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Abstract	<p>This study was done to find out an important aspect of self-medication in the context of primary healthcare in Shan Kalay Kyun Village. In 2001, villagers went to China for their survival as craftsmen. They got access to technologies which they have applied. Now they have established the home industry of wood sculpture and bronze ware in their village for over two years. Consequently, this paper discusses the primary healthcare system for the common diseases according to their economic and lifestyle changes. Most of the people over 40 are suffering from high blood pressure, and a few of them have diseases related to the sensory system. Cough, skin diseases, and body aches are common to everyone. The majority of the people suffer from flus seasonally. People did not use to go to medical clinics or hospitals. They had financial problems in receiving medical treatments and some of them did not even consider that they should seek medical treatments from professionals. Some of them had no time to see the doctors. They relied on traditional medicines for their health. At present, although the village has one public clinic and two private clinics, the people rely mostly on modern medicines and herbal medicines that are available at the village's retail shops when they experience fever, pain, and minor high blood pressure. Some of them use traditional herbal medicines made at home. They prefer to get a massage when they have aches. Some even consult with spirit-mediums and make offering to traditional spirits. The people do not usually go to the hospitals or clinics for regular medical check-ups. Despite the fact that the economic situation at the village has improved, the people still lack knowledge on proper healthcare. In doing field research, a community-based ethnographic research design was carried out by collecting data on socio-demographic characteristics, knowledge, attitudes, and practice of self-medication related to Shan records are 463 pages of Royal Orders for passed by Kon-baung Kings (1752-1885). Their ruled for 130 years and most of the orders for Shan State he passed were more or less routine. They tell us nothing but the king's conduct of detailed.</p>
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## **Self-medication; an Important Aspect of Primary Health Care in Shankalay Kyun Village, Mandalay Region, Myanmar**

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### **Introduction**

The term self-treatment is frequently used in the literature on treatment-seeking but often not well defined. Some studies combine home treatment with traditional remedies. Many studies note proportions who self-treated or treated at home, but do not discuss what kind of treatment was given. When it is described, self-treatment may involve a number of behaviors with very different potential impacts on an episode of disease. These include home treatment such as cool baths, use of herbal remedies and purchase of cosmopolitan drugs from a shop.

Self-care research demonstrates that the majority of care in illness involves self-medication has been shown to be a common first resort in illness. Yet despite the emergence of a social science literature on self-treatment and medication use in both developing and developed nations. Many studies have been conducted on drug use and provision in developing countries. However, most of these studies are descriptive in nature and focus on the providers of drugs. Few studies looked into self-medication practices at the community level of health-care and even less studies are anthropological in their approach. This may include non-pharmaceutical self-medication practices their evolution of treatment options and use of medications are influenced by both the cultural setting and the economic and socio-cultural context.

In an article on medication use by craft-men in Shankalay Kyun village, Mandalay Region clearly defines a distinction between self-treatment and home treatment. Self-treatment referred to an individual treating himself without direct involvement of another person, while home treatment occurs in the house-hold when one member gives treatment to another. In this definition, the two are mutually exclusive. For the purpose of this paper, I will use the term self-treatment in a broader sense to include home treatment. Self-treatment is any treatment that does not involve consulting a health-care provider or traditional healer. Thus a mother who visits a shop or pharmacy to purchase medication for her family member is self-treating. The elder person in the family visit the neighbor, cult, astrologer or self-help group to consult for ill-person in the family is also self-treating.

The study area, Shankalay Kyun village is located within 20 miles away from Mandalay on a bank of the Ayeyarwaddy River. In 2001, villagers went to China for their survival as craftsmen. They got such technologies and they have applied those. In 2007, one home industry of wood sculpture was started to establish in this village. Now a day, they have established the home industry of wood sculpture, bronze ware in their village for 2 years. In this study, rural habitats in Shankalay Kyun Village were concerned with the socio-economic

system. Most of the villagers over 40 are suffering from high blood-pressure, and a few of them have diseases related to sensory system. Cough and cold, body aches and skin diseases are common to everyone. Majority of the people suffer from flu seasonally. Villagers did not use to go to medical clinics and hospitals. They had financial problem to receive medical treatments and some of them did not even consider they should have medical treatments from professionals. Some of them had no time to see the doctors. They relied for their health on traditional medicines. Now a day, although the village has one public clinic and two private clinics, the villagers rely mostly on modern medicine and herbal medicines that are available at the village's retail shops when they have fever, pain and minor high blood pressure. Most of them use traditional herbal medicines made at home. They prefer to get massage made by family members or their colleagues when they have aches. The women, their neighbors give the advice to make offering to traditional believed spirits. In this way not only situation of native people's basic knowledge on health seeking behavior but also need analysis can be explore. Focusing on public health research for once region to another from a hamlet levels to village or town levels, activities of national level development are expected to be supportive plentifully.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To identify the scope of self-medication in prevention and treatment of common illness.
2. To elicit how socio-economic factors are linked to self-medication
3. To find out the influence of the existence of different health-sectors on the choice of self-medication.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do villagers in Shankalay Kyun villager perceive common illness and how they treat their illness?
2. How do villagers acquire information and knowledge on how to treat common illness?
3. What are the practices in self-medication among villagers when they develop their socio-economic conditions?

