

**Sub-Regional Experts Meeting in Asia on Intangible Cultural Heritage:
Safeguarding and Inventory-Making Methodologies**
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**The Revitalizing and Restoring of Lanna Traditional Medicine and Medicinal Herbs:
An Example of Inventory-making methodologies of Intangible Cultural Heritage
(ICH) in Northern Thailand**

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Lanna is in upper-northern Thailand with more than 800 years history. It has its own ICH for traditional medical practices and medicinal herbs which reflect views, wisdom, knowledge and belief of the Lanna people in relation to maintain their “good health”. The health-related evident base knowledge was accumulated from actual experiences and has been tested through a trial-and-error process and passed on within families from older generations to younger ones in various forms or through certain institutes of the community e.g. temples and monks.

Thus the traditional health practices are an integral part of the society’s way of life, long before modern sciences are adopted and become a dominant base of knowledge in the community health care system. These pieces of knowledge are born from local beliefs that are related to natural environment and animism (spirits) as well as under the influence of Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Chinese medicine.

The study supported by ONCC from 1992 had shown that most of knowledge was formed on a piece-by-piece basis and there had been no effort to systematize them to be the same theoretical frame work while the rapid change due to modernization and development had left the traditional practices behind and broken the passed on processes. Though some traditional health practices and herbs have been applied for commercial purposes, the ICH for traditional medical practices and medicinal herbs are gradually disappeared from the Lanna cultural context.

Nevertheless, the fact is that the increasing of medical complexity in the modern world, the more and more increasing of need to look backward to the basic. Thus the role of traditional medicine today is still very important in all societies, in the most developed ones where traditional medicine is applied and used as alternative medicine, natural therapy, or complementary medicine. The clear example of this evidence is the decline and controllable of HIV epidemic in upper northern Thailand by the wisdom of Lanna healers. Therefore, it’s an urgent need of revitalizing and restoring those traditional medical practices and medicinal herbs usage, in order to conserve, to renovate, to improvise, to apply, and to inherit the intangible cultural heritage of the Lanna people.

As the consequence, there had been an effort to elaborate and systematize the knowledge of Lanna traditional medical practices and medicinal herbs inventory by Lanna healers organized by the School of Traditional and Alternative Medicine. This bottom up inventory-making methodologies for the ICH from the grass root level was carriage out since 1998, supported by Thailand Research Fund. The bottom-up inventory-making process initiated by the invitation of hundreds of healers from 8 provinces of upper northern Thailand to work together for 5 years to revise their existing knowledge and pool them together as a unification holistic system called “Traditional Lanna Medicine”. In addition, medicinal plants inventory and herb mapping was also undertaken and identified. The finding had shown that more than 450 identified herbal cultivars were found in almost every district of Chiangrai, Chianmai, Lumpoon, and Payao province. As the result, four general

reference text books of “Traditional Lanna Medicine and Lanna Pharmacopeias” were compiled and published.

It is the objective of the revitalization and inventory-making process to systematically analyze the various healing sub-systems and practices found in the upper northern Thailand, so as to establish a theoretical framework that will encompass them and will encourage their unification into an integrated structure. This structure has ultimately been supported by Thai law for the protection of the ICH and issues regulations that promote a high standard of medical services.

This bottom up inventory-making process that is intending to embark on will involve five stages. These stages in chronological order of their proposed execution are as follows:

1st stage Review of ancient script and literature, elaborating/gathering individual knowledge and experiences from the healers.

An initial survey of the literature and individual healer will be undertaken. This will build on much of the research team's past experience in collecting information on Lanna healers and other systems of traditional Thai medicine. Furthermore this will make use of the existing Lanna healers' networks in the upper northern Thailand, which the research team is already familiar with.

2nd stage Workshop to investigate, identify, classify and revise in a systematic platform of knowledge and practices of traditional Lanna medicine

A workshop with the thirty most experienced Lanna healers available will act as representatives for other healers across the eight provinces of the Upper North of Thailand and will be selected so as to get as wide as coverage as possible of three major sub-systems of Lanna healers, i.e., “Mo-Ya” (herbalist/physician), “Mo-Nuad” (masseur), and “Mo-Pitee” (voodoo doctor).

3rd stage Individual healer's in depth case study for deeper, investigation and confirmation, including causality of disease, diagnosis, classification of disease, herbal remedy and etc.

A series of detailed case studies on at least 25 common diseases were targeted in greater depth evident based thorough study of experienced resource healers and follow up their patients.

