

*An Application of*

# **Mindfulness Practices in Thai Buddhist Schools**

**The crucial factors to enhance learning capacities  
of teachers and students**



*by*

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*An Application of*

# **Mindfulness Practices in Thai Buddhist Schools**

**The crucial factors to enhance learning capacities  
of teachers and students**

## **Abstract:**

According to Buddha's teaching, the most powerful of human values is the learning capacity through the proper mindfulness practices. Through the process of Sila-Samadhi-Panna, the Noble Eightfold Path, one can practice by themselves to enlarge and deepen their capacity of detachment from the causes of dukkha (grievances, uncontrolled likes and dislikes). However, among the necessary ways of practices, the most important foundation everyone should follow; the only direct path, is the satipatthana, mindfulness practices which focus on four major elements; the human body, senses, mind and Dhamma. Undoubtedly, this is the only advantage and opportunity specifically for human beings, whether they realize it or not, they still own this grant.

The best moment or the birth of true learning happens when one's mindfulness is fully cultivated. Depending on two major factors, Kalayanamitre (wise spiritual friend) and Yonisomanasikara (wise reflection), one is able to have right practices and achieve the corresponding results. This constructive understanding of learning how to learn could probably best be applied to the school learning system. In which manner can we apply and integrate the concept of mindfulness practices into the school settings? Despite some past experiences from Thai schools, both private and government public schools

called 'Buddhist Schools' have been experimenting, reviewing, and reporting their more or less satisfactory performances through much research, many articles and some reflective activities. However, it can scarcely be found that those reports reflect directly to the effectiveness of implementing mindfulness practice methods in the schools. Moreover, the Thai Buddhist Approach schools, following the government policy of school reform from 2003 onward, which at its peak had 24,212 schools in 2011, currently has been decreasing to less than 1,000 schools, even though they have been developing through the conceptual framework and precise direction derived from the recommendations of the renowned monk scholar, Phra Dhamma Pitaka, together with the specific guidelines which were helped in formulation by the Mahachulalongkorn Rajavidyalalai (monk) University.

The private Buddhist schools, like Roong Aroon has put a lot of effort in restructuring its school system to emphasize a value learning community, in order to provide the platforms and systems available for the integration of mindfulness practices into every aspects of the school setting, in addition to formal mindfulness meditation. In terms of academic involvement, the value oriented curriculum and lesson plan design process as well as the embedded formative assessment have been managed to enhance the teachers' capacities to handle their classrooms with caring value objectives. Along with the prior input process, the output results were also arranged in After-Action-Review (A-A-R) and Before-Action-Review (B-A-R) platforms to provide the teachers' team the opportunity to practice wise reflection which require mindfulness in a broader sense. On the other hand, the interconnectedness relationship among school, parents and Buddhist temples or monks and other contemplative trainers has been encouraged to build up the Family-Temple-School as a value learning community. In doing so, many different spaces and activities were created to help ease the mindfulness and wise reflection practices for sharing and learning Kalayanamitre, or contemplative Community of practice.

This article intends to present two major parts; the first part will elaborate on the above decoding experiences of Roong Aroon School in analyzing, organizing and establishing those operating systems in its school culture. Depending on the process of decoding Roong Aroon 's experiences, it was found that the school's original practicums participated in by all partners required the mindfulness practices which were certainly well appreciated by all.

The second part will be the recommended implication of the value systems initiated for those 27 Buddhist schools. These most recent schools awarded 'Best Buddhist Approach Schools' were invited to join as the target population in the research project: "The Transforming of Buddhist Approach Schools to the Basic Buddhist Community, the Tripart of Family-Temple-School" funded by Thailand Research Fund as a 3 year action research. This action research will recommend and experiment the application of essential value systems, platforms and activities which could be established in the regular operation of the school system. These platforms will provide the available partners to gradually get used to the mindful self-reflection system among their teamwork in both the classroom and routine life activities. After two years, each role model school could encourage 3 other schools to develop and construct the strong foundation of a value learning community within the school as a focal point. They should be able to provide the opportunity for those partners; the school directors, teachers, parents and students to have regular practice, either in classroom activities or outside classroom activities and finally have their own F-T-S communities.

On behalf of the Roong Aroon research team, the writer has been working with them in decoding, analyzing and structuring the findings of major value oriented operating systems which will be presented here in this article. We have just realized with pleasure that writing this article was the complement to our continued research.

# 3 CORE VALUES



A Conceptual Framework in Applying Buddhism into Academic schooling system.