### **Literature Review**

Self-care has been defined as a process in which people function on their own behalf in health promotion and treatment at the level of the primary health resource in the health care system. All activities undertaken by individuals themselves to treat or prevent ill health may be categorized at self-care is autonomy: that a layperson is able to unction effectively on his or her own behalf in health decision-making. Self-care is not limited to the individual but also includes members of one's own household. In many cultures the family operates as a therapeutic group: it is a network for sharing knowledge and experience, making therapeutic decisions, and for sharing prescriptions and medicines.

Self-care constitutes, among other things, self-diagnosis and self-treatment. It may imply the use of home remedies, herbal medicines and modern pharmaceuticals (This is often referred

to as self-medication as well as dietary practices and the effects of religious and other taboos. In many parts of the non-western world, the use of western pharmaceuticals is becoming increasingly important in self-care (Helman, 1990).

Kleinman (1980) introduced the concept of the popular, folk and professional sectors. The popular sector is the lay, non-professional, non-specialist domain of society, where ill-health is first recognized and defined and health care activities are initiated. It includes all the therapeutic options that people utilize without any payment and without consulting either folk healers or medical practitioners. Among these options are: self-treatment or self-medication; advice or treatment given by a relative, friend, neighbor or workmate, healing and mutual care activities in a Church, cult or self-help group; or consultation with another lay person who has special experience of a particular disorder, or of treatment of a physical state.

The folk sector consists of local healers, such as herbalists, bone-setters, spiritual leaders, diviners and traditional birth attendants. The professional sector is the domain of medical specialists who enjoy a privileged position in the sense that they are legally protected and control membership, knowledge and quality of medical practice by means of formally recognized professionalization. Those belonging to the professional sector include biomedical practitioners and paramedic as well as members of other professionalized health systems such as Ayurvedic, Yunani and Chinese medicine.

Across the popular, folk and professional sectors individuals have different beliefs about the causes of illness and appropriate therapy.

A child who passes many watery stools could be diagnosed by a health worker in a clinic as having acute diarrhea. In the biomedical vision, this condition requires only the replacement of fluids to prevent dehydration by administering oral re-hydration solution (ORS) to the child. The mother of the same child may, however perceive the child's condition as natural, because the child is teething. Diarrhea in this period is often not classified as an illness, but as an integral part of growing up.

Even the same biomedical terms are used, beliefs about appropriate treatment can be different across the various sector. A mother of sick child may label the condition as fever. In some cultures, popular beliefs has it that young children with fever should be kept warm by wrapping them in blankets, since it is thought that cooling a hot child is dangerous. This idea is diametrically opposed to the treatment of fever as preferred by most doctors. Biomedical trained personnel may advise washing the child in cold water and leaving the child uncovered to reduce the risk of seizures caused by overheating. Here there is a clear difference between a popular and professional belief which has consequences for treatment to be employed.

## **Methodology**

For the field research, data collection methods include the design of Ethnographic research depending on specific objectives of this study to correlate the documented data. This paper discussed about the primary health care system for the five common diseases

which are high blood pressure, flu and cold, body aches and skin diseases according to their economic and life styles changes of craftsmen's families.

Field researches within the study area were done four times – five or five hours and a half each. For the first time, the meetings were at the village monastery with three people from the village, who have lived there for a long time, and who knew about the village from the past to the present time, the village administrator, and the abbots of the monasteries. The informal conversation included the economic development and changes, social and health situation at the village. We introduced ourselves to the villagers that we are the teachers from Mandalay University, and we would like to study and observe the health situation, the common diseases and self-medication among the villagers. Then, we visited round the village to continue their work and informal conversations were used to collect the data.

Most of the people of Shankalay Kyun Village are honest. They truly admire university lectures, and they believe that they should help the lectures in interviews which may be helpful for the development of their village. With this belief, most villagers help the research works at the village. For the second time, we decided to focus on the self-medication habit in craftsmen's families. This paper was based on a random sample of craftsmen's families.

The village monastery and the villagers offered the food for us. We also had a chance to participate in a pagoda festival and attend a wedding reception. We noticed that the villagers used a lot of sweetening powder and palm-oil in their food. This food habit obviously caused high-blood pressure.

In order to reach the objectives of this article, elders of the village, monks and health personnel were conducted as the key informants. In- depth interview were conducted with selected heads of the households, adolescents: owners and workers from home industries. Fifteen key informant interviews (KIIs) were made, each about half an hour, including two private doctors and one midwife. Three In-depth interviews (IDIs) were made: for twenty minutes with one informant, and thirty minutes each with two other informants. These interviews provided the information about life history from the perspective of health.

