

Research on “Chinese + Law” Teaching Resources in Thailand

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Abstract: This article details the distinctive progress in Thailand’s “Chinese + Law” sector. It then examines the development of related teaching resources, culminating in three key conclusions: (1) The integration of “Chinese” and “Law” in Thai vocational education is insufficient; (2) Teaching resources for “Chinese + Law” in Thailand are scarce and of subpar quality. Presently, there are only print textbooks available, with no accompanying digital or multimedia resources developed; (3) The optimal approach for “Chinese + Law” teaching materials in Thailand should involve collaborative efforts between Chinese and Thai experts.

Keywords: “Chinese + Law”; Teaching resources; Case analysis

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1. The development achievements of “Chinese + Law” in Thailand

With the advancement of the visa waiver policy between China and Thailand, bilateral interactions between the two countries have become increasingly convenient, leading to a growing number of Chinese personnel and enterprises engaging in trade and investment in Thailand. These practical realities have heightened the demand for legal regulations and related academic exchanges between China and Thailand, thereby propelling the development of professional training and teaching resources in the field of “Chinese + Law” in Thailand ^[1]. On November 7, 2023, Dr. Wichian Kuphaisong, the Chairperson of the Thai Bar Association, met with Consul Zhulei Kong of the Chinese Embassy in Thailand. Dr. Kuphaisong expressed his hope for stronger cooperation and exchange in the legal sector between Thailand and China and requested that China provide Chinese language training for Thai lawyers to assist Chinese nationals seeking legal advice in Thailand, facilitating their ability to file lawsuits and protect their rights ^[2].

Amidst the increasing closeness of Sino-Thai cooperation, Thai judicial officials possessing a certain level of Chinese language skills have laid a solid foundation for deeper judicial exchange and cooperation between China and Thailand. It has also facilitated more convenient legal services for Chinese citizens in Thailand. Currently, the primary initiatives for the “Chinese + Law” project in Thailand are the training conducted by the

Thai Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute for the Thai National Anti-Corruption Commission, the “Chinese + Law” training organized by the Phuket Confucius Institute of Songka Prince University for the Trang Provincial Court, and the training for Chinese-Thai translation and legal reserve volunteers hosted by the International Affairs Division of the Office of the President of the Supreme Court of Thailand.

1.1. Thai Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute: “Chinese + Law” training for the Thai National Anti-Corruption Commission

The “Chinese + Law” training conducted by the Confucius Institute on the Silk Road for civil servants of the National Anti-Corruption Commission of Thailand (NACC) started in 2016, and so far more than 200 officials of the NACC have received professional training on “Chinese + Law.” Most of the trainees have passed HSK level 2–5 exams, among which many high-level trainees have passed HSK levels 4 and 5. From March 5 to 18, 2019, a group of 20 NACC officials from Thailand went to Tianjin Normal University (TNU) for a two-week professional training on “Chinese + Law,” where trainees went to the Law School of TNU, observed mock courts, and participated in the training. They learned about the criminal, civil, and administrative trial and arbitration process in China ^[3].

1.2. Phuket Confucius Institute of Songka Prince University: “Chinese + Law” training for the Trang Provincial Court

On March 10, 2019, the Phuket Confucius Institute of Songka Prince University in Thailand conducted a “Chinese + Law” training session for 50 staff members of the Trang Provincial Court. The training was delivered by Chinese teacher Ling Ma and translated into Thai by local Chinese teacher Guoyang Shen. The emphasis of the training was on basic Chinese listening and speaking skills, covering topics such as Chinese phonetics, greetings, numbers, and ordering food. To enhance the interest of the classroom, the training also included an introduction to Chinese culture and appreciation of Chinese songs ^[4].

