



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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Music with a message by Gary Boyle



Photo courtesy of www.facebook.com/rapagainstdictatorship

Read the following story by Suwittha Chaiyong from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.

After releasing the viral anti-junta single “Prathet Ku Mee (What My Country's Got)” two years ago, rap group Rap Against Dictatorship continue to confront the government through their music, including well-known songs like “250 So Plo (250 Bootlickers)”, “Before Darkness” and “To Whom It May Concern”.

MILITARY SYSTEM

With more than 12 band members, Rap Against Dictatorship recently released its latest single “Sotus”, which criticises abuse in universities. Although the song doesn't directly attack the government, it still associates Sotus with the military system.

Sotus is an acronym for Seniority, Order, Tradition, Unity and Spirit, and it refers to hazing arranged by senior students in universities in which freshmen are made to do activities as ordered by their peers. While most seniors usually claim that the hazing ceremony is a tradition which instills a sense of unity among new students, Sotus also shows the hierarchy in Thai society which allows seniors to treat their young peers as inferior.

One of Rap Against Dictatorship's founders, Dechathorn Bamrungmuang has raised questions about the Sotus system ever since he was a university student. Although he graduated from university almost a decade ago, he noted that many young people still experience the same abuse from seniors today.

"When I was a university student, I created a short movie about Sotus and showed it to freshmen and posted it online. Back then, the video drew a lot of comments and led to debates. Freshmen started thinking that they did not want to go through hazing and senior students were not happy with my action. That happened many years ago, but yet even now, I find Sotus being practised in many schools," Dechathorn said.

FORCED TO WAI

Executive producer of "Sotus", Dechathorn believes the themes of Seniority, Order, Tradition, Unity and Spirit were created with good intentions. However, people who practise them in schools interpret them falsely.

"There are many ways to make people respect you. Young people are able to learn things by themselves. They do not need to be controlled to learn about orders or be forced to wai. In the past, people respected elders due to their age, but things have changed. For me, I respect people for their work. Age doesn't matter to me," said the 30-year-old rapper.

"We are aware that many universities have already banned hazing ceremonies, but we still see reports about injured freshmen at hazing events. It is time to stop doing this. Don't claim that it is tradition. It's time to raise questions about hazing.

"For this song, we didn't expect to gain a lot of views on YouTube, so it was great to see listeners comment and share the video. We wish the song will reach our target audience -- university students and high school students."

"Sotus" got more than 800,000 views on YouTube within one month of its release. Yet, Rap Against Dictatorship's signature song is still "Prathet Ku Mee (What My Country's Got)" as it is well-recognised as an expression of criticism towards the military government. During the junta era, the hashtag #PrathetKuMee became a top trending hashtag on Twitter every time young people felt frustrated about Thailand's political chaos. It was a surprise to see our song title as a popular hashtag."

With more than 91 million views and five million subscribers on YouTube as well as over 100,000 followers on Facebook, the band members enjoy their popularity and see a promising future. Yet, they do not have much hope for the toxic political climate that still exists in Thailand.

"I think Thai people want a hero. When we encounter something, we start looking for someone to lead us such as Artiwara "Toon" Kongmalai who raised funds for hospitals and Bin Bunluerit who helped flood victims. Recently, the Future Forward Party was dissolved and people thought about #PrathetKuMee again. This means our country is still in trouble," said the rapper.

Section 1: Write the correct answer in the space provided.

1. Rap Against Dictatorship has more than a dozen members. True or false?
2. Dechathorn is a university student. True or false?
3. Who enjoyed his Sotus film more - younger or older students?
4. Many universities prohibit hazing. True or false?
5. The group expected 800,000 views for "Sotus". True or false?
6. The new song has a popular hashtag. True or false?
7. What do the group have more of - views, followers or subscribers?
8. Toon and Bin helped flood victims. True or false?

Section 2: Write the noun form of the following words in the space provided.

9. believes
10. falsely
11. aware
12. frustrated
13. promising

Section 3: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

"After the dissolution of the Future Forward Party, we have less ...14... . Many young people just ...15... their rights to vote for the first time. Future Forward Party was a ... 16... of the new generation. So the dissolution was like the hope of the new generation had just ...17... . Some young people might not want to ...18... attention to politics anymore. We don't want them to feel that way. We want to create a song to ... 19... the new generation," Dechathorn said.

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| 14. A. hope | B. hopeful | C. hoping |
| 15. A. tried | B. exercised | C. did |
| 16. A. cymbal | B. symbolism | C. symbol |
| 17. A. vanish | B. vanished | C. varnished |
| 18. A. stand | B. do | C. pay |
| 19. A. encouragement | B. encouraging | C. encourage |

Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.

20. activities involving abuse or humiliation of new students
21. an abbreviation formed from the first letters of other words
22. not as good or important as something else
23. feeling annoyed because you do not have what you want
24. complete disorder or confusion

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th