4th stage Grand council of revising and systematizing the general reference text books to the public

A concluding seminar to assess and discuss the findings with a group of 500 people made up of both healers and experts. The seminar intends to investigate, confirm, and to correct the general reference text books by the public.

5th stage Restore the ICH for the Lanna traditional medical practices back to the community's daily live.

One way is to upgrade and promote the healers to full fill their duties in their community by training and cooperating with health authorities while the other is to establish university professional degree training to produce new blood healers, so as to create employment opportunities on the basics of health services and herb products. That is to make Lanna herbs and wisdom edible and usable so that the ICH will be automatically conserved and sustainable restored without legal action.

The explanation of health from the perspective of traditional Lanna healers

The revitalization has shown that norms and practices of Lanna traditional healers are related closely with Lanna culture where community's views, beliefs, traditions, ceremonies, and environment play a vital role to determine ways people behave and how they deal with their health problems. In other words, traditional medical practices reflect guiding philosophy and principles of the society. Therefore, to integrate those wisdoms into education of the new generation is necessary. These views form a basis of indigenous ways of preventing and healing diseases which could be concluded as follows.

[Life starts with the "original soul" from one's previous life. This soul, determined by "karma" (what one gets as a result of good or evil deeds), identifies quality and differences in characters among individuals. When new life first starts in the mother's womb, it composes 5 types of dhatus or elements. The first type is earthen element and consists of 20 dhatus which is considered to be male type element. The second type is water-element and consists of 12 dhatus which is considered to be female type element. When the embryo is 42 days old and has formed its 32 organs from the 32 dhatus up to the forehead, the original soul will enter this new body.

However, the newly formed body will be able to move only when it has the third type element consists of 7 wind-elements to drive it and 6 fire-elements to warm it up and give it "life". Only then, the new life will start, completed with 32 organs and determined by "karma" which comes with its original soul. In addition, between the 32 organs and the 10 entries to human body, there are some empty space which filled by "air". Thus, air is considered as another type of human body's elements.

Based on this assumption, human body is comprised of 5 types of elements or dhatus which are driven by power of the soul through the "khwan" or vital energy that bridges the original spirits to each organ. If the soul comes with "good karma" from the previous lives, and the body has completed 32 organs, the person should have a happy life and a good health. However, if one or more of these components are missing, the person could eventually become sick. Karma, therefore, plays a key role in determining a person's fortune. Sickness, unhappiness, health problems are believed to be caused by "evil karma" from previous and present lives. Thus, one should try to always do good deeds which result in good karma. This means one should try to create an internally balanced wellbeing of his/her body and soul as well as a balance with his/her external environment, community, human relationship, nature, and any spirits and supernatural power in the environment.

In conclusion, karma is the key to sickness and human's physical and spiritual wellbeing. Karma could be classified as (a) inherited karma which caused sudden misfortune such as accidents or sudden sickness, and (b) karma from ill relationship of the person to his/her internal and external environment in this present life. Based on this assumption, sickness is also classified into 5 types according to their causes i.e. sickness caused by human behavior, sickness caused by non-human, sickness from the unbalance in internal elements or dhatus, sickness from ill relationship with external environment, and sickness caused by evil karma]

Based on the above theory, Lanna traditional healers are able to diagnose sickness and their causes which could be cured by traditional medical treatments. These include sickness such as wind disease, khang disease, tumor, fever, allergy, muscle pain, paralysis, emotional breakdown (which in many cases is believed to be caused by evil spirits), etc. The diagnosis helps the healers to identify proper treatments or cares which could be classified

into 5 main categories including: (a) spiritual (psychological) therapy, (b) physical therapy, (c) herbal therapy, (d) dietary therapy, and (e) behavioral therapy.

Healers are also called according to their specialized areas. For example, a healer for spiritual therapy is commonly called “*Maw Khwan*” meaning healer of the spirits. A healer for physical therapy is called “*Maw Nuad*” (massager), “*Maw Yam Kang*” (thermal therapy), or “*Maw Kradook*” (bone healer). Healers who use herbal medicines will be called “*Maw Ya*” (medicine doctor). What is obvious is that most healers tend to use a combination of various methods or therapies in the perspective of a holistic health care rather than a single method.

The traditional Lanna medical practice and health care procedures

Patients’ decision on type of treatments/health services depends mainly on their belief about the causes of illness. Other factors affecting decisions include, for example, accessibility, proven references, and costs of the treatments. If they believe that the disease could be cured by traditional treatment, they would go to a special traditional healer. On the other hand, if they think the causes of their sickness should be treated with modern medical methods or private clinics, they will so. If the result of their first choice is not satisfied, then they may switch to alternative methods.

