

# **Myanmar: Different Ethnicities in Thai Buddhist University of Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University in Ayutthaya Province**

Dr.Lampong Klomkul

ASEAN Studies Centre

Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Thailand

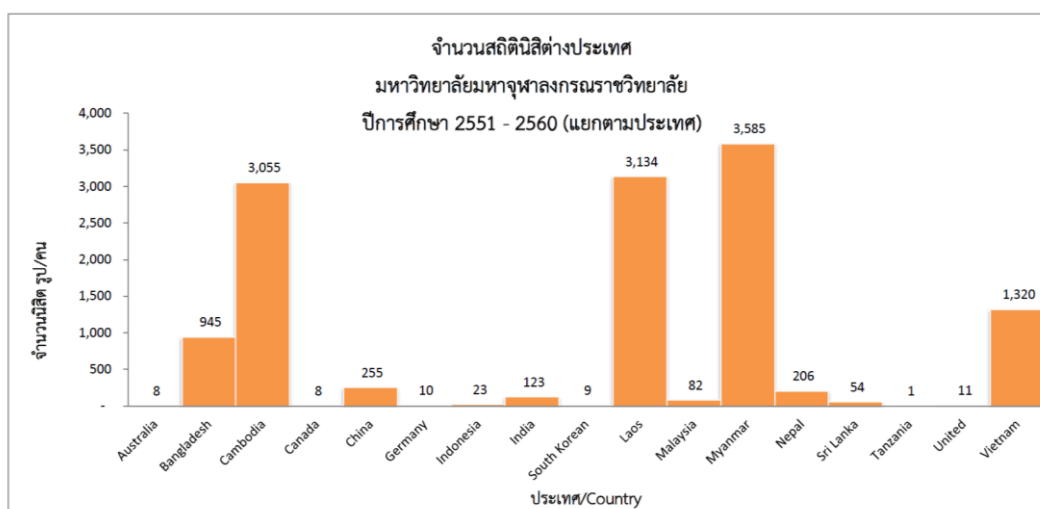
## **Abstract**

This article aims to study the diversity of local groups that are native who come from Myanmar and was known as “Ethnic group”. This study focuses on studying the idea to help each other when they are living together in the same community. How do they learn and live together peacefully under the difference of historical consciousness? Documentary study, area studies and participatory observation of actual conditions in Buddhist monastic universities were used for data collection. The main variable of the study is the way of Myanmar students to coexist under the diversity. Results of the study indicated that Burmese students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University have shown the largest group in the university. There are a number of students in many ethnicities such as Tai Yai, Mon, Pa-long, Pa-O, etc. These Myanmar students come together to Thai Buddhist University under the framework of Buddhist education, activity and learning together in the classroom. This phenomenon makes cross cultural learning, adaptation and learning each other under the similarities and differences of each other.

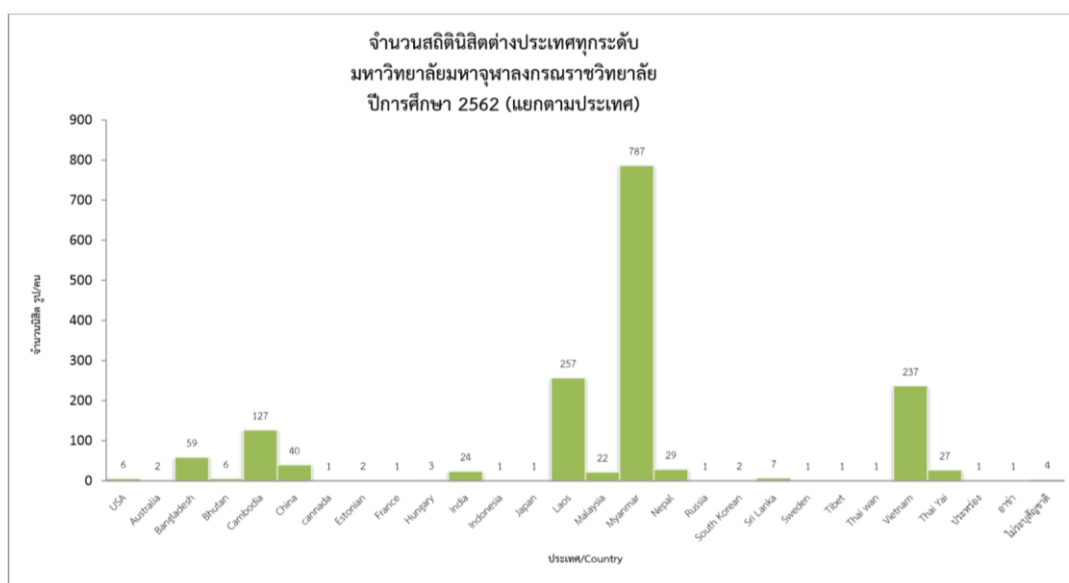
**Keywords:** Myanmar, Ethnic group, Thai Buddhist University