## The 1st CORE VALUES

### TRI-SIKHA

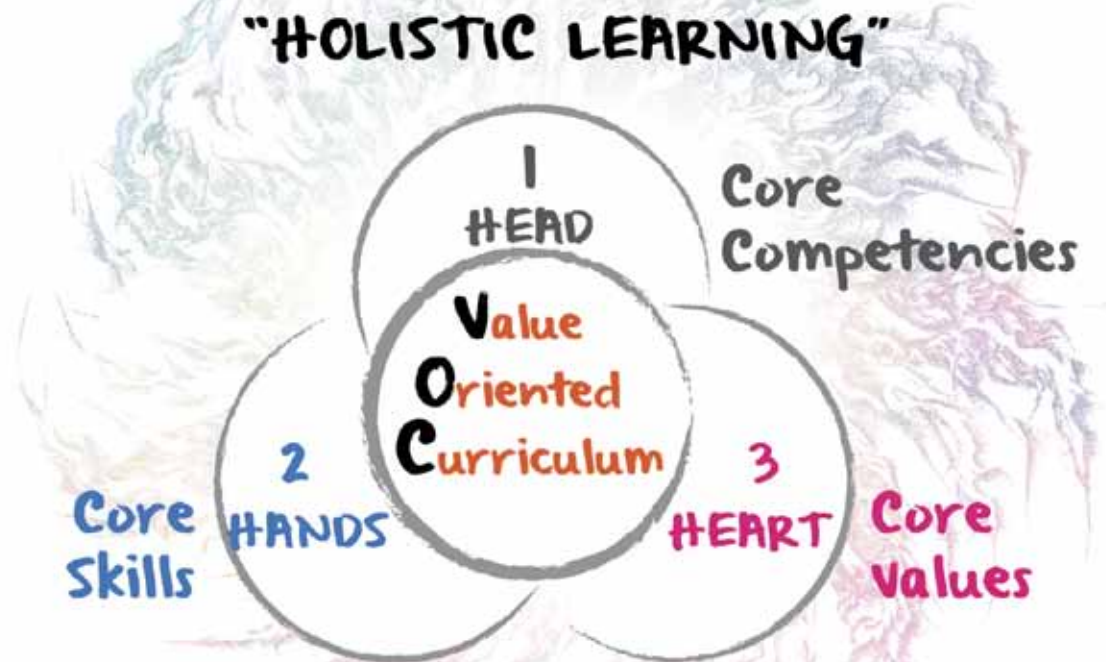
- **SILA**  
(Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood)
- **SAMADHI**  
(Right Efforts, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration)
- **PANNA**  
(Right View, Right Intention)

ULTIMATE GOAL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



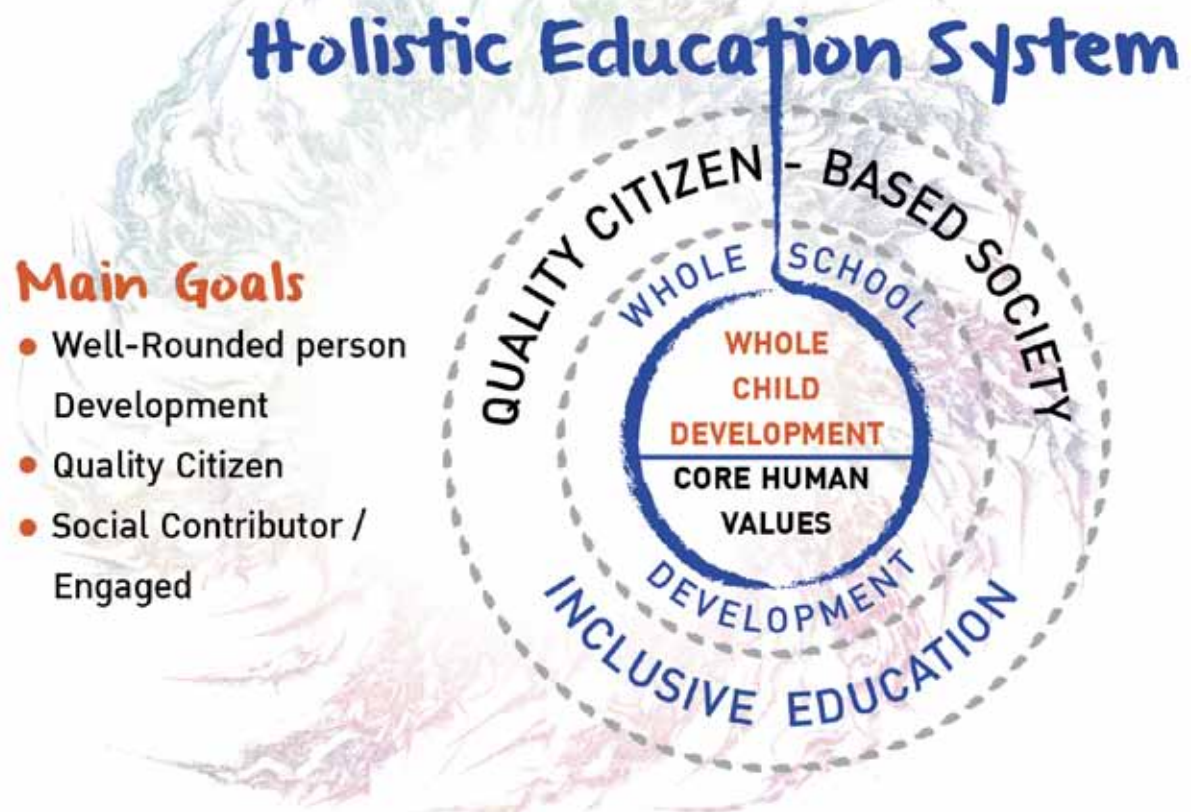
Learning is life  
or  
Life is learning