However, these measures are often combined or applied to supplement one another because traditional health care system is a holistic one which includes both preventive and curative aspects while also focusing on balancing the body and mind happiness. To elaborate, cases on curative and preventive measures are explained below based on the assumptions about causal factors of the diseases as perceived by the patients themselves and the healers. There are many choices to pick up for solving health problems as shown in the followings.

1. Solving health problems caused by supernatural power.

Supernatural powers are invisible but have important influences over people’s lives according to traditional Lanna beliefs which can be classified as follows.

- a) Beliefs about human status which is determined by Karma and fate.
- b) Beliefs about relationship between human and supernatural powers which reflect in beliefs about Khwan (soul), fortune, spirit, black magic, lucky, etc.

Lanna communities have integrated such beliefs in their day-to-day living until they become part of Lanna lifestyle, traditions, ceremonies, etc., all of which have impact on people's well being or mental and physical health, both from a curative and preventive aspects.

A case conducted by one Lanna traditional healer revealed that curative method is determined by causes of the sickness. If the cause is supernatural, the method must try stopping the action of supernatural power. For example, if a person behaves badly in his/her house in ignorance of the spirits of the ancestors who were there to protect him/her, then the spirits may punish the person, causing his/her sickness. In this case, the healer will conduct a ceremony to ask for forgiveness from the spirits. Or in some other cases, supernatural powers could frighten a person; thus he/she becomes sick. Then, the healer would hold a ceremony to call back his/her Khwan (soul).

From the Lanna points of view, all kinds of sickness are always related to beliefs about “Khwan” (soul) and “Dhatus” (elements) of human’s body. The status of one’s soul and elements is determined by “Karma” and “fate”, as well as his/her internal balance and external interaction with super natural powers. These beliefs have their roots from “anamism” combined with Hinduism and Buddhism which are three major ideologies in Lanna. Followings are examples showing how health problems are believed to be associated with supernatural powers. The two main beliefs are about “Khwan (soul) and diseases” and “Karma and fate”.

1.1 Lanna’s beliefs about “Soul and Diseases”

As explained earlier, Lanna people believe that each person has 32 Khwan or souls which control each of his/her organ’s function. All the khwans will join at one center point called “Chom Khwan” which is located at the highest point of the person’s head. These khwans will take care of the person’s happiness and protect him/her for good health. A healthy person is believed to have “all his khwans with him”. Yet, when he/she is frightened or overwhelmed with sudden rejoice, or face with serious problems/accidents or is sick for a very long time, his khwans will become weak or disappear. This is understood as “lost or frightened khwan”.

In order to cure sickness caused by the above factor, the healer will start by assessing whether the person’s khwans are still with him/her or not. And then, he will proceed to next steps, perhaps the combination of different methods. For example, if it is believed that some of the khwans have disappeared or stolen by the spirits of the one’s ancestors or other supernatural spirits, the healer will start with the “*Spiritual therapy*” through “*Call spirit essence or soul calling*”, “*Extend fate*”, or “*Send bad luck*” (a ceremony to throw away misfortune). The choice of the spiritual therapy will depend on severity of the problem/sickness.

However, if the diagnosis found that there are no problems with the khwans, the healer will examine the overall physical status of the person to see where the problems originate and will also identify the causes of the diseases, which could well be from external factors (parasites from outside the body) or the internal factors (unbalanced functions/conditions of body’s organs). Then, curative measures will be determined, which could combine different methods such as spiritual therapy, physical therapy, herbal therapy, with some aspects of behavioral and dietary therapies.

1.2 Lanna’s belief about “Karma and fate”.

1) Karma: determining factor of a person’s health.

Lanna people believe that “karma” is the key factor that determines status of a person’s life. Because man is a part of nature, his life is also under the rules of nature which explains the nature of life as a composition of both physical aspect (body) and abstract aspect (mind). The two combined will form a complete life with five elements: form, compassion, consciousness, body, and soul. A man is born to a new life because of his Karma or the results of his deeds in the previous lives. In his new life, he will joy the privilege of the good karma and, when due, pay back the bad karma to whoever he owes it to from the previous lives. From Buddha’s teaching, it is clear that “life” and “karma” cannot be separated. All men have “karma” as determinant of birth, karma as offspring, and karma as heritage. How happy or unhappy a person is in his present life depends very much

on the nature of karma he brings from his previous lives. If his karma is more of a “virtuous” nature, he will have quite a happy life or vice-versa if his karma is more of “vicious” kind.