## **Introduction**

This article is developed by the preparation of data documents and share for the lessons Learned together with students from Bodhi Vichalaya, Mae Sot district, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017 in the case study of multi-ethnic Burmese at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. From the information that has seen by Myanmar students at the university can reflect that many foreign students come to study which reflects the differences or diversity, but there is the same of Buddhist respect such as students from Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia. There are 3-4 countries with having common characteristics of culture in many respects, but there are differences that become conflicts. However, when specific to Burmese students in the past, there were 3,585 students in total and more than 483 students in the current academic year. "Burmese nationality" of writing in this article will search for the understanding of the ethnicity that exists in the coexistence of students of ethnic groups. The image that was found when a student was asked "Burma", it indicated that those students will confirm ethnicity and vernacular. In other words, it reflects a difference in what is happening on those differences.



**Figure 1** Statistics of foreign students in Buddhist University during 2008-2017  
(Source: Registration and Evaluation Department,  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2017)



**Figure 2** Statistics of foreign students in Buddhist University in 2019  
(Source: Registration and Evaluation Department,  
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2019)

From the figure 1-2, the number of students from different countries reflects that the number of students studying at the Buddhist University is increasing especially to students as the university perceives to be Burmese students. As a Burmese student, there is a growing number every year continuously with the conditions for education hidden of migration to the third country where the empirical data are specific to the guidelines or methods for assimilating Burmese ethnicity. For coexistence under the concept of different learning and experiences including history and different historical realizations, this article will be conducted to study the specificity of Myanmar ethnicity

with consciousness and many case studies. It is a framework for collaborative education and at the same time, those differences have driven and moved forward in terms of collaborative learning in the joint role between one ethnic and another ethnic and between people.

From the experience of the instructor, it was found that students usually live in separate groups and separate room. From the experience of teaching, it was a different living based on the main reason of them that having the purpose to come and study. Therefore, it was preventing dispute by using different methods to reduce the interaction in each other (Interview Instructor C, 22 October 2017)

### **Ethnicities in Myanmar**

Myanmar is a country with has the borders connect to Thailand, Laos, China, India and Bangladesh with a population of 53.26 million people (The World Bank, 2015) and has a collaborative religious with a long history. When we meet students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, they always have questions about the origin and network of migrant workers who appear to be Burmese citizens all over Thailand. These students have networks or activities with ethnic groups that have networks throughout the country. When specific to ethnicity, there are information that has been studied to find that there are 135 ethnic groups that are commonly known, including Burma, Mon, Shan, Karen, Kachin, Chin, Kaya, and Rakhine. All 8 ethnic groups are important ethnic groups in the national history. The ethnic groups are designated as the 7 states, except for the Burmese ethnic groups that are identified as the main ethnic groups of the 7 districts namely Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyarwady, and Tanaosri. There are many sub-ethnic groups such as Thanu, Tong Yo, Tae, Moramachi, Dai Naung, Ingta, Ravang, Leesu, Lahu, Kho, khakhu, Kasi, Khami, Naka, Miao, Wa, Pa long, Palay, Eng, Pa-O, Salong, Sayeng, Yingbo, Barae, Padong, Yingtalae, Kamti, Yo, Lam, Khmu, Lu and Khuen, etc. Most of these ethnic groups live in the high mountains in each region of the country. Most of them are not familiar even among the general Burmese that has received attention from the government because of drug trafficking problems, such as the Kokung Group and the Wa Group lives in Shan State near the Chinese border and after that Wa group has expanded to come near Thailand. Another group that the state is paying more attention to is Naka, which is near the border with India because of the ways of living close to nature and hunting of human heads. Another group that has received attention from the state because of their way of life and culture can attract tourists is the Padong or the long necked Karen and Engta people living in the Lake Engle in Shan State (Wirat Niyomtham and Oranuch Niyomtham, 2008: 2).

### **Ethnicities of Students**

According to the study of "The way of coexistence among Burmese students under the various ethnicities in the Thai Buddhist University", it is found that Myanmar has a high ethnic with evidence found that there are more than 135 ethnic groups.

Ethnic and all these populations have historical, ethnic, territorial development including religion and practice according to different religious principles. For the Burmese students in Sangha University from a research study found that students in Burmese nationality include both nuns and laymen of statistics in 2017 showed that there were more than 483 students and counting back 10 years, there are 3,500 students in total of statistics as Figure 1. The various monks found in the university are Myanmar, Tai Yai, Mon, and Rakhine, Palaung, Pa-O, Kaya and Karen. However, all of them have history, ethnic realization, and conflicts in the past which are the base of the origin. When having to live together as a student, they can study together, living together, resulting in interpersonal communication between groups including creating interaction between each other. In other words, learning cross-cultural awareness of history in the past can result in learning and coexistence under various ethnic differences in which the students studying at the monastic university found there are 8 ethnic groups as follows:

