

Suchawadee Kesmanee 2012: Thai Literatures to Reflect the Chinese Identity in Thai Society.

Doctor of Philosophy (Thai Language), Major Field: Thai Language, Department of Thai Language.

Thesis Advisor: Associate Professor Wilaisak Kingkham, Ph.D. 417 pages.

The objectives of this research were to explore Chinese identity in Thai literature from 1967 to 2007 and to study the supports and the obstacles that effected Chinese identity in Thailand.

The data were collected from the Thai literatures including the novels and documentaries of which the main character, the content and the context were relating to the Chinese residing in Thailand from 1967 to 2007.

It was found that the Thai literatures could represent the Chinese identity in Thai society with four aspects: 1) the relationship of the family and the kinship: it was found that the Chinese have always adherence to tradition and traditional beliefs. The Chinese identity in Thai society is reflected by the relationship of the family members from being a male-dominated family to a female-accepted one. The status and role of men were better than women. Besides, there were the Chinese inheritance and the family structure system, the practice of ancestor worship was practiced only by members of the male side. Only people who do good deeds have the right to set up their ancestral soul label on the ledge. Nowadays the status and role of Chinese women are equivalent to men because economic, society and environment have been changed. 2) Chinese language: it was found that when the population in Thailand increased, there was a need for schooling for children to study Chinese language. During the revolution in Mainland China, Chinese schools in Thailand were used as a place for transferring political and revolution beliefs and ideology. This seriously affected the stability of Thai government. Since the reign of King Rama VI, the Thai government had tried to correct and prevent this political conflict by introducing the Private School Act. As a result, many Chinese schools closed down. The popularity of Chinese schools gradually diminished. Presently, the Chinese people have assimilated into the Thai culture and life style. The Thai government has loosened regulation in order to promote a private sector to invest in education. Chinese language is allowed to be taught in schools. 3) Chinese Opera: it was found that the transformation in Chinese Opera can be seen from its role as a place to an entertainment venue. The elder Chinese believed in traditions while their offspring generations have been declining to do so, but adapted themselves into a modern social environment. The performing arts of Chinese Opera in Thailand has developed and adapted to the pace of the changing modern world. It is widely recognized as the art of integrating diverse cultures around the world. 4) Tradition and Culture: it was found that the first generation Chinese in Thailand accurately practiced the originals in 8 annual tradition and 5 rites of passage. The mechanism and methods used by the ethnic Thais to develop their Chinese identity through rites were applied by family elders acting as models, consultants or instructors, religions leaders passing on concepts and beliefs and relatives providing advices and chances to learn through rite participation. Nowadays, some rites of Sino-Thai had been adapted to be more convenient and appropriate for the economic condition, the society and the environment.

---

Student's signature

---

Thesis Advisor's signature