



## **CONTEMPLATIVE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE THE SENSE OF PATRIOTISM, FAITH IN RELIGIONS, AND RESPECT FOR MONARCHS CONDUCTED BY FRESHMEN AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION, SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY**

**Sommaipavaboot**

The purpose of this research was to try out contemplative education activities to enhance the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select an experimental group which was 30 freshmen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, academic year 2016, at the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research instrument in this study was 1) contemplative education activities and 2) a one-group pretest – posttest research design. The collected data then were analyzed by using percentages, means, and standard deviations. The statistics used to test the hypothesis was t - test for dependent group and one-sample t-test. The research findings revealed that the posttest results were higher than the pretest results at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Keywords:** Contemplative education activities, Patriotism, Faith, and respect for monarchs.

### **Introduction**

Nowadays, the development of human resources is of paramount importance for higher education institutions to enable their students to have perfect quality in terms of academics, profession, morals, leadership, and compatibility with others in accordance with the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) and Amendments (Second National Education Act B.E. 2545). Also, the Roadmap for Education Reform (B.E. 2558-2564) strives for an ultimate goal, for Thai people, of being good and cultivated, fostering harmony, having competitive potential, being able to communicate, think, analyze, and solve problems reasonably, having morals and virtues, being public-minded and disciplined, lodging oneself in the public consciousness, adhering to democracy, showing patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs, holding values, being proud of being Thais, and being capable of changing with the times. Moreover, the government has adopted policies on 12 national core values in order to reinforce Thailand as follows: 1. upholding of the three main pillars: the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy; 2. having honesty, sacrifice, and patience with positive attitude for the public interest; 3. promoting filial piety towards parents, guardians, and teachers; 4. pursuing knowledge and working hard directly and indirectly in education; 5. conserving great Thai traditions and culture; 6. preserving morality, integrity, considerateness, generosity, and sharing; 7. Understanding and learning true democratic ideals with His Majesty the King as Head of State; 8. maintaining discipline and respect for laws and senior people; 9. being conscious and mindful of His Majesty the King's royal statements; 10. applying His Majesty the King's philosophy of Sufficiency Economy which refers to saving money in reserve, living a moderate life, sharing or trading surpluses, and cautiously expanding business when ready; 11. keeping physical and mental strength, militating against the evil power or desires, and having a sense of shame about sins

according to religious principles; and 12. giving priority to the public and national interest over self-interest. According to the above-mentioned reasons, it is necessary to adopt a fostering process using the integration of related knowledge appropriately in order to improve students to be good, proficient, happy, and successful in accordance with the aims of the National Education Act, as well as the national core values.

The Nation refers to a land which is occupied by people, has exact boundary, is properly administered, and has leaders as rulers of the country and the whole people adopting laws prescribed by the people of the country. For example, Thailand covers 513,115 square kilometers. The population is estimated to be 66.7 million (B.E. 2555). Thailand is a constitutional monarchy. The state religion is Buddhism. Thai culture, traditions, customs, and convention forge their identity. The identity has been inherited from their ancestors for years. Patriots help protect the country from enemies who come to invade or destroy the country so that their descendants can keep on dwelling there, develop the country, and live a peaceful life eternally. To do this, it is crucial that the students must be nurtured, cultivated, and given a sense of pride in Thai identity through Thai history, culture, traditions, customs, convention, and languages. They should use accurate and appropriate Thai language in order to express their love and pride in Thai identity.

The Religion refers to teachings of each religious founder, for instance; for Christianity, the Religion refers to the teachings of Jesus Christ; for Islamism, it refers to the teachings of Allah, having Muhammad as the Prophet, believing in one god which is Allah; for Buddhism, it refers to the teachings of the Lord Buddha; and for other religions, the Religion refers to each religious founder's teachings or beliefs. Each religion exists for teaching human beings to turn away from evil, do good deeds, and purify people's minds and get rid of defilement from their minds referring to greed, hatred, and delusion. The Religion is a spiritual anchor for people in the nation. A country without support from religious principles could encounter a problem of people's lacking morality which is one of the reasons behind the fall of a nation. Although people practice different religions in Thailand, they still live peaceably together. It is necessary to teach the students to understand, respect, and love people who follow different religions. People may practice variant religions. Nonetheless, the core of all religions is to make people become good persons with morals and ethics towards themselves, others, and the society.

