The Self-Care Knowledge of Thai Song Dam Community in Suphanburi Province

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Abstract — This study discusses several aspects of health care utilization and health care practices for a group of Thai Song Dam who today are living in central Thailand. This research aims to present the study of self-care knowledge situation of the Thai Song Dam ethic group in Thailand. Research data had been collected from all Ban Don, Uthong district Suphanburi by surveying, observing, participating and interviewing. The results show that the prevention of sickness, and the maintenance and promotion of good health, cannot be realized through the services delivered by the health sector alone. Collaboration between a variety of health knowledge, including local wisdom in health promotion, local wisdom in disease prevention and local wisdom in the treatment of disease might prevention of sickness in Thai Song Dam community. Therefore, an approach in making cooperation with the Thai Song Dam communities in self-care maintenance could be achieved by supporting and enhancing their current ways as such.

Keywords — Self-care knowledge, Thai Song Dam, medicinal plants.

I. INTRODUCTION

Thai Song Dam are one of the many cultural groups exist in Thailand. Their ancestors is believed migrated both from Muang Thaeng (or Dien Bien Phu located in northwestern Vietnam) or Muang Thaeng (Myang Teng or Muoi), Sipsongchutai (Sipsong Chao Tai) in the northern part of Laos. In Vietman, Thai Song Dam is believed that their original homeland was Son La, Dien Bien Phu and in Nghia Lo, Yen Bai which both settlements are located in the heart of the Sip Song Chu Tai between the Red and Black rivers in northern Vietnam. However, another evidence suggested that these people migrated from Muang Thaeng (Myang Teng or Muoi), Sipsongchutai (Sipsong Chao Tai) in the northern part of Laos where used to be under the Luang Prabang government [1, 2]. The evidence indicates that the Thai Song Dam or Tai Dam were captured and relocated to Thailand as prisoners of war a total of six times from the late 18th to 19th century. The first Tai Dam migrants settled in Phetchaburi province in 1779 during the reign of King Taksin of Thonburi. At later periods, Tai Dam moved to nearby provinces including Ratchaburi, Suphanburi, Nakhon Pathom, Samut Songkhram, Samut Sakhon, and Kanchanaburi provinces in the western region. They are found in Loei province in the northeast as well as, Pichit, Phitsanulok, and Sukhothai provinces in the lower northern region, Nakhonsawan, Saraburi, Lopburi provinces in the central region and Chumporn and Suratthani provinces in the south [3, 4].

Nowadays, there are about 5.5 Thai Song Dam people around the world. About 3 millions are in Vietnam, 1.5 millions are in Thailand, 1 millions are in Laos, 20 thousand are in France, the United States, Canada and Australia and the rest are in the south of China, the original land before Tai Dam moved to Vietnam. Initially, Thai Song Dam predominantly wet-rice cultivators. They usually live in mountain valleys. Some Thai Song Dam also cultivate upland rice on the slopes using the swidden method. Once cultivated, the fields are abandoned after three years to lie fallow for eight to ten years before being recultivated. Buffalo are used as draft animals. The people are good hunters and fishermen using hunting weapons such as crossbows and traps. Hunting and fishing activities provide necessary supplementary food, in addition to which the Tai Dam gather vegetables including bamboo shoots gathered in the forest. Currently, Thai Song Dam maintain their traditional lifestyle and practices. They have many names and are referred to by the Thai people according to their characteristics such as “Tai Dam” (black Tai) or “Tai Song Dam” (black-clothes Tai) from black clothes (Fig. 1), “Lao Song” referring to their migration from Laos, and “Thai Song” referring to the Thai government practice of attempting to include minorities in Thailand into mainstream. Thai society. This ethnic group is well-known for their cultural practices including traditional houses, spirit worship, dancing, and handicrafts [5].
Since Thai Song Dam are a minority group whose traditional practices and beliefs are quite different from those of the majority of people in Thailand, it is also considered an endangered language and culture and thus needs to be preserved [2]. Suphanburi is one of Thai provinces where Thai Song Dam group is gathering in Ban Don, Uthong district. The province is located in central Thailand. It might be the site of the legendary Suvarnabhumi, which is mentioned in very old Buddhist writings. However the first confirmed historical settlement was in the Dvaravati period, when the city was known as Meuang Thawarawadi Si Suphanaphumi (“the Dvaravati city of Suvarnabhumi”). Its founding did take place 877-882. Later it was called Uthong, and was the home city of Prince Uthong, the founder of the Ayutthaya kingdom. King Khun Luang Pha Ngua finally gave it the current name. Suphanburi was an important border city, and also the location of several battles with the neighboring Burmese. However no study, thus far, has been conducted on self-care aspect of Thai Song Dam.

