

URECA Proposal Submitted by (Student Name)

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Ida Fadzillah Leggett

Project Title: Conducting Research with Traditional Specialists to Better Understand the Local Culture's uses to Aid and Cure Ailments in Singapore

Introduction

Cultural health belief systems can impact who an individual seeks in times of medical need, what they consume, how they respond to prescribed health interventions, and even how they feel about health and illness (Nielson-Bohlman et al. 2004). Local treatment protocols indicate cultural ideas about how to combat common ailments (which are self-treated in most societies rather than requiring doctor visits) like headaches, rashes, and sore throats. I have the opportunity to accompany my professor, Dr. Ida Leggett, to Singapore for 2 weeks in May and want to use this time to conduct field research on Singaporean ideas and uses of cultural remedies. This is an interesting project to conduct because while Singapore is very Westernized, technologically advanced, and with a highly advanced modern health care system, it is also a society where traditional ideas of medicines for health and illness are still popular and widely used.

My proposed project builds off this hybrid concept of health protocols and examines how one population handles the treatment of mild sickness by surveying local apothecaries and other traditional medicine shops to inventory what the local population seeks out when treating common ailments. During my time there, I will be visiting 3 different ethnic regions of the city—Little India, the Malay area, and Chinatown—and visit some of the plentiful local apothecaries, herbalists, and fresh markets to see what medicinal items are being sold and talk to the vendors on how these local medicines work and what ailments they cure. Since Singapore is a multicultural nation and has distinct ethnic neighborhoods with their own shops, I can see how

the community ideas about health and healing might differ. I will use my research of Singapore's traditional medicinal applications to better understand how more traditional societies today interpret and apply traditional ideologies of health and wellness.

Background

Traditional and culturally prescribed treatments are still popular today in many countries and are used in addition to Western medicine and healthcare. There are articles pertaining to cultural treatment of illness from national health organizations, accredited health practitioners, and medical anthropologists. As Krumeich et al state, "an anthropological approach has much to offer" regarding the approaches to cultural health and wellness beliefs (2001).

Prior to this project, I have worked closely with multiple professors of the Anthropology program on specific research projects pertaining to the human body. During this prior research, I evaluated skeletal remains to answer different questions: how a person lived, how they died, and how their culture impacted items found with the individual at the time of burial. I have used both non-destructive (visual analysis) and destructive (isotope analysis) methods during research. A major project I was a part of was the Forensic Aviation Archaeology Field School in France which took place in the summer of 2022 where I was exposed to ways that individuals died during wartime. My proposed research in Singapore will add to my understanding of how much an individual's culture can impact their health and quality of life.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to better understand the cultural influence of health and wellness in Singapore through traditional practices by surveys traditional treatments still offered today. Results will help to interpret relevant applications of medicine from an opposing cultural viewpoint and appropriate traditional uses.

Methods

The research methods used for this project will include observation/ participant observation, informal interviews, and archival study of published books/articles by adhering to qualitative methods. Before departure, archival research of published articles/book will be done to create a base line of knowledge. Both observation/ participant observation and interviews will be conducted in Singapore. After arriving back to the US, I will compile the information gathered in Singapore and references used to create a presentation of the information and knowledge gained.

After reviewing the guidelines regarding IRB certification, IRB approval/ certification will not be necessary for this project because the people being interviewed will be the shop proprietors speaking about their products being sold.

Observation/ Participant Observation

When visiting herbalist shops and local food markets on different days, I will record which items are frequently purchased, the price labeled per item, and the quantity they are purchased in. This observation will allow me to gather information regarding what items are available in an average Singaporean home, which age groups purchase these items most often, and if the items are paired with other substances for different results. Appendix A contains a list of the locations I will visit during my time there to collect the information necessary.

Interview

The interview aspect of this research will be different from talking to the public asking specific, personal, questions or focus groups, rather I will have informal conversations regarding the items used and the impact of the practice using non-traditional methods of healing. By conversing with shop/ stall owners they will be able to share their personal beliefs and reasoning

for using traditional remedies rather than prescribed medicine. Their cultural background will provide insight to biased traditional remedies which will help to draw the lines of distinction between cultures found in Singapore of which application to use or perform to aid during illness.

Archival

Reading the books *Everyday Life in Southeast Asia* by K. Addams and K. Gillogly, *Celestial Healing* written by M. Micozzi, and *Traditional Medicine in Asia* edited by R. Chaudhury and U.Rafei, will give me a general knowledge of the types of medicine used in that region of the world; along with the books I am currently reading for my Peoples and Cultures of Southeast Asia (ANTH 3510) and Anthropology of Globalization (ANTH 4130). By completing these preliminary books, I will be able to compare it to real life scenarios in Singapore. While in the country, I will also seek out written texts describing the methods of practice for combating common illness. After compiling notes and observing traditional methods and practices of combating sickness, I will read published articles overlooking the medical application throughout history. Answering questions such as where this practice originated, has it been modified over the years, are similar practices found elsewhere, and what are the health benefits of these practices compared to Western medicine.

Collaboration with Faculty Member

While conducting my Research in Singapore, I will be continuously checking in with Dr. Ida Leggett throughout the days there as she will be there conducting parallel research on foodways. She will be helping with research by providing known sources, looking over my documentation and notes from the day, recording my hours spent conducting research, and help guide me through the field. Dr. Leggett has conducted research within Southeast Asia previously; she is a fluent speaker of Malay, one of the main languages of the country; since she

has prior knowledge of the culture and area, I view her as a specialized mentor for this study. I am responsible for picking which locations to visit during my time there, some of which have been recommended by Dr. Leggett. During the morning and early afternoon, I will spend time in a designated location then set a time to meet and go over the information I gathered as well as plans for the following day. Once back in the US, I will be working with her to compile my data, analyze the data for patterns, and deriving conclusions from the collected materials to produce a final paper, a presentation at the Fall Open House, and possible publication, to bring to light one example of how traditional treatments for minor ailments fit into cultural ideas of health and illness.