The Monarchy refers to kings, *le Chef de l'Etat* or the Head of State, who have a duty to rule their countries and people and make their people live peaceably within the law and in accordance with good morals, culture, traditions, and convention of the countries. Each and every one of Thai kings has been the Soul of the Nation. They have taken care of their people, have maintained sovereignty, and have been developing the country. King Bhumibol was *le Chef de l'Etat*, righteously ruled Thailand according to the 10 royal virtues, and provided principles of Sufficiency Economy which suggest a guideline on living a better life for Thai people and bring about prosperity and bliss to all Thais. The students, as Thai citizens and descendants, should be cultivated to love and respect the kings above all things in order to be proud of living peaceably, harmoniously in the reign of King Bhumibol, promote unity, behave appropriately, and pledge their loyalty to the King.

The students may consider patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs old-fashioned and unfavorable. Some behaviors, e.g. lacking sense of shame and morals; giving priority to self-interest rather than the public interest; lacking self-discipline; being materialistic; dressing inappropriately; treating other people with disrespect; using incorrect language; and ignoring value of Thai wisdom, culture, and traditions, cause problems and effects upon the country. Also, these changing values affect Thai identity. Thus, it is crucial that the students should have morals and good values, be patriotic, have faith in religions, respect the monarchy, feel grateful to the country, gain knowledge, appreciation, and pride in being Thais, be aware of value of Thai language by using the language accurately and properly, appreciate and participate in conserving, inheriting, and disseminating Thai wisdom, traditions, arts, and culture, have good personality and manners according to Thais, be modest, be able to greet and farewell appropriately, respect seniors in order to conserve and constantly inherit Thai cultural heritage, traditions, customs, and Thainess.

The Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, has a main duty of producing great graduates in education. Thus, enhancing awareness of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs of the freshmen will be the mainspring of the development of the country in order to prepare for the AEC (ASEAN Economic Community) era and to be world citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century proudly. Hence, we need to build awareness, promote, cultivate, practice, and conduct training activities which are various and creative and concentrate on the learners so that the students become complete human beings in terms of body, mind, intelligence, and knowledge, have morals and awareness of the three main pillars that are the Nation, the Religion, and the Monarchy, behave well and appropriately, are able to get along with other people, and live harmoniously despite cultural diversity. These will enable the students to creatively pass their knowledge and experience on to their future learners, to encourage the students to improve themselves based on their potential, and to make a connection between different fields of study and acquire their own bodies of knowledge. Enhancing the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs can be done by contemplative education activities which are learning activities under careful consideration concentrating on the development of emotions, feelings, thoughts, and beliefs in order to raise awareness of values of things, to create love, mercy, and respect for nature, to show the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs, and to be capable of link and completely apply knowledge from different fields of study to their lives, as well as to be good Thai citizens and members of the AEC who can get along with other members.

According to the above-mentioned reasons, I would like to study the development of contemplative education activities to enhance the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs of the freshmen in order to provide the students with desirable characteristics showing good citizenship of the nation, to maintain sovereignty and faith, to show adherence to the national religion, and to pay respect to the monarchy. The students who are patriotic, pious, and respectful of monarchs are those who show good citizenship of the nation, live peaceably, are proud of being Thais, adhere to their religious principles, express loyalty to the monarchs, and have great conscience. These are for preparing people for entering the AEC and becoming world citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Research Objectives**

To try out contemplative education activities to create a sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs with the freshmen of the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, the population of the research.

### **The Scope of the Study**

**The population:** 200 freshmen in the second semester of the academic year 2016 at the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University who enrolled in EDU 1102 Development of Being Professional Teachers.

