

## EPTAS #12 – Thai Kids are so stupid

*Welcome to “Every Picture Tells a Story”; a weekly post about living in Thailand. Each week we’ll post a picture that illustrates some of the best parts about living in Thailand.*

Every culture has issues with their younger generation. I’m no different. Kids from my home country seem lazy and unintelligent to me. They play too many video games, eat too much junk food and have no idea what is going on in the world. How will they ever contribute anything to society?

Parents in Thailand are asking the same question. Much has been made about deficiencies in the Thai education system. It’s been said that the approach to teaching is an arcane process of learning by rote. Thai kids simply repeat what they’ve heard over and over again. Consequently, they can sing “Hotel California” and have no idea what the lyrics mean ... or even what the word “lyric” means.

Over the past few years, I’ve seen several initiatives in this country to upgrade the education system. It appears they’ve started in the right place; by testing and culling teachers. When a system-wide English test was administered to Thai English teachers, it was revealed that a shocking percentage weren’t proficient in the language themselves.

I applaud their efforts and insight because it certainly isn’t the kids. Look, kids are kids ... they take the path of least resistance and learn whatever is the most fun. It doesn’t mean they are stupid.

My stepdaughter’s first English word was “strawberry”. She learned it from me at Swenson’s ice cream shop. Now she wears me out with long conversations and a million questions.

That’s the story this week’s picture tells. It was taken at Naklua seafood market in North Pattaya. As I wandered through the huge open air market I

stopped to take a few photos. A tiny but clear voice pierced the din of the market and hit me from behind. “Hey mister, you want some mussel?” When I turned around to see where the voice came from I was shocked.



This little girl was standing on a 5 gallon bucket behind a large bin of green-lipped mussels. She scooped up a metal plateful of the fresh shellfish and held them out for my inspection.

I was stunned and amazed ... and totally under her spell. I asked her name in Thai. She cocked her head to one side and answered in English, "My name is Noi". Again in Thai I asked how old she was. Undeterred, she answered me again in English, "I am 5 years old mister, do you want some mussels or not?"

Frozen by her precocious command of my native language, I just stared in disbelief. After a few seconds she held up the plate again and smiled sweetly, "they are delicious" she purred.

"Two kilos please Miss Noi" I heard myself say.

I don't think this kid will have any problem contributing to society.

Orlando Barton