

Part II

Thai Middle-Class Sexual Discourse and Its Discursive Practices

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เว็บไซต์นี้มีเนื้อหาและข้อมูลที่ไม่เหมาะสม
ถูกระงับโดยกระทรวงเทคโนโลยีสารสนเทศและการสื่อสาร

	ส ส่งเสริม	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ ส่งเสริมการเรียนรู้ และควรส่งเสริมให้มีการดู
	ท ทั่วไป	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ เหมาะสมกับผู้ดูทั่วไป
	น 13+	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ เหมาะสมกับผู้ที่มีอายุ ตั้งแต่ 13 ปีขึ้นไป
	น 15+	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ เหมาะสมกับผู้ที่มีอายุ ตั้งแต่ 15 ปีขึ้นไป
	น 18+	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ เหมาะสมกับผู้ที่มีอายุ ตั้งแต่ 18 ปีขึ้นไป
	ฉ 20-	ภาพยนตร์เรื่องนี้ ห้ามผู้ที่มีอายุต่ำกว่า 20 ปี ดู

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Figure 3.1 Thai middle-class sexual discourse and its discursive practices

CHAPTER 3

The Transition of Women's Sexuality and Gender Roles in Northern Thai Society

This Chapter aims to discuss the historical development of the power controlling young woman's gender and sexuality in northern Thai society. This Chapter consists of three main parts; the first part draws on the decline of the local *phii pu njaa* or ancestor spirit beliefs. The second part explores the rise of the *kunlasatree* (good, proper woman) discourse which was imposed from the culture of middle-class people in the central part of Thailand. Both developments were instrumental in bringing about a transformation of the gender and social position of women from matrilineal to patriarchal in northern Thai society. The third part investigates various strategies that the Thai state employed to identify the state-led key operations, such as providing sex education, media censorship, and social order campaign, that are necessary to shape young women's sexuality according to the model of the *kunlasatree*.

3.1 The Decline of *Phii Pu Njaa* and the Transformation of Women's Position in Northern Thai Society

A steadily increasing body of literature demonstrates that women were active in positions of power and leadership throughout pre-and early modern Southeast Asia (Disch, 2012). Especially in Thailand, women used to be recognized as powerful economically, socially and culturally (Van Esterik, 1996). Bowie discovered in the course of conducting her research on village voting laws that formal provisions for female suffrage in village elections in Thailand date back to the Local Administration Act of 1897. In effect nationally, this often overlooked act arguably establishes Thailand's right to claim to be the second country in the world to enact female suffrage (Bowie, 2010).

In northern Thailand, women held sway in the spiritual realm. Northern Thai men were embedded in matrilineal marriages and strong matrilineal spirit cults (Bowie, 2011). In Lanna, now known as Northern Thailand, the local spirit medium was almost always a woman, which greatly influenced how women's roles in society were viewed and valued in the public sphere. Women were essential to address many kinds of societal or familial concerns, such as curing illnesses, forecasting the future of family life and of agricultural fortunes, as well as locating missing loved ones (Pakdeekul, 2009). Even nowadays, military draftees in Chiang Mai often carry a strip of their mother's *pha sin* skirt to keep them safe. Northern Thai women were in fact acknowledged to have superior powers (Bowie, 2011).

Phii pu njaa were the ancestral spirits among northern Thais, and were inherited matrilineally. Spirit cult participation once strongly influenced general beliefs and practices regarding female sexuality as Tanabe (1991 p.191) stated that: "Spirits are believed to reside in the female body." According to the tradition, if an unmarried couple was found having a sexual relationship, or even having bodily contact, it was believed to be an act of sexual violation that wronged the spirit lodged in the woman's body (*phid phii*). To atone for such transgressions, the man was required to provide money to the girls' parents to purchase a pig's head as an expiatory offering to the spirits (*sia phii*). This forgiveness must be sought; otherwise sickness or some form of misfortune could strike a family member, which would be a punishment by the ancestral spirits which protected the woman's body. In addition, if a daughter of the lineage was about to marry, the spirits that resided in and belonged to the old house must be informed. This was necessary to promote harmony in their marriage life, another sign of what Davis (1984 p.68) called "the social structural dominance of females" (P. Cohen, 1984; P. Cohen & Wijeyewardene, 1984; Davis, 1984; Fongkaew, 1995; Shigeharu, 1991). Moreover, early ethnographies of Thailand depicted the complementary status between men and women and relatively equal sexual relations among the Thais. Especially young women in pre-Buddhist northern society seemed to enjoy some degree of sexual freedom (Michinobu, 2005). For example, Andrew Turton found out that pre-marital sexual relations were common among rural men and women. At harvesting time, young men and women would often sleep out in the fields, and had many opportunities to engage in sexual relationships (Turton, 1984).

