

## Research on Methods of Treating Mental Weakness and Some Diseases Related to the Nervous System Using Spiritual Methods in the History of Vietnamese Mother Goddess Religion

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### Abstract

*Many works have confirmed the positive effects of the spiritual medicine, especially neurological diseases and diseases related to the nervous system, but the explanation of the healing mechanism remains unclear. This study is based on the results of our own topic over 9 years (from 2010 to 2019), on spiritual medicine in the Maternal Belief of Vietnam. Used observation, in-depth interviews methods after then the data processing software including Excel and SPSS 20.0 from there analyze qualitative and quantitative information after processing. The method of healing in Vietnamese Goddess Belief; In-depth interview with patients about the procedure and effectiveness of treatment and explain the healing mechanism in the spiritual medicine. Spiritual healers have used mystical tricks to create a spiritual fulcrum for them, to help them feel assured, protected, and assisted; since, disorders of sensory, emotional, thinking and other disorders have been rearranged in its normal order. At the same time, healers also create stimulation that causes endogenous hormones appear to help the body regulate disorders and restore health.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual, Neurological Diseases, Clinical, Psychology, Healing.*

### INTRODUCTION

Neuroscience is closely related to spiritual medicine. In which neuroscience studies the structure and function of the cerebral cortex and spiritual medicine is a phenomena of complementary and alternative medicine, based on "mystical" power to influence the spirit of the patient. It is a mysterious cultural phenomenon, of ancient origin but is still relatively popular in many countries of the world. There have been many scientific works studying this phenomenon. Marilyn Schlitz (2005), a senior scientist at California Pacific Medical Center (USA), cites a social epidemiology, showing: more than 1600 researches of the relationship between religion and mind spirituality and health [3]. Harold G. Koenlg stated that in 2012 alone, there were about 8,000 articles on Google Scholar and about 4,000 articles on Medline [2]; this work alone surveyed 3,300 original texts, and more recently, J. P. B. Gonçalves<sup>1</sup>, G. Lucchetti, P. R. Menezes and H. Vallada (1915), reported that they surveyed 4,751 related articles [1].

Most researches works acknowledge the positive effects of healing with spiritual therapy. Including diseases of the nervous system and diseases related to the nervous system such as peptic ulcer, hemorrhagic rectal inflammation, asthma, allergy-joint pain, headache, thyroid disease, etc (lesions with psychological causes) or injuries, poisoning, infections, ulcers, etc. Marilyn Schitz (2005) argues that positive healing results are a fact, "regardless of religious affiliation, diseases or health conditions, age, sex, race or ethnicity, or nationality of those studied", and "overwhelming evidence" shows "a positive relationship exists between religious practice, spirituality and health outcomes on a variety of conditions"[3,5].

Many diseases such as anxiety, depression, increased/decreased blood pressure, decreased resistance, even more types of cancer, etc. have been effectively intervened by spiritual medicine [2,6].

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## **METHODS AND APPROACH**

- Observation and direct monitoring.
- + Lively follow the steps of practicing mother worship beliefs at some temples and pagodas in Vietnam
- + Observe physical emotional states and learn the language of hymns when practitioners of mother worship perform
- + Collect documents related to traditional Vietnamese culture through legends and fairy tales related to motherhood.
- + Analyze research results on Vietnamese culture and beliefs such as the custom of worshiping ancestors, the custom of worshiping river gods, mountain gods, forest gods, the custom of worshiping the dead, and practices related to the belief of calling people's souls deceased, of domestic and foreign scholars
- In-depth interviews.
- + Develop sociological surveys to probe the understanding of mother worship beliefs of people living in different regions of Vietnam.
- + Design a questionnaire to understand the current state of people's awareness, attitudes and desires regarding the role of mother worship in Vietnam.
- + Discuss and consult with experts on traditional Vietnamese culture at a number of human and cultural research institutes
- + Investigate the current status of practicing mother worship beliefs at temples and pagodas in Vietnam and some Southeast Asian countries
- Describe and analyze data
- + Use research data processing software including Excel and SPSS 20.0
- + Analyze qualitative and quantitative information after processing

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Short Description of Spiritual Healing Activities (In Vietnam Mother Goddess Beliefs)**

Beliefs of the Goddess of Vietnam, also called as “Dao Tu Phu” (the Four Places Belief) are a traditional belief that has a long history in Vietnam, but has grown strongly since the 15th century. There are many goddesses worshiped, but the most concentrated are the four Goddesses in the Four Places: the First Mother Goddess, administering the sky; The Second Mother ruled the mountain forest; The Third ruled the river and the Fourth Mother ruled the lands. Under the Goddesses are "Chau" (representatives), Mandarins, Aunts, Uncles, and finally the Tiger God, the Snake God, etc. All gods have magic, depending on the "cung" (Place), the "ngai" (Position) of each person.