The last field research was an informal conversation at a fried snack shop where we talked to four women sitting at the shop at that time. Those women offered us some fried snacks. We sat together under a tree and had conversations for more than half an hour. While talking, I felt some itches on the shoulders and around the neck. I rubbed with the nails. There were red spots on the skin. I shouted, "What is this? It's itchy." A woman warned me, "Madam, don't rub on it. The itch will go away in half an hour. It happens all the time in the rainy season. Some warms fall off the branches and their hair causes itches on the body. What she said was true: the itches go away after half an hour. I had a bath when I got home, and applied Thanakha on my body. I also applied Saya Khoe medicine. The red spots disappeared after two days. The shaman (Nat-sayar) has a technique to see whether a particular disease is due to spirit possessions or caused by witchcraft. They take the pulse on the right wrist of the patient. One of my colleagues even checked this technique by being tested by a shaman.

The interviews were done well sufficient data was collected. These knowledgeable informants' questions about life history in the community were also collected. As case study and life history were described by using documented data, key informant interviews, In-depth interviews, and triangulation method was used to validate the data. When field research was carried out, tape recorder, MP3 player and camera were used to record the data. Eighteen informants who are (7) households of wood sculpture and (5) households of bronze ware were collected the data (see table 1)



Figure (1): Testing particular disease caused by witchcraft

**Table (1) Informants lists for five common diseases**

	Symptoms	Age	Occupation	Sex	Remarks
1.	High-blood pressure	74	brassware	M	6 informants
		50	brassware	F	
		45	brassware	F	
		55	sculpture	F	
		58	sculpture	M	
		65	sculpture	F	
2.	Flu	74	brassware	M	6 informants
		73	brassware	M	
		56	brassware	M	
		62	sculpture	F	
		55	sculpture	F	
		64	sculpture	M	
3.	Cough and cold	74	brassware	M	6 informants
		59	brassware	M	
		37	brassware	F	
		55	sculpture	F	
		45	sculpture	F	
		47	sculpture	M	
4.	Body aches	25	brassware	M	6 informants
		50	brassware	F	
		45	brassware	F	
		40	sculpture	M	
		55	sculpture	F	
		30	sculpture	M	
5.	Skin disease	74	brassware	M	4 informants
		45	brassware	F	
		65	brassware	F	
		55	sculpture	F	
Total Informants					18 informants

### Data Analysis

Before going into the field research, researcher analyzed available archival data, including photos, historical background and landholding documents. These data helped the communities to be studied in a broad context. During field work, the accumulated field notes, photos, tape recordings were carefully managed to reduce bias, distortion, and discuss the problems and missing links and collect missing information. After the data

collection, these data were analyzed, making sure to cross-check the tentative findings matrix analysis of major themes in data, including observations and archival materials.

### **Findings: 1. Reasons for self-medication**

Respondents gave the following reasons for treating themselves instead of consulting qualified medical professionals

- (1) No time to see the medical practitioner
- (2) Need to wait for long periods
- (3) Belief in traditional herbal medicine

There are also some other reasons. People cannot afford to pay the medical charges at hospitals. They find it difficult to pay frequent visit to hospitals and clinics that are only in towns. They do not really know the advantages of getting treatments at hospitals and clinics. They do not have close relationship with doctors, and they worry that there could be problems in communication with doctors. Besides, they are afraid to tell their problems to the doctors.

A 74-year-old man said, "I don't know about modern medicines. I don't know any doctors and I am afraid to go to the hospital. I always hesitate to go to hospitals because I think that my health would be seriously damaged if I were to go to hospitals. There was a teenage boy in our village, who lost his two fingers while he was cutting grass for the cows. He was sent to the hospital. We were not allowed to stay with him at the hospital overnight. The boy was so scared being alone, without any of his relatives, at the hospitals. He spent the night alone and died the next day. He was scared to death. Since then, most people in the village had not been to hospitals. But many people are not scared of hospitals any more now. When the monks at our villages were sick, they were admitted to the hospital and we had to attend to them at the hospital. We are used to hospitals now. Some people go to see the doctors these days. They understand that they should see a doctor when they are ill. However, they still prefer to buy some medicines from retail shops and treat them themselves."

A 45-year-old woman said, "We have herbal plants easily available at our village. We know how to use them. Our parents and grandparents have taught us about those herbal medicines. Now we can easily buy not only modern medicines but also traditional herbal medicines at retail shops in the village. We don't need to go to the doctors for just minor illnesses."

### **2. Self-medication and self-regulation in socio-cultural context**

Shankalay Kyun is a village where agriculture used to be the main source of income. Some people from the village work in brass-casting and wood-cutting industries in Tampawady in Mandalay. In 2001-2002, wood trading was strictly prohibited, and some

workers lost their job in Tampawady. Some of them went to China where they worked for wood-curving industries. They were treated badly and their labour was exploited there. In 2007, they came back to Myanmar and started their one own small home industry in the village. The home industries of wood sculpture, bronze ware have been established in their village for 2 years. The village became lively with those work places, and there have been more and more retail shops and teashops. At present, there are five retail shops and four teashops in the village. People start the habit of drinking tea. Some of them drink tea once in the morning and once in the evening. The owners of the home industries also give tea-breaks for the workers. So, most of the workers usually drink three or four cups of tea in every day. There are some people, aged over 40, who start to have high-blood pressure. Besides, with the rise of ground-nut oil price, people sell the ground-nut oil for money and have cheap palm-oil instead. They also use sweetening powder in their curries since it was available at the retail shops. Changes in lifestyle have probable caused high-blood pressure. It is notable that the people over 70 do not have high-blood pressure. The climate changes and hard work make people suffer from flu. The dust produced by the machines caused coughing. Men who work as sculptors and women who need to stand all day at their works suffer from muscle pain. Besides, the dust from the machines and worms from trees cause itches.



