

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Historical Background

Education helps develop people to have intellectual growth which would help them approach the reality. Reality required people to see the interrelationship among things and their interdependence to maintain the balanced, contributive, and happy co-existence (Phra Brahmaganabhorn - P.A. Payutto ; cited in Niyom, 2008) The main goal of education is to develop people to become total human equipped with knowledge, skills, and morality. When they complete their education, particularly from high education institution, the graduates should be capable of maintaining the occupation of their choice. Basing on Thailand Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (TQF-HEd), there are the goals for higher education institutions to guide their educational provision reaching the minimal standard. Such framework prescribes 5 learning domains for the graduates, namely, 1) Morality and Ethics, 2) Knowledge, 3) Intellectual Skills, 4) Interpersonal Relationship Skills and Responsibility, and, 5) Skills on Quantitative Analysis, and Information and Communication Technology. It is apparent that the first required characteristic is on morality with which the graduates are expected to have hoping that they would develop themselves to be moral persons being responsible for both personal and public matters and having public mindedness. They are expected to adjust themselves well in the midst of value conflict in the society. They are also expected to have the habit and actualize the moral principles (OOHEC, 2009), which responds to the calls in Thai society of certain individuals or mass communication to wish the graduates completing their education from various institutions to be the persons with morality-led knowledge so that they could apply their knowledge and skills in their profession with quality and morality. They are expected to be truly concerned with the humanity of their professional clients. This expectation is similarly prescribed in the 1999 National Education Act in its Section 1, Articles 6 and

7, which state that the educational provision is to develop their people to become complete humans in physical, mental, and intellectual terms, with knowledge, morality, ethics, and culture in maintaining their life. They are expected to happily co-exist with others. In any learning process, the teachers have to implant the right consciousness to guide the individual to be self-reliant, eager to learn, and self-learning on continuous basis, as well as to realize the human dignity, conserve natural resources and environments (1999 National Education Act).

Concerning the education provided at higher education level so far, basing on the assessment conducted by the Office of the Education Council which covers the report on the impact of educational reform during 1999-2008 academic years, it was found that the development of the quality of education and students or graduates had not been satisfactory. The graduate production emphasized quantity than the quality, theory than the practice, and lacked of the linkage to the workplace. Similar remark was also made by Poolpatarachewin (2011) who said that Thai educational provision focused on producing smart people who were neither quite good nor happy. Consequently, the Office of the Education Council had tried to find the way out through educational reform which had to alter the goal of the national development from focusing on economic security to the people's happiness. Education was important and it should facilitate the students to learn and be well-informed in every aspect, namely, intellectual, emotional, and social concern and to be happy with the study and everyday life maintenance (OOEC, 2008; 2009). These expectations are similar to the higher educational standards as mentioned above. For all these, the higher education institutions need to develop the graduates both with knowledge, skills, and attitude. Concerning attitude, it is to integrate morality, interpersonal relationship skill, and responsibility. The learners or graduates have to have good consciousness and responsibility to themselves and society and to maintain themselves in happily coexisting with others (OOHEC, 2009). Thai higher education institutions then have to develop their educational provision to produce the graduates who are with total development physically, mentally, and intellectually along the principle of morality-led knowledge to happily coexist with others.

Happiness is the highest goal of humans. Naturally, all humans hate suffering but love happiness (Wasi, 2005). Looking through all the curricula provided at higher education level, we have found that all of them focus on building up knowledge, skills, and expertise on the profession. The expertise in building up happiness, however, was not clearly coming up either in the courses or program or in the learning process. Many advocators of the consciousness revolution such Prawes Wasi, Vichak Panich, and Wisit Wangwinyoo, including educators from the formal, non-formal, as well as another unconventional institutions such as in Contemplative Education Center, Mahidol University, Arsom Silp Institut, Khawnmuang Institute, and Sathya Sai School, or other countries such as Naropa University, USA. The consciousness revolutionists and educators from all these institutions recognized the significance and needs for building up knowledge, skills, expertise, and experience to create happiness onto the learners. They contended that besides building up academic or professional expertise onto the learners, it was necessary to build up happiness as well. In other words, the institution should also have to provide life or people studies which were not any less important than those of the academic one in each of the professions as all people's life required happiness. Their life dealt with happiness, love or hate. At Naropa University, for example, there have been courses offered on contemplation which focuses on learning values of life, life problem solving, and recognizing facts of life. The courses trained the learners to realize themselves, and understanding themselves and others. They have to be kind to themselves and others (Panich, 2008; Lief, J., 2009). There are also other programs at the curriculum or course levels that provide education beyond the mainstream education all of which are aimed at facilitating the learners to apply knowledge, skills, and experiences to alleviate their or others' sufferings which are parts of human life.