Just as a person’s previous karma has direct effect on his/her present life, his present deeds can also affect his future fate. In other words, karma is a result of a person’s deeds which can affect his life sooner or later. So it is a man himself that has control over his life. He’s the one to manage and be responsible for his own life and for all factors that could make his “body” and “mind” happy or unhappy. His life is determined by his doings which eventually result in “good karma” or “bad karma”.

Life which is determined by karma is believed to have a pre-set fate or pattern. When a person is happy, it is believed that his fate/fortune at that time is good. On a contrary, when he is unhappy, or in serious trouble or sickness, one would say that his fate is “down”. When a person dies at an undue time, it is commonly understood that his fate is cut back.

Lanna people believe that the results of karma on human’s life can be divided into two phases. The first phase is the linkage of the past karma to the present life and the second phase is between the present karma to the future life. Thus, viewing from the present, a person would believe that whatever happens to his life now is the result of the previous karma which could not be changed or corrected. One must accept it and at the same time try to do good things to determine good future life. This is reflected in Lanna traditional activities such as merit gaining to contribute to next life, following good deeds and avoiding bad deeds in order to go to heaven after death, etc. Merit gaining is also believed to have impact on good health as one may pray while doing the merits.

2) Karma: a determinant of health care concepts and practices

Although a good karma can bring happiness to a person’s present and future life, it is not easy to always conduct good deeds because good deeds are often against our life instincts as well as human desires that are naturally born within our selves. In many cases, men are led by the power of worldly desires which could tempt him to do bad things to fulfill them. Hence, for a normal human being, it tends to be easier to do bad things than good things.

However, one should not be over worried about some of the bad things that he/she has done. In real life situations, people are facing with different conditions and have different levels of moral strengths to deal with difficulties. It is no use to mourn over something that had already passed. If a person cannot clear self-conscience about his past mistakes and keeps blaming himself all the time, it will be difficult for him to move forwards in a more positive direction. The guilt feeling could lead him to commit even more bad deeds because of his negative self-perception. The best thing for a person who feels he had done many bad things is to determine not to do such bad things again and try to develop strong self-confidence to overcome temptations that will lead him to evil deeds.

The intention to do good things is also regarded as “virtuous karma” because it follows a virtuous mind. This kind of consideration can encourage people to continue doing good things. Thus, the teaching about “karma” is not intended to make people passively accepting anything that happen to their lives. It is more oriented towards the improvement of life by continuously doing goodness.

In relation to health problems, some diseases could be cured either by traditional or modern methods. Some of them, however, could not be cured no matter by which methods. Buddhism considers them as “Karma diseases” caused by evil deeds of the patient from previous lives. Because it is not easy to identify from the first place which is “karma disease” and which is not, Buddhism suggests that all diseases should be regarded as curable and people should try every way to cure them. Also, even some of these diseases could be caused by the person’s karma, the karma will have full effects only when all conditions and times are conducive.

For such reason, when a person is sick, it is necessary that he/she is treated both physically and spiritually (such as through merit gaining ceremony) to delay or reduce the impact of bad karma on him. The treatments can as well help prolong the patient’s life until all the bad karma are repaid. Then, he/she will be back to normal condition again. The belief about karma in this regard, therefore, can be rather useful than obstructive.

In addition, the belief about Karma helps to pacify the status of the patient’s mind so he/she can calmly accept the condition and not accusing others for his own sickness. At the same time, he/she can still live with hope, knowing that things can always change, nothing is static including his/her own sickness. It can be improved when all the bad karma are paid off. Similarly, if nothing is improved despite all kinds of treatment he/she receives, a patient who believes in the “Karma principle” can accept the sickness as it is in peace, realizing that the sickness is the result of his/her own deeds in the past. By this way, he/she will be better prepared for death and can hope to have a better life after he/she dies.

Buddhists believe that death and birth are inter-chained, meaning that both are part of one’s endless life cycle. In Buddhism, birth and death follows one another continuously but we tend to think that “birth” comes first and “death” follows. In fact, both are components of the same thing. Just as we name a door. If we look at it from the outside, we will call it “entry”. But if we look from the inside, it will become an “exit”. Birth and death are just the same.

Hence, Buddhists believe that death is not the end of life, as it commonly understood. In fact, death will lead to a new life within the endless cycle. Therefore, one should not mourn over or be afraid of death. Death is unavoidable to all men. Even while we are still alive, our bodies and souls change all the time. This is a form of death that occurs every minute. Considered in this way, death is just a change from one life into another form of life according to one’s karma. What one should do while still alive is meritorious deeds through all means: behavior, words, and thinking. Results of these good deeds are virtuous karma which will be combined with the new body to form a new life which will be better than the previous ones. Therefore, a sick person who is coming close to death should not be afraid or mournful for he is just dying from one life to another new life. For a sick person, it is very important that he tries to keep his mind calm and peaceful throughout the remaining time of his life because this is a good karma that would eventually lead him to a good new life after his death.

