

Thesis Title                      Cultural Factors Related to Hookworm Disease in  
Southern Thailand : Case Study in Ban Si Yak Wat  
Not, Moo 5, Tambon Phothong, Amphur Thasala,  
Nakhonsithammarat Province.

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Degree                              Master of Arts (Cultural Study)

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Date of Graduation                29 June B.E.2537 (1994)

#### ABSTARCT

Nakhonsithammarat is a province in southern Thailand where the tropical climate frequently contributes to an epidemic of tropical disease such as hookworm infestation. This field study research was conducted in a small village named "Ban Si Yak Wat Not" located at Moo5, Tambon Phothong, Amphur Thasala, Nakhonsithammarat during the rainy and summer season of the year 1990. Using the qualitative method of study, the researcher spent over 6 months living with the villagers to observe in prevention and treatment of hookworm disease.

It was found that over 63 % of household did not have a lavatory built in their home but would defecate on the ground in the nearby forest. Although 37 % of houses had built a home lavatory, most of older villages and the children still wanted to use the forest area for their toileting needs.

Many of the village people preferred walking barefoot in the wet dirt all year round. This behavior provided the hookworm larva an opportunity to penetrate through the skin into the human body.

Because most villagers do not understand about hookworm disease, they often think hookworm is a kind of normal flora living within the average person and therefore, hookworm infestation is not a serious medical condition to be cured. Moreover, since it is very common, most people with hookworm do not receive treatment for it.

The campaign run by the Disease Control Agency (Public Health) was not successful due to its failure to convince the villagers to participate in the disease control program by learning proper toileting habits and by wearing shoes.

It is suggested that for this campaign to be successful, villagers should be informed directly by the health care professional about the use of proper health care practice so they will learn more about the transmission of this disease and change their health behavior in future.