1. Burmese is the most ethnic group in the country and most of the Burmese live in the Irrawaddy River using Burmese language in their daily lives. Genetically, East Asian and Indian when specific to the Burmese students will wear the robes in the Myanmar style and use Burmese Language as the primary language. There are group activities in the name of Burmese students and it is only in Myanmar group rarely cross-ethnic interaction and can speak in Burmese and English. There is also rarely interaction between other ethnic groups that study in English programs organized by the university such as linguistics or Buddhism in international programs. When counting as a proportion of Burmese students, there will be more than 200 students within Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province. There are also joining in group to do activities in the name of the Myanmar Student Club and interacting with Burmese workers who come to work in Thailand through religious ceremonies such as Kathin or Bunpa Pa, etc. (Interview Students A, 24 November 2017)



**Figure 3** Identity of Buddhist Ceremony of Burmese who work and live in Thailand. They came and joined activities with Burmese at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Year 2017-2018

2. Tai Yai Ethnicity or Shan is an ethnic group in the Tai-Kadai language family which is the second largest ethnic group in Myanmar and most of them live in Shan State, Myanmar about 3 or 4 million people. However, there are hundreds of thousands of Tai people who have migrated to Thailand in order to escape from political problems and looking for work. There are many groups, such as Tai Khuen, Tai Laeng, Tai Kamti, Tai Lue, and Tai Mao, but the largest group is kidney Tai Luang or Tai Yai. Tai language and Thai language are similar and some are not the same. Tai Yai people consider February 7<sup>th</sup> as a national day and the capital of Shan State is Taunggyi with a population of around 150,000 people. Other important cities are Si Poh, La Siaw, Keng Tung and Tachilek (Nanthasingha, 1997).

The Tai Yai group at the Buddhist University can be divided into 2 groups, which are from Shan State in Myanmar and hold a passport from Myanmar by having knowledge and understanding of Thai language. They studied in 2 courses with experience go in and out and study in Thailand such as from Nan Sangha College, Chiang Mai Campus, Lamphun Campus, Lampang Sangha College, etc. For group 2, they have an immigrant background and a pink card and being a Buddhist monks who studying in Thailand. They study in Thai language course and hold a foreign card which is a hidden population in the Burmese ethnic group. When counting informal statistics, this group of students is up to 200 students and activities are conducted in the form of clubs as well as interacting with other Tai Yai groups that have settled and worked in Thailand (Interview Student B, 26 November 2017)



**Figure 4** There are 4 monks students from 4 ethnic groups which are Burmar, Rakhine, Pa-O and Kaya from Myanmar. They are also two Vietnamese students who have different Buddhist sects. (Source: Author, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2017)

3. Ethnic Mon is people of ancient civilization in the land of Burma Speak the language of the Mon-Khmer family. A survey of the Mon population in 1931 found that there were only 300,000 people. Later in the year 1939, the Mon Society was established and the Mon population survey again showed that there are approximately

over 600,000 people. At the beginning of the socialist period, it was found that there were about 1 million Mon people who still spoke Mon in their daily lives, most of them living in the Mon State. However, only Mon people who live in the urban areas would speak Burmese language. The Mon State borders connected the neighboring areas in a clockwise manner. The north is adjacent to Hongsawadi and Karen State to the east, the south is adjacent to Kanchanaburi (Thailand) and Tanaosri District, the west is adjacent to the Bay of Bengal.

Mon in the study will be divided into 2 groups which is a Mon who was born in Thailand (Suporn O-Charoen, 1998) and holds the rights of being Thai Like Tai Yai, where one part is close to Thai people speaking Thai. There are localities in Kanchanaburi and have good interaction with Mon who born in Thailand and do activities together, have a historical awareness about ethnicity like Tai Yai with historical and ethnic sense with a long history that have established a club and carry out activities including interacting with the Mon Thai group. In addition, Mon from Burma who is also a laborer in Thailand (Interview Student C, 27 November 2017).

4. Rakhine, Arakan or Rakhine ethnic groups are another major ethnic group in Myanmar. They Live in Rakhine State and Rakhine people are considered a local group of Myanmar people in Rakhine State. The Rakhine language is considered an accent in the Burmese language and still have traces of ancient Burmese language. There are some voices in the Burmese language that are no longer used in the Burmese language such as the Rakhine language. If they want to spell words that contain letters, then should look at the pronunciation of the Rakhine language. This is because Rakhine is far from the center of Myanmar with the Arakan Yo Mountains blocking and Rakhine also had the independence of self-governing as a kingdom for hundreds of years. After the coming of England Rakhine is seen as different from the general Burmese. Rakhine State therefore is designated as a state like the minorities in Myanmar.

