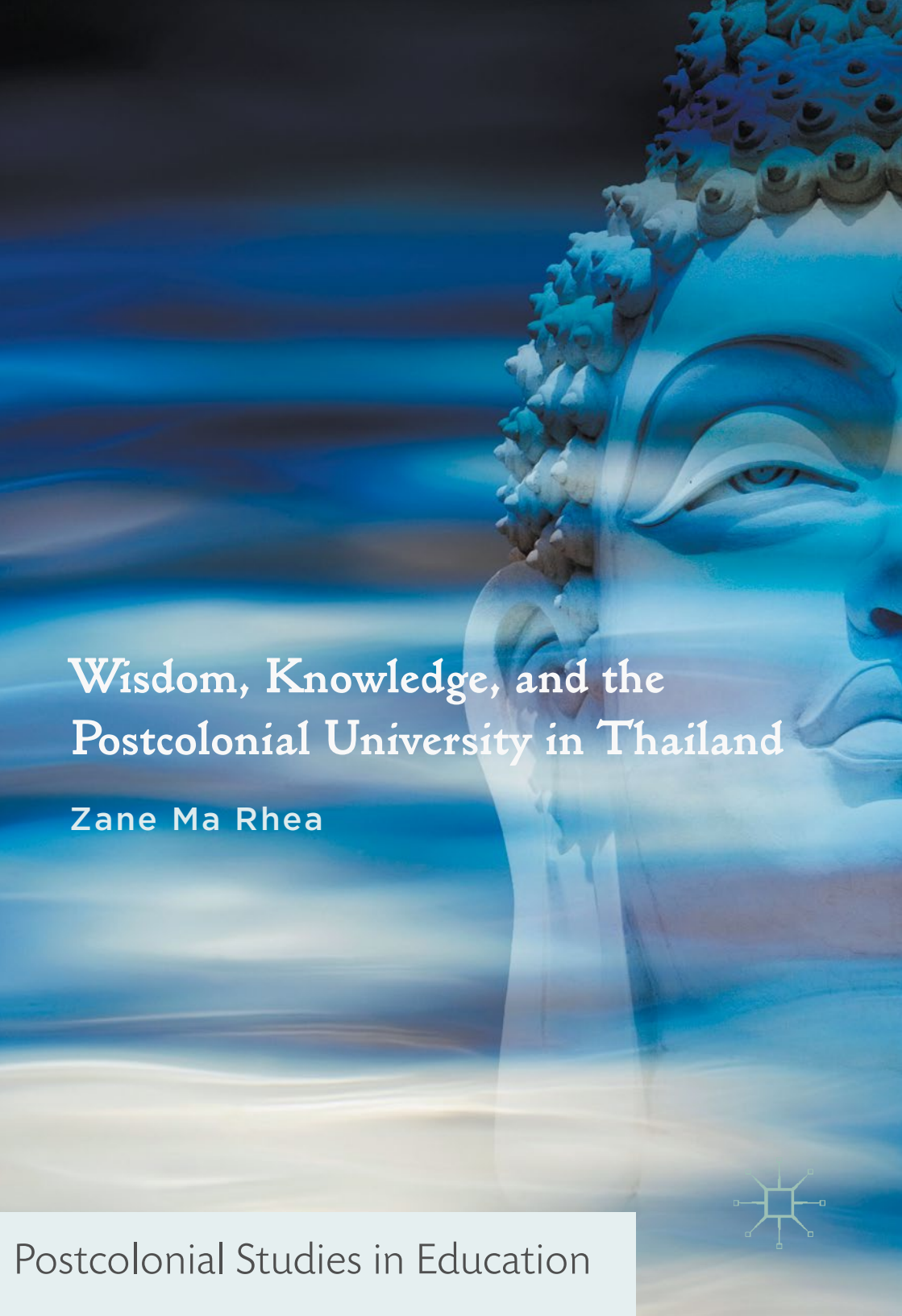

Wisdom, Knowledge, and the Postcolonial University in Thailand

Zane Ma Rhea

Postcolonial Studies in Education

Postcolonial Studies in Education

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This book is dedicated to Tongkam Suttisan
น้องแจ๋ว *Nong Jaw*
A wise and generous woman
who taught me about the heart of Thailand.
Sadly passed away too young.

Glossary of Key Thai, Pali, and English Terms

This book draws on three languages: Thai, Pali and English. The Romanization of the Pali script is by now fairly well established (Nyanatiloka 1988, Vajirañāṇavarorasa 2510BE/1967, Ayya Khema 1987, 1991, Buddhaghosa 400BE/1991, Buddhadatta 1958, 1979). The Thai language is tonal and its transliteration and translation into other languages is complicated by the many conventions that have been employed to do so. While this book has consulted an array of literature to fathom cross-cultural meaning between Thai and English languages, the task has been further complicated by the Romanization conventions that are equally diverse. I have drawn on hard copy sources over the 20 year period (Rajapandit 2537BE, Pawphicit 2534BE, Haas 1964, Sethaputra 1993). The contemporary authorities are now online resources that are able to be updated. One consequence of moving such material to an online environment is that the conventions for Romanization are now more standardized. Therefore, this book has employed the online *Ratchabandittayasapha* as its authority for Thai-English Romanization conventions.

Dukkha	Suffering (Pali)
Farang	Foreigner of European appearance
Khwaamchàlâat	Cleverness, intelligence, sagacity
Khwaamrúu	Knowledge
Khwaamrúudeegwàa	Transcendental knowledge
Khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan	Development knowledge
Khwaamruusàmăimài	Modern knowledge
Khwaamrúusăngkom	Local knowledge

Khwaamrúuthaanglohk	Worldly knowledge
Khwaamrúutjàakpainôk	Outsider knowledge
Kreengcaj	Reluctance to impose (upon)
Langsàmăimài	Postmodern
Máhăawíttáyaalai	University
Mettā	Loving kindness (Pali)
Panjaa	Wisdom
Panjaasàmăimài	Modern wisdom
Panjaathaanglohk	Worldly wisdom
Panjaathaangtham	Buddhist higher wisdom
Panjaawítee	Wisdom method
Paññā	Wisdom (Pali)
Paññāvaṇṇa	Path of wisdom (Pali)
Paññāpāramī	Complete wisdom, the perfection of wisdom (Pali)
Phumpanjaachawbaan	Indigenous Thai rural wisdom
Pràtêt Thai	Anglicized version of Thailand
Riap rooy	Proper behaviour
Sangop	Calm
Sàpaan	Bridge
Sàpaanmítdtràpâap	Friendship bridge
Satipanjaadii	The ability to get good grades
Sīla	Code of morality (Pali)
Samādhi	Concentration (Pali)
Sanuk	To have fun and to enjoy oneself and have a good time
สยาม *Ṣyām*	Siam, preferred spelling for Thailand for many Thai people
Siinsamaadipanjaa	Three domains of knowledge in Theravādan Buddhism: Morality, concentration and insight understanding
Ti-Piṭaka	(lit. Three Baskets – Pali) is the Pali canonical collection of primary Pali language texts that form the doctrinal foundation of Theravāda Buddhism
Wat	Temple
Vipassanā	Insight understanding (Pali)
Vipassanā-Paññā	Insight wisdom (Pali)
Wíchaa	University subject knowledge
Wipasanaa	Insight understanding

Sources: Nyanatiloka (1981, 1982), Buddhadatta (1958, 1979), Haas (1964), Sethaputra (1993), Ayya Khema (1987, 1991), Pawphicit (2534BE), Rajapandit (2537BE), Congress (2016), สำนักงานราชบัณฑิตยสภา *Ratchabandittayasapha* (2559BE/2016), Thailand (2554BE/2011)

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Thai *Phumpanjaachawbaan*; and the Buranathai Buddha Image Foundry for sharing their knowledge of Buddha image casting in the traditional Thai style.

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As a more than 20-year project, my thinking on this topic has been developing and modifying over the years and I would like to acknowledge the intellectual genealogy that has underpinned this work. This book is derived in part from ideas first developed for my PhD and later published in G.R Teasdale and Z. Ma Rhea (Eds), *Local Knowledge and Wisdom in Higher Education*, Copyright Elsevier Science Ltd.2000; cited in text as Teasdale and Ma Rhea (2000) and Ma Rhea (2000). Thanks also to Taylor & Francis for their permission for me to use parts of my article "Buddhist Wisdom and Modernisation: Finding the balance in globalized Thailand." *Globalizations* 10 (4):635–650. doi: 10.1080/14747731.2013.806739 (http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rglo20/10/4). Other writings are cited in text as relevant. Please refer to the Bibliography and endnotes for further information.

Finally, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to my wife, Jeane Freer, for her ongoing support and encouragement in enabling me to write this book.

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CHAPTER 1

Balancing Old and New Wisdom in the Thai University

1.1 Introduction

Khwaamrúu knowledge[1] is increasingly regarded as a "thing" *a la* Appadurai to be bought and sold (Appadurai 1990, 1988). Under this condition of commodification, the relationship between the garnering of knowledge and the cultivation of wisdom becomes a key testing ground for the ability of the human race to realign its education endeavours towards the education of its young adults and children for wisdom. This book will argue that contemporary universities, qua *higher* education, play a particular part in this industry. The internationally aligned

An earlier version of this chapter was published as Ma Rhea, Z. and Teasdale, G.R. (2000) "A Dialogue between the Global and the Local" in G.R. Teasdale and Z. Ma Rhea (Eds). 2000. Local Knowledge and Wisdom in Higher Education. UK, USA: Pergamon Elsevier, 1–14.

[1] Throughout this book, I use concepts that are embedded in three languages: English, Thai and Pali. While the work is written in English, words of central importance will be given in Thai and/or Pali with Thai in italics followed by the English and Pali words as relevant. Words across cultures rarely have exactly the same meaning and where I have made emphasis by using a Thai or Pali word, I am using it as the best translation available. See the Glossary of Thai and Pali words, their approximate English pronunciation and their meaning.

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university system now offers systematised information packages into the global education services market for purchase by "customer students" as required, providing the vital knowledge for them to be successful in their professional lives in the twenty- first century. In parallel, there are ways of thinking and forms of knowledge that have traditionally been rejected in universities but have been shown more recently to be capable of commodification. Conversely, some traditional university formal knowledge disciplines such as philosophy, and more broadly, the Arts, have shown themselves to be less amenable to commodification and so have been devalued under the conditions of *langsàmǎimài* postmodern globalisation.

This book is centrally concerned with the fact that it is the ways that we think that ultimately produce the world that we live in now, and indeed, also shape the future manifestation of the human race (Pope Koteen 1989). By the late twentieth century, scholars began to argue that a *langsàmǎimài* postmodern project was starting to emerge globally arguing, as Bhabha (1994, 239) said, "its own epistemological structures, vying with previous modernist and ancient paradigms". The unquestioning application of what were coming to be regarded as outmoded ways of knowing, that had been used by powerful economies such as the United States, led writers, academics, intellectuals and poets to question our wisdom and our sanity; to quote Baudrillard (1993b, 3), he provocatively asked "*What Do We Do Now The Orgy Is Over*?" (Capitals in the original) Often it is through the words of poems that we can hear it most strongly:

> *if the earth*
> *were regularly observed*
> *over a period of several decades*
> *major transformations of the surface might be noticed*
> *for example*
> *its systematic destruction*
>
> (Cataldi 1990)

From the 1960s, there was emerging scholarship that warned of the strictures of the modernity project and of its imposition on non-Western societies under the conditions of globalisation. Buddhadasa Bhikku provided a sustained critique in the case of *Sȳām* Thailand over many years (1956, 1986, 1988, 1989), drawing on traditional Buddhist knowledge and Thai culture to argue for the need for สยาม (*Sȳām)*

Thailand[2], [3] to protect itself from outsider knowledge. In deference to the people of สยาม (*Sỹām)*, when the contemporary English rendition of the country "Thailand" is used, it will be preceeded by the word *Sỹām* rather than the back translated as ประเทศไทย (*Pràtêt Thai)* (Sivaraksa 1994).

Contemporaneous with Buddhadasa, and possibly better known internationally, critical scholars such as Memmi (1965) and Fanon (1967, 1986) also laid the conceptual foundations for new ways of thinking that demanded that emerging economies be supported to modernise, without having to westernise. A growing body of scholars such as Said (1978), Moraga and Anzaldúa (1983), Sykes (1989), Trinh (1989), Spivak and Harasym (1990), Bhabha (1994), and in *Sỹām* Thailand, Sivaraksa (1992, 1994), accelerated this work. All, in a variety of approaches, critically reflected upon the processes whereby ways of thinking and knowing that were used in economically developed countries were both consciously and unintentionally being cultivated in not-as-yet economically developed countries.[4] Researchers of

[2] The key words in this book will be introduced using up to three representations. The first gives the Thai script for the word; the second is the Romanization of the Thai script and will appear throughout in italic; and, the third is the common English script version. In addition, in deference to the people of สยาม *Sỹām*, when the contemporary English rendition of the country 'Thailand' is used it will be proceeded by the word *Sỹām* rather than the back translated ประเทศไทย (Sivaraksa 1994).

[3] In fact, according to radical commentators in Thailand such as Sivaraksa, Thailand should still be called *Sỹām*. Sivaraksa (1994, vi) says in the opening pages of his book that:

> *This kingdom was known as Siam until 1939, when its name was changed to Thailand. Then it reverted to its original name again in 1946. Two years after the coup d'état in 1947 it was decreed that the country would be called Thailand, and it remains so officially. Ironically, the kingdom has since been ruled by one dictator after another – with very brief liberal democratic intervals. The name Thailand signifies the crisis of traditional Siamese Buddhist values. By removing from the nation, the name it has carried all its history is in fact the first step in the psychic dehumanisation of its citizens, especially when its original name was replaced by a hybrid, Anglicized word. This new name also implies chauvinism and irredentism. For this reason, the author of this book refuses to use it.*

[4] As will be shown in a later discussion, labels such as 'first world/third world', 'developed/developing', and 'Western/Asian' are useful as shorthand labels. In this book, I am looking for clarity rather than ease of expression and am trying to avoid such binary oppositions that oftentimes obscure the complexity of any interrelationship. Most often in this approach, it has been economic positionings that have determined hierarchies and so Australia, for example, is seen to be more developed than *Sỹām* Thailand. This in itself is a way of knowing about the world. For example, if cultural tradition was the hierarchical determinant then *Sỹām* Thailand might be seen to be more developed than a colonial outpost such as Australia where Indigenous cultures had been silenced under the colonial project.

education systems and education theories such as Illich and Verne (1981), Freire (1985), Spivak (1993), and Teasdale and Teasdale (1992, 1993), variously exposed the effects of bureaucratically and colonially inspired educational systems on life and culture. Eckersley (1993) and Mies and Shiva (1993) reminded us of the extensive and continued environmental damage being caused, powered by ways of thinking that were both outdated and dangerously hostile to planetary survival but which continued to be taught in schools and universities. Singer (1995) highlights the ethic of self-interest prevalent in the late modernist consumerist society and posed critical questions to universities about their contribution to this problem.

At the international level, nearly 30 years ago, there was an "urgent call" by the United Nations to task a World Commission on Environment and Development to "propose long-term environmental strategies for achieving sustainable development by 2000" (Brundtland 1987, 11). Although not made explicit in the final report, this commission was asked to examine the sustainability of the outcomes of ways of knowing and living of the economically powerful (Brundtland 1987). Known as the *Brundtland Report*, its work has not yet been realised in the early twenty-first century. Even so, the tone of that report turned my mind to the role that universities play in the production of the ways of knowing that have status on the planet at this time. It seemed to me that the concerns for the future expressed in 1987 were real enough, but that despite some attempts to address these matters through global conversations there has so far been little effort to tackle the actual ways that we think. The example of climate change reflects how as a global society we continue without engagement to think and know, even as such thinking and knowing has a direct effect on the creation of our present and future societies. Neither is there apparently any sense of urgency to examine how those ways of thinking and knowing might be changed. As Toffler lamented in his book *Future Shock* (Toffler 1971, 12):

> *…Earnest intellectuals talk bravely about 'educating for change' or 'preparing people for the future'. But we know virtually nothing about how to do it. In the most rapidly changing environment to which people have ever been exposed, we remain pitifully ignorant of how the human animal copes.*

Meanwhile, almost 30 years later, the 2010s witness the university system in economically developed countries, and increasingly in economically developing countries, being integrally involved in producing and

supporting the propagation of ways of thinking and knowing that encourage students and graduates to continue to behave within a mechanistically scientific, crude economic and industrial mindset. In effect, it is this very mindset and its outcomes that is producing many of the problems that we experience. These thoughts led me to look at the concept of ปัญญา *panjaa* wisdom, a capacity that is, in my reading of things, central to the successful evolution of a better way of living on the planet at this time. I found within Theravādan Buddhism that there are still traces of such an idea. For example, Vajirañāṇavarorasa (2510BE/1967, 35) records an old Buddhist proverb that comes to the heart of the reason for this approach, *Paññājivī jīvitamāhu seṭṭhaṃ [A life guided by wisdom is an excellent one]*. This book will examine the concept of wisdom and assert that without wisdom, humans have no guiding compass by which to make choices; without such a guide, choices become relative to circumstance and context, for the individual, the socio-cultural environment and for all sentient life on the planet.

Remarkably, Western interest in wisdom is rare to find. When traces of scholarly interest are found, they are often located in an individualistic psychological understanding rather than in educational or sociological literature. The "West" as broadly understood seems to have forgotten how to cultivate wisdom in the education of its people. As Steel observes, wisdom seeking in education raises fundamental questions more commonly addressed in educational philosophy, and even then as a complex and probably not teachable subject (Steel 2014).

An examination of non-Western philosophical and religious traditions reveals that, at least in some cultures and religions, the pathway to the cultivation of wisdom had not been lost. One such country, *Sỹām* Thailand, has continued to maintain knowledge of a well-trodden pathway to the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom both within its majority Buddhist tradition and within its broader societal manifestation. Because of this, I began to examine the relationship of ปัญญา *panjaa* wisdom to ความรู้ *khwaamrúu* knowledge within university education in *Sỹām* Thailand and to develop an understanding of the effect on the wisdom tradition when Thai scholars began studying outside of *Sỹām* at Western universities. For example, *Sỹām* Thailand and Australia have had a long history of collaboration in higher education and the research underpinning this book has arisen from that partnership.

I began looking at ways in which wisdom might be cultivated because, while many people outside academia, for example, ecologists, activists,

Indigenous peoples and "greens", rightly point out that we need wisdom to face the twenty-first century, there is little heed of this in the academic literature of economically developed or economically developing countries. In the early 1990s, Beare and Slaughter (1993) provided encouragement for such an examination in their book that asked how we are to educate people for the future. They spoke of a new global consciousness and particularly identified the need to go beyond scientific rationalism in school curricula. In the mid-2010s, I proposed that the conscious cultivation of wisdom is a crucial component to this project but one that has not yet gained sufficient traction within academia.

There are alternative epistemological structures in many economically developing countries that still function locally and are ways of knowing that give shape to cultural difference. The problem is that as these nations are drawn into a globally interdependent economy, they are increasingly required to adopt ways of knowing that come from outside the local culture, such as the New Public Management Model of higher education (Marginson and Van der Wende 2007; Marginson and Considine 2000). Knowledge of the cultivation of wisdom, such as in the Siamese tradition, is under strain because of the rapid pace of change in economic social relations and because wisdom does not seem to be very useful when it is discarded for an over-concern with profit, economic development and global education rankings.

This line of thinking will be gradually introduced in the following chapters, but as a general introduction to the issue, I began by seeing the importance of the notion of wisdom that has change as a necessary condition, unlike *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom that is in a sense fixed and conservative. *Phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom is, for example, a storehouse of technical knowledge, skills and social relations that has predominantly developed from rural living. Over centuries, it has become significant, shaping influence on Siamese and now contemporary Thai cultural identity. Now, with the rapid growth of urban living in *Ṣyām* Thailand, the old wisdom that relied on certainty and particular cultural and religious forms has been presented as irrelevant in huge cities where rapid change is the norm.

What I see instead is the need for *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom that has within its purvey a deep understanding of the nature of reality where human behaviour is carried forward through wise, sustainable adaptation to change. I draw this new form of wisdom from my research and from Buddhist knowledge, a corpus of teachings about the world

that is still maintained in many economically developing South-East Asian countries and from the Western intellectual tradition (see for example discussions by Fox 1996; Toh 1996). I am offering an understanding of *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom that might take us beyond the problems of simply exchanging one epistemological structure for another. I have been a student of Buddhist philosophy for many years and have undertaken extensive periods of research and study of Buddhist pedagogy. Under the tutelage of Bhikkuni Ayya Khema, an eloquent and learned teacher in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, I had access to an extensive library, to her books (Ayya Khema 1987, 1991) and to her interpretative commentaries (Ayya Khema 1989a, b, c, d). I studied the sacred Theravāda Buddhist texts and undertook the practices by which the *caj* mind – brain and heart[5] – can cultivate *panjaa* wisdom.

During my research at Buddha Haus, Germany, I first conceived of a clear and compassionately sustainable future that is not necessarily premised on economically developed notions of how the future should be. Neither is it premised on the replacement of one type of nationally – or culturally based epistemological structure with another, for example from being Western to being Asian. Instead, it arises from the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom that is based on the three ways of knowing,[6] in the Buddhist tradition broadly understood to encompass the cultivation of morality, concentration and insight understanding. The outcome is an experience akin to relaxing at home, giving the *caj* mind – brain and heart a place in which to be *sangop* calm, quiet, still, peaceful, tranquil and stable thereby producing a peace from which *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom can arise.

This book has arisen from a research programme drawn from two contemporaneous projects, one "Wisdom and Knowledge in Postcolonial Higher Education" of which the analysis in this research forms a part, and another about "Dhammic Pedagogy" researching the pedagogical aspects of the development of a Buddhist-inspired wisdom in schools and universities in the Asia-Pacific region. I want to bring some of these insights into the problem of how to prepare for the future and specifically the role

[5] The word *caj* mind will be used in a specific way in this book to refer to both the brain and the heart.

[6] I use the expression 'ways of knowing' throughout this book to encompass perception, feeling, mental formation, ideas, opinions, consciousness and other such activities of the caj mind (brain and heart) (see also discussion by Masemann 1990).

that university education might play in this; in fact, to take up Toffler's challenge quoted earlier. I became particularly concerned at the co-option of universities into a global, economically rationalist process of commodification of *khwaamrúu* knowledge, given the centrality of university-generated thinking on so many other areas of human action. I was interested to research in *S̄yām* because the modern nation states of Thailand and Australia have a history of exchanging *khwaamrúu* knowledge within universities and because in both countries, Buddhist philosophy finds its way into schooling and universities albeit in different forms. In *S̄yām* Thailand, for the majority, Buddhism is still a way of life, even though both *S̄yām* and Buddhism have undergone significant challenges over the 20-year scope of this research, under the pressures of globalisation and economic development. Chadchaidee (1994) and Sivaraksa (1992, 1994) both provide a profound insight into the complex process of balancing *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, both *khwaamrúu* knowledge and *wíchaa* university subject knowledge[7] within a Buddhist society.

How much of a Buddhist way of knowing still exists in the Thai university mission? What happens to this worldview after receiving a university education overseas? Is this a space, as suggested by Bhabha (1994), where new conceptual futures are cultivated? The Thai-Buddhist worldview of the middle way can still be clearly heard in the words of Jiranan Pitpreecha, a Thai poet and social commentator (in coversation with Yorsaengrat 1994, 15), when she says about the future:

> *Thai society in the future is for people in the future. Let them create their society themselves. It may turn out better than we expect. I myself don't think much about society or anything else these days. I just do my best every day and then go to sleep. Now I believe in the middle way. Just do the best now and don't think too much…*

In the early 1990s, the scholarship of both Macy (1991) and of Beare and Slaughter (1993) allowed glimpses of an opening for a thorough examination of the inclusion of Buddhist ways of knowing into discussions about education and the future. Beare and Slaughter suggest that it was seriously

[7] The word 'knowledge' in its general form was often spoken of as *khwaamrúu* and university knowledge as *wíchaa* in the interviews and I have maintained the distinction in this book. *Khwaamrúu* is the more encompassing term. This distinction is examined more closely in the following chapters.

flawed to leave the question of human motives and our worldview, unaddressed. They say (1993, 166):

> *It is our observation that when low-level human motives such as fear, greed, and hostility become associated with powerful technologies, the result is indeed a long running disaster. But when high motives such as selfless love, stewardship and what Buddhists call 'loving kindness' come into play, there are interesting consequences.*

I would go further in suggesting that a Buddhist contribution to the process is less to do with the cultivation of *mettā* loving kindness, important as it is, than to offering a way of cultivating *panjaa* wisdom. Possibly loving kindness has no meaning or value to most of us now. But what if, through the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom we can be assured of an ecologically saner and more compassionate future? I for one would like to see such a capacity taught in every university in every country, if this would be its effect.

This book, then, examines Thai knowledge and wisdom under the condition of postcolonial globalisation and the potential of *Śyām* Thailand to balance old knowledge traditions, both Buddhist and rural, with new Thai and imported knowledge in their universities. The second, a more difficult and somewhat speculative task, has been to look at wisdom and ask what contribution could be made by the Thai-Buddhist and rural wisdom traditions, especially in universities, to encourage ways of knowing where the outcome is seen to be wise, wise for now and wise for the future. As Prachin (1974, 11) said:

> *…knowledge must ultimately serve humankind's highest and fullest aspirations…if scholarship is to serve Thailand best, and in serving Thailand, best protect Thailand most, and bring forth Thailand's wisest responses. The Thai sword of knowledge must yield sweet fruits for Thailand with both its edges!*

I am not searching for a singular wisdom. I am convinced that the cultivation of wisdom is a local affair, but one that directly influences planetary survival. By now, it is widely recognised that biodiversity is an essential factor in the fine balance of ecological health. I am positing in my work that *prudentiadiversity*, a diversity of wisdoms, is also essential. I have coined this word to describe something we need to recognise; that there is a rich variety of wisdom available for us to draw on to seek solutions to our problems. The processes of understanding and respecting such diversity

will also provide a direction for future pedagogical and enilikagogical[8] development in schools and universities.

The effects of globalisation in general, and on university education in particular, seem to be having the reverse effect; that of homogenisation of *khwaamrúu* knowledge, causing ways of knowing and the outcome of such processes to become predictably capitalist, industrialist, scientific and modern in their economically developed conception. Pusey (1991, 1992) argued with passion that economic rationalism,[9] with its set of values and behaviours, is ill-conceived and a seriously mistaken way of knowing about the world. It is with this spirit that this book is offered even though it is possible to despair of the totality of scientific and economic rationalist epistemological structures. As Kropotkin (1902/1939, 295) says in his conclusion, many years before the advent of this economically rationalist way of knowing:

> *…self-assertion of the individual or of groups of individuals, their struggles for superiority, and the conflicts that resulted therefrom, have already been analyzed, described, and glorified from time immemorial. In fact, up to the present time, this current alone has received attention from the epical poet, the annalist, the historian, and the sociologist…while, on the other side, the mutual aid factor has simply been lost sight of…*

It is for this reason that discussions about *panjaa* wisdom are very important even when it is hard to find a place for them. Can a sociologist study something that has virtually been forgotten? Does an educationalist have the right to cultivate ways of knowing that go against the dominant beliefs

[8] Throughout this book I will use the words enilikagogy and enilikagogical where common usage might suggest the word pedagogy. I am talking in this book about the mental development of adults unlike pedagogy that is about leading the child to learn. The Greek root for child is *paithion* and for adult is *enilikos*. I have chosen not to follow (Knowles 1980) in describing adult learning processes as andragogy because the term is gender biased, the Greek root *andra* meaning man (the Greek root for woman is *yoni* leading to the word yonigogy). Even so, I accept the important distinction that he makes between teaching strategies that might be relevant for the education of children, pedagogy, and the processes whereby adults might successfully learn, enilikagogy.

[9] The term economic rationalism is troubling because it is being applied to every society in the world even though it has developed within a specific cultural context, a Western-scientific one. Its very claim to rationality denies the rationality of other sorts of economic behavior. I have settled on the term 'crude economics' to describe Western economic social relations, recognizing that in a high context culture such 'rationality' would be considered 'crude'.

of the society of which they are a member? Do the universities still have sufficient autonomy to take up the task of educating for a wise future or are they so hidebound by funding constraints that they dare do nothing other than reproduce destructive, unwise ways of knowing? Do we have the *panjaa* wisdom to know what is wise? Can we tell anymore?

Such questions have reverberated throughout this programme of research and will surface from time to time within an otherwise straightforward examination of *khwaamrúu* knowledge and *panjaa* wisdom in *S̄yām* Thailand. This book has been produced with the spirit of the poet. It does not simply attempt to describe human behaviour, but also to "think beyond" conceptual limitations that harness us to our respective ways of knowing. It tries to enter into "…a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction", that Bhabha (1994, 1) so convincingly calls into being.

The next section of this chapter provides background information about *S̄yām* Thailand for the purposes of this book, describing aspects of the complexity of the task and providing a preliminary perspective from which an understanding of *panjaa* wisdom and the production of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge might begin.

1.2 *S̄yām* Thailand Past and Present

The perspectives I take in developing the ideas for this book span over 70 years. During that time, the Kingdom of *S̄yām* has seen momentous changes in its economic, social, political and religious arrangements. Even so, over this period, certain aspects of *S̄yām* immediately come to the fore and have endured. *S̄yām* Thailand encompasses an area of the planet that has a long settlement history (Rajadhon 1973; Syamananda 1993). As such, it can be understood to be an old country with a rich culture and a population of nearly 70 million people. Rural life historically has been an important part of the Thai social arrangement. 20 years ago, rice farming accounted for about 80 per cent of the labour force. In the 2010s, 60 per cent of people still derive their livelihood from rice farming. Equally importantly, there has been a pragmatic interest in becoming economically modern without westernising (see, for example, Prime Minister 1991; Sheehan 1995), strongly influenced by an already established social, political and economic system which has evolved over many centuries.

S̄yām Thailand has had an association with many peoples over the history of its settlement and, as will be discussed, has taken in new knowledge in a consciously adaptive way. The production of both rural

and urban knowledge, such as *wíchaa* university subject knowledge in modern *Ɔ̄yām* and the bringing in of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge such as *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge continues. Amidst contemporary, globally-perspectival classifications as "newly industrialising country" and "developing economy" which may mean something in competitive, comparative international ranking charts, this book examines the deeper identity of the modern Thai state in a considered examination of *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge in Thailand with its rich past as *Ɔ̄yām*, its geopolitical location and its deeply religious roots.

Examination of World Bank statistics spanning the life of this research program (1995 and 2015) describe *Ɔ̄yām* Thailand as a middle-income economy, ranked 77th in the world in 1995 and 33rd in 2010 (using the *Atlas* method, World Bank 1995 and 2012) with a GNP of US$2100 per person in 1995 and US$4150 in 2012. In 1980, there were 13 per cent of the population who had completed a tertiary qualification and, in 1992, the figure had risen to 19 per cent (World Bank 1995). By 2010, this figure had risen to 48 per cent (World Bank 2015). With approaching half of the Thai population now having a university qualification, the impact of the ways of knowing cultivated in universities will have a profound influence on other, older Thai ways of knowing.

The peoples of *Ɔ̄yām* Thailand are experiencing rapid economic development (for an excellent introduction to modern *Ɔ̄yām* Thailand, see Sheehan 1995a). This development has caused traditional sources of *khwaamrúu* knowledge drawn from a rich spiritual and cultural heritage to be eclipsed by economic imperatives that favour a new sort of knowledge, *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge, produced in developed economies. Sivaraksa (1992, 1994) argues that while *Ɔ̄yām* avoided earlier attempts by outsiders to colonise the nation territorially, the new Thailand is being colonised by something far more difficult to resist. He said presciently (Sivaraksa 1992, 3) that "…our elites in Bangkok began to ape Western ways of life *and thought, and our intellectual colonisation began*" (emphasis mine). Even so, many in Thailand would refuse the word 'postcolonial' arguing that *Ɔ̄yām* was never colonized, preferring the term *langsamaˇimai* postmodern. Both will be employed in this book depending on the context of the discussion.

Thai society is no stranger to the influx of *khwaamrúu* knowledge from many parts of the world. In fact, for many centuries, *Ɔ̄yām* has sent its young people out of the country to gather new ideas and technologies. Thompson (1967) recounts early exchanges with China and Jumsai (1991)

gives a fascinating insight into the first scholars that were sent to England under the reign of King Mongkut. *S̄yām*, unlike most other countries in the region, managed to avoid being colonised territorially in the last century, a fact often commented upon by people who gave me interviews. Some writers, (for example Chadchaidee 1994), ascribe this to a carefully managed strategy promoted by Thai royalty. This strategy involved *S̄yām* becoming friends with the world powers, bringing new ideas back into Thai culture, and adapting those that were helpful to the development of modern *S̄yām* Thailand. Others (for example Sivaraksa 1994; Ekachai 1991) claim that the colonisation that was avoided in the last century has been merely delayed and that *S̄yām* is now under serious threat of disappearing as a unique cultural entity. This, they claim, is because Thai society is unable to assimilate and adapt to the sheer volume of incoming information, attitudes, values and technologies, quickly enough to preserve Thai ways of knowing.

To give a brief insight into the background of the development of Thai ways of knowing, I will consider here some broader influences that are relevant to the production of *khwaamrúu* knowledge and of *panjaa* wisdom: the geographical position of *S̄yām*, Thai history, the mix of religious and philosophical heritages and the cultural diversity in the Thai national identity. All such aspects have been significant shapers of the present ways of knowing. *S̄yām* Thailand is centrally located in what is known as South-East Asia; the Malay peninsula to the south, Myanmar to the West and north, Cambodia and Laos to the east and Laos in the north-east (as usefully described by Sheehan 1995, 11). Up until the last 100 years, these tracts of land were loosely controlled by various monarchies who settled disputes by rearranging their borders after defeat or victory in war. It is only in this last century that borders have been fixed. According to the early writings of Gerini (1902) and more recent historians such as Thompson (1967) and Syamananda (1993), the historical *S̄yām* has had relations with many other nation states, notably China, possibly from 607 AD.

During the century from 2300BE/AD1800, the Chinese influence waned, giving way to various European influences.[10] The Europeans and later the Americans failed in their bids to assimilate *S̄yām* into their

[10] BE denotes Buddhist Era, a counting of the years that dates from the Buddha's enlightenment and a system that is used in Thailand today, counted as 543 years before the Christian era, denoted as AD. Thailand also recognizes the Christianized AD calendar; publications intended for a Western audience will favor this method of counting the years. In Thai publications, it is unusual to find the AD system in use. Where it is relevant, I will use both the AD and BE systems. Of relevance to the timespan of this book, 2538BE is AD1995 and 2559BE is AD2016.

territories but, by forcing unfavourable treaties upon the Kingdom, many European countries did encroach upon, and erode, Siamese sovereignty. Treaties such as the Bowring Treaty (Sheehan 1995, 15) forced concessions in commerce and jurisdiction. After the Second World War, these treaties were renegotiated, but for the new Thailand, the lesson was learned that outsiders would always be eager to secure advantage over the Thais and that the Thai strategy should be to always protect their own interests.[11] This is an important point to remember when we begin talking about ways of knowing in a transitional *Śyām* Thailand.

This is not to suggest that there is not diversity within *Śyām* itself. The nation of *Śyām* Thailand incorporates ethnic Thais, Laotians, Malays, Cambodians, Indians and a number of indigenous peoples called collectively the Hill Tribes. All lived in the rural Kingdom of *Śyām* for many years and a distinctive Thai culture evolved from the meeting of these groups. In addition, there has been a strong presence of Chinese people for many centuries. There are records to suggest that *Śyām* and China had political and trading relations from the sixth century and now Chinese people are well integrated into Thai society, particularly in urban centres where they are known for their involvement in business (Thompson 1967; Coughlin 1960; Gerini 1902). Since *Śyām* opened up to the West in the late 1800s, there have been far-reaching changes in the social, political and economic life of the country. Contemporary Thailand is now more urban and industrialised because of rapid, metrocentric, economic development that has attracted many rural people to move to the cities.

Since engagement with the West, significant decisions have been made on behalf of *Śyām* by the Thai monarchy with the support of the military and other bureaucracies within the Civil Service. These decision-makers have traditionally been drawn from the Thai[12] ethnic group. Therefore, while the integration of the Chinese into Thai society is well known (Skinner 1957a, b), there is evidence that up until recently Thai nationals of Chinese ethnic family background did not work in the modern Thai bureaucracies. In line with such writers as Bun & Kiong (1993), my research suggests that the notion of assimilation needs to be rethought in light of the dramatic economic changes now taking place in *Śyām* Thailand, because

[11] 'History of Thailand' lecture presented at Perspectives on Thailand course, Chulalongkorn University, BE2537/AD1994.

[12] Throughout this book I will be using the word Thai to denote nationality rather than ethnicity. Where ethnicity is relevant, this will be made clear in the text.

traditionally, ethnic Thais did not participate significantly in business and ethnic Chinese did not participate significantly in the elite functions of running the modern state. Over the last 20 years, such stratifications based on ethnic cultural background have been fundamentally altered. Now, more ethnic Thais are involved in private enterprise and Thai Chinese people are taking up opportunities to purchase university education in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia and are intending to return to *S̄yām* Thailand to take up government and university employment. Rizvi (1996) noted that the dramatic changes in Malaysian society during the 1980s and 1990s were "ethnically nuanced" and the same must be kept in mind when discussing *S̄yām* Thailand.

Through recorded history the peoples of old *S̄yām* have lived at the crossroads of ideas and commerce between the peoples of China, India, Sri Lanka, the Malay states, Indonesia, the Philippines, the Khmer Kingdom and many smaller indigenous groups of people. All these peoples have both gained something and left something on their journeys. Historically, the people of *S̄yām* Thailand have welcomed all who come with a respect for Thai culture and have actively sought new ways of knowing from these peoples, along with the more recent European, Japanese and American contributions. This is a strong common thread in the history of *S̄yām* Thailand.

S̄yām Thailand is officially a Buddhist country and approximately 93.2 per cent of its people call themselves Buddhist (this figure has been slowly decreasing over the time of this research, dropping from 97 per cent in the early 1990s) (Pew 2010). For the majority of Thai people, being Buddhist is indistinguishable from being Thai. Buddhist spiritual philosophies are so intertwined with the Thai culture that they cannot be separated out easily. Ways of knowing in *S̄yām* Thailand are directly influenced by Buddhism (Kusalasaya 2005). Even so, recent research suggests that there are more people identifying with other religions within the nation – 5.5 per cent Muslim and 0.9 per cent Christian being the largest of the other religions identified by respondents (Pew 2010).

Many informants speak of the Thai capacity for adaptation that has brought diverse religious and spiritual practices into the everyday lives of all Thai people, which co-exist with the Buddhist philosophy of the Four Noble Truths. For example, informants from southern *S̄yām* Thailand, a predominantly Muslim area, explain that they practice their religion and are also brought up with Buddhist religious practices. According to Vongvipanond (1992) and Mulder (1994) there are layers of belief that have evolved over the centuries drawn from such traditions as Buddhism,

Hinduism, Animism, Islam, Christianity and Confucianism. The notable aspect of these practices is that they have been incorporated together into ways of knowing that are richly and distinctly Thai.

Respect for the spirits forms a strong basis for the spiritual practices of Thais, educated or uneducated. The spirits are to be looked after and, when necessary, pacified. Hindu beliefs and practices were adopted by the Siamese courts and established as a set of more powerful deities than the local spirits that also needed ritual appeasements and attention. Muslim Thais weave their own adaptations, as do the Christians, even in contemporary society; added to this are the philosophical beliefs of Confucianism that have found their way into Thai society through long relations between *Śyām* and China and more recently strengthened by Chinese Thai communities that are growing in Thailand. Historically, different status groups have been attracted to different combinations of ritual practices but they are all acceptable within Thai expressions of spirituality and philosophy. The King of *Śyām*, himself a Theravādan Buddhist, is the defender and upholder of all spiritual practices in Thailand.

Clearly, a complex basis for thought arises from such a rich spiritual and philosophic heritage. It can be argued that Thai people are well practiced in the assessment and transformation of the influx of outside influences into ways that are still Thai. A Thai friend described Thai culture and spiritual practices as akin to a vegetable casserole. It changes each time it is made; it can be either simple or elaborate, and can be transformed completely even though the same basic ingredients are there.

From this discussion, it can be seen that two strong attributes are present. First, there is openness to outside ideas and a diversity of inputs. These are often consciously brought into the culture. Second, the Thai style is to filter everything that is learned, borrowed, bought, or copied through a rich and proud cultural tradition (Lao 2015). In this process, the original often becomes unrecognisable, even to Thai people, who experience it as a Thai rather than as an outsider's practice. Traditional Thai culture is complex and unique as a way of organising people to live together harmoniously. Religious beliefs and a diverse ethnic combination form a strong basis on which the culture stands. Arising from this base are a number of cultural attributes that reflect ways of knowing which have been absorbed into a national Thai identity (Cooper and Cooper 1990; Mulder 1994; Moore 1992; Sheehan 1995). Of central value is the avoidance of conflict. This does not mean that there is no confrontation in Thai society but that indirect techniques are employed. This attribute is crucial in rural village life to maintain harmony when the harvesting is done jointly and the houses are

built co-operatively. It has been carried over into the urban situation and is still an important way of knowing. The saving of face is part of this awareness. Some insight can be gained into how Thais might expect to relate to outsiders by reflecting upon the importance of non-conflict.

Emotional distance is also valued. This arises from the Buddhist teaching that strong emotional attachments lead to *dukkha*[13] suffering. *Sanuk* to have fun and to enjoy oneself and have a good time is an important cultural attribute. It, again, is predicated on superficial fun and companionship without strong attachment. It is a concept that originally evolved from rural living and has been transposed to the urban situation, now relating to work and to play and indicates that one should gain enjoyment from whatever one does in a day.

Respect and love of the King and an awareness of hierarchical relationships weave through Thai identity. Vongvipanond (1992) says that everything in the Thai's perception is situated in a hierarchical system. Everyone is on a different rung and everyone knows, through the processes of socialisation, how to act with all others; these relationships are set. According to Klausner (1994), every moment of every day one is acting out these relationships. Actions performed with understanding of these relationships are considered to be *riap rooy* proper behaviour.

The opening up of *Ṣyām* Thailand to broader economic influences has led to other pressures on the fabric of Thai society and, for many young Thais, the traditional mix of cultures does not reflect their social reality. Both Ekachai (1991) and Sivaraksa (1994) express concern that the new social reality is fostering values that are simply not acceptable to older values. They say, for example, that many Western consumerist activities cultivate the very attributes of greed and ignorance that Thai-Buddhist ways of knowing have tried to diminish in people's behaviour. It is no longer a simple matter of assimilation of outsider ideas but, as they see it, a battle for the survival of Thai culture. According to Sheehan (1995, 23), "Some argue that the coming of the modern era in Thailand has meant that Thai society, to a large extent, has lost or is rapidly losing, its traditional religious principles and values".

In this research, it has become evident that, while the traditional mix of cultures may be less dominant, continuity is still evident despite change.

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[13] *Dukkha* suffering is from the Pali (Buddhadatta 1979, 514) and the understanding of its arising and its ceasing form a fundamental tenet of Buddhism. Wisdom is an aspect of the Arya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga Noble Eightfold Path that is the Buddhist path leading to the extinction of suffering (Nyanatiloka 1988, 108).

It is important to understand powerful aspects of traditional Thai identity when I come to examine the ways that the Thai people are adapting and changing in response to the pressures from the outside. In this time of transition, my research suggests that Thai people are creating a new way of life that is not traditional, at least superficially, but neither are Thai people simply copying Western models, something suggested by Lao (2015). As Bhabha (1994, 38) comments:

> *The native intellectual who identifies the people with true national culture will be disappointed. The people are now the very principle of 'dialectical reorganization' and they construct their culture from the national text translated into modern Western forms of information technology, language, dress…*

His insight makes more understandable the despair of commentators such as Sivaraksa who tend to look to a static "Thai culture" for refuge from the West. Bhabha echoes my thoughts as I have reflected on the diversity of identities and practices in *Śyām* Thailand, seeing people who are actively creating a new Thai future based on their present adaptation and translation of trends and ideas from around the world. This book takes the view that Thai *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge and *khwaamrúuthaangloog* outsider knowledge will continue to be negotiated and adaptively balanced into a way of knowing and living *panjaasàmăimài* modern wisdom that is still distinctly Thai. An important aspect of modern Thailand under the guidance of the present monarch, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, maintains the focus on the cultivation of wisdom in the people. Samosorn et al. (2011, 104) note that:

> *At the heart of the royal development projects is the people, or His Majesty's subjects. He emphasizes the virtues and innate goodness in each and every one of them as the core of the project, with co-existence as a community as the aim, and knowledge as the tool, to forge the common virtue of wisdom.*

1.3 A Brief Note on Methodology

> *A translated statement, like other types of utterances, is polymorphic in nature. That is, we cannot claim it to be identical, in all respects with the original utterance which it addresses. The translated product is never neutral, as it always incorporates at least one more voice, one more point of view.*
>
> (Hongladarom 1993, 55)

1.3.1 A Priori Considerations

When thinking about conducting research in *Śyām* Thailand, I have maintained the practice established during my doctoral studies, of examining those things that might have an influence on the way that I approach my research program, my *a priori* assumptions or considerations. Some of the most influential are the ideas and opinions about Thailand, and of Asia more broadly, that arise from my biography; from my expectation that I would experience culture shock in going to *Śyām* Thailand; and, from my ideas about the project that derived from an analysis of the research literature and world media. Other influences have become apparent over the years.

Personal biography is a fascinating site of *a priori* assumptions and possibly the most difficult to identify because the assumptions are, almost by definition, part of oneself, and not usually scrutinised. In addition, including one's biography can weaken one's arguments simply because researchers of society sometimes prefer to pretend that biography is not important and that one can be more "objective" if one ignores the effect that one's biography is having in the social interactions that are the substance of social scientific research. Rather than assuming that biography does not impinge upon the research project, I made the decision to bring to the foreground such assumptions as were possible to identify. Working cross-culturally in some ways makes the process of identification a little easier because there is always the shock of "otherness" there to make obvious one's prejudices and assumptions.

Being a non-Indigenous, Australian, Buddhist and scholar from an aspirational working class background are positionings that all made an impact on the research and have given me perspectives from which to undertake this prolonged research program. Being a foreigner with fair skin in *Śyām* Thailand accords one with relatively high status but this was complicated because, as a young scholar, I did not have either the class connections or the money to feel comfortable with the expectations associated with being *farang*.[14] My doing research and being based in universities gave the impression to people that I was of a much higher social class than would have been the case in Australia. At the time of the original fieldwork in the

[14] Anecdotally the word *farang* is a Thai adaptation of the word for French people, *Française*, that became *farangset* in Thai and is a word that is now extended now to include all foreigners of European appearance.

early 1990s, it was almost impossible for someone who was not wealthy to go to university in *Śyām* Thailand and university academics had always tended to come from the elites of Thai society.