Sexual norms reflect the interests of particular groups that are dominant in a particular historical period. This dominant group controls the political agenda and has the power to create and promote sexual norms to justify their own sexual behaviors and the treatment of their subordinates. Sexual norms are susceptible to change when political transformations necessitate new alliances among dominant forces (Michinobu, 2005). Boserup found that the introduction and influence of European administrators and European ideas about governance had the effect of transferring land rights from women to men. When communally-owned (but female-controlled) property was converted to and registered as individual ownership, property rights appeared to become more often vested in males than females. This further eroded the relatively advantaged position of women in Lanna society (1970 p.61, cited in Van Esterik, 1996 p.11). Muecke's study in northern Thai society confirmed that a decrease in the maintenance of the *phii pu njaa* ancestral spirits was associated with loss of ancestral house and land ownership of women (Muecke, 1981). The European style of legal and institutional development, characterized by centralization of Government power in Bangkok, bureaucratization of governance and specialization of ministries as well as other legislative reform was strongly encouraged by a Bangkok elite worried about loss of Thai territory to the colonial powers France and England (Wyatt, 2003). These processes had a negative effect on women's status because these processes failed to notice or utilize the productive roles that women played and reinforced values restricting women's activities to the household, limiting their tasks to child-bearing and child-rearing; in effect, Western values regarding appropriate work for women were gradually superimposed on Northern Thai society (Tinker and Bo Bramsen, 1976 p.5 cited in Van Esterik, 1996 p.11). Globalizing influences and socio-economic changes also contributed to the gradual abandonment of the spirit cults; young girls became less and less worried about retribution from the spirits (Mougne, 1981, 1984).

As mentioned above and in Chapter 1, economic and demographic changes have resulted in a substantial reformation of traditional belief patterns regarding female gender and sexuality. The initial strength of beliefs in ancestor spirits and their role in controlling female sexuality has degraded and currently holds no relevance in controlling female sexuality in northern Thai society (Fongkaew, 1995; Michinobu, 2005; Muecke, 1981). In the meantime, the rise of the Bangkok-based modern nation-

state in central Thailand and the emergence of middle class there as well as in the northern region has resulted in the construction of modern sexual norms and modern sexual control mechanisms through various social institutions. These will be discussed in the next parts.

3.2 *Kunlasatree* Model: The Introduction of a Sexual Double Standard between Men and Women in Northern Thailand

Later studies on the modernization in Northern Thailand concluded that the northern Thai region has gradually transformed to a patriarchal society where young women have been subjected to different standards of sexual behavior than their male counterparts. Sexual experience in any relational context has increasingly been seen as positive for men, as sex is believed to strengthen their masculinity; in contrast, sexual activity is considered as negative and bad for women, except when it serves a reproductive purpose, as sex is believed to corrupt and damage women's bodies (*sia tua*). Women are not supposed to reveal any sexual desires or needs, or show sexual pleasure or affection. As a result, women became morally judged according to a dichotomy of chaste, decent, 'good' women on the one hand, and promiscuous, indecent, 'bad' women on the other. 'Good' and chaste women keep themselves away from all sexual activity and maintain their virginity until marriage, whereas 'bad' and promiscuous women are those who become the objects of male philandering or were involved in prostitution. This sexual double standard serves as the basis on which the Thai state has come to expect northern Thai youth, especially females, to construct their gender and sexual expectations. These conventional discourses of sexuality as a taboo maintain their strength and are constantly reproduced by social institutions such as the media, families, and schools (Davis, 1984; Fongkaew, 1995; Michinobu, 2005; Sornchai, 2004).

The Thai state aims to shape young girls to conform to an idealized female youth sexual identity. The model of 'well-behaved women' (*kunlasatree*) thus was introduced and enforced. A *kunlasatree* woman has been defined as proficient and sophisticated in household duties; graceful, pleasant, yet unassuming in her appearance and social manners; and conservative in her sexuality (Taywaditep, Coleman, & Dumronggittigule, 1997). This ideal-type is at the basis of how the Thai state, through

various social institutions, attempts to shape female youth's sense of gendered and sexual self. For unmarried girls this means, in practice, that they are taught that sex in relation to (good) women is precious; it should not be squandered, but it should be kept and maintained for life after marriage. Even in marriage, a *kunlasatree* woman does not truly need or ask for sex; basically, only men and 'bad women' (including prostitutes) enjoy sex.

In fact, the *kunlasatree* reflects the standards of a particular kind of aristocratic woman, strongly influenced by conservative Victorian values. This discourse became the culture of middle-class people in the central part of Thailand and was reinforced under the administration of General Por Phiboonsongkram in the 1940s and 1950s. Boys would strive to be the leader of the family, strong, sexually independent, and good at fighting. Young teenage girls then were expected to control their sexuality by taking up and reproducing the *kunlasatree* discourse and practice to limit the level of their sexual expressions and practices. They had to be modest, soft-spoken, shy, sweet, and good at cooking and doing household chores (Fongkaew, 1995; Sornchai, 2004). Several poems of Sunthornphu, the Great Poet in the reign of King Rama III, reflect the expectations the Thai state had of the *kunlasatree*. His poems are widely known in Thailand and are taught to students throughout the country; the poems instill the message that a good woman has self-control in sexual matters so that she keeps her virginity. As he stated in one poem:

“Having been born as a woman, one should realize that and behave as a woman. One should be conscious of the feminine characteristics. To behave in a manner that is half masculine and half feminine is not appropriate. It is considered as disgraceful behavior by others”

(Kerdthet, 1974)