Such educational provision has made use of the core philosophy and morality of various sciences to apply to organize learning process for the learners and have them practice to achieve the goal of being relax, getting rid of the sufferings, and creating happiness in a concrete way. Suffering and happiness are like the two sides of the same coin. If we could relieve or destroy our suffering, happiness would occur as a Buddhist quote that says "Sappa Tassa Tukkha Sassa Sukkha Paharn: Having got rid of the sufferings, one would be happy at all time and place." At any time any place, if the sufferings were

removed, happiness would come. (Inthasara, 2010). The quote suggests that if the teacher could help the learners to realize the value of life and give up their bias and no longer divide people into black and white and right nor wrong, it would make the learners kind and have public consciousness, constructing and contributing to a wisdom-based society. The processes of organizing curriculum and learning that are aimed at the above goals serve as the education to develop the mentality. Such education has been known as contemplative education which fosters the learning for being critical and reflective. It is the education aiming at development from within to reach the realization and wisdom from one's own experiences and practice through various sciences interested in by the learners. It is the education to help one to understand him/herself, able to access the truth, good deed, and beauty of life, be liberated, and happy. This kind of education help develop people's mind which is the internal quality to become full human (Kuldiloke, 2003; Nilchaikovit, 2008; Wasi, 2008a and Panich, 2008) Consciousness revolutionists believe that contemplative education would assure the survival of Thai and world societies as it helps the people to have good mind and full humanity leading them to share life and refrain from taking advantages of but be kind to one another. They could put hand in hand in building up the well-balanced world that would prevent and lessen the problems emerged from being too-extreme on materials such as those concerning environment. This education contends that if most people have been mind-developed, they would acquire good consciousness and public mindedness, be less selfish but concerned with the problems confronting all. The education conventionally provided is based on fragmentation. It focuses more on academic and professional knowledge and less if not totally ignores the one on life justifying that the two types of knowledge have anything to do with each other. The students are assumed to be able to learn their life by themselves. It is not necessary to teach it in through the curriculum. Since the consciousness revolution movement started in Thailand for about 10 years now, some higher education institutions have begun to adopt the contemplative education principle into their regular study programs but there have been quite a few of them and it has not been widely acceptable nor known. The concrete implementation is at Contemplative Education Center, Mahidol University, for example, whose program philosophy is aimed at producing the graduates who are confident in humanity, eager to learn and continuously

train themselves on the balance of body, mind, and spirit. Another place has subscribed the philosophy is Arsom Silp Institute of the Art whose program philosophy is to serve as a learning source where students have to study and practice to access the essence of life maintenance which is based on truth, beauty, and good deed. These would be achieved through the 3 instructional principles, namely, aesthetics, morality, and culture. The students are to search among the documents, research reports, and conferences organized by universities all over the countries either of private or state. Besides, it has been found that the contemplative education has been applied in the instructions most of which are inserted in the instructional process in certain courses or subjects contemporarily taught. At Chiang Mai University, however, contemplative education is not found having been used as the framework or philosophy for developing any course or study program. It is only mentioned by certain professor in a few certain courses.

Many consciousness revolutionists have suggested the contemplative education could be used with the students by constructing new learning culture and designing the instruction by focusing on self-study. One has to learn about himself or herself and link things into his or her cognitive and intellectual processes focusing on academic, professional, and life. The instruction is organized to touch the humanity. Students are facilitated to operate development and change within themselves, have the public concern, and realize the relationship with nature. The contemplative education is framework that could be used for improving general education or inserting in other courses or creating as a new general education course (CE Center, 2009a; Amornvivat, 2008). Another point is that, in adopting contemplative education, one has to provide education to have the students practice or learn from their authentic experience not just the principles and theories. The program should be the integration of various disciplines before designing the instruction. In the instructional process, the integration is still required. It must be done with variety of methods and activities (Dechakupt, Yindeesuk, and Meesri, 2008). From all these literatures reviewed and principles of the contemplative education mentioned above, the researcher who is one of the education personnel who has certain roles in organizing higher education program and is a lecturer at Chiang Mai University, has become interested in investigating and developing the curriculum of the courses on art and science of building up happiness along the