**Figure (2) Home Industry of wood curving**



**Figure (3) Home Industry of wood curing**



**Figure (4) Home Industry of wood curving**



**Figure (5) Home Industry of Brass Casting**



**Figure (6) Home Industry of Brass Casting**



**Figure (7) Retail Shop in the Village**

### **2.1 Self-medication for high blood pressure**

Some people have high blood pressure, but they are not aware of the fact. They continue to live without any care for their health. Some of them die with high blood pressure without noticing any symptoms. A man, aged 74, said, "My son was just 47. He did not know that he had high blood pressure. He never took any medicines. He ate everything he liked. One day, he was fainted and fell, and he was taken to the hospital. The doctors first thought that it was the motorcycle accident. When he died they found out that it was not the accident that caused his death, but it was cerebral thrombosis. The food habit has changed, and many young people have high blood pressure.

Some people find out that they have high blood pressure only when they have a meeting with a medical doctor. But they do not really follow the doctors' advice. They tend to deny the fact that they have high blood pressure. Some of them are too busy to take care of themselves. They usually take herbal medicines that are recommended by the elderly neighbours. Some of them keep the herbal plants at home so that they can easily take the medicine every day. People do not mind to share their herbal plants with the neighbours. In fact, Shankalay Kyun is a village on the bank of the Ayeyawady River. There are many trees and plants in the village. People usually help each other find the right herbal medicine. Some vegetables such as lemon leaves, leaves from the plants called Pyin-taw-thein [clausena; exeavata Burn (Rutaceae)] and budina. These vegetables are eaten with meals. Another plant useful for high-blood pressure is leaves from horseradish tree (*Moringa oleifera*). People make soup with those leaves and have with their meals.

Some common herbal medicines for the high blood pressure are: nine sprouts of a plant called Pyin-taw-thein are boiled in nine glasses of water until the liquid becomes condensed up to one third of the original amount. Some people grind the root of the plant called Khaya (prickly poppy) and drink the liquid. Some eat Aye-ka-yit (*Millingtonia hortensis*) leaves with their meals. They also make salad with the flowers from those plants. It is useful in ways that people can grind the root and drink the liquid. It can also be used as inhalation. One can squeeze the plant into liquid and drink it. Some people keep a kind of plant called Pya-hmi-swe in their garden. They eat three or four leaves of the plant every

day. Some people boil the sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*) or wild Hin-nu-ne (*Amaranthus blitum*, *A. paniculatus*, etc). Some put garlic in honey and keep away from the sun light about a week and have a tea-spoon full of it every day. Some people mixed the turmeric powder with honey, make small balls and dry them under the shade. They believe that having three or four of them can cure high blood pressure.

For serious cases of high blood pressure, with the symptoms of swollen hands and feet, people chew about five guava leaves, new jasmine leaves, about four lemon seeds or Kyi-ar (*Trichosanthes palmata*) seeds, the seeds from horseradish tree (*Moringa oleifera*), or drink the liquid of about three new leaves from sweet sop trees (*Annona squamosa*). Some people recommend to cut a lime into two pieces, put the pieces in the boiled water with some salt, covered the cup for a few minutes and drink the juice.

A 65-year-old woman said, "I have been suffering from high blood pressure for about five years. I used to take modern medicines, but it was no use. I was told by some people that Ngwe-taung herbal medicine was very good for high blood pressure. They were from Shankalay Kyun, and went to Mya-set-kya monastery in Sagaing Hills for cooking. They said that some people donated that medicine to the monastery. It has been about five months that I have been taking this medicine. The direction says that I should take five tablets in the morning and five in the evening, and I follow the direction. A bottle of this medicine is 1500 kyats and has 150 tablets." She also mentioned that she has felt much better since she started taking that herbal medicine.



**Figure (8) Ngwe-taung herbal medicine**



**Figure (9) Ngwe-taung herbal medicine**

A 55-year-old woman said, "My husband, while eating a meal with me, had a stroke. It was fifteen years ago. He suddenly could not speak clearly. When he tried to stand, he fell on the floor. Some neighbours rushed to our house and applied some balm on him, and gave him massage. But he looked so ill that we took him to the hospital. The doctor said that he had high blood pressure. He said that the weather and the food were the main problems that caused the illness. He suffered from paralytic stroke on one side of his body. The doctor prescribed a lot of medicines, and said that we should have come after two days. I did not want to give those modern medicines to my husband. It was also not very easy to go to the

hospital. Some elderly people suggested that my husband must be kept warm and should apply some balm. I applied some balm on him every day. Some neighbours said that I should use a lime to roll on his body and palm. I followed their suggestion. A friend from another town said one of the best medicines was to boil a handful of lemon leaves with some sugar, and boil it until the water remain one third. I was hoping that my husband would recover, and I followed all the suggestions I was given. And I avoid cooking the food that could be bad for him. A friend gave me a gall bladder of a boa constrictor. Our friend said that I should rub it on my husband's tongue. After a month, my husband could speak a little.