This type of Buddhism beliefs is constructive because it helps patients to cope with the fact that they might be dying with a stronger mind. Buddhism teaches people to be conscious about death all the time to remind them to always do good deeds for one’s own benefits as well as for the benefits of others. The more good deeds one conducts, the closer he/she comes close to nirvana.

In Buddhism, it is also believed that all humans' organs are inter-related. So when any of them are not functioning well, the other organs will eventually be affected. Thus, everything in a human life is regarded as “holistic” unit and its “physical” and “abstract” aspects are compact. When a person is physically sick, it is therefore necessary to look at his mental health as well because whatever happens to the body can unavoidably affect the mind, or vice versa. Moreover, it is also believed that one's sickness is related to his/her external environment because everything in nature is inter-related in one way or another.

2. Solving health problems caused by natural factors.

Health problems caused by natural factors are usually those related to human's physical conditions. These could be solved or improved by natural methods (e.g. herbal treatment, massage, dietary therapy, etc.). These methods, commonly used by traditional Lanna healers, may differ from modern medicine. Yet, they aim at the same thing: to help the patients recover from their sickness. Thus, there is an increasing trend to adopt traditional medical methods in AIDS care with an emphasis on both physical and spiritual treatments.

However, it should be understood that there are different kinds of traditional healers in the society. These people develop their professionalism under different conditions and context. Thus, their methods for disease analysis and treatments vary. In an effort to use traditional healers in AIDS care, one must, therefore, consider both qualification of the doctor himself as well as his basic theories and knowledge about traditional medicine. The following are two underlying concepts of Lanna traditional medicine.

2.1 Concept about “body's elements”.

As earlier explained, Lanna traditional healers believe that human's body is comprised of 5 types of elements (earth, water, wind, fire, and air). Each type of element has its functions which keeps the body balance and alive. Water element moistures and holds the earth substance together. The wind element circulates the "good energy" through all parts of the body and removes the polluted energy. The “air” fills the gaps among the ten entrances of the body and holds the body in its shape. The “fire” also needs “water” in the burning process within the body, and at the same time it helps move the “wind” around the body parts. The “wind” in turn helps the fire burn, resulting in the body's metabolism process. Hence, when any of these elements do not function well, the overall health of the person will be affected. For example, the liquid in a person's gallbladder has a heating effect and it keeps the body warm. However, when it is over produced, the body temperature will be very high, indicating that the “fire” substance within the body has overworked. In other words, the body has too much fire elements.

The basic belief about these five elements and their inter-dependent functions provides better understanding about the person's sickness, its causes, and possible solutions. From the symptoms, it is possible to detect where the problems lie (i.e. in which element) and thus easier to identify the solution. For example, it is believed that the account of one's “red” and “black” blood must be well balanced in order for the body to function properly. When there is a change in such balance, his/her health will inevitably be affected. If the account of red blood declines, for example, the black blood will be blotted and more pressure will be needed from the “wind” elements to get the blood circulation going properly. This could be fatally dangerous. What a traditional healer would do in this case is, for instance, increase the account of the red blood or improve its quality.

It is very important that the doctor is able to explain about human body's main and sub-systems in order to lead to the right treatments. For example, for a body which is over fired, a doctor may subscribe a cooling herb or food with balanced yin-yang effects. Alternatively, he may add the water elements of the gallbladder's liquid; the doctor must try to find out the reason i.e. which element is not functioning well. Then, he can provide treatment to improve the function of the ill elements.

Based on these examples, it is evident that Lanna traditional healers believe that a good health comes from a balanced relation of the five elements. Criteria for such a "balance" may vary from one doctor to another but all are based on the same principle i.e. a well-functioning of the body and mind. In the case of AIDS, some traditional healers believe that AIDS patients have lost the balance in their body's elements. Although they know that AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV, the healers' treatments are not intended to kill the virus but rather to improve the immune system of the body by means of the "balance" theory. For example, the healer may give his patient medicines that can improve the function, composition, and quality of body's elements to keep him/her strong as much as possible.

