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## Medicinal plants and their use in Ban Thung Soong Community Forest in Krabi, Southern Thailand

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This is an abstract of a case study of medicinal plants and their use in Ban Thung Soong village, Krabi, Thailand. The aim of study is to investigate the relationship between medical plants and the people in Ban Thung Soong village. Also to assess the local knowledge and usage of medicinal plants grown in home garden. Qualitative research methods used by anthropologists were applied to collect and interpret most field data: ethnography, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, informal conversations, and observation and participation were heavily utilized in the field.

The research outcome sheds light on traditional folk medicine and its transformation. Modernization has played a crucial role in shaping villagers' health behavior during the last three decades. Not only have modernization and development altered peoples' lifestyle and subsistence strategy, it has changed their relation and attitude towards their traditional medicine. Villagers at BTS are no longer dependent on one kind of medical treatment because of lack of transportation or amenities. They can now choose between modern and traditional medicine according to their needs. Modern medicine however, has largely replaced traditional medicine in the village. Despite the decline, the role of traditional medicine remains important for most villagers.

At a cultural level, field data collected from village herbalists and elders reveals that herbs found in home gardens are multipurpose plants that are both culturally and medically vital for the well being of the community. They are intertwined with many village traditions. Moreover, questionnaires demonstrate that majority of villagers are aware that their local herbal medicine forms part of the village's cultural heritage. For them, both traditional medicine and modern medicine have their advantages and disadvantages, however, both are valuable healing systems.

Field investigation also reveals that home gardens are important centers for herbs conservation and management. Home gardens are places where local knowledge and uses of plants diversity are kept alive from generations to generation. Most villagers and herbalists plant as well as experiment with different medicinal plants in their home gardens. It is also an experimental area used by research institutions to introduce new species of medicinal plants that are potentially useful for the locals. Strong cooperation between research institutions and village organizations fosters positive environment for the study of traditional medicine. Majority of villagers demonstrate support and willingness to maintain local herbal traditions. Further research and development are welcomed and supported by village chief and village organizations.