Another friend told me that there was a good medicine in Nakkhatta-yaung-chi magazine. I made the medicine and gave it to my husband. The article in the magazine said that I should make small holes in some garlic, and keep them in honey for a month. It also suggested that a teaspoonful of this medicine must be given to the patient. I followed the suggestion. Another medicine was that some turmeric powder was mixed with honey, made small balls, and dried under the roof. The method suggested that three pieces of medicine must be given to the patient every night before going to bed. After about six months, my husband could move the paralyzed part of the body a little. Then he could walk in the house with my help. I made a bamboo handrail outside the house for him to hold while he was practising walking. After a year and a half of regular practices and taking traditional medicines, my husband was able to work by himself. Now, he has recovered perfectly, and can live with other normal people.

For paralytic stroke and numbness in the hands and legs caused by high blood pressure, the people of Shankalay Kyun get massage to enhance circulation and dissipate body heat. Massage cannot be a perfect cure for those who are paralyzed partially, but it can help them feel better and prevent the worse condition. They usually get messages every three days or once a week or once a month depending on their condition. They believe that if they get massage immediately after the paralytic stroke, within twenty-four hours, they can recover completely. Massage therapists do not usually charge a fix amount. They only accept some amount of present from patients as the token of thanks. Most people rely on Myanmar traditional medicines rather than western medicines for high blood pressure and paralytic stroke. Gall bladders form boa constrictors, although they are very rare and expensive, are the most trusted medicine for these diseases.

## **2.2 Self-medication for flu and cold**

A common prevention of flu for the people of Shankalay Kyun is ginger and jaggery. They boil seven slices of ginger and three pieces of jaggery together until the juice remain only one third. If they still get the flu, they use this traditional medicine twice a day and induce perspiration.

Most of the people in Myanmar traditionally keep Myanmar herbal medicines for children. They say, "If you have a child, you must have some medicines at home". A kind of medicine called "Shar-put-say", which is used to rub on the tongue, and another medicine called "Tha-nge-nar-say", which is especially for children's general sickness, are available at

every house. Sometimes, when a child keeps crying breathlessly, they make offerings to the spirits. They usually offer some money (five mut: one mut is a quarter of one kyat) to the spirits.

A sixty-two-year-old woman said, "Twenty years ago, my youngest son was just an infant. I took the baby to a pagoda festival up-river where I opened a shop. On the trip the baby was seriously sick and had fits. A colleague from my village told me that I should have had some medicines since I had the baby with me. I looked for a medicine and found some Shar-put-say in my money-box. I grounded it and put the liquid on my son's tongue. The baby perspired and felt fine. I could continue my business."

The government has been organizing campaigns for children to have prophylactic treatments. However, many people still use traditionally believed herbal homemade medicines. A homemade medicine for a male infant contains some milk from a mother of a female infant, the liquid required by grinding the cover of bael fruit (*Aegle marmelos*), and some ashes of straw. They must be mixed together using the middle finger. And a homemade medicine for a female infant needs some milk from a mother of a male infant. The other ingredients and the method are the same.

Some commonly used medicines available in the herbal shops at the village come with the brands – Pwe-ka-daw, Say-toe-pat-gyi, and Saya Pyaung Gyi. These medicines are mixed with some coconut oil and apply on the whole body of the infant when it has a temperature. One has to apply the medicine on the body from the head to the toes. Another useful medicine is made in the following way: some bitter gourd leaves (*Momordica charantia*) and some leaves from a plant called Pan-nyo are ground together and mixed with the liquid of sandalwood and thanakha (a kind of tree the bark and root of which are used in making a fragrant paste for cosmetic purposes: *Limonia acidissima*). This medicine can be used as the same way, i.e. applying the medicine on the infant's body from head to toes. This medicine is good for infants who have temperature. Sometimes, infants can get sick as a result of having breathed in acrid fumes. In this case, the medicine must be placed under the nose for a while or put a little of it into the mouth of the infant.



**Figure (10) Grounding together with bitter gourd and pan-nyo**

It happens sometimes to children that they keep crying continuously. In such cases, some people believe that it was caused by some spirits. A 71-year-old shaman said, "If one plays with a child at the eaves at sunset time or goes round the village, the child will be possessed by a spirit. The child will cry continuously and painfully. If the child cries at five o'clock in the evening, he cries at the same time every day. If the time is one o'clock in the morning, the same thing happens at that time next day. We can see that the child is possessed by a spirit in such cases. We have to suggest the child's family to make offerings to the spirit. We must know the day of the child's birth and a particular direction called Bhum-mi for the child. We have to make offerings at that place. Five portions of rice, five portions of a curry, and some flowers (of any kind) must be placed on a tray and offered it to the spirit that has possessed the child. The child will be fine if we do that."

