware pots), carry in the baskets to make merits for the ancestral spirits who are not relatives (spirits who have no relatives) Yee and Jiang spirits, by leaving the basket of food and sweet at the fork-intersection, public road. With the belief that the spirits who are not directly relatives would help them to make a good living of no obstacles nor problems, the family would be prosperous.

As for the traditional activities in the event of today, there have been additional official activities taking place from morning to afternoon, organized jointly by Cultural Council of Pak-Phli district, Thailand Cultural Center, community groups and temples in the Thai Phuan communities. Apart from all participating in the event, other educational institutions, those who are interested, are invited to join in the activities being held

in the temples, in the communities, in the area. The students and youths from schools and Phuan communities perform various traditional folk games, Phuan dances and other folk dances, etc.

## 2. the study of the applied model of Phuan's heritage tradition in creating the virtue of gratitude with the youths in Pak-Phli district of Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand

The driving force to use the applied tradition in creating morals and ethics has been done through the Cultural Center of Fangklong Temple, Koh-wai sub-district, Pak-Phli, by the abbot of the temple. Later, more organizations cooperated together as network such as, Pak-Phli District Cultural Center, schools and temples, together with the Phuan communities.

Once the applied traditional activities have been in motion and have created morals and ethics for a while, the network has found that the Phuan traditional event could create the virtue of gratitude for the youths, both in the forms of traditional event and activities to achieve socialization, the Pak Phli District Cultural Council and the network have therefore started conducting, creating the morals of gratitude with the youths seriously, regularly yearly.

The operation of creating morals of gratitude with the youths consisted of designing the cultivated activities of the village (Houses), Temple (T) and School (S) or named as the concept of HTS activities and designing the activities during the traditional event day.

The designing of the cultivated activities creating morals of gratitude according to the concept of HTS consisted of village activities such as, producing raw material for food derived from the local Phuan wisdom, storytelling of the Phuan folk tales/legends, praising the youths who have shown gratitude as good role models, raising the pride of being of ethnic group of Phuan people, etc. Temple activities are, such as, Dharma lectures that illustrate the expressions of people's gratitude towards the others, towards the animals or towards the environment, or of the benefits obtained from being a grateful person. School activities such as, organizing courses, educational centers, teaching and learning of cooking authentic Phuan meals in the home economics subject, Phuan dancing, drumming dance, Lam Phuan dance and other Phuan traditional cultural activities. All the school activities the students are trained, are to be performed and exhibited during the Phuan traditional event day.

The designing of activities during the Phuan traditional event consisted of activity from the Cultural Council of Pak-Phli district, from the Cultural Center, community

administrators, executives of the cultural units, local wisdom group, morality creating specialists, cooperating with one another in, knowledgably, informative lectures for the youths, public relations or convey the relationship between each activity and the expression of gratitude. The expressing of the gratitude is shown that it is done at the individual level and at the group or ethnic group level, as well as rewarding the youths who have shown the good example of gratitude. It is found from the interview with the youths, the parents and those involved in developing the expression of gratitude, specialists in traditional cultural and national value, and specialists in creating the morals of gratitude, that, it is of their opinion that the Phuan youths in the area of Pak-Phli district have a higher virtue of gratitude by expression in their actions, being aware of the value of the persons, of the environment, returning the gratitude without being selfish and could adjust the way of living in harmony with the other people. Apart from this, it is found from the study that the Phuan youths express the gratitude to individual person and also at the Phuan ethnic group level.

### Conclusion

1. Organizing the Phuan traditional event in Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand

The Phuan traditional event is held on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of dark moon, 9<sup>th</sup> month of Lunar calendar yearly. It is the Phuan tradition of showing gratitude to the ancestors. The morning part of the day, the prepared food and the Krayasart sweet are taken to be offered as merits making for the ancestors. Afterwards, the 5-6 wrapped packages of food from each house-hold will be taken to leave in the rice field of each household for the ancestors and guardian angels of their rice fields. Later, the food and sweet in the earthenware pots are carried in baskets to leave at the public road fork-intersection area for the spirits with no relatives (Yee and Jiang spirits). The merits making as such is to express gratitude where today, there are other local folk cultural activities during the day also.