Being Australian was a very interesting category in the mid-1990s when I first started this research journey. The Australian political narrative under successive Labor governments had worked to shift the Australian dependency on Britain and the USA towards a recognition that Australia is geographically located in the Asia-Pacific region of the world and that we needed to foster better relationships with our near neighbours.

This significant policy shift was somewhat puzzling to people I spoke to in Thailand. They were very keen to understand why Australians suddenly all wanted to be Asian given that the majority population was clearly *farang* and had little or no history in the region. There was a lot of gentle teasing about this directed towards me at interviews and in social situations. I was unsure what "being Australian" really meant, especially for non-Indigenous Australians and this category was the most difficult to see outside myself. As the project developed, I realised that so many of my values derive from the perspective of being brought up in Australia in the culturally dominant group.

Educationally, as I researched the secular education system, I reflected that I see a value in being educated with moral or ethical[15] principles as well as being given secular information because I was educated in a Catholic girls' school. I also benefitted from access to a university education that was free to me, and this has influenced my attitudes as to how education can be. I question what happens when people have to pay directly for an education. It would have been very difficult for me, for example, to undertake university undergraduate studies if my family or I had been required to pay for it. It was not the experience of my parents' families to send their children to university, especially the women, and even if it had been something that was expected, the costs would have been prohibitive. Knowing this, I have a clear *a priori* leaning towards fully subsidised public

[15] I draw a distinction in this book between morals and ethics. I use the words associated with morals (for example morality, moral) to defines those behaviours that are principally governed by the application of religiously derived rules, advice or codes of living. I use the words associated with ethics (for example, ethical) to identify those ways of behaving well that have arisen in a secular environment through individual choice or through adherence to political convictions.

funding of universities and I question free market rhetoric that says that anyone can have a university education now because money is the only determining factor for access. Those who receive a university education will contribute to the financing of that system for the rest of their lives through the taxation system anyway, but I have had to think very deeply about my assumptions on this issue.

This is not intended to be a confessional discussion but rather, by my bringing such aspects to my consciousness, I became more aware of when I was acting out of those perspectives. Neither is such a list intended to invalidate the rigorousness of my research program. Consciousness of my multiple sites of subjectivity, rather, have helped to bring varying perspectives to the data as I have tried to understand what is going on. I have experienced living in a number of cultures other than the one of my birth; I have worked for a number of years in England and Spain, and did my teacher training in an Australian central desert community of Pitjantjatjara-speaking people. There have been various sojourns across Europe in France, Germany, Czechoslovakia (as it then was), Austria, the Scandinavian countries, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Morocco and Malaysia. I have learned to speak Spanish and Pitjantjatjara and so was confident of my ability to learn the Thai language. I was also aware of the myriad issues involved in living in a different culture to the one of my birth and anticipated that some sense of culture shock would need to be taken into account in the initial period in *Sȳām* Thailand.

Culture shock was a term originally borrowed from the biological sciences and popularised in the social sciences by Oberg in 1960 (cited in Barna 1983, 19, 22, 29, 39). Redden (cited in Kealy and Ruben 1983, 164) gives an early definition that describes culture shock as disorientation caused by misunderstanding or not understanding cues from another culture. Early attempts by American behavioural scientists to reduce its effect worked on the assumption that people who were susceptible to culture shock would not be as efficient as those hardier specimens who appeared to fit in very quickly.

Kealy and Ruben (1983) questioned the validity of equating "good" adjustment, i.e. little or no culture shock, with long-term effectiveness in the culture and suggested that people who were more aware were initially more culture shocked but made longer term adjustment to the culture better than those who showed little evidence of disorientation. Further, Barna (1983, 40) found that, "persons who were most aware of the personal and subjective nature of their perceptions, values and biases and

so on experienced the most intense culture shock". In an examination of the literature about adapting to a new culture, I learned that there are recognisable stages of adaptation. A consistent suggestion was the importance of learning the language and knowing something of the culture in its social, political, religious and economic aspects. My previous experience told me that culture shock, this elusive to define but nonetheless very real reaction could be essential to one's long-term understanding of the new culture and that attempts to shield one's self from its effects would possibly be self-defeating. I therefore began learning the Thai language and script from the beginning of my research and tried as much as possible to prepare for living in *S̄yām* Thailand. I was aware that nothing short of living there would prove to me the assumptions that I was making, but I nonetheless did what I could to understand the culture into which I was going.

I was mindful of Hall's (1959, 40–41) point that having a technical knowledge of a culture does not mean that one understands anything! One excellent resource that assisted my preparations was *Culture Shock Thailand* (Cooper and Cooper 1990). This work described some of the all too common mistakes made by foreigners when coming to *S̄yām* Thailand. It also provided a useful bibliography of other books to help along the way. The Linguaphone Thai language course was also invaluable in providing not only language but also a discussion of the appropriate uses of the language. I also enrolled in a month long intensive "Perspectives on Thailand" course conducted in Bangkok by Chulalongkorn University. This course was an invaluable first step to being in *S̄yām* Thailand. I had lectures each day about various aspects of Thai society and language, coupled with excursions to places of interest and opportunities to meet Thai experts on history, geography, economics, language, social issues, education and so on. Being at Chulalongkorn University, and continuing my association with colleagues there over the intervening years, I have also had the opportunity to discuss the research aspects of my project with informed Thai people before too many mistakes were made. Mulder's (1994) revised book was helpful as was Pramoj's (1981) *Sii Phaendin* (The Four Reigns), that describes in story form the latter part of the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1868–1910) to the reign of his grandson, King Ananda, that ended in 1946. It is a popular modern classic and is a beautiful introduction to *S̄yām* Thailand from the beginnings of its modernisation. Komin (1992), in her excellent research, gives valuable information

about values and attitudes of modern Thais, with insights that challenge more common orthodoxy.

1.3.2 Methodology and Methods

I am using the terms method and methodology in a specific way in this book. Methods, here, are the tools and approaches that I use to collect information from people about aspects of the research into Thai wisdom and knowledge. The methodology has been the organising principle for this book as a whole and the methods have been selected in reference to its approach. This book is describing a new research area, one that first requires description before anything else can be done. It is crucial for us to know something about the impact of outsider knowledge on the preservation of a diversity of Thai local knowledge and wisdom traditions, be they rural or Buddhist, as we educate the next generations into the global village. Many claims are being made about exchanges of development knowledge, particularly in the economic sphere, but little research has been done to examine the processes and the thinking behind the beliefs that are being made into policy at this time. The research has, therefore, examined the complex interaction that has been occurring over the last 20 years between local wisdom and development knowledge being bought and sold, a main component of that being *wíchaa* university subject knowledge.

My research into wisdom and its place in the modern university arose from a theme of my Honours research (Ma Rhea 1992). In that work, I observed that university education was moving away from the ethos of rich nations giving poorer nations access to knowledge for the purpose of development towards the commodification of university knowledge for the purpose of profit. From this early research, it was also apparent that many Western university policies were being formulated based on economic rationalism. The critical literature review for this book shows that thinking about the transition of an economically developing country such as *Sȳām* Thailand to a globally competitive economic entity is still premised on very traditional expectations about the role and outcomes of education (see for example, Behrman 1990a, b; Malaska 1993; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985). This led me to ask if policy-makers had any idea of the future that they were creating, or even the profound impact that their policies were making on the scope of possible educational outcomes. In short, were policy-makers wise; how did they conceive of wisdom and the production of knowledge and how did they see future developments in

university education? Are their policies cognizant of the new global world into which the policies are being enacted?

I have used a mixed-methods approach over a number of years to gather data for this research drawing on developments in the field over time (Crotty 1998; Richards 2009; Saldana 2009; Barad 2007; Jackson and Mazzei 2012; Neuman 1997). Some research was done as part of my PhD program using both qualitative and quantitative data. Some was done in conjunction with various programs of teaching and research done for an array of projects. The official sources of statistics are drawn from both published academic literature and from the World Bank, OECD, UNESCO, CIA and Thai census material. I modified the Grounded Theory Building methodology to suit the needs of my research program, with the interviews giving me a depth of understanding of the subject while descriptive statistical analyses corrected the necessarily perspectival opinions of the various groups involved. I found a mix of qualitative and quantitative research methods of data collection worked very well together for this type of research.

1.3.2.1 Analysis of the Interview Texts

The text made from interview data has been very important to this project. It is the ground on which everything else has been built. It has been the foundation for my theory building processes over the years. The textual analysis has been done using three types of coding procedures, open, axial and selective coding drawn from Strauss and Corbin (1990) in conjunction with a technique of matrix design developed from Miles and Huberman (1994). Strauss and Corbin (1990, 61) describe open coding as:

> *The process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data.*

The interviews, transcribed onto a computer, have been printed out. Each interview has, from the outset, been assigned a number to preserve confidentiality. This is the only identifying mark on notes, tape cassettes and voice files. There is one main list that links the numbers to the informants and this is kept separately from the data.

I began the open coding by numbering each paragraph of each interview. In this way, I found my way around the document at a later date with ease. After each paragraph was numbered, the process of labelling the phenomena began. This is a very detailed and generative process. The first

few interviews were the richest because of the detail. As the process continued, I became familiar with the phenomena and did not need to spend so much time on each document. Sometimes something arose from only one word; at other times, it was a sentence or a whole paragraph. I found it useful at the beginning to keep a list of phenomena beside the coding until I became familiar with them.

I then drew up a covering page for each interview and made a list of the phenomena present in that interview. The location reference for each example of each phenomenon was recorded alongside that phenomenon. Once the phenomena had been labelled, it was possible to count how many times a phenomenon had been discussed. Each time I add to these data, I use the same process, and from this can see the first glimpses of the provisional emergent themes present in the data.

After grouping similar phenomena into conceptual themes, I work right through the interviews again and recorded the dimensions of each one according to what the informant has said. The two processes of labelling the phenomena and grouping the phenomena into conceptual themes, each with their dimensional range, provided me with a very rich examination of the text, preserving the texture in the dimensionality of the concepts, an issue I will discuss in greater detail in the next section.

The second procedure, axial coding, is not separate from the first and once I became familiar with this technique, I was able to move easily between one and the other. In this process, the data was analysed using a paradigmatic causal sequencing model in order to examine the openly coded texts. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 96) describe axial coding as:

> *A set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences.*

In this process, I look for "cause and effect" type relationships and I use this coding technique to investigate, and sometimes disrupt, the provisional conceptual themes suggested in the open coding.

First, I draw out the phenomena that are pre-existing conditions to the conceptual themes; the conditions that cause them to arise. I then look for the phenomena that contribute to social, political, economic, historical and spiritual conditions that impinge on the conceptual themes. Third, I examine dimensional relationships of the conceptual themes, and lastly

I look at the outcomes of the conceptual themes to see if they generate new phenomena.

At this stage of the data analysis, while this is still textual analysis drawn only from the interviews, I can begin to see how the literature and background information enables me to be sensitive to the conceptual themes. This has been particularly relevant when I look at phenomena in terms of the causal influences of history or economics and other subjects.

1.3.2.2 Text and Texture

What someone has said in an interview is generally treated by researchers as something that can be fixed in some way for the purpose of analysis. This approach is particularly problematic when research is done across cultures because there is no way to do justice to the words of another unless the context of their speech is respected and understood.

Vološinov (1929/1973) convincingly discusses the errors of both abstract objectivism and individualistic subjectivism in the field of linguistic study of language and opines, in accordance with the approach of Grounded Theory Building, that "the utterance is a social phenomenon" (1929/1973, 82). He says, "Contexts do not stand side by side in a row, as if unaware of one another, but are in a state of constant tension, or incessant interaction and conflict" (1929/1973, 80). Across the years, I have transcribed spoken interviews into text. Data cannot simply be regarded as text without texture (or what Platt 1989, 637 calls 'context'). Hongladarom(1993, 53) explains the relationship of text to texture in this way:

> *I have used the word 'texture' to contrast with 'text'. 'Texture' refers to contextual meanings that include voices embedded in texts. A text without texture is monologic. The relationship between text and texture is crucial for our understanding of the usages of words…*

I acknowledge the important contribution made by her in the formulation of the way that the data were collected, examined, analysed and understood because of the many hours we spent discussing the problem of conducting interviews across culture. She says (Hongladarom 1993, 53):

> *This as I see it is a crucial problem of methodology that faces us when we try to elicit data from native informants and analyse them for the purposes of our studies. Often we overlook the fact that linguistic data are involved with intentions*

> *and our informants are social agents, not mere data-producing objects. It is legitimate that we want to focus on hard data and analyse them as if they were a text. But, in creating text, we leave out the texture, which is an integral part of it. It is this texture that gives us a clue about what sort of interests native speakers have in working with us, and allow their voices to blend, interact, or argue with our researcher's voice. The text helps us to grasp the referential meaning of the utterance; its texture enables us to see human conflict that shapes discourse.*

Her approach reinforces the arguments made by Sheehan (1995) and Flyvbjerg (2546BE) that the context of social action and understanding is very important in *Sỹām* Thailand. In transcribing interviews, I have made a conscious effort to preserve the emotions that were expressed. In this way, I can read the analysis with as much of the texture as can be captured at the time, an especially important aspect given the time span of 20 years over which these conversations and interviews have taken place.

This is of particular relevance where words such as *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge are discussed. These and other words used in the interviews are never exactly translated in meaning. There have been many examples of Thai people looking for a close English equivalent to a point they were making, each time making an evaluation against both what they were trying to describe in Thai and the word in English that they knew might or might not be the best attempt at describing the point at hand. Vološinov (1929/1973, 105) makes the point that:

> *The separation of a word meaning from evaluation inevitably deprives meaning of its place in the living social process (where meaning is always permeated with value judgment) to its being ontologized and transformed into ideal Being divorced from historical process of Becoming.*

I have attempted to overcome this problem by asking the informant to clarify the use of a Thai expression at the time it was spoken. Sometimes this continued to be a problem because either there is no English language equivalent or the informant does not know the English language word or phrase that adequately describes the point and my Thai is not sufficiently nuanced to tease out the meaning in Thai. In these cases, the informant has been asked to write down the Thai word or phrase and later I look up the meaning and translation in dictionaries. While not perfect, this default to an agreed public meaning has meant that it has been

possible to communicate across cultural difference with some approximate understanding.

1.3.2.3 Building Theory from Textured Text

In the final part of the qualitative method of analysis, I employ a series of steps to build grounded theory. There have been a variety of opinions, practices and policies being used and taking shape over the last 20 years. To begin to give form to the findings of the research, I have moved from emergent conceptual themes to selective coding and then onto building the conceptual frameworks described in Chap. 1 (see Fig. 1.1 below). Selective coding is described by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 116) as:

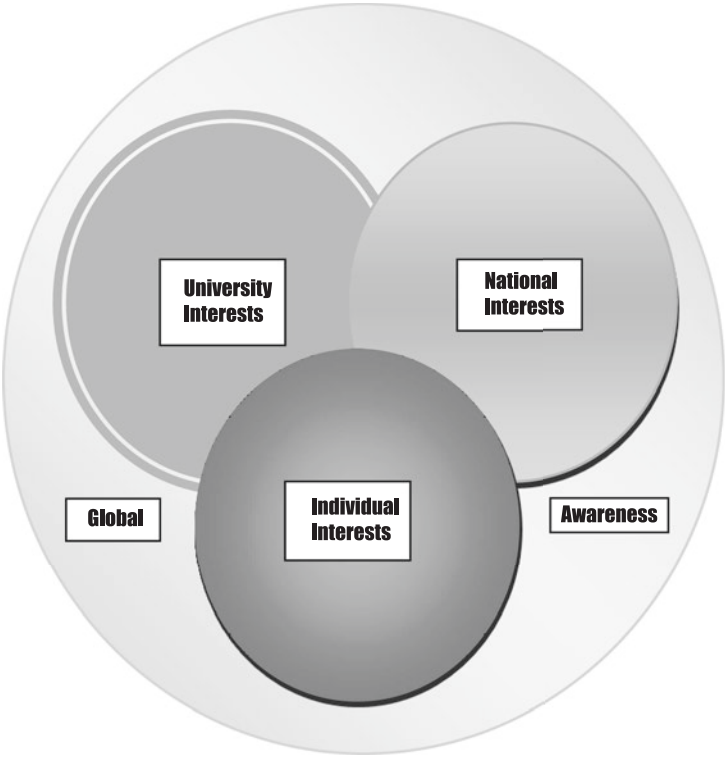

Fig. 1.1 Interlocking interests under globalisation

The process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development.

I have found that there is not one dominant theme that guides all of the others. Instead, I have identified three emergent themes. To assist in the conceptualisation of this final part of the analysis, the part that enhances the theory building capacities of the research, I have adapted and used the idea of the thematic, conceptual matrix outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994, 131–132) because I feel that this approach has given me the flexibility that I needed in order to work with the emergent themes over time. Having analysed the interview data to this level of abstraction, each time I am able to identify gaps and inaccuracies in the story, as is the purpose of the selective coding process. Some of these issues have been taken back to informants for clarification and others, which I discuss in the following chapters, remain unresolved.

1.4 Framework of This Book

This first section introduces the framework of an understanding of this book. This opening chapter introduces the argument for thinking about, theorising and operationalising wisdom and knowledge as guiding concepts for examining the role of universities in changing societal ways of knowing. I have introduced the background to the research program underpinning the ideas developed in this book, providing a context in which to examine the Thai-Buddhist approach to the cultivation of wisdom. In parallel, I have given some broad-brush strokes of thinking about the engagement of the Kingdom of *Śyām* Thailand in its bringing of modern knowledge and capitalist economic practices into the country in order to create a more "modern" Thailand and its efforts to find balance between the old and the new.

I then situate myself in this work as a non-Thai Australian and Buddhist and discuss the thinking behind the research approach. I have provided a brief contextualised discussion of the methodological approach I developed and provide consideration of the methods of data collection and analysis that have been employed across the various periods of data collection.

In the next section, *Investigating Wisdom and Knowledge in the University*, I will undertake a focussed investigation of *panjaa* wisdom

and *khwaamrúu* knowledge in the university in two chapters. Chap. 2 lays out an epistemic map that later helps in understanding the ramifications of the commodification of university knowledge. *Sȳām* Thailand has a distinct Buddhist epistemological tradition that is considered here. The key concepts of the book, *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge are introduced with discussion of a range of literature and insights from data. The final sections examine the state of wisdom in the modern state of *Sȳām* Thailand and the potential to balance the old and the new in the university context. Chap. 3 will examine the role of the university in *Sȳām* Thailand and the different ways that university knowledge shapes Thai society and has been exchanged between them and overseas universities such as Australia since the Colombo Plan. To do this, some analysis of the foundations of the modern university and its relationship to older Buddhist systems of higher learning are necessary and a specific examination of the sorts of university knowledge that are being produced, exchanged and reproduced within this system is made.

What emerges is that there are competing expectations being placed on university knowledge that occur because of individual demands, of national policies of economic development, of modernisation and of regional power brokerage. All are factors within a global context that increasingly sees university knowledge as a globally vital and financially lucrative commodity.

The next section, *Knowledge, 'Outsiders', and the Market*, presents findings that demonstrate the interlocking aspect of individual, university, and national interests operating against the backdrop of an emergent awareness of globalisation, as shown diagrammatically (see Fig. 1.1).

Comprising three chapters, Chap. 4 draws on tangible evidence of exchanges of university knowledge between Australia and *Sȳām* Thailand as a way of examining the modernity project in the university sector by examining examples of old and new exchanges and the insights this gives to the development of an emergent Thai university system under *langsàmăimài postmodern* globalisation. Chap. 5 examines an emerging awareness of global education markets in *Sȳām* Thailand, and analyses the conceptual interaction that is occurring between internationalisation, globalisation and regionalism. Drawing on the bilateral knowledge exchange relationship between Australia and the Kingdom of *Sȳām* Thailand, I begin with a discussion about individual responses to such awareness of global possibilities. Internationalisation is then discussed as a characteristic of an earlier sort of awareness about the world that was not so influenced by

global economic forces, with more recent uses of the word being examined. I then move on to ideas about globalisation, proposing that it is a concept that is given meaning because of peoples' awareness of global markets, although I found in global education services markets, that ideas of internationalisation are promoted alongside globalisation. I conclude by examining various perspectives of informants' awareness of global education markets such as regionalism and international law. The final chapter in this section, Chap. 6, begins with an examination of national interests, building on the previous chapter, and draws on both interviews and official documents to develop an overview of the national interests that are being served, using the exchange of university knowledge between Australia and *Sȳām* Thailand as the focus.

The ways in which university knowledge continues to be exchanged between the two countries is becoming an issue of importance for future relations. *Sȳām* Thailand is keen for Australia's continued support for its economic development. Australia is keen to tap into a potentially lucrative market for the sale of university knowledge in *Sȳām* Thailand. Both countries are keen to establish themselves in the region in positions that will benefit their own economies, deriving from the economic development of South and South-East Asia. By identifying these inter-relationships, the national interests of the two countries begin to emerge more clearly and the consequences of these types of collaboration for the sorts of knowledge being produced become clearer.

The final section, *Towards a* Langsàmăimài *Postmodern Wisdom*, theorises how *Sȳām* Thailand is undertaking a complex process of adaptive balancing of local and outsider knowledge while holding on to Thai traditional understandings about wisdom and its cultivation. Chap. 7 develops the theoretical understanding of how old and new knowledge regimes are co-existing in *Sȳām* Thailand. It argues that there has been a shift in understanding of *panjaathaangloog* worldly wisdom and the various types of knowledge that support it from being strongly shaped by the religious framework of Buddhism to a framework supported by a secular, Thai university system and an unmediated influx of imported "outsider" university knowledge. The challenge for Thai people is how to negotiate such a shift. The pressing concern is that these newer understandings are, as yet, "unsettled" as reliable signposts to enlightenment, to becoming a wise person and that the knowledge of the old pathway is in danger of being forgotten. The final chapter, Chap. 8, gathers together the themes of the book and speculates on the potential of individuals and universities,

operating with awareness of global education services markets in *langsàmăimài* postmodern, postcolonial society, to find value in a balance of local and "outsider" knowledge in the work of universities that supports the cultivation of modern wisdom.

1.5 Conclusion

This introductory chapter identifies an important undercurrent of this book. I have argued that *panjaa* wisdom is a crucial capacity for human beings to have as we live in the present and create our future. Informants and authors in *Sȳām* Thailand have pointed out that the Buddhist religion, old *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom, and *khwaamrúusǎngkom* local knowledge are no longer viable by themselves, as sources of information by which to live. Even so, Thai demand for *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge and *wíchaa* university subject knowledge appears to reflect a search for individual and institutional financial security rather than the enhancement of modern individual or communal life, or indeed for enlightenment. Even as economically developed countries continue to commodify economically valuable *wíchaa* university subject knowledge that *Sȳām* Thailand is willing to purchase, it must be asked whether such *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge is helping to cultivate the ways of knowing that enhance older Thai wisdom and knowledge traditions or make them unthinkable.

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CHAPTER 2

ปัญญา *Panjaa* Wisdom and ความรู้ *Khwaamrúu* Knowledge

This chapter lays out an epistemic map that later helps in understanding the ramifications of the commodification of university knowledge. สยาม *S̄yām* Thailand has a distinct Buddhist epistemological tradition that is considered here. The key concepts of the book, ปัญญา *panjaa* wisdom and ความรู้ *khwaamrúu* knowledge, are introduced with a discussion of a range of literature and insights from data. The later sections examine the state of wisdom in the modern state of *S̄yām* Thailand and the efforts being made to balance the old and the new in the university context. This chapter examines the potential in *S̄yām* Thailand to balance old knowledge traditions, Buddhist and rural, with new Thai and imported knowledge. It investigates the Thai-Buddhist approach to the cultivation of wisdom, and in parallel, the engagement of the Kingdom of *S̄yām* Thailand in its bringing of *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge and capitalist economic practices into Thailand, and its efforts to find balance between the old and the new.

2.1 Wisdom and Knowledge

First, it is necessary to offer a brief discussion about *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge. A review of the literature about wisdom and knowledge offers one an array of opinion and theory. Working

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across different cultures, academic domains and systems of religious and philosophical thought, demands a constant checking for meaning because it is easy to take as universally true something that actually arises within a particular worldview or social setting. It is especially important during this time of rapid globalisation, to resist the urge to see the emergence of a global culture that is homogenous but reflecting a predominantly Western worldview (Smith 1990). Interestingly, most people with whom I spoke in formal interviews and in discussions had ideas about *khwaamrúu* knowledge. Significantly, fewer talked about *panjaa* wisdom.

2.1.1 Wisdom and Knowledge in Education

I had been studying Buddhism for a number of years and then began reading Western postmodern and Thai *langsàmăimài* postmodern philosophical and sociological theory and was aware how much of these "new" perspectives were being drawn from Buddhist and other Eastern metaphysical ideas without necessarily being aware of, or acknowledging, their intellectual genealogies. Further, it became clear to me that the questions being posed in Western postmodern and postcolonial literatures were questions that arose from a particular metaphysical way of knowing about the world. These authors were in the process of transgressing the boundaries of Western, academically acceptable scientific ways of knowing, causing great effect and disruption.

As the discussion in the first chapter of this book argues, the study of *panjaa* wisdom and understanding how particular bodies of *khwaamrúu* knowledge are shaping the world's future are an essential part of higher education in order that there be healthy and sustainable human life. This may well depend on a complex diversity of wisdoms that rely on discrete but interrelated storehouses of knowledge and ways of knowing. If this is true, then it is crucial for social scientists and education researchers to think deeply about the consequences of the globalised commodification of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge, the focus of the next chapter. If this process means homogenisation of *khwaamrúu* knowledge so that it becomes exploitative *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* then research needs to be focused, exposing the fact that the way of knowing is most obviously harnessed to elite interests, the scientific one. Further, it behoves us to support metaphysical and moral/ethical ways of knowing that are currently outside the scientific. This is not to say that religious and metaphysical ways of knowing cannot be used in the same exploitative way as

science but that, at present, these ways of knowing can provide insights into the dominant one.

Sociological enquiries have looked at human behaviour from a variety of vantage points, making contributions to an understanding of different ways of knowing. In my review of the large body of literature on the sociology of knowledge, I found the writings of Max Scheler, an early 20th century German sociologist who was formulating his ideas in about 1924–5, very useful in helping me to deepen and organise my understanding of the Western sociological view of wisdom, which was significantly absent from consideration generally (Remmling 1973, 5) Scheler's examination of knowledge allowed scope for a variety of ways of thinking and he was one of the few sociologists to discuss wisdom. In addition, his work was of central relevance to my research because one of his basic research questions arose from his attempts to decide what university knowledge could be successfully exchanged between cultures and what could not. He asked (Scheler 1963, 163):

> *Which tasks of research and study permit in principle free substitution, and thus unlimited co-operation, of the talented of all nations and cultures, and which essentially preclude such co-operation by the very nature of their subject matter, so that co-operation of the nations themselves, as collective intellectual entities and individualities, and the mutual complementing of their particular dispositions and forms of vision and thought will be required for reaching the most adequate knowledge of the object?*

He proposed that knowledge is produced from three distinct ways of knowing – religion, metaphysics, and positivist science – that are in turn, the outcome of various social forces. He says (Scheler 1963, 165):

> *Religion, metaphysics and positive science rest on three different motives, on three entirely different groups of acts, three different personality types, and three different social groups. Also the historical forms of movement of these three mental powers are essentially different.*

His questions and insights resonated with my findings over the last 20 years of research into this topic and so I will examine his ideas more closely. The importance of this discussion is in how he describes the different ways of knowing and the sorts of knowledge that they produce.

In religion, Scheler suggests that the motive for this way of knowing "rests on the person's irresistible urge for mental self-preservation by

salvaging, rescuing the core of personality into a holy power which is personal itself and governs the world" (Scheler 1963, 165). The outcome of knowing is a unique experience of God. Religion has its churches, sects and congregations. There is no need for a notion of development or progress, "merely deeper intrusion into the substance of the original revelation" (Scheler 1963, 166); it is a retrospective view back to the sources and the intention of passing on the knowledge in this situation is to teach something old.

Scheler describes the motive for an exploration of the metaphysical way of knowing as "…an ever-renewed wonder that there is anything instead of nothing" (Scheler 1963, 165). The aim of metaphysics is "…the highest forming of the person by wisdom" (Scheler 1963, 167). The metaphysicians had schools in the ancient sense and this way of knowing finds its strongest surviving presence in more traditionally oriented societies such as India, Thailand and some indigenous cultures. In such a conceptual field, according to Scheler, there is "…no progress of knowledge as an infinite process". Instead, there is "…an ever-renewed exercising of mental attitudes by which one is made wise, with fixed material for these exercises which do not substantially change or grow" (Scheler 1963, 167).

Scheler sees positive science as having the following traits. It rests on differentiating the arbitrary from the particular. The action is done "…by observation, experiment, induction, deduction" (Scheler 1963, 165). The aim of science is to control the natural world after determining the mathematical relationships of all things and it is the scientist who is the leading type. Science has, according to Scheler (1963, 166), "…its various organisations e.g. universities, technical and other specialised schools, academies, learned societies … [which] always strives to be international". The historical movement of the scientific way of knowing hinges on a:

> *…rational, specialised science based on a division of labour which serves a differentiated social body and a trained body of department officials, and seeks to produce a world concept which makes technical control of the world possible.* (Scheler 1963, 168)

Embedded in such an approach is an explicit concept of progress; the knowledge that is produced is replaceable and can be discovered simultaneously by many and it "…moves by the division of labour, impersonally, continuously, internationally, and by a cumulative progress connected with a devaluation of each earlier state" (Scheler 1963, 167–169).

In conclusion, Scheler's significant mapping of knowledge opens up the possibility for sociological and education researchers to move between cultures and to appreciate a diversity of ways of knowing. He shows, for example, that the idea of progress is itself a construct of the scientific way of knowing.

Scheler also places wisdom as an outcome of a metaphysical way of knowing, an assertion that requires greater discussion. Scheler's analysis helps in understanding about the relationship between mind, knowledge, and thinking. He says (Scheler 1960, 172):

> *We call 'group soul' only those mental activities that are 'performed' as spontaneous acts, but merely 'happen', such as expressive reactions, and other automatic and semi-automatic functions; while we call 'mind' of the group the subject that constitutes itself in the joint performance of fully conscious, spontaneous acts with an objective-intentional direction.*

For Scheler, consciousness and knowledge are closely related phenomena. But his conceptualisation is intrinsically bound to his own social way of knowing. Here we see the emergence of the underlying Christian and scientific ways of knowing that gives his conceptualisation its field. Scheler conflates I think mistakenly, the concept "mind" into a meaning of mental functions so favoured by the scientific way of thinking. The "soul" is a Christian idea the existence of which has been challenged by Western science and by various spiritual traditions, including Buddhism. Scheler's idea of a group soul and mind goes some way into the terrain of the metaphysical but it is important to recognise that Western theorising outside the scientific is relatively undeveloped. For this reason, it is better that I look at the more developed ideas preserved within other belief systems, such as Theravādan Buddhism where religious and metaphysical ways of knowing are better theorised and understood.

As will be examined more closely below, in the Buddhist metaphysical context, the group mind is the society. Those actions that Scheler referred to as the group soul are probably better described as the social heart. The conscious mental activities of the society could then be conceptualised as being the group brain. In this way the social heart and the social brain come together as the social *caj* mind. Because of the extensive research that has been done in Buddhist societies metaphysically to do with the way that the *caj* mind functions and its consequent ways of knowing, this conception rather than Scheler's will be employed.

Transposing Scheler's schemata into the Buddhist way of knowing, *Silā* (*siin* Thai) morality knowledge can be seen to be akin to the religious way of knowing. *Samādhi* concentration is akin to the metaphysical way of knowing, and *Vipassanā* (*wipasanaa* Thai) insight understanding is akin to critical analysis that is part of a scientific way of knowing. A distinction to this is that "insight is not the result of a mere intellectual understanding, but is won through direct meditative observation of one's own bodily and mental processes" (Nyanatiloka 1988, 231). *Panjaa* wisdom then becomes the outcome of the deep understanding of these three domains of knowledge.

Metaphysics and transcendence are distinct concepts in the Buddhist way of thinking. Metaphysics is still understood to be within the realm of suffering, and is therefore always dissatisfactory and impermanent because of this. *Panjaa* wisdom cannot arise from the metaphysical realm alone. Transcendence is the disappearance of the self, either for a temporary moment or as a more profound liberation and its disappearance is an outcome of *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom arising. As Buddhaghosa (Buddhaghosa 400BE/1991, 1.3.3, Samyutta Nikaya) writes in the early Buddhist era:

> *Síle patitthaya naro sapañño, cittam paññācabhavayam…so imam vijataye jatanti*
>
> *[When a wise one, established well in virtue, develops consciousness and understanding, one succeeds in disentangling this tangle…]*

It is interesting that writers such as Scheler have designated philosophical traditions such as Buddhism as a metaphysical way of knowing when in fact Buddhism examines the same three ways of knowing as Scheler does, but harnesses the transcendental domains of knowledge to a specific goal, *panjaa* wisdom. Scheler's placement of wisdom as being an attribute of a metaphysical way of knowing is challenged by the Buddhist approach and in the explanations of the Thai research group. *Panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom is higher than *khwaamrúu* knowledge and the experience of the transcendental is superior to that of the metaphysical because it is understood that *paññā pāramī* complete wisdom (in Pali) is only possible through the cultivation of *panjaathaangtham* (see, for example, Bunčhœm 200?).

Over the last 25 years, Western scholarship has resurrected wisdom as a worthwhile research topic with influence in education. Sternberg (1990) edited an important book that began to research this difficult topic in

the field of psychological studies. He argued that it was time for the psychological sciences to begin afresh to develop an "understanding of wisdom and to point the way for future theory and research" (1990, p. ix). Research across sociology, education and comparative studies is far more tentative about wisdom than it is about topics such as knowledge transfer, the politics of curriculum, new public management and cross-cultural learning and teaching.

Steel (2014) has charted some of the contours of discussions about wisdom in education, drawn from the field of philosophy of education. The broad field of holistic education, somewhat peripheral to mainstream education, has scholars such as Forbes (1996), Miller (1992), Martin (2002) and Forbes and Martin (2004) who have attempted to describe a somewhat broad, diverse concept that sometimes asks questions of the role of pedagogy in the cultivation of wisdom. They refer to Montessori, for example, who espoused the need for children to be given a "cosmic education". She writes:

> *…it is through a childhood modified and freed from the ties of unconsciousness, of weakness, of psychic deviations and of ignorance, that it is possible to act by giving a new form of intellectual culture and by cultivating new sentiments for humanity. It is this latter part, culture, that which represents the study to be carried out in the schools, the universal syllabus that can unite the mind and the consciousness of all men in one harmony, that we intend by 'Cosmic Education'.* (Montessori 1946, 111)

Bernstein (1996) offers the idea of "sagacious competence" in his attempts to tease out how the development of wisdom might be approached within education efforts. In parallel, scholars from the Asia-Pacific region such as Nabobo (1994) and those in the Teasdale and Little collection (1995) opened up a discussion of wisdom in an examination of the impact of culture on education. Some specifically investigated wisdom and knowledge (Kopong 1995; Ma Rhea 1995; Mel 1995; Nabobo and Teasdale 1995; Thaman 1995) in various national and cultural settings. These papers do not define so much as attempt to describe the relationships between wisdom, knowledge and education, and in doing so offer some insights into how such concepts differ yet share common features across cultures. Teasdale and Ma Rhea (2000) address some of the definitional and applied issues involved. Singh (1991) specifically examines education under globalisation in the twenty – first century and introduces the tensions involved in the Asian context.

2.1.2 *Wisdom and Knowledge in* สยาม *Śyām Thailand*

Sivaraksa (1994) made a strong argument for the need to develop a Thai-Buddhist vision to renew society through education that draws on the older *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom, working together with new knowledge, as its basis. Wilson (2004) provides a concise analysis of Thai efforts to discern its indigenous wisdom tradition and develop a process of bringing the knowledges that inform its development into the processes of mainstream schooling. Part of this research was keenly interested in the impact of processes of globalisation on Thai wisdom and knowledge traditions, and the consequences for สยาม *Śyām* Thailand becoming influenced by what many informants called *khwaamrúutjàakpainók* outsider knowledge. The uncomfortable aspect of globalisation for these informants was that it has opened *Śyām* Thailand up to comparison with other nations. For example, a Thai historian, in discussion explained that only recently had it begun to matter whether an overseas scholar had received a thorough education or not, because the system was a self-contained one. The new information coming in had been necessary but not critical to *Śyām* Thailand's economic survival.

The Thai word ปัญญา *panjaa* derives from the Pali word for wisdom, *paññā* (Buddhadatta 1979; Nyanatiloka 1988). According to the *Rajapandit Dictionary* (2537BE, 528) wisdom is defined as complete knowledge (see also, Haas 1964, Pawphicit 2534BE). There are numerous folk tales in Thai culture that explain various aspects of *panjaa* wisdom, and it is important to note that these tales arise from *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom combined with the recognition of *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom (Pawphicit 2534BE, Rajapandit 2537BE). There is less thinking that discusses the newer conception of *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom, although such writers as Inthankamhaeng (2536BE), Pramoj (1981), and Sivaraksa (1994) point out the need for such research. The Thai word *khwaamrúu* knowledge, according to the *Rajapandit Dictionary* (2537BE, p. 706; Haas 1964; Pawphicit, 2534BE), is formed from two parts: "information" and "understanding". There is an emerging discussion captured in interviews that describes this new form as *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge (Pawphicit 2534BE).

It is useful to expand on some of the components of Buddhist epistemology that directly examine human thinking systems. Over many years, Theravādan Buddhist scholars have developed an extensive written record

considered to be its orthodoxy. The oral teachings of the Buddha are preserved in the Pali Canon, a collection called the *Ti-Piṭaka* Three Baskets[1] (Nyanatiloka 1981). The *Piṭaka* baskets are known as:

1. *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the rules for monks and nuns
2. *Sutta Piṭaka*, the discourses, mostly ascribed to the Buddha, but some to disciples, and
3. *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, the expositions on metaphysics, philosophy, psychology and associate matters

Buddhist teachings are often ordered numerically. Ong (1968) reminds us when we are thinking about ways of knowing which are not of our own era, that it is a characteristic of old knowledge that it has been preserved using systems, which are easy to remember, and also for clarity of enunciation and exposition. This is especially so in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The clear and categorical way that such things are discussed is a very common aspect of a Theravādan Buddhist way of knowing. Conze (1980, 24) describes *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom (Pali: *paññā*) as:

> *…the unfaltering penetration into the true nature of objects, wisdom is the capacity to meditate in certain ways about the dharmic constituents of the universe.*

What is significant is that the cultivation of *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom is possible through various practices of cultivating the *caj* mind. Nyanatiloka (1988, 230) says that:

> *It is insight understanding wipasanaa that is the decisive liberating factor in Buddhism, though it has to be developed along with the other two trainings in morality silā and concentration samādhi.*

His comment points to a tendency in Buddhist orthopraxy to regard the cultivation of insight more highly than the other two. From a learned Thai perspective, wisdom has two distinct types: *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom and *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom. The first, *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom, is a recognised pathway to

[1] The Tipiṭaka (Pali: ti, "three," +piṭaka, "baskets"), or Pali canon, is the collection of primary Pali language texts which form the doctrinal foundation of Theravāda Buddhism.

enlightenment and arises from a full understanding of Buddhist teachings. The second, *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom, describes the path to becoming recognised as a wise person. Personally held wisdom is understood as deriving from community recognition, and is a characteristic of certain people who have added to *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge in a particularly useful way such that the outcomes of the new application can be displayed to a group and improved upon by group effort. Santasombat (2003, 217–218) powerfully observes that:

> *The intimate relationship between wisdom and locality, humanity and its ecosystem, have made local knowledge unique in contrast to Western science. While science is based on the principle that knowledge is by nature universal, local knowledge is grounded in a particular territory. It has been developed and maintained on the bases of intimate relations between human and environment, and cannot survive or continue to develop if cut off from both its natural and cultural roots.*

Khwaamrúu knowledge can also be understood as being of two broad types, reflecting the two types of wisdom. The knowledge that supports *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom is *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental knowledge; the knowledge that supports *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom is collectively understood as *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge. *Khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge comprises complex and ever-changing interplay between *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge and *khwaamrúutjàakpainók* outsider knowledge.

Informants agreed that an individual could investigate a transcendental or mundane domain of knowledge and thereby attain an outcome of wisdom, Buddhist higher or worldly, depending on the domain of knowledge; but the domain of knowledge itself was believed to be already extensive enough for the individual. It has been a consistent perspective amongst Thai informants that the task of the individual is to apply the knowledge that already exists, although some Thai educators have spoken of an emerging need in สยาม *Śyām* Thailand for new knowledge that is "home-grown". There are a number of overlapping and intersecting points, which will be discussed more fully in later sections of the book. It is of particular interest that there is now a clear crossover between outside knowledge and *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge, with constant reconstitution of what it means to hold *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge in the Thai context.

2.1.2.1 The Pathway to Enlightenment: Panjaathaangtham Buddhist Higher Wisdom

Panjaathaangtham Buddhist higher wisdom from the Pali word for wisdom, *paññā* (Buddhadatta 1979; Nyanatiloka 1988) is the outcome of a person penetrating the nature of reality. It arises from cultivating an understanding of three different domains of knowledge. Following the early Buddhist teachings, the idea of domains of knowledge was further developed by Nyanatiloka (1982).

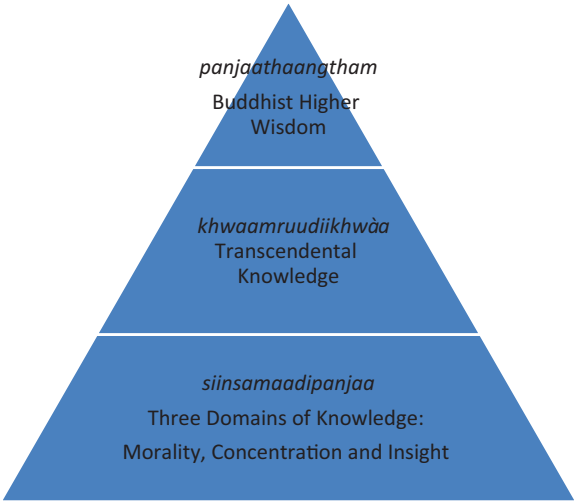

Fig. 2.1 Pathway to higher wisdom (Adapted from Ma Rhea 2013a)

The three domains of knowledge are *siinsamaadipanjaa* (Pali: *silā*, *samādhi*, and *vipassanā*), being the knowledge of *siin* morality, *samādhi* the knowledge of concentration, and *wipasanaa* the knowledge of insight understanding (Buddhadatta 1979; Nyanatiloka 1988). These bodies of knowledge are collectively called *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental knowledge (Figure 2.1) leading to the arising of *vipassanā-paññā* insight wisdom, the "decisive liberating factor in Buddhism, though it has to be developed along with 2 other trainings in morality and concentration" (Nyanatiloka 1988, 230–231). According to informants, most Thais, in traditional times and even in modern times, do not actively pursue attainment of this insight wisdom, *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom. The way to this wisdom

has always been regarded as being very difficult and requiring capacities gained in past lives, and only a few are seen to have these capacities. Most agree that *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom is the outcome of the development of certain thinking processes that arise from understanding *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental knowledge, from being born with the capacity to understand, and having had the experience of intuitive deep understanding.

Many informants—Buddhist nuns and monks as well as lay informants—explained that while Thais may still know the phrase *siinsamaadipanjaa*, most seek only to practice the moral precepts, to live a good life, as outlined in the knowledge domain of *siin* morality. Some who have the interest and capacity might seek the knowledge domain of *samādhi* concentration and would attempt meditation practices. Fewer still would seek the transcendental teachings of *wipasanaa* insight and understanding that leads one to attain *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom.

2.2 Pathways to a Wise Life: *Panjaathaanglohk* Worldly Wisdom

There is a variety of opinion about how individual *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom arises. For some, it is related to values and interpretations of the world arising from pursuing *panjaa*, the Buddhist path of mundane wisdom. In this view, it is a personal achievement that is inside and inward. For others, it is related to innate capacities, while for still others it could be learned, and for yet others it was a combination of both. For more traditional Thais, individual *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom is derived from age and experience and is steeped in *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom, the past source of Thai *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom. Such wisdom is passed on to the younger generations. People explained that this wisdom arose because the older people have more knowledge and experience of Thai society than younger members, and their accumulated knowledge has assisted them in surviving and developing wisdom.

Others have said that *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom is breaking down because older rural people often do not understand what is going on in modern urban or rural society and their values and attitudes do not help younger people to survive. In fact, some Thai informants have commented that old people's wisdom is moving in the opposite direction to that of the newer society. They have also observed that older people's wisdom and knowledge is being devalued in modern society by new qualifications. Thus, people with years of experience are no longer necessarily

recognised as having *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom, because they have no piece of paper to validate their claim.

Many Thai academic and bureaucratic informants have commented that the National Education Plan for *Sȳām* Thailand has had as one of its major goals the inclusion of *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom, where appropriate, in modern education (see, for example, Chantavanich and Fry 1981; Terwiel 1977). According to the Thai informants, it has proved far more difficult than anticipated to incorporate *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom into the mainstream curriculum. One academic speculated that this is because students no longer understand the world in accordance with traditional, rural, Thai ways of knowing and a true understanding of old *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom could not arise without this. The new curriculum is now so emphatically urban, westernised, and based on overseas education systems that it has proved hard for teachers to start to think positively about Thai knowledge and incorporate it into their teaching. With both local and *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge feeding into what constitutes *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge, it is perhaps unsurprising that *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom is also being devalued, is challenged for relevance and is struggling to maintain its historical legitimacy in the face of such pressures and expectations.

Khwaamruusàmaimài modern knowledge is regarded by the informants to be automatically gained through the processes of a university education but many people express concern about some of its attributes. Some argue that the quality of *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge – particularly knowledge derived from overseas study, *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge. – encourages a sort of fast paced, uncaring way of living that ignores *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge. Many regard this sort of behaviour encouraged by new *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge as being untested and potentially harmful to the Thai way of life. Some went so far as to assert that it is "un-Thai". They fear problems arising for Thai society if graduates only understand the one and not the other.

One informant, formerly a senior bureaucrat and now a scholarly Buddhist nun, said that there is already a problem in the system, because many Thai educators have been educated overseas and have themselves forgotten about *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom, *panjaa* Buddhist mundane wisdom and *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge. She argued that increasingly, overseas educated Thai people hold *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge that is almost completely *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge.