1.3. The International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat “Chinese-Thai Translation and Legal Affairs Reserve Volunteer Training”

Due to the lack of dedicated Chinese-Thai translators within the Thai court system ^[5], there are obstacles in communication during the handling of criminal cases that involve Chinese plaintiffs or defendants. In such circumstances, the Thai courts have to temporarily hire Chinese-Thai translators, with a daily salary cap of up to 4500 Thai baht. However, since these translations are often ad-hoc and without a standardized system, the quality of the temporary Chinese-Thai translators can vary greatly. According to the author’s interviews, there are fewer than five registered qualified Chinese-Thai legal translators in the Thai court system (in comparison, the number of English-Thai legal translators in the system is ample, and there is no shortage). Against this background, the International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat began to host irregular “Chinese-Thai Legal Translation Reserve Volunteer Training” sessions and developed a specialized textbook titled *Official Chinese Usage Guide for Criminal Cases* (Chinese-Thai version) (published by the International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat, 2021) ^[6]. We will introduce the textbook in the second section separately, and here we will only provide a brief introduction to the training ^[7].

The “Chinese-Thai Legal Translation Reserve Volunteer Training” by the International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat was held before the pandemic, with the most recent session taking place from February 12–16, 2024. The training funds were provided by the International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat, and participants attended free of charge. However, there were criteria for participation, with the process including registration, submission of educational and professional qualifications, and passing an

entrance examination (Chinese-to-Thai and Thai-to-Chinese translation) before being eligible for the training (with a participant capacity of 50). Upon completing the training successfully, participants were entered into a talent pool of Chinese-Thai legal translation reserve volunteers for the Thai court system and would be notified by the court on a case-by-case basis when involving Chinese individuals in Thailand.

Overall, the “Chinese-Thai Legal Translation Reserve Volunteer Training” hosted by the International Affairs Department of the Thai Court Secretariat aims to recruit talent for Chinese-Thai legal translation reserves and to set standards for Chinese-Thai legal translators to meet the requirements of the Thai court system. However, since legal translation is not a specialized profession, it essentially involves a temporary partnership between the Thai court system and Chinese-Thai legal translators, paid on a per-case basis, and the effectiveness of the legal translation reserve talent pool is yet to be fully determined.

2. Thai “Chinese + Law” native teaching materials and tools

At present, there are three main types of local teaching materials and tools on Chinese language and law in Thailand:

The first type is books aimed at popularizing Chinese law among Thais. These books are generally bilingual, and the translators are generally Chinese experts with Thai translation skills and a strong foundation in jurisprudence. Taking the *Civil Code of the People’s Republic of China* as an example, this book is a Chinese-Thai bilingual edition, which is the first systematic official work on law in the industry, with good translation quality, rigorous and standardized language, suitable for Thai language students at or above the level of the third year of university, professional translators, and teachers specializing in the Thai language in colleges and universities. The book is translated by Associate Professor Qun Li, a postdoctoral researcher at the Zhongnan University of Economics and Law in China and a Doctor of Laws at Thammasat University in Thailand ^[8].

The second type is books aimed at Chinese people to popularize Thai law. These books are generally in Chinese, and the translators are both Thai and Chinese experts who are proficient in Chinese and Thai bilingualism and have a deep foundation in law.

For example, the translator of *Practical Laws for Investment and Business in Thailand* is one of the few Thai licensed lawyers in Thailand who is fluent in Chinese, English, and Thai. The book aims to popularize general business laws and regulations in Thailand and provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the legal issues encountered in Thailand in terms of the origin of Thai laws, civil and commercial laws, wholly foreign-owned enterprise laws, tax laws, real estate laws, labor protection laws, and residency and visa regulations, and so forth. It provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of the legal issues encountered in investing and doing business in Thailand.