Sometimes, even adults find unable to control their mind. They become so absent-minded, and also feel physically ill. We believe that they are possessed by some spirits. We can test if it was the case. We take the pulse on the right wrist and make a truthful wish, remembering our moral qualities and meditation practices such as development of the attributes of the Buddha or the sincerity in taking refuge in the Triple Gems – 'If this person is possessed by a spirit, may I be able to feel a short halt in the pulse'. If the patient is possessed by an evil spirit, he or she starts acting strange or the body starts to quiver. In such a case, we get a glass of water, chant the attributes of the Buddha or the taking refuge in the Triple Gems into the water, and get the patient drink it. This is all necessary to do for such case."

Massage is also favourable treatment for women who suffer from abnormal period, catch cold, quiver, and have temperature. A 58-year-old massage therapist said, "If a woman suffers from the paralytic stroke on her right side and a man on his left side, we consider it being caused by extreme heat in the body. This is easy to get cured. If a woman suffers from it on her left side and a man on his right side, it is considered to be caused by extreme coldness in the body. And it is difficult to get cured. Ten years ago, a girl came to see me. She had high temperature and the right side of her body was quivering. I gave her a massage only one time, and she was fine.

When adults get flu during climate changes or caused by tiredness at work, they usually buy some modern medicines available at the village retail shops. These medicines are called by the villagers as "Phya-nar-sat-say", and a packet of it only costs 200 kyats. If one packet is enough to take the flu away, they don't bother to buy another one. They might buy another packet only if necessary. This medicine is a mixture of four medicines and ready to be used. Some drug stores in Mandalay make these four-in-one packets.

Some companies that sell medicines occasionally distribute free medicines such as Paracetamol or Decolgen, etc. that are commonly used for minor illnesses. People do not usually use these medicines for they are not able to read the instructions written in English.

Sometimes, fever comes with cough. People buy medicines at the stores for their children at the age of seven or eight. Usually, a packet of these medicines cost only a hundred kyats. If one packet is enough to take the cough away, they don't bother to buy another one. They might buy another packet only if necessary. The people in Shankalay Kyun

suffer coughing during the climate change and caused by the dust produced at the home industries. When they have cough, they usually buy the modern medicine from the retail shops.

A forty-year-old man said, "I have cough, most of the time, especially in winter. Every winter, I suffer from cough. I cannot sleep well at night. I usually keep a bottle of water near my bed and I drink it quite frequently. It helps. Sometimes, the cough goes away without any treatment. If I cannot bare it, I take "Chaung-soe-sat-say" from a retail shop."

When they suffer from asthma, they might go to see a doctor, but they stop taking medicines if they feel better. Coughing is a common disease for the villagers of Shankalay Kyun. When they have cough, they usually buy "Maw Chaung-soe-pyauk-sat-say" available at the retail shops. The people rely on the medicines from the village-stores since doctors are not available at the village fulltime, and since they find it difficult to go to the clinics in town.

People usually use the following traditional medicines: boiled betel leaf liquid with salt or some Yet-sar (herbal and mineral preparation in powder form to be licked), ripen star-fruits with honey, basil (*Ocimum canum*) leave liquid, a leaf from a plant called Khwe-they-pan, betel leaf and ground-hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) together are boiled until the liquid is condensed into one third of the original amount, ripen morinda fruit (*Morinda angustifolia*) mixed with jaggery, and a papaya with some salt in it is roasted on fire and the ash is mixed with lemon juice, etc.

People prefer to use traditional medicines for children's illness. However, some mothers consult with a midwife for their children's illness. Most men prefer western medicines available at the village retail shops for their cough and fever. For cough and fever, Myanmar traditional medicines are more expensive than western medicines, but women prefer to use Myanmar traditional medicines.



Figure (11) Phya-nar-sat-say for flu



Figure (12) Chaung-soe-sat-say for Cough



Figure (13) Maw-chaung-sat-say for cough



Figure (14) Chaung-soe-pyauk-say-ye for Child



Figure (15) The child buying Chaung-soe-pyauk-say-ye

### 2.3 Self-medication for body aches and skin diseases

Many people feel aches in their bodies due to hard works. However, they do not usually go to doctors' clinics or hospitals. Instead, the members of families or co-workers give massage on one another. Besides, almost every house has balm such as Tun Shwe Wa. Balm, Taw-shauk-say-ye, and various kinds of herbal roots are common pain-killers used among the villagers.

The abbot of the village monastery in Shankalay Kyun made a pain-killer himself. This is to apply on the body. He got the method from a Shan monk from Shan State. This pain-killer is especially made for the monks who spend a lot of time teaching and learning while sitting. However, the monk is happy to share the medicines with the villagers free of charge. The list of ingredients includes two kyat-tha (part numerical classifier used in

counting hundredths of a viss) of menthol, one kyat-tha of Thaing-Hmo, one kyat-tha of Phone-ma-thein, one kyat-tha of camphor, five kyat-tha of mustard oil, etc.

Some people suffer from aches in their backs and necks due to hard works. Some of them have a crick in the scapular region. They get massages for such kind of problems. Sometimes, therapists give massages for two hours. The therapists receive the technique through generations. Some people, when they break a bone, have a tendon displaced or joint displaced, they go to traditional medical clinic such as Pale-ba in Mandalay.

