

## “Yoo Fai”, A Classical Wisdom on Traditional Midwifery Nursing in Thailand

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### ABSTRACT

*Midwifery nursing is a general nursing with a very long history. The existence of midwifery can be seen in any ancient histories. For supporting primary nursing care, to promote the local wisdom of traditional midwifery nursing is necessary. To learn from the traditional midwifery nursing practice is also proven useful. The local wisdom on midwifery nursing is an interesting issue in nursing. In Thailand, the practice namely “Yoo Fai” by a local midwife is merit for study. The authors discuss and present the details of “Yoo Fai”.*

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### INTRODUCTION

In medicine, the health management is very important and become important consideration in public health management. Nursing is an important basic practice in public health system. This important practice is seen around the world. Nurse becomes very important part of the health care team.

There are several kinds of nurse. Midwifery nurse is the specific kind of nurse who practices midwifery nursing. Midwifery nursing is the nursing practice that has a very long history. This classical practice exists in several areas around the world. In the region with a very long history, there is usually a traditional midwifery nursing. The classical midwifery nursing practice has been remained important health practice in several parts of the world for a very long time.

The rooted classical midwifery nursing practice is usually interesting and might imply very interesting value. The wisdom

might be hidden in the classical traditional midwifery nursing practice.

The local wisdom on midwifery nursing is an interesting issue in nursing [1]. In Thailand, the practice namely “Yoo Fai” by a local midwife is merit for study [2]. The authors discuss and present the details of “Yoo Fai”.

### CASE STUDY

To demonstrate a case study, the authors hereby collect and summarize the important the details of an important midwifery nursing practice seen in Thailand namely “Yoo Fai”. The case example is collected and demonstrated. The closed observation with photographing is also done for clarification of the details of the studied procedure as depicted in Table 1.

The “Yoo Fai” is a traditional practice seen in Indochina (Fig. 1). The service is usually by local midwifery nurse who gives traditional care to local people. The care is prepared for the post-partum

female. During the process, the female has to live in a specific made and warmed by herbal hot air. This process is to keep the patient warm and promote the healing of the wound.

## DISCUSSION

Midwife nursing is a general nursing with a very long history. The existence of midwife can be seen in any ancient histories [3]. Dietsch et al. noted that “Traditional midwives provide a valuable service to women” and “their role is being increasingly devalued by global health agencies [4].” To promote the local wisdom of traditional midwifery nursing is therefore necessary. To learn from the traditional midwifery nursing practice is also proven useful. Dietsch et al. noted that “Learning from women and continued professional reflection are ways of learning for midwives that may increase their confidence in women, birthing and their midwifery skills [5].”

**Table 1.** Important procedures of “Yoo Fai”.

Procedures	Details
Keep Warmth	Keep warmth is the basic main procedure during “Yoo Fai”. In fact, the word “Yoo Fai” means living with fire. Hence, the laying down at a specific place kept warmth is the important procedure during this traditional midwifery nursing. Having appropriate rest in the warm place and living with the newborn can promote recover of the mother and support the material-child relationship.
Herbal Massage	Herbal message is the use of specific preparation of warm herbs wrapped with whitish clothes for message at the body of the post-partum woman. The message at the body might help muscle relaxation and the message at abdomen might help passing of lochia. Food restriction is the basic concept that promotes the refreshment of the post-partum woman. Avoidance for some inappropriate intake such as alcoholic foods is proven useful during post-partum period. On the other hand, promotion of some food intake is
Food Restriction and Promotion	also proven helpful. The local wisdom can also be seen such as the promotion of intake of banana leaf that can result in increased volume of breast milk that is useful for breast feeding.

Local wisdom seen from “Yoo Fai” is merit and reflects the fact that the local nurse in Indochina knows well about the concept to keep warm to the post-partum female. The use of local herbal regimen is aimed at promoting of wound healing. In fact, to promote the local wisdom of traditional midwifery nursing is an interesting public health issue. Rogers and Solomon et al. noted that “Because traditional midwives deliver a large number of births in Asian nations, the potential is great for them to reach large numbers of women regarding family planning particularly poor, illiterate women [6].”



**Fig. 1.** Local picture of “Yoo Fai”.

## CONCLUSION

Yoo Fai is a good example of a local wisdom on midwifery nursing in Indochina. This practice is an ancient rooted nursing care with a very long history. The intelligence of the Indochina ancestor on using warmth to keep care to the post-partum women can be reflected. In the past traditional midwife, is the main system for the people in rural area of Thailand where there are few medical centers and accessibility to the medical centers is usually problematic. In the present day, an increasing in number of medical centers in rural area might help promote the use of modern midwifery nursing. Until present, this practice is still seen in rural villages of Indochina. Although the modern midwifery system is provided in the standard medical center, the traditional midwifery is still existed in Thailand. The people in rural areas usually preferred to use the traditional midwife service. At present, both registered nurse and registered traditional midwife are legally accepted as the medical personnel who work and serve midwifery nursing care for local Thai people. The regulation and standardization by the modern approach is performed and it is the way to modernization this valuable classical midwifery nursing.

The traditional role of midwives in Thailand is giving suggestion to the pregnant women, performing the obstetrics delivery procedure and providing the post-delivery care by Yoo Fai. The traditional technique is usually referred to standard sanitation care, food selection, herbal formula, warming, psychological support and providing suggestion for the practice that must be avoided. There are no specific strict stepwise protocols, which are common thing in modern midwifery nursing, for the traditional midwifery nursing in Thailand but each midwife has

to adjust the practice for each patient after gathering and assessing the patient's history and status. In fact, the traditional midwifery nursing usually based on the concept to seek the best care for individual case. Adaptation of the nursing is flexible due to each patient. This concept might be a way for individualized medical and nursing care which is the modern paradigm. Of interest, abortion rates are still high nowadays despite the modern nursing care. The use of traditional nursing care system which strictly focuses on individual case, comparing to generalize modern nursing service, might be a good observation on the usefulness of traditional nursing concept.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None

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