In the modern era of Northern Thai society, since the traditional beliefs of the matrilineal ancestral spirit or *phi puu njaa* no longer exists and most parents do not inform their daughters about *phid phii* or the acts of sexual violation which wrong the ancestral spirits (Gray, 1990; Mougne, 1981, 1984), a distinction in the socialization of girls and boys becomes apparent. Girls and boys arrive at adolescence with a different range of social experiences. Girls are taught and expected to be well-behaved and gentle

as well as polite in all ways. Adults, especially parents and teachers, pay attention to girls' mannerisms more than boys by addressing the way they sit, dress, and speak. Boy's physical strength reflects social values which reinforce masculinity as a biologically determined tendency to act as provider and protector while the girls are internalized to believe that they are weaker than boys. Girls are expected to start their domestic responsibilities in their early childhood while boys are excused from household chores and gain more freedom socially and sexually. Daughters are not given more freedom because parents fear that their daughters, being supposedly innocent and unknowing about sexual matters, could be easily enticed into premarital sex if they wander too far from home (Fongkaew, 1995, 2002).

Fongkaew notes that the image of the inferior and submissive woman is pervasively present among northern Thai women. Some northern Thai doctrines that provide moral lessons for women by expressing the basic rules that should govern female sexual behavior are taken up. For example, in Prince Lau's Teaching for the World (*Pra Lau Sorn Loak*) which was found in Chai Chom Poo temple in Chiang Rai Province chronicled the moral instructions that governed and controlled female sexuality:

[This] moral instruction for women delineates women who are not good and do not deserve to be daughters and wives:

1. *Women who are uncertain and unpredictable.*
2. *Sensual women who are ready to melt, like wax when brought near a flame.*
2. *Women who are sexually unstable like fire that is never satisfied by fuel.*
3. *Sly women who are unreliable.*
4. *Women who are like thieves and who are ready to kill her husband.*
5. *Dangerous women who are like sharp knives.*
6. *Stubborn women who are hard to harness like a man herding twenty stubborn cows.*

Women who are virtuous and who are considered wives:

1. *Gentle women, polite and cordial.*

2. *Women who speak softly and sweetly.*
2. *Women who are industrious.*
3. *Women who love their families as well as their husbands' families.*
4. *Women who are thrifty and careful with money.*
5. *Women who love their husbands as they love their children.*
6. *Women who respect their husbands in a way that slaves respect their masters.*
7. *Women who appear like a jewel to their husbands.*
8. *Women who are concerned for the well being of their children and husband (Payomyong, 1990).*

Bowie argues in her study that the double standard of sexual socialization emphasized the lower position of women in northern Thai society such as the belief that menstrual blood was spiritual pollution and taboos regarding women in temples and around monks are not necessarily a longstanding northern Thai custom. Rather, these customs emerged out of a complex historical process involving massive relocations and integrations of war captives of diverse ethnic backgrounds by the Lan Na Thai rulers which were ongoing as late as the 19th century (2011 p. 135). A study by Davis described an ideology of male dominance in which men are superior to women in the position they take in coitus and in their access to greater magic power in northern Thai society (1984 p.65). Females exist in an inferior position in most respects compared to males; people come to believe that one is born as a woman because of an inadequate store of Buddhist merit accumulated in previous lives. Practices that reinforced these notions of male superiority became commonplace in modern Northern Thai social functions and ritual practices such as social gatherings that include domestic rites, temple fairs, and merit-making occasions such as the celebration of a new house. For example, during the ritual ceremonies in the temple hall, elderly men and adult males sit immediately in front of the monks, while women and young children sit towards the rear. All ritual specialists are men, and only men process spells, magic formulas, and divinatory texts. Women have to gather gifts to present to the monks and to prepare food, snacks, soft drinks and other supplies to serve the people who come to join the ceremonies. It is the women's responsibility to make sure that everyone is served and satisfied with food. These

subservient service tasks assigned to women serve to enhance the prestige of men in northern Thai society.

These ideologies related to gender and sexuality influence Northern Thai girls' perceptions of their feminine sexual constructions and practices. It is clear that the social conditioning of northern Thai women is aimed at producing 'good women' according to the *kunlasatree* discourse, as discussed above. Studying this in more detail, Fongkaew (1995) found out that female youth in modern Northern Thai society perceived four main ideal types of feminine characteristics which they thought they were expected to follow: 1) women should be gentle and well-mannered, 2) women are weak, passionate, emotional and dependent, 3) women should be dedicated to families as dutiful mothers and wives and, 4) women should preserve their reputation and their virginity. In the below, each of these points is discussed in more detail.

1. Women should be gentle and well-mannered.

Young women are expected by adults to be polite, gentle, and well-mannered in every way. The term "to be proper" (*riep roi*) is normally used when describing good women in Thai society. *Riep roi* is normally used to describe a Thai woman who acts, speaks, and dresses in a modest way. *Riep roi* women should be more proper than men in every way. They should not play roughly like a boy. Young women are concerned about social expectations, which are taught to them by adults, especially parents and teachers, who strictly control their behavior. The girls have to behave gently, politely, and be cautious in their manners, especially when they walk and when they meet older people. *Riep roi* has become so much associated with proper femininity that for same-sex attracted men being *riep roi* has connotations with lacking masculinity or being homosexual (De Lind van Wijngaarden, 2014).