Historically in *S̄yām* Thailand, formal studies were conducted in the *wat* temple by monks who were also senior, revered members of the local community. Only boys were allowed to attend the *wat* for formal studies. These studies comprised learning the ways of knowing in the three domains of *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental knowledge – *siin* morality, *samādhi* concentration, and *wipasanaa* insight understanding. The *wat* temple was, by definition, a place for cultivating *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom. Surrounding this learning, in the villages that supported each *wat* temple, children were socialised into *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge, developing their cultural identity; activities such as commerce were learned by experience. In time, the *wat* expanded to teach a more secular curriculum, creating the possibility of an approach to education that was not embedded in the Theravādan Buddhist worldview (McDaniel 2008).

A modern school system was then established for both boys and girls, as were universities, with academics performing the role of passing on *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge that was derived from overseas higher education systems. Such knowledge was incorporated into Thai universities using the new term *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge. This imported, secular knowledge became a distinct hallmark of the national education system and Thai universities, distinguishing them from the Buddhist education system and was initially regarded as complementary to insider, Thai ways of thinking (Wyatt 1994) still preserved in wat temple education (see, for example, the sermons of Phra Rātchananthamunī 2531BE).

The importing of *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge has been regarded principally as a source of information for *S̄yām* Thailand about what other countries were doing, in order to protect *S̄yām* and enable it to be prepared for outsiders. Those who had the social position and the capacity were sent out of *S̄yām*; knowledge was learned, and then brought back. While overseas, Thai students were taught ways of thinking that were outside the experience of the majority of Thai people. In earlier times, during the period of Thai engagement with English and French colonial powers, it was the Siamese children of the elites that were sent out, those who would return and take up leadership roles in the new Thailand. This was a significant channel for new knowledge and new ways of thinking to be introduced into the country, and the ideas were heavily mediated and filtered through established social mores before they were incorporated into the society. A fascinating narrative of this process is captured in the wonderful *Sii Phaendin* (trans. The Four Reigns, Pramoj 1981) which tells

of the Thai Kings of the Chakri Dynasty who oversaw this transition in Thailand carefully gathering information about any new ideas, discussing things extensively and trying each new item before adopting it into the society. There is a wonderful description of the King taking a *rótjàkyaansŏnglór* bicycle out for its first test. Even under the present king, *Phra Bat Somdet Phra Paraminthra Maha Bhumibol Adulyadej Mahitalathibet Ramathibodi Chakkrinaruebodin Sayamminthrathirat Borommanatthabophit,* the ninth king of the Chakri dynasty, known in English as King Bhumibol Adulyadej, there is a Royal Strategy that develops research and experimental projects within the royal residences before implementation, especially to do with agricultural development, water conservations strategies and sustainable production (Samosorn et al. 2011, 98).

Even at a time when there are many avenues by which information can enter the country, the contribution of overseas scholars to this overall research strategy is still significant, because they continue to import new ideas and technologies into * S̄yām* Thailand from the outside and can enable the wise development of Thailand. Thai informants said that Thai people still generally consider *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge acquired at an overseas university to be more useful to Thai economic development than local education, particularly at postgraduate level (Ketudat 1973; Nimmanhiminda 1970).

I have had a number of discussions with Thai academics who have studied overseas. I spoke specifically with them about whether they felt the need to change or translate knowledge they had gained once they returned to * S̄yām* Thailand. Most said that the new Thai style was to teach from a deductive, Western-derived theory base. Even so, one academic had spent many years arguing for the need to cultivate an indigenous economics using an inductive approach and rejected the assumptions underpinning the Western scientific tradition by using a Buddhist argument. The academic explained it as follows:

> *A Western scientist may observe something, thereby perceiving and sensing it. At this point if the knowledge was apprehended it would be knowledge derived from observation. But mental formation rapidly orders the observation, simply because of the extensive training of the scientist in the scientific theoretical way of thinking, and in this, empiricism is compromised.*

A Thai economist asserted that all *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge had a social context that could not be ignored even if it claimed to

be "pure knowledge". For the Thai informants the most distinctive aspect of university knowledge in particular, and imported knowledge in general, was that it was seen as untested and had to be thought about alongside *panjaa* Buddhist mundane wisdom, *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom and their underlying *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge. This combination of uniquely Thai wisdom and knowledge is what identifies them as "Thai", said the informants, but increasingly their national knowledge was being overshadowed by imported knowledge. The Thai informants were concerned with the impact of imported knowledge within *Śyām* Thailand, focusing their comments on how difficult it was becoming for Thai people to maintain a sense of cultural identity amidst the overwhelming amount of incoming information that their country was experiencing.

The preceding analysis of the Buddhist and Scheler's perspectives on *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge gives a general overview to the research by identifying three different ways of knowing. Not all literature allows for such a perspective. Much Western literature that examines epistemological structures is convinced of a sequential development of *khwaamrúu* knowledge and of its own superiority by placing the scientific way of knowing above the religious or the metaphysical, a worldview that is challenged by Scheler (1963, 164) who says:

> *Religious, metaphysical and positivist thinking and knowing are not historical stages in the development of knowing but permanent attitudes of mind and forms of knowledge given with the human mind as an essential feature of it…*

Teasdale (1995, 588) highlights the profound impact of such a way of thinking by commenting that:

> *While these modern ways of knowing and understanding have been of great importance to the development of the human race, they have also led the colonizers to assume an inherent intellectual ethnocentrism – an intrinsic sense of the superiority of their own ideologies and value systems – that has resulted in the denigration of indigenous knowledge and its processes of analysis and transmission.*

The European intellectual traditions of Nietzsche (Mistry 1981), Foucault (1989, 1991), Baudrillard (1983a, 1983b, 1993b) and Habermas (1987, 1992) take a step further than Scheler away from scientific ways of knowing

and suggest ideas that have interesting similarities with Buddhist metaphysics (see also writings by Berry and Wernick 1992/2006; Ma Rhea 1994; Trinh 1989). From a similar perspective, Mao Zedong (1966, 2) noted that, "Correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter". Buddhism approaches the inspection of ways of knowing in a manner distinct from other metaphysical, philosophical, postmodern, postcolonial and 'queer' perspectives. A Buddhist approach argues that all these ways of knowing are equally meaningless if they do not have, as key elements, a deep understanding of interdependence, impermanence and transcendence leading to the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom.

2.3 Knowledge

So how is the production of knowledge to be understood? Knowledge can be an input to this process, as an idea, information or a technique; and it can be an output of this process gained from a direct experience, replicated by others and then generated as something to be known. As an input, the information, idea or technique can be locally generated or drawn from a growing pool of globally available knowledge. Knowledge can also arise from a thought generated from an individual mind.

The treatment process for knowledge, in the Western world, is critical analysis derived from a scientific way of knowing, no matter whether the input is derived from that system or one of the others identified, for example, by Scheler or Theravādan Buddhist texts. There are other treatment processes that are possible depending on the worldview and sorts of knowledge being used. The outputs of knowledge will inevitably reflect the sort of knowledge used as an input and the treatment process that was used.

There have been two perspectives arising from my data analysis over 20 years that concern the production of knowledge. The first is a disagreement about whether knowledge can be created by an individual brain or is context-bound, and the second relates to the notion of knowledge as power. Regarding the first, there are two dichotomies at work. One is a disagreement about whether it is possible for an individual brain to generate knowledge in isolation from society. Francis Bacon's (1900/1970) work in the 17th century reflects a Western intellectual trend to try to isolate those aspects of knowing that are not culturally conditioned but arise in the brain of the individual. He and others such as Locke and Hume who followed

this line of thought exhibited an extreme form of individualism but at the same time it was an argument constructed from the very notion of individuality already recognised in that society. The Calvinist challenge to get rid of all obstructions to the direct experience of a relationship with God is a religious way of thinking reminiscent of the line of enquiry taken by Bacon. In this regard the ideas of Marx (1887, 1947) are also pertinent. The analysis undertaken by Marx challenges Bacon, and subsequent thinkers of that tendency, by asserting that knowledge can never be seen separate from an understanding of the historical moment in which the knowledge arises.

Remmling (1973, 19) describes Marx's contribution to the sociology of knowledge as an examination of the social determination of consciousness saying of Marx that he, "…asserts that ideas are determined by socio-economic reality". There is a theme within Marx's work that thinking is done when consciousness is present and that the elites, the owners of the means of production, have the opportunity and need to think because they are conscious of their power and their tenuous position in the society. They therefore produce ways of thinking about the world that justify their elite position and employ whatever tactics are at their disposal to ensure that non-elites do not become conscious of their status in any way that would cause them to think independently of the established socio-economic organisation. Marx (1947, 104–105) observes that:

> *…the class which is the ruling material force of the society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class that has the material means of production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those that lack the mental means of production are subject to it.*

The way of conceptualising knowledge proposed by the work of Marx has been criticised by many. It flies in the face of those such as Bacon, Locke, and Hume who strove to discover knowledge, pure knowledge apart from the historical and social structures of the society, thus supporting the idea of autochthony. The assertion of Marx cannot easily be discounted because it is so difficult to know whether a new conceptualisation is simply a manipulation by a new elite in a particular historical location. If there is no external reality by which to know such a thing and when it becomes evident that a new conceptualisation is serving the interests of a defined and conscious group then it is difficult to see how Marx's theory of the production of knowledge can be disproved.

The second dichotomy about the generation of knowledge of relevance to this discussion arises from the Theravādan Buddhist literature. In the Thai-Buddhist intellectual tradition the *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental domain is considered to be complete and only requiring understanding, but in the worldly knowledge domain Thai informants spoke of new ideas coming in from outside, calling it *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk*. From the perspective of a Theravādan Buddhist way of knowing, it appears that it is not so much an issue of whether new knowledge can be created by an individual or not. Rather, a distinction can be made between *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental, complete knowledge and *khwaamrúusă*ngkom local knowledge, *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge, or *wíchaa* university subject knowledge all of which are considered to be incomplete.

It can also be argued that the idea of complete knowledge is still influenced by this historical moment. As Price (1986, 23) points out, Marx's position on religion was not to reject it but to recognise that it, too, is "from the outset conscious of the transcendental arising from actual existing forces" (cited from Marx and Engels 1848, p. 93). Trinh (1989, 218–219) says of this that "The realisation of silence implies the intervention of the 'I'…". I would go further to suggest that Marx did in fact criticise religious and metaphysical ways of knowing, especially when they were used by elites to manipulate the majority, and he was also pointing out that the consciousness of the possibility of the cultivation of wisdom through a transcendental understanding has an historical location.

Another perspective raised in the interviews was regarding knowledge as power. Scheler (1960, 1963) expands the hierarchical, conflictual conception of consciousness depicted by Marx to say that there are different groups of people attracted to different ways of knowing, and that the elite has the power to promote their way of knowing as universal. Universities are seen to have contributed to maintaining the power of the elite through the production of particular sorts of knowledge. But as Scheler and Marx point out, other ways of knowing are not always conquered because they are the preserve of different people from those in power and their ideas can still be passed on to other like-minded individuals (see also Price 1986).

Thai thinkers such as Bhikku Buddhadasa (1986) and Sivaraksa (1994) expressed concerned that the focus on economic development has overshadowed other ways of knowing of the Thai people and that the Thai elites have betrayed the Thai people by bowing to global economic pressure and cultivating their own power by having access to Western knowledge.

Thai informants echoed these sentiments and some were actively trying to reassert the importance of a Thai *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge that could be used to filter *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge, and *wíchaa* university subject knowledge. The new form that was suggested couples *wíchaa* university subject knowledge with *siin* moral principles for the knowledge that is produced to be of benefit to future Thai society. There was an implicit recognition by Thai informants that having particular sorts of knowledge related to scientific and technological development gave both personal and national power, but did not necessarily contribute to the cultivation of inner wisdom or to a sane, sustainable, wise future.

Some Western scientists have questioned the over-emphasis on the scientific way of knowing, the misuse of scientific discoveries for the pursuit of destructive power, and they have encouraged exploration of other ways. Smullyan (1977), Bateson (1979), and Harding (1991), for example, have all sought a more balanced approach to the ways that the Western world conceptualises. One is reminded of Marx's assertion that if one way of knowing is dominant above all others then it is serving the interests of particularly powerful people within that social context. Even while these scientists are saying things that are already known in other epistemologies, showing that the scientific way of thinking is but one way of knowing, there is evident power to be had by being able to control the production and reproduction of scientific knowledge.

In the Thai context, *khwaamrúu* knowledge had two levels, reflecting the two levels of *panjaa* wisdom. The *khwaamrúu* knowledge that supports *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom is *khwaamruudiikhwaà* transcendental knowledge and the knowledges that support *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom are *khwaamruuthaangsangkhom* local knowledge, *wíchaa* university subject knowledge, and *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge. Depending on an individual's capacity, domains of *khwaamrúu* knowledge could be learned and understood but *khwaamrúu* knowledge is not generally understood as something that the individual can discover or create for themselves. The individual could investigate a domain of *khwaamrúu* knowledge and thereby attain an outcome of wisdom, "higher" or "worldly", depending on the domain of *khwaamrúu* knowledge; but the domain of *khwaamrúu* knowledge itself was believed to already be extensive enough for the individual. It was a Thai perspective that the task of the individual was to apply *khwaamrúu* knowledge

that already existed. Even so, some Thai academics spoke of an emerging need in *Ɔyām* Thailand for new knowledge that was *khwaamruusàmaimài* modern knowledge brought from outside Thailand to help it to address modern problems.

2.4 Conclusion

This examination of wisdom and knowledge has revealed a complex array of matters to consider in the context of the modern university, impacted as it is by rapid and insistent globalisation. This chapter has begun to outline the understanding of knowledge in two broad contexts, the one propagated from ancient times by Theravādan Buddhism in Thailand alongside the development of distinctly Thai rural knowledge, together contributing to the emergence of modern societal knowledge. Such emergence has been subject to increasing incursion of westernised forms of knowledge that have been translated into Thailand with varying degrees of compatibility and disruption. Amidst such change and turmoil of the ideational possibilities of a culture, this chapter also suggests that the concept of wisdom has similarly been challenged. Older Western conceptions of the place of wisdom were all but forgotten through a series of wars across the European continent, and then the world, throughout the late 1800s until the modern era. Similarly, ancient religious conceptualisations of wisdom have been shown to be wanting in a rapidly modernising Thailand. The evidence suggests that in both cases, the possibilities for the cultivation of inner wisdom in human beings is being forgotten and set aside for increasingly mundane pursuits. The next chapters will investigate the potential for the old Theravādan Buddhist pedagogical pathway to wisdom to be reinstated into the *raison d'etre* of the *langsàmăimài* postmodern university.

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CHAPTER 3

The Thai *Máhǎawíttáyaalai* University

3.1 Introduction

This chapter moves the book to a specific examination of the ways of knowing that are cultivated and disseminated within the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university. Thailand has well-established universities and has been involved in the international exchange of university knowledge since the inception of its first national university *máhǎawíttáyaalai*, Chulalongkorn University. I will first discuss the Thai university system, outlining its philosophical and historical foundations. I will then briefly reflect on the establishment of a colonial outpost, Australia, a country that has had a bilateral university relationship with Thailand for over 70 years. Because of my location as an Australian academic, I have looked at Thailand's relationship with Australia as something of a case study of the sorts of exchanges that are occurring in order to trace the consequences of these knowledge exchanges back to Thailand in order to investigate the relationship of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge to *khwaamruusàmǎimài* modern knowledge and ultimately to *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom. Finally, I will focus on the impact of increasing globalisation on the modern Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai*.

Universities are called on today to perform a variety of functions depending on the needs of society and, increasingly, on the demands of the funding bodies. A working description of a university is recorded in the *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1993, 3493) as:

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> *…a corporation of teachers and students formed for the purpose of giving and receiving instruction in a fixed range of subjects beyond that provided at a school. Later, an institution of higher education, offering courses and research facilities in mainly non-vocational subjects and having acknowledged powers and privileges, especially that of conferring degrees…*

The neatness of this description hides the complexities by which the form of the modern university has come to exist in the first place. At the international level, bodies such as UNESCO see a strong role for higher education in achieving the goals of *Education for All* (Brundtland 1987) but often universities have been seen to comprise a small elite serving the interests of a narrow proportion of the population (UNESCO 1993). This has been particularly so in countries that are attempting to develop economically within the global context.

It seems to me, after many discussions with Thai academics, university administrators and bureaucrats who are responsible for implementing government policies, that, with the ascendency of economic rationalism, the role of the Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* is being rewritten. The changes being undertaken are attempting to revolutionise its elite reputation, requiring that the production of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge be marketable to a wider range of Thai young people and responsive to larger economic pressures. As a UNESCO (1993, 12) report says:

> *As higher education moves from an elite to mass universal system of participation, it involves directly, or touches upon the lives of increasing proportions of the population of each country, and is called upon to perform an expanding range of tasks.*

My analysis of the interview and other data suggests that the expectations placed on the emerging Thai university herald a fundamental change in role and outcomes that need to be made obvious in the process of rapid commercialisation of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge. While much has been written by sociologists, economists and other social scientists about the role and functions of education, *per se* the role of Thai universities has not been so extensively analysed in terms of finding the balance between modern needs and the preservation of a unique Thai mobilisation of the modern university.

In general terms, the traditions of Marx, Gramsci and Althusser place education at the behest of the powerful in any society, with intellectuals

and universities faring particularly badly in their analysis. It can be assumed that universities have not been researched and analysed with the same attention as other sectors of the education endeavour precisely because the university is the place where research is produced and then exchanged and reproduced. This process is surrounded by a number of contradictory explanations about the role of the university in Thailand that will be discussed in this chapter because on the one hand, universities are elite institutions that are increasingly being opened up to mass participation under the policies deriving from crude economic ideology. On the other hand, despite their elite history, Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* universities have provided a lens by which society has come to understand itself, and they have contributed to a very old tradition of international knowledge exchange with scholars around the world. Such ambiguity and contradiction will surface throughout the chapter as I show the evolution of the university in Thailand.

The role of the university is under scrutiny in all parts of the world. At the 1996 *World Council of Comparative Education Societies* congress held in Sydney, Australia during the early period of research for this work, there was a thematic focus on higher education. Papers were given from many countries and all pointed to the pervasive intrusion of crude global economics into an activity that had previously been linked much more to national needs. Scholars studying higher education in countries such as Malaysia (Kim 1996; Samuel 1996), Japan (Hayhoe 1996), and Thailand and Australia (Ma Rhea 1996) showed similar trends. Even previously-communist universities had moved towards privatisation (Hayhoe and Yu 1996; Mok 1996; Zhan 1996).

For many social critics of education, theirs has been a long-argued concern with the problems facing economically developing societies with the provision of basic literacy and numeracy suggesting that for developing societies, it is far more important to focus on the provision of basic education (Fals Borda 1985, 1990; Freire 1985; Ghai et al. 1977). Such education and development theorists maintained criticism about the amounts of money earmarked as aid for developing countries, that are spent educating elites in higher education at the expense of improving primary and secondary education systems for all (see, also, Cerych 1965; Dore 1976; Freire 1985; Hanson and Brembeck 1966; Hardiman and Midgley 1982; Lee and Ninnes 1995; Psacharopoulos and Woodhall 1985; Glewwe 2002) but this scholarship changed its focus as the impacts of globalisation have moved education significantly towards the private sphere, hence falling

outside international policy considerations and critique, as was possible in the latter years of the twentieth century (Palfreyman and Tapper 2005, 2009).

Amongst such debates, others have noted that the activities of the intellectual elites continue to avoid receiving much scrutiny in economically developing societies, and even less in economically developed societies (Etzioni-Halevy 1989; Swyngedouw 2000; Courpasson and Clegg 2006). Contributing to such debates, there has been an exponential increase in research associated with international student migration and cross-cultural education experience over the last 70 years that has matched the increased focus amongst universities to attract international students into full fee attracting courses of study and scholarship.

The Western shift in its provision of university education in the late 1980s towards the acceptance of a crude economic (inaccurately labelled economic rationalist and/or new public management) approach raises questions about the utility of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge that is being produced and its elite character; this approach arguably has also undermined one of the university's traditional roles that has provided a lens by which to analyse and understand the society in which it exists. This role, most obviously fulfilled by the social sciences and humanities, has been superseded by a fixed crude economic viewing point that questions the need for the enquiring and open-ended role played by those faculties. In this way it can be understood that the transition to mass higher education in the late 1980s in a country such as Australia under the framework of crude economics (DEET 1993) is increasingly involved in the ritual of teaching technical outcomes that have been "discovered" by others, with less expectation of, or desire for, deep examination and analysis of the society in which we all live (Riggs 1992). In Thailand, there has historically been the tendency to use university education as training for civil service rather than for intellectual development, the elites being expected to carry the development of the modern Thai bureaucracy (Ketudat 1973; Nualnirun 1995; Suwanwela 2006; Lao 2015).

Twenty years on, it is not simply that economic pressures are now of paramount importance to universities. The university has not been a fixed monolithic entity through time and in geographical location, although one of its most consistent claims has been that of the search for truth, however constructed. This claim has coexisted alongside broader functional aims of universities within society. The becoming and evolution of the university is in itself an intriguing study, beyond the scope of this

research. There are scraps of information that suggest that there have been long established university traditions all over the world that have arisen and fallen with the rise and fall of civilisations. Some of these scraps will be touched upon below.

Le Goff (1993) gives us a fascinating account of the birth of the intellectual and later the university. He records that in the twelfth century it was the Arab centres of learning in Byzantium, Damascus, Baghdad and Cordoba where people of Western Europe sought out books, first to translate and later, to incorporate into their traditions. Daniel of Morley says he hastened to Toledo where the Arabs were giving instruction available to all in the arts of the quadrivium [or sciences]. Here, he attended lectures of the most learned philosophers in the world (cited in Le Goff 1993, 19). Oriental thought was brought to the West through centres in Chartres and Paris (cited in Le Goff 1993, 20)

For the purposes of this research, the important point to note is that in the twelfth century, Western Europe was a producer of raw materials sold to Arabic and Oriental communities to feed the productive demands of the large urban centres that flourished there. There was a plurality of well-established centres of learning where Western scholars went to study. That Western nations are now in the twenty-first century selling knowledge, significantly gained from the Arabic and Oriental learning centres, back to Asia and many Arabic countries is one of the more profound and ironic inevitabilities of the production and exchange of university knowledge.

The contesting economic claim is that value has been added to this earlier university knowledge, coupled with an exponential development of technological knowledge. The justification is not found in the university knowledge *per se* but in the ways that the West has been able to use one sort of knowledge, scientific/technical knowledge, to achieve global economic superiority. The findings of this research over many years certainly point to the probability that it is this reason that makes it attractive for non-Western nations to encourage their people to study in the West, the symbolic receiving of the knowledge that can be brought back and used to reposition the nation state within the *langsàmǎimài* postmodern world. The technological information that is available in the West serves as an adjunct to the hegemonic economic control that Western nations currently enjoy and this *wíchaa* university subject knowledge has both symbolic, and real, caché for those countries that can optimise the opportunities that having it represents.

3.2 Foundations of the *Máhǎawíttáyaalai* in Thailand

> *Thai wisdom means the body of knowledge, ability, outstanding value and skills of the Thais inherited from experiences that are respectively preserved and transmitted through generations. It is accumulated as a common asset of the nation to help people solving problems, improving their quality of lives and creating the appropriate balance between their way of lives and environment.* (Sangnapaboworn 2003, 8)

Chantavanich and Fry (1981, 10) describe higher education in Thailand as aiming for:

> *…the full development of human intellectual abilities, the advancement of knowledge and technology, and the provision of high level academic and professional manpower needs for national development. Admission to major universities is based on performance on competitive joint entrance examination.*

There are 155 higher education organisations in Thailand. There are 13 government supported public universities and colleges, 19 autonomous universities, 39 universities in the Rajabhat system, nine universities in the Rajamangala University of Technology system, 12 specialist colleges and institutes, 39 private universities, 10 private institutes and 23 private colleges, and one intergovernmental institute (Ministry of Education 2015).

The Kingdom of สยาม *Śyām* began to develop a higher education system in 1887 (Hayden 1967; Ingram 1971; Nimmanhiminda 1970) establishing *Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya* University (1887) and *Mahamakut* Buddhist University (1893). *Phranakhon* Rajabhat University (established 1892 as Thailand's first teachers' training school, founded by King Rama V with the primary goal of producing teachers for primary schools.) and *Bansomdejchaopraya* Rajabhat University (established 1896 originally as a Boys' School following the English model) were the first of the teachers colleges that grew to a system of 40 Rajabhat universities.

In 1917, *Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramentharamaha Vajiravudh Phra Mongkut Klao Chao Yu Hua* (King Vajiravudh, also known as Rama VI; 1 January 1881–25 November 1925) decreed the first secular *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university. Ingram (1971, 63) says:

> *…the chief motive for the establishment of the first university in Thailand was mainly to train civil servants to serve the numerous branches of the government*

> *of the country which was emerging from a feudal past into the new era as a modern state and concurrently fighting extremely hard to survive and keep intact her age long independence…the university established at that time was meant to meet the manpower needs as required in the attempt to run the country, fully determined to maintain its own sovereignty…and the independence of its people who had never been under alien tutelage before.*

As discussed in Chap. 1, Thai people had for many centuries been bringing in ideas from the region and adapting them to suit the needs of Thai society. But here was something different. His grandfather *Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poramentharamaha Mongkut Phra Chom Klao Chao Yu Hua* (King Mongkut, also known as Rama IV; 18 October 1804–1 October 1868), and father *Phra Bat Somdet Phra Poraminthra Maha Chulalongkorn Phra Chunla Chom Klao Chao Yu Hua* (King Chulalongkorn, also known as Rama V; 20 September 1853–23 October 1910) had engaged the British, the French and the Americans to teach them and their children. The founder of the modern Thai university, King Vajiravudh was a recipient of this new form of education. Jumsai (1991) records that King Mongkut closed the Palace to the American teachers at one stage because they were preaching Christianity and trying to convince everyone that polygamy was wrong. The King and his subjects quickly became aware of the consequences of such an "alien tutelage" and determined that Thailand would develop its own systems that were to be identical with the European ones.

To manage this huge transition, one that continues to the present, Thai citizens were sent all over the European world to gather information. What is often not recognised in placing Thailand in the "developing country" category is that the financial burden of building the modern Thai bureaucracy was carried jointly by Thailand together with financial and technical help from other countries. This was particularly so in the development of the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* universities. Concurrently with the strategy of sending out the royal children and other elite's children to learn from the West, the foundations were being laid for the Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university.

The practice of sending the elite to centres of learning outside สยาม *S̄yām* and later Thailand was not new. Thompson (1967, 102–123) notes that the relationship between *S̄yām* and China has been longstanding, possibly from 607 AD. A Siamese mission to China is ascribed to King Arunavati Ruang of Swankhalok possibly in the eleventh century (Gerini 1902). In the following centuries there were well-established trade links and ideas

moved freely around the region. Up to the 1800s, Chinese influence was strong and many Thais had access to the great learning centres of China.

The third and fourth kings of the present Chakri dynasty learned of the increasing power of the European nations and shifted their focus in that direction. Jumsai (1991) records the fascinating early relationship between the monarch of สยาม *Sỹām*, King Mongkut and the British Queen Victoria. Jumsai speculates that, "The custom of sending sons to England could have started in 1857 but the two boys got home-sick…" (Jumsai 1991, 252). It was not until 1867 that the first boy stayed in England to be educated and the next followed in 1871. There is a very moving account of such a journey in Pramoj's (1981) *Sii Phaendin* The Four Reigns. Although the Thais were very comfortable with the interchange of ideas and commerce within their region, it was a significant transition to open up to outsider influence. By 1926, there had been 2000 boys who had gone to England to study and "the custom of sending sons to study in England became firmly established" (Jumsai 1991, 252).

Thailand's development of the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university was influenced by the British system, derived from information gleaned from its returning scholars blended with the French Jesuit influence on the monarchy, for the Thai elite did not only send to England. The children were also sent to other Western countries that had royal families. In this way, Thailand gathered information from France, Spain, Prussia and Russia. The *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university was to give the trappings of civilisation that were recognised in the West to a Kingdom that already considered itself to be highly civilised. Interestingly, the eventual Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university is a unique creation of many styles blended together in a distinctly Thai way. The development of the system was watched over by King Mongkut's son, King Chulalongkorn who engaged with Western nations through the turbulent period of attempted colonisation by them. As Lao (2015, 2) remarks:

> *Even though Thailand has taken pride as the only Southeast Asia country that has not been colonized by the West, Thai universities were founded upon a variety of foreign influences.*

In 1889, the first medical school was established in Bangkok and, in 1902, the Royal Pages School was established to begin to train the Thai royal family and nobility for administrative positions (Hayden 1967). In 1917, the first university was decreed, *Máhǎawíttáyaalai Chulalongkorn*.

The trend with the subsequent universities was to establish them as specialist studies centres for social studies, medicine, agriculture, art, cultural heritage and so on under the direction of a discrete minister of government (Sanguanruang 1973, 63). After the Second World War, the concept of a *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university spread beyond Bangkok and three regional universities were established. Initially these were also specialist but over time they have become more generalist in their approach.

With the shift in the balance of power over the period of the two World Wars, Thailand (having made the transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932) broadened the scope of its interests in the West and forged strong relationships with America and later Germany. The shift of power was reflected in the increasing preference for students to go to America for university study and eventually such a shift influenced the operation of the Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university (Ketudat 1973).

To this day, some of the structural incompatibilities between the British-style and Thai-style *máhǎawíttáyaalai* universities can be attributed to the change in approach that occurred in Thailand with the increasing replication of the American-style university after the Second World War (Altbach 1985; Tapingkae 1985). To further examine the processes by which Thailand has brought university knowledge back into its national sphere, I will introduce the Australian university system in the next section. Thailand has sent scholars to Australia for many years and it is a country that has similarly been deeply impacted by the globalisation of its universities.

3.2.1 The Australian University in Thai Context

The territorial colonisation of Australia by the British meant that the idea of a university was imported from Britain into the newly established colonies of Australia. The university system was established for the benefit of the white descendants of British convicts and settlers. Unlike Thailand that was never territorially colonised and had the time and reason to adapt its system according to need, available finances and political expediency, a replica of the British university system was funded and established in each of the colonies in Australia by the British as they developed sufficiently to warrant them.

The existence of extensive knowledge held by Aboriginal peoples about the land and its people was invisible to the eye of the British colonists.

Australia was occupied and established as an outpost of the British Empire and, as such, its new squatter and administrative classes argued for their right to be civilised in the European fashion. Eighty years after Britain claimed discovery of Australia, the university sprung fully formed from its father's head as an important "civilising agent". It is critical to understand the justifications and foundations of this event given the claims of legitimacy that have been made over the past 30 years by Australian education services brokers.

The assertion of legitimacy goes back to the establishment of the early Australian universities as replicas of those in Britain. While historically, Australia has experienced a contemporaneous development of its universities with its Asian neighbours, it claims a cultural lineage that is as old as the university in Britain. The secular British university tradition developed, according to Ketudat (1973; also Ashby 1967) from a concept of Von Humbolt's of scholarly training for the aristocracy, in the early 1800s (Ketudat 1973; Ashby 1967). It was a significant evolution of the Aristotelean Lyceum that had been maintained through the middle ages. The new university undertook to train its students to cultivate intellectual skills, vocations being taught elsewhere. The British university, like its European counterpart, was to produce gentlemen who would be civilised even if they could no longer feed themselves. Sanguanruang (1973, 64) observes that Thailand adopted a version of this approach in its development emphasising that such intellectual training should be put to the service of society with each "single profession" university under the jurisdiction of a different ministry. Over the last 150 years, university activity has changed from serving an elite few, the aristocratic men of each European country, to meeting the needs of a growing middle class of both men and women. This is equally relevant to both Thailand and to Australia. According to Nualnirun (1995, 3), the Thai middle class asserted that their education was the necessary key to the progress of the human race and to increases in prosperity for the society.

In university terms, Australia, with the increase in numbers in the Australian middle class, coupled with a revolution towards a scientific way of knowing, moved away from the liberal arts and the aristocracy. Instead, there was an increase in vocationally-oriented courses deemed useful to the industrialists and the merchants. What is fascinating in looking back at these developments is that the transplanted university that first found itself in Australia in the middle of the nineteenth century, when the transition from aristocratic to bourgeois control of society was being felt most keenly

in the universities in Britain, brought all of the unresolved conflicts with it along with its strong civilising mission.

Significant investment was made in the early Australian universities and they were, and continue to be, ensured of access to the university knowledge that is the product of British universities. British academics are encouraged to bring their knowledge to Australia to assist with the development of Australian universities. As an Australian Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) country profile points out, "Australian education was originally patterned on the British models and this influence is still evident" (DEET 1991, 2).

The first Australian university was the University of Sydney, founded in 1850 by the government of New South Wales. While still separate colonies under British rule, the government of the Victorian colony established the University of Melbourne in 1853. In 1874, the government of South Australia founded the University of Adelaide and in 1890 the government of Tasmania established the University of Tasmania. At federation, in 1901, the control of these universities remained with the individual states and the universities themselves were constituted under their own individual Acts (DEET 1991). The Australian university system was part of an empire-wide Commonwealth that drew on and contributed to their collective knowledge base.

By the 1950s, there was a university in each of the six states and a research university had been established in the national capital, Canberra. The historical and philosophical foundations of the university in Australia saw the universities develop through a rapid maturation process in a short 100 years that spanned the establishment of the university as a civilising agent in a far-flung colony to their legitimation as participants in the Colombo Plan, principally involved in the economic development of Asia. However, Thailand was not a stranger to the idea of a *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university when Australia offered to help with the development of Thailand's university system as part of its Colombo Plan commitments.

3.2.2 Sàpaanmítdtràpâap Friendship Bridge

The universities in both Thailand and Australia have distinct historical and philosophical heritages that are reflected in their respective modern university missions. These influences are evident in the characteristics of the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and a country like Australia. Part of the character of Australian universities is the past link to

the British system, from where it derives its status and legitimacy as a vendor of university knowledge. This characteristic also makes Australian universities less attractive to Thai students because the Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* has become increasingly modelled on the American system and the majority of Thai international scholars receiving scholarships are attending universities in the United States or the United Kingdom (Australian Government 2013, 10). Many Thai informants who had previously studied in Australia said that it would have been better if they had been able to do coursework-based postgraduate study in Australia, as was possible in the United States. This was for a number of reasons. First, there was little recognised need in Thailand during the early 1990s for highly trained researchers with the sorts of skills encouraged by Australian postgraduate research. Also, Thai people found that doing coursework provided them with access to a wide range of literature that they could take home and develop into suitable course materials in their own *máhǎawíttáyaalai university*. They did not get this when they did postgraduate research without a coursework component.

When I considered these points and looked at the sorts of courses that Thai students were doing, there was a clear preference for coursework-based postgraduate study. This was particularly so for subjects where the student was privately funded such as for Business Administration. I noted in my early research that as the influence of the market strengthened, it could be expected that Australian universities would increasingly adopt an American-style university system as a way of attracting potential students who are more familiar with that system. This has been the case with many Thai students studying in Australian universities and undertaking privately and publicly funded coursework postgraduate degrees. Even so, more recent analysis of Thai preferences in overseas university qualification have moved towards the requirements for a research based PhD (Australian Government 2013, 22). This is because the Second 15-Year Long Range Plan on Higher Education of Thailand from 2008–2022 is moving towards classifying Thai higher education institutions into four groups: research universities (all academics to have a PhD), science, technology and specialised universities, liberal arts universities and community colleges.

Interestingly, the Thai word สะพาน *sàpaan* bridge was a common metaphor chosen by Thais and Australians to describe the university relationship between Thailand and Australia. Symbolically, only a month before I arrived in Thailand to do the fieldwork for the original research (April,

1994), Australia had just completed the building of a bridge over the Mekong River for Thailand, called *Sàpaanmítdtràpâap* Friendship Bridge. It became an influential metaphor evoked by people to show both the generosity and the ignorance of Australia in their dealings with Thailand, so much so that I eventually travelled to Nong Khai, in the North Eastern Region, to see this *Sàpaanmítdtràpâap* for myself. It was a potent symbol of future development in an area that was still predominantly agricultural. When the Prime Minister of Australia was awarded the Order of the White Elephant in recognition of the gift of *Sàpaanmítdtràpâap* Friendship Bridge, the irony was not lost on some of the Thai and Australian informants.[1] The *máhăawíttáyaalai* university was described by a number of Thai university staff metaphorically as being a *sàpaan* bridge between Thailand and Australia because the exchange of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge provides a very important means of people of different cultures coming to understand one another. As one academic said, "We need to be able to understand one another which means we have to be able to think the same way…"

The new characteristic of Australian universities is that they are open to selling their university knowledge to scholars from overseas. This created tensions within Australian universities with some academics wanting to protect universities from what they saw as government interference, and the market. For others, the influences of the market were seen as positive, making universities become more accountable and productive. Some faculties had benefited more from selling education than others. Business Administration, Economics, Informatics, Engineering and Science were doing well. In some universities, overseas students as a source of income began to contribute a crucial proportion of the university operating budgets. This new money was sometimes disrupting old hierarchies of power within universities and there had been debilitating acrimony about the

[1] Many Thai people pointed to the bridge as an example of the good relations between Australia and Thailand but some Thai academics gave a different picture. They asked who would benefit from such a thing and said that it was probably going to benefit the Japanese most because they had the biggest investment interest in opening up Laos to development. The local people of Nong Khai still travel across the river as they have always done, by boat and when I was there, I only saw two petrol tankers actually using the bridge. Local people said it was very expensive to cross the border by the bridge. What the bridge makes more likely is that the much discussed Asia freeway going from Singapore north and across into China will take its route through this part of Thailand.

distribution of the overseas student dollar. One administrator said, "It's a long feeding trough".

The increased access to overseas university education is also affecting the balance of power for academics in Thailand. Previously it was the very bright and the very rich who could afford to go abroad, and many of these people on their return took up influential positions in government, civil service and universities. According to data and from discussions with Thai academics, more people with overseas qualifications began choosing to go into private enterprise rather than back into the public service. One Thai academic said they thought that the filtering system was breaking down and that this would have serious consequences for the preservation of Thai culture. They explained that Thai academics, educated overseas, had traditionally acted as a filter for *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge and *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, bringing back the new *wíchaa* university subject knowledge and making it appropriate for Thai society. It is to this aspect that I will now turn, looking at *wíchaa* university subject knowledge, *khwaamruusàmăimài* modern knowledge, and the potential for *panjaa* wisdom to arise in the *máhăawíttáyaalai* universities.

3.3 *Wíchaa*, *Khwaamruusàmăimài*, and *Panjaa* in the *Máhăawíttáyaalai University*

I have drawn on a broad survey of the literature for this section and have found that there appear to be both intrinsic educational motives for the preservation of the type of university knowledge offered by a modern university and extrinsic economic forces that shape its very being. The place of the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom within the university is far less easily discernible.

The university, and other centres of higher learning throughout history, have provided a place for those individuals within society who love knowledge, study and research into how things work. It has, in some cases, in the past had an intrinsic function of cognitive development (Scheler 1921, 1924/1980, 1963). Historically, within education, the capacity within an individual for *khwaamchàlâat* cleverness, intelligence, or sagacity and *satipanjaadii* the ability to get good grades has been a subject of argument. Some informants said they felt that *khwaamchàlâat* intelligence was a capacity only given to some while others argued that a good teacher could

trigger such a capacity in most people and that education was important because of this.

In Western cultures it became accepted, using arguments promoted by Darwin and others who followed him, that only about ten per cent of any given society would have these capacities and that one of the roles of the school was to find these individuals and offer them encouragement to go on to university. This theory of the ten per cent has been used subsequently to justify the drawing of leaders of the society from the universities and also guarantees that the wider society would financially support the university's functioning on the basis of its collective capacity to achieve intellectually in a way that also served the interests of the broader society. Thus, intrinsic cognitive development was seen to have broader extrinsic utility, but only for a small minority of intelligent scholars.

Other images conveying this broader utility, drawn from responses in the interviews in both Thailand and Australia were: that the university sought for truth and then shared its discoveries with the broader community; that it developed future leaders within the society; that it was the "brain" of a society; that it was at the cutting edge of new ideas and technologies which were then translated into the broader society; and that it was responsible for the preservation of culture. In short its intrinsic functions appeared, overall, to contribute to the intellectual storehouses of the society, operating slightly outside the rest of the society, contributing to a balance between different modes of thinking.

Scheler (1963) claims that the modern university is principally an agent of only one way of knowing, the scientific way. He (1963, 69) makes the following point:

> *As a practical demand concerning constructions of the organisations of education in the various nations, it follows that in such a construction there should not be one-sided training in the direction of any one of these forms of knowledge but a harmonious training in all of them.*

Evidence can be found in universities today of other ways of knowing, as discussed in the opening chapter. Even though most are being reconstituted through the scientific/economic paradigm, they are making a valuable contribution to the re-establishment of balance in the intrinsic operation of the university. I have given particular attention to these aspects of the data where there was evidence of a moral/ethical dimension in the education practice and where aspects of the metaphysical

were being incorporated, in keeping with the understanding of which I outlined in the discussion in Chap. 2 with the epistemic mapping of the concepts.

3.3.1 Wíchaa and Khwaamruusàmǎimài

From all the Thai informants it is clear that *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom in universities in Thailand tends to be greatly influenced by global economic knowledge and an economic way of knowing the world. This thinking overshadows *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom and *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom. The global economic demand for Thailand to maintain the pace of its rapid economic development places heavy demand on Thai university graduates to have up to date *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge and *wíchaa* university subject knowledge. It has been only gradually that the demand from within Thai society to listen to the wisdom of Buddhism and of rural people has gained respectability, but Thai informants have noted that this demand has largely been ignored in the effort to stabilise the Thai economic system in the face of both external and internal upheaval.

For the Thai research group *wíchaa* university subject knowledge had predominantly been an imported body of knowledge and the acquisition of it gave one *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge. Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* were established to pass on this *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, often couched in development terms, that was derived from European education systems. This has been incorporated into Thai universities as *wíchaa* university subject knowledge. This outsider secular knowledge has become a distinct hallmark of universities to distinguish them from the Buddhist higher education system and it is regarded as having the capacity to complement insider Thai ways of thinking.

As argued previously, the importing of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, particularly *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge, has been regarded principally as a source of information for Thailand about what other countries are doing. *Khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge that has become Thai *wíchaa* university subject knowledge has become an influential input into Thai thinking processes that over time is being assimilated into the broader Thai society. This new *wíchaa* university subject knowledge is being taken into the society and is being judged to decide if it is useful or not. If it survives the tests of time

and experience, it will become an insider Thai way of thinking and evolve into recognised *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom.

One distinctive aspect of the discussions with the Thai research group to emerge is their awareness of the potential for them in accessing the global marketplace of commodified knowledge. There have always been opportunities in Thailand for trade with outsiders and this interaction has provided a rich source of new knowledge about the world. The newly emerging marketplace of knowledge is described as a bridge between older *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge and newer *khwaamrúutjàak-painôk* outsider knowledge within the global context, and many Thais have taken the opportunity to buy access to a new *khwaamruusàmăimài* modern knowledge through gaining *wíchaa* university subject knowledge at overseas universities such as in Australia. As noted in the opening chapters, Thailand and Australia have a 70 year history of cooperation in education. Initially based around narratives of aid and development under the Colombo Plan scholarship program in the post-WWII era, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in 1991. Subsequent MOUs in 1994, 2004, 2012, and 2015 are evidence of a maturing relationship in education exchange between the two countries, undertaken in a significantly commercialised market environment (Ministry of Government 2004, Education 2012). Together with the Thai-Australia Free Trade Agreement (Australian Government 2005), the potential in the area of the provision of education services has expanded significantly over the period of the last 20 years.

As I attempted to understand this new *wíchaa* university subject knowledge market, I asked Australian informants what it was that they understood that they were passing on to international scholars such as those from Thailand. My analysis suggests that university knowledge is regarded by the Australian informants as having some specific dimensions. These are that it changes over time and should therefore be understood to be dynamic. It is often confined in the education process because of the formality of the transmission. Because it changes over time it is always tentative and cannot be conclusive even though it is believed to be true until proven otherwise. In this way, it needs constant revision. As a memorisation of facts it can be used, regurgitated and passed on easily. Its overriding dimension is that it is externally sourced. The knowledge context of the Australian university is most often confined to the transformation of information, through the treatment process of the scientific way of knowing. Some of the Australian informants suggested that one was freer to think

for one's self at the university level but others said that it was very difficult because by the time one had been in the formal learning system for many years it was no longer possible to think in any other way than the scientific.

Observation and theory were both mentioned as ways of producing and reproducing knowledge in the university. The properties of observation are that knowledge is derived from examining actual experiences, its source is local, inductive and often related to a need or a specific problem. The property of theory is that it is a generator of ideas, information or a technique, which could then be scientifically applied to actual experiences. Theory is understood in this context as being a framework for looking, so that knowledge can arise deductively. For knowledge derived directly from observation, the context is reasonably specific and while the solution can be tested against the problem and the knowledge adjusted accordingly, the context needs to be borne in mind when the knowledge is being passed on to others because it constantly needs to be tested in that new context.

A number of informants spoke about issues of power and knowledge production within universities. The knowledge context for theory production is seen to be more dependent on one's place in the hierarchy than on the theory's capacity to generate new thinking about a problem. In the Western tradition of observation within the scientific framework, everything is observed through the treatment process of scientific thinking and is therefore not really observation in the sense discussed above. A distinctive aspect of discussions with Australians was that individuals could create and discover knowledge, particularly university knowledge, and that the deductive application of theory in research is favoured in Australian universities as a way of knowing.

One point that requires some emphasis is that the knowledge taught in Australian universities is not seen to be directly derived from Australian society. A frequent comment made about Australian society by informants is that Australia doesn't really have a distinctive "knowledge" to call its own. The point made by political and bureaucratic informants is that knowledge at the national level is a valuable commodity to be bought and sold. More specifically and of central importance was the saleability of university knowledge, and for this to be successful, it is apparently important that Australian university knowledge is seen to be "as good as" anywhere else in the world.

At the level at which this project was researched, I got no sense that the informants regarded Australia as having a particular sort of knowledge to call its own, even though there are groups within Australia who have ways of knowing that give that group a particular worldview and a distinctive character. In Thailand there is such a thing as *khwaamrúusăngkom* local

knowledge that comes from inside Thailand and Thai informants describe its source as being traditional and predominantly rural in origin, and importantly, developed before contact with European and American influences. This *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge has been passed down from older to younger. It is the technical knowledge accumulated by the village over centuries, for example the knowledge of traditional plants and herbs. These are recognised as cultural storehouses of biological and technological knowledge of the peoples of Thailand and the *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom spoken of earlier is the outcome of this cumulative process.

