



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

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Homegrown heroes by Gary Boyle

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



Photo by Varuth Hirunyatheb

When Himmaphan Marshmallow -- illustrations of Thai mythical creatures -- went viral, artist Komkrit Tepthian loved the simple yet cute designs. The drawings inspired Komkrit to create five miniatures of his own.

He named them Nak Pod (a naga), Nak Punk (a different naga), Mae Hera (a crocodile head with a naga body), Mom (a monkey with four legs mixed and some lizard features) and Ta Singha (a lion). They were produced in

his workshop, Motmo Studio, and became popular among shoppers.

"Fan art on social media sparked me to create artwork. The idea came suddenly at night, so I told my wife to go to bed without me since I wanted to work on it. I decided to create five miniatures for a set. When I was young, I liked the Japanese action superhero TV programme *Super Sentai*, which had five members wearing different coloured costumes. As a result, each of my miniatures has a different character and colour," said Komkrit.

Simple designed sculptures of Thai mythical creatures can be seen at temples in the northern and the northeastern regions of Thailand. In Thai literature, the creatures live in Himmaphan, which is a magical forest.

"According to my research, the top of Mount Kailash in Himmaphan Forest is a place for angels. The creatures are responsible for guarding the kingdom. Pavilions, vihara and temples are sacred areas similar to Mount Kailash, so Thai architects build mystical creatures to guard the stairs of these religious structures," explained Komkrit.

Komkrit is an artist, a lecturer and the owner of Motmo Studio. The 35-year-old gained recognition after he installed a vending machine next to his sculpture, Giant Twins, at Wat Arun for the Bangkok Art Biennale in 2018. Giant Twins was a combination of two figures -- a Thai giant and a Chinese warrior. The vending machine dispensed eight small models of Wat Arun's guardian statues in capsules which caused a long line at the temple.

"I am currently working with a gallery in Singapore and discovered that the number of people who come to view my works is small. Art collectors are people from the middle class and above. [The vending machine] made me understand that art does not have to be expensive. I believe deep down that Thais want to own something related to our culture. I also believe that 80% of artists want the general population to understand their work," he said.

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

1. Komkrit makes illustrations of Thai mythical creatures. True or false?
2. He worked on his miniatures with his wife. True or false?
3. Which TV show inspired him?
4. Which mountain does he say angels live on?
5. What is Giant Twins?.....
6. What percentage of artists don't want people to understand their work?

Section 2: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

"Tourists who ...7... Japan collect cards, stickers and other products ...8... to mascots. In Japan, there are local mascots in ...9... prefecture. Thai people shouldn't think they are cartoons and a ...10... of time," Komkrit said.

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|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 7. __A. visit | __B. go | __C. travel |
| 8. __A. related | __B. relation | __C. relative |
| 9. __A. any | __B. every | __C. usually |
| 10. __A. lose | __B. waste | __C. spend |

Section 3: Find words that match the following definitions.

11. small versions of something
12. works of art produced by shaping stone, wood or other materials
13. a device that gives small objects when a coin or token is inserted
14. small cases or containers

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