2. Women are weak, passionate, emotional and dependent.

The Northern Thai girls described women as being soft and weak. Women cannot tolerate hard work like men. They are vulnerable to influence or easily convinced by someone (*jai on*), whereas men are intrinsically strong of body and mind (*jai kang*). The girls perceived themselves to be more emotional than boys. Terms reflecting

emotionality, such as “crybaby” (*keerong hai*), “weak-hearted” (*jai on*) or “worrier” (*kid maak*) were seen by the girls as important characteristics of being a woman. The girls associated these manners with the heroines in popular Thai soap operas who usually cry easily, are soft-hearted, and are good in household chores. There is a strong sense of rejecting women who tend to be strong and be hard or rigid (*kra dang*) which is not considered appropriate feminine behavior in Thai society. Women with such characteristics were often seen as masculine and were often associated with being masculine lesbians (*tom*).

3. Women should be dedicated to families as dutiful mothers and wives.

Northern Thai girls felt obliged to perform household tasks and take care of other family members. It is clear that young girls grow into adulthood within domestic spheres that show the primary roles of women as being mothers and wives. They are trained to be feminine in order to be good wives and mothers in the future. This training is so pervasive that it is eventually embedded in their unconscious development. Young women are expected to be and remain close to their mothers or grandmothers; the girls are supposed to remain at home where they are taught domestic skills, while boys are allowed, expected and encouraged to go out and have more freedom.

4. Women should preserve their reputation and their virginity.

The double sexual standards between men and women discussed above allow men to have two forms of sexual interaction: commercial (having sex with prostitutes) and sexual behavior within courtship. For women there is only one form of sexual interaction, which is sexual behavior through courtship—or to be more precise, after courtship has led to marriage. Girls are constantly warned to take extreme caution in maintaining their chastity to avoid gossip and contempt from their peers. Preserving virginity (*rak nuan sa nguan tua*) is a timeless message that has been passed on through the generations from grandmother to mother to daughter: “Protect one’s virginity, avoid premarital sexual relationships, save oneself for marriage.” Virginity (*prom ma ja ree*) is considered a woman’s ultimate virtue. According to this ideology, a woman’s hymen is a symbol of her innocence and purity. The notion of losing one’s virginity (*sia tua*, which translate as ‘to break/destroy yourself’ or *sia prom ma jan*) is viewed as a grave

sin that not only destroys women's worth, but also that of their families. Young girls associated a women's loss of virginity with getting pregnant, which is an obvious cue for society to judge their behavior. For a daughter to become pregnant out of wedlock is the worst dishonor for a family. Proper behavior for women in sexual relations is therefore important if women want to avoid public criticism. It is also deemed unacceptable for women to reveal their own desire by displaying affectionate behavior to men (Fongkaew, 1995).

Another study regarding gender socialization in a modern northern Thai society confirms that double standards with regard to sexual morality and practice remain strongly accepted within northern Thai families. Young men are not only allowed but even encouraged to experiment with sex before marriage. Indeed, such activities are considered a rite of passage for boys. Sex is an issue that father and son, male teacher and male student, or young men with older male friends or relatives could discuss reasonably openly. This openness for discussing sexuality is lacking among women. Some parents continue to forbid their daughters to attend any sexual education program fearing that sexual experimentation would encourage their daughters to have immature sexual practices. Some teachers, moreover, reportedly refused to allow sex education activities in their schools, believing that their students were unlikely to need such education (Tangmunkongvorakul, Kane, & Willings, 2006).

In sum, the enforcements of *kunlasatree* model and the perceptions of feminine characteristics among young women in northern Thai society discussed above reveal that the culture of a group of people is used to set the standard behaviors that everyone must follow even as they are in different conditions and contexts. Since the traditional belief in matrilineal ancestral spirits or *phi puu nja* declined, the introduction of *kunlasatree* model thus represents the transformation of control over female sexuality by men in the northern Thai society.

3.3 Protect our Girls from the Western Invasion: Science of Sexuality and the Roles of Thai State

Over the past few decades, economic expansion and Western influences have driven greater materialistic purchasing power among Thai people, especially in urban areas. As northern Thailand has become more westernized and, in particular, with the rapid development of information technology, ways of living and social practices have changed dramatically. Young people, who are in a pivotal phase of their development, are among the generation that most easily adopts these changes. Studies found that the downside of the phenomenon of globalization has been the adoption of unhealthy lifestyles such as increasing consumption of fast food, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, night-time recreational practice, and unsafe sexual behaviors (Tangmunkongvorakul et al., 2006).

New expressions of youth subculture, such as ways of dressing, speaking, and changing sexual norms regarding sex between unmarried youth, challenge conventional Thai values and traditions. These actions are portrayed as 'non-Thai', leading to public concern and even to moral panic (A. Cohen, 2006, 2009; Fongkaew, 1995). The transformation of sexual practices and expressions among young people, especially girls, are often seen as the enemy of the established order, and as the source of moral angst among the elite. These 'unsuitable' sexual practices and expressions, as seen by the state, thus tend to be a generator of frequent moral panics in modern Thai society. Public attention is particularly directed towards youth sexual identity formation and how this is expressed, especially among female teenagers. The gradual transformation in female youth's sexualities is morally judged and labeled as undesirable, and is therefore regulated by the state systems via families, educational institutions, and the mass media. Schools teach young Thai women to deny their sexual desires and affections and that they are not supposed to know about sex. In other words, northern Thai schoolgirls have been socially constructed to be gentle, proper, innocent, and virgin (Fongkaew, Wongpanarak et al., 2007). There are various ways the Thai state and social institutions have operated to control, regulate, and suppress young Thai female sexuality. This is done to uphold conventional values and assumed traditions as

well as keep Thai teens away from ‘inappropriate’ sexual behaviors and ideas that were presumably imported from Western countries (A. Cohen, 2006).