Hence, for traditional healers the cause of the sickness is not HIV. The body is sick because it loses the balance between its five types of elements. Their treatments, therefore, will focus mainly on improving the balance, which in turns will improve the immune system of the body. Improvements could be measured from changes in the patient's behaviors or physical conditions such as good appetite, good sleep, better health condition, increased energy, etc. From the perspective of modern medicine, although these "element-based treatments" cannot kill the HIV virus, they prove to be useful in improving the immune system of the patients, hence, preventing them from opportunistic diseases.

2.2 Concept about "herbal medicine"

Treatment methods of traditional healers vary, depending on their skills and specialization. "Maw Ya" or medicine doctor is known for their experiences and knowledge in using medicines as a main method. The medicines used can also vary from one healer to another. From a study, it is found that herbal medicines are generally classified as *single herbal medicine* which contains only one kind of herb, and *mixed herbal medicine* which contains two or more kinds of herb. The same study also shows that the ways traditional healers use their medicines reflect a profound art and science at the same time.

These medicines can take various forms, depending on types of the diseases, or symptoms. Commonly known are *Ya Maw* (pot-boiled medicine), *Ya Rom* (blowing medicine), *Ya Chong* (stirring medicine), *Ya Aab* (bathing medicine), *Ya Jue* (embrocation), *Ya Sueb* (smoking medicine), etc.

3. Holistic health improvement in Lanna traditional medical system

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "health" as "*the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*". The emphasis is on the relationship between a persons' well-being and his/her family, community, society, and environment. This is consistent with the underlying principle of traditional Lanna medical system which regards "good health" as a "well blended status of physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual development of a person". The emphasis is on

moral and spiritual aspects which have greatest influence on determining practices in traditional health care system. Major characteristics of the system could be explained as follows.

3.1 A Balance between physical and mental health cares

As earlier explained, Lanna health care measures are identified in accordance with “causes of the disease”. These measures are classified into broad categories for easy references. In practical terms, measures to deal with super natural power and natural factors of diseases are often combined or reinforcing each other, as often referred to as “All embracing” approach with 3 kinds of measures as follows.

1) Medicinal substance-based measures which use medicinal substances from herbal plants, animals, or minerals and aim to cure somatic aspect of sickness.

2) Curative measures dealing with intangible forces such as ceremonies, practices that are influenced by religion and beliefs which are complicated, diversified, and having social and psychological curative affects. These include techniques such as, *divination* which, in some cases, is used for prognosis in addition to normal diagnosis based on the cause of the disease. In case it is believed that the disease is caused by super natural power, religious ceremonies will be used as a supplementary curative method.

3) Combined measures between the use of medicinal substance and ritual

An example of such super natural method is the use of spirit medium based on the belief that the medium represents sacred power which can kill serious diseases. Through the medium, the sacred power would make “holy medicine” or “holy water” for drinking or bathing so as to chase away all bad spirits from the patients. In cases where traditional healers could not serve as the medium themselves, they would use other mediums as part of their healing. Other methods such as “*extend fate*”, “*song-kroh*”, (misfortune relieved) or “*magic candles*” are also used as supplementary activities. The diagnosis of traditional healers could vary from ill fortune, bad karma, frightened khwan (soul), weakened soul, evil deeds, etc. The most common solution would be spiritual therapy e.g. *soul warming*, *long living ceremonies* which aim to boost spiritual (and physical) strengths of the patients.

It is evident that “spiritual therapy” plays a vital role and is imbedded in all stages of traditional healing process. The meaning and significance of these rituals are clearly accepted among people of the Lanna culture although they may be regarded as superstitious from outsider’s point of view. In general, there are 5 major stages that have “ceremonial” component. These include:

Stage 1 Requesting for the healer’s help: If the healer is invited to visit the patient at home, the patient must present a “*Khwan Teen*” (a banana leave container filled with flowers and money for the healer’s travel costs). If the patient goes to see the healer at his place, he/she must bring with him “*Suay Bucha Maw*” (another set of materials, also filled with flowers, but with no money) to present to the healer. This is to show that the patient is willing to attend to the healer’s services.

Stage 2 Worshiping the Guru: Traditional Lanna healers believe that the effectiveness of their healing depends not only on their expertise and the behavior of the patients but also on the support from their “Guru” (teachers). The *Worship of Guru* is,

therefore, required as an inclusive part of the healing process. The worship could be done only once or several times depending on the needs identified by the healers. It reflects the inter-relationship between the healer, the patient, and the super natural power and, at the same time, builds up the patient's trust in the curing methods to be undertaken by the healer (Yingyong Taoprasert, 1999).