Rakhine ethnic students According to the survey, there are about 80 students who use Arakan language for internal communication. They use Burmese language to communicate between Burmese ethnic groups and use English for communication outside the group. The attitude and status of Arakan students with their own history have Buddhism in its own way as shown in the Ashon Nyanuttara (2014) called "A Study of Buddhism in Arakan" which reflects the unique identity of the language, religion, way of belief, as well as the history of one's own land. Since the past, when they come together, the office of history and nationality still exists including the shared history between Arakan and Myanmar. As a war-torn city in the past, it made these conscience clear and became an issue and attitude of interaction between groups (Interview Student D, 28 November 2017)

5. Pa-O is an ethnic group that resides in Pa-O Self-Administered Zone (PAZ) is located in Shan State. In the northeast region of Myanmar away from the Thai border of Chiang Rai about 570 kilometers north, located not far from "Tong Yi", the major city of Shan State. According to the year 2008, Myanmar Constitution, Pa-O has 3 cities, which are "Si Saeng, Ho Pong, Pang Long", but in reality, Pa-O ethnicities live in many



different areas and have their own spoken language (Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds., 2017). The average population is at least 600,000 people including the National Organization of Pa-O (PNO) has been the main bow since 1949 with one's own security "Pa-O National Army", about 400 people that changed their name to "Pa-O National Liberation Organization" (PNLO). Later, signed a ceasefire with the State Peace and Development Council in 1991 (Pa-O National Organization, 2010). The study consists of 12 monks and inquiring about ethnicity. There will be differences with Myanmar as well as having a different consciousness through language, way of life and locality, and being closer to Tai Yai for reasons of geography and similarity, speaking Tai Yai, speaking Burmese, and interacting well with all groups. (Interview Student E, 29 November 2017).

6. Palaung is one of the 135 tribes in Myanmar and one of the 56 ethnic groups in China. By immigrating to live in Myanmar and some parts migrated to Thailand on the border Near Doi Ang Khang, Fang District, Chiang Mai Province (Ashley, S., 2006). Palaung people speak Palaung language which is the language of the Mon-Khmer family calling oneself "Da-ang, Ra-ang, Ta-ang" (Sujaritlak Deepadung, 2008: 99-112). The word "Palaung" and the population of Palaung by survey of Human Rights Protection Agency estimates that there are 1 million people in dense habitat at the mountain range in Shan State. The areas of Tongpang, Nam San, Si Por, Muang Mit and the southern regions of Shan State are Muang Chiang Tung, Burmese ethnic students in Palaung which consist of 4 students who are native to Shan State by being a minority without the history of the big nation state. Therefore, it causes Palaung have a more personality attitude and can speak Burmese, Palaung and Tai Yai languages. (Interview Students F, 30 November 2017).

7. Karen ethnicity or pronounced Karen, Kayin, or Yang are considered an ethnic group that has their own language and is called Karen language. It is in a Chinese-Tibetan family. The majority of this ethnic group lives in Karen State located in Southern and southeastern regions of Myanmar. Karen has a population of about 7 percent of the total Burmese population or about 5 million people. Many Karen migrate to Thailand and most of them live along the Thai-Burmese border. The Karen led by the Karen National Union (KNU) and has participated in the war against the Burmese government since the beginning of 1949. The KNU's first objective was to be independent. Since 1976, the armed groups have demanded more central government for autonomy to be independent. As for the students who study in the Buddhist university in the status of monks, there are 8 students and most of them are Karen from the Karen State area which has local areas on the Thai border, Mae Sot and across the border and they were persuaded from Karen's seniors (Interview Student F, 30 November 2017).

8. Ethnic Kaya is also known as the red Karen and it is an ethnic group that has its own language and identity, and has boundaries in the Kaya state State of Kaya in the area of 11,737 km<sup>2</sup> (4,530 miles<sup>2</sup>), divided into 2 districts, each district is divided into 7 sub-districts, each subdivision is divided into 106 villages respectively. The capital is

Loi Ko in Loi Ko district and Boca Cae district in Kaya State. There are 56.12% of the Kayah people, 17.58% of Myanmar, 16.67% of Tai Yai, 6.45% of Karen, 2.08% of hybrids, and 1.1% of others. Karen group is often confused with the Mayan tribe and they are well known for collar rings worn by their women, but they are just one subgroup of the Red Karen (Karenni), one of the Kaya people in the Kaya state of Burma. As for the students who come to study at Buddhist University, there are 2 students who live the Kaya area near Mae Sot.

Diversity of ethnicities found and reflected that different ethnic groups who come to study and learn in the university, there are pluralistic ethics and beliefs in different origins. However, they can be assimilated with identity and religious beliefs. One of the reasons that caused people to study was a conflict, but in another it caused learning to adapt into choosing to learn, learn together and develop their living together.