The concept of ‘abstinence’ has been brought into the state’s attempts to protect and preserve Thai girls’ virginity; young girls are seen as increasingly exploited by Western culture and capitalist expansion through advertisements, movies, TV series, TV channels such as MTV and the Internet. Exposure to Western culture might lead the girls to accept some kind of affectionate behaviors toward men that used to be strictly reserved for traditional sphere within marriage. There is an increase in the frequency and explicitness of sexual references in the global media and popular culture. This suggests that modern northern Thai society has been influenced by Western values through shaping and determining the content of the media and popular culture. Newer media and popular culture tend to include more fantasy love and romance than in the past which could lead to ‘unsuitable’ sexual practices and expressions. The Thai state and conservative urban elites view the control of young women’s sexuality as a means to maintain social order and the Thai identity—whatever that may be—in the age of globalization (Charoenporn, 2003; A. Cohen, 2006; Fongkaew, Wongpanarak et al., 2007).

In order to legitimize state-led campaigns to shape youth sexuality to be “proper” and “healthy”, Foucault (1990 p.58) notes that the repression of sex in nineteenth-century bourgeois society demanded a “science of sexuality” (*scientia sexualis*) in order to understand, catalog, and identify any perversions that needed to be control and eradicated. It resulted in a pervasive discourse on youth sexuality that is a form of power/knowledge and as a justification for increased control and regulation. Thai state and its allies play an active role in constituting knowledge of Thai sexuality via various national campaigns to protect youth who are recognized as the future of the country from the invasion of Western culture and sexual attitudes.

As mentioned previously, most previous studies on Thai youth sexuality have emphasized and pursued an approach that tends to see the youngsters as victims of the commercial media, consumerism, and modernization. Scientific studies have aimed to portray the continuing rise in “inappropriate” sexual behaviors among Thai youth. For example a study among youth in night entertainment spots in Chiang Mai City found

out that 53 percent of female teenagers reported having had sexual intercourse and that the mean age of their first sexual experience was 16. The researchers wanted to explore the girls' reasons for having sexual intercourse, and found few surprises: reported reasons included that they felt close to their partners, had sexual desires, wanted to gain commitment to their romantic relationship from their partner by allowing sex. Other reasons were that they felt less inhibited to have sex due to the use of alcohol and amphetamine use, or they were forced by boyfriends or older adults. Some also wanted to experiment with sex after having watched pornography, or wanted something in exchange for sex (Fongkaew, Bond, Srionsri, & Soparat, 2000). Another study of sexual behavior among 1,726 adolescents in Chiang Rai Province reported that 45.8 percent of student participants revealed that they had had or were in a sexual relationship (Rewthong, 2001). The highest rate of sexually transmitted diseases was reported in youths aged between 15-24 years, which were 47 percent of patients. Rates of HIV/AIDS infection among Thai teens were also reported highest among the same age group. Many of them contracted the virus before they were 15 years old (France-Press, 2000). Recent studies also showed that young Thai teens tended to have their first sexual intercourse earlier and had more unprotected sex; so that it significantly increased their vulnerability of contracting HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Numbers of unwanted pregnancies and induced abortions have also increased in recent decades. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Health changed the target population for HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns to young people aged 18 and lower (UNFPA, 2013).

To construct desired sexuality among Thai young teens, providing sexual education in schools has been one strategic action operated by the Thai state. According to a study of existing sexual education efforts in northern Thailand, Rutchanagul (2003) found that sex education within schools was considered a central aspect of the National Plan and seemed to be the only way to help Thai youth receive accurate information. In Thailand, sexual education is known as "Life and Family Education. The "Life and Family Education" is integrated into the subject area of Health and Physical Education which cover grade 1-12. The framework for the curriculum is required by Department of Health and Department of Mental Health to cover six core areas of Life and Family Education:

1. Human Sexual Development: physiology and the reproductive system, adolescence, and secondary sexual characteristics.
2. Relationships: family relationships, friendship, love, marriage, and life spans.
3. Sexual behavior: sexual expressions, sexual relations, and sexual abnormality.
4. Sexual health: reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, and birth control.
5. Society and culture & personal skills: value, refusal/negotiation, decision-making, assertiveness, problem solving, and requesting help.
6. Sex roles: sexual values, gender roles, sexual and media.

However, the study revealed that the content of existing sexual education curriculum did not adequately address contemporary sex-related issues and needs of Thai teenagers. It emerged that teachers taught only the part of curricula about which they felt confident, while overlooking certain content they considered culturally inappropriate for students. Teaching methods used to teach sex education followed mainly the traditional lecture style that tended to bore students. The lectures primarily focused on the biology of reproduction and reproductive body parts with little or no reference to the social-emotional and gender-sensitive issues related to sexuality and leading a sexual life. The teaching also focused exclusively on pregnancy and disease aspects of sexual activity, attempting to induce fear and negativity around sex. Most importantly, in the process developing sexual education curricula and materials for youth, the key stakeholders, especially young people, never had a chance to take an active role or provided any participation. The study also found that any sexual education guidance for teenagers that was not in accordance with the hegemonic ideology about gender and sexuality was not included. For example, the sex education book for youth “Handbook for Teen” (*Kuu Mue Wai Sai*) sponsored by Siam CARE organization in 2002 was banned after a short period of distribution. There had been claims of obscenity due to the book’s content and pictures regarding masturbation. The government responded by collecting all the books back.