### **The variables:**

**The independent variables** refer to contemplative education activities.

**The dependent variables** include:

- 1) patriotism which consists of using Thai language accurately and appropriately, having Thai manners which refer to standing still while singing the national anthem, being able to explain the meaning of the national anthem, and following Thai traditions, customs, and culture correctly;
- 2) faith in religions which consists of having faith, adhering to the religion, applying the religious principles in daily life by adhering to Panchasila (5 principles for everyday life), and attending religious activities (listening to the teachings and dharma, making merit, and giving alms to monks);

- 3) respect for monarchs which refers to paying respect to the monarchy, being well-behaved as dedication to the King , and living a life according to the principles of Sufficiency Economy given by King Bhumibol.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Patriotism** refers to using Thai language accurately and appropriately, having Thai manners which refer to standing still to show respect for the national flag while singing the national anthem, being able to explain the meaning of the national anthem, and following Thai traditions, customs, and culture correctly

1. using Thai language accurately and appropriately refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, appreciation of Thai language, capability to use Thai language to communicate appropriately in different occasions and personal status, intently listening and having aims of listening, having polite, respectful, calm, and appropriate manners in terms of kinesics and speech, and dressing properly;
2. standing still to show respect for the national flag while singing the national anthem and being able to explain the meaning of the national anthem refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, appreciation of the national flag, being able to sing the national anthem accurately and clearly, and be capable of explaining the meaning of the national anthem correctly; and
3. following Thai traditions, customs, and culture correctly refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, appreciation of Thai traditions, customs, and culture, and having awareness of following them.

**Faith in religions** refers to having faith, adhering to the religion, applying the religious principles in daily life by adhering to Panchasila (5 principles for everyday life), and attending religious activities (listening to the teachings and dharma, making merit, and giving alms to monks);

1. having faith, adhering to the religion, applying the religious principles refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, and being conscious of behaving according to one's religious principles with adherence and faith;
2. adhering to Panchasila (5 principles for everyday life) refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, and being conscious of applying 5 principles for daily life with adherence and faith; and
3. attending religious activities (listening to the teachings and dharma, making merit, and giving alms to monks) refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, and being conscious of attending religious activities (listening to the teachings and dharma, making merit, and giving alms to monks) in order to improve one's mind to create wisdom of living a happy life.

**Respect for monarchs** refers to paying respect to the monarchy, behaving appropriately for royal merit, and living a life according to the principles of Sufficiency Economy given by King Bhumibol.

1. paying respect to the monarchy refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, being conscious of respecting and adhering to the monarchy, being so grateful for the monarchs that being well-behaved as dedication to the King , and applying the King's statements or homilies to daily life;
2. being well-behaved as dedication to the King refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, being conscious of being well-behaved as dedication to the King by militating against the evil power or desires, doing good deeds, and purifying one's mind and getting rid of defilement; and

3. living a life according to the principles of Sufficiency Economy given by King Bhumibol refers to having knowledge, understanding, feelings, conscience or any behaviors which show perception, awareness, and appreciation, being conscious of following the King's philosophy of Sufficiency Economy by living a modest, reasonable life, as well as having good personal commune system against any internal and external effects.

**Contemplative education activities** consist of 5 steps as follows:

**Step 1:** Considering, concentrating, and preparing oneself for learning

- activities: chanting, practicing meditation, and checking-in

**Step 2:** Opening the door to ideas, giving inspiration, and tempting the students into thinking

- activities: posing questions, raising inspiring issues, and thinking deeply, thinking and linking internal ideas with external ones

**Stage 3:** Exchanging and learning

- activities: listening deeply to dialogues, exchanging, and learning in small then big groups

**Step 4:** Revising, reflecting, and concluding

- activities: revising, reflecting, considering, evaluating, concluding ideas, and summing up by themselves

**Step 5:** Reporting the results

- activities: concluding, reporting the results to draw concepts and bodies of knowledge, as well as disseminating the acquired ideas.

## Research Procedures

### Experiment Procedures

This research was held as an experimental development research, which was conducted as follows.