Thai informants explain that earlier *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge was derived from the older *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom and has been passed on through Thai socialisation strategies that were geared to giving young members of the society the knowledge they needed in order for them to be able to be "Thai". These ways of thinking, knowing and doing things were either formally taught by older family or community members or informally acquired by the young through observation. There is a Thai saying "*doen taam phuyai maa mai kud* [walk behind the elders and the dogs won't bite]" (Phn̄phiriyakunchai and Vejjajiva 2010, 21) They explain that:

> *Thai society places great emphasis on respecting and obeying one's elders and betters…however, it is not just enough to walk behind – one must also study and create new things before taking one's place as the next generation of elders…*

Processes of formal and informal acquisition of *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge continued throughout a person's life; the shape of the knowledge changed over time and was context-based and the storehouses were available to all in the community. The contents were taken up and practised and sometimes, as the above saying suggests, improved.

For the Thai research group, this *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge is the one that identifies them as "Thai" but they said that increasingly their national knowledge was being influenced by *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, particularly, *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge. At an earlier time, *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge was useful to Thailand as discussed in Chap. 2 and was employed to establish such organisational structures as the Thai bureaucracy but increasingly it has not been not so easy to control its incursion into Thai ways of knowing.

Interestingly, when considering *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge, there is a similarity in Thailand and Australia in the location of such knowledge. In both nations, it resides predominantly with people who are not the ruling elites but who live within *langsàmăimài postmodern*, democratic nation states as distinctive collectivities: rural villagers, Indigenous peoples and immigrant ethnic minorities in Thailand and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, immigrant ethnic minorities and rural people in Australia. Certainly in neither nation is there a strong market demand for such knowledge at the level of higher education.

3.3.2 Siinsamaadipanjaa

So what of the development of *panjaa* wisdom in the university? The mode that Scheler (1963) described as the religious mode is being re-argued in discussions about *siin* ethics and morals across universities in both Thailand and Australia. Not surprisingly, these discussions must now take into account the pervasive economic morality according to which goodness, justice and virtue are assessed by their exchange-value in social relations.

There is recognition in the interviews that the temptation to go back to former religious or cultural hegemonic moral precepts would, informants feel, ultimately be unacceptable in a modern globally-conscious world. A number of academics suggest that an emerging ethical/moral position must be consensual and flexible amongst groups of people, often only appropriate for that particular circumstance. Central to this way of knowing is that people should have access to education that cultivates skills in them that could lead to a willingness to achieve consensus, recognising and respecting difference.

I believe that in the global arena there is not and probably never will be a socialisation of all humans that enables them to share a common set of principles for good living. Hence, there is a need at a minimum to cultivate tolerance and willingness for consensus (Fox 1996; Toh 1996). Even this minimal goal is thwarted by those who use such processes to maximise their own power. Recognition of this fact has led many to despair at ever finding moral consensus and it appeared in my discussions that current academic discussions of morals and ethics are struggling to find a ground in which to develop, spanning back many years (Peters 1966).

Thai university educators are divided in their perception of the role of the *máhăawíttáyaalai* university in cultivating a moral or ethical way of knowing, some believing that such a way of knowing is best cultivated

through extracurricular activities, if at all, with the curriculum to be based solely on the secular Western approach. These informants regard moral training as being predominantly outside the responsibility of the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university, more the responsibility of the home and the *wat* temple. They believe that the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university could support such training for those who are interested but that it should not be central to the functioning of the modern *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university.

Others point to the massive upheavals currently being experienced by the majority of people in Thailand and argue that the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university has a positive role to play in the discussion and development of ways of knowing that could deal morally with the new questions facing people in Thailand today. They believe that the family and the *wat* temples are less well equipped than the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* universities to understand the changes taking place. They regarded the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university as the last possibility, if the family and the temples fail, to train people in a way of knowing that is ethical and modern at the same time.

One senior administrator explained their approach to the acquisition of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge by sharing with me a Thai saying that worldly knowledge must be coupled with moral principles because without such training, the saying continues, "a person with a lot of knowledge becomes a very cunning person". When I discussed this with a senior administrator from another Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai*, they raised the problem of how the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* might achieve this moral way of knowing. They were concerned that because so much of the teaching methodology of a Thai *máhǎawíttáyaalai* has been based on learning by rote, there is a danger that in this environment, students would simply learn morals by rote as well if they were included in the curriculum. The administrator felt that, on balance, this was too big a risk to take because morals could easily become corrupted by indifference. The balance of opinion is that moral character is best developed through modelling and so it is the professors and other teaching staff rather than the curriculum that are pivotal to the development of *siin,* the ethical and moral way of knowing.

In Australian universities, there is less division of opinion. The predominant response is that it is not the responsibility of the university to develop the moral character of its students. There is recognition that Australians have such a diverse range of ethical positions that it is not possible to have ethics and morals within the curriculum. There are some tentative suggestions that the moral skills needed by Australians in the

new world are beyond the capacity of the university to provide, geared as it is to the production of technology and information, the extrinsic forces, rather than to cognitive and ethical cultivation of the individual. The Australian students, according to Australian academic informants, are being expected to produce, and prove their worth and have little time for morals and ethics. There is no suggestion that university staff could act as moral/ethical models for their students, and there is a sense of sadness in some academic circles that they can see the need but can do nothing to facilitate a solution.

At a structural level, there is evidence of the university administrators recognising the need for ethics and morals, for example, in discussions about equal opportunity and movement towards non-racism and non-sexism in the curriculum and course delivery. The product of non-sexist and non-racist ways of knowing is, in part, a capacity for ethical/moral living. The experience in Australian universities since the early 1980s, where there has been an attempt to assert a moral way of knowing in such things as the use of non-sexist, non-racist language in the university, has been a reaction of resistance followed by bureaucratic incrementalism that raises expectations insistently through policy reformulations followed by periods of new hostility and resistance. One point of opposition expressed by Australian academics and administrators is that it is not the role of the university to be involved in such "social engineering", as it is termed in Australian parlance.

In both Thailand and Australia, there is recognition that with the impact of globalisation people need a new moral way of knowing but there is little evidence of any form of leadership in this matter within universities. The problem seems to be beyond the capacity of the university. Some in universities re-assert the importance of ethical ways of knowing while some re-assert the scientific way of knowing. One of the challenges facing university administrators and educators becomes deciding how much it is the responsibility of the university to equip students with the skills to arrive at ethical positions that are consensual and cross-culturally sensitive. Even in the universities that take up this approach, the strength of the individualism of the West is significant because each individual will come to the consensus process with their own ideas.

In Thailand, consensual practices may be differently attained because of the already existent pervasive sense of communality in Thai social practices. Trends in Thailand for people to embrace Western individualism ask the Thai *ajaan* questions about their role and responsibility to offer skills to the students in developing consensus-based ethics in a world of plurality.

3.3.2.1 Deep Examination, Mind-Strengthening Practices and Langsàmǎimài Postmodernity

The mode of thinking that Scheler (1963) described as metaphysical is probably better described in the university context as deep, sustained examination. Its existence is often overlooked in discussions about the role of the *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university because there is a divide in opinion about its characteristics.

Some believe the capacity for interest in the metaphysical to be innate, giving further weight to the ten per cent theory. Others believe that everyone has the capacity but that it needs some sort of trigger to become manifest. The university people to whom I have spoken over the years in Thailand and Australia by and large take the former position. Little attention had therefore been paid to how the capacity for deep examination might be best cultivated. This is a field of understanding that is best seen within a Buddhist world view and the following ideas arose from my analysis of two particular interviews with senior Thai academics, and my ideas that were generated from these discussions (see also Chuaprapaisilp 1989, Chapters. 3 and 7). Deep examination seems to be the least understood in present *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university activities in either country but without it, arguably, neither *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom or *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom can arise.

The product of deep examination is the capacity for concentration. An outcome of such concentration on any subject is that one develops strength of mind. A way of knowing that enables deep examination of a subject is separate from and different to, but compatible with, analysis of a subject commonly recognised as scientific thinking in the modern *máhǎawíttáyaalai* university. The capacity for, and cultivation of, concentrated deep examination of a subject is a central component in the production of new university knowledge according to these two informants.

In Thailand, this capacity is recognised and cultivated within Buddhist practices. The Buddhist doctrine does not hold with the ten per cent theory and asserts that all minds are the same in capacity. It further asserts that training can be given to strengthen the mind and these teachings are preserved in the *Tipiṭaka* (a point that was more fully explained in Chap. 2). In Thailand the university administrator and educator informants assume that if a person has such a capacity it would already have been both triggered and trained somewhere else, generally in a *wat* temple. As such, they do not operate much differently from their Australian counterparts in not providing opportunity for the cultivation of this capacity at the level of the *máhǎawíttáyaalai university*.

I am suggesting in this book that the globally compassionate and sustainable production and exchange of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge requires a conscious recognition of the capacity for disciplined concentration. Without this capacity, the product of thinking, in this case critical analysis, becomes shallow and expedient, and dynamic ethical engagement becomes empty of form and ritual. Further, I am suggesting that any passing on of knowledge that does not have a concurrent training in strengthening the mind for deep examination departs significantly from the ideal role of the university, that of a responsibility to be involved in the training of people for a globally-interconnected world.

Universities should not simply become regurgitation factories of "already thought" bits of information, now popularly known as "mashing". This means that universities have to consider seriously those teaching and research strategies that strengthen the minds of the students, producing a capacity for concentration and deep examination. This is particularly critical for the social sciences and the humanities whose very existence in the crude economic view of things is under threat.

One outcome of such deep examination is now being more extensively discussed in Thai and Australian universities with the emergence of what is being called *langsàmăimài* postmodernity. I have elsewhere noted the similarities between the postmodernism of Baudrillard and the Buddhist metaphysical texts (Ma Rhea 1994) suggesting that questions that were formerly raised in discussions of theological metaphysics before the advent of the Enlightenment are re-emerging in the offerings of Nietzsche, Foucault, Habermas, Kristeva, Irigaray, Baudrillard and contemporary postmodern thinkers.[2] When the Western university intellectual begins asking metaphysical questions that are not derived from the scientific paradigm, they are crossing the border into subject matter previously occupied by Western and Eastern religious metaphysics scholars. Recognition needs to be given that in such a subject matter, Western secular intellectuals in universities fall far behind Eastern and South East Asian philosophical traditions. Questions that can appear startling and disruptive to a Western university committed to the scientific way of knowing are commonplace in societies where deep examination into the nature of reality is evident, as in Thailand. Increasingly, as knowledge becomes internationalised,

[2] The Western Christian tradition also has had metaphysicists within its religious activities. St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa de Avila are good examples of practitioners of a Christian form of deep examination.

these different ways of knowing that together can produce *panjaathaan-glohk* worldly wisdom and intellectual balance will have to be recognised and cultivated, or lost beneath the sheer volume and pervasiveness of the Western scientific way of knowing.

Two Thai metaphysical exponents who have assisted me with this pointed out that even the pursuit of metaphysical questions across faculties in Thai universities have been conducted within the dominant scientific discourse method, where evidence is demanded of things that cannot be known solely by data-driven scientific analysis. I feel that the reflective, thoughtful aspect of Thai *langsàmǎimài* postmodern discussion of such metaphysical, philosophical and sociological questions is an echo of the way of knowing that is an outcome of deep examination (Čharœ̄nsī 2544BE). This way of knowing is not well liked within the university sector in either country. Like the reactions to attempts to assert an ethical way of knowing within the university, there is strong reaction against the questions raised by *langsàmǎimài* postmodern thinkers and Buddhist practitioners alike. Thai administrators make the counter-assertion against postmodernity when they argue that the university is the site of outsider knowledge and that the way of knowing should be the scientific one. Scheler's (1963) proposition that the university is intrinsically tied up with the scientific project is correct in that the scientific way of knowing produces the dominant discourse. There is a Thai proverb "A man full of knowledge cannot support himself" that Bhamorabutr (1982, 30) explains means:

> *A person with education and knowledge, he knows well in many subjects, but he cannot support himself, no money, no house, some time lack of food. He is unfortunate, because he studies arts and sciences only, he does not study moral education and ethics, he cannot behave himself to get along with people, and unable to make his own adjustment to others.*

In an intrinsic sense, the multiple roles that the university is being expected to play cannot simply be met by the rigid adherence to one way of knowing. As the extrinsic demands increase, it will behove the university sector in Thailand and in countries with whom it shares the development of its intellectual elites in bilateral university exchanges, to look to the conscious training of the students to strengthen their minds so that in this time of information explosion they will be able to discern, by deep examination, which are the bits of information that are useful for further analysis

and which sorts of information will further the capacity for ethical living. Those who have developed this capacity for disciplined concentration will also be able to better understand the information that is being exchanged across cultures, by looking deeply into it and being able to see the similarities and differences beyond popular opinion.

The moral and metaphysical ways of knowing and training the mind that are small voices within the intrinsic university activity are only briefly glimpsed, if at all, in the pursuit of internationalisation that is forming the extrinsic manifestation of the modern *máhăawíttáyaalai* university in in Thailand and Australia.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the *máhăawíttáyaalai* university in Thailand and begun to examine the sort of university education being offered by a country such as Australia, with whom Thailand has had a long education partnership and the bilateral positioning of each university sector in the modern world. Looking at the historical foundations of Thai and Australian universities, I have then examined the thinking of key informants in both countries surrounding the production of university knowledge and the present inattention to wisdom. Finally, I have discussed the respective roles of both knowledge and wisdom in each nation.

The pressures of economic globalisation are centrally challenging the sometimes- contradictory purposes of the university in both countries for different reasons. In bilateral relations, this has led to the international relationships between Thai and Australian universities to take on a critical economic function. These relationships are being promoted and then scrutinised for their value and their earning potential. The next section moves the analysis of old and new exchanges of knowledge that have occurred between these two nations as a way of examining the changing nature of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge.

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PART 1

Knowledge, 'Outsiders', and the Market

This section examines the circulation of university-derived knowledge under the condition of globalisation. Chap. 4 presents an analysis of tangible evidence of the exchanges of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia over a 20-year period as a way of examining the historical modernity project of the international university system and the impact this is having on new development of the Thai university system under *langsamăimai* postmodern globalisation. Chap. 5 offers critical analysis of an emerging awareness of global education markets in Thailand and Australia, and examines the conceptual interaction that is occurring between internationalisation, globalisation and regionalism. Drawing on the bilateral knowledge exchange relationship between the Kingdom of Thailand and Australia, I begin with a discussion about individual responses to such an awareness of global possibilities. Internationalisation is then discussed as a characteristic of an earlier sort of awareness about the world that was not so influenced by global economic forces, with more recent uses of the word being examined. I then move on to ideas about globalisation, proposing that it is a concept that is given meaning because of peoples' awareness of global markets; I have found in global education services markets that ideas of internationalisation are promoted alongside globalisation. I conclude by examining various perspectives of informants' awareness of global education markets such as regionalism and international law. Chap. 6 moves to an examination of national interests, building on the previous chapters, and drawing on both interviews and official

documents to develop an overview of the national interests that are being served, using the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia as the focus.

The ways in which university knowledge continues to be exchanged between the two countries has made an important contribution to overall bilateral relations and is becoming an issue of importance for future relations. Thailand is keen for Australia's continued support for its economic development. Australia is keen to tap into a potentially lucrative market for the sale of university knowledge in Thailand. Both countries are keen to establish themselves in the region in positions that will benefit their own economies, deriving from the economic development of South and South East Asia. By identifying these inter-relationships, the national interests of the two countries begin to emerge more clearly and the consequences of these types of collaboration for the sorts of knowledge being produced become clearer.

CHAPTER 4

Old and New Exchange: Transitioning to Modernity and Beyond

4.1 Introduction

In its most recent World Development Report, the World Bank notes that "without shared mental models, it would be impossible in many cases for people to develop institutions, solve collective action problems, feel a sense of belonging and solidarity, or even understand one another" (World Bank 2015, 62). It is easy to forget the individual people involved in the exchanges of university knowledge across cultures because at the level of policy-making, such individuals are human resource capital, harnessed to social and economic development goals. It is interesting to note a shift of perspective in World Bank analysis that now takes into account the importance of such mental models. World Bank reports of the 1980s and 1990s focused more sharply on the societal mores that were thought to hinder development (World Bank 1980, 1989, 1995).

In this chapter, the activities of individuals will be heard most strongly as students, university administrators, academics, bureaucrats, politicians, or education services brokers, highlighting those parts of the tangible evidence where the importance of individual interests is the main focus although certainly individuals act within the universities and national and global perspectives that are the foci of the following chapters. This chapter allows an analysis of mental models that are employed by individuals to help them to negotiate complex cross-cultural knowledge exchanges. This discussion will focus on one of the interlocking aspects presented in the first chapter, individual interests (Fig. 1.1). Tangible evidence of old

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and new exchanges will be presented (anonymously) through a series of examples drawn from interview data. Metanarratives that surround these exchanges, the prevailing opinions of the individuals involved, will then be discussed.

4.2 Examples of Old Exchanges

Example 1:

This Australian university was already well established after the Second World War and has always been a popular place for Thais to study and, although no records have been kept, I have been told on a number of occasions that many Thais were educated here under the Colombo Plan. Some also now come as fee-paying students. The university has had a number of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Thai universities and has been able to build on old relationships and respond to changing Thai and Australian needs. Many Thais receiving scholarships still choose to come to this university because of its continued high status, even though some commented that they felt that it was no longer at the cutting edge of access to new scientific and technological knowledge. Others spoke fondly of their experiences and pointed out that reputation was very important because Thais were influenced by their teachers and peers and that ongoing relationships had been relied on over the last 20 years, on both sides. For Thai informants, this is as important as access to new knowledge gained during the narrow window of formal university study undertaken previously.

Example 2:

This university provides an example of the oldest continuous programme that I have found operating between Thailand and Australia. It has been, as with so many of these types of activities, the product of long-term individual academic initiatives and ongoing personal friendships between Thai and Australian academics that were developed almost accidentally, 15 years ago, with a chance meeting between a Thai and an Australian academic. The Thai academic wanted access to new ideas about, and methods for, the teaching of English and the Australian academic wanted their students to have the opportunity to teach English in a different culture to really experience the problems of the exchange of university knowledge from one culture to another.

Each year, Australian trainee teachers have undertaken their teaching practicum in Thailand, teaching English for 10 weeks. I spent time in

Australia with the Australian academic who had been responsible for the programme from the early 1980s and subsequently was invited to observe the students teaching at the Thai teacher's college and to interview the Thai academics partnering in this practicum experience in Bangkok. I was also able to accompany the group on a day trip to the River Kwai Bridge, to interview a number of the Australian students and their accompanying Australian and Thai lecturers and later to meet with the Thai academics a further number of times. Of all the old exchanges, this independently financed and managed programme impressed me deeply, and spending time with these people has helped greatly in my understanding of some of the differences in approach between gift-based and commercially motivated projects.

It is an ongoing programme that has continued to operate alongside newer involvements; it is in receipt of any new money, and it is a very popular option for education students at the Australian university even though they had to finance it themselves. With typical Thai generosity, accommodation and breakfast are provided at the Bangkok-based college and so the students really only pay for the airfare and take personal spending money. Even the airfare is substantially reduced because of the relationships that have been built up over the years. It is not a big programme and it does not make any big claims, but it is clear from talking to all the parties involved that it provides a unique opportunity for university-knowledge exchange in a way that everyone has greatly appreciated.

Senior Australian administrators are putting pressure on the organisers to make the programme bigger and to change the approach and this has caused some distress to the organisers who argue that it works very well as it is. The Thai academics confirm that they are very happy with it and the students are eager to participate in it. It is uncertain whether this exchange will survive pressures to conform to the pressure being imposed by the new public management model discussed in earlier chapters.

Example 3:

I had a number of opportunities to talk with a Thai informant who is a distinguished academic in an older Thai university, because the academic wanted to help an "Aussie", especially one who was from the same city as where they had studied. There was much discussion of people known in common and offers to arrange interviews with other Colombo graduates from Australia who were all now in positions of high status in Thailand. The informant regarded the education they received as excellent, although it had been necessary to complete further postgraduate study in America as well.

One significant concern raised was that even though they received an excellent training in classic economic theory and, through access to modern development knowledge, contributed significantly to Thailand's economic development, they saw it as crucial for Thailand's future for theorists to move away from the use of Western outsider knowledge reliance on deductive theory. The way forward in Thailand was going to be achieved, this informant believed, by developing inductive theory where the economic understanding was based on Thai rather than on Western examples of the "rational economic being". This informant noted that because of the strength of the Western model in Thai economics at Thai universities, it has become very difficult to develop an "indigenous economics". They argued that this evolution in thinking would be an important next step in Thai progress towards academic self-determination.

A point made strongly by this informant and subsequently echoed by other Thai informants has been that while there is good feeling towards Australia, Australians have expected and demanded too much of Thailand too soon. This is because Thailand is still nowhere near Australia in terms of GDP or any similar indicators and has yet to establish itself on the world stage before the relationship can become equal.

Example 4:

This Thai university has had many scholars that had been trained in Australia or have worked closely with Australian academics in Thailand to develop the teaching skills and research capacities of the Thai university system. The financial support derived from Australia has been widely appreciated in universities where the contribution has been significant. Again, in recognition of previous support, a number of people spoke about the ways that they have tried to help Australia's interests by such things as being involved in the Australian Embassy's attempts to form an Australian alumni organisation and in supporting Australian education services' exhibitions held in Thailand. I have been provided by a senior administrator with such ongoing supports as a room, telephone and library access and have been given many contacts and other support in conducting the research with Australian alumni. Without such goodwill, the research would have been significantly hampered. Many of these people have extended hospitality and help when needed and while some of this was simply Thai culture, some can also be directly attributed to a recognition of previous Australian support for them in their personal and institutional development.

Example 5:

This person is a senior faculty member of a regional Thai university and is very active in promoting Australia. Awarded a scholarship to come to Australia, when Australia's reputation for nursing education was on a par with the best in the world, this academic has been able to develop a radical teaching approach that has met the needs of Thai nurses and provided a framework for nurse education over a 20-year period. While there has been significant intellectual encouragement and excitement shown by their Australian academic supervisors over the years, this academic felt that unless one understood Buddhism one would be at a loss to really appreciate the teaching style or approach and none of the academic advisors from Australia had ever been able to contribute to the localising project in a useful way. It helped greatly in our discussions that I am Buddhist and concerned with many similar questions about how university knowledge is best exchanged in ways that respect other ways of knowing.

We were surprised and pleased at the similarities of our ideas and the informant expressed gratitude to Australian people for opportunities in the past, on a number of occasions. Because of such goodwill, this academic has been willing to use their position of high status to assist in the development of research collaborations with Australian university partners but warned that having studied in Australia, they are aware of Australian attitudes to Thailand that are racist and greedy and they are only prepared to help those that are interested in projects of mutual benefit.

Example 6:

Like the previous older university, this Thai university has many academics who studied in Australia under the Colombo Plan to do postgraduate degrees or have worked closely with visiting Australian academics. Again, as in so many places, I have experienced a great openness and willingness to help from the Thai people with whom I spoke. Many of the Australian Colombo Plan graduates are in positions of power and are facilitating exchanges and other new programmes because of their interest in helping to meet Australia's economic needs.

This university has two important missions, one to be accountable to the local community and the other to become a significant centre for university knowledge exchange with the poorer countries of the region. A university administrator described the university as doing what Australia did over the 30 years of Colombo Plan involvement in seeing its international responsibilities as primarily towards its own region. In this way, Australia has been used as a model of how such a programme of university knowledge

exchange should proceed. Because there is still great need for rural development in this part of Thailand, there is little interest in attempts to market Australian education. Most people are not rich enough to buy such a thing. Recipients of Thai and Australian scholarships are encouraged to take these up in Australia when the courses were relevant to the particular needs of the university. The strongest measure of goodwill here is the willingness to take Australian undergraduate exchange students, a new programme built on old relationships.

During one of my research trips, I was able to be involved with a senior university administrator in welcoming a new group of Australian UMAP[1] students to the university and I conducted interviews with both the administrator and the students together and later with the students by themselves. The support and willingness to help me and open up new possibilities was seen to be associated with the strength of past associations and interest in the research project itself.

There is still substantial aid money made available to this university unlike the Bangkok-based ones, and the relationships are to some extent still influenced by a donor-recipient attitude although the newer projects are taking on a more transactive perspective. By way of an example of this new form of exchange, the academic staff of one faculty have been able enrol in a postgraduate degree at an Australian university, undertaking most of their study in Thailand with visiting Australian academics, and complete their study with a short stay in Australia. They are also given a discount on the cost of the course.

This is one example of a university in transition from an aid-based relationship to a more commercially oriented approach. This above initiative 20 years ago heralded a significant shift in the balance between old and new forms of exchange, with the Australian academics being at the university for the first teaching module at the same time as I was there. More recently, I was told that the course was so popular that the university has extended this arrangement to other faculties, in recognition of the needs of Thai academics to upgrade their academic qualifications under new forms of commercialised university education exchanges.

One academic at this university commented that the Thais are a very pragmatic people and they understand that Australia is less economically strong and is unable to support Thailand in the same ways as previously. Equally, they commented that Thailand is becoming more confident of itself in the region and no longer needs the same relationship with Australia.

[1] UMAP: University Mobility in the Asia Pacific was established in 1993 (see www.umap.org)

Summary

There are many other examples of old programmes but this selection has drawn out the common themes of such exchanges. Early forms were predominantly donor-recipient based and, as such, Thai informants felt that they have been in some ways restricted by the constraints of this style of relationship. The exchanges of knowledge were usually what the Australian or other overseas donor or Thai policy-makers thought were needed, rather than the choice being made by consultation between academics and students. For all the Colombo graduates there was a sense of pride in their words as they described their education in Australia and how it had enabled them to contribute directly to the rapid improvement in Thailand's economy. Everyone mentioned that things are significantly different now and that the needs of both countries have changed. While there is a sense of *kreengcaj*[2] expressed by Thai informants for opportunities given and a willingness on a personal level to help, there is also the comment that Australian aid also benefits Australians and that Australia cannot hold Thailand to any direct reciprocity of previous favours. This has been best described as Australia needing to learn a little patience and to allow things to develop in mutually beneficial ways without immediately expecting some sort of repayment now that Thailand is becoming more economically stable. The slow pace of rural development in Thailand had made Australian attempts at marketing in the regional universities appear too eager, too greedy. The common impression has been that there is still a long way to go before Australia can expect any significant benefit to accrue from its relationship with Thailand.

4.3 Examples of New Exchanges

Example 7:

In this example, a centre has been established with Thai money in an Australian university to facilitate Thai business people being brought to Australia from the parent company to do business-upgrade courses. I have spoken to the Australian administrator but have been unable to speak to the Thai partners in Bangkok. The discussion I had with the Australian administrator was very helpful, even though this person was bitter about the processes and outcomes of such a joint venture. They experience this

[2] Haas (1964, 39) gives the meaning to this very complex word as "to have consideration for; to be reluctant to impose (upon)"; see also Moore (1992, 83–84) who describes this important heart word as being a mingling of "reverence, respect, deference, homage, and fear" and that it "defines the way that people of various ranks communicate, behave, and react with one another"

sort of education as being used as window dressing for an expansion of a Thai company's business interests in Australia.

The Australian university thought that it would be making a large profit from the arrangement but has found it not to be the case, and some of the university staff were at loggerheads with others over whether to stop the relationship or not. The university has received considerable kudos from having such a centre but has been restrained by the Thai parent company with regard to its development. For some academics, the loss of academic freedom has caused considerable upset and cynicism directed both at the funding body and the Australian university administrators.

This example shows how the establishment of joint ventures across cultures in higher education is not all plain sailing and high profit margins. The informant echoes the comments of many Australia informants in this relatively recent commercial world of education markets, expressing amazement that so few people are critical of such expectations and that so many are prepared to sacrifice education ideals for the sake of a "quick buck".

Example 8:

One nursing department in a regional university in Thailand has successfully developed a problem-based learning methodology in conjunction with an Australian university. The Australian academics first trained a very small number of Thai nurse educators in the methodology in Australia. In the following year, another small group were trained, again in Australia. Thai universities have a very good reputation for nurse education and a high standard of qualification for their nurse educators. They have selected both long and short course training for their staff, based both on the reputation of the overseas institution and the needs of their own programme. On the strength of a recommendation from an Australian academic in nursing, I sought out Thai academic nurse educators who had paid particular attention to developing teaching strategies appropriate to the cross-cultural exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia.

The early training was done "gratis" and was in the words of the Australian academic "culturally fascinating but not commercially viable". As the Australian academics came under increasing pressure from their university's administrators to offer the training on a full cost recovery basis, the Thais suggested that the Australians come to Thailand and help to establish a teaching curriculum for the methodology in the Thai universities. The Thais subsequently ran the courses themselves and occasionally

approached the Australians as consultants. Significantly, while the personal relationships were very good, the Thai informants have commented with some frustration that it is because of greed that the Australian university administrators are wanting to charge for something that had initially been an academic exchange between peers.

Some Thai informants speak of this as a form of racism because Australians sometimes do not recognise that Thais approach the teaching-learning relationship in a different way to this new profit-driven approach. Certainly charging for training and education had made Australian nursing courses less of an option for Thai nurses. Thai nurse educators reflect that if one has to pay for a course then one should go to a world-class university that has maximum status attached to the purchased qualification rather than go to a place where the cutting edge is being developed. While for example, Australia has an excellent reputation it does not have the status of an American qualification. Therefore, without the attraction of scholarships or mutually beneficial exchange agreements, it is the opinion of these informants that Australia is unlikely to be able to attract Thai nursing academics to pay to study in the numbers that they hope to attract.

Example 9:

From 1984, under Australian foreign policy initiatives and economic pressures to "internationalise" (see both the Jackson and Goldring Reports that heralded a substantial shift in Australian policy towards education for development and as an exportable commodity), this Australian university found itself encouraged to "capitalise" on its long involvement with countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Previous assistance extended to Thai universities had been based on a sense of collegiality, in recognition of the competence of the Thai university system. The Australian administrator stressed the inappropriateness of this university recreating dependent relationships, when for the past ten years it had been working towards relationships of interdependence with Asian universities.

I was unable to get exact details of the various arrangements due to the commercial nature of this university's plans; neither was it possible (in this or any other Australian university studied) to establish a distinction between Thai scholars on scholarships and full fee paying scholars. This university has a long established joint degree with a Thai university that has money involved but amounts have not been mentioned. It has been speculated by several informants in this Australian university that there are very few Thais studying in Australia at the postgraduate level who are paying the full fees themselves; the majority are assumed to be scholarship

holders and full fee-paying Thai students represent only a fraction of the Thai postgraduate group worldwide.

There are more undergraduate Thais becoming interested in studying in this university, preferably for only a part of their degree, but the administrator of the International Office of this university had a strong impression that it was very difficult to make these arrangements commercially viable because fee-paying scholars needed considerable infrastructure support in terms of language and study skills. These expenses that contribute to diminishing the commercial viability of a larger emphasis on full fee-paying international students such as represented by the Thai cohort…

This university has many years of experience in Thailand and has well-developed relationships. The director of the International Office here is cautious of newer, Australian government-directed, joint-degree arrangements knowing from experience that it is trusted friendships that assist most in future relationships. This informant cautions a very slow approach, contrary to the general race for the Asian education dollar, speculating that on some benchmark assessments, the profits are at best neutral when dealing with Thais. It was stressed that this does not negate the importance of building relationships and participating in joint degrees and academic exchanges, but that as a commercial venture, there is less clear profit than is commonly optimistically forecast. A nation such as Thailand t is in a very strong negotiating position with a number of global institutions being researched for the best deal. The Thai strategy makes it difficult for this university to be certain of any eventual profit that might accrue after all deals had been done and the related expenses paid.

Relationships based on trust and familiarity, are vulnerable to the changes that normally occur in bureaucracies. Old staff leave, and new staff come in, often unable to maintain the earlier rapport. This informant has experienced, in two cases, new Australian administrators who have upset old relationships by pushing a particularly aggressive marketing strategy. This has caused the Thai universities that were involved to take a step back and re-assess the old relationship, and try to slow things down a bit and ease the perceived pressure.

Example 10:

This is a short training program under the 2004 MOU (Australian Government 2004) where Thai academics come to Australia to learn newer teaching methodologies for teaching English as a second or foreign language. It is not specifically designed for Thai needs, drawing from a wide group in the Asian region, and many difficulties have arisen as a

result. It is funded by scholarships given by the Australian government and managed by Thai bureaucrats in Thailand. One of the Australian academics said, that much work needs to be done to work with such a diverse group so that their training needs could be met.

While some countries' scholars expect to be given an off-the-shelf course that could be taken back to their home country, others such as the Thai scholars want a course that meets their particular needs, even when they appear to be "happy" in the classroom situation. An academic informant said it was only through having some Thai friends that they had discovered that the course had been less useful than the academic had thought. Discussions were proceeding to rectify this but the informant pointed out that without Thai friends they would never have known there were problems.

The academic expressed concern, saying that while the Thais were very polite and accommodating of the Australian teacher, this is an inappropriate learning strategy in the Australian classroom because the Thai students would not get what they wanted. This inevitably leads to students not recommending the course to their peers, and so it is in the interests of this Australian university to examine its teaching approach with Thai students, with great care. This informant said that without good cross-cultural communication, there were numerous problems with Thai scholars across Australia, that were not being recognised. It is this informant's opinion that given that most Thais, particularly at postgraduate level, are studying in Australia on scholarships, there is no market mechanism that allows them to vote with their feet if they are dissatisfied.

Another academic stressed that newer programs are fraught with potential problems because of the inexperience of Australian educators in teaching across cultures effectively, and this informant is trying to develop a teaching approach that makes it possible for an Australian academic to work in a classroom situation that is sensitive to cultural difference. This they regard as a critical area of professional need for academics if Australian universities are to compete in the growing global marketing of university education.

Example 11:

This example involves two groups of Australian UMAP art students at two universities in Thailand. I spoke to one Australian university programme manager of one of these exchanges in Australia, a group of students from one project and academic staff and administrators in both the universities in Thailand where they were based. UMAP has been a

particularly interesting programme in its development since the late 1980s, seemingly operating with some of the earlier exchange ideals amidst the new Australian government push for full fee payment for university education. That was until one began to examine it more fully.

By the mid-1990s, the message of Australian universities to Asia was that if one now wanted university education then for most it would be necessary to pay for it. Australian universities were under pressure to "internationalise" and one way to achieve this objective cheaply was to offer students an opportunity to study at an overseas university. It was not the education per se, that was being offered, but the broader experience of another culture in the relatively safe framework of education structures. In this way, universities in the Asia-Pacific region were encouraged to exchange students at the undergraduate level.

The problem with this approach is clear in the case of Thailand. As remarked by Achava-Amrung (2002, 150), Thailand had been experiencing severe economic crisis from 1996 and had made difficult decisions about reducing funding for higher education. One aspect of such policy decisions was that the Thai Ministry of University Affairs and the individual Thai universities were unable to subsidise undergraduate education by supporting international mobility when there were seen to be more important priorities for national development. UMAP relies on the local institutions waiving tuition costs and ensuring that the wages of the teaching staff are covered locally. For Australia, this program has been ideal because there is scope for Australians to go overseas without having to find large amounts of money. It has proved much more costly for Thai students to be supported to come to Australia because the cost of living is so much greater. According to a Thai university administrator, Thailand perceives Australia as making disproportionate use of the system over the past years without mutual benefit accruing to the Thai university system.

It has not all been plain sailing for the students either as discussions with some of them showed. They discovered that there were some broader issues of mismatch and some specific problems with Thailand. In one program, because of their lack of skill in the Thai language, the Australian students were being instructed in the English language separately from the Thai students. In Example 15 (to be discussed below), the student was in a Thai language classroom and was having a very hard time even keeping up, let alone passing any of the exams that were set.

Both situations were seen by the students to have drawbacks but were common when Australian students had been exposed to the Thai

education system directly without proper preparation. The Thai teaching style does not sit comfortably with Australian students who expect to ask many questions. They were warned about this at their welcome to the university but were still finding it a shock. We discussed the specific effects of culture shock in depth and it was recognised that even with good preparation, Thailand was a country that took a long time to understand.

One Australian art student had particular problems with the idea of artistic freedom, coming up against images that in Thailand were considered sacred and therefore not subject to artistic licence. This student's approach of superimposing Buddha images onto animals' backsides was causing a lot of grief to the Thai academics; this was also causing distress to Thai students. The Australian student defended the importance of disrupting all images, particularly those held sacred, as being a contribution that art could make to a society.

The Thai people did not accept this as an excuse for rudeness, with the point being made by a senior Thai academic and well-respected artist that education exchanges really needed to be accompanied by very good cross-cultural information and a respect and sensitivity to the matters of importance in the host country. This informant felt that visiting Australian students sometimes did not understand their own ignorance, believing they knew everything there was to know about the world; further, Australian students sometimes tended to give the impression that they did not need to learn anything from Thailand. The informant asked, "If this is the case, then what are they doing in Thailand?"

When talking with these and the other Australian students in Example 2 above, the common experience was that of culture shock with a variety of responses. I am uncertain whether the expected outcomes of these exchange policies can be realised without careful preparation and debriefing afterwards. While different from mainstream tourism, educational tourism has problems that are barely glimpsed, couched as they are in all sorts of opportunistic rhetoric aimed at the Australian undergraduate student. For Australian universities, this is an experiment in cross-cultural educational practice and careful examination is needed to examine the claims made about it. Without proper management, negative experiences are prone, in the words of one Australian student, to "turn you off Asia forever!"

Example 12:

I have interviewed university administrators from both the Thai and the Australian universities involved in this exchange and have had an

opportunity to talk at length to the students involved. One student has been doing part of their degree at a Thai university. Initially, the Australian university wrote to the Thai university and requested that the student be able to do part of their degree at the Thai university for credit in Australia. Nothing was heard from the Thai university so the Australian university wrote again with the request. Again, nothing was heard, so the decision was made to send the student anyway.

The student arrived with no arrangements having been made. One department in the Thai university assumed the student would be paying fees and so "snapped them up" into a course that was, according to a senior Thai university administrator, academically unsuitable for the student. This informant believed that academically it would have been better for the student to be at another campus doing a different course but they were out-manoeuvred by the department that thought the student would have fees to pay. When the Australian university heard of the requirement to pay fees they demanded that the Australian student be treated the same as a local student as was agreed in their Memorandum of Understanding.

By this time, the Thai university administrators and academics were very offended by the Australian approach. There was resentment that the Australian academics had ignored the polite Thai way of saying "no" by way of not replying to the first letter, and the more direct Thai "no" signalled by the lack of reply to the second letter. It was to their amazement that the student arrived, unprepared, on their doorstep and there was anger that the Australian university had pushed them into something that they were unwilling to do.

The student was aware of all the tensions but had decided to make the best of the situation and was having a challenging, rewarding though academically difficult time. The student was being very well supported by the staff of the International Office of the university and was being treated like local students as much as was possible. It was eventually agreed that the student would pay the equivalent of the local fees much to the anger of the academics in the department where the student had been studying.

This example raises a number of important issues for discussion in the following chapters. There seems to be a situation developing of cross-purposes between exchanges of student placements discussed in the UMAP example above, where money exchange is kept to a minimum, conducted in an overarching environment where the selling of university education is being pursued in such a way as to seek to maximise profit. This example shows that the Thais, like their Australian counterparts, are

eager to secure foreign money by selling their education but exchange-memorandum agreements seem to be cutting across this in some very interesting ways. A continuum between the gift of education and the commodification of education seems to be emerging more apparently, as the exchange of education expands and becomes more complex. This will be examined in more detail in the following chapters.

Example 13:

Thai academics at an older Thai university suggested to me that mutual benefit between Australian and Thai universities involves meeting different but equally important needs. Thais need science and technology, engineering, informatics and biotechnology that Australian universities can offer. Australia needs to educate itself about the countries in the region and Thailand is well placed to assist in such learning. In parallel with the strategy of Australian universities to market their university knowledge, Thai academics are also constructing courses that they feel would be marketable to an Australian need. As one Thai university administrator said, "If negotiated exchanges can be arranged then so be it…otherwise Australians can enrol on a full fee-paying basis to do an intensive course about Thailand taught by Thai academics in English".

I attended one such month-long intensive course, taught by eminent scholars about both the modern country and the ancient kingdom that is Thailand. Furthermore, I was offered the famous warmth of Thai hospitality, an important part of my learning during the course. Outings and tours were organised and I was given ongoing support for the research once the course was completed. In keeping with the market ethos, the course was expensive but the quality of teaching and the depth of analysis offered were invaluable.

Having had some experience of the Australian approach to marketing and conducting courses, I have been struck by the cultural differences in the approaches. In Australian universities, the needs of the students are largely streamlined into support service activities such as orientation, with counselling and language/study skills support available as necessary. The main focus is on the academic educational processes and the students are treated the same as local students except for some subject tutorial support in some disciplines. My experience at the Thai university is qualitatively different. The participants are treated like valued guests and there is a strong emphasis on the participants leaving Thailand with an informed and good impression of the whole country, not simply of the course being undertaken.

Because of my preparation for the fieldwork for my thesis and subsequent research trips, I developed a general understanding of the history, geography, politics, economics and so on but had a unique opportunity to discuss some of the issues in detail with Thai academics. Accordingly, this book has been researched with much deeper analysis than would have been possible without the knowledge given at this course. In addition, many Thai academics have been educated overseas, some in Australia, and so have been able and willing to reflect upon their own experiences as students. There were many interesting conversations about how they were treating us much better than Thai students are treated in Western countries such as the USA, UK and Australia where Thai students are left, substantially to fend for themselves. My Thai teachers worked hard to improve our experiences based on their own in foreign countries. What is certain is that such academics that have run such courses with their high standard of teaching, their sensitivity to foreigners' learning needs and their up-to-date information about Thailand, make them a valuable source of university knowledge to be exchanged with other countries on a fee-for-service basis.

According to a senior Thai university administrator, Australia unfortunately seemed unwilling to admit that Thailand has anything to teach Australians. The focus is normally on exposure to "Asia" rather than on approaching Thailand with some humility and finding grounds for the meeting of the mutual needs for mutual benefit. There are Thai academics that are prepared to assist Australian curriculum developers with their Asian Studies but who have not been asked to help in this programme. Australia is perceived as entering the region without knowledge and without wisdom and while Australians continue to sell their university knowledge, these processes mask a much deeper need for education exchanges that could facilitate the real exchange of university knowledge across cultures. Thais consistently spoke of this as being a far better strategy economically for Australia than the current initiatives, but one that seems far more difficult to grasp.

Not only are this and other Thai universities opening their doors to Western overseas students but also they are keen to emulate Australia's success in attracting students from other countries in the region. This strategy is a potential source of conflict for Thailand and Australia and will be examined in greater depth in later chapters.

Example 14:

The Thai university partner in the venture approached Australian universities in an area of similar interest to establish a regional forum that

might protect their mutual interests from outside interests, especially American, which threatened to undermine regional authority in the exploitation of a certain resource. Initially, both sides applied for funds and I was privy to some of the difficulties of that process. Because this was a "grassroots" initiative, it was not considered a priority by any funding body. The Thai academic explained that this was based on ignorance of the problem at the policy level in both countries, and that it was considered critical enough for both parties to decide to go ahead without external funding after about four months of negotiations. Each partner was funding their own part of the project.

The basic agreement had taken many months to evolve because the needs of the two groups were different. Initially, the Australian partner saw dollars in it and agreed readily, thinking that their university already had the necessary technology to sell. The Thai partner pointed out that the technology was not in itself the important thing because the conditions in Thailand were different from the application of the technology currently used in Australia. What the Thai partner was seeking was a collaborative venture where the available technology could be adapted to suit the new conditions. Except for costs, there would ideally be a long-term, trust-based agreement where the profits would be split as they accrued.

The Australian partner baulked at this, raising issues of intellectual property that had to be recognised in any agreement. The Thai partner replied that it was they that had the contacts, the vision, the access to the raw material and that there was already a balance of contributions to any long-term partnership. Further, they commented that the Australians always thought they understood Thailand just because it had structures and bureaucracies that were familiar to the Australians. This informant said that underneath such a façade Thailand was much more like Japan. If Australia did not cultivate trustworthy friends in their dealings in Asia then they would be at a distinct disadvantage.

Over the passing 20 years, issues associated with intellectual property have not been settled and this small example represents a much bigger issue that has become more rather than less complex. Both governments are very keen for collaborative research projects to be undertaken but the concepts of "ownership" of ideas, in the shape of international intellectual property laws, has become a serious handicap to the exchange of new university knowledge for joint capital-intensive research development projects.

This issue goes right to the heart of the problem, because while there is rhetoric of reciprocity and mutual benefit, Australians are not yet

prepared to pay for the sorts of specialised local knowledge that countries such as Thailand have preserved, and yet the sorts of university knowledge that Thailand wants from Australia, increasingly have a large price tag attached to them and labyrinthine laws protecting them and guarding their ownership.

At present, it is not even feasible to see the relationship as mutually respectful because there is not yet a true sense of "equal value" in the exchanges of university knowledge. There is no value that can be agreed on for the Thai knowledge and so one Australian academic described Thailand's supposed "part" in the exchange as simply to consume Australian university knowledge. "Mutual benefit" is then reduced to an equation of "you want to sell and we are willing to buy; you want to buy and we are willing to sell". This attitude shocked the Thai partner in this example (and two others described similar situations to me in other universities) because the Thai academic was the one initiating a potentially lucrative, collaborative, open relationship that would protect both parties' interests in a much longer time-frame. Eventually, this project failed because of the lack of institutional "fit" about shared intellectual property arrangements.

Example 15:

This example opens up a discussion with various Thai students who have been studying at Australian universities, all in receipt of scholarships from the Australian government. Some have been interviewed in Australia and some in Thailand. Some Thai students have raised questions about the relevance of their courses for their employment, but say that because they are scholarship students they do not feel they can say very much. Often they speak about their feelings of *kreengcaj* and say that their feelings about "not wanting to impose upon" make them very self-sufficient students. In Thailand, students do not have an expectation that the teacher can help solve a problem. Thai students are expected to rely on each other far more. The informants think that this is because of the difference in status between อาจารย์ ***ajaan*** academics and นักศึกษา ***náksèuk-sǎa*** students in Thailand. Thai scholars in Australia maintained their status-conscious relationship with Australians of equivalent status, even if the Australian was unaware that this was occurring. In Thailand, there was an awareness of a certain value in the Western approach, with one Thai academic telling me that their faculty was working to change the status-conscious relationship between academics and students to a more informal relationship, where the student was able to feel more at home.