Apart from promoting “proper” and “healthy” sexual knowledge through sexual education in school, various state-led campaigns of social discipline under control of the Office of the National Cultural Commission, Ministry of Culture or ‘social and cultural

engineering' have operated nationwide. The 'Social Order Campaign' (*Jud Rabiep Sangkhom*) was started by former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's government in 2001; this campaign and other campaigns of the Culture Ministry appealed to the largely middle-class panic about changing social and sexual practices (Phongpaichit & Baker, 2009). This panic was primarily a response to growing parental anxiety regarding "depraved" and "untruly" urban Thai youth. As youth are seen as the repository of national identity and the means by which it is reproduced, they became the focus of the campaign. The priority was to control and regulate the social and cultural practices of Thai youth (A. Cohen, 2006).

According to a study of Cohen (2006, p.124-126), the social order campaign and moral panic among middle-class people shared a marked orientation to nationalism and to the creation of a disciplined population, providing the ideological reason for perceiving youth sexual and social behaviors as deviant and threatening. In 2004, the national social order campaign started widely publicized raids on entertainment venues to monitor underage clients; it then extended to a range of other youth sexual practices under the proclaimed aim to eradicate youth promiscuity and discourage them from engaging in sexual intercourse until marriage. Another moral panic occurred when it was reported in the Thai press that studies found that many young Thai women deliberately planned on losing their virginity on Valentine's Day as a sign of commitment to their boyfriends. In another example, the Cultural Ministry prohibited young females from wearing spaghetti strap or strapless tops during the Thai New Year (*Songkhran*) water festival celebrations. The government also implemented a 10 p.m. curfew for those under 18 years old; most bars, clubs, and other nightspots were ordered to close by midnight to reduce youth promiscuous behaviors. The age at which young people could enter entertainment places was raised from 18 to 20 years.

The media was also seen as an important source of 'inappropriate' sexual attitudes and behavior for youth. The Ministry of Culture therefore spearheaded an initiative to create a television and movie ratings systems. In 2006, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) announced a new rating system for TV channels (Khaosod, 2013). Under the new guidelines, Thai television channels were

required to label their programs and reschedule their shows to comply in the following categories:

“Primary” - content suitable for pre-primary school aged children



Figure 3.2 The label of “Primary” in Thai television rating system

“Children” - content suitable for children between 6-12 years old



Figure 3.3 The label of “Children” in Thai television rating system

“General” - content suitable for general audiences



Figure 3.4 The label of “General” in Thai television rating system

“PG13” - content suitable for people aged 13 and above, but can be watched by those who are under the recommended age if parental guidance is provided. Under this category, the content can be shown on TV between 20.30 and 05.00.



รายการที่เหมาะสมกับผู้ชมที่มีอายุ ๑๓ ปีขึ้นไป
ผู้ชมที่มีอายุน้อยกว่า ๑๓ ปี ควรได้รับคำแนะนำ

Figure 3.5 The label of “PG13” in Thai television rating system

“PG18” - content suitable for people aged above 18 years old; those who are under 18 must be provided with parental guidance. The program can only be shown on TV during 22.00-05.00.



รายการที่เหมาะสมกับผู้ชมที่มีอายุ ๑๘ ปีขึ้นไป
ผู้ชมที่มีอายุน้อยกว่า ๑๘ ปี ควรได้รับคำแนะนำ

Figure 3.6 The label of “PG18” in Thai television rating system

“Exclusive” - content unsuitable for children and youngsters, and can be viewed on TV only after midnight.



รายการเฉพาะ
ไม่เหมาะสำหรับเด็กและเยาวชน

Figure 3.7 The label of “Exclusive” in Thai television rating system

Apart from the television ratings system, censorship measures have been strictly implemented in Thai television programs. Any acts related to alcohol consumption, smoking, blood, weapons pointed towards people, nudity, and any types of provocative dressing such as swimwear or bathing suits have been required to get blurred, even in cartoons, as the illustrations below show:



Figure 3.8 This swimwear is deemed too sexy for Thai children



Figure 3.9 Cigarette smoking is also blurred



Figure 3.10 Alcohol drinking and alcohol beverage brands are censored with the caption “Drinking alcohol could be harmful to your health and destroy your intelligence”

Television stations have censored or blacked out portions of programming that they deem politically sensitive or pornographic. A censorship board in the Office of the Prime Minister reportedly advises broadcasters either verbally or through letters of specific programs deemed inappropriate or offensive and advises programmers to be more careful in the future (Bureau of Democracy, 2005).

