

Dignity in Humility: the Representation of Central Female Characters in Thai Literary Works

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This study aims to examine the representation of central female characters in three classic Thai literary works, including *Inao*, *Kritsana Sorn Nong Kam Chan*, and *the Four Reigns*. Although all central female characters are made to fit into the stereotype of a virtuous woman in Thai patriarchal society, the result of the study shows that those central female characters are able to turn what the patriarchal dictates about what constitutes a “good woman” into power to gain the recognition and acceptance of their thoughts, feelings, sensations, and behaviors from people around them. On the one hand, it is possible to say that Thai gender-coded rule of conduct seems to place more demand on women than on men. Women are expected to perform their defined gender roles both in society and within marriage by remaining obedient, gentle, humble, and hardworking. On the other hand, it is unarguable that such female gender roles imposed upon women are as important as those of their male counterpart. Without women fulfilling their roles, it would be impossible for men and other family members to live their lives decently. Being obedience, humble, and gentle should not therefore be considered as the degradation of women but rather as the qualities that make other people value their honor and dignity as individuals who sacrifice their lives for the well-being of the families.