There are ready made modern medicines for knee-pain and backaches. These medicines are called by the villagers as Du-nar-khar-nar -sat-say. A packet of them is only 200 kyats at the village stores. Three pain-killers are mixed together in the packets. The one who sells these medicines is a university graduate and a native of Shankalay Kyun. This makes the villagers believe that he has a good knowledge of medicines.

The village is located on the bank of the Ayeyawady river and area is always wet. The home industries produce dust all the time. Besides, the seasonal plants produce some particles that cause skin diseases. For the skin diseases and cuts on the body, almost every house has a Myanmar herbal medicine with the brand "Saya Khoe". They do not bother for such trivial skin diseases.

For skin-itchiness, Thanakha (a kind of tree the bark and root of which are used in making a fragrant paste for cosmetic purposes. *Limonia acidissima*) and salt is one of the most used medicines. There is a popular traditional medicine brand named "Cho Sin Linn". People use this medicine when they have skin-itchiness. Another kind of traditional medicine is roselle (*Hibiscus sandariffa*) leaf: it is crashed in the hands and the liquid is to apply on the skin.

When children have skin infections, people consider that it is because they are still children and it is natural that they suffer from infantile ailments. There are some children and teenagers who regularly take medicine for infantile ailments until the age of 14 to 15. People do not take it seriously when young people have skin infectious diseases because they consider that it is natural. On the other hand, doctors say that skin infectious diseases are caused by the dirty environment, lack of keeping body-cleanliness such as having long finger nails.

A fifty-year-old woman said, "There are some worms on trees in some seasons. When you go under those trees, those worms fell on your body and caused small itchy boils. In this case, you should not scratch on it. Just leave it for a while and the itch will go away in thirty minutes. Modern pain killers are popular medicines for most men while women prefer to use traditional medicines. People have to use more money for Myanmar traditional medicines because one has to buy the whole packet.

These five kinds of disease mentioned above are common in the village. People are so used to those diseases that they do not even bother to get treatments. All they do is to buy herbal medicines and modern medicines from the village stores and treat themselves. The people of Shankalay Kyun mostly rely on self-medication.



Figure(16 ) Herbal medicine for body aches



Figure(17 ) Herbal medicine for body aches



Figure (18) Sat-say for body aches



Figure (19) herbal medicine with the brand "Saya Khoe"



Figure (20) The man with modern medicine



Figure (21) The woman with herbal medicine



**Figure (22) Tun Shwe Wa, traditional medicine**      **Figure (23) Roselle, traditional medicine**

## Discussion

Shankalay Kyun Village is located on the bank of the Ayeyawady River. The people of the village can get fresh vegetables that they eat every day, and as a result most of them are healthy. It is very rare that they get ill. Those who are over 70 do not have high-blood pressure. This is only a problem for those who are in their forties, and it is due to changes in food-habit.

Previously, villagers are scared of being admitted in hospitals. When a sick person is to be taken to a hospital, he or she feels as if they are dying. People have negative opinion about hospitals since medical clinics and doctors are available quite a distance from the village, it is not easy to travel to them and it can cost a lot of money. Sick person are taken to hospitals only when the disease is deadly serious. This creates the opinion in the mind of the people that admission in hospital means death.

Nowadays, the monks of the village, when they get ill, go to hospitals, and there are villagers who attend to the monks at hospitals. They have witnessed the nature of hospitals and that the monks recovered from illness. They are not afraid of hospitals anymore. However, elderly people still refuse to go to hospitals or having yearly medical check-ups.

Most people who suffer from high blood pressure are aged over 40. They have lived the period when the lifestyle has been changing. Some of them do not even know they have high blood pressure. The lack of health knowledge is rooted on the fact that the workers at the home industries are not educated ones. There are children working at the industries. They had no school education. Some of them only had primary education. People consider that university degrees are not really useful for getting a job, and it is better to get a job and get some income instead of going to school. Consequently, most native people of Shankalay Kyun are unable to read the instructions on the modern medicines. They prefer to use herbal medicines and homemade medicines that they are familiar with. Paralytic stroke caused by high-blood pressure and fever and body aches due to hard labour works are common

diseases that people believe that they only need to see traditional massage therapists, or they should consult with shamans since they think the problems are due to spirit-possession.

People do not consult a doctor for minor high blood pressure cases. They do not want to avoid eating the food bad for the disease. Sometimes, careless treatment on the disease causes serious problems. Some of them even do not care until they suffer from paralytic stroke. Some even lost their lives. When they go to hospitals, it is too late.

Every house has traditional medicines such as pain-killers, skin lotions, and herbal medicines for illness. They can understand instructions on the bottles and packets since they are printed in Myanmar. They do not keep modern medicines at home. Sometimes, medical companies make free distributions of medicines for sale promotions, but the people just take them without thinking of using them. They do not really trust them. They rather trust their elders, neighbours and friends in their village.

The grocers at the village are university educated. They sell modern medicines for fever, cough, aches, and some modern medicines for children's cough. They make packets for one-time use. Most men prefer to use "Sat-say-htou" that is modern medicine from retail shops while most women use Myanmar traditional medicines. Women tend to trust Myanmar traditional medicines that have been used in their generations. Villagers usually treat most of the illnesses themselves. They follow the suggestions and traditional methods that they are told by the elders, relatives and friends. Women are usually better than men in making herbal medicines. They have more knowledge on traditional medicines than man. This is the reason that women use traditional medicines more than men do.