### **The State of Students' Problem in the University**

The differences of ethnic language and cultural have become important reasons for these students to have no different important characteristics. Due to the fact that those differences create different propulsion processes and identity mechanisms and can make us see that students actually appearing on a variety of ethnicities make a great difference among these students until now. It creates an overall drive towards what is happening under the mechanism of differences and alienation as seen by some students that behave differently from all Thai monks. These values, behaviors, beliefs, and ideas are markedly different.



**Figure 5** Burmese students live, study and do activities during studying at Buddhist University (Source: Author, 15 November 2017)



From the appearing state, most of the students are ethnic in Myanmar dimension. Most of them are different in culture and religion which is characteristic of ethnic groups related to food, history and beliefs. Therefore, the relationships between groups are different or not completely related including practices in the form of Buddhist monks in terms of conditions and differences that occur under conditions and possibilities until it becomes behavior and actions in a holistic manner.

1. Adaptation under different cultures means that students are different and create new behaviors, new actions including the expression of beliefs that are different. Therefore, it caused student behavior to be learning, but not adaptable by reason of Historical "hatred" which is a condition of the relationship between students.

2. A different historical bureau refers to the history of fighting that had actually occurred in relation to the history of Burma among the Burmese ethnic groups, Tai Yai, Arakan Mon, Karen, etc. These facts also affect the feeling, expression, attitude and interaction between ethnic students from Burma at the Buddhist University.

3. Not cooperating with the university means the awareness of ethnic Myanmar especially students who are genuine Burmese. They generally have the idea of religious identity that comes with dress and posing under the sense of belief and implies that Myanmar is superior to Thailand. It may have both in terms of history and the influence of Buddhism such as the practice of meditation and the management of Burmese Apidhamma. It make one meaning to be a superior consciousness and causing compliance and non-compliance with certain rules such as the blanket that has to be wrapped in the chest as a university regulation. There are some practice that are not consistent with Thai culture such as eating betel nut, not wearing a robe in the university area. These images reflect conflicts under the university administration.

One way that the university can operates is the fusion of Buddhism in the meaning of ethnic language, but with a common religious nature and education. Therefore, to create the process of melting to achieve mutual learning can result in cross-cultural studies. The process of learning is together for the benefit of religious education and religious mechanisms together. The advantages of studying together and do activities together can cause students in the dimension of Myanmar that they came to live together on the basis of the common religious traditions of Buddhism. It is the incubation process of being a Thai Buddhism in learning diversity based on differences under one's own characteristics.

Buddhist culture related to the worldview and religious knowledge are the one that create that uniqueness like most monks who are Burmese students. It indicated that there is a similar religious foundation, but with a historical, political, and economic sense, the worldview towards expression is different on the basis of those differences.

### The Concept of Burmese Students Coexistence under the Diversity

There is a Buddhist concept on ethnicity, wherein the conflict in the Buddhist evidence, the country that has the base and the origin of Buddhism has the concept of ethnicity and national origin. It became a violent conflict as shown in a Buddhist expression that says "... Na chaja wasalo hoti Na chaja hoti pramano kammuna waslo hoti kammuna hoti pramano...", the person is a bad person, because his life cannot be found. Being noble because the nation does not (but) be a bad person because of actions is a virtue because of actions ..." (Khu Su, 25/322). Buddhism gives importance to actions, not ethnic or national origin, or not giving importance to age or old experience. As a Buddhist concept, it is a concept that "... a person who forgets a great diligence lives only for one day is better than a lazy person and abandons perseverance to live for 100 years ... " (Scripture: Khutaka Nikaya Appatana [Thai], Book 33, Verse 231-240, page 486). Therefore, Buddhism gives importance to "Karma-Action" that is a summary of joint life living when students have to come together, but when everything changes, the situation changes, causing old behaviors and karma that would be punishable and will not cause any punishment at all. The studying of the concept of Thorndike who was an American (Edward L. Thorndike, 1874-1949), results of the study indicated that the concept of learning (Learning Theory), which suggests that human learning takes place by creating a link between stimuli and response that is appropriate and that effective learning must be based on 3 rules: (1) Law of Readiness (2) Law of Effect (3) Law of Exercise

**Table 1** Learning Theory of Edward L. Thorndike (1874 - 1949)

| Law of Readiness |   |                  |                |
|------------------|---|------------------|----------------|
| ready            | → | satisfaction     | → learning     |
| ready            | → | not satisfaction | → not learning |
| not ready        | → | not satisfaction | → not learning |

If the aforementioned concepts are created and viewed as a learning mechanism between the concept of "ethnic", karma or action according to Buddhism and the concept of learning students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University was built by a melting mechanism building learning based on impermanence until leading to readiness and enabling learning under the concept of coexistence or mechanisms that lead to mutual understanding. Therefore, the concept under cultural diversity is naturally the concept of cross-cultural learning and coexistence on diversity which concluded the learning in that way is the readiness to learn to overcome some prejudices or truths in the past and not remembering history that doesn't mean letting it pass or passing by. However, when we look at the truth in an understanding of the context of the past, it is an important part of educational management which will be an extension of holistic educational system.