Stage 3 Diagnosis of the symptoms: The methods of diagnosis vary among different healers. Some of them may examine physical symptoms and interview about patient's health record and then prescribe treatments. Others may as well use "super natural" methods such as a medium or divination to supplement scientific diagnosis.

Stage 4 Treatments: After the diagnosis, the healer would provide treatments according to the causes and symptoms of the disease. The treatments could be a single method or a combination of different methods under the five categories as earlier explained.

Stage 5 Closure: When the patient recovers, he/she must come back to the healer with another set of materials to express his/her gratitude to the healer. This should include money or other in-kind presents as mutually agreed during the first stage. This closure ceremony is a must otherwise the patient may fall ill again since he/she has not completed all the ceremonial requirements.

The above is a concrete explanation of how traditional medical ceremonies and process can significantly improve the patient's psychological health. This is in line with its philosophy which explains that a human being is unit of life which has physical and spiritual elements. A person's good health therefore, refers to his/her normal physical and mental status. Traditional healing tries to go beyond the curing of "physical symptoms". For example, the Guru Worship Ceremony is considered as the *rite of passage* from an anthropological point of view. They prepare the patient to be psychologically ready for subsequent treatments. As a result of these sacred procedures, the patients are psychologically ready to follow the healer's advice, hence quicker improvement in health status. Similarly, once he/she is back to the normal health condition, the patient needs to undertake the Closure Ceremony to indicate that he/she has changed the status from a sick person to a normal one.

In addition, some of these commonly practiced rituals such as the "*Soo Khwan*" or *soul warming* help to boost up the patient's hope. This positive feeling, in turn, increases the effectiveness of his/her immunization system that could speed up the healing effects. The "*Song Kroh*" or misfortune thrown-away ritual also reinforces the patient's confidence that he/she would not fall ill again since all the misfortunes are already chased away.

The Lanna traditional medical system, therefore, differs from the modern medicine in several ways. It is the "patient-centered" approach which brings into consideration multi dimensional relationships between the patient, his/her family, concerned personnel, as well as community members. The healing, therefore, aims to simultaneously improve the patient's physical and psychological health as an internal factor while also consider his/her social, cultural, and environmental context and his/her relationship with ancestors' spirits, family, community as external factors to help accelerate the effects of the three types of healing methods (i.e. medicinal substance-based, super natural power-based and the combination of the two).

This curative process not only has positive impact on the patient's psychological health but also brings in collaborative efforts of family and community members to look

after the patient, hence build up his/her confidence to overcome the sickness. For example, before the “long-living” event which aims to extend the life of the patient, the patient’s family members and neighbors will have to prepare the place and materials for the ritual. During the ritual process itself, family members and neighbors will participate actively to make the patient feel that he/she is not alone. This is part of the socialization process that helps the patient gradually adjust him/herself with the rest of the community without feeling alienated because of his/her sickness.

By this means, traditional healers prove to have a vital role in psychological rehabilitation, particularly for symptoms or diseases that are believed to have super natural causes. Since in traditional medical system, sickness could be caused by factors such as *wrong behaviors (not conforming to traditional norms), or misfortune caused by evil karma from previous life*. Some of these kinds of sickness therefore could not be cured by specialized modern doctors. Or if they are cured, the patient could fall back to sickness anytime since the real cause is not yet removed. With this evidence, Lanna medical system proves to be a wise blend between different systems to tackle health problem in a holistic way.

The fact that traditional healers are believed to have communication channels with super natural power and spirits of the patient’s ancestors makes them stand as “Guru” and “rescuer” to these patients at the same time. Since the healers and patients are from the same cultural system, the healing process usually involves a variety of cultural activities that aim to have psychological impact on the patients. The process is “slow” in nature but it puts special emphasis on the patient’s behavioral changes i.e. his/her lifestyle, food, relaxation, exercise, and relationship with others in the family/community. The more ethical and spiritual aspects are emphasized in the healing process, the more satisfied the patients are. The belief that the healers could bring the “vital force” from nature to reinforce the patient’s own force/strengths and boost the impact of the healing, is a key factor that makes patients feel confident about the effectiveness of the process.

In conclusion, Lanna traditional medical system puts equal emphasis on the improvement of the patient’s physical and psychological health status based on the belief that “body” and “mind” are an integral part of each other. The sickness of body will inevitably have effect on the mind, and vice versa. Thus, health care system needs to look at and treat both aspects holistically, in accordance with the context of the problems. Being considered from this perspective, traditional Lanna medical system is not contradicting with any other medical systems but it supplements what is lacking or not sufficiently covered elsewhere. It should also be noted that there is no absolute way to deal with health problems but there needs to be an integration of several methods so that the problems are tackled holistically from various dimensions.