Many Thai scholars mentioned their awareness of the large income that Australian universities and the wider Australian society derived from them. From their estimates and the available statistics (from 1995, AIDAB, Thai CSC figures, and DEET unpublished statistics and for between 2005 and 2015, from Thai CSC data, DFAT, DIBP, and Austrade Education data) there was an income of somewhere in the region of A$10,000 per annum per student going directly to Australian universities in 1993 rising to an average of $20,000 by 2015. In addition, the monies that filtered to the general community for housing and general living costs, that after discussions with them I estimated to also average A$10,000 in 1995 rising closer to an average of A$20,000 per annum per student by 2015. In total, I estimate that monies accrued to the Australian economy from all Thai university students per annum was in the region of $16.5 million for 1995 and rose to $27.5 million in 2015 (Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

These estimates bear out what the Thai students were saying. In 1995, as Table 4.1 demonstrates, just less than quarter of the total higher education-derived monies made a circle from Australian government monies through scholarship programs back to Australian universities on behalf of the Thai scholar; just under a quarter was derived from private funds of Thai students and went to the individual university; and a half,

Table 4.1 1995 estimates of providence (@ AUD20,000 per student)

1995	*AUD estimates*	*No. of students*	*% of students*
Australian Government	$8,000,000	400	48.4
Royal Thai Government	$1,200,000	60	7.3
Other[a]	$7,320,000	366	44.3
Total	$16,520,000	826	100

[a]Other includes family, philanthropic, and undisclosed government sources

Table 4.2 2015 estimates of providence, (@ AUD40,000 per student)

2015	*AUD estimates*	*No. of students*	*% of students*
Australian Government	$160,000	4	0.1
Royal Thai Government	$6,240,000	156	4.9
Other[a]	$120,840,000	3021	95.0
Total	$127,240,000	3181	100

[a]Other includes family, philanthropic, and undisclosed government sources

some AUD$8 million filtered into the general Australian community as living expenses, some from scholarships and some from private money. It can be seen from Table 4.2 that by 2015, Thailand was receiving far fewer scholarships as part of the Australian Government allocation, although there may have been other sources for scholarships given by particular government departments or by individual universities. These are counted in the "Other" category along with sources of providence discussed previously such as family, trusts and philanthropic sources because they are sources of providence that fall outside the wider national and bilateral discussion to be examined later in this section of the book. Analysis of this data, except for Thai government scholarships (4.9 %) that still represent a large financial investment in comparison to 20 years earlier, suggests that the majority of Thai scholars are now funding their university studies overseas through their individual efforts to attract money from private sources.

Example 16:

Thai university administrators at this regional university speak of the Australian economic success in the area of the commodification of university education services and are in the process of copying this model in order to establish themselves as a credible education services provider to their region. While this development sounds warning bells to some Australian policy-makers who see South and South East Asia as a legitimate "Australian" area of influence, it is clear from discussions with some Thai people that there is no intention for Thailand to cut Australia out of the region. Rather they perceived that Thailand is now very well placed to establish itself jointly with Australia.

The Thai university administrator in this example affirms some of their bona fides: their proximity to other countries in the region; the high academic standard of their qualifications (with the majority of their staff being trained in countries such as Australia); their teaching/learning styles that are more Asian-compatible; the smaller financial burden borne by students in the region for studying in Thailand and the ability of regional Thai universities to offer scholarships to those in less fortunate circumstances than themselves around the region. Thai administrators of this university offered Australian universities the chance for joint development of international universities in Thailand that would serve the region and that would also be of mutual benefit to each nation. Australian university administrators have declined such offers, saying to the Thai administrator that their universities were in such straitened circumstances financially that even if they were interested, which some of them definitely are not, they would be hard pressed to take up the offer.

Summary

There was ample evidence in the discussions I have had that new exchanges of university knowledge are operating under tangentially different ideas than those involved in the old exchanges. Many informants comment on the improved capacity to exchange information and technology, made possible by better communications and greater regional awareness. There are also many problems that are now being discussed. These new programs of exchange are working better when there has already been activity under older exchanges, in other words when there has been a relationship of trust between the organisers. Without such relationships, the informants are feeling their way slowly and are reluctant to make long-term commitments.

Thai informants have been saddened by the aggressive way that some Australian education services brokers have been commodifying study in Australia but are at the same time positioning themselves in the region to emulate Australian selling tactics, establishing their respective universities as regional centres of knowledge exchange. Many informants speak of the pressure to internationalise their respective universities, causing problems that are sometimes out of their control. I identified a significant transition in the logic of exchange behaviours between Australian and Thai universities that I will return to later in the book.

4.4 Atmosphere Surrounding Exchanges

As I examined the examples, what emerged was a clear "atmosphere", a pervading cohesion of attitudes that surrounded individual action. An analysis at this level offers an insight into the attitudes that individuals hold, emotions they express and aspects of consciousness they reveal, often offered as an explanation for an action or decision that has been taken. Some aspects of this atmosphere have already been discussed in the previous part of this chapter in the examples of old and new exchanges. This section will focus specifically on attitudes held by Thais and Australians about each other's countries and behaviours.

4.4.1 Attitudes Held by Thais About Australia and Australians

Aussies still don't really understand Thai people…we think Australia is a new country not like us and not like Asia…maybe in another 70 years when there are more Asian people in Australia it will be better for our university partnerships…

(Senior Thai bureaucrat)

Australia is perceived by Thais to be a wealthy country. This perception is reinforced by holidaying Australians and the large amounts of money that Australians spend in Thailand. It is rare that Thai people have the disposable income to travel extensively and neither have they had reason to consider Australia as a holidaying destination. Many Thai people I speak to outside of the university system are unaware of Australia, so there is also little inclination to see it as a place to do business or to visit. In recent years under encouragement from the Thai government, more Thais are considering Australia in their thinking. Australia is most often associated with จิงโจ้ *jing jôh* kangaroos and "Crocodile Dundee".

More seriously, Thais are aware of the past "White Australia" policy and a number of informants have commented that Australia is still experienced by Thais as a racist, anti-Asian country. One Thai university academic/administrator, whose job among many other responsibilities, is to manage university affairs with Australia said that Australian bureaucracies treat everyone the same without recognition of the work that some Thais did on Australia's behalf. They related a story of coming through Australian customs and being stopped along with a number of other Asians. There were no non-Asians stopped and the informant was very unhappy with the treatment received, experiencing it as racist. Because of this experience, they prefer to support New Zealand's education efforts rather than those of Australia.

Other Thai academics who have had experiences with Australian education services, brokers and universities commented that Australia is only in the business of selling education to Thailand for its own economic benefit and not for mutual benefit. A senior Thai university academic suggested that this is because Australia has such a small population and so many universities, so that it does not have enough intelligent people to fill its universities, and accordingly they rely on selling university places to overseas students. Thinking in this way, they said that many Thai university people are mistrustful of the Australian unified university system because not all Australian universities are of a high standard and regard the selling of places to Asians as a desperate attempt to shore up the university sector in Australia.

The irony of this Australian approach towards selling its university knowledge, according to a senior Thai university administrator, is that the best and brightest Thais get a free education at the state universities in Thailand and are then given scholarships to study overseas, usually in America but sometimes in Australia. By deduction, they continued, it is

only the less bright that are buying a university education and they are harder to teach because of it, especially in another language with a difficult learning and teaching style, such as Australian universities are known to have. Their incisive commentary raises an important point taken up later in this book that Australian universities appear to be more concerned with a student's capacity to pay than their capacity to think. In addition, following on from this point, Thai people migrate from Thailand in relatively small numbers so, unlike some minority groups who use education to investigate immigration possibilities, Thais prefer to spend a number of years in another country but make frequent returns to Thailand during the course of their studies.

A mitigating point was made by a Thai-Chinese academic, someone considered to be from an ethnic minority in Thailand, who said that Chinese Thais who have business aspirations or who already have well-established businesses, often do not send all their bright children through the state system, even though it is free, because they want to choose the course of study for their children that best suits their business plans. Neither do they want their children tied to the obligation to work in the Public Service on their return from overseas study funded by the state. Rarely, they explain, would they "put all their eggs in one basket". For example, they continue, one child might go to Australia, one to Britain and one to America. These decisions are often strategic in investigating the possibilities for establishing business in those countries.

Thai attitudes to Australia can begin to be understood from consideration of the points that have been raised in various discussions over the past 20 years. When Australian universities changed over to a Unified National System in 1989 (Jackson 2003), this caused some diminution of confidence in Thailand as to their standard. Australian policy-makers had been keen to stress the equivalence of all their universities, but at the same time there had been confusing messages sent to countries such as Thailand when older Australian universities asserted their power in the market saying that really there were very big differences between Australian universities and that the older ones had higher status, were better funded and the standard of education was better.

Thai informants have spoken of this change towards a more market-oriented style as beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Historically, this was seen to be in response to the policy changes resulting from the Jackson Report (Australian Government 1984b), when Australian universities were experiencing funding shortfalls and were actively seeking out

new forms of revenue overseas because of diminishing Australian government contributions to the university operating budget.

Both Thai and Australian informants have often commented that some of the marketing tactics have been unscrupulous. According to a number of Thai bureaucrats and academics, relations with Australia remain very confusing,because on the one hand the Australian government has been trying to establish its bona fides in the Asia-Pacific region and has been relying on Thailand to support this aim and on the other hand there are some desperate education services brokers and individual Australian university representatives who do a very good impression, according to numerous informants, of being "Aussie cowboys". Although Australian informants have been quick to point out that the market is now better regulated, the Thais regard this as another example of racism, especially in Australia's ignorance of Thai culture and ways of doing business.

One Thai university administrator, a very high status person at a Thai regional university, made a very thoughtful analysis that has reverberated through this research. They point out that they are at something of a loss to understand Australian business practices that seemed to be very naive and immature. The Thai habit is always to work in any business negotiation from a position of strength, having a clear strategy with fallback positions to accommodate the needs of the other person, while not conceding anything unintended oneself. The administrator then explained that Australia has been very involved with their regional university through aid programmes over the last 40 years. Australia was seen in the early years to be an economically strong nation and their help in the development of the Thai university system, particularly in the poorer regions, was very much appreciated.

This was the time, 40 years ago, according to the informant's perspective, when Australia should have been negotiating with Thailand because the Kingdom was very poor and not in a position of strength. They commented that if it had not been for the anti-Asian mentality which the informant knows exists to this day, for example on Australian university campuses then Australia could have made some very good relationships. As it was, Australian people are not looking for friendships with Thais even though individual friendships exist to this day from that time between individual academics. Their activities are not seen to be supported by most Australian people especially since the global financial crisis, when Thailand has again found itself in a difficult economic situation and Australia seems to have lost interest in helping its old friends. One striking example of this

is that Thailand is no longer considered eligible for Australian scholarships even though the nation is in severe economic difficulties.

Thus, the way this informant describes it, Australia is now negotiating from a position of diminished strength at a time when Thailand has other options that it can consider. This informant suggests that to get Thailand to take Australia seriously, either as a broker of education or as an actor in regional South East Asian affairs, Australia needs to be seen as a strong nation both economically and in international relations.

A number of Thai informants have speculated that in a relationship based more on the Thai approach of mutual benefit, everyone's needs can be met. For example, Australia could support Thailand internationally to establish itself as a regional power. In return, Thailand could support Australian businesses to establish in Thailand and be more active in promoting Australian university education to Thais. In this way, with many linkages of friendship and business, both countries could benefit from the development of the region. Thailand could then support Australia to better integrate into the economy of the region and Australia could recognise that support by investing and developing businesses in the Kingdom. Many informants stress that it is important that both sides see they are getting something out of it and observe that Australia has been slow to recognise that Thailand has become a nation with more potential than Australia. Because of such perceived wrong attitudes, Australians are not making beneficial business deals with Thais and this includes the business of education.

Thais are interested in what Australian universities have to offer, particularly as Australia is very close to Thailand, especially Perth, and that with increasing affluence over the past 20 years, more Thai families can afford to send their children to study and to pay for them to be able to return home at least once a year. This is seen as a much better than the previous option, when students were often confined to Australia, or any overseas country, for the duration of their studies, which was very difficult for many Thais.

Australia also provides an attractive opportunity to learn English even though the Australian accent is difficult for many Thais, who have been predominantly educated with American English. Some Thais look to Australia for English language training closer to home before undertaking studies elsewhere. Some are considering undergraduate study in Australia to strengthen their English before undertaking postgraduate study, again elsewhere. Thus, Australia is perceived as giving the Thai students an

opportunity for an easier middle step between home and study in America or Britain. At the postgraduate level, Australia is not seen to be capable of offering as wide a range of options as the American system simply because of the difference in population, but it is regarded as a safe place with no pollution and a "nice way of life" with no traffic jams.

Some Thai students added that they found that generally, Australians were willing to accept foreigners and this was not what they had expected when they first came to Australia. Being perceived as a good country to study in, Australia is still seen as very naive, like Canada, still a young country with a lot of idealism and very little corruption, unlike America and Britain. However, Thais know where they stand with those world powers but are less sure of Australia, or of Australian attitudes. For example, Thai students have recounted how difficult it is to pull strings to get special treatment in Australia because of the lack of hierarchical consciousness among Australians, and while Thais appreciated the intrinsic "fairness" of the Australian way, they found it unsettling to be in a position where status was meaningless.

A mixture of attitudes emerges, where Thais are interested in what Australia is doing but where most of the initiative is provided by Australia. Thais perceive that Australia seems to need Thailand more than Thailand needs Australia and this gives Thai people a very strong bargaining position. Australia's policy "to become Asian", as one Thai informant described it, is treated with humour, disbelief and wariness and only time will tell what is really meant by Australia's idea of becoming part of Asia. For Thais, if it means that Australia is an ally working to assist in the attainment of mutual interests then all is well and good, but if it means the development of false relationships which demand reciprocity to further Australian interests and the intention of using Thailand based on a one-sided view of the current state of affairs, then the relationship will not go very far.

4.4.2 Attitudes About Thailand and Thai People Held by Australians

…All these bigger agreements can do is put people in touch with one another but then it just comes down to chemistry that serves both their interests…Both sides have to get something out of it.

(Manager of an Australian University International Office)

The general impression that the Australian informants seem to hold about Thailand is that it is a good place to go for a holiday although it is not as

cheap as it used to be. Consumer goods are still generally a lot cheaper although previously popular personal tailoring is more expensive because Thais' wages are increasing. It is seen as a destination for the more adventurous, outside the touristy places, because few Thais speak English and even fewer Australians speak Thai.

As Thailand is economically developing, the predominant Australian impressions of Bangkok, the most common point of entry into Thailand, is that it is too fast and that it is very polluted. Building work proceeds at a frightening and dangerous-looking pace for those Australians who are used to Australian codes of building practice. Often the buildings are being built by very poor people from the North Eastern region, whose skills are in farming and who provide a source of cheap labour for employers who have little regard for occupational health and safety either for their workers or for the general public who have to pass these buildings. Maybe, though, the buildings are fine, and it is the building practices in Australia, which are overregulated? For some Australian informants this is a difficult thing to decide.

There are a number of underlying factors that influence Australians' attitudes to Thailand. In the current Thai economic climate of slowing economic growth after a previous period of economic stability and moderate sustained growth, who needs who in the Thai-Australia relationship has changed many times over the past 70 years since the beginnings of the bilateral education exchange relationship between the two countries starting with the Colombo Plan. There is a perception by Australians that the Thais regard themselves as superior to the Australians because of a number of factors that Thai bureaucrats and administrators are keen to make known in any negotiation. These factors are: population size, 67 million versus 23 million; the economic potential of the country because of this population; availability of natural resources; significant capital reserves that are enabling the Thai society to transform from labour-intensive to capital-intensive production; their Asian credentials that are stronger than any Australian claim; their claim to be a regional power based on their independence from colonial control during the time when all the other countries in the region (including Australia) were under the influence of either France or Britain; and, finally, their strong sense of self-worth.

A common comment made by Australian informants is that Thailand is a developing country sometimes now referred to as a Newly Industrialising Country (NIC) and there is a general ignorance about the history, language, politics or culture of Thailand in Australia. While these Australians perceive that Thailand regards itself as superior, they view themselves as

"much better off" and want to engage with Thailand from a position of strength. Because of this, they have been at a loss to find points of agreement from which to begin and subsequently build a relationship.

Australian bureaucrats told me that Australia grants Thailand "developing country" status to encourage trade but that this did not necessarily help Thailand. An example of this was that Thailand was allowed to sell pineapples to Australia even though pineapples were an important primary product for Australia. An Australian bureaucrat said,

> *…but it was Hawaiian pineapple, processed in Thailand by an American company. So where do you start and stop with this and why do you give them these statuses?*

More recently, the Thai-Australia Free Trade Agreement (Australian Government 2005) has strengthened the mutual benefit aspect of this relationship in positive ways.

The Australians' perception was that the Thai view of itself was changing and an AusAID bureaucrat, echoing the brief history outlined in Chap. 3, said that they could perceive at least three phases in Thai self-perception. In the first phase, there had been a reserve towards outsiders, an arrogance and an introspection. This was before King Mongkut's decision in the latter part of the nineteenth century to engage with ฝรั่ง *fàràng* outsiders (Jumsai 1991).

During the reign of the Kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn particularly, there had been a second phase of looking outwards and an attempt to manage their foreign affairs more carefully. The third phase, 20 years ago was identified as a time of some reversion to the first phase with blatant pursuit of their own goals and a sense of being in a position to create their own destiny. This informant described the third phase as a reversion to their "natural characteristics" and this represented a big paradigm shift that Australians, because of their ignorance of Asian history, only dimly glimpsed if at all. A more general feeling was expressed as follows by a senior Bangkok-based Australian bureaucrat:

> *…Thailand has the money and the domestic economy to do just about anything they clearly decide to do. We don't have enough money to influence these decisions in any major way…*

The more recent "transition phase", represented something of a retreat from the initial optimism of the early 1990s as the political and economic

fortunes of Thailand were placed under increasing internal upheaval. Unfortunately, the AusAID bureaucrat reflects, Thailand's earlier arrogance meant that Australia is now less willing to help Thailand and no longer regards Thailand as a potential source of international students.

These underlying factors have clear consequences for the way that Australians perceive their role in the university education context. Australia's inaccurate assessment of the market potential for selling education to Thailand has been only part of a broad range of attitudes reflecting the fact that Australians has been slow to recognise the changing perception that Thai people have of their somewhat fluctuating position in the world.

Many Australian informants still believe that Australians are not making any significant inroads into Thailand and Thai bureaucrats and academics are often seen to be calling the shots because they come from a very wealthy elite who are in control, are astute and are well-educated. Australian policy-makers had assumed that the growing middle class in Thailand would welcome the opportunity to pay for a postgraduate education in Australia and Australian policy analysts have been trying to find reasons why this has not occurred. The results of my research suggest that the increase in fee-paying Thai students is in fact happening but no one could foresee the negative impact that the global financial market collapse continues to have on developing economies such as Thailand or previously resource-dependent ones such as Australia. Both countries are looking for solutions to internal and external instability of economic and political systems and bilateral relations have been difficult to stabilise in such conditions.

Australians have discovered that Thais are very shrewd in their business dealings and often the decision to pay for an education is both a business and academic decision. Australians in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with their belief that Thailand was a developing country, and also with a false understanding of what was meant by Asians having a deep respect for education, thought they could make a good profit from appealing to such sentiments. Instead, according to an Australian education services broker, Australians found themselves in a culture that they did not understand, faced with a labyrinthine bureaucratic structure, a very habit-oriented, hierarchical society and the Australians had few personal relationships. Most "operators" shifted their focus to other, more lucrative markets. The successful businesses were generally those that built on relationships formed during the period of the Colombo Plan and even then, the Thais

maintained more control than the Australians anticipated. This assessment is borne out in the examples given earlier in this chapter.

The general view emerging from my analysis of Australian attitudes is that the long- term commitment required to establish relationships in Thailand has not been commercially viable and that Australia, considering how much support had already been disbursed in direct aid and scholarships, should have concentrated on pressing for some sort of reciprocity before more aid was given. As a result, notions of an imbalance of reciprocity can be seen to be in response to a perceived imbalance in the relationship because of what Australia had already done for Thailand.

As education services brokers and universities have experienced more and more problems in working with Thai bureaucracies and students, and as they have found the markets to be less lucrative than they had imagined, a general feeling has permeated bureaucratic circles in Australia, that Thailand is not helping Australia at a time when Australia faces growing financial difficulties, but there is a recognition that Thailand is in no position to help at this time.

Australian attitudes to Thai interaction strategies highlight the potential for misunderstandings across the cultures. Generally, Thais are perceived to be both economically and culturally cautious. They are known to be very good bargainers and always looking for a discount in the education deal. They have previously been in a position to buy the best for their country to get their needs met, and they have shopped around, not simply taking things on face value or relying on past good relationships. Culturally they are perceived to be cautious with all outsiders and are looking for an accommodating attitude in the potential partner.

Some Australian academics spoke of their frustration at not being in a position to bargain and to accommodate particular needs because either they are not senior enough to be authorised to do so or there is no margin of profit. In the first instance, a Thai person who is doing business has the authority to bargain and make decisions and expects to be dealing with an equal. In terms of government-to-government initiatives, it is only in the last few years that the Australians have had a person of such a level in the education sector based in Bangkok who can directly negotiate with the Thais. In the second instance, there is a fine line between competitive pricing for courses or training projects that give Australians a chance at the contract but leave no room for later negotiations on the bottom price, and overpricing that allows for a margin of negotiation but endangers the project from consideration because of being more expensive than competitors are.

While Thailand continues to be a target for education and trade, a number of Australian education service providers explain that the relationship might work if Australians could get used to the cultural differences in interaction strategies and, most importantly, be prepared to accommodate the Thais in their bargaining style. This has been consistent advice from successful Australian education services brokers, one of whom no longer works for Australians because they were seen to be unwilling to accommodate Thai ways of doing business.

Within the classroom, Australian attitudes to Thai learning styles are also a potential problem. According to Australian academics teaching Thai students, the interaction strategy of Thai students tends to be silence coupled with graciousness and an eagerness to please. Qualities that are valued are seen to be, "reticence, humility, and standing back" according to one Australian educator who has been teaching in Thailand for many years. There is no value placed on the critical, adversarial approach so favoured in Western universities. The preferred Thai classroom- interaction strategies are perceived by Australian academics to make the Thai students poor material for postgraduate research work, especially when coupled with poor spoken English. The culturally embedded reluctance of Thais to perform well in tutorials has sometimes led to a hasty, and wrong, impression of Thai students' academic capacity.

Interestingly, although this problem has been well known for many years, at least anecdotally, little was done during the period of aid-based postgraduate education because Australian academics were working on the assumption that they were performing a service to a person of a less developed country. Those who went beyond these assumptions were unlikely to change their teaching and supervisory methods for a host of reasons intrinsic to the operating principles of the university such as: that standards had to be maintained; that to gain a critical way of thinking was going to be in the interests of the development goals of Thailand; and that it was very important to develop English language competency for similar reasons.

According to an Australian education services broker based in Bangkok, Thai scholars place a tremendous value on learning, are perceived to have a rigid learning style and are very conservative by Australian standards. Their purchasing style is also seen as conservative. Thai people are seen to be more consensus driven, constrained by habit and custom and in need of constant reassurance. The opinions of the family are crucial to any decision to purchase a course of study in Australia and prospective students take

careful notice of the opinions of their peers. Noted by Lakshmana Rao (1976), word of mouth remains the strongest form of advertising according to my research.

In the final analysis Thais were seen by most Australian education services brokers to comprise a difficult market and a difficult student cohort and for some informants the difficulties have made doing business with Thai people commercially unviable. The main reason for Australian engagement with Thailand, they suggest, is in helping Australia's regional aspirations, business interests and in opening up better educational opportunities for Australian students and academic staff. There is an underlying resentment that Australians are expected to accommodate Thai needs when all the while the Thais have been blatantly driving a hard bargain.

There continue to be a small number of Australian academics teaching and providing educational services to Thailand who have worked to overcome these difficulties and over time, they expect that many of the former misunderstandings will work themselves out as the Thai-Australian relationship matures. They observe that as relationships with the "right" people develop, the Thais will drive less of a hard bargain and it will become easier to accommodate their needs. Nevertheless, notably, these informants have all been developing relationships over many years and reiterated to me the perception by more recent Australian comers that there was no instant profit in Thailand.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter gives examples of both old and new attempts to exchange university knowledge between Thailand and Australia and sets the larger concerns about wisdom and knowledge within a very specific context. An attitudinal atmosphere, indicated by opinions surrounds this context and observations held by the informants about what Thai and Australian people feel about each other's values, attitudes and behaviours. These opinions have created a space in which the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia is conducted and is understood, and its influence will be recognised in the following chapters.

The next chapter moves to an examination of an emerging awareness of global education markets in Thailand, and analyses the conceptual interaction that is occurring between internationalisation, globalisation, regionalism and a uniquely Thai approach to higher education.

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CHAPTER 5

Higher Education Services Markets: The Interplay of International, Global, Regional, and Local Thai Perspectives

In this chapter, I will use Fig. 1.1 (Chap. 1) as the underlying conceptual map for this discussion. In considering the modern university in Thailand, the interests of individual students, universities and nations are all surrounded by the interests of global markets and while global market interests are not separate from the other three, they need to be distinguished separately for the purposes of this analysis. I will examine international, global, regionalist and local Thai approaches that are operating within awareness of now pressing global market forces in higher education. The possibilities (or not) of thinking across national or cultural differences, of examining different contexts of wisdom and knowledge within the intersection of ideas of internationalisation, globalisation, regionalism, together with Thai perspectives can then be better understood.

After analysing my research data, it was clear that people to whom I have spoken conceptualise their actions in the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and nations such as Australia within a perspective that I have understood as being a global awareness. Global awareness is enabling what are being called "global markets" so I focus on this rather than the markets themselves, discussing global market interests as relevant. Althusser (1971 [1972], 243) had already suggested the possibility and necessity of looking beyond tangible evidence of production, in this case the production of university knowledge, saying:

Z. Ma Rhea, *Wisdom, Knowledge, and the Postcolonial University in Thailand*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-37694-7_5

> *…we know that the reproduction of material conditions of production cannot be thought at the level of the firm [in this case the universities and the individuals involved therein] because it does not exist at that level in its real condition. What happens at the level of the firm [university] is an effect, which only gives an idea of the necessity of reproduction, but absolutely fails to allow its conditions and mechanisms to be thought…(brackets mine)*

What Althusser fails to recognise in his use of the word "real" to separate false consciousness from true consciousness, is that his viewing of a social formation from the perspective of either the state or wider global markets is unable, by itself, to explain the conditions of the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and countries such as Australia. Even so, Althusser's encouragement to "follow Marx's global procedure" (1971 [1972], 243) was useful in my analysis, so that I did not simply concentrate on the productive forces surrounding the exchange of university knowledge as a commodity in the world marketplace but was able to identify some of the internal production, exchange and reproduction mechanisms as well. I found in my methodological approach, that it was only through an examination of the awareness in people of global education services markets, and the way that this state of mind is creating an interaction of global market interests with the interests of individuals, universities and nations, that I could hope to succeed more fully in allowing the "conditions and mechanisms to be thought".

5.1 Thailand and Internationalisation

This section attempts to provide an analysis of Thai responses to older internationalist ideals about the higher education sector, in order to understand the need expressed by many Thai informants, for finding a way to balance between an internationalist perspective, while preserving and maintaining something distinctly "Thai" (see Malaska 1993, for a broader discussion of the impacts of global knowledge on old local knowledges and national identities, see also, Ma Rhea and Seddon 2006). University education, in the interviews, was not spoken about in terms of globalisation in the same way as other processes. Possibly one of the reasons that debates about education continue to be discussed in terms of a concept of internationalisation rather than of global processes is that education is managed by individual nations in conjunction with other nations. This will probably change with the increased global access to the virtual university

or multiversity that is made possible by potentially globally available computer technology.

Post-WWII, Thailand was among the first 48 countries to endorse the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Thailand has maintained an active involvement in the United Nations, serving as a member of the UN Human Rights Council from 2010–13, including a term as President of the Council. A Thai national also served as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, from 2005 to 2013. With respect to higher education, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, in part that:

> *…higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit… Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.* (cited in UNESCO 1991, 16)

After the Second World War, like many other Southeast Asian nations, Thailand participated in the Colombo Plan:

> *The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific was conceived at the Commonwealth Conference on Foreign Affairs held in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in January 1950 and was launched on 1 July 1951 as a cooperative venture for the economic and social advancement of the peoples of South and Southeast Asia.* (Colombo Plan Secretariat 2015)

In the early days, development and university knowledge were cast as tools for achieving the internationalist ideal of peace and prosperity. Thailand became part of the emergent UNESCO that took up the promotion of education for all on the planet, focusing in the early days on the development of the higher education sector. This organisation clearly linked education to "peace, balanced and sustainable development, respect for human rights and the preservation of the ecosystem" (UNESCO 1991, 5). Each country that is a signatory to the United Nations declaration is supposed to establish an education system that meets its local needs and educates about the increasing interdependence of us all, thus breaking down barriers of ignorance and fear about one another. For UNESCO policy makers, education has maintained its use-value. Even so, UNESCO has a particularly colonising international

perspective within its own agenda. UNESCO (1993, 14) defines its role as, "to facilitate the transfer and sharing of knowledge" and "strengthening the role of education so as to give the world a scientific view of things and spread a scientific culture". Ketudat (1973) contends that the role of the university in a developing country is always greater than the ideal university of the past, suggesting that:

> *No longer have these hallowed institutions been able to limit themselves to preserving past ideals. Rather they have had to become more relevant to the social and economic development efforts now underway throughout the world.* (1973, 94)

Clearly, such a view of education can be interpreted as strengthening the Western scientific worldview and speaks to the fears of Thai academic informants that the internationalisation agenda is really a Westernisation one rather than a modernisation one that preserves Thai wisdom and knowledge traditions, transcendental and mundane, in a globally-interconnected world. Traditionally, universities have disseminated their discoveries through exchange and reproduction, across national boundaries. In this sense, the university can be seen to have had an international focus. It became apparent in my discussions that when people now speak of internationalisation, it is a new awareness of global markets and economic social relations that separates it from its historical roots, an observation that I will return to later.

In 1864, Karl Marx founded the Internationale, the International Working Men's Association. Waters (1994, 230) records that Marx said:

> *In the place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal, interdependence of nations.*

The internationalism of Marx recognised the hostile power of the state *vis-a-vis* the worker and he saw internationalism as a way of breaking through such hegemonic nation-based structures, in order to oppose capitalism at the international level. Marx (1947, 97) notes the gathering momentum of globalisation, saying:

> *In history up to the present, it is certainly an empirical fact that separate individuals have, with the broadening of their activity into world-historical activity, become more and more enslaved under a power alien to them, a power that has become more and more enormous and, on the last instance, turns out to be the world market.*

In 1956, the Bandung conference drew from this older tradition of internationalism that had been fostered by Marx and the Internationale (Marx and Engels 1848; Radosh 1975; Zagladin 1976; Nation 1989), while raising concern that global markets that were disguising Westernisation and global economic interdependence as internationalisation and modernisation, were in fact a strategy by the capitalist class to re-establish their power. The participant nations, such as India, Yugoslavia and Indonesia, were concerned to modernise without Westernising and they challenged the homogenising effect of the push for global marketisation. Thailand joined the Non-Aligned Movement in 1993. Echoing concerns of non-aligned members, many authors decried new forms of internationalisation as being a post-colonial control mechanism (Memmi 1965; Fanon 1967, 1986; Fals Borda 1985, 1990; Bhabha 1994).

The 1980s saw fractures in both Left and Right evaluations of internationalisation. The Right questioned the necessity of their earlier expectations, such as development for all and education for all, given the spiralling costs involved, particularly in universities (Behrman 1990a, b). The Left was increasingly drawn into debates about the economic viability of its programmes for equality, freedom and justice. Ideology on both sides showed a marked movement towards crude economics and even the newer post Second World War internationalist ideals were assessed by processes such as "structural adjustment" and "ratcheting". Education was targeted and scrutinised to try to yield the maximum profit from the education dollar. The 1990s witnessed a continuing disillusion with the ideals of internationalisation. This is not surprising if one considers the global transformation that is occurring towards a market ideology. Evans and Grant (1991, 12) argued, for example, that:

> *Insulation from the pressures of the international marketplace is becoming harder and harder for any single country to sustain. It is gradually coming to be appreciated that breaking down such remaining barriers as stand in the way of economic interdependence is a matter of intelligent self-interest; that it is against all experience, as well as all theory, to yearn after autarky in a world increasingly interconnected.*

Debates continue as to the best strategy for education in a global marketplace and policies arguing for internationalisation of university education have risen and fallen over the past 20 years. Amornvivat (1993) and Pongpisit (1994) have written about the challenges, which have been faced

and consequences of, internationalisation of universities for Thailand. As Amornvivat (1993, 25) suggests, Thailand is like every other country in the world in needing to respond to new global economic pressures that are, "…increasing the necessity of exchanging the body of knowledge, educational administration, and faculty staff and students to establish an academic network…". In the early days, the process of university internationalisation in some universities in Thailand was guided by the bureaucrats in the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) who suggested that the curriculum be made more extensive; to actively exchange staff and students with other universities around the world, and to establish centres of research to promote study of other countries. For example, the Australian Studies Centre was established at that time at Kasetsart University and the MUA developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Australia, one of only three[1] in the world, to assist in the mobility of staff and students from both countries. The MOU with Australia was very active, "supra-active" according to one Thai bureaucrat. There were no Thai government-to-government MOUs that focused on cooperation in higher education with America, Japan or Britain in the early 1990s, which surprised me. When asking about this, I was told that:

> *We (MUA) will focus on what we think would generate knowledge and benefits to our universities through the sharing and the linkages. So we have signed this since 1992. It was difficult at first so we are trying to make concrete action, to make projects. So slowly, little by little, we came from MOU to now we have agreed priorities and workshops. Actually right now there is one team of Australian experts trying to identify our staff development needs in our universities so we are working on that too. So it has been very close and this is only one channel with DEET. Under DEET we have planned to have staff and student exchanges, we now have at the moment staff development and we have done a lot of information exchange…*

All Thai universities have MOUs with universities all over the world but the MUA decided to focus on those relationships that assisted the various iterations of the former MUA and now the Commission on Higher Education (Commission 2008; Education 2008) internationalisation policy for the universities it oversees and as analysed by Lavankura (2013). The process has not been an easy one especially at the level of the curriculum. Like attempts to make the curriculum more responsive to the input of the local

[1] The others being with Austria and Israel.

community to be discussed later in this chapter, the attempts to internationalise have been only vaguely seen. A Thai bureaucrat told me that

> *…although we have the policy on internationalisation, we don't have concrete guidelines for what will be done. So we are thinking at global competence of our graduates and an international standard curriculum. Now talking about this some university lecturers would say, 'Oh! It's international already because we copy it from the West'. I died! I died!*

In the years of optimism and expansion of the mid-1980s until the late-1990s, the West was still seen as the primary source of information for the development of an international perspective even though it was realised in Thailand that many of the solutions offered by the West were inapplicable to the particular Thai context. As noted previously, there was optimism in Thai aspirations to internationalisation that could be seen to be acceptable within Thai worldview. Some supported the general intentions for greater acceptance of outward-looking internationalisation suggesting that, "… each country has as much to learn and exchange since each country has its own people, society and identity" and he proposes that internationalisation has two dimensions, an academic atmosphere and a peace atmosphere (Amornvivat 1993, 26–27). He sees the need to strike a balance between the two programs such that:

> *…students from wealthy countries with economic and political power, and industrialised countries with scientific and technological advances, as well as students from poorer agricultural countries or countries with a different political ideology will be able to learn from one another and understand each other…*

He calls this "striking the balance". I would suggest that this optimistic period reflected an old ideal of internationalisation coupled with the pressure of global economic rationalism that was beginning to force the pace. In the 1990s, Thai universities seemed much better prepared on paper than they were in actuality for the enormous task ahead. In reality, the exchange of university knowledge across cultures has proved a very difficult enilikagogical undertaking that has not yet reached its maturity. What is also clear is that internationalisation, as a word, has had different meanings from the start and has taken on numerous definitions and meanings over time. The ideals have been found wanting but the romance of the idea remains strong. This has been particularly so in the field of university education.

It is likely that the new highly globalised international perspective of the universities is derived from a change in the type of bureaucratic functionary (publically-funded students) and businessperson (privately funded students) that the global market requires. Thus, capitalist internationalist rhetoric is being articulated to a new awareness of global markets called globalisation. In this way internationalisation, as an awareness of global markets, has become a characteristic of university education that is now operating with an awareness of global education services markets

5.2 Thai Engagement with Globalised Higher Education Services Markets

As discussed in earlier chapters, Thailand has been sending people to study in Western universities since the late 1800s and has an established approach of sending bright scholars to different parts of the world to gather information and new ideas. The experiences of the early students have been fictionalised in popular novels by Pramoj (1981) and Sudham (1983, 1987 and 1988). Culture shock is a prominent theme. One student said:

> *Everything went wrong when I started my Australian university…because of myself who at the beginning was very shy, very close-self, especially very embarrassed with my English and my foreign accent.*

This is mixed with an underlying belief that it has been necessary for the Kingdom of Siam to develop into the modern state of Thailand (Jumsai 1991). Nearly all students I spoke to say that they feel an enormous sense of responsibility to do well no matter whether they are being publicly or privately financed. One student said:

> *…when I heard the news I was so scared…and proud and frightened all at the same time…I wanted to do well for my parents and for my teachers. I hope I will…*

A common way of speaking about their experience as a student is how their study is always overshadowed by the importance of doing well for their parents. This is particularly so for the informants who are privately funded. There is also confirming research now starting to emerge about Thai student, university experiences in an overseas country (Yue and Le 2009) and also about issues they face on their return to Thailand (Rujipak

2009). I found in talking with these students, as I had found in my earlier research (Ma Rhea 2002a) that the Australian approach to international students, by way of example, insists on selling a standard product that is marketed as being the right thing for all occasions. While scholarship managers such as *Austrade* (formerly AusAID, IDP, and AEI) do attempt to find the right course for the needs of the student and for Thai economic development goals, once the student arrives at the overseas university there has been little regard given to the particular needs of scholarship funded students, except by some individual academics who recognise that university knowledge needs to be relevant to the context of its application.

The third aspect that students speak about reflects the optimism discussed above during the 1990s that was occurring in Thailand due to the sustained economic development of the country and Thailand's greater participation in world affairs. For the individual Thai student, there had been increased scope for studying abroad because Thai families were becoming wealthier. Many students who completed a survey I conducted in 1996 were privately funded and they represented a cohort of which little was known. This fact, coupled with the growing existence of a very competitive international education product, meant that there were new opportunities for individual Thai scholars who entered the marketplace as consumers rather than as recipients of aid-related gifts of education. Charles (1996, 3) reflects this optimism and sense of self-sufficiency when he records that:

> *A landmark summit of Asian and European leaders…served as a wake-up call to European firms about opportunities…giving increasingly prosperous Asia respect and recognition of its world role…The communiqué contained both a commitment to promote human rights and a promise not to interfere in each other's internal affairs…That formula was designed to satisfy Western pressure groups by mentioning rights while placating the Asians who insist on their right to conduct their affairs in line with their own cultural values, free of Western interference.*

In the 1990s, for example Australian government's AusAID defended the importance of maintaining education support for Thailand because education was still seen as a useful way of encouraging development (JSCFAD 1995, Chapters 6 & 9). While the amounts of financial support were relatively small, there was no evidence to suggest that the giving of access to Australian universities would cease. What changed was that AusAID

needed to justify the continued giving of education as aid to Thailand in terms of education's exchange value in the global marketplace rather than in terms of its intrinsic use-value, a situation that is as delicately poised in 2016 as it was in the 1990s. Concurrently, Australia has continued to be aggressive and entrepreneurial in the quest to sell its development knowledge and university knowledge in the global education services market, and particularly so into Asia. The successful marketing of Australian development and university knowledge as commodities is evident in the increases in the numbers of Thai students coming to Australia as privately funded scholars.

When this research began, Australia was the third most popular destination for Thai people wanting to study. Recently I was told that Australia is now the second most popular after the United States of America. Clearly, Thai people are responding to new global possibilities of purchasing an overseas education. This is occurring in parallel with the older practices of students going out into the world and bringing back knowledge for Thai national development, reminiscent of the ideals of internationalisation. Analysis of the survey showed clearly that many of the scholars were using education as a way of improving their activities in the sphere of private enterprise. The information in the data and the literature that I have collected over the past 20 years shows this is not as clear a linear progression from aid to global marketisation in higher education because all the above behaviours continue to exist in practice. The profound change has occurred in the way that each of these activities has been articulated under the conditions of global markets for the provision of higher education services. The practice of going all over the world to get a university education is a relatively new global phenomenon and the larger picture of international student migration under global market forces is only slowly becoming recognised as being of significant research interest. Global capital requires a mobile elite workforce that is comfortable with working in a variety of national contexts. The university is being brought in to train people for this mobility. International student mobility is becoming an important part of the process of market globalisation.

Thai academics have had a particular responsibility to receive "new" overseas knowledge, adapt it and reproduce it in the local context. Thai bureaucrats and academics are eager to have collaborative research with more powerful, knowledge-producing nations because to lose access to advanced knowledge production and reproduction threatens the ability of Thailand to function in the globalised economy, and it is feared that this

will render the nation vulnerable. While something similar to the reproduction research of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and the view of Lao (2015) that there is a "culture of borrowing" in Thai higher education, I have argued elsewhere that this should be more correctly be understood as adaptive balancing rather than straightforward reproduction or borrowing (Ma Rhea 2000). Reproduction implies copying and borrowing and suggests using without any clear sense of ownership. I argue that this is not what seems to be occurring in Thailand. Thai academics are clearly adapting outsider knowledge to local Thai conditions and worldview, balancing the need to exhibit an understanding of Western ways of thinking with Thai cultural imperatives. For example, in the early days of discussions about postmodernity, Thai scholars such as Čharœ̄nsī (2544BE) began using the English language transliteration *phōtmōdān* but more recent literature and translations use the Thai term *langsàmǎimài* when discussing postmodernity. This is something that I have needed to be mindful of in undertaking this research to ensure that when I have been told something using a westernised version of the word it is likely that it is already in a state of transition into something more recognisably Thai that captures the spirit and meaning of the Western idea.

Even so, in Althusserian terms (Althusser 1971 [1972]), Thailand could be seen to be reproducing the existing relations of production within the global market. This is echoed in the discussions that I have had with some Thai academics who are trying to teach in a university system that is changing radically as it tries to respond to both internal and external forces. The intrusion of externally-driven market forces has left them feeling disillusioned with their future role in the university. Others are content with the changes that are occurring, seeing the university's new responsiveness to the market as a positive thing for them. Some Thai informants have suggested that ideas about globalisation, like earlier ones of internationalisation, are simply disguised justifications for a process of Westernisation, of outsiders imposing Western economic models and Western technological information on countries such as Thailand, echoing critiques made earlier by Inkeles and Smith (1974).

From the 1970s, scholars had made a sustained argument that outsider knowledge brought into Thailand was a two-edged sword (Prachin 1974; Altbach and Kelly 1978). While forms of the so-called "Western university" came into being before the formation of nation states, whether influenced by ancient Islamic, Chinese, Greek, Roman, Siennese, Parisian or contemporary Western traditions, and all have drawn their scholars and

intellectuals from geographically diverse sources (Le Goff 1993). The funding arrangements for these centres have also been diverse. Accessibility to them has also been various. Some have been funded predominantly by religious or monarchical sources and continue to be so. Others have been funded from public monies. Traditionally, such universities have disseminated their discoveries through exchange and reproduction, across national boundaries.

Thai universities evolved after the formation of the state but as an essential component of it (Wyatt 1994). Their role has been to produce the state administrative personnel to run the modern state of Thailand and to bring in ideas from outside, incorporating necessary ideas into the local university knowledge pool. Because modern Thai universities are located and funded within the nation state, they have not been particularly accountable to global scrutiny until recently. University knowledge, like any other type of production, has historically been locally owned. Access to it has depended on numerous factors, social, economic and political.

There are two directions that I have discerned about the impact of globalisation in its difficulties over the past 20 years. The first involves the fact that many of the current issues facing Thai and their partner universities such as those in Australia, are shaped by global economic trends rather than by intellectual trends. The second is the increased possibility of mutually beneficial exchanges of university knowledge between Thai universities and the world that has been enabled by improved global communication networks. This second aspect is possibly more correctly seen to arise from an idealised, international view of higher education that was discussed above and by the examples given in the previous chapter.

The issues facing the universities in Thailand centre most strongly around the need to have enough people to manage Thailand's economic development, but this needs to be understood within the context of the impact of globalisation that has opened Thailand up to comparison with other nations. In discussion with a Thai historian, they explained it had only been recently that it had really mattered whether an overseas scholar had received a thorough education or not because the Thai system was a self-contained one. The new information coming in had been necessary but not critical to Thailand's economic survival. Their feeling, one echoed in discussions I had with Thai government staff, was that Thailand was under increasing pressure because its economic development was being assessed by global organisations such as the World Bank, and new, globally-comparative, university ranking tables.

The economic development in Thailand prior to the global financial crisis in the late 2000s meant that there was rapid expansion of the middle class, and with it, greater demand for access to university education. Studies conducted by UNESCO and the International Association of Universities (Hayden 1967) continue to be relevant today. Hayden (1967, no page numbering in the original) suggests that large numbers of Thai students went overseas to study at that time "not only because facilities for post-graduate study at home are not adequate in many fields, but also because there is a definite premium on a foreign degree". A study by Chinnawoot (cited in Hayden 1967) found that overseas graduates on their return to the Thai Civil Service qualified for a "salary scale that was 78 per cent higher at the lowest level and 17 per cent higher at the doctoral level". Nicholls (cited in Hayden 1967) estimated that these people often commanded a salary that was twice that of those with similar qualifications from a Thai university. In addition, by the early 2000s, Thai private universities were experiencing a decline in enrolments, "making affordability a major factor for higher education clientele" (Achava-Amrung 2002, 152)

The concern of policymakers in Thailand, who have relied on the expertise brought back by the overseas graduates, thus justifying the greater salary, has been that over the years more people have been able to go abroad and buy a degree. These people have not necessarily been the brightest of Thai scholars but they have returned and benefitted from a salary scale that was supposed to optimise the bringing back of development knowledge for the benefit of the wider Thai society. It had been recognised for some years in Thailand that unscrupulous overseas universities have capitalised on the Thai eagerness to purchase a university education, putting Thai students into a degree mill that has been both a waste of time and money and has not given the returning student the information and skills they needed to assist with the development of the country.