framework of contemplative education for undergraduate students at Chiang Mai University to be developed as a course in general education required for all graduate students of the faculties and institutes affiliated with Chiang Mai University. This would follow the principle of general education which is aimed at develop the students to be well-rounded with wide and far vision, understanding nature, themselves, others, and society. They could apply the knowledge in maintaining their life and co-exist in the society with good balance and happiness (Tantiratanavon, 2008; Usawad, 2008). In general, it could be said that the objective of the general education is to develop the students to the highest potential of their humanity (Wasi, 2008b). Contemplative education could fulfill the education provided by the universities at the present to be able to produce the graduates satisfying the national standard of higher education. Such standards would assure the quality of Thai graduates along the 3 indicators, namely, 1) being smart - with knowledge and expertise in their discipline, being able to learn, construct, and apply the gained knowledge to develop themselves, carry out the professional duties, and creating the works to develop the society to become competitive in the universal arena, 2) being good – with conscience, maintaining life, fulfilling the responsibility, and stronghold in morality and ethics, and 3) being healthy – both physically and mentally, being with self-esteem, having good relationship with others, being able to deal with everyday life problems, and smoothly maintaining life or being happy.

However, the educational provision at higher education in Thailand including that of Chiang Mai University has things to be developed and improved including the curriculum, instruction, or knowledge management, particularly when the general education is concerned. So far, there has been some misconception on the principle of this group of subjects. Many courses included in general education have contents and objectives deviating from those regarded general education. In practice, the general education courses are often taken as basics for the professional courses that follow. This is a great mistake as general education is not basic courses, not for taking first, nor experimental one. It is to equip students with total humanity. It requires integration when being taught. The instructional process utilizes variety of techniques and methods including lecture, discussion, engaging in activities, study tour, and learning from the real situation, for example (Duangduan, 2008). At the present, there have been some

revisions on the courses in general education. Some of these include the principle of learning through activities. Some institutions have focused on developing the students on their spirit or internal development. They offer the courses on life aesthetics, morality, life skills, psychology, and people development, for example. At Chiang Mai University, similar move has been seen. For example, the course 050106: Humanistic Arts has been offered by the Faculty of Humanities. In the second semester of 2010 academic year, there were 234 students from all faculties enrolled in the course. The course 510100: Wellness is offered by the Faculty of Associated Medical Sciences which covers the learning substances on wellness and health in physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual aspects. It was originally designed as a core-course for the Faculty's students and opens as elective course for students of all faculties of Chiang Mai University. It turns out that many students take it in each semester reflecting their interest in such course which has substances relevant to life maintenance, study skills, contemplative education, and happiness enhancement. Though there are many students taking the course but the number is only a small proportion of the whole Chiang Mai University student body.

From all these rationales, there is still a need to develop general education courses to be chosen by the students to fit their interest. There is also a need to focus more on life maintenance and happiness creation which have not been much covered by the existing courses offered as general education courses. The researcher has realized the significance of developing the students to become quality graduates and believes the course on science and art of building up happiness basing on contemplative education which would be developed as a general education course would be another course that facilitates the students to develop themselves to their full capacity becoming total humanity – being good, smart, and happy in learning and maintaining life. This course would be chosen by certain study program as a course in general education or even elective course categories for the students who are interested in them would enroll.

1.2 Research Questions

1.2.1 How would the science and art for happiness creation course based on contemplative education for bachelor degree students, Chiang Mai University as a general education course look like?

