



# CHINADAILY

中國日報

ASIA WEEKLY

JANUARY 2-8, 2015

ASEAN EDITION

PAGE 27

# Thais warm to Chinese culture

LOCALS FLOCK TO ENJOY LANGUAGE LESSONS,

PEKING OPERA AND CULINARY CLASSES AT BANGKOK CENTER

## Regional Life

By ZHAO YANRONG in Bangkok  
zhaoyanrong@chinadaily.com.cn

**N**ongluk Hwangsan-guankij has her hands full as a lecturer at Mae Fah Luang University in Chiang Rai, northern Thailand — some 800 kilometers from Bangkok. Yet the 60-year-old makes it a point to attend a two-hour cooking class at the China Cultural Center in the Thai capital every Saturday.

“Being Thai-Chinese, I wanted to come to the center to improve my Chinese speaking skills,” she says. When she found out that the Chinese chef instructor spoke “perfect Chinese”, she became even more interested to join the class. “I learned more skills in the kitchen,” she says with a smile.

For Thais of ethnic Chinese descent like Hwangsan-guankij, what the center has achieved since its inception has exceeded expectations.

“Two years ago, on this same stage, then Chinese premier Wen Jiabao and then Thai prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra attended the unveiling ceremony for our culture center,” Lan Suhong, the center’s director, said during the center’s second anniversary in late November. “It was a new journey then and we have made it this far.”

The Bangkok center is one of the largest such Chinese facilities in Southeast Asia. With a design that blends Chinese and Thai architecture, it features a temple structure and comprises an exhibition hall, a theater, a library and classrooms. Since 2012, it has hosted nearly 200 cultural events, which have been watched by more than 80,000 people.

Lan recalled that in the early days of the center, the staff had to give directions to taxi drivers so they could find its location. But with its growing popularity, the center has become a landmark in the area.

“Some post that should have been delivered to other China-related institutes would end up in our mailing boxes sometimes,” Lan added.

With strong support from the Chinese Ministry of Culture, many State-level artists and performing arts troupes have performed in the center, sometimes to a standing room-only crowd.

“Because of the two countries’ close cultural and historical ties, as well as the large Chinese community living in Thailand, Thai people can find many similarities in our Chinese programs to their