**1. Before the experiment:** using a test on the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, respect for the monarchy with 30 freshmen majoring in Education in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, academic year 2016 at the Faculty of Education, Ratanakosin groups of Rajabhat Universities and recording scores as pre-test scores

### 2. The experimental operation

**Phase 1** The students attended contemplative education activities for enhancing the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect the monarchy for 11 times as follows:

Activity 1 orientation activities

Activity 2 patriotism (using proper Thai language and having appropriate manners)

Activity 3 patriotism (standing still to show respect for the national flag while singing the national anthem, and being able to explain the meaning of it correctly)

Activity 4 patriotism (following Thai traditions, customs, and culture correctly)

Activity 5 faith in religions (having faith and practicing one's religious principles)

Activity 6 faith in religions (practicing 5 principles for daily life)

Activity 7 attending religious activities (going to temple, listening to the teachings of the Lord Buddha and dharma, making merit, and giving alms to monks)

Activity 8 respect for monarchs (respecting the monarchy)

Activity 9 respect for monarchs (being well-behaved as dedication to the King)

Activities 10 respect for monarchs (adopting the philosophy of Sufficiency Economy)

Activity 11 post training

**Phase 2** The students carried out a community service project by setting up an academic camp in which the students shared their knowledge to younger children. The students conducted contemplative education activities for encourage awareness of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect the monarchy with students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, academic year 2016 from the Teacher Professional Development Cooperation School of the Faculty of Education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, and schools located in Bangkok and its vicinity. Each activity took 3 hours, and there were 3 activities as follows: the first activity was about patriotism, the second one was related to faith in religions, and the last one dealt with respect for monarchs.

**3. After the experiment:** a week after the experiment, the students were given a test on the sense of patriotism, faith in religions, respect for the monarchy which is the same test given before the experiment. The acquired scores were used as posttest scores.

### Conclusions

The research findings showed that the posttest results were higher than the pretest results at the 0.05 level of significance.

### Discussion

The results of the contemplative study of the activities are discussed below.

The sampling group of this study got higher scores on the posttest at the 0.05 level of significance. This accords with Nareumol Anakewit (2009) who studied the development of contemplative education programs for nursing students. Also, Kanokorn Tiplan (2011) researched uses of counseling activities including concepts of contemplative education in develop self-discipline of grade 8 students.

Wandee Chotipanich (2003: Abstract) studied the effect of guidance activities by using the shadow acts (held by students majoring in dancing) to reflect the self-responsibility of the students. Porntip Nimsaeng (2005) researched the development of moral reasoning on self and social responsibility in the process of solving the problems of students in the Doctorate Vocational School. Suthiporn Boonsong (2002: Abstract) studied on means of teaching students to develop self and social responsibility of students at Rajamangala Institute of Technology, and Reimer (Reimers, 1988) found that moral reasoning, self-development, responsibility and ethical responsibilities conform to their age and sex. The stage of moral responsibility is consistent with the stage of self-development, rather than moral reasoning agreeably with the Nickerson's (Nickerson, 2004) who found that the relationship between the ethical self-understanding is even greater and could reduce the risk of using drugs and increase participation in society. The relationship between the self and moral reasoning are not statistically significant.

The above-mentioned information shows that the students who have participated in the contemplative education activities tend to have more sense of patriotism, faith in religions, and respect for monarchs in accordance with the following reason: contemplative education activities are a learning process in one's internal self in contemplation which consists of: 1) deep listening, 2) contemplation, and 3) monitoring the actuality (meditation). Learning results of the process cause a fundamental change in oneself (transformative learning), initiate love and mercy, and help build up the self-wisdom that could be applied in routine life perfectly.

Contemplative education activities include these steps:

**1<sup>st</sup> step** of contemplative education activities is deemed to **explore the idea** of mental calmness and to prepare one's self to learn (to meditation check in) which lets the students learn on their own, live on their own then be happy and fully prepared to learn which is what the students did not tend to mind normally.

### General Suggestions

1. Teachers play a vital role in conducting contemplative education activities helping the students learn from the origin of ideas or instruments and methods in order to see real aims of each training activity and to be able to adopt the ideas or paradigms involving in the ideas and experience acquired from the training activities and the core of contemplative education in accordance with lifestyles in each period of time.
2. Contemplative education activities should focus on the practical subjects and allow students to practice constantly and seriously in the most suitable ways of learning for each of them in order that they appreciate possible benefits and use them as tools in living a life linked to the greatest value which leads to the aim of contemplative education activities: development from small minds to great minds.

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