References

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), *ASEAN Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Medical Practitioners*, February 26, 2009.

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Chaudhury R., Rafei U., *Traditional Medicine in Asia*, No. 39, 2002.

Krumeich A., Weijts W., Reddy P., Meijer-Weitz A., “The Benefits of Anthropological Approaches for Health Promotion Research and Practice”, *Health Education Research*, Vol. 16, Issue 2, April 2001, Pages 121-130.

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Lee B., Kirmayer L., “*Dang-Ki* Healing: An Embodied Relational Healing Practice in Singapore”, *Transcultural Psychiatry*, Vol. 57, Issue 6, December 2020, Pages 786-800

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Lui C., “Overview on Development of ASEAN Traditional and Herbal Medicines”, *Chinese Herbal Medicines*, October 2021, Pages 441-450.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9476802/>

Micozzi M., *Celestial Healing: Energy, Mind and Spirit in Traditional Medicines of China, and East and Southeast Asia*, 2011.

Neilson-Bohlman L., Panzer A., Kindig D., “Culture and Society”, *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*, 2004.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK216037/>

Appendix A

- GOODNEWS Health
-170 Upper Bukit Timah Rd. #02-74, Singapore 588174
- Heng Foh Tong Medical Hall
-274 Bukit Batok East Ave. 4#01-92, Singapore 650274
- Eu Yan Sang
-50 Jurong Gateway Rd., #B1-48, Singapore 608549
- Hing Lam Choon Medical Hall
-281 Bukit Batok East Ave. 3, Singapore 650281
- Kong Who Tong
-247 Victoria Dt., Singapore 188033
- HB Essential Trading Post
-Buffalo Rd., Singapore 210662

Project Timeline/Itinerary

April 9th- May 19th: Read and annotate archival resources to gain general knowledge of the area, culture, and practices to apply in the field.

May 20th: Pack for two-week trip to Singapore.

May 21st: Depart from Nashville BNA Airport.

May 22nd- May 23rd: Arrive at Singapore SIN Airport. Check into Salvation Army Praise Haven center for lodging.

May 24th-May 28th: I will be visiting 4 locations Northwest of where I will be staying that specialize in herbal medication and remedies. To observe the celestial and spiritual healing, there are two temples of different religions within walking distance.

May 29th: Checking out of the Salvation Army Praise Haven center and relocating to YMCA at 1 Orchard Rd..

May 30th- May 31st: These dates are dedicated to visiting the shops and temples Northeast of the YMCA.

June 1st- June 3rd: I will focus on shops to the Southwest of my lodging. There are also multiple museums and natural gardens in the area.

June 4th-June 5th: Depart from Singapore SIN Airport.

June 12th: Begin to create a final research paper and presentation to present during Fall Open House. This will take multiple meetings with Dr. Leggett to review drafts, annotations, and presentation details. I am projecting that the completed research project will be completed before the last week of July to the first week of August.

Travel Justification



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Student Travel IE Funding Request Form

Name: [Redacted] M-number: [Redacted] Email: [Redacted]
 Major: Anthropology Minor: Forensic Anthropology College: College of Liberal Arts

Request use of program funds in connection with the following activity:
 Attend Conference Other Independent Undergraduate Research Project

City: Singapore Country: Singapore

Travel Dates: From: May 21, 2023 To: June 4, 2023

Explain purpose of the travel (attach your faculty letter of support; invitation letter or program material):
 The purpose of this trip is to conduct an undergraduate research project on the cultural practices of health and wellness. During the trip, I plan to observe which plants, foods, medications, and metaphysical practices are used to combat everyday illness such as headache or cough. I will be accompanying Dr. Ida Leggett of the Anthropology Department of which has prior knowledge of both the city and traditions of the culture.

Explain how the knowledge gained on the trip can be to your benefit in regards to internationalization:
 The knowledge to be gained on this trip will benefit me regarding internationalization by being able to place myself into their daily lives and nature. By being in this region of the world, I will be exposed to a different climate, culture, and economy that will impact my desired area of study as well as my own beliefs and traditions. The ability to travel will allow for my knowledge of the world to expand by going and experiencing, rather than just watching a documentary.

Estimated Costs		Proposed Funding Sources	
Description	Amount	Sources	Amount
Plane Ticket	\$2,223.67	Department	
Lodging	\$564.64	Personal	\$2,300
Meals	-\$400	Other:	
In-Country Transportation	-\$200	Total:	
Extra-Curricular Activities	-\$200		
Total Estimated Costs:	\$3,588.31	Difference:	\$1,288.31

A copy of a flight quote from Expedia, Orbitz, etc. must accompany this request. Funds will only be distributed as reimbursement.

Total IE Funding Request: \$1,288.31

[Redacted Signature] *March 14, 2023*
 Traveler's Signature Date

To be reimbursed, you must submit a Travel Authorization (TA) form to the Office of International Affairs (Jones Hall 159) 60 days prior to the date funds will be needed; then file a travel claim after completion of your travel to be reimbursed. If the award is issued in the form of a stipend, please be aware that this form of payment may affect your other grants or scholarships (please check with the financial aid office.) Amounts above \$600 may be reported to the IRS if an award is issued as a stipend for more than \$600.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Office of International Affairs does not approve approves \$ 1,288.31 to be used for Undergraduate Research Project to support this trip.

Vice President of International Affairs Signature *March 16, 2023*
 Date INDEX: 250343