In the Saints, Gods, anyone can make illnesses to punish and at the same time can cure patients when they are merciful. However, there are gods who are more trusted in healing like Aunt Bo (Co Bo), The First Mother (Mau de nhat), Second Mother (Mau denhi), The Third Mother (Mau de tam) and Big Mandarins, etc [7].

In Vietnam, besides the large temples, has the recognition of the state, there are many "dien" "phu" (Saint Places) at the private home. Healing based on divine power is considered illegal. However, the people still come to a “dien”, “phu” or temples are very crowded. People call for all sorts of things, such as prayers, fortune-telling, good luck and of course there is a demand for health. Among the healthy people, many are patients. People pray for all kinds of things: talent, wealth, luck, and of course health, etc. Among the people pray for health, many are patients.

Spiritual healers in “Holy Door” are called "ong Dong" or "Ba dong" (mediums). They are become healer not by educated. Often after a "ten parts dead, part live" illness, they are returned from the dead and bring many resurrection experiences with all kinds of horror fantasies. Healers do not have the level or experience of modern medicine, but have many spiritual experiences. In particular, they have a strong belief in supernatural forces outside the human world. When healing, they often have to play in the divine roles, so they need a team of servants, called "chan nhang", "de tu" (disciples). These people, apart from the duty of helping, must convey the meaning of the mysterious words or acts of the Holy Mother and Holy Aunts, etc. when they embody into the healers.

People who come to pray at the “Holy Door” are patients and some of their relatives. They have to make offerings and if approved, they will have to make many "le" (small feast but solemn) for the saints to forgive and bless them.

The incurable diseases treated at a hospital or traditional medicine for a long time not effect, they will come to the “Holy Door” to pray. The table below shows the diseases that can be cured at the “Holy Door”.

**Table 1. Study of the types of diseases cured according to the spiritual medicine in the Mother Goddess Beliefs of Vietnam.**

Clinical symptoms	Called according to spiritual medicine	Called according to modern medicine
Neurological depression, phobia, anxiety, cardiac arrhythmia, hysteria, and many other disorders (no obvious damage in the body).	“Yin” diseases	Psychogenic diseases
Peptic ulcer, hemorrhagic rectal inflammation, asthma, allergy- joint pain, headache, thyroid disease,etc (lesions with psychological causes)	“Half Yin halfYang” diseases	Psychosomatic diseases
Injuries, poisoning, infections, ulcers,etc (by bacteria or foreign objects)	“Yang” diseases	Entity diseases

The diseases that are effectively treated are "psychogenic diseases" (called "Yin diseases"). Some "Psycho-entity diseases" ("half Yin half Yang diseases") can also be cured here by taking medicine, praying, and Vietnamese folk called "thuoctra, ma cau" (medicine - use, ghost - pray). Particularly, entity diseases, called "Yang diseases", often do not cure here but must go to hospitals of modern medicine; however, still there are special cases that need to be medicate under both methods.

In addition, it is also see that a few cases of infertility come to the “Holy Door” to praying for (called "cautu"- pray at the temple); people with stress often come here to relax; until the innate illness children (called "tien thien bat Tuc" - incomplete inborn) are also sent by the parents to the “Holy Door” to rely on (called "ban khoan" - sold to saints). People treated at the "Holy Door" are usually based on "le" (ceremonies). This is a kind of compulsory spiritual ritual, reserved for patients, and of course, patients also attend other spiritual activities of the "Holy Door". The ceremonies used in spiritual medicine include the "le trinh dong" (the introduce ceremony), the "le giai han" (release bad luck ceremony), the "le cat day loan" (the cut the love string ceremony), the "le chuoc via" (the buy back soul ceremony), etc. Here, the fellow healers use many artistic elements such as spiritual painting, sculpture, music, theater, etc.

In particular, the patients witnessed the famous "chau van" melodies, watching the mysterious "len dong" scene of Mother Religion with 72 "gia"<sup>(\*)</sup>, in which the Saints shows up through bodies of healers.

At this time, the patients and their family members are taught by the Saint through the Spiritual healers: when they threaten, when they are merciful. Saints often give "holy water" - a natural, pure water, like rain water, well water, etc., but make sure it is clean to take home to drink. Each time, he took the Holy medicine, the patient had to light a incense, mutter praying, then dip the scented incense into the cup of water. This water cup is called a "nuoc thoai tan huong" (used water by Souls and incense ash), then drinking.

Especially, it is time the patient sit to "hau dong" (for the Saints can show up to their bodies). By the mystical healing art of healers, many of them start twirl, their heads sway in the melody "chau van", they fall into "unconscious" plight, with different shallow depths level depending on each person. In some cases, the disease changes positively, even cured completely. Many other cases must be repeated every day, or every three days.

<sup>(\*)</sup>"Len dong" is the scene shows up of saints; "gia" is the shows up of each saints.

The patients must officiate at the "Holy Door" at the beginning, but then they may be set up altar by the healers to worship at home and perform the ritual themselves, just go to the "Holy Door" on day 1st, 15th of each month and so like that, less gradually. The disease may be cured from an unknown time.