2. The applied model of Phuan's traditional heritage of creating the virtue of gratitude

The applied model of Phuan's traditional heritage of creating the virtue of gratitude for the youths, case study Phuan ethnic group in Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand, came from designing cultivated socialization activities in the concept of "HTS" activities and activities during the traditional event

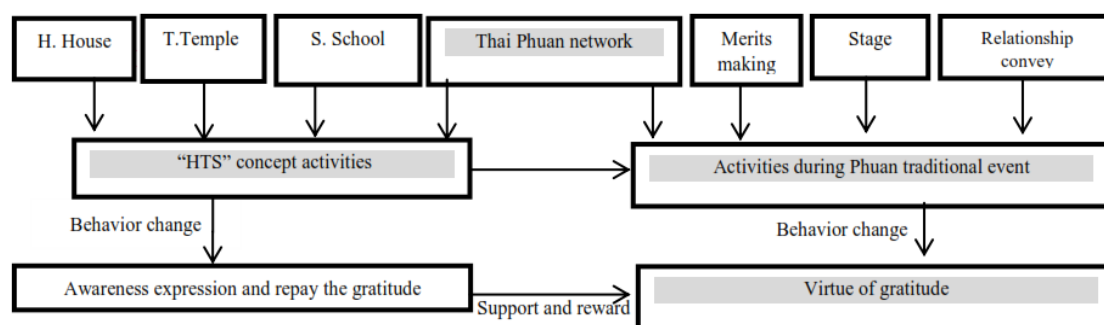


Figure 1 Applied model of Phuan's traditional heritage of creating youth's gratitude

From figure 1 it is shown that the applied model of Phuan's traditional heritage of creating the virtue of gratitude with the youths, conducted by the Thai Phuan network in Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok where the design of 2 main socialization activities are: 1) Activities according to the "HTS" concept which are done throughout the whole year and 2) The activities during the traditional event days which is held for 2 weeks in a year. Both activities are organized by sub net-work and both activities are designed to be related to one another. It is found that the activities during the

traditional event have direct effect to creating the morals of gratitude with the youths while the activities according to the concept of "HTS" have an indirect effect to creating the morals of gratitude with the youths.

### Discussion

It is found from the study that the Phuan's traditional heritage could create the virtue of gratitude for the Thai Phuan youths by designing 2 socialization activities of: Activities according to the concept of "HTS", organized mainly in the schools and the activities during the

traditional event days organized by having the trained students from the first type of activities to perform during the event which are in consistent with the research of Sampetchalern and Nuntaput (2017), where it is found that the gratitude could be instilled and cultivated to the students in the elementary school in Nakhon Pathom province. This is also in consistent with the research of Sukawattako (2013) where it is found that the gratitude could be instilled and cultivated to the students in the secondary school at the Wat Khao Sukim Secondary School, Chantaburi province.

From the study it is found that Thai Phuan youths express their gratitude both to individually person and to their ethnic group, in consistent with the study of Bhakdechakriwut, et. al. (2016) where it is found that by using the intellectual and Thai Phuan heritage capital, it has become an important factor to strengthen the community, in consistent with the research of Hussadin (2016) where it is found that the intellectual capital of Thai Phuan community has created the ethnic group identity. This again is in consistent with the research of Punyopashtambha and Marpraneet (2015) where it is found that the cooperation of the local community and the Cultural Center Board members, is the driving force in creating sustainable preservation of Thai Phuan cultural heritage which is in consistent with the research of Wattanabut, et al. (2018) in stating that, gratitude is something that can be strengthened by family care, cultivated socialization, creating awareness in gratitude and expression of repayment,

both to individual person, to the environment and to the society.

### Recommendations

Recommendation to use the findings

It is found from the study of the Phuan's traditional heritage in creating the morals of gratitude for the Thai Phuan youths in Pak-Phli district, Nakhon Nayok province, Thailand, that it came from the 2 cultivated socialization activities: 1) Activities according to the concept of "HTS" where they are held throughout the year and 2) Activities during the traditional event days which is held for 2 weeks. Therefore, the provincial administrators, those who are involved with the education, religion and culture should have the cooperation of the specific specialists, encouraging, supporting both activities, to enhance the moral development of gratitude, to be continued from one generation to the next generation further.

Recommendation for further research

From the study it is found that the activities during the traditional event have the direct effect in creating the morals of gratitude for the youths while the activities according to the HTS concept have an indirect effect, through the activities during the traditional event and through the awareness of expressing the gratitude to the others, also, effecting to the creating of the morals of gratitude. But as this is a qualitative research, there should be a quantitative research and path analysis, confirming the results further, in order to use the test results as a model for the development of cultural traditions creating the virtue of gratitude further.

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