Up until the sixties, the professionals that were produced by Thai and overseas universities met the needs of the developing modern professional and bureaucratic fields. Ketudat (1973) observed, and senior Thai bureaucratic staff whom I interviewed have reiterated, that as the demands of economic growth forced the Thai government to formulate national economic and social development plans, the established system of academic contribution had been found wanting particularly in the fields of science, engineering and technology. The informants felt that because of a tendency towards overspecialisation, the professionals did

not have the broad background of development knowledge or the capacity to analyse, think through, or reflect on a problem, skills that were crucial to the functioning of modern bureaucratic management. Ketudat (1973, 97) continues:

> *The result has been that the individual who is trained receives only limited exposure to cultural or ethical issues and to the scientific fields that do not relate directly to his (sic) own career development*

By focusing on sending graduates abroad, Thai senior bureaucrats had found that in the last twenty years there had not been enough people trained to participate in the plans formulated for Thai national development. Sinlarat (1994) examines some of the successes and failures of faculty development in Thai universities. He identifies a number of issues to be addressed; firmly believing that energetic discussion needs to take place in Thai universities in order to develop a role for the university that corresponds to the new needs of Thai society. He says (1994, 61):

> *…teaching and research; teaching and community service; and teaching and society [need to] have real relations so that teaching will be in harmony with the duties of university instructors and will lead to well balanced faculty development…not only teaching how to think and how to practice but also should add some new values to Thai society such as feelings, thoughts and relationships with the new generation, especially students, new values of industrial society and informative society, including duties and responsibilities for mankind.*

Ketudat (1973) identifies a commonly held belief that when the Thai university system was established, the leaders took the form and not the philosophy behind the Western idea of university education, a point that was reiterated by many informants (see also, Neave 2000). Others have pointed out the importance of recognising that many of the ideals which Western educators had, and continue to hold, for a university, were those ideals generated by an elite whose claim of intellectual superiority justified their being paid very highly from the capital surplus of very rich nations and that their contributions to that society were rarely understood or made accountable (Altbach and Knight 2007). This perspective is supported by the fact that as wealthier nations such as Australia are experiencing their capital surpluses diminishing; the universities are being called to be accountable, and are being made to do more with less (Marginson and Rhoades 2002).

Functioning within an economically developing nation, the universities of Thailand have always had to do more with less. It is for this reason that the Thai government has been encouraging the development of private universities and secondary schools. It rightly predicted that there would be great popular demand for such institutions as the wealth of the wider Thai society grew but the government was unable and unwilling to invest the enormous amounts of capital that would be required to meet this demand from the capital surplus.

University staff in Thai universities are paid reasonably poorly although their status has traditionally been very high in Thai society. According to Thai academics to whom I spoke, the growing pressure to be seen to be financially wealthy rather than simply to be a high status person has meant that there has been a drain of university staff to higher paid industry positions. Those that have stayed in the university are sometimes induced to do what is called "moonlighting" (Hallinger 1995) to earn extra income, even though the Ministry of Education has raised salaries and academic title rewards at various times over the past 20 years. The loss of academic staff from universities has had serious consequences for an already struggling sector. It is evident in my analysis of the data that these pressures are more abundant in Bangkok and, as will be suggested below, academics in regional universities have been able to draw on local and regional approaches in order to rearticulate their engagement with global market pressures in higher education, possibly more effectively than their city counterparts (Nopphadon 2532BE).

From a city perspective, Thai universities do not compare well in global rankings. In traditional aspects of pedagogy and curriculum, Thai universities continue to struggle to become modern. According to a number of academic informants, the teaching practice within the Thai university has been generally confined to the passing on of information in a formal way from the *ajaan* university lecturer to the *nákseùksăa* university student. *Wíchaa* university subject knowledge has been taught in a structured way via curricula. The information is normally Western derived, believed to have universal applicability, and to be universally true because it has been derived from scientific theory. In reality, many curricula that are directly brought to Thailand from European, American or Australian universities have been developed from local situations in those countries. By the time the *wíchaa* university subject knowledge gets to Thailand, it is predominantly theoretical in presentation. This means that the *wíchaa* university subject knowledge is taught in a pre-existing framework that often does

not reflect the Thai social reality or Thai ways of knowing. The university system is under pressure of globalisation because the demands of economic development have eclipsed the university's more cautious role as an important filter that adapted *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge.

The movement of university knowledge, like capital, seems only to need nations as a resting place on the way to endless accumulation and dispersal. Baudrillard (1993a, 27) observes a style of fractal capitalism where "both big financial capital and the means of destruction have been hyper-realized - and both are now in orbit above our heads on courses which not only escape our control but, by the same token, escape from reality itself". He notes that trade that is "real" transfers of something tangible but now only represents a forty-fifth of the total movement of capital.

The word globalisation is, for many informants, a term applied to what appeared to be "just happening", as a by-product of other things, almost unintended, accidental in some way. This could explain some of the discomfort that research informants have, both in Australia and in Thailand, in seeing the exchange of university knowledge in terms of globalisation. In a globalised world, individuals, universities and nations that have access to university knowledge can attempt to ride the Juggernaut as described by Giddens (1990, 138 & p. 151ff). Is globalisation an atmosphere in which human activity is now conducted, a manifestation of a constantly changing awareness of global markets? Petrella (1992) argues that he perceives globalisation as being distinct from processes of internationalisation and multinationalisation. He notes (1992, 3–4) that:

> *The term globalisation in particular is still the subject of strong divergence and dispute. Many experts are even sceptical about its pertinence. More often than not, the three concepts (internationalisation, multinationalisation and globalisation) are used indifferently and interchangeably, as if they were describing the same phenomenon. I belong to the group that thinks that the globalisation of technological innovation and economy is a new phenomenon… one of the key factors of present globalization is that the phenomenon concerns predominantly hi-tech and advanced economic sectors, and that it is limited to the most developed part of the world economy, namely the triadic one: Japan, Western Europe, and North America. In this sense, its global nature is, as yet, rather limited.*

His words in the above quote echoed my research findings. Only certain groups of people living on the planet at this time have access to the resources to be involved. The pervasive atmosphere of global market

processes is not a tangible thing in the way that a state is tangible, with elections and bureaucracies. Certainly, there is no agreement on the existence or parameters of globalisation as yet. Globalisation has entered the modern lexicon. It is a consistent theme of this examination of people's awareness of global markets that inanimate technologies and phenomena such as nuclear weapons, terrorism, international sex services, drug trading and fast food chains can have a globalising effect, but that humans are still trying to respond to these phenomena within international forums.

It is not surprising that a complexity of interpretation arises when a closer examination of ideas such as internationalisation and globalisation occurs. Geertz (1983, 148) says that "polysemy is the natural condition of words" and in a discussion about the nature of thought, encourages social researchers to be attentive to definitional differences because, "it takes us to the heart of the unity and diversity theme as it has appeared in the social sciences since the twenties and thirties". Geertz has focused sociological attention on a very thorny problem. This problem constantly reappears in the writing of *sangkhōmmawitthayā* sociology as a tension between local and global perspectives, between the cosmopolitans and the locals as Hannerz (1990) describes them.

It is in the examination of global economics that writers such as Baudrillard (1983a, 1993a, b) and Bauman (1988, 1990) have been persuasive when they scathingly describe the commodification of anything that can be sold. The atmosphere of globalisation for these writers has produced a consumer world gone crazy. Interestingly, it was Lenin (1917/1975), who foresaw that because of imperialism, globalisation would be a necessary adjunct to the pursuit of capitalist goals. He, like Marx, saw this process of economic globalisation as assisting in the breaking down of old class hegemonies and strengthening the bargaining power of the working classes. Marx and Lenin could not have foreseen the complexities of economic interdependence, the successful mutations of capitalism and the consequences of an awareness of global markets that have been made possible by the technologies that have in turn served escalating economic expansion around the world.

None of the sociological theories suggests that globalisation should be regarded as a form of awareness of global market forces in the way that I am suggesting. My understanding is that globalisation is a very powerful idea that creates an atmosphere whereby many otherwise unconnected possibilities become connected. It has, for example, become feasible to exchange university knowledge around the globe in a commodified form

that was not possible before, because of people's awareness of the potential of a global education services market.

5.3 Thai 'Self-Sufficient Inclusion' and Regionalism

The 2000s witnessed a radical shift in Thailand brought about by the global financial crisis. In Thailand, the overall higher education budget was cut by 30–40 per cent for public institutions (Achava-Amrung 2002, 153). The policy focus on internationalisation returned to an older, more inward-looking focus of self-sufficiency, self-reliance and the strengthening of education partnerships with Thailand's Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbours. The Australian government recognises the importance placed on regionalism, saying:

> *Thailand was one of ASEAN's five original members (founded in 1967). It has developed increasingly close ties with other ASEAN members and is committed to the Association's centrality in regional architecture. Thailand is the second biggest economy in ASEAN and is actively promoting integration efforts under the ASEAN Economic Community. From 2008 to 2012, Surin Pitsuwan, a Thai national, served as ASEAN Secretary-General. Thailand most recently chaired ASEAN in 2009. Thailand is a member of other ASEAN-centred regional forums, including the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum.*
>
> *Thailand served as APEC host in 2003, is a member of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and is participating in other regional organisations including the Organisation of American States and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe where it enjoys observer and partner status respectively.*

This "gathering in" was not new to Thailand. To many, the fears of too much engagement with Western ways and the reliance it had created were borne out. Thailand had been used to generating its own *khwaamrúusǎngkom* local knowledge through many local structures. Thai Buddhist religious institutions preserved *panjaa* transcendental religious knowledge and such Buddhist ways of knowing were drawn upon by the majority of Thai society to decide moral and ethical principles. The traditional family and community structures socialised Thai peoples into the broader society that was Thailand. Marketplace knowledge was learned by buying and selling things. Entering the "global village" has meant that to some extent Thailand has

lost its autonomy in the generation of endogenous knowledge, and more broadly, about what constitutes knowledge. *Khwaamrúu* knowledge, under the conditions of internationalisation and more recent global marketisation, has become transplanted and reproduced, a "gift" through aid and then a commodity to be sold by economically more powerful countries and bought by economically less powerful countries such as Thailand.

Some Thai academic and bureaucratic informants remain cautious about the globalisation of markets. One Thai academic explains that Thailand has been using its own domestic capital as much as possible to gain access to new technological knowledge because, "to do so helps us to globalise and join the world community", but with such independence "we can substantially be on our own". This sort of response to the purchase of specialised technological knowledge from global markets has been evident in many discussions I have had with Thai informants, a stance that I have termed "self-sufficient inclusion" in the global market.

Thai policy makers also show evidence of this "self-sufficient inclusion" in their awareness of global education services markets in the ways that they are encouraging their universities to develop. The central Thai focus has been two pronged. The first has been a policy side by side with internationalisation of their universities to ensure that the Thai worldview has been preserved. Academics and government informants both discussed a need for the preservation of Thai cultural identity in the new global world and to create unique Thai knowledge they needed the capacity for independent research, developed in partnerships offered by internationalisation. The second policy direction for Thailand has been to some extent forced by processes of globalisation as Thailand has sought to enter the higher education services market as a provider rather than as a recipient, through positioning themselves within regional forums as a nation that is willing and able to look after neighbouring poorer nations and by establishing themselves as a regional power, coupled with a careful nurturing of relationships with wealthier foreign powers.

The bringing in of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge into the Thai university system has been a policy imperative that has been in tension with the preservation of *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom. As argued above, in the early 1990s, as Thailand was beginning its process of internationalising its universities, some Thai scholars began to question the processes involved and question whether the aspired goals were being met in the race to "internationalise". To many, their caution was justified, as Thailand experienced the full impact of the global financial

crisis and is still trying to recover from its effects. In response to the severe negative impact of the global financial crisis, the Thai approach to balancing the cacophony of internal and external demands of their higher education system in this context, as previously I have called "a process of adaptive balancing" (Ma Rhea 2000), drew on the two strands as previously outlined, self-sufficiency in the global economy and a strategic approach to regionalism.

First, some of the regional Thai universities have taken up the challenge to become more responsive to the needs of the local community. In the regional universities, there has been a serious effort to incorporate *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom into the universities' activities. It has proved more difficult to incorporate this knowledge than was first expected into the scope of the metropolitan universities. The academic services section of each regional university has been more easily able to work with *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge and *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom because it has been directly engaging with the local community in various agricultural and commercial enterprises.

The mainstream university activities based on the internationalised scientific curriculum had been more difficult to balance with *wipasanaa* insight understanding, *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom, and *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge. As discussed in greater depth in Chap. 2, the supremacy of this new scientific way of knowing in the internationalised Thai university has led to the diminution of the Thai way of cultivating *panjaa* wisdom, now vulnerable to devaluation and sadly to being forgotten. From my analysis and the discussions presented in Chaps. 2 and 3, it appears that this newly emergent, internationalised, commodified, scientific knowledge is simply the way of analytical, deep examination that has been developed in the West. In this analysis, I situate such a way of scientific knowing and Thai Buddhist *vipassana* insight understanding as similar in domain, with their outcomes being similar and their approaches relying on personally-apprehended evidence of the true nature of reality, even as the ways of going about their cultivation look and sound very different in each cultural worldview. It would be very difficult but not impossible to hold two such different sorts of the same way of knowing in the one worldview because each leads to a similar outcome. Both would lead to *panjaasàmăimài* modern wisdom within the respective societies over time if they were balanced with the other two ways of knowing. Indeed, it could be argued that this is the sort of intellectual

adaptive balancing that Thai overseas scholars are doing throughout their period of study, and well into their careers.

Traditional storehouses of Thai *khwaamrúusǎngkom* local knowledge and *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom, that were being pushed to the side and seen as an impediment to economic development during the periods of internationalisation and globalisation, are again being re-evaluated within the university sector after the global financial crisis, although pressures towards internationalisation still threatened to override this fragile process (see also, Lavankura 2013; Santasombat 2003). Despite the pressures of turbulent global economic markets, there has been a new feeling in the air in Thai higher education and schools since the late 2000s. At a policy level, there have been major attempts to bring older Thai local and religious knowledge back into the universities. At the university level, implementation has somewhat relied on the rhetoric of internationalising the curriculum while at the same time focusing very strongly on the needs of the local communities, particularly at the regional universities in Thailand. This has meant developing academic services for the local communities, also rethinking what is being taught and how it is taught in the curriculum itself. For the students, it has meant that they are being encouraged to look to their own nation's stores of *khwaamrúusǎngkom* local knowledge, *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom, and *panjaasàmǎimài* modern wisdom through extracurricular activities in which they are encouraged to participate. New teaching methodologies are also being tried. Over 20 years ago, Inthankamhaeng (2536BE) led the way in higher education thinking by elucidating that it is a spiritual imperative for Thailand to incorporate Dhammic studies, derived from Buddhism, into universities if Thailand is to preserve its distinct cultural identity. Recent efforts to clearly articulate the twelve Thai Values across the Thai education system reflect this ongoing desire to preserve a national identity that is clearly Thai and Buddhist (Diagrams 5.1 and 5.2).

From my research, it seems that the regional universities are possibly better placed than the metropolitan ones to preserve uniquely Thai ways of cultivating wisdom while engaging with their regional partners. Many people whom I interviewed from regional universities are at pains to stress the importance of this work. In terms reminiscent of the ideals of internationalisation, they consider it a duty for the regional university to be responsive and intrinsically part of the local community. This idea is borne out by the early research undertaken by Thai scholars such as

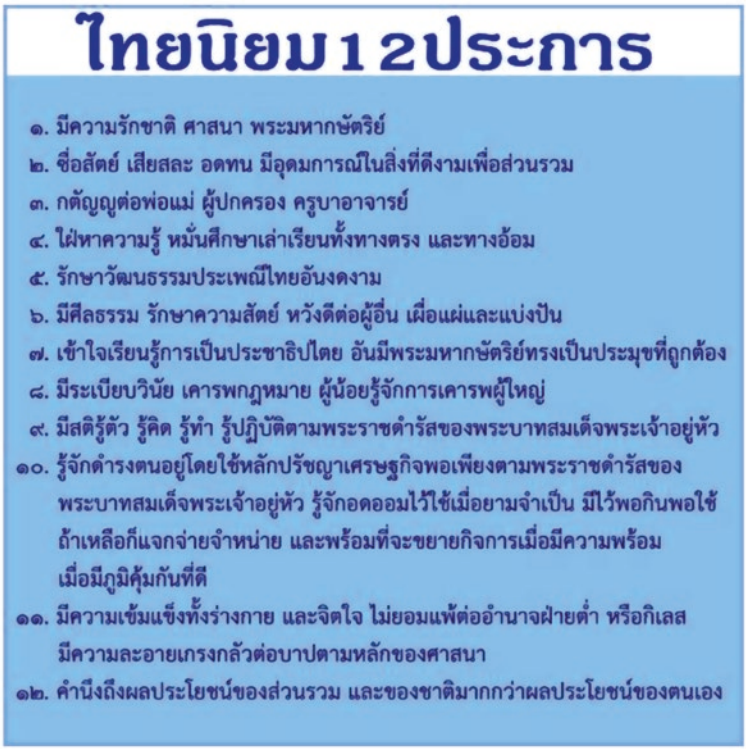

Diagram 5.1 Twelve core values [Thai version] (Reporters 2557BE, NNT 2557BE)

Boonyavatana (1995) and Sethasathien (1995) who both discuss the role of the regional university in the North, Chiang Mai University, at the Fourth INRUDA conference held in 1995. Boonyavatana (1995, 1) proposes there that:

> *…the university, especially the regional ones, take a leading role as a human resource centre for the development of the community as a resisting force to urban-centred activities.*

She charts the impact of industrialisation on the northern region of Thailand, a decline in agriculture, loss of traditional farming lands, migration of the young to the cities for factory work and prostitution, and a

Diagram 5.2 Twelve core values [English version] (Reporters 2557BE, NNT 2557BE)

serious impoverishment of the rural areas around Thailand, and questions the value of the traditional university. She says (1995, 3):

> *It is time for the university to think of itself as a functioning unit within the community network, not the prestigious ivory tower where the faculty members consider themselves 'superior' to the other members in the community…*

Interesting also is the Thai higher education push to mobilise its long-standing bilateral higher education relationship with Australia to legitimise its claim to being a hub of higher education excellence in the region, a legitimacy that has been made possible in part because of the 70-year-old bilateral education relationship between Thailand and Australia. Even in the 1990s, but increasingly so in the 2000s post the global financial crisis, Thai policy makers are fostering Thailand as a regional hub for education in the technologies needed for development, while ensuring that their university graduates continue to access overseas university scholarships to have the necessary knowledge to protect Thailand's interests in the

region. Unlike Australia, Thai academics had not yet developed a strong locally-controlled research capacity and Thai universities are not placed highly in the hierarchy of global university knowledge production. While there is evidence in Thai universities among academics and senior policy makers of the need to produce as well as to consume the knowledge commodity for global markets, they also affirm a need for the preservation of Thai cultural identity in the new global world.

5.4 Conclusion

The concatenation of international, global, regional and uniquely Thai approaches to the modern university suggest that the discussion about the commodification of university knowledge has gone beyond the post-World War Two Allies' ideals of internationalisation and Westernisation. Marxist notions of ethical international cooperation likewise, have been overtaken by a globally aware marketisation of university knowledge as a commodity. Universities in Thailand are increasingly beholden to the owners of the material means of production and these owners are influencing the intellectual independence of national universities, thus in Marx's words, coming to own the mental means of production in a globalised world that barely recognises cultural otherness and local production of university knowledge.

Globalisation is a process that has happened because of the intersection of many unrelated factors whereas internationalisation has arisen as a product of human thought and action. This chapter has traced the characteristics of internationalisation and globalisation and their interplay in the contemporary Thai university. There is evidence that the word internationalisation, and its numerous education ideals, is being subsumed into an enilikagogically indifferent and highly globalised university knowledge commodity and services market. Together with Thai intentions regarding its place in the region as a provider of university level education and its insistence on having a self-sufficient inclusion in global higher education services markets while preserving its traditional Thai worldview.

One implication of this discussion for sociological or educational theory-making is that one cannot simply commit oneself to one side or the other of the global versus local debate. This dichotomy hides important competing discourses within each side. Cross-cultural education is often caught in these big dichotomies, particularly in discussions about curriculum content. The production, exchange and reproduction of university knowledge also becomes a site of conflict.

Technological communications across cultures, supported by people's awareness of global education services markets, could allow for the development of a global stock of common knowledge. For many cultures, this has simply meant that education has been a vehicle for the opening up of that society to Westernisation and homogenisation of the knowledge economy. What I am suggesting as an alternative approach is that we need to understand the various strands of people's awareness of global markets, and specifically of higher education services markets and, that in understanding its roots and impetus, we can draw upon alternative views theorising a world future that is actively mediated by human thought and where the exchange of university knowledge is not serving to undermine a diversity of knowledge in the quest for modernisation. This approach also respects and preserves the prudentiadiversity of the peoples of this planet.

The next chapter takes up an emergent theme that has arisen from the analysis of the materials in this and earlier chapters. It became apparent that the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia is a form of exchange behaviour that is in transition and it is to this phenomenon I now turn.

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CHAPTER 6

Building the Wooden Horse Together? Mutuality and Contestation in the Knowledge Market

This chapter begins with closer examination of the influence of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge on Thai knowledge, building on the previous chapters of this section. It draws on interviews and official documents together with emerging research in the field to develop an understanding of the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and countries such as Australia, a longstanding bilateral partner but one whose own interests have developed and changed over the past 20 years as have those of Thailand. Indeed, besides internal drivers, both nations have experienced the strengths and limitations of the increasingly interconnected and interdependent global economy.

In the words of one Thai academic, she wryly noted that in Australia:

> *You do not have enough suitable students in your own country to make it financially viable, and now education is a product it is not the same…*

A pragmatic Thai bureaucrat explained in this way:

> *We are relying on the chemistry of mutual benefit now…the other ways just haven't worked…*

The ways in which university knowledge continues to be exchanged between the two countries is becoming an issue of importance for future

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relations. Thailand is keen for Australia's continued support for its economic development. Australia is keen to tap into a potentially lucrative market for the sale of university knowledge in Thailand. Both countries are keen to establish themselves in the region in positions that will benefit their own economies, deriving from the gradual and sometimes faltering economic development of nations in the region. By identifying these interrelationships, the national interests of the two countries begin to emerge more clearly and the consequences of these types of collaboration for the sorts of knowledge being produced become clearer.

The exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia is increasingly responsive to the interests of the individual. Individual students are asserting their rights within the marketplace to move around the world in search of education qualifications. Universities, traditionally gatekeepers of access to knowledge, have become more dependent on the marketing of their knowledge to an internationally mobile group of knowledge seekers. What is less obvious is the part that the exchange of university knowledge plays in satisfying national interests and the way that individuals and universities are responding to overarching national priorities. This is the focus of this chapter.

I will first give an historical account of the bilateral relationship between Thailand and Australia. I will then examine scholarship giving and receiving in the bilateral context, noting the characteristics and atmosphere surrounding such activities. I will then discuss processes of Australian policy making, the structural problems with bilateral relations, and the development of Memoranda of Understanding between Thailand and Australia during the period under examination. I will then examine the tensions that have arisen between the responsibilities of Thai and Australian bureaucracies responsible for the provision of higher education and the pressures of the market on the policymakers and follow this by a discussion about the ideal of mutual benefit. Finally, I will focus on the possible future outcome of a confluence of Thai and Australian national interests within the global marketplace.

6.1 A Brief History of Bilateral Relations

In 1940, there was a Thai goodwill mission to Australia (DFAT 1994, 13). During the latter part of the Second World War, Australia and Siam were at war with one another and 2800 Australians died as prisoners of war in the construction of the Death Railway from Kanchanaburi to Burma. Given

the reality of the atrocities that were committed against both Australians and local Thai conscripted peasant labourers, estimated to be in the region of 23,000 dead, it was important for me to reflect how far both nations have come towards one another in the last 70 years.

Since the Second World War, Thailand and Australia have developed a number of bilateral links that have enabled the education relationship to occur. The DFAT report (1994, 15) summarises it as follows:

> *The relationship built up over many years, is complex and multidimensional and involves practical co-operation and consultation on international, regional and bilateral issues across a range of subjects.*

Each country has had an Embassy in the other's country since 1955. As the DFAT submission records, "Up until the 1980s bilateral relations were based in large part on common Cold War security interests" (DFAT 1994, 14). In the early years, each nation needed to find reasons for their bilateral relations with each other. In 1974, they signed a bilateral cultural agreement (Department of Foreign Affairs 1974). Article 1 agrees that:

> *…each Government shall encourage and assist co-operation in the fields of:*
>
> (a) *literature, music, crafts, visual and performing arts, and other activities of a cultural nature;*
> (b) *education and research;*
> (c) *anthropological studies;*
> (d) *science and technology;*
> (e) *mass media;*
> (f) *social and youth activities; and*
> (g) *tourism.*

As regional security has become a bigger issue and trading markets have become increasingly globalised, Thailand and Australia have often been at the same table geo-politically. Australia, under the Hawke government, sought out Thailand in 1989 in order to establish an agreement on development cooperation (DFAT 1989a). Alongside this, some military cooperation was being established. With the military coup of 1991 in Thailand and the subsequent violence in May 1992, Australia reassessed its bilateral relations, deferring ministerial contact and new aid cooperation proposals. In September 1992, with the reinstatement of the democratically elected Leekpai government, bilateral relations were resumed, with the signing of the first Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries

on education. That MOU was signed between the then Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and the then Thai Ministry of University Affairs and it was focused on the development of the Thai university sector, promoting and supporting a program of information, staff and student exchanges, collaborative research and development and institutional links including joint degree programs. An MOU with the Thai Ministry of Education, signed in June 1994, substantially extended that cooperation to the schools and vocational education sectors, beyond the scope of this book. In 2005, a new MOU on cooperation in education and training was signed between the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and the Thai Ministry of Education in Canberra on 5 July 2004. That MOU replaced the two MOUs signed in 1991 and a 1994. These Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) were being established to give form to the policy initiatives of Thailand in its relationship with Australia and other less important nations. While various Australian universities and businesses were attempting to develop their own niche markets in education provision to Thailand, there was also an attempt by Thai and Australian bureaucracies to formalise the operation of these markets so that they did not impinge on the broader foreign affairs concerns of each nation. The relationship of the state and the market will be discussed in a later section.

There have been a large number of bilateral strategies employed over the last 70 years that maintain Australian-Thai relations including visits by senior ministerial politicians and members of the Thai Royal family. There is diplomatic representation in both countries and an Economic Co-operation Agreement and a Trade Agreement, along with a number of associated bilateral treaties and agreements. There are economic, transport and finance agency links. There is a formal defence relationship involving multilateral security links. There are specific education commitments.

Fortuitously for this research, there was an inquiry (1994–5) by the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (JSCFAD) about Australian's relations with Thailand that allowed me access to a range of information and opinion about Thailand that had not previously been brought together. Interestingly, the terms of reference did not specifically mention education but many of the submissions to the inquiry reported on the importance of the Australian-Thai bilateral education relationship. The final report (JSCFAD 1995; see in particular Chapter 9) recognised this omission, devoting a full chapter to education. It is significant to note that one of the longest operating

programs of bilateral activity has been nearly 70 years of Thailand having access to Australian university knowledge although this exchange activity has been consistently relegated to a less important role than trade and military matters. That is until the present, where education is now regarded as an important component of bilateral trade under the conditions of globalisation of higher education services markets. Many informants attest to education being one of the most important aspects of the bilateral relationship in "people to people" terms, regardless of its present role in trade, one that allows cross-cultural understanding to arise and has formed the basis for long-lasting friendships.

The information drawn together for this chapter was collected initially from bureaucrats and politicians operating under particular national governments, in Thailand under the leadership of Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and in Australia under the leadership of Prime Minister Paul Keating. Both governments have changed a number of times with the Leekpai government voted out of office in 1995 and the Keating government in 1996. Since Leekpai came to power, there have been 16 changes of government including periods of military rule. The current Prime Minister, General Prayut Chan-o-cha has led the government since 22 May 2014, first as leader of the National Council for Peace and Order and later as an outcome of National Legislative Assembly resolution. In Australia, over the same period there have been four changes of government since the Keating government, with recent turmoil seeing sitting Prime Ministers being deposed from within their parties rather than through the electoral processes. It is notable that over the past two years, because of political instability within both nations, that there has been little active diplomatic engagement between the two countries despite a raft of ongoing, bureaucratically managed programs of exchange that have continued to include education exchanges.

Changes in government are a notable aspect of international diplomatic relations. A number of bureaucratic informants from both Thailand and Australia have commented on this, saying that relationships are most easy to maintain when the public servants stay the same. They note though that it is a feature of modern diplomacy that diplomats do not stay long in one place, subject as they are to internal policies and changes of government direction outside their control. This partly explains the difficulty in sustaining a long--term perspective on the relationship between the two countries because not only are the diplomats and the bureaucratic staff in each country moved every three years or so, but there have been a

number of shifts in the engagement between Thai and Australian bureaucracies in bilateral education activities, a point that will be discussed later in this chapter. This changeability is one reason given by Thai informants to explain why it is difficult to be wise in the policy-making arena.

There have inevitably been changes in foreign policy direction for both nations. Prior to the global financial crisis of the late 2000s, as Thailand was developing its regional focus and building its economy, the election of a Liberal government in Australia under Prime Minister Howard witnessed an Australian policy shift away from Keating's proactive engagement with Asia, reconcentrating instead on relations with Britain and the United States of America. My analysis of the post-GFC era suggests that the issues discussed here will remain relevant for different reasons. Both nations have become more clearly focused on their respective roles in regional politics, operating within a framework of regional agreements to which both nations are signatories, and bilaterally because of the extensive groundwork that has already been laid down between Thailand and Australia over the last 70 years.

From analysis of the interview data, I developed a sense that there are different interests that are expressed by each nation. In general, Australia has had a concerted period of policy development that has led to a focused engagement with nations of the South-East Asian region. This has meant that for Australia there is greater interest in Thai-Australian relations. Thailand meanwhile has been positioning itself as the hub of information, technology and financial flows for the South-East Asian region and beyond. From these different positions, Thailand and Australia have developed policies that could also easily emerge as competitive, with opportunities for mutual advantage, to be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

It is often mentioned by informants that bilateral relations between Thailand and Australia only developed because it was in their respective interests to do so. Analysis suggests that in the early period of the bilateral relationship, Australia had greater need of good relations with Thailand than the reverse (JSCFAD 1995). One Thai informant said that Australia is only of third level importance to Thailand because there are friendly relations between the two and no direct territorial and security concerns. Thailand is identified by some Australian informants as a first level concern for Australia, and fifth most important within this category. They point to the fact that the Australian Embassy in Bangkok is one of the largest Australian overseas missions with around sixty Australian personnel.

In broader foreign affairs terms, there is a difference of needs and interests and this is reflected in an analysis of education relations between Thailand and Australia. In education, the national "wants list" from the exchange of university knowledge has different starting points. Thailand wants assistance from Australia in building English language competence in order to facilitate its ease of operation in the global economy. It wants access to the latest information in the fields of science, engineering and technology, business and economics, computers and informatics. It wants to internationalise its own universities using the Australian approach, planning that Australian and other students will come to Thailand to pay for an education. It wants university links as a way of developing businesses, not necessarily for academic purposes. As one Australian academic pointed out, the Thais know what they want and they are coming to Australia in the spirit of cooperation and for business opportunities rather than looking for a handout.

The Australian wants list is different. Predominant is the need for money to maintain the Australian university system. Some sectors of Australia want to learn from international students or to learn about Thailand specifically. Because it is seen to be in Australia's national interest to have a closer relationship with Thailand as part of its ASEAN engagement, there is some political and bureaucratic support for Australians to engage in whatever activities are possible to help this to happen. University to university sector collaboration has been seen as an essential key to economic development. For Australia, the economic development of Thailand opens up increased trading opportunities for Australian businesses, and the political stability of Thailand is regarded as being crucial to the economic stability of the region. Political stability has also been linked to education standards and so education has been seen as contributing to economic stability through indirect means.

Gannon (1994, 43) argues that education systems are an important mechanism for understanding global cultures, one which he calls a "culture-creating mechanism" (1994, 343). Over the last 70 years, such understanding between Thailand and Australia, has, in part, been made possible through the culture-creating mechanism of university education exchanges. From this process, a "common ground" has been created, a recognisable cultural space within and by which Thai and Australian people can communicate. In the Leninist sense (1917/1975), the exchange of Australian university knowledge to Thailand has been part of a sophisticated imperialist move that has facilitated the opening up of Thailand to the global, and Australian, economic markets. As such, access to

universities and their knowledge can be seen as the gift whose effects have been for some Thais as terrible as those experienced by the people of Troy who were tricked into the loss of their culture and their territory. Sivaraksa (1992, 1994) mourns how the old Siam has been betrayed by the Thai elites in their clamour to be part of the new global order. The following discussion will consider publically available documentary evidence alongside comments that have been taken from interviews that I conducted. There is otherwise little published literature regarding Thai-Australian bilateral education relations in terms of national interests.

6.2 Scholarships and National Interests

Traditionally, under the original Colombo Plan and then under various aid managing bureaucracies in Australia, Thai people were chosen to study in an Australian university most commonly for a postgraduate degree. While this was a significant change for Australia from being blatantly anti-Asian, what Australians saw as a gift of great import must be considered in the light that Thailand probably had a population at that time of about 45–50 million people. Offering a handful of scholarships to Thailand, while putting Australia on the map so to speak, has to be understood as a symbolic gesture, to use Baudrillard's (1975, 1981) notion. Thailand has long been recognised as having a well-established undergraduate system and Thailand and Australia agreed that a small number of highly trained people could be taught research skills in Australia and then returned to Thailand to exchange the new university knowledge to their colleagues.

I spoke with no-one who was a recipient of these very early bilateral scholarships but discussions with both Thai and Australian university administrators and academics suggested that even in these early stages of the relationship there were some differences of appreciation of what was actually happening in terms of national interest, with the giving and receiving of scholarships. These differences in perception have influenced bilateral negotiations at the national level.

Unlike previous eras of scholarship provisions formerly managed by formerly ADAB, AIDAB, and AusAID, now rebranded as Australian Awards, scholarships are now considered as:

> *…a whole-of-government initiative bringing together scholarships and fellowships administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade the Department of Education and the Australian Centre for International*

> *Agricultural Research (ACIAR), offering the next generation of global leaders an opportunity to undertake study, research and professional development in Australia and for high-achieving Australians to do the same overseas (Australia 2015).*

In 1994, education comprised a substantial part (in 1994, 25.7 per cent) of Australia's development cooperation program with Thailand (DFAT 1994, 22). The DFAT report (1994, 23) says of AusAID:

> *Over the past seven years, the program has been effective in contributing to Thailand's economic and social development, and in enhancing the broader trade and foreign policy relationship between Thailand and Australia. The program has been closely aligned with Thailand's priority development constraints, and Thailand has exhibited a strong capacity to effectively utilise Australian aid. The Effectiveness Review found that the most successful areas have been education and training…*

The Thai counterparts have been the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and Department of Technical and Economic Co-operation. During the years of the Australian government giving economic development assistance, access to university knowledge was of central importance to the economic development that was expected in Thailand. An AusAID informant said, "while I have some concerns about our developmental role, I also see it as being a thing that we do well and it achieves our foreign policy objectives".

An interesting finding arising from my analysis suggested that in terms of reciprocity and exchange, Thais consider Australia to be a "branch office" of the United Kingdom even as Australia is attempting to forge its own identity in the region. Thailand has had a long association with the United Kingdom but was economically disadvantaged by the unfavourable Bowring Treaty with the UK for many years. After the war, this was renegotiated but there remains the impression from talking to some Thai people that they feel the United Kingdom still owes them some recompense for the earlier unbalanced accounts.

From a Thai point of view, there are two reasons why Australian actions of giving Thai people scholarships and access to university education have been accepted in Thailand. First, Australia, being an outpost of the United Kingdom has been able to fulfil some of the outstanding obligations incurred by the United Kingdom. Second, Australia is known to be very rich and Thailand is very poor so it is correct in a moral Buddhist sense

that Australia be generous to Thailand. From an Australian perspective, Australian people have historically been very hostile to Asia because of their allegiance to Britain and their involvement in the Second World War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War generally fighting Asian "enemies" and although politicians see a need to develop a regional identity, many strong constituent groups oppose them.

In the early days when Australian politicians were trying to encourage Australia to have more engagement with its regional neighbours, they tended to evoke two sorts of duty (see, for example, Department of External Affairs 1946, 1948; Macmahon Ball 1967) that justified breaching this opposition. There was the duty imposed by UNESCO that asked Australia to prove itself as a developed country by helping less developed ones. Also, the majority of Australian people identified themselves as living in a Christian country and notions of duty to one's fellow beings were also invoked. In considering the research, it can be understood that Australia felt obliged by structural duty to offer access to university knowledge to Thailand, and resistance to this was overcome by using an aid rhetoric and offering scholarships that had significant symbolic value but did not overly burden Australia in a financial sense.

The imposed structural duty defined the interaction as a transfer, whereby the "books" would always be unbalanced. Because Thailand was at best a distant neighbour, the Australian politicians of that day recognised that a more substantial level of interaction had to be built if there was to be any ongoing relationship between the two countries. Access to Australian universities has opened up the possibility for a culture of understanding to be built between the elites of the two nations. Australian politicians then interpret scholarship giving in terms of Australia suffering continued symbolic losses, and they therefore see themselves as being in the position to claim recompense later. Thailand has been interpreting the same action as an exchange where the account between itself and the United Kingdom is finally being balanced.

As Australia has sought to increase its political profile and power in regional forums such as APEC and ASEAN, attempts have been made by Australian bureaucrats to use scholarships as leverage for trade concessions and for Thai support in establishing Australia's regional bona fides. The past giving of scholarships was also used to manipulate the good feelings that Thai scholarship recipients had towards Australia especially those in positions of power in Thailand, albeit to very little effect. I have been told by a number of Thai scholarship recipients who are now senior civil

servants that personal feelings did not extend to a relationship with a whole country, especially one like Australia that was eager to exert its influence by exhibiting behaviours that appeared to be based on power and dominance. One Australian bureaucrat has noted the diminishing capacity for Australia to influence Thailand by saying, "You can't buy much for your aid dollar anymore!"

There have also been scholarship holders funded by the Royal Thai Government studying in Australia but most of these have chosen to go to America and I did not have contacts for any of them. A senior Thai civil servant told me that Australian bureaucrats have tried to persuade the Thai scholarship disbursers to send more students to Australia but this has been generally unsuccessful. An Australian bureaucrat made a rough estimate that since the Second World War; Australia had received about 4 per cent of Royal Thai Government scholarships in any one year, a point to be taken up again in the next section.

For Thai bureaucrats, the regularity with which Thailand has apportioned its own scholarships to Australian universities points to a consistency that suggests Thais trust the Australian universities and are looking for particular skills in them that they have consistently found. For Australian university administrators keen on "improving benchmarks", this 4 per cent static statistic represents a source of frustration. They reason that Australia has been giving Thais a large amount of scholarship support and that, as the economy improves and Thailand becomes eligible for larger World Bank loans, Australia should be getting a larger amount of the pie.

6.3 National Policy Development and University Education: Tensions and Opportunities

Following-on from the previous section, it is apparent that there is a national policy-making process that has been operating in Thailand over the last 70 years of their bilateral engagement, that has been different to Australian processes. A Thai academic explained that policy-making in Thailand operates in a social context of cultural stratification that sees much of the power concentrated in the hands of a few, in the monarchical, military and religious structures. Some bureaucrats also belong to these elites, along with some university staff. Even so, as structures, the bureaucracies, the universities and even the government are significantly weaker than these more powerful entities. Australian politicians and bureaucrats express frustration with Thai policy-making processes.

Australia simply does not figure prominently in the bureaucratic organisation of Thailand's bilateral relations. One senior Australian bureaucrat expressed frustration at their attempts to get their "opposite number" to take seriously an issue of concern to Australia. By way of example, during one period of my fieldwork in Thailand, all Thai bureaucratic energies were directed at stalling a possible United States of America withdrawal of aid to Thailand, heralding as it did troubling changes in the USA's foreign affairs commitments. Any consideration of minor nations such as Australia paled into insignificance when there were policy tensions arising in Thai-USA or Thai-Chinese bilateral relationships.

History may give an insight here because it will be remembered that the Thai bureaucratic structure was developed at the same time as relations with the West were sought and while these bureaucracies were supposed to manage the transition of Thailand into a modern nation state and deal with outsiders, these structures did not displace older and more Thai forms of organisation. Some Australian informants verified this, saying that the bureaucracies were often a façade and they had been patiently cultivating relationships of influence as well.

During this time of reassessment of the national interests of each country vis-à-vis the other, Australia still had a policy of giving scholarships for Thai people to come to Australia for study but the number of scholarships was diminishing each year. AusAID bureaucrats spoke of the importance of university scholarships in foreign affairs terms and argued that it was crucial to maintain scholarship giving at high levels of expenditure. One AusAID informant said that Australia had learnt from past mistakes in Malaysia that it was not prudent to withdraw university scholarships lightly.

Even so, there was a reassessment of Australia's aid-giving position towards Thailand. In their executive summary, Brogan and Herderschee (1987, iii) report that they were asked to:

> *…consider whether Australian aid to Kingdom of Thailand should decline in quantity, change in sectoral focus, become more commercial in its delivery and move in the direction of bolstering Australia's initiatives to expand its exports to Thailand…*

They found that the focus of Australian aid, of which higher education support formed a significant part, was overall a program that stressed improvements in rural living conditions and productivity growth in small-scale

village agriculture. They called for a major redirection of Australian aid efforts and concluded that:

> *…what could be justified, as part of the modernisation of Thailand's economy, is a slow transition of the bilateral aid relation to a quasi-commercial one.* (Brogan and Herderschee 1987, iii–iv)

What ensued in the following years was a lively debate in bureaucratic circles in Australia about the ethics of giving aid as a way of improving trade with Thailand and other countries in similar economic positions (AIDAB 1990; Bennett 1982; DFAT 1989b; Kelley 1989).

Gradually, AusAID's role in Thai-Australian bilateral relations diminished in part through the activities of Australia's Department of Education who had consistently argued for a larger direct share of the overseas aid budget. They wanted a policy shift away from universities towards aid-funded training activities conducted by them. The then department, under the acronym DEETYA, under the Minister of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, positioned itself to be the bureaucracy of engagement with regards to future development of education cooperation between Thailand and Australia and also as the "one stop shop" for the brokerage of Australian education services.

As the commodification of education services has gathered momentum in Australia, it has been education rather than aid that has shaped new interactions with Thailand. AusAID has always acted with an awareness of political, symbolic and moral economies in the management of their responsibilities but the then education ministry was relatively new to the cross-cultural international and bilateral provision of education services. One of the aims of this department was to generate a "seamless policy", that guided the implementation of bilateral education cooperation (including AusAID) and in the period of 1994–1997, I sought to understand the development of such a policy objective, something I have continued to follow as the relationship has become increasingly profit driven and potentially counterproductive to the bilateral relationship overall.

Bilateral policy-making became an issue during the early years of this research because many informants in Australia did not believe it would be possible for DEETYA to generate a seamless policy; others blamed problems they faced on Australian or Thai policy, but I found it difficult to gain an interview with any one person who took responsibility for actually making these policies. Eventually, a senior informant in the Australian

Embassy in Bangkok explained policy-making as an 'iterative process', meaning that the process was fluid and comprising layers and layers of interconnected reasons. It was explained in this way:

> *…the Australian embassy does a country strategy paper in consultation with all the attached departments…the strategy is written up and sent to Canberra. Technically, the Bangkok-based Australian staff deliver what they [in Canberra] have designed but it doesn't really work that way. Its more a blend of initiatives designed by DFAT, other departments and Ministers…the policy direction is formed in Bangkok because we are the ones who know what is really going on…*

Overall, Australian bilateral policies have historically been developed cumulatively between the Australian Parliament's Ministerial Office of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (DFAT). Consultation and arguments occur between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the shadow foreign affairs politicians from the opposition parties. Information is then passed diplomatically between Bangkok and Canberra over issues of policy and ultimately it becomes the responsibility of DFAT to implement the directives of the Minister's Office, given that they remain the largest Australian ministry represented in the Australian High Commission, Bangkok.

I have been unable to gain interviews with research staff that write policy for the Minister for Foreign Affairs and instead have been directed to the staff of the Thailand desk in DFAT in Canberra. The information from this desk was of the press-release type and did not clarify questions I had about how policy is generated. I then approached the federal ministry of education and here was unable to gain access to the policy makers, being passed on instead to the person responsible for implementing the agreements between Thailand and Australia. The same thing happened at Australia Aid, formerly ADAB, AIDAB, and AusAID. All these informants were very helpful in identifying the problems of the bilateral relationship between Thailand and Australia but were not able to discuss policy questions. I was reminded of the structural problems of studying up. I went to Thailand having somewhat disappointedly left these questions in abeyance.

I was pleased and surprised to find that there has been far more willingness to discuss such questions in Thailand with both Thai and Australian bureaucrats and politicians whom I have interviewed and sought information from over the years. In Thailand, I was also able to trace the path of Australia's "seamless policy" making far more successfully than in Australia. The then Department of Education wanted a "seamless policy"

that met their education objectives but they still had to submit their plans to the overall DFAT-controlled process. The overall impression I received from various Australian bureaucrats and politicians can be summarised in the following quote from an Australian parliamentary Senator:

> *I believe Government policy in this area is so vague that the departments have decided to take their own policy initiatives and their own policy initiatives are not necessarily in concert with one another. There's one following the head and the other following somewhere else and there are personal egos and prejudices involved in this…*

There has since been a number of changes in Australian government but I understand that the development of bilateral policy will continue to happen as the iterative process the informant so aptly described.

Australian policy makers have certainly begun to question their previous perceptions that Thailand is a very poor country. As more information became available about Thailand prior to the GFC, it was clear that per capita GDP was not a good indicator of wealth in Thailand. A Thai ministerial informant of the Leekpai government suggested that the biggest problem in Thailand was the marked inequality in the distribution of wealth in the country.

Much of the wealth was centred in Bangkok and one informant estimated that while the overall GDP was about $2000 per person, between 2 per cent and 5 per cent of Thais owned 95 per cent of the accumulated capital. There were people living in North-eastern Thailand who had an annual income from rice farming of less than $1000 when the average wage to be earned in Bangkok was $4000. A Thai academic pointed out that this Bangkok figure was an estimate for the manual trades and that university academics had a starting salary four times that amount. To attract the "best" people to industry, the starting salary for many graduates, particularly with overseas qualifications, was even higher than this.

The emergent understanding in Australia that there is an inequitable distribution of wealth and that little has been done to address this, led to calls for policy change that would see the diminishment and eventual curtailment of aid to Thailand. According to a senior Australian bureaucrat there were:

> *…big questions about why Australia continues to provide so many university scholarships to Thailand when the richer people of Thailand who have previously benefited from such assistance seem to be using the support to further their own interests at the expense of the general development of the country.*

While this is clearly not the case for some Thai scholars who have returned to work in Thailand as civil servants who are not personally very rich, an opinion was formed among Australian bureaucrats that there has been a large proportion of previous recipients of Australian scholarships who have gaining more for themselves than they have contributed to any development of Thailand. Such scholarship recipients have been perceived, in their success, to be unwilling to support Australian initiatives that might have reflected their gratitude or at least their recognition of support that was previously given.

A sense of obligation has been mentioned many times in the interviews and has evident importance for the Australian policy makers and bureaucrats to whom I have spoken who were trying to such gratitude it to further Australian interests in Thailand. These policy people, who are looking to countries such as Thailand to legitimise Australia's economic integration into the South-East Asian region, feel Thailand is not showing appropriate gratitude to Australia within regional forums. One senior Australian policy maker said that the Thai commitment to Australia amounted to "sweet fuck all!" The perceptions of Thai fickleness has led many bureaucrats to argue that Australia needs to continually monitor its bilateral relationship with Thailand and possibly look to other countries for more reliable support. It also reinforces the point that has been made that Australia needs Thailand more than Thailand needs Australia.