## The 1<sup>st</sup> CORE VALUES



An Application of Tri-Sikha to Holistic Learning and Value Oriented Curriculum

## The 1<sup>st</sup> CORE VALUES





The 1<sup>st</sup> CORE VALUES

Development of Education in 21<sup>st</sup> Century



from CONVENTIONAL

Chalk & Talk  
Content-based Learning  
Test score - based Evaluation

Learning by Doing  
Competency & Skills-based Learning  
Human Core Values  
Formative Assessment



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> CORE VALUES

### KALAYANAMITRE & YONISOMANASIKARA

#### EXTERIOR & INTERIOR FACTORS OF LIFE LEARNING

Kalayanamitta (exterior factor) joining with Yonisomanasikara (interior factor) : the dawn of learning into the right view for contemplation.

#### THE BIRTH OF TRUE LEARNING PROCESS

### VALUE ORIENTED SCHOOLING SYSTEMS

- Value Oriented Curriculum
- Value Oriented Lesson Plan
- Mindful Classroom
- Embedded Formative Assessment
- Teachers' Wise Reflection Dialogue

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> CORE VALUES

### KALAYANAMITRE & YONISOMANASIKARA

#### Kalayanamitta :

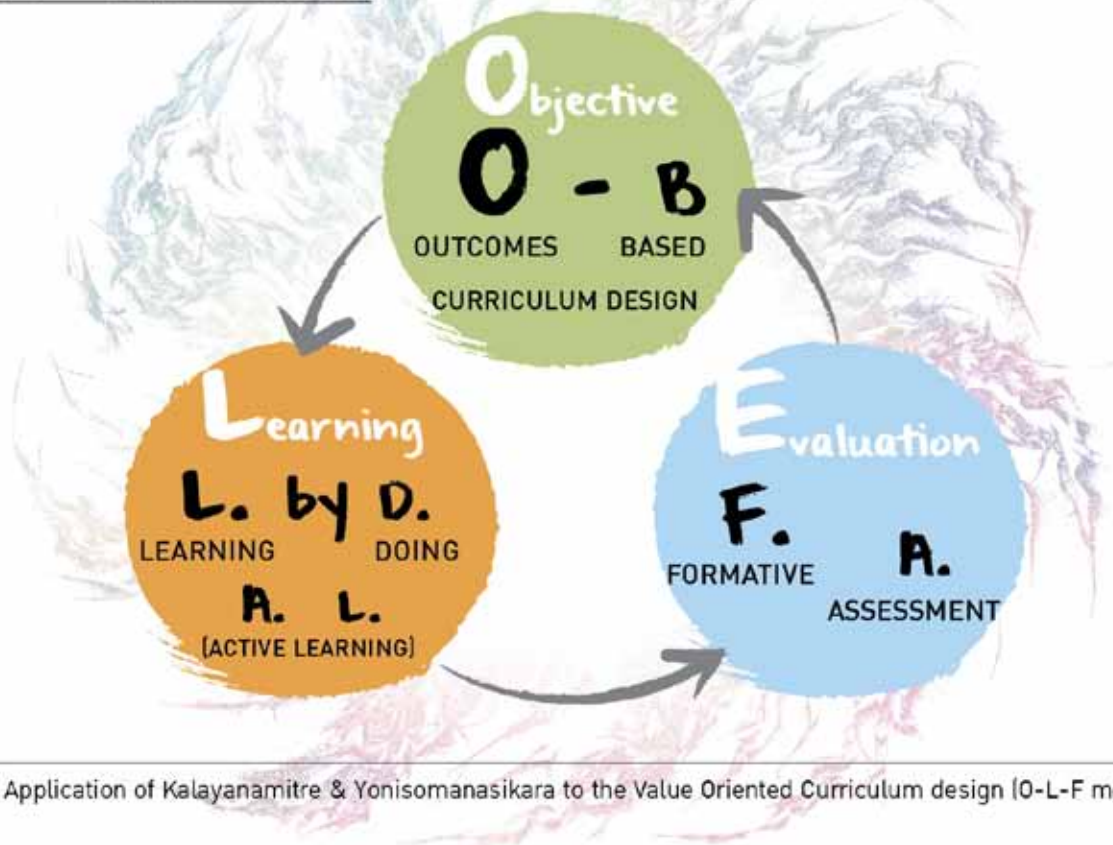
wise spiritual teachers, guides or trainers.

