

The Construction of Mainstream Thought on "Thainess"
and the "Truth" Constructed by "Thainess"

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Abstract

Mainstream thought on "Thainess" has been firmly defined by significant intellectuals since the reign of King Rama V. Intellectuals adjusted the key aspects and significance of "Thainess" periodically in response to the changing political contexts. However, the original structure of "Thainess" was retained throughout these adjustments. As a result, the mainstream construction of "Thainess" has an overwhelming power upon the ways of thinking of Thai people.

The definition of "Thainess" originated within the context of the centralized political structure. This construction of "Thainess" then became the basis of the ideology that maintained the centralized political regime and the hierarchical social structure. Thai people have been dominated by this overarching ideology since the end of the 1950s, since then, the ideology has functioned as an obstacle to prevent Thai people from adapting themselves to the rapid, crucial changes in Thai society. Further, the meaning of this idea of "Thainess" has been too narrow to create "social space" for all groups of Thai people to attain justice, freedom and equality. Justice, freedom and equality are essential for people to access essential resources and to live a dignified life. Therefore, we can say that mainstream thought on "Thainess" has been one part of the violent structure of Thai society.

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