For example, the three translated books *Civil Procedure Code of the Kingdom of Thailand*, *Criminal Procedure Code of the Kingdom of Thailand*, and *Establishment and Procedure Law of the Administrative Court of the Kingdom of Thailand* will be published soon by Associate Professor Qun Li, a postdoctoral researcher of the Zhongnan University of Economics and Law of China and a Doctor of Law of the Thammasat University in Thailand, which can provide a reference to the legal texts for the enterprises or personnel engaged in the interaction between China and Thailand to understand comprehensively the civil, criminal, and administrative litigation system of Thailand, and let them choose the litigation channel to defend themselves in the necessary time to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests; additionally, it is also for Chinese experts and scholars engaged in the study of civil, criminal, and administrative litigation law to provide basic information for more experts and scholars to study the legal system of Southeast Asian countries; at the same time, it can also be for

the public prosecution and the law and other substantive departments of the staff of the law enforcement, to provide a useful reference with important theoretical significance and practical value^[9].

The third type is guide books on Thai legal departments for Chinese and Thai people. This kind of book is usually in Chinese and Thai versions. Limited by the author's search scope and vision, there is only one book of this kind—*The Official Guide to the Use of Chinese in the Courts (Criminal Cases) (Volume 1)*, produced by the International Affairs Division of the Office of the Thai Courts. This book can be used as a professional book of “Chinese + Law” for Thai court officials, as a professional textbook of “Chinese + Law” for Thai law students, and as a tool for Chinese people to consult Thai courts, which has a wide audience and strong practicality. It is also used as one of the training materials for the “Chinese-Thai Translation and Legal Reserve Volunteer Training” organized by the International Affairs Division of the Office of the Court of Justice of Thailand, which has been mentioned before^[10].

The book is bilingual, presenting the working scenes and functions of each department of Thai courts in the form of dialogues, and ending with a Chinese-Thai glossary of court application forms and legal terminology, but there is no Hanyu Pinyin in the whole book. In addition, there are a lot of grammatical errors and a few Chinese character errors in the Chinese presentation of the book, probably because the book was translated by a Thai, whose Chinese language skills are limited, and the book was not reviewed by a Chinese legal professional. Considering the wide audience of this book and its great practicality, the author has taken this book as a general proofreading and found and corrected 160 errors in the book, which are expected to be adopted and revised by the International Affairs Division of the Office of the Court of Justice of Thailand.

3. Conclusion

Overall, the development of Thai “Chinese + Law” is still in its infancy, and its advantages, disadvantages, and corresponding development strategies mainly include the following points:

There is a lack of integration between “Chinese” and “law,” with a low level of compatibility. Training programs such as those offered by the Thai Maritime Silk Road Confucius Institute for National Anti-Corruption Commission and the Phuket Confucius Institute of Songka Prince University for Trang Provincial Court officials place a greater emphasis on developing “Chinese” language skills rather than on fostering “law” professional capabilities. This has not yet achieved a comprehensive integration of “legal Chinese” abilities. Future “Chinese + Law” training materials, textbooks, and courses should increase the focus on legal content to enhance participants' comprehensive legal Chinese abilities.

There is a scarcity of high-quality Thai “Chinese + Law” teaching resources, with only printed textbooks available and no corresponding digital or three-dimensional supporting resources. Looking at the current teaching resources for Thai “Chinese + Law,” the only genuinely relevant resource is the bilingual *The Official Guide to the Use of Chinese in the Courts (Criminal Cases) (Volume 1)*. Other materials can only be considered general legal publications for Chinese-Thai law popularization. In the future, greater efforts should be made to develop professional Thai “Chinese + Law” textbooks and to construct corresponding supporting resources, such as developing supplementary courseware, recording video micro-lessons or animated short videos, and uploading dual-language audio explanations.

Thai “Chinese + Law” textbooks should preferably be co-written by Chinese and Thai experts. Currently, all Thai “Chinese + Law” teaching resources are independently written by experts from either China or Thailand, with little collaboration between the two. *The Official Guide to the Use of Chinese in the Courts (Criminal Cases) (Volume 1)*, due to being written by Thai personnel without Chinese expertise for proofreading

and oversight, contains a significant number of errors. In the future, the compilation of Thai “Chinese + Law” textbooks should prioritize co-writing by experts from both China and Thailand to ensure that the textbooks are not only professionally sound but also tailored to the local context.

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