### **Guideline for Living Together in Buddhist University**

When students come to study in the Buddhist University, they have to come and live together. However, there are problems in many cases of students who are from ethnic Burmese and some caused to serious conflicts, bullying, physical assaulted, etc. Due to the above reasons, the university has studied in detail the ways of managing with students through activities through the way of living together on diversity in order to enhance learning as experience together through religious activities (Interview Executive A, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2017). These activities are set in the form of learning, eating and sleeping in order to create learning, adaptation and understanding with the common goal is that students who have graduated in accordance with the framework set by each course. In this study, the study was conducted in a way that the university under the student affairs division collaborated with the education sector at the faculty and curriculum level with the goal of administration. Students are managed to live together according to the framework of multicultural learning, cross-cultural learning into learning, understanding and adaptation in order to accept the differences of ethnicities. The leaving of the monks in Buddhism and students in the Buddhist University of the Thai Sangha Council through a multicultural process, across cultural learning to create unity under the differences which can be classified as follows:

1. Joint study in a program specified by the university means students are carry out study activities with courses in the university requiring learning in each subject including ASEAN education. Students are asked to present body of knowledge in ethnic content on the basis of Buddhism (Figure 2). There are also activities in the group of Burmese students including activities between groups of Burmese students and most of them come to study at various levels, including monks, nuns and laymen, studying undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs. There are two courses which are Thai and English language courses. According to the knowledge and ability of those students, in the case of Tai Yai people who are familiar with Thai or use Thai in daily life and will be able to study in a Thai language course. However, in the case of students who do not have experience in Thai language, they will study English language courses in the Faculty of Humanities majoring in English and with the Faculty of Buddhism in English language curriculum. The subject matter of study allows students of different ethnic backgrounds to live together as students in that course, resulting in interaction and communication among each other, with the teacher teaching as an intermediary in communication through joint learning activities throughout the course duration of 2-5 years approximately.

There are also activities designated by the university or course such as cultural exchange activities, demonstration of religious culture and Thai culture. In other words, students should know Thai culture or language as students in Thailand. There is also a demonstration culture for learning and accepting various differences under the mechanism of university administration. (Interview Executive A, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2017). It was organized in a holistic manner, but it could lead to learning differently and creatively as a base for mutual understanding.

[DRAFTED] ASEAN SEMINAR BY MCU ASEAN STUDENTS NETWORKS

TIMING: EVERY WENDESDAY, SECOND AND FOURTH WEEK OF THE MONTH FROM 8/11/17-09/18

START TIME: 15.00-16.30 Room: Buddhametta, Floor 4, Zone D424, Disciplinary Learning Building

| NO. | DATE     | TOPIC  | SPEAKERS/Group in Charge                           |
|-----|----------|--|--|
| 1   | 15/11/17 | Arakanese Buddhism and Multi-Culture in <u>Rakhine</u> State, Myanmar            | <u>Rakhine</u> MCU students group                  |
| 2   | 22/11/17 | Malaysian Buddhism and Multi-Culture   | Malaysian MCU students group                       |
| 3   | 06/12/17 | Mon Buddhism and Multi-Culture, Myanmar  | Mon MCU students group                             |
| 4   | 13/12/17 | Khmer <u>Krom</u> Theravada Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Vietnam                | Khmer <u>Krom</u> Theravada MCU students group     |
| 5   | 10/01/18 | Shan Buddhism and Multi-Culture, Myanmar   | Shan MCU students group                            |
| 6   | 24/01/18 | Pa-o Buddhism and Multi-Culture, Myanmar   | Pa-o MCU students group                            |
| 7   | 14/02/18 | <u>Kayah</u> and Karen Buddhism and Multi-Culture in <u>Kayah</u> State, Myanmar | <u>Kayah</u> and Karen MCU students group          |
| 8   | 28/02/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Laos   | Laos MCU students group                            |
| 9   | 08/03/18 | Vietnamese Theravada Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Vietnam                       | Vietnamese Theravada MCU students group            |
| 10  | 13/06/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Cambodia   | Cambodian MCU students group                       |
| 11  | 27/06/18 | Mahayana Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Vietnam                                   | Vietnamese MCU students group                      |
| 12  | 11/07/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Indonesia  | Indonesian MCU students group                      |
| 13  | 25/07/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Singapore  | Speaker.....                                       |
| 14  | 08/08/18 | <u>Wa (Va)</u> / Palaung Buddhism and Multi-Culture, Myanmar                     | <u>Wa (Va)</u> / <u>Palaung</u> MCU students group |
| 15  | 22/08/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Brunei/Philippines                                 | Speaker.....                                       |
| 16  | 05/09/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Myanmar  | Burmese MCU students group                         |
| 17  | 19/09/18 | Buddhism and Multi-Culture in Thailand   | Thai MCU students group                            |