Of note, at the request of the Royal Thai Government in November 2003 after the global financial crisis, Australia's development cooperation with Thailand started to reduce. From 2004–2005, Thailand transitioned from being an aid recipient to being an aid donor. While Australia's bilateral development assistance program with Thailand ceased, and therefore its scholarships, Australia continues to provide some Australian Awards scholarships to Thai nationals through the Endeavour Awards. Australia also provides short-term grant funding support through its Direct Aid program to non-government organisations and human rights institutions to implement projects that help to enhance human rights. Education is still considered a fundable category under these guidelines. The overall assessment in 2015, from an Australian government's policy rhetoric perspective is:

> *Thailand's economy grew by an average of 3.1 per cent per year for the period 2007 to 2012. The International Monetary Fund projected the country's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to grow further by 6.0 per cent in 2013. According to World Bank 2011 figures, Thailand's Gross National Income*

> *(GNI) per capita of US$4,440 was more than four times that of the average GNI per capita of US$1,073 among its neighbouring Mekong countries.* (Vietnam US$1270, Laos US$1130 and Cambodia US$820)

> *In terms of quality of life, Thailand ranked 103 out of 187 countries on the United Nations Development Programme's 2011 Human Development Index. Thailand is making good progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is likely to meet most of the MDG targets. This relatively high level of development and Thailand's important position in the Mekong Sub-region have provided a sound basis for the evolution of the Australia-Thailand development cooperation relationship from donor-recipient to one characterised by development partnership in the region. As a member of ASEAN and the East Asia Summit and an upper-middle income economy, Thailand is an important partner for Australia in providing south-south leadership and driving broader development outcomes in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.* (Australian Government 2015)

As I piece together the various agencies and structures involved in the exchange of university knowledge between Thailand and Australia, I begin to see a possible reason for the problem. The Australian attitude comes from an expectation that there should be bureaucratic symmetry, and in this case it is not so. There are far more Australian policies, agencies and bureaucracies trying to develop links with Thailand than there are Thai policies, agencies or bureaucracies to meet their needs. The two countries are unequal in lines of management, organisation and accountability. I talked to a number of Thai and Australian people about this. Thai people explained that they prefer not to have an overall organising structure, suggesting that each bureaucracy in Thailand is both more autonomous and more constrained in their bilateral and regional dealings. As Australians have been discovering over the years, developing a relationship with one part of the Thai bureaucracy does not mean things can move forward unless there are also relationships in the other, sometimes bigger power structures that might help to facilitate such a relationship to achieve tangible results. One Australian Senator with experience in Thailand said:

> *…there is little else we can do because the structure of the country isn't as regulated as we are. It's a whole lot of disparate groups who are sort of held together because they're all one country but they don't have the same sort of infrastructure…*

Strangely, in the final analysis, both nations seem quite fractured and iterative in their bilateral negotiations despite attempts by both in the last 70 years to formalise and streamline matters between them. What also emerges from this analysis is that despite changes of government and of national policy making, university-level cooperation has been maintained as part of the soft diplomacy toolkit, even as both nations have moved more aggressively into the marketing of their higher education services in the region and internationally.

6.4 The Market and National Interests

As has been discussed previously, the exchange of university knowledge has traditionally been one way between Thailand and Australia through scholarships and other forms of staff and student exchanges. In parallel, over the last 30 years, Australia has also sought to become a major exporter of its higher education services around the world. In 1984, two reports were considered by the Australian government that were to have a profound impact on the way in which education has been thought about in Australia. The first was the Jackson Report (Australian Government 1984b) which opened the way for Australian universities to sell education services overseas in a way that had never happened before and the second report known as the Goldring Report (Australian Government 1984a) which opposed these recommendations.

The logic of the Jackson Report was that the funding of Australian universities was under threat and that opening universities up to full fee-paying overseas students was an acceptable way to make up the shortfall. In accepting the Jackson Report, Australian politicians and legislators allowed university education to become influenced by characteristics of the market in a way that had never before been experienced in Australian universities or in bureaucratic and political circles.

Several Australian bureaucracies were assigned the task of assisting the universities with establishing themselves in the market, DFAT, DEETYA and Austrade. Competition between universities was fierce. Both the Bureau of Industry Economics (Australian Government 1989) and the Industry Commission (Australian Government 1991) examined the export of the Australian education services and their findings validated the Thai perception that Australia was now selling what had formerly been given to Thailand. The foreword of the Bureau of Industry Economics (1989, vii) report says:

With the balance of payment difficulties facing Australia in recent years, there is a need to improve our export performance and reduce the import bill. A sustainable improvement in trade performance requires a shift in exports away from agricultural and mineral commodities to a greater reliance on manufactured goods and services. Within the service sector, the export of education services, particularly at the tertiary level, is widely regarded as having great potential for expansion.

Increasingly, fewer and fewer students from Thailand have had their fees paid for them by either Australian or Thai scholarships. As demonstrated in Chap. 4, more students are privately funding their studies. Many Thai alumni who had studied in Australian universities suggested to me that if they had not got a scholarship to come to Australia they would probably have gone to the United States or the United Kingdom where they could have gained a comparable degree with more status attached to it. The impression I gained from both Thai and Australian informants was that at a both national and personal levels, Thai people are grateful to Australia for past scholarships and access to university knowledge but they do not necessarily see Australia as a place to pay for an education.

It is therefore interesting that Australia has slowly increased and held its share of the privately funded Thai market despite the protestations of every informant that had knowledge of the subject. However the numbers speak for themselves. Diminishing numbers of Thai students receive scholarships to study in Australia and the numbers of privately funded students are increasing, as can be seen in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in the previous chapter. Even so, at the national bilateral level, Australia has faced a number of problems in Thailand in convincing Thai bureaucrats that the commodification of Australian education services has been compatible with good bilateral relations.

In early 1990s, the Thai Ministry of Education (MoE) and Australia's DEETYA took over the bureaucratic roles previously performed by MUA and CSC in Thailand and AusAID in Australia. It is significant that to change the relationship away from aid, a different meeting of bureaucracies had to emerge. Various branches of DEETYA and MoE assumed responsibility for different parts of the relationship, not without conflicts and ongoing tensions. There were efforts to establish a legislative structure within which to conduct the government-to-government negotiations. Codes of practice and an international students' policy were also formulated. Some attempt was made by DEETYA to overcome the Thai

perception that Australia was marketing university education to help it out of its own financial worries. Le Grand and Estrin (1989) have attempted to examine the role of markets in relation to the responsibilities of the State, writing from the position of having a commitment to equality of access and being troubled by the inequity of access to these so-called free markets. They take on the idea of competition that is central to the operation of markets and propose that if markets are so impressive then why can we not have market-based socialism regulated by national policies. They question why markets always are used to reinforce capitalist style processes within and between nations. Certainly, at the level of national interests, Australian bureaucratic informants appear unconcerned about how and why markets are functioning or what they might be supporting in other countries by selling education to powerful elites. These, of course, are ethical questions founded in political and economic systems, and crude economic ideology does not allow for regulatory measures or for Le Grand and Estrin's concerns to ensure equality. Le Grand and Estrin (1989) predicted that:

> *…the outcome is likely in most cases to be yet more inegalitarian than the existing welfare state, with the distribution of medical care, education, housing, social care, and social insurance being determined primarily by the distribution of market incomes.*

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) argue that there is a strong collusion of education systems with the reproduction of certain cultural forms in a society. Althusser (1971 [1972]) and Baudrillard (1981) go further in arguing that power and knowledge maintain a collusive ideology within a nation. It is only recently that the structural exchanges of power have become so obvious between nations such as Thailand and Australia. In the national policy contexts of each nation, an examination of the exchange of university knowledge between each country, staff and student exchanges, and newer forms of marketisation of higher education, it is possible to see that these activities can be seen to be symbolic outcomes of such bilateral discussions.

Crude economic ideology made a deep impression on DEETYA policy makers, people who have been employed to protect Australia's national interests and who created the "seamless policy" environment that sought to manage such bilateral activities. Such efforts brought bureaucrats directly into conflict with Australian universities and education services

brokers, who represented their own interests and those of the evolving global education market. From 1988, when Australian universities were allowed to market their education services to Asia there was, according to many education services broker informants in Bangkok, a stampede of ignorant, ill-prepared "Aussie cowboys" who turned up in Thailand expecting to make a killing. This image was employed by a number of Australians and Thais in their re-telling of those "frontier" days (see also Baba 1987, who contemporaneously describes the "buccaneering" style of Australian academics in the South Seas).

There was little interest shown in these activities by either country at the national level at that time. Over the following years, many Australian universities and brokers concluded that profits were to be found in other countries far more easily than in Thailand and they left for greener pastures. Most Thai informants were shocked at the aggressiveness of the Australian marketing approach, and this has soured some important bilateral discussions. Because this souring of relations has had an impact at the level of national interest, this has caused the Australian government to move towards establishing coordinated efforts through Austrade that are able to manage government-to-government MOUs, to act as a coordination point for the marketing of Australian education, and generally to encourage the Australian universities and private education services brokers to behave in a more responsible manner. This has caused enormous opposition from some Australian universities and education services brokers who claimed they have voluntarily regulated their behaviour in response to the market and further, questioned the motives of the government in its intervention. Others who were not doing so well welcomed the intervention of the government.

6.5 Working Together: Partnership, Reciprocity, and Mutual Benefit

There have been many activities conducted between Thailand and Australia in the higher education domain that provide tangible evidence of how Thai and Australian bureaucrats have worked together using education as a soft diplomacy tool to try to protect bilateral relations from the forces of the market. The Australian government has committed funds to the universities specifically for new exchange programmes under the new Colombo Plan and those such as UMAP, discussed in Chap. 4, is one such programme along with the Targeted Institutional Links program,

Research and Development Internships, the National Asian Languages Scholarship Scheme, and the Australian Research in Asia Awards (of which I was a recipient). The strong national policy objective at the heart of all these programmes seeks to give Australians the opportunity to learn about countries in the region through education activities while managing bilateral relation with Thailand.

Australian bureaucrats and politicians were very encouraging of such programmes because they saw a need for Australian graduates to be increasingly aware of the region. As part of the Australian government's policy of internationalising Australian universities, there was an expectation in some Australian universities that up to one quarter of graduates would have exposure to another country during their undergraduate years. As was discussed in Chap. 4, there has been significant resistance to the idea from Thai bureaucrats. On the one hand, Australia is expecting Thai students increasingly to pay full fees for their study in Australia, while on the other Australian students are expected to be able to study at Thai universities for the same cost as a local Thai student. Australian bureaucrats argue that such a programme opens up possibilities for Thai undergraduate students to come to Australia under the same arrangements via individual university MOUs. Thai politicians and bureaucrats argued that they are unwilling to invest more money in undergraduate education, preferring to improve the qualifications of their staff, a more pressing problem. They also point out that it is much cheaper for an Australian to go to Asia to study than it is for an Asian to go to Australia to study both in real terms and in terms of access to money. Australian bureaucrats are using regional forums to further the cause of such exchange programmes but these programmes also provide a good example of how differing national objectives lead to a divergence of interests around particular ideas.

I have discussed the Thai-Australian relationship with many different informants over these past years and the words partnership, reciprocity and mutual benefit are commonly used by Thai and Australian policy-making groups, the bureaucrats and politicians. There words, almost like a mantra, give an atmosphere to the way that these informants describe the quality of the national bilateral relations.

The predominant reason that is given for the need for partnership between Thailand and Australia is their geographical proximity to one another in the present economic order. In the diplomatic engagement between Thailand and Australia, it is apparent that the Thais believe that

Australia needs them more than they need Australia. An Australian diplomat put it in these words:

> *Thailand has the money and the domestic economy to do just about anything they clearly decide to do. We don't have enough money to influence these decisions in any major way…*

Thus, the partnership seems imbalanced. This is reflected in the mismatch organisationally (as discussed above). As another Australian diplomat said, "Thai ambiguity and terrible bureaucracy wears Australian dippos [diplomats] down!" There is a paradox in the attitude to partnership though because although many Thai and Australian informants comment on Australia needing Thailand more than the other way around, it is also evident that Australia is considered to be far wealthier than Thailand and access to Australian education is still highly valued. An experienced Australian diplomat with whom I later discussed this paradox said that such strategies were commonplace in diplomatic discussions and that it was all simply a way of negotiating power. They sense that there is a clear mutual need between Thailand and Australia, and there has been for some years, although neither would be happy to admit this.

Reciprocity is another common word used in my research about national interests. A Thai diplomat has described the relationship as a functional one where both sides need to see that they are getting something out of it. The idea of reciprocity seems to suggest a transaction based on a clearly agreed value of what is being exchanged, reflecting a caution on both sides due to the past. Thailand and Australia seem unsure of how to proceed in an equal, reciprocal relationship. Both nations have a history of considering themselves superior, independent and in a position to bestow favour in the international arena where both give allegiance to American and, to a lesser extent, to British policy directives. Both have been primary-producing nations that do not add value to their export goods and both are seeking to develop the higher education services sector of their respective economies. There is still a feeling of caution about reciprocity with informants of both bureaucracies expressing doubts about the intentions of the other. For this reason, both sides are suggesting that the relationship be one of mutual benefit where each engagement balances.

The term "mutual benefit" is the one most often settled on as a way forward in Thai-Australian bilateral relations. Australia is not regarded as a "typical Western donor" that is clearly placed as superior to Thailand, and

informants suggest optimistically that this allows pursuing mutual benefit as evidence of an emerging equal relationship. However, this idea of an equal relationship is taking on some interesting dimensions. One dimension concerns Thai-Australian bilateral relations and the other concerns the joint projects that are being established to exploit Thai and Australian mutual interests in the region.

6.6 Future Plans in a Globalised World-Thailand and Australia

There is a complex matrix of foreign affairs interests that are embedded in the bilateral higher education policy developments between Thailand and Australia. I have chosen the metaphor of the "Trojan Horse" to describe some past policies that have been favoured by Australia with regard to Thailand in particular and South-East Asia in general. Gannon (1994) has written a particularly fascinating study of the relationship between metaphors and national characteristics. I was inspired by this to extend the Trojan Horse metaphor to describe bilateral Australian-Thai behaviour. The Trojan Horse metaphor is used here to evoke an iconic story from Ancient Greece where a wooden horse, seemingly abandoned by the Greeks was taken into Troy but within the wooden horse were Greek soldiers who were able to open the gates of Troy and allow in the army that eventually overran and defeated Troy in war. I find the metaphor continues to be apposite to describe such bilateral collaborations as the joint Thai-Australian education expansion into the Indo-Chinese region. The dimension of interpretation of mutual benefit surrounds the future bilateral education relationship amidst the meeting of national policy objectives. Their approach to mutual benefit means that a co-operative program is acceptable if it makes a profit and meets a need. As argued previously, because of past unbalanced bilateral activities, both Thailand and Australia are now attempting ways to balance each exchange.

Scholarships and cross-cultural sensitivity do not fit into the new ideas that have emerged in response to the changing status of Thailand and Australia in the new global order except if they serve the interests of mutual benefit. For example, a DFAT report (DFAT 1994, 26) on the future direction of the Australian cultural relations program with Thailand says:

> *Much of what we are trying to achieve in our bilateral relationship with Thailand hinges on public perceptions of Australia. While many Thais have first hand knowledge of Australia, anecdotal evidence suggests that widespread and fundamental misconceptions about Australia persist. Many Thais have an outdated view of our economy, society and national identity. The predominant image among Thais of Australia is that of a farm, a mine, a beach and kangaroos…more could be done to achieve a greater acceptance of Australia as a helpful and willing regional partner and as an innovative and dynamic economy offering sophisticated technology, goods and services…*

Thailand is primarily concerned with its regional relations and secondly its relations with the world powers. In neither of these does Australia figure very highly. As one Australian diplomat has suggested, Australia may need to continue high levels of commitment to the relationship for little return simply to maintain a presence in Thailand. One bargaining chip Australia does have is that its universities are well regarded. But discussions about mutual benefit have not moved very far because Australia is keen on getting hard currency for its education services and Thailand does not necessarily need Australia for its own aspirations in the region.

There is another idea of mutual benefit in the future development of universities that involves Thailand and Australia acting together in the region for the benefit of each. This cooperation involves big risks and "questionable bedfellows" as one Australian informant put it. I found evidence in my research that both nations are keen to use education to open up Laos, Cambodia, Burma and southern China to trade and for the exploitation of those natural resources. This area of regional relations brings Thailand and Australia into the most obvious potential conflict or potential mutual benefit because both nations see themselves as a legitimate power in the region. Thailand's economic progress over the past 20 years speaks to its aspirations. In 1994, Thailand had the third largest economy in the region after Malaysia and Indonesia (discounting Singapore) and in 2014 had overtaken Indonesia to occupy second place (IMF 2015).

Thai and Australian national interests continue to be best served through "peaceful" economic development of the region, with mutual hope of exploiting the trade possibilities. Thailand sees itself as a hub of South-East Asian economic activity, particularly in the field of the development of higher education markets in the region but an Australian NGO informant told me of the suspicion with which Thailand was regarded because of the way that Thailand describes itself as the "big brother" of Laos, Cambodia

and Vietnam. It is widely believed that Thailand is reasserting its past territorial claims, lost after the Second World War, in subtle ways.

Thailand has been offering Australian education services brokers and universities attractive possibilities of joint-venture expansion into these countries, giving weight to the idea that Australia needs Thailand more than Thailand needs Australia. But echoing the point made by a diplomat informant, something that is often mentioned by Australian bureaucrats who have experience in South-East Asia is that Thailand also needs a country like Australia to legitimise activities that would otherwise create suspicion if Thailand was acting by itself. One Australia diplomat said that Australian universities should be careful not to invest too heavily in the region because there are long histories of competing groups' interests into which Australians can hardly even glimpse, pointing out that Thailand, itself, has a long history of playing one group off against another to gain the best deal.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has moved the analysis to the level of national interests and it is clear that Thailand and Australia have different, but not necessarily incompatible policy agendas in the higher education sector. For Australia, the Thai diplomatic approach has been one of relative indifference but also friendliness because, as one Thai informant suggested, Australia didn't evoke an unbalanced relationship, one where there was a sense of obligation attached because of the power involved, such as with the United States of America or Japan.

For Thailand, the Australian approach on the diplomatic level was very good because Australia had given assistance with development projects and had become involved in joint co-operative ventures in the Indo-Chinese and South-East Asian regions. However, for both nations, in discussions with the policy makers, it becomes clear that there are two levels to the bilateral relationship. The more hidden aspect is that both sides have doubts and agendas that are not made explicit. It is the observation of one informant that each side would have to concede equality before mutual benefit would be possible. But as a more wary informant observed, Thailand and Australia both have exploitative interests in the region that will either force them to collude or will see them involved in levels of tension and conflict. The context for the higher education relationship between Thailand and Australia needs to be viewed in this way.

Formally, there are a "raft" of agreements that have enabled the movement of university knowledge and scholars from one country to the other but these co-operative activities are only possible when broader political and economic forces consider that education cooperation is desirable. In addition, the sale of university knowledge by Australian universities and education services providers while initially being free of government regulations other than those of trade, has been brought in under the Austrade umbrella despite opposition and political conflict about it.

The next chapter returns to Thailand and develops the theoretical understanding of how old and new knowledge regimes co-exist in Thailand among such international activities that bring Thailand into the global education services market and, possibly even more important, into contact with the global knowledge pool that does not necessarily support the unique Thai approach. Similar to many cultures under the conditions of globalisation, the threat to cultural uniqueness poses a specific concern here. If, as has been proposed, Thailand holds precious knowledge of a pedagogical pathway to the cultivation of wisdom and its supportive practices, then it behoves us to understand this knowledge and learn from Thai people how best to preserve such knowledge before it submerges again into the depths of human memory. The forces discussed in this chapter are doing little to support such endeavours.

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PART 2

Towards a *Langsàmăimài* Postmodern Wisdom

The final section of this book in two chapters, moves towards a theoretical conceptualisation of what a postcolonial wisdom might entail, examining its emergent roots within the contemporary Thai secular university system and then moving to consideration of its potential more broadly within the highly globalised higher education system. Chap. 7 presents the argument that aspects of Thai society are in danger of being lost and that one aspect of importance is the Thai-Buddhist approach to the cultivation of wisdom. The Thai university system, as the system charged with the responsibility for "higher" education, has the opportunity to find balance between the influx of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge and Thai wisdom to achieve *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom. Chap. 8 concludes this book by presenting a theoretical argument for the implementation of a *Panjaawítee* Wisdom Method influenced by the Thai Theravādan Buddhist pedagogical tradition *[Paññāvaggа, Pali]* within higher education more broadly across the planet and includes discussion of some practical pedagogy and curriculum elements that might be used as examples of the larger argument.

CHAPTER 7

Balancing Outsider Knowledge, Holding Thai Wisdom

7.1 Introduction

In the early Buddhist era, Buddhaghosa (400BE/1991, IX, 124) gives clear indication that wisdom is not something that simply exists in a person but that it needs to be cultivated, saying, "In order to understand clearly what is beneficial and injurious to beings, they purify their wisdom (*paññā*)…". The pursuit of wisdom is still a key element in Thai society despite centuries of change and modernisation. Sangnapaboworn (2003, 8) reflects this, saying:

> *Thai wisdom means the body of knowledge, ability, outstanding value and skills of the Thais inherited from experiences that are respectively preserved and transmitted through generations. It is accumulated as a common asset of the nation to help people solving problems, improving their quality of lives and creating the appropriate balance between their way of lives and environment.*

The words of Buddhaghosa and Sangnapaboworn resonate through this chapter. How is Thailand to again achieve the integration of its cultural storehouses of knowledge, its common asset of such great and precious value, without attention to pedagogy and curriculum content of its university courses? Mongkhon and Methini (2542BE, 121) argue that westernised knowledge "has not been suitable for the country as a whole and neither has it radically improved the quality of life for its

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people". They go on to argue that the current economic and social problems facing Thailand:

> *…could be solved by questioning Thailand's vision for the future and by reflecting upon traditional Thai wisdom which emphasizes a culture of living in harmony with nature. If traditional Thai wisdom were used as a guide to establish a moderate way of life based on the four basic elements of food, shelter, clothing and medicine it would lead to a self-sufficient society which also provides a sustainable way of life for the people. Thailand must consider this approach as a way to exist in today's global society and to enter the new millennium with dignity.* (Mongkhon and Methini 2542BE, 121)

This chapter develops an understanding of how old and new knowledge regimes could be mobilised in Thailand in the university sector through finding a balance between the sorts of knowledge found in the university exchanges discussed in previous chapters with what is uniquely Thai knowledge and wisdom. It argues that there has been a shift in understanding of *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom and the various types of knowledge that supports it from being strongly shaped by the religious framework of Buddhism to a framework supported by a secular Thai university education system and an unmediated influx of imported *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge, together with the myriad other sources of information available to people across the planet, none of which appear to have been particularly successful in incorporating Thai approaches to wisdom into formal higher education matters. The challenge for Thai people is how to negotiate such a shift. The pressing concern is that these newer understandings of formal knowledge cultivation in Thai universities are, as yet, "unsettled" as reliable signposts to enlightenment, to becoming a wise person, and that the knowledge of the old pathways and knowledge ecologies are in danger of being forgotten.

How can Thai universities be involved in balancing *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge with Thai ways of thinking and being, that serve the processes of synthesis mentioned above? And how does the Thai university system begin to believe in the necessity of Thai wisdom once again? When I consider the future, I want Thai universities to be helping produce the sorts of knowledge and ways of knowing that first and foremost lead to the cultivation of wisdom such that planetary survival and quality of life for all beings emerge as meaningful pursuits. I do not want to see universities devolve away from their core purpose of "higher" education into becoming agents in the processes of planetary

destruction and as Thai Buddhism would describe, leading people into the hell realms. There are choices that can be made and I hope this book can contribute to a discussion about how some of these things might begin to be viewed.

Information flows around the economically developed world at astonishing speeds. It would be useful if people of this planet had the skills to discriminate between the good and the not-so-good in this volume of information traffic. Universities can help with this. People are looking for better ways to do things. Universities can help with this. Increasingly in this highly globalised world, we need harmonious third spaces where our cultures can meet and be mutually understood. Universities can help here too.

7.2 Thai Universities: Complexities and Challenges

Since the closing years of the twentieth century up to the present era spanning 20 years, the humans of planet earth are part of a paradigmatic shift of great consequence. The movement is multiple. Perspectively, we are increasingly globally aware. As yet this does not mean that local affairs are of less importance. What it seems to mean is that our choice of behaviours in response to local conditions are drawn from a much larger pool of possibilities. Temporally past, present and future are being rewritten in cyberspace, in hyper-reality, where the only thing that seems certain is that everything changes. History, politics and the very fabric of our societies are alive with contested meanings and the growing momentum of emergent new knowledge around the globe means that certainty is a momentary experience. Even so, and possibly because of this sense of impermanence, global student migration is becoming a significant aspect in contributing to a constantly shifting global awareness. Students, by studying in another culture, are becoming a vehicle in the search for knowledge, for new ideas, for better ways of doing things.

My research over this time shows that the awareness of Thai students who return home after a period of study overseas has changed, about the world, themselves in that world and the host culture. As these people begin to make a contribution to Thai society, their awareness filters into the decisions that they make, the perspectives that they bring and the understandings that they operate within. They share their ideas with their friends. They create changed attitudes in their places of work. They embody an awareness of global markets. The rapid movement of ideas

around the planet is in part made possible by such people and it is important that their contribution to social change is recognised and understood.

There is an emerging field of research work that focuses specifically on global student migration. Some informants describe it as educational tourism. I think it is also contributing to something more profound than the superficiality of the metaphor of tourism suggests. Global student migration is at the same time an activity made possible by a growing global awareness and also an activity that embodies such awareness. This is a group of people who, by their training, render ideas comprehensible across cultures.

This has long been the role of overseas scholars for Thailand, enabling Thailand to adaptively balance *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge with local culture. This points to the fact that Thailand has been grappling with the understanding of a globalised world since the middle of the last century. There is evidence of the impact of global student migration throughout this book, evidence that will be discussed in a later section. It is important to an understanding both of the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom and in the exchange of university knowledge to recognise that these students embody ideas and carry them from place to place, translating those ideas into knowledge by their own embodied experiences, generating a global culture by their very comprehension of knowledge that has not come from their own culture. They become both a force for the homogenisation of global knowledge in the creation of a global culture and a force for disruption of local certainty.

7.3 Preserving the "Higher" in the Thai University Mission

As can be understood from the discussions of the previous chapters, the university relationship between Thailand and nations such as Australia exist because of a number of interconnected spheres of influence. The most pervasive and extensive is the awareness of global markets, particularly education services global markets and the financial gains to be made in this sector of global commerce. In recent years this has been the single most important influence in providing a reason for Thailand and nations such as Australia to engage with one another. This emerging financial, and often political, engagement now governs the exchange of a commodified university knowledge between Thailand and Australia without thought to the overarching, pressing need for such activities to have a goal of

"higher" education. The problem is that neither nation has a particularly strong articulation of what higher education is for in the modern world. To some degree individual preferences of prospective students drive the new university approach in Thailand with the many universities competing for business in the education services market. Even so, nations and universities are also able to steer such market forces to some degree and in Thailand, the intention to steer universities towards the higher goal of incorporating Thai wisdom into their core mission has the potential to enable Thailand to create a strong marketing ethos across their offerings to both domestic and international students.

7.3.1 Higher Education and the Langsàmăimài Postmodern Individual

The future for the individual student migrant is one that promises adventure and access to knowledge, difficulties of culture shock to be overcome and a potential for the student to gain an invaluable experience of living in another country. The last 20 years has witnessed an exponential increase, albeit punctuated by global financial crises, in such an approach to university education, expanding all over the world as higher education services markets become an important source of revenue for nations. The only real limitation is the adaptability of humans to unfamiliar situations. Certainly there are financial and institutional constraints but ultimately it is our own willingness to exchange across cultures that I think will be the deciding factor in a transition from a global awareness to a global reality.

Individuals are exchanging goods and services across cultures and it is they who are working out how these third spaces of exchange actually work. Universities and governments can capitalise on their successes and, as has been the case between Thailand and Australia, can now exponentially expand the opportunities for individuals to act in these cross-cultural spaces.

Since the decision by King Vajiravudh to establish a Thai higher education system, a number of different approaches, all influenced by various combinations of ethics, politics and economic concerns have been tried and either included or rejected, depending on these same complex circumstances. Historical works give insight into Thai "folklore" that guided ethical development drawn from the Sukhothai period (see, for example, Panya 1982, 37–65). Some vestiges of Thai ways of doing things are still evident in the daily functioning of the university. In terms of its relations

with overseas scholars and countries, critical to these has been the quality of the individual relationship, a factor that has been a strong recurring theme of the data analysis. People cannot be made to exchange across cultural spaces and neither can they be made to consider the ecological sustainability of their exchange. Such things are a product of thought, and one important role for the universities can be to facilitate such capacities in individuals who are there to learn.

Even so, in interviews with individual students, it becomes clear that none of them are articulating higher aspirations that might be expected in undertaking studies at university level. In many instances, interviewees related that they had very little to do with making the decision for them to study at university. Many students were quite passive to what they were receiving. Some spoke of the pressures of having received a Thai or Australian government scholarship and how they would have to return to work in public service for the foreseeable future. Others spoke of how their parents, and sometime extended families and communities had saved for them to study either in Thailand or overseas and how this gave them an enormous sense of obligation to return and repay such generosity back into the family business or wider community. It is significant that the student experience of university has devolved into a passive accumulation of useful knowledge and skills that enable their integration into the economic fabric of their society. Where is the individual student in this activity? Where is the encouragement from families and governments to develop themselves to be wise people through their university studies? At the most fundamental level, where do the significant motivations arise for an individual scholar such that a market-driven system supports them to develop their potential for wisdom?

At the individual level for Thai academics and education administrators, many at the prestigious research universities have overseas qualifications and a common thread of their concerns has been the difficulties they have in developing teaching innovation and research programs. In the early years of my research, the Thai social structure and adherence to it meant that the universities I visited and those at which I was privileged to study and attend lectures and graduate workshops were very focused on the didactic method, reminiscent of the pedagogy of the *sangha* monks and nuns in Thai temples. Books were scarce in libraries and scholars were dependent on their lecturers for access to books within their field of research specialisation. At the senior levels, it was not unlike the Oxbridge method of research development used in the UK where the focus was very

much on the academic developing his or her individual students into the academic traditions of that field. Commonly, Thai academics taking this approach to their work had studied in the US or UK. While lecturing was often delivered in huge halls of hundreds of students, and in my time for two to three hours for a lecture, much of the passing on of new knowledge was undertaken at a very individual level. The similarities to the pedagogies of the temple were apparent.

The academic life in Thailand continues to have high status but is low paid when compared with those who are in the private commercial sphere. Their situation dramatically emphasises the transitional tensions playing out in Thailand. As has been discussed in previous chapters, in old, traditional Thailand where the อาจารย์ *ajaan* academic came from a financially-secure, high status family and was sent overseas to gather new knowledge to bring back to Thailand in order to support its development as a modern nation, people of lower status paid respect to them for their work and for their commitment to Thailand. Knowledge coming into Thailand was carefully mediated and in a predominantly rural population, formal education was scarce. In the faster, modern Thailand, the status system is under significant challenge as people in Thailand connect to the outside world through unmediated channels such as the internet and social media, formal primary and secondary education are more commonly available and lower status people question why they are kept at the lower levels and why they cannot share the financial benefits of modernisation. In the world of the university, there are many universities in Thailand now and academics do not attract the sort of respect they once did. Given the continuing financial pressures facing the Thai nation, there is no foreseeable increase in spending in the public higher education sector. For the modern *ajaan* lecturer this means that there is little financial or structural support for Thai academics to put effort into developing innovative teaching practices or to undertake significant research programs that focus on incorporation of Thai wisdom within their subject curriculum. Without structural incentives and support, such aspects of modern academic life are less likely to be embraced.

7.3.2 Where Is Wisdom in the Thai University?

This begs the question of how the Thai university system is able to begin the task of reinstating Thai wisdom back into the role of the university when the students (often now as customers) and academics (many of

whom at the research universities were educated overseas) are bearing the brunt of a Thailand that is transitioning from old to new in a complex and often uncomfortable way.

The global accretion of homogenised university knowledge is one of the most significant outcomes of the last fifty years. Thailand is dependent on securing access to sources of new knowledge within an increasingly global world. Thus, the university, as a key producer, agent of exchange and reproducer of new knowledge has been brought into the spotlight as a critical player in any nation's economic development. As Sangnapaboworn (2003, 3) observes,

> *King Vajiravudh who established Chulalongkorn University, the first university of Thailand, had clearly shown his intention to cultivate the consciousness of being Thai along with the modern knowledge in his young men. Some of the obvious evidences are the university's Thai style architecture and academic gown designed according to his own initiative. Courses of Thai arts, literature, language, history, and Buddhism were also offered in the university together with other subject matters adopted from western countries.*

As the university has assumed more central importance within Thailand, its own sphere has become more scrutinised and the ways that it produces and exchanges university knowledge have been assessed and found wanting in terms of national economic demands (see for example, OECD 1987). Important for this discussion, the *Thai Ninth Higher Education Plan* (2002–2006) included four major strategies to be implemented by every Higher Education Institution: (1) *building up the capacity of higher education institutions to reach quality at an international level by relying on Thai local wisdom (italics mine)*; (2) supporting and providing opportunities for sustainable academic strengths in higher education; (3) creating a network of higher education institutions to enhance stability in communities and localities; and (4) restructuring organisations of higher education administration and management for quality and efficiency (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2008).

Part of the problem in Thailand, according to the many Thai people who express opinions about the current state of Thai universities, is that universities seem unable to produce the sorts of knowledge that would contribute to the betterment of Thai society generally (Wirun 2552BE). The choice of Thai policy makers to shape the university mission into becoming of comparable international standard through the incorporation of Thai wisdom will backfire if there is not an added commitment to

research funding and teaching improvement measure that will support the universities to focus on such matters. Sangnapaboworn (2003, 4) reports that Office of Higher Education statistics showed that,

> *The teaching and learning in higher education institutions are perceived as having placed too much emphasis on memorization and contents, which do not relate to the real situation, labor demand and the development policy of the country. Students are not sufficiently cultivated with necessary skills for self-learning, critical thinking, problem solving and creative ability.*

It is research and innovative teaching practices, with their cultivation of a balanced set of skills including ethical development, meditation and analytical, deep examination skills that separate universities from other forms of education, and provide them with a reason to exist at all. Such an approach would enable the possibility of a Thai-influenced pedagogical framework for wisdom to emerge as discussed in previous chapters.

Of concern to those of us hoping that Thailand will find a way to bring back Thai wisdom into its mission and role, such an approach to "higher education" might be detrimental to the overseas student markets that these universities are pursuing with such vigour. Thai universities are an attractive option for poorer nations in the region and because they have collaborations with universities in the developed world, such as US, UK and Australia, with their good reputation for teaching, and for access to new research and technology. By way of example, there were many instances during this span of research when people discussed with me how risk-averse their universities had become in the attempt to make them "just like an American [or British or Australian] education". Allowing curriculum design to be market-led has diminished the interest in either Thailand or in these more "developed" economy nations in attempting to think about new knowledge in the local context and to take risks on unpopular courses or new teaching approaches. But it is precisely these sorts of knowledges and activities that Beare and Slaughter (1993) and Sinthunava (2008), among other concerned educationalists, would argue that we need to encourage as we face the twenty-first century.

In Thailand, the *máhăawíttáyaalai* university continues to be an icon of privilege and status. Traditionally, academics have looked outside Thailand for the *wíchaa* university subject knowledge that legitimises their position and generally the older, more traditional *máhăawíttáyaalai* universities have passed unscrutinised in their ways of teaching, reproducing and disseminating *wíchaa* university subject knowledge. Newer universities and

those transitioning from the Rajabhat Institute system into the university system have faced greater public pressure to become autonomous, and to make sure that they become financially independent of the state as quickly as has been possible (Sinthunava 2008). As previously mentioned, when the Thai *máhăwíttáyaalai* university system had greater expectations placed on it by the demands of Thai national development plans, generally they were found to be unable to meet the new needs (Achava-Amrung 2002). Indeed, it is only recently that policy makers in Thailand have begun to look to their own universities for solutions to the problems they currently face, and found the research capacity of Thai universities to be almost non-existent. Sangnapaboworn (2003, 8–9), for example, makes the following summary of Thai government attempts to engage with developing the Thai focus within the work of its universities in the following:

> *Another point of concern in the law is the revitalization of Thai wisdom in the education system. Lessons from the past national development have shown that it has not been in line with the Thai way of life and Thai culture to the extent desired. The development of public education has followed the line of western countries. As a result, Thais had to face many problems in crises. The National Education Act, therefore, has defined a framework for development of Thai wisdom as an integral part of Thai education system. … Realizing the importance of Thai wisdom, the Office of the Education Council, Ministry of Education of Thailand, in collaboration with many public and private organizations, has made several attempts to establish and promote Thai wisdom into Thai education system, such as conducting research on Thai wisdom, honoring of the Thai wisdom holder as a wisdom teacher, promoting the integration of the Thai wisdom into education at both formal and non-formal education institutions.*

Under the new 15-year Plan of Higher Education 11 (2007–2022) (Lamphak 2009, 5), four leagues of Thai universities have been created:

1. Research universities with graduate schools
2. Universities with fields of specialisation
3. Teaching universities with undergraduate emphasis
4. Community colleges

According to Lamphak (2009, 6), the policy is, “Aiming to achieve an international standard of excellence while upholding social responsibility”. The weight of expectation for the improvement of this system, and

in achieving its social responsibility aspirations has fallen to nine of the autonomous, older, traditional universities. These are:

- Chulalongkorn as Pillar of the Kingdom
- Mahidol as Wisdom of the Land
- Kaesetsart as Planting the Seeds of Knowledge
- Thammasat, as Morals at the Core of the Knowledge Base
- Chiang Mai, as University of Excellence
- Khon Kaen, from Isaan Wisdom to Globalisation
- Prince of Songkhla, as Our Soul is for the Benefit of Mankind
- King Mongkut's University of Technology, as Professionalism and Integrity
- Suranaree University of Technology, as Excellence in Science and Technology

These universities have been formed into a National Research University (NRU) League. Lamphak (2009, 8–9) describes the following expectations that have been placed on them:

- NRUs aim to achieve simultaneously on their research excellence and social responsibility by focusing their research on the country's pressing issues.
- NRUs act as the catalyst in improving the overall quality of Thai higher education system.

In part, these aspirations are being supported through the strategic mobilisation of various types of Thai government scholarships. Historically being influenced by the British research tradition, Thai universities have increasingly turned to America to educate postgraduates because American universities award doctoral qualifications based on coursework. Where Thai universities and bureaucrats perceive a need for Thailand to produce its own research, they still look to the UK and the USA. The largest share of Thai government scholarships is still awarded to Thai scholars undertaking studies in high ranking universities. For example, in 2556BE, UK and USA each commanded a 33 per cent share in of scholarships allocated from various Thai government sources, King's, Government (CSC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Public Health, Office of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), One District One Scholarship Scheme (ODOS), Institute for Promoting

Science and Technology, all under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC 2557BE). Of the 76 prestigious King's Scholarships, 70 were awarded to students studying in the USA and the other six in UK. Interestingly, the HEC cast the widest net in terms of sending its students abroad. Of the 365 awarded in 2556BE, the UK received the largest allocation of 133, the USA 100, Australia 24, Netherlands 18, Germany 16 and Japan 16. Smaller numbers were distributed across France, Malaysia, New Zealand, China, Switzerland, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Spain, Finland, Russia, Singapore, Italy, Austria, Belgium, India and Portugal (Tables 7.1 and 7.2).

It is not clear from such strategies how Thai scholars studying overseas on Thai government scholarships will be able to contribute to the aspiration of integrating Thai wisdom into their work. Certainly, as I have argued previously, Thai academics who have spoken with me over the years undertake a process of what I have described as "adaptive balancing" (Ma Rhea 1994, 1995, 2013a) but their careful work of leadership in maintaining "Thainess" in the incorporation of the khwaamrúutjàakpainôk outsider knowledge they now hold exists in tension with the modern aspirations of the majority of Thai people who do not see how the old impositions of Thai status are going to help them achieve their aspirations to break out of such strictures. Academics and their universities, particularly the privileged autonomous universities are often regarded as symbols of such old, repressive ways of life.

The government funded Thai universities are responsive to the economic logic of Americanising their universities and are tailoring their curricula,

Table 7.1 Number of Thai Government Scholarships by Government Ministry by Country 2013

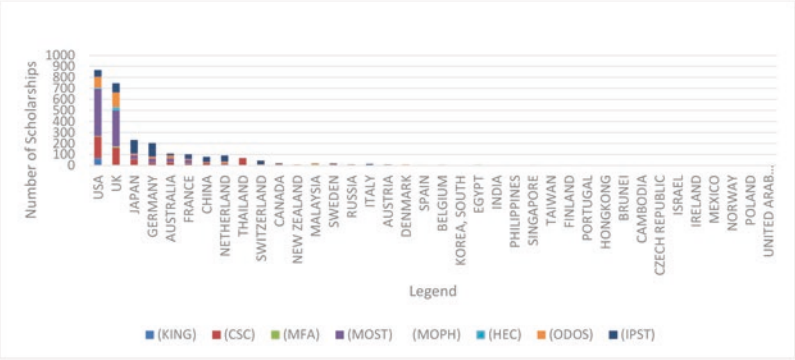
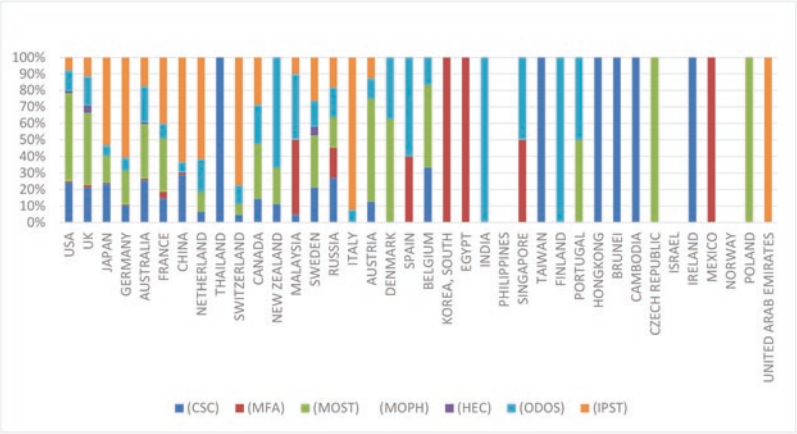


Table 7.2 Relative allocation of Thai Government Scholarships by Ministry by Country 2013



university mission and marketing strategies to the awareness of global education services markets. They are seeking out the market possibilities of coursework-based postgraduate studies, shorter courses and are wanting to be an Asian education hub. This approach is a distinctive transformation in the university mission. Never before in Thailand has the university been so blatantly harnessed to the productivity engines of capitalism.

Certainly, events are shaping university decisions outside of their control. Overseas governments, such as in the case of Australia discussed in the previous chapter, are not giving as many scholarships to Thai scholars because Thailand is now regarded as being able to afford to pay for its higher education scholars to study abroad. Also, scholarship students undertake specific courses of study seen to be within the Thai national development needs. Diminishing numbers of scholarships has affected those disciplines in universities that have traditionally educated overseas students. Analysis of available data suggests that there are at least as many fee-paying Thai students in Australia who are doing business-related courses, as fee-paying Thai students doing courses that are seen to be important to Thai national development policy makers, such as engineering, science and technology.

An interesting problem then emerges for Thailand with it becoming an aid donor country rather than being an aid recipient, and therefore having significantly less scholarships to utilise as a method of directing

much needed skills to areas of policy priority. Can the objectives of the new Plan of Higher Education II (2007–2022) be met while so many are doing business-related courses and gaining high status postgraduate qualifications, in preference to paying for the sort of scholarly research-intensive courses that will bring new cutting edge, research based, university knowledge into Thailand? There are, of course, many people doing science-related courses but the projected number of graduates needed who have the skills to assist with national development goals far exceeds the numbers that market forces alone are currently producing. And how does this focus on bringing new knowledge back into Thailand support its aspirations to integrate Thai wisdom back into its core purpose?

7.4 Bringing Thai *Phumpanjaachawbaan* into the University

In many *langsàmăimài* postmodern societies, the pathways of the indigenous and other traditionally oriented societies to the cultivation of both mundane and higher wisdom are undergoing transformation under the conditions of globalisation (Suzuki and Knudtson 1992). In a country such as Thailand, it is not possible to go back to an imagined past prior to Thailand's engagement with the outside world. What is clear is that *phumpanjaachawbaan* local, rural wisdom traditions that can guide students towards living a wise life are themselves in a process of transformation under the conditions of the *langsàmăimài* postmodern, globalised world (Amonwiwat 2534BE). There are increasing initiatives to bring traditional Thai ecological knowledge into the work of universities and these processes are transmuting traditional knowledge into forms that are amenable to the work of universities in the reproduction and transmission of ideas and are changing the work of universities.

Thailand has been a member of many programmes of research and study of its traditional ecological knowledge. In 2003, I co-authored a report for the United Nations Development programme regarding Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity (Langton and Ma Rhea 2003). This report examined the "Status and Trends Regarding the Knowledge, Innovations and Practices of indigenous and Local Communities Relevant to the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity" (Secretariat 2003). Thailand is party to this Convention, as with many such international mechanisms, and was proactively involved in pursuing such aspects of the Convention as were possible, responded to our survey, and were

generous in the materials provided to us regarding their progress. The research opportunity for many nations, Thailand included, is that it is necessary to infer the existence of traditional biodiversity-related knowledge and practices from the ethnographic, demographic and other literature, because much of such *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional local ecological knowledge and practices has not been documented. Before such information, knowledge and wisdom can be brought into curriculum at university undergraduate level, Thailand's extensive storehouses of traditional ecological and agricultural knowledge need to be researched, codified and made accessible across university curricula. In particular, there have been many projects in the regional universities that are slowly building the much needed knowledge banks that can then be taught to university students into the future (Nopphadon 2532BE, Wasan and Wičhai 2558BE). Such is the research opportunity into the future.

