



# ไทย ไทย Thai Thai

Thai Language Program  
scaling the next height

## Message from the Editor

สวัสดีค่ะ

Once again, welcome all students to the Thai Language Program at NUS. We are glad to be your partner in your journey into the Thai language and culture during the course of your chosen language of study, whatever level you may be in.

This newsletter is especially produced with “you” in mind; to give you a glimpse of what happened and what is to come during the semester. In this edition, we have included the most recent 'Welcome Tea and Wai Khruu' ceremony, and an interesting article by *Mok Wei Wu*, this year's winner of the *FAAS Award in Thai Language*. We also have an exclusive interview on how Thai language has helped in one's career path.

To further relish in the richness of our Thai culture and customs, joining the immersion program or being a member of *Sawatdii Club* will give you an opportunity to be a part of many interesting events; to exercise your organizing skills in activities together with your member friends. It is a rich way to gain better insight and understanding of Thailand in a more creative and refreshing way, besides what you've learned in the formal classroom context.

We hope you find Thai language intriguing, lesson challenging and culture amazing. If you have any suggestion or anything to share with us, please write to us at [ThaiThainews@gmail.com](mailto:ThaiThainews@gmail.com).

We love to hear from you.

Editor

Find out more about us...



See you at...



## Welcome Tea cum Wai Khruu: Sept 2012



*Some Ajarns with Phaen, made & presented by students at Wai Khruu*

The much awaited Welcome Tea cum “Wai Khruu” ceremony was held on 20 September 2012. It observed the traditional Thai teacher's day which must be held on Thursday.

The strong crowd of students; ranging from Thai 1 level, who had just ended their class of the day, to those in Thai 5, came trickling into LT12. While waiting eagerly for the event to start, students were grouped to arrange flowers in 'phaen'

and in the flower cones to be presented to teachers.

The students all stood up to recite traditional Thai Teacher's Day wish; and presented the beautifully arranged flowers vessels to teachers as a token of appreciation. Thus ending the ceremony with grace and respect.

Students mingled while helping themselves to the specially prepared finger foods like 'khaaw niaw sangkaya' (sticky rice and egg dessert), satay and tuna dips.



*Sawatdii Club students with flowers ready to be presented to Ajarns, a part of Wai Khruu*

## Thai Concert at NUS

### *Yala City Municipality Youth Orchestra concert*



*The Youth Concert at NUS*

On Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 the Yala City Municipality Youth Orchestra concert from Thailand had entertained and impressed the audiences at LT 13, National University of Singapore. The Concert was sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the Royal Thai Embassy, Singapore and the Thai Language Program at the Centre for Language Studies, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, NUS. The Yala City Municipality Youth Orchestra (YMO), founded in 2008, is the pride of Southern Thailand. It brings together young talented musicians from different ages and cultural background in Yala Province to perform beautiful and inspiring melodies, at the same time, it aims to build bridges within communities. Highlights of the orchestral program include: King Bhumibol Adulyadej's compositions, Thai traditional music, and local traditional dances.

## Speak from the Heart

*Journey through the course of Learning Thai - Triumph in the End!*

By: Mok Wei Wu AKA "nakrop" - CLS Thai Language Prize Winner 2012

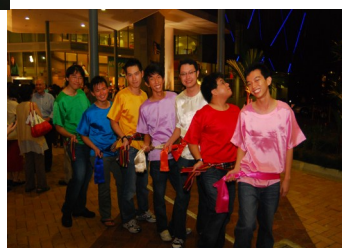
"Sawatdii kha nakrian phasaa Thai, wan nii..." is probably the most familiar phrase many of you have been hearing ever since you bid for and successfully secured your LAT modules. As I went on stage to collect a prize I didn't really expect to receive, I was vaguely thinking about that phrase too

Firstly, let me share with you a little about myself. I was a Chinese Studies major, in FASS. Currently, I am undergoing training in the National Institute of Education to become a secondary school Chinese Language teacher in Singapore. I started learning Thai since my first semester in NUS.



*Wei Wu (in blue top) with  
teacher & classmates from a  
Thai class*

*Wei Wu (in yellow top)  
posing with friends at  
Loy Krathong Night*



Back then, since I planned to teach Chinese in the future, I started to observe how my Thai teachers taught this language that is foreign to us Singaporeans. The Thai language program at the Centre for Language Studies is well planned.

Thai 1 exposed us to the language, where we learned in phonetics useful phrases and practise basic Thai writing. Thai 2 increased the vocabulary and the expectation on our literacy in Thai. It is also the phase where we transit from purely writing in phonetics into writing Thai scripts.

Thai 3 was very challenging! Our teacher, Ajarn Adisorn, pushed us to our limits by having us think of stories to share to our class, within ten minutes or so.