#### Yonisomanasikara:

wise reflection or 10 deliberated thinking systems ;

1) Good inner values application thinking, 2) True state awareness thinking, 3) Presence situation focus thinking, 4) Four noble truths problem solving thinking, 5) Fact based explanation thinking, 6) Element stratification thinking, 7) Cause-effect finding thinking, 8) Concept-objective connection thinking, 9) True-artificial value judgment thinking, 10) Advantage-disadvantage comparison thinking.

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> CORE VALUES



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> CORE VALUES

**Road Map : Integrated Subject (Social Study-Thai Class)**  
 Theme: The Northeast "Changing of folk people's way of living"  
 Grade 9 Roong Aroon School Term 1/2015

Scope of content	O bjectives			L earning Process	F ormative Assessment E valuation
	Knowledge	Learning Skills	Value		
Field Study of North provinces of Thailand 1.The way of living 2. Current situation				Learning by Doing & Reflective Share & Learn	Process / Tools Formative Assessment & Summative Evaluation

An example of a template for a learning unit's lesson plan design, Integrated with value objective



Secondary school students' project of "Hill Tribe community development through Rainforest Conservation"



Tranquil atmosphere and natural learning environment.



Primary students' rice planting in the school, and a package of rice.



Secondary students' operating of waste water management system.



Secondary students' organized a public forum "The use of natural resources has an impact on the environment"

# The 3<sup>rd</sup> CORE VALUES

## SATIPATTHANA 4

### MINDFULNESS PRACTICES IN 4 FOUNDATIONS

- FORMAL MINDFUL MEDITATION
- DAILY LIFE MINDFUL ACTIVITIES
- CONTEMPLATIVE, WISE COMPREHENDED PRACTICES

### THE CONTEMPLATIVE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICES (F-T-S)

- Parents' Classroom
- Share-Vision Platforms
- Teachers-Parents Mindful Dialogue
- Inspiring Contemplative Arts Activities
- Voluntary Services
- Etc.



Formal Mindfulness moving meditation practice led by the monk



Morning pray and meditation to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of Institute



Teachers' Mindful Dialogue



Parents' Classroom



Traditional Buddhist Days activities; giving food with gratitude to monks and contributing to the poor's



Kindergarten kids' bathroom cleansing.





Kindergarten kids' washing milk cartons, ready for recycling.



Primary kids' voluntary sweeping the lawn.



RAS concert : an annual performance by students, teachers, parents and all staff, joining with the national artists at the National Theatre



# Arsom Silp Institute of the Arts

## Method of Learning of the Institute

1. Holistic Education
2. Professional Learning Community -PLC
3. Practice Self-Reflection and meditation skills

## Short Term Workshop Programs

- Facilitator Program
- Active Learning Program
- More Than Art program
- Coaching Team
- More Than Sport (Thai Wisdom in Sport)
- Change garbage to community asset program
- Attitude Development and Analyzing Skill -  
The Connection between the Architecture of  
the Community and the Environment.

## Higher Education Curricula of Arsom Silp Institute of Arts.

The field of Education is comprised of

three departments as follows:

1. Department of Education, major in Childhood Education.  
(Bachelor Degree. Course duration 5 years)
2. Graduate Diploma in Teaching Profession  
(One and a half Year Post Graduate Program)
3. Master Degree in Education, major in Holistic Education.  
(Master Degree. Course duration 2 years)

The field of Architecture is comprised of

two departments as follows:

1. Department of Architecture (Bachelor Degree. Course duration 5 years)
2. Department of Architecture for the Community and  
Environment. (Master Degree. Course duration 2 years)

In field of Social Entrepreneur there is

one department:

- Department of Social Entrepreneur (Bachelor of Arts)





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*What can sustain concentration is  
mindfulness.*

*Mindfulness is a natural state,  
which allows us to recognize the  
emergence of other natural states.*

*Buddhist Priest  
Cha Supatto*

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