Fortunately, there are both direct and indirect indicators which infer the existence of traditional biodiversity-related knowledge and practice. The direct indicator is that indigenous peoples and local communities affirm its existence and that nation states recognise it. There is also indirect evidence related to such factors as language diversity, religious belief systems, traditional medical knowledge and practices and the ways in which people exploit their environment to survive (Ma Rhea 2004). The issue of evidence of the existence of traditional biodiversity related knowledge is not merely a methodological one, but one that concerns the future retention of Thai traditional rural, agricultural and environmental knowledge. As national education systems are extended to rural and remote populations, bringing increased opportunity for communities to enter the industrialised, global market economy, the role of education has been a double-edged sword (Prachin 1974). There is extensive evidence that shows that western-styled education systems, even when localised, contribute to the delegitimisation of traditional knowledge of agrarian and other subsistence economies. Further, such exposure leads to legitimisation of the sorts of knowledge that will enable people to enter the industrial economy, for example, learning in other languages and learning reading and writing, mathematics and western science and technology from a westernised perspective. It is also been the case that, in isolated examples, education has supported the documentation of traditional knowledge in a way that has been critical to the capacity of future generations to access that knowledge.

In my research across Asia and the Pacific, including traditionally oriented indigenous Australian societies, I have found that the role of

education, while often referred to as an essential aspect for the preservation and maintenance of traditional and indigenous lifeways, is assumed rather than directly critiqued in terms of its willingness and capacity to undertake its preservation and maintenance role. There are a variety of contributing factors to the very large gaps in knowledge of, and literature concerning, the role of education in the preservation and maintenance of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. These can be summarised under the following general descriptors:

1. Rare examples of nations proactively recognising the importance of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities within education;
2. Underdevelopment and lack of resources to support education systems to preserve and maintain traditional systems of knowledge;
3. Remoteness and inaccessibility of many small indigenous and local populations mitigating against research and documentation undertakings, and reducing accessibility to information about local initiatives in education, if they exist; and
4. Lack of consensus on the value and importance of the knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities within education systems for both holders of such lifeways and knowledge, and for the broader society (Ma Rhea 2002b, 2004).

In my research, I have found that while education involves use of societal knowledge that contributes to curriculum content, it is clear that academics struggle to include the human knowledge of rural and traditionally oriented communities in their courses, partly because it is regarded as lower order knowledge when compared to the superior knowledge system of western industrialised societies (Ma Rhea and Atkinson 2012; Ma Rhea 2013b, 2014b; Ma Rhea and Russell 2014).

In the case of Thailand, many academics were not brought up with access to Thai *phumpanjaachawbaan*, have been educated in the West, have never formally studied Thai rural, agricultural, or ecological knowledge and have no opportunities to learn about it or how to incorporate it into their field of specialisation. Even so, in Thailand, there are aspects of Thai rural life that have been researched and are available to enable the integration Thai *phumpanjaachawbaan* into the work of education in general (Wirun 2552BE) and more specifically into the work of the modern Thai university (Mongkhon and Methini 2542BE). As one example, the

tradition of using and maintaining non-domesticated plants in house gardens reported by Moreno-Black et al. (1994) is an expression of culture, and represents an intense interaction between humans and plants. The preservation of botanical diversity is directly related to local knowledge and practices, and closely bound up with microeconomic and social processes. Human beings play a role in maintaining select species, providing botanical refuges and serving as an active force in shaping the landscape. In north-eastern Thailand, women's gardening practices have been instrumental in the preservation, selection, consumption and exchange of non-domesticated plants.

Moreno-Black et al. (1994) report that the house garden is important as an informal "experimental station" where women can transfer, encourage and tend indigenous species as they try them out and adapt them for use (Kimber 1966; Ninez 1987). As a result, these gardens often represent a refuge where less common species and varieties are preserved. During their study, they obtained information on women from 60 of the 110 households in a village, making use of interviews, focus groups and surveys of the different house gardens.

The house gardens studied contained 230 different plant species. Individual garden diversity ranged from 15 to 60 different species. Non-domesticated plants were found in 44 (88 per cent) of the gardens; of all of the plants recorded during the surveys, 29 per cent were classifiable as non-domesticated species. However, there was considerable variation between the individual gardens. Some contained no non-domesticated plants at all, while the garden which was most diverse contained ten different non-domesticated plant species.

The authors argued that the considerable variation among the gardens studied is probably related to the high degree of control exercised by individual women with respect to plant choice and management. Home gardens are tailored to each woman's own preferences, although personal constraints such as off-farm employment, family size, household composition and local traditions are of influence on the number and variety of non-domesticated species. Most plants are used for food, although a number of women grow plants for their medicinal, religious or decorative value. Some of the non-domesticated species appeared spontaneously (*gurt eng* birth themselves), but a sizable number of plants were taken from the wild or obtained from friends, neighbours, other villages or government agencies. A few of the plants had been deliberately spared when the forest was cleared for house-building by the parents or grandparents.

Species which are no longer in frequent use, such as those used for soap or paper-making, still have a place in the garden.

Universities are in a unique position to foster collaborative research partnerships with traditionally oriented peoples (also known as the "Hill Tribes" in Thailand), such as occurs at Chiang Mai University, not for the purposes of exploitation of resources but to support Thailand in its responsibilities under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the support of traditional peoples who hold knowledge of these important Thai sources of rural wisdom (Wasan and Wičhai 2558BE; Wilson 2004; Langton and Ma Rhea 2003; Santasombat 2003). The alienation of local communities from their traditional forested estates has major implications for the state of retention of traditional ethnobiological knowledge (Langton et al. 2014). The ability for these peoples to develop and maintain their ethnobiological knowledge relies on their capacity to participate in the sustainable management of natural resources, and practice sustainable livelihoods through practices such as hunting, gathering, cultivation and herding. This participation is contingent on government and researchers' recognition of the rights of traditionally oriented peoples and their contribution to cooperative and collaborative measures for conservation of biodiversity, for example by engaging local communities in the development of protected areas, and to provide support for community-based natural and cultural resource management.

At the school level, and being something useful for initial teacher educators, Lucarelli (2001) undertook research with two primary schools of Ban Narai and of Ban Daeng in north-eastern Thailand. Their efforts to integrate traditional local wisdom into the curricula have yielded impressive results. Developing local curricula has also helped the schools to preserve local knowledge for younger generations and has opened up the classroom to student-centred learning approaches. Using the focus of Thai wisdom, the schools were supported to develop a localised curriculum. This meant that the researchers worked with the community and school to gather their unique history, culture and social issues. In one village the priority became the forest, the priority issue is the forest, and this became the basis of the local curriculum. There are three learning modules:

- Exploration of the ecosystem
- Consciousness-raising
- Reforestation

As Lucarelli (2001) reports, in the first module, *Exploration of the ecosystem*, the children explored the geography of the forest, learning about its

current condition and about its various plants and animals and how they contribute to a healthy ecosystem. The children learnt about the benefits of the forest plants from a team of traditional herbalists called the Local Wisdom Group. The herbalists explained which plants and roots are traditionally used to treat infections, and which are boiled and drunk to cure ulcers, diarrhoea or constipation. The elders showed the children the spiritual side of herbal medicine as well. Before a herb doctor can cure a patient properly, he has to understand the nature of his patient and the relative strengths of the four elements – fire, water, air and earth – in that person. This learning module has created a way for future generations to preserve Thai knowledge about the value of locally available herbs and to pass on the spiritual beliefs central to the practice of herbal medicine. As the children's appreciation of the forest grew, the local herbalists taught them how the forest is indispensable. This is the consciousness-raising module, which aims to inspire the children to a sense of activism regarding deforestation near their village. During the reforestation module, the pupils organise community activities and invite their parents and other interested community members to replant trees and help to re-establish biodiversity in the local forest. The children also learn about local methods of forest management. The local practices draw upon the Buddhist religion and animism to protect the forest.

This simple example demonstrates how important research underpinning teacher education can be. Arguably, Faculties and Departments of Education in Thai universities can be at the forefront of such developments. With research and a clear mandate to incorporate Thai wisdom, it is possible in a few generations for Thai knowledge to be again at the forefront of education work. This job is not restricted to education. Every faculty has an opportunity to develop research-led teaching in its field of specialisation that brings Thai knowledge and wisdom to the forefront of its endeavours. For example, In Thailand, the Yadfon Association (an NGO), has undertaken a project on the conservation of river and coastal ecosystems in Trang Province, Thailand. In the coastal area of Trang Province and the Palin River basin, over 50,000 people practised subsistence lifestyles in the rainforest, sago palm (*Metroxylon sagus Rottb*) forest, nypa palm (*Nypa fruican*) forest, mangrove forest and seagrass beds. These forest environments have been widely degraded as a result of development projects and the state of retention of traditional knowledge is subsequently at risk. The NGO has sought collaborations from universities both in Thailand and overseas but did not manage to attract interest.

In another example, the loss of coastal mangrove forests due to prawn aquaculture, resort development and charcoal production is posing a

significant threat to Thailand's aquatic avifauna and native fish stocks. The knowledge and practices of local communities who practise traditional artisanal fishing is threatened by the decline in fish stocks. Farmers living adjacent to Thailand's diminishing forests are also adversely affected by the uncontrolled exploitation of coastal natural resources, as they are dependent on a declining supply of supplementary subsistence products and ecological services. These trends have provoked a nationwide response among rural people who are now demanding the rights to manage their local natural resource systems. These rights were enshrined in Thailand's Constitution (1997), under which rural communities will be afforded considerably greater rights and responsibilities with respect to the management of Thailand's natural resources, and the sustainable use and conservation of its biodiversity including coastal systems (Vivajsirin et al. 2002, 269–270).

In another university-led project, research by Langton and Ma Rhea (2003, 50–51) has been undertaken between Moken people and *Máhǎawíttáyaalai Chulalongkorn*. The coastal islands and coastal regions of Thailand, along the eastern shores of the Andaman Sea, have been home to a distinctive people, the "Chao Lay" or "sea nomads", whose life styles, languages and cultures differ from the rest of Thai society. One group of Chao Lay, the Moken, maintain a semi-nomadic way of life. Having frequented the Surin Islands, about 60 kilometres from Thailand's mainland coast, for at least several centuries, a group of Moken decided to establish themselves on a more permanent basis several decades ago. The Moken live as hunters and gatherers of the resources found on the land and in the sea, and they trade marine products such as sea cucumbers and shells for rice and other necessities. The 150 Moken people in the Surin Islands build their houses on stilts above the sea, and occasionally the village sites are moved in order to alleviate disputes and escape illness. In 1981, the Thai government declared the Surin Islands a protected area and established a national park. Under park regulations, the Moken no longer have the right to continue traditional resource harvesting, nor even to live within the park. This raises serious concern about the effects that the regulations may have on the Moken's ability to maintain their traditional culture and lifestyle.

To address these concerns, a field project was initiated by the Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute and supported by UNESCO through its Bangkok Office, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the intersectoral and interdisciplinary platform for "Environment and Development in Coastal Regions and in Small Islands" (CSI) in 1997 entitled "A place for indigenous people

in protected areas, Surin Islands, Andaman Sea, Thailand" (UNESCO 2003). Following a rapid appraisal of the issues affecting the Surin Islands' Moken community in December 1997, a series of workshops were held during which concerned stakeholders joined efforts to sustain a dialogue that would begin to provide for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Moken and the Surin Islands.

The first workshop, held in Bangkok in November 1998, brought together government officials, academics and non-governmental organisations to identify the crucial issues to be addressed in order to determine sustainable development options for the Moken. A few weeks later, a second workshop was held in the Surin Islands during which the same group of stakeholders participated with the Moken in a series of activities designed to share ideas and identify the aspirations and needs of the Moken people. A third meeting was held in March 1999 when stakeholders met to reaffirm their commitments to the project (UNESCO 2003).

Each workshop has represented a step along the road to exploring sustainable development options with the Moken that allow them to maintain and enhance their lifestyle while conserving the biodiversity of the Surin Islands. The project activities include resource assessments based upon scientific and Moken ecological knowledge, preparation of reading material for Moken children, handicraft learning, basic health and welfare training, turtle conservation and giant clam mariculture. Work has already started on some of these activities and an update is included in the final chapter (UNESCO 2003). Across the region, and in many other parts of the world, finding sustainable solutions that benefit both traditional communities and the environment, while meeting national tourism and development objectives, has become a priority. The outcome of this project may serve as a model for the region and beyond.

This is the sort of aspect of the preservation of Thai wisdom that should attract priority government research funding that would enable Schools of Biological Sciences, Community Development and Geography to collaborate to research such matters and to include studies of such situations in their undergraduate and postgraduate courses across Thailand.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that there are unique aspects of Thai society that are in danger of being lost and that the Thai university system, as the system charged with the responsibility for "higher" education, has the opportunity to find balance between the influx of *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk*

outsider knowledge and Thai wisdom to achieve *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom in order to preserve its valuable traditions and traditional knowledge in the face of globalised homogenisation of the social. The next chapter discusses the potential pedagogical contribution that can be made by employing the *Panjaawítee* Wisdom Method, thereby positioning Thailand to take a leadership role in the provision of pathways to the cultivation of wisdom in the globalised "higher education" system internationally.

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CHAPTER 8

The Future of *Panjaa* Wisdom in *Langsàmăimài* Postmodern Globalised Universities

This chapter speculates about the potential of individuals and universities in Thailand and beyond, operating with awareness of global education services markets in *langsàmăimài* postmodern society, to find value in a balance of local and "outsider" knowledge that supports the cultivation of modern wisdom. The contemporary university is being positioned in myriad ways to further individual, university, national and international purposes. I would argue that despite a pressing need to do so, there is insufficient focus on the need for university-educated scholars to graduate with the skills to cultivate their inner wisdom. In Thailand, while there is a policy level recognition of this need, it has proved difficult to implement in a systemic fashion. This situation speaks to the powerful, corrosive influence of education services markets in their driving the global provision of higher education towards homogenisation. It also speaks to a sense of uncertainty among Thai senior higher education policy makers in how to operationalise their national "common assets", Buddhism and rural wisdom to name two strong cultural assets, across their higher education system. At this time when Thailand is, again, looking inward, it is an ideal historical moment to take such steps as necessary to do this important work of preserving Thai wisdom within education.

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8.1 Stepping Onto the Pathway to Wisdom

I have been developing an argument about the need for Thailand to recognise what it holds of its "common assets" and begin the difficult process of taking back the ideational world under the leadership of its secular universities as a distinctly Thai *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom since the 1990s.

The following discussion will provide examples of two aspects of Thai wisdom that have potential to position Thailand as a knowledge-producing nation contributing to solving global problems, in marketing terms as having its own unique selling proposition. The first thinks about the methods of teaching and learning currently employed at Thai universities and outlines the framework for a pedagogical approach grounded in the Thai Buddhist transcendental tradition and provides discussion of the potential to have a *Panjaawítee* Wisdom Method developed across the Thai university system. The second turns attention to strengthening research capacity through competitive research grants that directly support the proactive development of the incorporation of Thai traditional ecological knowledge also known as *phumpanjaachawbaan* traditional Thai rural wisdom into all aspects of Thai university offerings.

8.1.1 The Panjaawítee Wisdom Method

As briefly outlined in Chap. 2, the pathway to a wise life with links to Buddhist knowledge (Fig. 8.1) is the outcome of a number of years of studying the pedagogy used by Thai monks and other knowledgeable

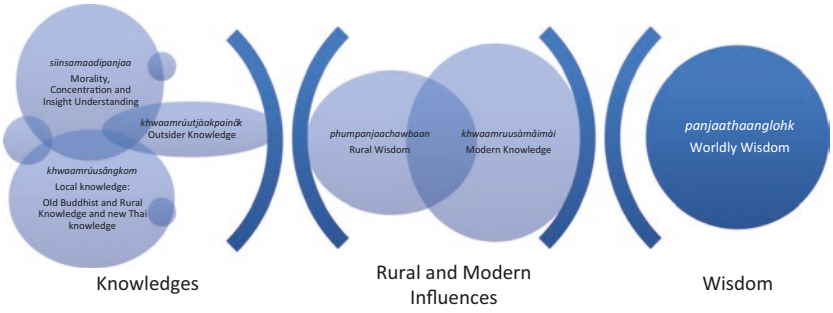

Fig. 8.1 Pathway to a wise life with links to Buddhist knowledge (Adapted from Ma Rhea 2013a)

people to teach a Thai Theravāda Buddhist pathway to the cultivation of wisdom.

The work traditionally done in the *wats* temples, monasteries and the famous Thai Buddhist Universities, following the pathway to enlightenment as discussed in Chap. 2 (Fig. 2.1) needs now to spread into the life of its secular higher education system in new and dynamic ways as shown in Fig. 8.1. The pathway to leading a wise life still draws on and adaptively balances this process with *khwaamrúutjàakpainók* outsider knowledge as needed, and as such provides a uniquely Thai vision of how students might be able to cultivate the necessary skills to live a wise life. This process is well- worn in Thailand since its decision to engage with the outside world. The importance for me is that Thailand still has, albeit in danger of being forgotten, a pedagogical approach to this important matter and it also holds the necessary content knowledge drawn from its majority Buddhist worldview to promote their pathway to a wise life on a global scale. I have made a theoretical conceptualisation of the relationship between ideas, knowledge and wisdom in various forms (Ma Rhea 1997; Teasdale and Ma Rhea 2000; Ma Rhea 2013a, 2014a) drawing on this tradition.

In this next section, I want to describe how the traditional Thai Theravādan Buddhist pathway to enlightenment can be employed in the mundane world of the Thai university system, and indeed more broadly across the global university system. I draw on the metaphor of the three-legged pot. As can be understood from Fig. 8.2, the pot itself holds wisdom, both "higher" wisdom and "worldly" wisdom, depending on the source of ideas and/or knowledge, as shown above in the epistemic mapping of the two domains (as shown in Fig. 8.1). In such a conception, wisdom must be understood as an outcome of other conditions. It emerges from the development of other skills, knowledge, and understanding. The three legs of the pot represent various aspects of ideas and can be read in two dimensions. It is to the development of these three aspects within the work of the university that I now turn

The mundane dimension, the aspiration to live a wise life, to be a wise person, and to make wise decisions, is accessed in many situations through, for example, learning at home, in the community, at the *wat* temple, at school, and for some, the future leaders of the nation, at universities. In all of these learning environments, one can be exposed to ideas that might come from local sources, but might just as easily be found on the internet. The teaching and learning of particular practices can open pathways to cultivating a "worldly" wise life. To achieve an outcome of "worldly"

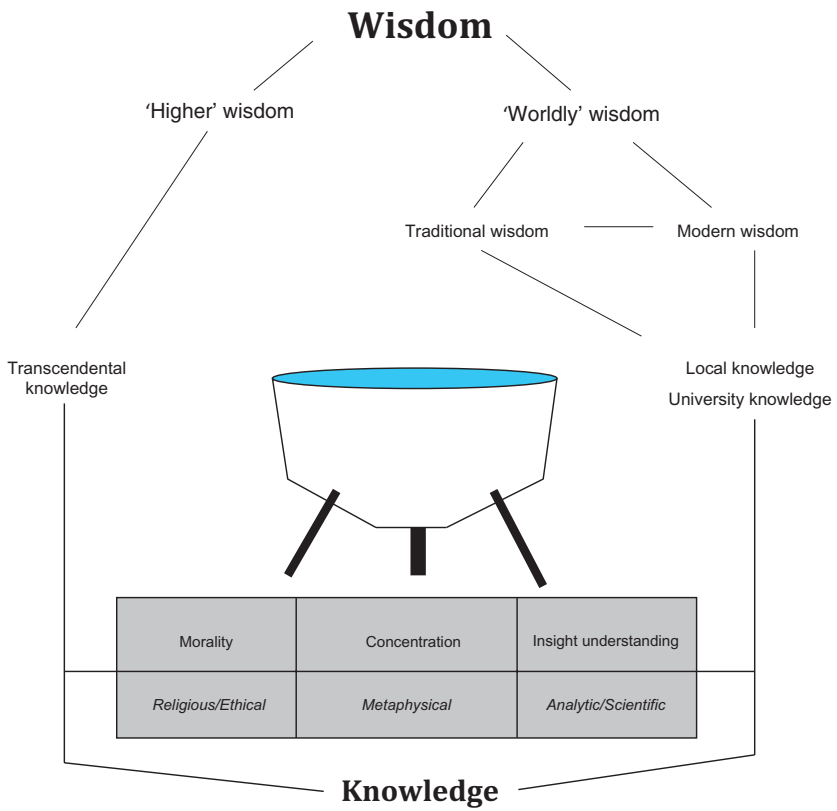

Fig. 8.2 A pedagogical framework for cultivating wisdom in the university (Adapted from Ma Rhea 2000, 2014a)

wisdom, I suggest that one would need to be able to balance three idea domains: religious/ethical, metaphysical, and analytic/scientific.

In this *langsàmăimài* postmodern globalised world, each domain is necessarily a composite derived from local and outsider ideas. The Thai Theravādan Buddhist teachings about *siinsamaadipanjaa* morality, concentration and insight understanding, while formerly being more involved with transcendental concerns, are often now involved primarily in offering ethical advice with a distinctive worldly perspective. If attention is not given to strengthening all three aspects then the balance of the pot becomes weakened and unstable and it becomes difficult to create the necessary

conditions for wisdom to emerge. In the domain of *siin* morality, and now also ethics, universities can guide their students by using innovative teaching, researching their teaching, and undertaking research about the pedagogical developments required for this important domain. The analytical domain *wipasanaa* is the domain of deep inquiry, research and analysis, the domain that seeks the answer to the question "Why"? The metaphysical domain *samādhi* is the domain of stillness, of meditation, and of reflection. It enables one to sit with apparent contradictions and complexities of emotional and epistemological challenge and find resolution.

Influential on my thinking has been the Theravādan Buddhist tradition for the cultivation of wisdom found in the fourth of the *Ariya Sacca* (Noble Truths), the *Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Maggа* (Noble Eightfold Path) as one pedagogical pathway that was accessible to me (see also, for example, Wirun 2552BE, 120). I have studied and practiced these teachings and have been taught how to teach others this approach. It provides some important guidance on what sort of content is important for each domain. In the domain of *siin* morality and ethics, the student is encouraged to focus on Right Speech, Right Action and learn to make wise choices about Right Livelihood. In the domain of *samādhi* concentration, the student learns to make Right Effort, employ Right Mindfulness and practice Right Concentration. In the domain of *wipasanaa*, insight, the student learns Right View and Right Thought (Nyanatiloka 1982, 13). The next sections will give some practical examples drawn from work being undertaken in Thailand and in Australia to bring these ideas into university classrooms and extracurricular activities.

From a teaching perspective, supporting students to cultivate their potential to live a wise life is best understood as a consequence of balancing these three ideas domains. The explanatory strength of the three-legged pot metaphor lies in the idea of balance. A balanced approach is needed to the three different ways of knowing. As with a three-legged pot, any tendency to strengthen one leg, or one way of knowing, without the other two, will result in imbalance and disharmony and "spilt soup" as one of my Thai *Ajaans* suggested, with the analogous loss of the potential to cultivate wisdom.

In employing this understanding to the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom, and thereby identifying its pathway, I differ from those who see only the religious or the metaphysical or the scientific way of thinking as the pathway to wisdom. While an analytic way of knowing, such as the scientific, is a necessary part of the body of knowledge that would enable the cultivation of wisdom, it needs to be in its proper proportion. Because of

the power of Western science, there is a tendency in Thai universities to look outside Thailand for this way of thinking, assuming that Thailand does not have its own analytical tradition but this would be a mistake (Ma Rhea 2001). I have argued that it would be more skilful to bring the Thai analytical way of knowing, the domain of *wipasanaa*, into a harmonious co-operation with ethical and metaphysical ideas in a culturally resonant way, providing a firm support for the cultivation of Thai wisdom.

8.1.1.1 Cultivating the Religious/Ethical

Overwhelmingly, interviewees spoke of *siin* the ethical and moral domain as being the strongest aspect of Thai culture that is still present for students and academics alike whether they also practice another religion. The Thai King is the protector of all religions and Thailand is still predominantly Theravādan Buddhist and so all Thai people receive a social and formal education in the principles of Thai Buddhism. Some students come to their studies at university from a strong religious background. Their families are involved with religious communities and they have been educated in religious schools. Furthermore, these students are likely to return to such schools as teachers. For other students, they have little or no interest in religion, their families have no particular religious affiliation and some are opposed to the concept of religion. Even so, many ascribe to Thai Buddhist ethics often by habit rather than because of a considered position on ethical matters.

Thinking about the reach of global ideas about religion and spirituality and its impacts up to the present on Thai society, I have been interested to learn and understand how this might influence one's approach to teaching about Thai wisdom and current educational issues of curriculum and pedagogy at the university level. *Ajaans* academics gave many examples of how they invite their students to draw from their religious or ethical positions to inform their thinking about their topic specialisation and how they will deal with the complex social world in which they find themselves. In Thailand, some academics felt that it was better to keep the classroom free from such discussions and rather to encourage students to undertake extracurricular service activities that gave them opportunity to practice Right Speech through Right Action.

8.1.1.2 Cultivating the Analytic/Scientific

For the Thai university system, its academics, students and education administrators alike, the domain of *wipasanaa* insight understanding is regarded as the most difficult domain in the transcendental arena. Some of

this sense of it being too difficult for most to understand is also evident in the mundane pursuit of analytic or scientific knowledge. By way of example, Dignāga gives homage to perfection of wisdom, with Stanzas 56–57 giving insight into the complex philosophical teachings underpinning the Buddhist approach to the cultivation of wisdom (Various 1966, 102):

56
What is differentiated as opposite in meaning,
Conceals the subject matter at hand;
In the realm of Transcendental Wisdom
A masquerade this has been likened to.

57
Attachment to the perfection of wisdom is
To this extent the epitome of meaninglessness.
Taking again one's stand in the opposite,
The selfsame dilemma is just resorted to.

As discussed in previous chapters, the scientific method is regarded as a Western invention, one about which Thai society must learn by going abroad and bringing back new scientific discoveries and technological knowledge to help drive the emerging Thai economy and society. I believe this to be a fundamental misunderstanding of the domain of *wipasanaa* insight understanding. Buddhist Thailand holds a wealth of knowledge about Right View and Right Thought which is successfully integrated into mundane university life has the potential to revolutionise the way that Thailand creates new knowledge that will help to solve pressing social issues; such a pedagogy and curriculum content, rests in the storehouses of Thai *panjaa* wisdom. *Ajaans* academics that are developing innovative teaching approaches such as the Thai approach to problem-based learning in fields such as medical education(Khoo 2003; Suwanwela 1991; Suebnukarn and Haddawy 2004), nursing (Chuaprapaisilp 1989; Klunklin et al. 2011; Rideout 2001) and leadership development, (Bridges and Hallinger 1996) have shown good results in encouraging students to think deeply about the topic and use their Buddhist training to support such exploration of the nature of reality.

8.1.1.3 Cultivating the Metaphysical

Such analytical research done by students and their reflection on the moral/ethical/religious implications of what they are learning can be

disturbing both for them personally and for their professional practice. In my research, I have found that Thai academics and students find their strength in the domain of *siin* morality and ethics. Australian academics and students by comparison find their strength in the analytical, scientific domain. Of significant absence in both cases is the capacity for *samādhi* concentration. Over the past 20 years, I have been developing a pedagogical approach to this important domain with my students. The reason for its centrality is that the domains of morality or analysis/insight understanding by themselves do not create the necessary conditions for the emergence of wisdom.

In my classrooms, to support students in their higher learning they are asked to develop a meditative, reflective practice of stillness and quietude. Given the range of religious, ethical, and ethno-cultural backgrounds of the students, they are encouraged to find such practices for themselves but are encouraged to do so, to talk about what approach has worked for them and why. Many look within their family tradition while others seek out formal meditation classes. Others seek out people they believe to be wise to help them to access a more metaphysical way of thinking. Students commonly report that the practices of stillness, reflection and meditation help them to sit with their discomforts and to support them to think more deeply and openly about the issues with which they struggle.

8.2 Reflections on the Pedagogy of This Pathway

The *Panjaawítee* Wisdom Method, a pedagogical approach to enabling the causes and conditions for wisdom to arise, seeks to open up a pathway for students to cultivate their potential for wisdom through higher learning by using the wisdom pot as its metaphor. The approach is not culture specific but does enable students to learn about, and learn to respect, their own cultural and religious traditions while at the same time supporting them to become skilled and knowledgeable about their responsibilities as adults in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. At university level, students commonly start this journey with some fear and trepidation but by the end, most have found that they have developed both personally and professionally. It is apparent in marking their final assignments that many have undergone a profound and paradigmatic shift in their understanding of themselves and their place in the world, and have learned to look for balance in their way of thinking about complex issues, drawing on their emergent skills and knowledge, balancing analytical, ethical and metaphysical ways of thinking.

For some, they were not able to find this balance, preferring to stay in their preferred mode of thinking. Their response provides insight into the condition of the modern university if it continues to rely on the cultivation of one mode of thinking above all others. More important, it provides encouragement that if a more complex approach to the development of higher learning in students is undertaken then they can access their innate wisdom. As was suggested by using the metaphor of the pot, if all three knowledge domains are not strengthened equally then there is learning without the potential to cultivate wisdom in the learner.

Commonly in the Western-style classroom, whether in the West or not, the instability of the pot lies in the absence of a way of knowing that focuses on concentration, disciplines of the mind and stillness. As students start to understand themselves, wise people often tell them that they talk too much. They learn to listen. They discover that without stillness, it is difficult for deep ethical or analytical understanding to arise. The modern form of the secular, mundane university has traditionally turned away from the metaphysical, concentrating instead on whatever is the most culturally acceptable domain, ethical or analytical, and it is not surprising that ideas derived from Western epistemologies are often much stronger in their scientific/analytic conception than in the ethical or metaphysical. It is therefore possible to understand that knowledge derived from Western universities is scientifically thorough but would fall short of enabling a wise learning outcome. This of course is the issue when Thai scholars return from overseas. Often they hold their new knowledge out of balance with their Thai cultural inheritance.

8.3 Considerations

8.3.1 Methodological

This book has raised a number of issues for contemplation. From Chap. 2, methodologically, the most important learning that I have had during this 20-year journey is that no one method will apprehend "reality". Having settled on a qualitative approach, it was with some shock that I realised that it is possible for a group of informants to all tell the same partial story. To a degree, this was because I was not asking the right questions, but not knowing that such a question was necessary, I came to see how important it was to triangulate my qualitative findings with statistical evidence. Ironically given the subject matter, it is often said in the Zen Buddhist approach to spiritual inquiry that one will receive the right answer when

one learns to ask the right question. By examining available statistics and analysing the array of data, I have been able to sharpen the questions to be asked in an iterative way.

The other methodological learning that I have had is about understanding what people are telling me across cultures. I have found it necessary to have a clear set of thematic questions in mind but to be very sensitive to most other aspects of the context in which the fieldwork has been conducted. My research approach to Australian informants has been different to my approach to the Thai informants. I have far more understanding of the Australian situation because I live in Australia and am part of that culture. I have relied far more on Thai people to explain to me what is happening in Thailand than I have in Australia.

8.3.2 Understanding Panjaa Wisdom and Khwaamrúu Knowledge

My contemplations about *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge over the last 20 years have led me far and wide in my reading and in discussions with people. This book has narrowed the question to the relationship between the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom and the production, exchange and reproduction of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge, looking at evidence from Thailand and a nation such as Australia, a thread examined across a number of chapters. It was clear that *panjaa* wisdom was considered differently in Thailand to a nation such as Australia. It was also evident that there were differing opinions about *panjaa* wisdom within each national group. I found the Buddhist orthodox explanation of the relationship between *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge both resonated with, and added something to, what the informants and the literature had said.

Superimposing Scheler's sociological examination of ways of knowing over the Theravādan Buddhist one, I saw that there were two different sorts of *khwaamrúu* knowledge, *khwaamrúudeegwàa* transcendental knowledge and a grouping of worldly knowledges that constitute contemporary Thai mundane knowledge or k*hwaamruusàmăimài* modern knowledge. The latter *khwaamrúuthaanglohk* worldly sorts of knowledge include *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge, and *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledges such as *khwaamrúuphíphádthanaakaan* development knowledge. Of most relevance to this analysis is *wíchaa* university subject knowledge, what is taught together with how and why it

is taught. Both knowledges comprise three ways of knowing about the world, the cultivation of which would lead to *panjaa* wisdom.

The relationship of wisdom to science was one of the most complicated ones to understand. As I contemplated this, I was struck by the number of Thai informants pointing to Western science as a form of *panjaa* wisdom, whereas Australia informants had been telling me that scientific knowledge without ethics was something potentially dangerous. As I thought about this, I felt it was wrong to consider knowledge and wisdom as being on the same level and so went back to the Theravādan Buddhist orthodox understanding. I realised too that this teaching has become distorted. Theravādan Buddhist texts now teach the three ways of knowing as morality, concentration and wisdom in the teachings about *Ariya Sacca* the Four Noble Truths and *Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgika-Maggа* the Noble Eightfold Path (Bodhi 1984; Nyanatiloka 1982). My revised understanding of *Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgika-Maggа* the Noble Eightfold Path now sees *panjaa* wisdom, whether *panjaathaangtham* Buddhist higher wisdom or *panjaathaanglohk* worldly wisdom, as the outcome of practice and understanding of the three ways of knowing. In such a way, the pot of wisdom is constantly replenished and balanced.

When I examined the actual practices that were being called "wisdom", they were very similar to *wipasanaa* insight understanding practices that in conjunction with morality and concentration could lead to an experience of wisdom. The informants who insisted that wisdom was higher than knowledge provided the key to unravelling the mess. Equally, Thai informants insistence that science could be regarded as a form of wisdom then became clearer, because Thai Buddhist are taught that wisdom is the insight path. I then understood that what these Thai informants were saying was that the Western scientific way of knowing about the world was very similar to the way of knowing that encourages *wipasanaa* insight understanding. Both are practices of deep understanding if applied correctly.

The scientific way of knowing is an important part of discussion I have had with Thai academics and students. The established Thai practice of bringing Western science into a clear Thai cultural framework tried to make sure that this new k*hwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge was balanced with *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge and, sometimes, with *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom. It remains to be seen whether the increases in the migration of Thai scholars to overseas universities to gain access to new *wíchaa* university subject knowledge in

science, engineering, informatics and computer technologies will disrupt the adaptive balancing that has occurred up until now. It will be influenced by the scholars themselves, by how they bring their newer *wíchaa* university subject knowledge back to Thailand, by how they filter what they have learned and by how they act because of their global awareness and their *khwaamruusàmăimài* modern knowledge.

What becomes clear is that *khwaamruusàmăimài* modern knowledge is being brought into nations such as Thailand by returning students and that such *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge poses a serious challenge to *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge. I found that the sorts of knowledge that had been built on the past, on experiences and on cultural storehouses of *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge had over many centuries become *phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom. As such, there had been a strong reliance on the relative stability of Thai society on which to base wise pronouncements. As such, traditional Thailand could therefore be seen to be inherently conservative.

Against such conservative stability have arisen forces for change, some from within the conservative establishment but a greater cacophony has come from those who regard such forms of *khwaamrúu* knowledge as *wíchaa* university subject knowledge as a tool by which to construct a different, better future for Thailand. *Phumpanjaachawbaan* indigenous Thai rural wisdom is withering before *wíchaa* university subject knowledge because such knowledge accommodates change. University graduates know that their *wíchaa* university subject knowledge becomes outdated by new discoveries. They are trained to be open to such a process, and to be questioning of ways of knowing that look for solutions to problems outside the material.

A training in the traditional Buddhist *panjaa* wisdom path insists that there is more to insight than the physical manifestations of materiality. Transcendental understanding would incorporate change while teaching that solutions to material problems can be found in balancing the three ways of knowing transcendentally and metaphysically. My contemplation of this teaching led me to consider the second leg of the pot, the metaphysical domain of knowing described by Scheler, and the potential role of the university in the development of a strong mind that is capable of deep concentration about profound questions. I will take up this question again in the last section.

After considering *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge, I then turned to a close examination of the production, exchange and

reproduction of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge within Thailand and with a nation such as Australia. I have stressed the methodological importance of viewing society from a number of perspectives or levels in the examination of particular behaviour. In the research for this book, I have considered the global awareness of individual students and academics, universities, and nations and how they have responded to, and participated in, the production, exchange and reproduction of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge within Thailand.

8.3.3 Khwaamrúu Knowledge and Its Forms

Chaps. 4, 5, and 6 have examined *khwaamrúu* knowledge, that which has been shaped by individual understandings, has derived from outside Thailand, and how Thailand is responding to new globalised education services markets. Chapter 4 focuses on individuals involved in a selection of actual exchanges of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge that have taken place or are continuing to take place between Thailand and a nation such as Australia since the Second World War. Chapter 5 considers the traditional role of the *máhăawíttáyaalai* university in the production, exchange and reproduction of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge within Thailand and with a nation such as Australia and how this role is changing under pressure of new global economic imperatives. I make an argument that individuals' awareness of global markets, specifically of global education services markets, within which the production, exchange and reproduction of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge has occurred is creating a new form of global awareness within higher education. This global awareness relates to the exchange of ideas around the globe, ideas that are embodied, understood and filtered by students who study outside their place of cultural identification, and carried with them from nation to nation. This global awareness has manifested itself in discussions about internationalisation, globalisation, regionalism and international law, as the tasks of nations and universities are being channelled into the requirements of global capital.

8.3.4 Sociological Considerations

This book provides a crucial backdrop to a more specific understanding of how concepts such as *khwaamrúu* knowledge and *panjaa* wisdom need to be viewed in a social context that is increasingly interwoven and global in its perspective. Actual manifestations of *khwaamrúusăngkom* locally produced

knowledge and *panjaa* wisdom are being globalised daily. However, despite many attempts in past centuries to provide forums where all humans on the planet could reach consensus on a common future, the goal seems as elusive as when it was first conceived. The idea that the humans of this planet all belong to a global society is a relatively new notion and its debates have attracted a great deal of discussion. Notions of collective global action to provide food and shelter for all humans arise from this global awareness and education is seen as a tool for enabling this to become a reality.

While *sangkhōmmawitthayā* sociology has concerned itself greatly with the future that is being created by human actions, it has paid scant attention to the development of wisdom, rather focussing on what is not working and why. Examinations of trends towards globalisation have tended to use established sociological ways of knowing: arguing structure versus agency, focussing on local and global arguments as they arise in society. As hinted in discussion in Chap. 7, the sociology of the future needs to make two significant shifts. First, a *langsàmăimài* postmodern, postcolonial global awareness needs to be cultivated. In Thailand, this will mean developing a local research capacity in universities that supports the equal importance of locally produced university knowledge alongside outsider knowledges such as development knowledge, with the social sciences being well positioned to make a powerful contribution in Thailand (Flyvbjerg 2546BE). One of the present problems is that academics in nations such as Australia think Thai university knowledge is simply a reproduction of Western university knowledge and therefore not worth investigating. Little research is undertaken about the Thai higher education system outside of Thailand, except by those who work in the development sector. It is crucial now that Thai universities are emboldened to produce new *wíchaa* university subject knowledge that comes from the older *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge and *phumpanjaachawbaan* rural wisdom of their own people and to develop a sustained, systemic teaching and learning program to support academics to incorporate such *khwaamrúu* knowledge. It is a rare historical moment where simultaneous change could allow for exciting new possibilities in the production, exchange, and reproduction of university knowledge on a global scale.

Secondly, it is essential that sociological theorising is able to recognise change and impermanence in the very fabric of theorising. Given the time scale of this research program, I have needed to employ a research approach that has allowed for the activities I was studying to change, even within the course of the research. I have maintained sensitivity to the influence that

time has had on Thailand and on its engagements with outsider nations and people. For example, without an examination of exchange activity that took into account the passage of time, many exchange behaviours would have appeared as incomprehensible. Further, the patterns and transformations of the exchange relationship between Thailand and a nation such as Australia would not have been possible to chart had I not accepted that change is a crucial characteristic to be mindful of when conducting such an extended piece of social research.

This book, itself, opens up new possibilities for a *sangkhōmmawitthay ākhonganăakót* sociology of the future, a project that must also continue to encourage research into the relationship between *panjaa* wisdom and *khwaamrúu* knowledge from a sociological point of view, particularly with respect to the role being played in higher education, or globally. *Panjaa* wisdom should not be left to psychological inquiry alone because wisdom most clearly manifests itself in social context and sociology has the tools to investigate how a globally aware *panjaa* wisdom might arise. This would move the sociological project beyond merely describing the fractured social space, into a project that goes to the "orchestral" proposed by Houston (opening quote, above) "to synthesise more from the sum of the disjointed parts" (Houston 1996).

8.3.5 Considerations About 'Higher' Education

A sociological examination of university education has also been of central consideration to this book. Globally aware individuals and nations interact with universities for a variety of reasons and the clearest theme to emerge from my research is that the traditional role of the university is being transformed by the demands of crude economics. This ideology has been applied both similarly and differently in both Thailand and a nation such as Australia.

In Thailand, the edicts of crude economic ideology have created the belief that Thailand needs more engineers, scientists and technology specialists if it is to compete in the global marketplace. Thai universities rely on *khwaamrúutjàakpainôk* outsider knowledge and *wíchaa* university subject specific knowledge brought in by their own people who have studied overseas. Increasingly they are inviting outsiders into Thai universities to facilitate university knowledge exchanges more easily.

My concerns for higher education are twofold. First, serious work is only now being undertaken to determine the most appropriate teaching approaches to employ in Thailand, particularly in fields such as teacher

education (Education 2008). Second, the incorporation of a focus on the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom into Thai universities needs to be addressed (Vajiravudh, Krom, and Thawipanyasamoson 2522BE, Amonwiwat 2534BE).

Considering the first issue, there was an opinion by a number of the academic informants in this research that problem-based learning was a very effective learning style for Thai scholars. It is an approach pioneered in Canada and some Thai academics had shown particular interest in Australian courses that used this approach. This is a distinct approach to teaching at university level in Thailand from past approaches and, as discussed previously, is being used successfully in medical and nursing education. It also seems particularly useful as an enilikagogical approach across cultures where the problems faced by the student, and the context in which they will return to work, are very different from the foreign situation.

The interest in problem-based learning has slowly been gaining momentum in Thailand and there have been some high level academic exchanges about its more widespread implementation, particularly about the difficulties of assessment with countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia. This aspect of the research opened up the general question about what a Thai student might actually be learning in the foreign university, the applicability of courses for subsequent work and so on. Problem-based learning seemed particularly good in situations where the student was in a country such as Australia on a development-related scholarship and needed to be able to return to Thailand and contribute to economic and social development through their public service. As I have argued previously, there is little or no recognition in Australian universities that course content for scholarship students, needs a precise enilikagogical approach (Ma Rhea 1992). It has been assumed that for privately funded students the way to gauge a good outcome is if the student numbers increase. Because now this seems to be the case, there is little willingness on the part of universities to look too closely at enilikagogical issues. There is not, as one informant said, “a lot of willingness to experiment, when nearly one quarter of our budget comes from these students”. In this way, it can be seen that the opening up of the universities to market forces has had a conservatising effect on exploring enilikagogical themes.

The second important consideration for education is how to approach teaching the necessary ways of knowing that lead to the cultivation of wisdom. A small number of Thai academic informants have been researching and developing enilikagogical strategies for the incorporation of Buddhist

transcendental knowledge, local knowledge, and rural wisdom into their courses. One early example was the approach taken by Ajaan Arphon Chuaprapaisilp (1989) who offered an analysis of some of the Thai Buddhist mind-strengthening concentration practices that were being trialled in her courses, an occurrence unusual even in Thailand as the practices of Buddhism are usually taught in the *wat* temple. Little sustained work has been undertaken in Thailand in the ensuing years even as policy development in education has certainly encouraged such approaches to being incorporated.

As I have suggested in this book, both Thai universities and their exchange partners such as Australia, have a somewhat ambivalent, sometimes hostile, attitude to the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom within the mainstream university curriculum. As the three-legged pot analogy shows, the cultivation of *wipasanaa* insight understanding, the analytic/scientific way of knowing, needs to be balanced with training in both *siin* ethics and *samādhi* mind-calming and strengthening concentration practices.

There was discussion in the Thai group of a possibility of introducing meditation practices into the Thai university curriculum, not as a religious practice, but as a way of strengthening the student's ability to concentrate, thereby supporting the insights gained by the analytic/scientific approach. Chuaprapaisilp (1989) and Inthankamhaeng (2536BE) both identify a strong need for Thai educational theorists to incorporate Thai Buddhist teachings into their work and argue that meditation practices are an important part of such an effort.

From the findings of my research coupled with a consideration of the approaches in the literature to an understanding of *panjaa* wisdom, it would seem prudent to examine the Thai approach to the cultivation of *panjaa* wisdom to see if appropriate calming and mind-strengthening practices might also be incorporated more broadly into higher education efforts globally. This process would require new engagement with old traditions of holistic education because there has been little thought given to how such things might be embedded in mainstream higher education efforts. Problem-based learning and Chuaprapaisilp's coupling of Action Research with Buddhist meditation are two enilikagogical approaches that could facilitate the development of a Thai approach that is internationally needed. Emerging research such as that of Steel (2014) begins to ask questions of teacher education and the role of mindfulness and contemplative practices in the school classroom but little is being done at higher education level.

Such a focus would also enable the development of exchange of *wíchaa* university subject knowledge both within Thailand and across cultures, in an attempt to preserve a healthy balance of ways of knowing, ways that respect Thai *khwaamrúusăngkom* local knowledge. In this way, globally mobile international university students might have something to contribute to the wise and sustainable future of this planet, if they were able to access a component of their qualification in Thailand. If this opportunity cannot be successfully marketed as desirable and important, then international student migration and the exchange of university knowledge across cultures simply remains part of the problem.

8.4 Conclusion

> *Sukho paññā paṇṭilābho the gain of wisdom brings about happiness.* (Mahamakutratchawitthayalai 2536BE, 143–144)

This book has presented an argument for the need to cultivate the potential for the emergence of wisdom as a graduate attribute for the globalised postmodern university system. In doing so, it has focused on *Śyām* the Kingdom of Thailand that has within its storehouses of knowledge a pedagogical pathway to its cultivation, its *Panjaawítee* Thai Wisdom Method. A modernist, colonial approach to Thailand tends to relegate it to "developing" status, something that positions it as a knowledge recipient nation. Taking a more postmodern, postcolonial view, I have further argued that the knowledge held in Thailand, and other cultural traditions that have a way of teaching the cultivation of wisdom such as some indigenous and traditionally oriented societies, reminds the global education community that there is an urgent need to pay attention to a more holistic approach to the education of people, particularly at higher education level.

Thailand, like many nations, is at a crossroads, where it still has its old knowledges available to its university scholars but many continue to turn to Western universities in order to achieve their aspirations. Those who still hold Thai wisdom and knowledge, rural people and those aligned to the Theravādan Buddhist traditions, are not yet integrated into collaborative partnerships with Thai universities. In the case of Thailand's 70-year relationship with Australia, it becomes clear that Australian universities have as yet little to offer about the cultivation of wisdom, and indeed, there are questions about whether such a field of knowledge would appeal

to the global education services market. My hope is that the gaining of wisdom will again be recognised as an important human pursuit, one that *Ṣyām* Thailand can lead.

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