NOTE: This Schedule can be modified as to the appropriateness - update 28-09-17

**Figure 6** Instructional Model focus on Multicultural Learning in living together  
(Source: ASEAN Studies Centre, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, 20 December 2017)

2. Living together of a student in the dormitory, for the foreign students will have 2 groups which are in temples in Bangkok or nearby in a dormitory provided by the university. Burmese students who can speak Thai will be at the temple in the area around Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University or temples in which that monk can communicate with each other. However, in the case that cannot speak Thai at all, most of them are at the dormitory for the reason that they cannot communicate with the abbot in Thai temples and most of them can speak Thai as well (Interview Executive B, 27 December 2017) during staying in a dormitory. Therefore, there are activities due to living together such as praying, chanting, residential development, cleaning the place. For example, there will be a cleaning day to clean the accommodation, joint housing development every week that resulting in communication and joint activities which cause a positive interaction between students inside the university dormitory.



**Figure 7** Students attended the activities related to Buddhist Ceremony

3. Eating in the university cafeteria, all students, both Thai and foreign students, will live and stay in the dormitory together for a total of more than 1 thousand lives together. Resulting in interaction through eating can make students to communicate from one day to one month, from the month to cause communication, learning and adaptation in a culture of sharing food. In particular, in the case of Burmese students, in the group of Burma, Tai Yai, Mon, Rakhine, most of them still socialize in groups, which mean to eat in the same group. However, there are sometimes moving across the group because of a sense of friendship by living in the same dormitory or near each other. These interactions are positive communication that leads to learning and adaptation under the consciousness of ethnicities as well (Interview Executive C, 24 December 2017).



**Figure 8** Students activities during they lived together within the university area that caused them learn from other differences.  
(Source by author on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2017)

4. Religious activities and coexistence activities, that is to say, most of the students are monks and novices. In the university, there are 2 main sects, Mahayana from China, Vietnam, Taiwan and Theravada from Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka. When they come together in the same religious culture, there are activities that follow religious principles such as Khao Phansa, Kathin, Pa Pha, or important Buddhist Day on Visakha Puja Day, or the prayer of students on this point is a religious practice. This can also leads to mutual learning on cultural differences. When it specifically goes down to Burmese students, the interaction between each other leads to the learning, acceptance, and adjustment of attitude to positive communication together including that the university has stipulated to conduct cultural demonstration activities, as in the case of orientation for new students to have knowledge about Thai culture or each other's culture, resulting in learning and understanding in each other including the students in the name of Burmese nationality participated in activities by learning to adjust positions to the historical and ethnic sense which is believed to be lighter and more positive interaction (Interview Executives D, 21 December 2017).





**Figure 9** Students join together to do Buddhist ceremony and practice including help each other to clean and look after the area of their loving within the university. (Source: MCU News, 30 September 2560)

Therefore, when processed in the overview of classroom activities interaction activities between groups in coexistence which the course operates or design universities, all with the goal of coexistence among students. This results in advantages for students to learn together under appropriate guidelines and mechanisms in living between foreign students and Thai students. Foreign students are living together including ethnic groups in the name of Burmese students with historical awareness, ethnic identities in the case of Burma, Tai Yai, Mon, Rakhine, Palaung Pa-O that appear in Thai Buddhist university.

### **The Empirical Effect on the Way of Coexistence in Thai Buddhist University**

The empirical effect is the educational management of goals for multiculturalism or peaceful coexistence under various differences. If we look at the concept of the target, it expects to find multicultural education cross-cultural learning held in educational institutions. There are empirical results in many dimensions such as (1) helping to reduce racial discrimination or nationalities and religions, (2) help to promote fairness in society and look at everyone in equal status including rights, freedom and duties in the community, society and the Buddhist University, (3) be a mechanism to stimulate and encouraging members of foreign students especially in the name of Burma, (4) the faculty executives and personnel stimulate to learn to seek more knowledge about the dimension of diversity both teaching methods or knowledge are more integrated and more ingenious, and (5) help everyone in society understand each other. They do not apply the differences in culture, ethnicity and belief in the ways that cause conflicts into the point of conflict.

### **Lesson Learned of MCU Burmese Students to Bhodhivichalaya Students**

After information about the ethnicities of Burmese students at the Buddhist University was collected, this knowledge can be transferred into 2 options. The first option was sharing it as a learning experience with students in the curriculum of Landscape Culture at Bodhiwitalaya (Mae Sot, Tak Province), Srinakharinwirot University on November 30, 2017. Another option was used as a transcript to remove

the knowledge of learning through the form of an article for being knowledgeable cross universities including learning experiences that are not directly from the student's knowledge because the case study in each area will have a framework or different learning contexts. Resulting of comparisons to new knowledge and experiences from the case study was acquiring knowledge about ethnicity and diversity. Therefore, it leads to the transmission process and in the transmission, it creates a mechanism and the driving of knowledge that is coordinated because most of the students are people with experience and background in Burma especially about tribes. When useful information was received by citing case studies, it was seen that it would be very useful for studying Burmese sample groups in Buddhist University. Academic administration for students with different language backgrounds, fundamental beliefs and different language values show how these students should behave and express their beliefs. Therefore, it is transferring experience through learning of sharing story, and it is expected that it is a collaboration of body of knowledge in order to learn together and lead to the development of various forms of knowledge until it was an experience of sharing and providing appropriate educational opportunities under feasibility.