Besides taking medicines, the people of Shankalay Kyun also make offerings to the spirits traditionally believed in the generation of the families. The women who are grandmothers or their aunts from maternal side or paternal side usually lead when they make such offerings. There are a lot of differences between the traditional belief and western medical science, and the people of this region place more trust on the traditional belief.

## **Conclusion**

Most native people of Shankalay Kyun do not know the names of western medicines. Even the shopkeeper who sells medicines buys readymade packets from bigger drug stores from Mandalay. They do not have sufficient medical knowledge. Most of the medicines are in packets without expire date. They do not have any knowledge about the side effects and there is no proper instruction for consumption. The people just buy what is sold at the shops. They keep traditional herbal medicines at home, but they do not know the side effects and expire date. Therefore, it can be said that despite the proper income, the people have very little health-knowledge.

The people of Shankalay Kyun have TVs where they can watch health-education programmes and medicine-promotion programmes. However, they are still lack of the

health knowledge that they don't have regular medical check-ups and consult with medical professionals for their health on time.

There is a habit among the people of Shankalay Kyun of refusing professional medical treatments. They do not follow the doctors' instructions exactly: they take some of the prescribed medicines while they leave others. They stop taking medicines if they feel better. And they mostly rely on the medicines available at the village stores. This is a dangerous habit that can cause a lot of health problems. Therefore, it is necessary that the government organizations and concerned ministries should organize public health educational talks at the school in this local community. It is the responsibility of the government of Myanmar to organize medical check-up for aged people in the village and to give free treatments for common diseases.

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Myanmar Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
uGrf;&Guf(Betel Leaf)	Better Vine	<u>Piper betle</u> linn
yifpdrf;(Basil)	Basil	<u>Ocimum canum</u> sime
rkefnSif;(Musterd)	Indian Brown Mustard	<u>Brassica campestris</u> (Brassicaceae)
acG;ao;yef;(Khwe-they- pan)	Bizat	<u>Eupatorium cannabinuml</u> ((compositae)
oabmFoD;(Papaya)	Papaya	<u>Carica papaya</u> linn (caricaceae)
oeyfcg;(Thanakha)	Chinese Box tree	<u>Limonia acidissima</u> linn (Rutaceae)
c&myif(Khaya)	Prickly Mexican Poppy	<u>Argemone Mexicana</u> L.(Papaveraceae)
csOfaygif&Gu f(Roselle)	-	<u>Hibiscus furcatus</u> willd (Malvaceae)
yyif;awmfodrf(Pyin-taw-thein)	-	<u>Clauseria excavate</u> Burn (Rutaceae)
{u&mZf&Guf(Aye-ka-yit)	Indian Cork Tree	<u>Millingtonia hortensis</u> linn (Bignoniaceae)
ysm;jrD;pGJ(Pha-hmi-swe)	Nerr	<u>Gynura procumbens</u> lour (Asteraceae)
xdu&kef;(Sensitive plant)	Sensitive plant Touch-me not	<u>Mimosa pudica</u> linn
[if;EkEG,ft&dkif;(Hin-nu-ne)	Spiny Amaranthus Hinnunwe supauk	<u>Amaranthus hybridus</u> L (Amaranthaceae)
MuufoGefjzLOWpfvHk;(Garlic)	Garlic	<u>Allium sativum</u> L. (Liliaceae)
rmvum&Guf(Guava leaves)	Guava	<u>Psidium guajava</u> Linn. (Myrtaceae)
py,f&GufEk(Jasmine leaves)	Common Jasmin	<u>Jasminum pubescens</u> ( Oleaceaez)
a&SmufoD;(Lemon seed)	Lemon	<u>Citrus medica</u> L. (Rutaceae)
'efY'vGefaph(Drum Stick seed)	Drum Stick	<u>Moringa oleifera</u> lamk (Moringaceae)
MoZmnGefU(Sweet sop leaves)	Custard - Apple	<u>Annona squamosa</u> L. (Annonaceae)
OospfoD;(Bael)	Bael fruit	<u>Aegle marmelos</u> corr ( Rutaceae)
Muuf[if;cg;(Bitter gourd)	Bitter gourd	<u>Momordica charantia.</u> L. (Cucurbitaceae)
yef;ndK&Guf(Pan-nyo leaves)	-	-
awma&Smuf&Guf(Lemon leaves)	Wild Lime	<u>Atlantia monophylla</u> (L)
odkif;rdl(Thymol)	-	-
apmif;vsm;oD;(Star-fruit)	Carambola	<u>Averrhoa carambola</u>
zkef;rodrf(Phone-ma-thein)	-	-

ukef;aA'g(Ground-hyacinth)	-	<u>Eichornia crassipes</u>
rifaomf(y&kyf)(Menthol)		
MuD;tmoD;(Kyi-ar)	-	<u>Trichosanthes palmala</u>
&J,dkoD; (Ripen morinda fruit)	-	<u>Morinda angustifolia</u>

**Table: 2 The List of Medical Plants**