1.2.2 What are the results of using the science and art for happiness creation course based on contemplative education for bachelor degree students, Chiang Mai University?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives for this research as follows:

1.3.1 To develop the science and art for happiness creation course based on contemplative education for bachelor degree students, Chiang Mai University

1.3.2 To study the result of using the science and art for happiness creation course based on contemplative education for bachelor degree students, Chiang Mai University

1.4 Scope of the Research

1.4.1 Scope on Population and Sample

- 1) Population: The population inferred by this research is that of undergraduate students in every undergraduate study programs, at every level, and of every faculty of Chiang Mai University in 2012 academic year.
- 2) Sample: The sample used in this research included the undergraduate students at every level, of every faculty of Chiang Mai University enrolled in the second semester of 2012 academic year and were enrolled in the course art and science of creating happiness.

1.4.2 Scope on the Content

The content for this covers the development of the course on science and art of building up happiness basing on contemplative education. The researcher would study the results of using the course covering the contents on happiness of the students, their satisfaction, principles on contemplative education including the techniques used in the contemplative education.

1.5 Expected Outcomes

1.5.1 The course on science and art for happiness creation based on contemplative education the framework relevant to the standards prescribed for Thai higher education institutions and satisfies the societal need in having graduates with academic, professional, and personal masteries and ability to happily coexist with others. To be a new general education course (humanities and social sciences) which is another choice for the Chiang Mai University bachelor degree students of every level and faculty. It could be specified in a study program as a general education course or as an free elective course serving as a foundation for the students to learn in other courses and to acquire the contemplative education principles that suggests the reflective learning, knowledge construction by themselves, happy learning via variety of learning activities, including to have guideline for appropriately maintaining their life, to be able to solve the problems occurred in their everyday life and get rid of the obstacles encountered, and be happy in learning and maintaining life.

1.5.2 Guideline for developing the general education curriculum that showed an appropriately and clearly process and steps, from problems and needs surveyed for curriculum development, finally curriculum assessment and evaluation. Further more this guideline can apply for others curriculum development.

1.6 Operational Definitions

The course on science and art of building up happiness basing on contemplative education is referred to the course developed by the researcher which is classified as a general education course which facilitates the students to learn through contemplation, emphasizing learning via practice, realizing and accessing the facts of life, learning life values, and solving life problems as well as to organize the learning process to facilitate the students to realize themselves, understand themselves and others, and be kind to themselves and others. The course utilizes the core philosophy on morality and the principles or guidelines for alleviating suffering and building up happiness adopted from various disciplines, particularly the contemplative education and Buddhism as well as other sciences and arts concerning building up happiness to be integrated in organizing the content and setting up the learning process for the students through various kinds of instructional media both inside classroom and outside. The 5 techniques advocated by contemplative education includes intensively listening, reflectively taking into mind, monitoring the truth or intrapersonal engaging, dialoging, and reflecting the learning. All these would facilitate the students to achieve the goals of the course - to help the learners happy and be satisfied with the learning.

Contemplative education is referred to the education that aims at develop the learners from within their mind through the reflective process to realize themselves, and acquiring wisdom from the experience and practice through the learning process of integrating variety of disciplines concerning life, education, and happiness. Through all these, the students are expected to derive wisdom that helps access the knowledge, truth, and values of life and develop their mind to realize total humanity, freedom, and detachment from external things or materialistic values, and to happily maintain their everyday life.

Results of using the course is referred to the crucial characteristics and main knowledge and ability expected by the course developer to occur while implementing and after using the course. These results are evaluated by 1) Learning reflection of the learners while implementing the course through the process of classroom action research 2) Happiness in learning, evaluated by the students' happiness indicators, and satisfaction on part of the learners assessed through the questionnaire, 3) Learning

satisfaction, evaluated by the students' learning satisfaction questionnaire, and 4) Other though and feeling of the learners after course implemented, evaluate by learning evaluation form in terms of 2 open questions.

Happiness is referred to the emotion of feeling well, pleasant, calm, self-esteem, and proud in oneself from realizing his/her success and progress and ability to maintain good relationship with others. The happy person is able to get rid of stress and problems occurred in his/her everyday life, and are able to learn things with critical mind leading to the growth within his/her mind and view the world and life in a happy way.

Learning satisfaction is referred to the interest and like to learn and positive feeling towards the learning contents and environments including classmates and teacher, as well as the instructional process via contemplative education's techniques and activities in the course science and art of building up happiness. The satisfaction is composed of 6 dimensions, namely, achievement, recognition, responsibility, work itself, opportunity, and interpersonal relation.