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Abstract

The objectives of this qualitative research were 1) to study the folk bone healer's role and his other role toward community and 2) to study the folk bone healer's process of knowledge transfer. Data were collected by in-depth interviews and participant observations – their guidelines were used as a tool for in-depth data collection from the healer and other persons related to him.

The results can be concluded as follows:

1. Family and community context – these aspects contribute to the folk bone healer's incentive and decision to enter such role in healing patients – the aspects can be divided into two groups: 1) The entry into the healing role is inevitable, i.e., the healer is inspired externally by knowledge transfer within the family as the prime decision to enter such role. 2) The entry is voluntary, i.e., the healer is inspired internally by a feeling of sympathy to help other people as the prime decision to enter such role. Moreover, the external incentive is like the return expectations in forms of premium from working.

Besides, the results reveal that both the healer and patients have a similar belief basically in the cause of sickness including bone breaking as well as a similar belief in magic – these beliefs contribute importantly to the healer's designation of patterns and healing methods and which affect the patients' decision to choose healing methods. In addition, every healer always applies strange and risky methods with magic, still mysterious in the public's perspectives, and a religious ceremony to the healing rite. These things inspire trust, faith and confidence after the healing rite, resulting finally in effective healing abstractly, namely satisfaction and confidence in recovery from sickness after this sacred rite.

2. Healing role and the other role toward community – the healer's status brings about two important roles – healing role and other role toward community; the latter includes the role in the public's spiritual support in a monk's status or a senior citizen's

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status as well as the hidden role in healing patients. The results also reflect that anyone in the healing role and social role is always more accepted and respected by the public than with only the healing role.

3. The healer's process of knowledge transfer at Wat Yukhonrachsamakkhi, Amphoe Phanthong, Changwat Chonburi consists of three stages. First, the follower, at this stage (observation stage), the healer and disciples use observation importantly: disciples observe the healer's needs and act accordingly for being carefully selected while the healer (teacher) does the same with his disciples with set conditions between the two sides. These conditions in disciple selection are 1) designation – the designation of those interested in knowledge transfer must swear to the sacred beings not to take this knowledge to overcharge patients; 2) the use of careful consideration – after passing the first condition, the candidates must undergo the healer's personal quality consideration once more. This condition is very important because, if the healer found these candidates unsuitable to receive knowledge transfer, he would deny them immediately even if they had passed the first condition. The two conditions involving the healer are that he must have tree full years' healing experience and must go through teacher homage paying at least once, held annually on the first Thursday of April. Second, the practitioner, at this stage (role try-out stage), the candidates, having passed the selecting process, must try out the healer's role. This stage has two important points: 1) the healer will perform the admission ceremony for those who have passed the careful selection. This rite confirms that healer approves of these candidates as disciples – also, the start of healing knowledge transfer ; 2) the details of teaching methods are mentioned with healing-science content, which covers knowledge on kinds of bone breaking, how to pull back a dislocated or broken bone, kinds and methods of cast braiding as well as steps and treatments for a broken bone. Third, the skilled person, at this stage (role-taking stage), disciples can perform complete healing treatments to patients, because they have leaned both professional skill and ethics, and at this stage, time is not used to determine individual folk bone healer's skill, since skill depends on healing experience.