**Figure 10** Interview Lecturer from Bhodhivichalaya Srinakharinwirot University, Mae Sot District in Tak Province, on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2017

## Conclusion

The diversity of members in the Sangha University society of ethnicity, Burma is diverse in itself which is an ethnic difference, cultural differences and beliefs political vernacular. When students have to come together through participation in the studies that has organized by the Buddhist University, students then have learned a culture of learning and adjusted themselves to live together under the views of politics, economy and language which are assimilated under religious culture and language culture with common English language used including most students speaking Burmese as a base for living in Myanmar. The learning on different customs and practices at the same time creates new behaviors, new actions under the differences until resulting in coexistence among students at Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.

## References

- Ashon Nyanuttara. (2014). *A Study of Buddhism in Arakan*. Oo Thein Maung.
- Ashley, S. (2006). *Exorcising with Buddha palaung Buddhism in northern Thailand*. Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada.
- Chotivaro, P. (2017). Director for Student Affair, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. *Interview*, on 22 October 2017.
- Deepadung, S. (2008). Paluang. *Journal of Language and Culture*. 27(1): 99-112.
- Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). *"Pa'o Karen"*. Glottolog 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
- Khanokkamales, V. (2017). Head of Foreign Department. Faculty of Humanity, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. *Interview*, on 22 October 2017.
- Khin May Aung.(2015). *Historical Perspective on Mon Settlements in Myanmar*. International Conference on Burma/Myanmar Studies Burma /Myanmar inTransition: Connectivity, Changes and Challenges University Academic Service Centre (UNISERV), Chiang Mai University, Thailand, 24-25 July 2015.
- Maung Htin Aung. (2013). *A History of Burma*. Translated by Pecharee Sumit. Bangkok: Foundation of Book Project of Society and Humanity.
- Michael W. Charney Buddhism in Arakan:Theories and Historiography of the Religious Basis of Ethnonyms School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS], University of London.
- Michael W. Charney (2007). *Buddhism in Arakan:Theories and Historiography of the Religious Basis of Ethnonyms*. School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS], University of London.
- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. (2016). *Statistics of Migrant Workers*. Retrieved on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2018, from [https://www.m-society.go.th/article\\_attach/18712/20429.pdf](https://www.m-society.go.th/article_attach/18712/20429.pdf).
- Moonmek, A. (2505). *Shan State: History and Revolution*. Bangkok: Matichon.
- Nanthasingha. (1997). *Thai Yai History*. Sompong Taitumkaen and Chatthip Nartsupa (Translate from Tai Yai language). The Project of Tai Social and Culture: The Thailand Research Fund.
- Pa-Oh National Organization (2010). *Pyidaungzu De-Ga Pa-Oh: Union of Pa-Oh*. Pa-Oh National Organization.
- Ploysaeng, K. (2011). A Study of Problem of Thai Language used of foreign students in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. *Research Report*. Buddhist Research Institute Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
- Sridee, N. (2017). Vice-Dean for Administration, Faculty of Buddhism. Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. *Interview*, on 20 October 2017.

- Tharathi, S. and Kovito, S. (2010). A Study of Foreigner Students' Opinion towards Educational Management in Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. *Research Report*. Buddhist Research Institute Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
- Trichot, P. (1999). *The Ethnic Groups and Burma Government*. Bangkok: The Thailand Research Fund.
- O-Charoen, S. (1998). *The Mons in Thailand*. Chanwit Kasetsiri and Kanchani Laongsri (Editors). Bangkok: Foundation of Book Project of Society and Humanity.

### **Curriculum Vitae**

**Dr.Lampong Klomkul** is a researcher and director for research, information and academic services division, ASEAN Studies Centre, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University. She Graduated in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Educational Research Methodology, Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She received award from National Research Council of Thailand: The best dissertation of year 2013 in Good Level (Education Field), received Graduate Scholar Award from The Nineteenth International Conference on Learning, The Institute of Education University of London, London, UK, August 14-16, 2012. She also received Golden Jubilee Scholarship to study in Canada for two years in Bachelor degree from 1997-1999. She interested in conducting classroom action research, and to conduct research on teacher's development. In addition, she interested in conducting research on applied Buddhist Studies into education and culture in ASEAN Community.

**Contact:** E-mail: research.mcu@gmail.com, Tel. +66 92 251 1212