When we reach Thai 4, it was yet another level, we learned how to read short stories and even write poems in Thai. Our knowledge of Thailand improved with leaps and bounds from asking someone 'aayu thawrai' to appreciating the history of Ayuttaya.



*Wei Wu with CLS faculty & other  
CLS Language Prize Winners*

In Thai 5 & 6, I met and made new friends and learned more about Thai literature and contemporary issues of Thailand.

And finally, how can we forget the eventful and exciting projects that sparkled so brightly in our journey of learning Thai? My class did a magazine on introducing the Thai worker community in Singapore in Thai 3, put up a skit on Songkran in Thai 4, did a blog in Thai 5, and filmed a video in Thai 6 for Songkran. As I look back, all these are pleasant memories.

Learning Thai has definitely benefitted me greatly. The boost in my CAP is secondary compared to the usefulness of knowing a third language. I am able to read important signs when I travel to Thailand, maintain a conversation with native Thai speakers, get a better price when I shop in Bangkok, and even contribute in my church's mission trips to villages in Northern Thailand.

After I completed Thai 6, I taught my friends who are going to Thailand conversational Thai too. It was during teaching when I realized how much hard work the teachers in CLS Thai program must have put in to provide additional guidance in difficult areas and deciding on which components should be taught first.

So to all nakrian Thai, I wish you all the best in your learning of this beautiful and melodious language. To my respected teachers, I want to say a big "KHORP KHUN MAAK MAAK KHRAP" (ขอบคุณมากครับ) for your hard work and passion in sharing the language you are so proud of. You have made me proud to be a student who completed the Thai language program in NUS also! Thank you!



# In Conversation with Ajarn Tukta...

## *The Inspiration To Learn Thai*



Hui Yee

Different people have different reasons or inspiration to learn Thai. What about yours? After hearing from many of your friends who took Thai as the language of their choice, now let's hear from others who voluntarily chose Thai because they realize how importance it is for their future careers. In this Volume, please let me introduce to you, Tan Hui Yee, a journalist of The Straits Times. :)

**Ajarn Tukta:** Sawatdii kha Hui Yee, please tell us briefly about yourself.

**Hui Yee:** *I'm a 34-year-old journalist with The Straits Times covering Thailand news from Bangkok. I studied in Singapore up till the age of 18, then did my BA in politics and international studies and MA in gender and international development at the University of Warwick, UK.*

**Ajarn Tukta:** What are your reasons to learn Thai?

**Hui Yee:** *I've been learning Thai for the past three months to prepare for my posting to Thailand. Stories are so much richer when reporters can slip under the skin of a community through genuine understanding of its language and culture and all the nuances. So far, my rudimentary grasp of Thai has helped me to break the ice with some Thai officials and reporters. I'm hoping it will progress to more sustained exchanges as I pick up more of the language. And of course, which true blue Singaporean will not be thrilled at finally being able to read Mahboonkrong in Thai script!*

**Ajarn Tukta:** How can we inspire NUS students to choose Thai as their choice of language?

**Hui Yee:** *In my very brief learning journey I have been constantly struck by the simple yet elegant logic of Thai phrases and concepts. My personal favourite is the 1,001 ways you can use the word "jai" (heart). So, "dii jai" (literally good heart) means happy, and "jai dii" (heart good) means kind, while "hai kamlang jai" (give heart??) means encourage. I'm slowly adding to my "jai" list as I go along.*

*There are some things that just crack me up. Only people with a serious sense of humour would use the same pronunciation, but different tone, for the words near "klâai" and far "klaai". There's so much to learn about Thais through their language. Of course, having teachers who are always ready to take fascinating detours from the textbook always helps, and I've been very lucky in this aspect.*

**Ajarn Tukta:** What learning skills that you focus on/want to achieve?

**Hui Yee:** *I had three months and aimed to learn as much spoken Thai as possible, and enough Thai script to be able to read notices and signs.*

**Ajarn Tukta:** What is the most difficult part in learning Thai? And how can you overcome this difficulty?

**Hui Yee:** *The greatest hurdle is psychological. It's a new language, with an alien-looking script with tiny knobs that you have to squint at, so it's very easy to say "it's too difficult!" I guess it helped that I had a clear objective in mind - I wanted to do in-depth reporting on Thailand.*

*But more than that, I survived with three mantras: 1) Don't be afraid 2) Don't be afraid to look stupid 3) Don't be afraid to feel stupid. If you learn and absorb at least one new thing after each lesson, it's a victory in itself.*

*There were painful moments, yes, but one day I woke up realizing I had been dreaming in Thai script, and it felt like the dam had burst. It's kind of like a blind man who suddenly realizes he can see. His vision may be a blurred at the edges, but there is no way he can be dragged back into the darkness.*