

Looking trendy, but stupid

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bangkokpost.com -- 26 Jan 2016

(1) There must be many redundant angels wandering about this so-called Land of Smiles - to match the number of gullible people who have nothing better to do than raise these infant-like Angel Child dolls – Thailand’s latest trendy fad.

(2) They pamper these so-called Angel Child dolls, or luk thep in Thai, as if they are their actual, living babies -- feeding them, taking with them to restaurants, shopping malls, beauty salons and even on aircraft, where they occupy a seat.

(3) The angels must surely have a lot of free time, if they are always available to move into a luk thep doll at the whim and call of Phra Ajarn Vinai Thitapanyo of Wat Bua Kwan in Nonthaburi province.

(4) The temple is packed every day, and especially during weekends, with people who bring him their dolls - some bringing 5 or 6 dolls - to be blessed by the monk, who reportedly spends 5-10 minutes on each doll, scrawling something on them that no-one understands. But that does not matter, as long as the owners believe they now have an angel in their doll - a guardian angel who will ensure them good luck and good fortune.

(5) Phra Ajarn Vinai was quoted by Thai Rath as saying that he cannot stop people from having faith in Angel Child dolls, but he warned they must also show wisdom (panya) and not be stupid. He said he blessed the dolls in order to respond to their owner's faith, so they would feel happy, mentally at least.

(6) I do not agree with the monk in his explanation for blessing the dolls. How can he expect those people who come to him to have their dolls blessed, or anointed, to have any panya of their own. What he does in no way helps enhance their wisdom, it just drives them deeper into superstition.

(7) What the monk should do is to give them a lecture on the Lord Buddha’s teaching, a lesson on wisdom, or on how to make their life useful to society, to themselves, to their families. And, above all, to bring them back to sensibility.

(8) I cannot agree more with Phra Payom Kalayano of Wat Suan Kaew. In his interview with TV Channel 3 on Tuesday morning, the outspoken monk lashed out at the practice of raising luk thep as un-Buddhist, a superstition.

(9) He likened the craze, said to be especially popular among celebrities, to the Jatukham craze which, in the end, faded away without leaving any trace after enjoying popularity for a few years.

(10) If the blessed Angel Child dolls are as magical as some people have claimed, in bringing them good fortune, Phra Payom suggested they should offer a few dolls to the Commerce Ministry, so it can export the surplus rubber at above-market price, which would be a great service to the rubber growers.

(11) Justice Minister Paiboon Kumchaya expressed his concern that some airlines are offering full service for these dolls, including seats, saying they could be used by the unscrupulous to smuggle drugs onboard, by hiding them in the dolls.

(12) But what if it is not just drugs, but bombs or other weapons that are carried on board a plane inside the dolls by terrorists?

(13) I really don't understand the mindset of those who raise these dolls, treat them like their own babies, feeding them or taking them to a restaurant and insisting they be served. I can understand the restaurants or airlines that provide extra services for these dolls, because they make money doing it. But that makes Thai people appear like they have only half their brain functioning.

(14) This may be just a trend, started and followed by celebrities. Celebrities, we all know, may be rich and look great physically but, mentally, they are more often like infants themselves - like the permanently-infantile luk thep dolls.

(15) Do you really want to look cute, but stupid?