Under the 1930 Film Act, theater owners and broadcasters must submit films they plan to show to the film censorship board for review in order to assess whether these films pose harm to ‘public decency’. The movie ratings system was proposed in the Film and Video Act of 2007. The ratings were put into effect in August 2009 as detailed below:

- P – Promotional, film is educational and viewing is encouraged for all Thai people.
- G – Suitable for everyone.
- 13 – Under 13 not admitted.
- 15 – Under 15 not admitted.
- 18 – Under 18 not admitted.

20 – Under 20 not admitted.

Banned – Films that are not allowed to screen publicly in Thailand



Figure 3.11 The labels of movie rating system

The board may ban a film if their requirement that portions of the film to be deleted or censored is not met. Reasons for censoring films include violating moral or cultural norms and disturbing the public order or national security. Officers at the censorship board cite sexual situations and nudity were the main reasons for banning (Bureau of Democracy, 2005).

In 2010, “Insects in the Backyard” was the first Thai movie that was banned from the film censorship board for reasons that the film was deemed to undermine or disrupt social order and moral decency and might impact national security. The movie addresses sexuality and gender issues, and has scenes involving masturbation. The teenage characters in the movie end up becoming prostitutes. Additionally, they engage

in various sexual acts with a variety of clients while they are wearing their school uniforms. Among 21 board members, 13 voted against the movie because they felt it was immoral and pornographic. Anyone found selling copies of the banned film would face a fine of 200,000 to 1 million baht (Journal, 2010; Nation, 2010).

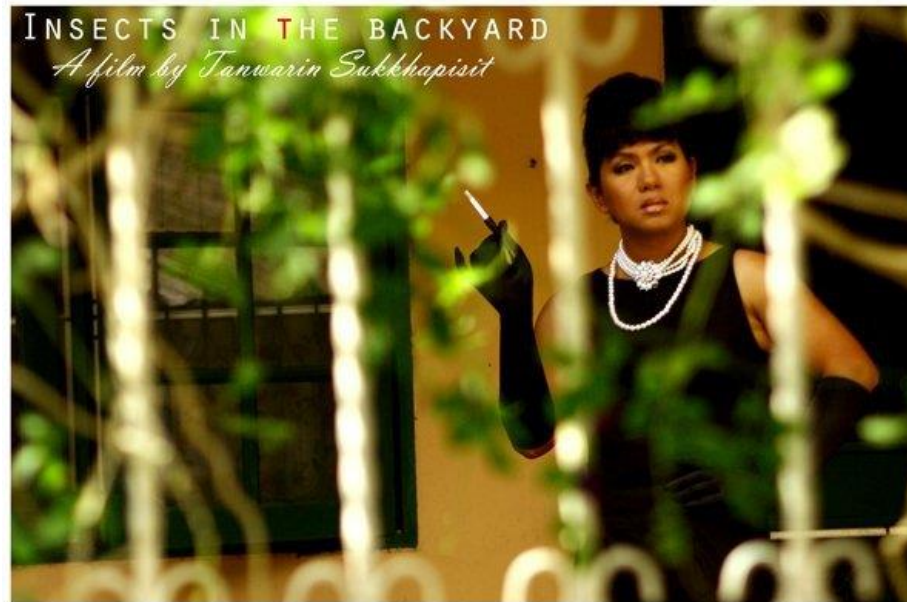


Figure 3.12 PR poster of the banned Thai movie “Insects in the Backyard”

Since 2003, the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Ministry has also been actively censoring the Internet. The Cyber Inspector Team was set up to monitor and ban websites featuring pornography and other content deemed inappropriate. According to the chairman of the Cyber Inspector Team and an advisor to the Prime Minister, the organization was created in November 2003 and had more than 100 volunteers who surveyed the Internet and reported what they saw as offensive content. The Government began regularly distributing a growing blacklist of websites, both domestic and foreign, to government and private Internet service providers (ISPs) to be blocked. Compliance by the ISPs in blocking routine access to these websites was universal. Most of the sites blocked were deemed pornographic. According to the Cyber Inspector Team, 1,574 websites were blocked in May 2013. The government announced that an additional 2,500 websites hosted within and outside the country were blocked in December 2013 (Bureau of Democracy, 2014).



Figure 3.13 The display of a website which is censored, blocked or banned by ICT with the caption “This website contains inappropriate content and information and is being detained by the Information and Communications Technology Ministry”

Another organization which has been playing an active role in promoting “healthy” sexual knowledge of Thai youth is the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (abbreviated in Thai as ‘*Sor Sor Sor*’). *Sor Sor Sor* called itself an “independent state agency” set up under the Health Promotion Act 2001 and funded by a 2% surcharge tax levied on tobacco and alcohol products. Its governing board is chaired by the Prime Minister with half of its members from independent social organizations. This independent state agency funds over one thousand health promotion projects a year and spends around US \$100 million yearly. According to the Ministry of Public Health, unsafe sex has been declared one of the ten major health risk factors for the Thai population (Foundation, 2013). *Sor Sor Sor* has promoted sexual health initiatives by disbursing grants to variety of partners and networks. Apart these initiatives, a series of television programs and advertisements have been created and broadcasted to encourage and teach young people to have ‘healthy’ sexual behaviors and ‘proper’ sexual education. For example, on Valentine’s Day 2011, a thirty-second advertisement entitled ‘Painful’ was launched and widely shared in social media. The advertisement portrays the faces of teenage girls screaming painfully while delivering their babies. Their screaming voice and facial expression imply the ultimate suffering of those girls who had premarital/unprotected

sex which resulted in unexpected/immature pregnancy. The last ten second of the advertisement shows the statistic data from the Bureau of Policy and Strategy, Public Health Statistic, Ministry of Public Health, 2009 that 336 teenage girls become mothers daily; then ends with the motto used to promote youth sexual health, “Sexual Issues, Think More, Look at the Long Term” as figures shown below:



ทุกวัน มีวัยรุ่น 336 คน
ต้องกลายเป็นแม่

ที่มา: สำนักนโยบายและยุทธศาสตร์ สถิติ สาธารณสุข, กระทรวงสาธารณสุข, 2552

เรื่องเพศ คิดให้เยอะ มองให้ยาว



Figure 1.14 The Sor Sor Sor advertisement, entitled “Painful”, to raise awareness and fear about teenage pregnancy

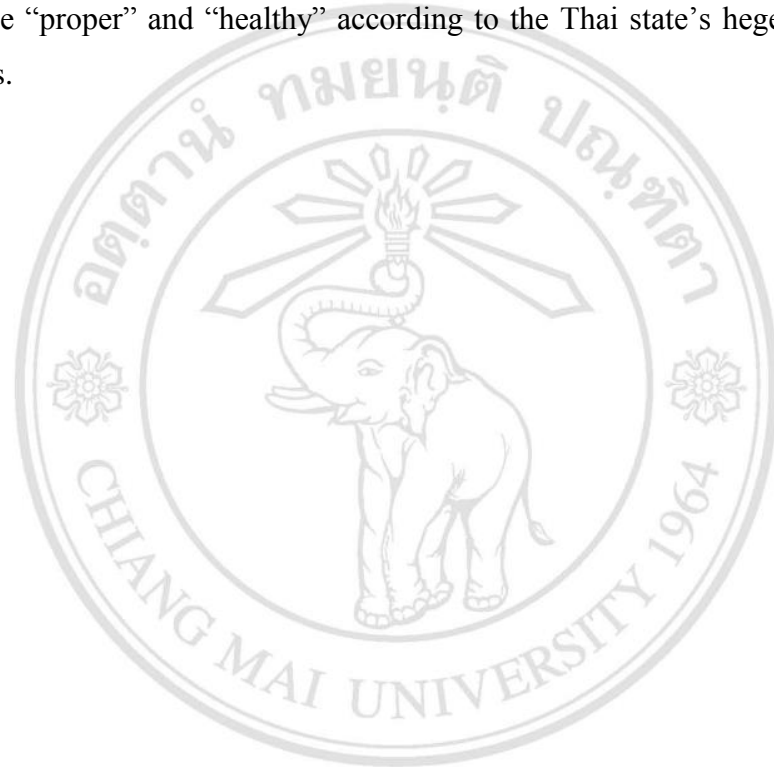
According to the representative of Social Marketing Department of *Sor Sor Sor*, this advertisement campaign: “*Was intended to encourage youth to think about this issue. This advertisement campaign has been heavily debated before being launched; how could we communicate to young people without intimidating them? It turned out that the research showed this campaign brought a huge impact. They [youth audiences] were really afraid [of having sex and teenage pregnancy] from the narration of this advertisement*” (Sondumrih, 2014). The producer’s pride in successfully instilling ‘fear’ of sex among teenage girls is indicative of the overall ideology of discouraging female sexuality, especially among the young.

Conclusion

The first and second parts of this Chapter reviewed various studies of female sexuality in northern Thai society to explore the factors that influenced the transition of women’s social status and feminine sexuality and gender ideology from a matrilineal to a patriarchal system. Women in northern Thai region used to be recognized as powerful figures due to the matrilineal marriages and strong matrilineal spirit cults (Bowie, 2011). Then, the introduction of European administrators and practices to transfer rights in land from women to men and implemented values which restricted women’s activities to household duties changed northern Thai society from “the social structural dominance of females” (Davis, 1984) into patriarchal society where young women have been subjected to the double standards of sexual socialization relative to men. In modern northern Thai society, traditional beliefs of the matrilineal ancestral spirits or *phi puu nja* are now no longer practiced. Girls are expected to control their sexual expressions and practices according to the *kunlasatree* discourse derived from the sexual morality and practice among middle-class people from the central part of Thailand which remain strongly accepted in northern Thais today.

The third part focused on the settings of strategic practices (de Certeau, 1988) through which the modern Thai state attempts to construct a desired ideal typical sexual identity—the *kunlasatree* model—among young females through various social institutions. According to Foucault (1990), systems of knowledge are bound up with regimes of power. Systems of power bring various types of knowledge, which in turn produce material effects in the bodies of social agents that serve to reinforce the original

power formation (McNay, 2003). Therefore, the control of young woman’s sexuality by the Thai state resulted from an explosion of various academic studies—in health science, psychology, youth sexual behavior survey, etc—as a form of power/knowledge to portray the vulnerability of Thai youth, fuelling a series of moral panics and providing a rationale for state intervention. A range of state-led campaigns followed—social order campaigns, sex education, media rating systems, Internet monitoring, etc—which are legitimized by these ‘alarming’ studies to control and repress female youth sexuality to be “proper” and “healthy” according to the Thai state’s hegemonic sexual characteristics.



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