Self-care in health refers to those activities individuals undertake in promoting their own health, preventing their own disease, limiting their own illness, and restoring their own health. These activities are undertaken without professional assistance, although individuals are informed by technical knowledge and skills derived from the pool of both professional and lay experience. Therefore, this research paper aims to find the self-care knowledge of Thai Song Dam in Ban Don, Uthong district Suphanburi and an approach in building cooperation with the community in healthcare maintenance.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research design was of multi-methods such as survey, observation, participation, and in-dept interview in self-care in health of Thai Song Dam community during April to December 2016 (Fig.2). The setting was Ban Don, Uthong district Suphanburi. A number of Tai Dam leaders such as village heads, folk philosophers, activists and other knowledgeable people constituted the study population. Data are facts and statistics collected together for reference or analysis.
III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research into the historical background and importance of monuments of Thai Song Dam community in Ban Don, had their own identities and culture. Ban Don is the name of one group of Thai Song Dam villages situated in Uthong district of Suphanburi province. Generally, the present life of the Thai Song Dam people in Ban Don Village has thoroughly changed from their traditional lifestyle. The development of basic infrastructures from the capital city (e.g., a water supply system, high voltage power lines and new concrete roads and paved roads that easily connect them to the outside world, and the new trends of an urban life style that gradually assimilated into their community) are the main factors in the change. The Thai Song Dam’s unique attire can be only occasionally found, except in the Thai Song Dam traditional festival organized once a year during the Songkran festival. In the family, men and women share responsibilities. Women are commonly responsible for child rearing, house work, and other minor tasks in the rice field. Men have main responsibilities outside the house such as planting rice or attending other agricultural activities. Rice production is still the main element in sustaining a traditional economy. It is not only for earning their lives, but also for maintaining ethnic identity and solidarity among them. Even though Thai Song Dam people embrace Thai people and Thai culture, they still preserve their rituals and practices, though some rituals, such as those of marriage, funerals and housewarming have been integrated with the Thai customs. The analysis of knowledge of self-care from the local wisdom of the Thai Song Dam community are revealed as follows. Present data on folk uses of medicinal plants of Thai Song Dam community shows that almost 20 species are traditionally used by local inhabitants for the treatment of various diseases (Fig.3), for example *Sesbania grandiflora* (boiled bark with water and drink to cure diarrhea) and *Chromolaena odorata* (Mix with lime and then apply to the wound to reduce pain).

![Fig. 3. A. Sesbania grandiflora  B. Chromolaena odorata](image)

In addition, the community recognized and valued the expertise that the professionals brought to the community involvement in health through community partnerships Community members had a generally positive view of the professionals’ skills with the exception of their capabilities of working with, organizing and reaching community groups and target beneficiaries. The professionals, however, were less generous in their assessment of the skills and capacities of the communities [3, 4]. In addition, the prevention of sickness, and the maintenance and promotion of good health, cannot be realized through the services delivered by the health sector alone. Collaboration between a variety of health knowledge, including local wisdom in health promotion, local wisdom in disease prevention and local wisdom in the treatment of disease might prevention of sickness in Thai Song Dam community (Table 1). As health care professionals focus on involving communities and individuals, they need to adapt approaches that emphasize the role of negotiation, compromise, and advocacy. This study found that the folk healers is play a role in the curing of the people on the basis of their faith and beliefs.
Table 1. Local wisdom in self-care of Thai Song Dam community in Ban Don

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local wisdom in health care</th>
<th>Practice of Local Wisdom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Local wisdom in health promotion</td>
<td>Practicing in daily life Food consumption, relaxation, exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Local wisdom in disease prevention</td>
<td>Disease prevention by ritual</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Local wisdom in healing</td>
<td>1. Treatment of illness with folk medicine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Treatment of illness with herbs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Treatment of illness by ritual</td>
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<td>4. Local wisdom to restore health</td>
<td>1. Rehabilitation of postpartum health</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Restoration of health at the time of sickness</td>
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<td>3. Rehabilitation of postpartum health</td>
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IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study of knowledge of health care from local wisdom of the community of the Thai Song Dam, Ban Don, Uthong Suphanburi. It is a traditional health care and folk medicine ritual beliefs, cultural rituals of the community and community resources such as traditional health care, birth child care, consumption of local vegetables local food. Treatment of illness with herbs and rituals. Knowledge of health care from the local wisdom of the Thai Song Dam Thai community have benefited from traditional health care practices.

V. REFERENCES