### Short Description of the Cases Cured at "Holy Door"

During April 2006 to March 2019, we observed and investigated some of cases of mental illness, came to treat illness by spiritual therapy [8].

Methods of observation and investigation: We met directly with 84 randomly selected patients, who were referred by healers, patients or happened to meet them at the "Holy Door". We raise questions for them and for their loved ones. The questions include: cause, duration of disease, clinical symptoms, duration of treatment in modern medical hospitals (if any), etc [9]. Their answers are recorded or written on the questionnaire.

We would like to present a summary of the results of interviews with 84 cases of treatment for 84 cases of spiritual healing at 7 "Holy Doors" in the central and Northern provinces of Vietnam according to the table below:

**Table 2. The table to monitor the results of therapy some diseases according to the Mother Goddess Beliefs of Vietnam.**

Causes of diseases	Clinical symptoms	Called to according to modern medicine	Called according to spiritual medicine	Quan-tity	Effect		
					Cur-ed	Mitiga-tion	Dead
Excessive sex (both male and female)	Panic, desperate, anxious; failure of heart, liver, kidney, and lung; spermatorrhoea, to have wet dream, etc.	Depression; Sexual dysfunction	Complication of "cam phong" (Half "Yin" half "Yang")	5	2	2	1
Male puberty disorder	spermatorrhoea; panic, fear; tired.	Adolescent depression	Half "Yin" half "Yang"	2	2	0	0
Female puberty disorders	Hemorrhage(flux); delusion	Adolescent depression; Schizophrenicdisorders	Menses disorder ("Cam kinh" - Half "Yin" half "Yang")	3	1	2	0
Was betrayed by his lover	Sometimes lose consciousness; nud; leave home to wander	Hyteria; Schizophrenicdisorders	"Yin" diseases	7	4	3	0
Disillusioned	Lose consciousness; Paranoia; afraid of communication	Schizophrenicdisorders	"Yin" diseases	6	4	2	0
Too big a failure in life	Disappointed, regret, hate, haemoptysis	Inhibit; liver failure; hypertension	Disease of emotion (Half "Yin" half "Yang")	9	5	3	1
Postpartum depression	Worry; fear; fear of wind, fear of water, fear of sun; tired.	Postpartum depression	Half "Yin" half "Yang" diseases	7	6	1	0
Depression; anxiety disorder, sexual disorder	Too sensitive; depression; often fainted	Hyteria	"Yin" diseases	8	8	0	0
Complication of "cam han"	fear of sun, water, wind, noise; worry - think; tired	Depression	"Yin" diseases	11	8	2	1
Losing loved ones suddenly	Loss of consciousness, paranoia	Schizophrenicdisorders	"Yin" diseases	4	3	1	0
Lost or received much asset suddenly	Paranoia, neurosis, crazy	Schizophrenicdisorders	"Yin" diseases	3	2	1	0
Newborn babies with severe allergies due to noise	Babies too long asleep, sweat viscou; cry a lot; jumpy; high fever; be die if not treated properly	High fever, allergy	Children lost soul ("Yin" diseases)	3	3	0	0
Suddenly see dead body when tired	Panic, scared; Neurological heart disorders; many diseases arise	Psychosomatic diseases	Adults lost soul ("Yin" diseases)	1	1	0	0
Excessive working time is prolonged like: after building a	Excessive fatigue; anorexia; insomnia; constant sickness; lost ability to recover	Depression; multi-organ failure	Half "Yin" half "Yang" diseases	3	2	0	1

private house; after the harvest,...							
Excessive working	Suspense, insomnia, palpitations, arrhythmia, fatigue, etc.	Neurological heart disorders	Half "Yin" half "Yang" diseases	6	6	0	0
Other causes	Injury; ulcer; infection, fracture, etc.	Entity diseases	"Yang" diseases	6	4	1	1
	Total:		Quantity	84	61	18	5
			%	100.0	72.6	21.4	6.0

Through the above description, we see that there are many diseases that have been cured at "Holy Door". They can be caused by many different causes, and there are also very complex clinical manifestations, It may be due to a neuro-humoral mechanism. However, a minimal comparison between their names in spiritual medicine and modern medicine, along with the description of clinical symptoms, will make it easier to visualize these complex cases.

The data show that the cases are completely or partially cured, accounting for a large proportion. Of course, as stated, the above success is not only spiritual medicine [10]. But spiritual medicine has deeply intervened in healing, especially with all psychosomatic and many psycho-entity diseases.

## CONCLUSIONS

Spiritual healers have used mystical tricks to create a spiritual fulcrum for them, to help them feel assured, protected, and assisted; since, disorders of sensory, emotional, thinking and other disorders have been rearranged in its normal order.

At the same time, healers also create stimulation that causes endogenous hormones appear to help the body regulate disorders and restore health according to the neuro-humoral mechanism.

## Conflict of Interests

Authors has no conflict of interests

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