3.2 Health care measures from ecological, social cultural dimensions.

Traditional medical wisdom also reflects social and cultural values. The diagnosis about the cause of sickness is based not only on the unbalanced relationship between the patient and nature and super natural power, but also on problems in his/her relationship with others in the society. For example, one could become sick because of his misbehavior (something that deviates from the societal norms). Traditional healers can have a role to help the patients solve these problems.

An example is the concept about superstitious power or spirits which is commonly accepted in the Lanna society as key factor determining human's health. From a social dimension, spirits are regarded as the oldest and most powerful institution in maintaining social rules, regulations, and norms. For example, the belief about "commune spirit" explains the role of this spirit as the "guardian" to control the behavior of the people in the society. It has to make sure that people do not break social and traditional norms and perform their roles properly in order to keep the society harmonized. These social and traditional norms are often reflected in religious ceremonies to create "happiness" of the community as a whole or in a code of conducts for community members in accordance with their different roles. People who break these commonly accepted "codes", for example, those who are promiscuous, bellicose, or lack of respects for the elderly will eventually be punished by the "commune spirit" and become ill.

In this regard, it could be explained that health problems are related to people's social behavior, thus, could be considered as a "social problem" as well. Solving health problem can, therefore, lead to the reorganization or correction of social system, rules, and relationship. Since sickness is believed to be caused by supernatural power as its punishment to people's misbehavior and problematic relationship, the philosophy of the treatments, therefore, derives from the needs to control and correct people's behavior and relationship as means to overcome the sickness.

It is evident that a peaceful society is good for people's health. The purpose of "super natural" healing methods includes the improvement of social organization so that people can live in harmony along the commonly accepted social values and norms. Whenever problems occur, a wise solution will be identified, based on the assumption that human's natural environment is protected by super natural power. If a person behaves badly, break the holy rules, or ignore the sacred power, he/she will be punished and become ill. Sometimes the punishments will take other forms such as social conflicts, or natural disasters, e.g. drought. On the contrary, if man behaves well, such as following traditional norms and social rules, and paying due respect to supernatural power, he/she will be rewarded and happy.

The concept about super natural power plays a vital role in determining one's attitudes and behaviors towards nature. The belief that human is controlled by super natural power in the environment makes people humble and treat nature with respect. Traditional Lanna ways of life, including health system, therefore, is to harmonize with nature rather than to win or control it. On a contrary, a man is considered as a "tiny" unit of the great nature. His sickness from supernatural power is, therefore, considered as part of a problem in relationship between "men" and "nature", reflected in a form of disease.

Restore and inherit process of Lanna medical practice and herb usage.

As mention at the beginning, if the passed on of ICH from generation to generation is terminated by any reason or the ICH responsibility for human survival (edible /usable /valuable) is not function, the value of the ICH will become valueless. Thus to pass on or to inherit the ICH means to make the ICH meaningful (edible /usable /valuable) to the people. Nevertheless, elaboration and conservation should be taken as the first priority, then following by the process of identify, revising and systemizing that is correspondent to the present situation and cultural context. That means it might be need to improvise or even to renovate the necessary ICH to support the human basic need first and for the human ideological need later. As the consequence, the ICH for any society will be automatically

restoring and inherit. For the confirmation of the passed on process, it needs to build-in into education system both at the school level for basic concept /utilities and at the university level for the professional /license utilities.

The School of Traditional and Alternative Medicine (STAM), Chiangrai Rajabhat University, under the support of ONCC, Thailand Research Fund, Thailand Health Promotion Fund and Ministry of Public Health, has carriage on these revitalizing, restoring and inheriting process all the way more than 10 years, including offer the 4 year professional degree of Thai Medicine (B.TM.) as well as graduate degree both Master and Ph.D. level. The work covers from boosting healers and communities to realize the lost and the benefit of their ICH in particular traditional medical practices and medicinal herbs usage till to be adopted by national policy and legislation. So far the ministry of Public Health has applied the Thai Traditional Medicine into part of health services in health center and hospital through out the country while the government has also implement the Thailand Medical Hub of Asia policy since 2004. That is try to make use and value-add the ICH to be edible, usable, and valuable for human being.

Moreover, The STAM has been continuously carrying on the expansion of project to be more practical and effective by further R&D to equip the healers enable to complement the health personnel to work side by side for providing the alternative health services. At the same time, other potential healers from ethnic minority also has been taken part and developed as shown in the following diagram.

