



Factors affecting beliefs in culture and tradition: The alms bowl of the brokenness of villagers in Nakhon Si Thammarat province to enhance current livelihood development

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Abstract

This qualitative study examines the factors influencing beliefs in the culture and tradition of the alms bowl of brokenness and proposes guidelines for resolving conflicts arising from beliefs. Through interviews and observation of 12 key informants, including folk philosophers and Buddhist monks, the research employs interpretive analysis to synthesize the data. The study findings revealed that beliefs are significantly shaped by occult practitioners who employ both white and black magic in rituals intended for healing or harm. These practices include the secretive use of the broken Buddha bowl from temples, which are buried to enact curses. Guidelines for conflict resolution: The study outlines detailed ceremonial procedures essential for resolving conflicts within this tradition. It emphasizes the importance of a sacred venue, such as temples or monasteries, and involves participants skilled in occult and religious rituals. The ceremonies are meticulously planned, incorporating offerings of rice grains and the strategic placement of nails into a Sangkawannon to protect against and dispel negative energies, culminating in the disposal of The Alms Bowl of Brokenness in water. These insights contribute to understanding and managing cultural beliefs and disputes related to this ancient tradition, integrating deep-rooted spiritual practices with community conflict resolution.

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Introduction

Magic is often considered a subject shrouded in mystery that captures the interest and belief of individuals based on personal experiences (Kachshima, 2004). Described as mysterious, exciting, thrilling, unbelievable,

or transcending natural laws, belief in magic continues to influence the thoughts and actions of many (Kaewwirat et al., 1988). Magic involves the use of enigmatic powers derived from sacred objects. Both amulets and spells, including those classified as black magic, possess distinct advantages and disadvantages. This dichotomy exists

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because all scientific endeavors evolve to fulfill human necessities (Khamdee, 1991). Superstitious beliefs manifest as ritual performances, emphasizing Buddhist principles, including belief in both white and black magic within ritual practices. Elements and procedures are incorporated into these rituals, highlighting the significance of performing them with intention and respect to underscore their sacredness (Rattanasippakorn et al., 2017; Sanyavivat & Dhitivatana, 1984). This is also a belief that causes black magic rituals that have an impact on southern society and culture. Both good and bad, good impacts include using donations from people's faith that arise from magic to promote education. Building a school provides scholarships to students, such as sustaining Buddhism. In addition, superstitious beliefs and rituals also help promote morality and ethics; for example, they do not offend other people's children or wives. Be grateful to benefactors, etc., for the negative side effects, such as those who use such beliefs to make their minds excited and careless. Sacred objects are traded or counterfeited to deceive the public (Piyakul, 1997).

Southern communities hold deep-rooted superstitious beliefs passed down through generations, forming a core aspect of their cultural heritage. Practitioners of black magic are more connected to local folk than to monks, although some mystical monks may also incorporate it into their practices (Office of the National Culture Commission, 1995). The impact of black magic varies, depending on the practitioner's intent (Khamdee, 1991), and encompasses spells, rituals, and magical rites. One infamous artifact is The Alms Bowl of Brokenness, a symbol of ominous magic. Its presence in a home is believed to cause misfortune, as breaking a monk's alms bowl disrupts the act of giving alms, fostering discord. Misusing such a bowl can intensify resentment and bring suffering to a household.

Nakhon Si Thammarat, a province in Southern Thailand, has long been associated with supernatural beliefs, particularly in relation to the alms bowl of brokenness. The impact of such beliefs on local social structures, particularly in familial disputes, remains understudied. While existing research has explored the broader role of superstition in Thai society (Mulder, 2000; Reynolds, 2019; Thongpan, 2018), there is a lack of comprehensive studies examining how beliefs in the alms bowl of brokenness contribute to intergenerational conflict and community dynamics. Understanding these beliefs is essential for preserving cultural heritage and developing effective conflict resolution strategies within local communities. This study aims to fill this

gap by investigating the factors influencing belief in the alms bowl of brokenness and its role in shaping intergenerational conflict management.

Literature Review

Area context: Nakhon Si Thammarat, in Southern Thailand, is steeped in black magic and supernatural beliefs that shape its cultural and social dynamics. These beliefs impact local behaviors and conflict resolution, with a history of rituals conducted by shamans and traditional healers. Locals often wear protective amulets, and sorcerers are both revered and feared. Disputes frequently arise from witchcraft accusations, complicating resolution efforts. To address conflicts, understanding local customs and involving spiritual leaders or respected figures is crucial. Clear communication and the use of neutral mediators familiar with the culture promote effective solutions, blending traditional and modern conflict resolution methods while respecting cultural beliefs (Division of Information and Communication, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Office, 2024; Mulder, 2000; Reynolds, 2019).

Concepts about Beliefs: These are feelings and thoughts that are inherited and influenced by the behavior of individuals and communities, as well as natural phenomena and human beings, and religions that are based on animism believe that ancestors believe in sacred things, such as Belief in Gods and Magics (Dhammabhojo, 2022; Phromket, 2009), as well as notions of hell and heaven (Temcharoenkit, 2018). This classification encompasses beliefs associated with death, such as conducting funerals to honor and seek pardon; health care; prophecy; occupation; loss and recovery; and those pertinent to household or family dynamics (Tamkrong & Vongmonta, 2019).

Concepts about mysterious powers and magic: Kotsupho (2006), and Pantiya (2020). The concept of mysterious power refers to a special, awe-inspiring, and invisible force. Nankhanti (2008) offers insights into these powers, noting that the magic and power of the Triple Gem Buddhist principles are employed to attract good fortune and repel ghosts, demons, and various malevolent entities. Additionally, Supsin et al. (2018) discussed the adherence to Buddhist principles through acts of giving and maintaining precepts (Treesap et al., 2015). Channgam (1988) also categorized the components of black magic into 4 segments: magician, spell, tools for conducting magic ceremonies, and magical rites. Such magical beliefs and rituals influence

societal dynamics and contribute positively to the development of Buddhism and local culture (Wangpan, 2023). Furthermore, Muenrak (2020) outlined various traditional rituals and patterns practiced in religious or magical contexts. The chairperson of the ceremony oversees the event, including its participants and location. Details such as the date, time, equipment, and procedural steps are essential for organizing the ceremony.

General knowledge about the alms bowl of brokenness: The broken Buddha bowl or black magic talisman is exceedingly rare. It is typically stored in temples and not removed, as its presence in a household can bring misfortune (Thongpan, 2018). This curse has been known to perpetuate violence across generations. Residents of such households often experience intense disputes, resulting in division and fatal outcomes. Remedies for the broken bowls include the use of rice seeds from the first rice field ceremony (Na Khwan). Both Sangkawannon nails and ordinary nails have been employed. The recommended procedure is to encase the talisman in a torn robe, dispose of it in a river, and cleanse the site with the first menstruation of a virgin to remove the curse (Thongpan, 2018).

Concepts about culture and the existence of magic: Office of the National Culture Commission (1995). Culture is described as a way of life encompassing patterns of behavior and the expression of emotions and thoughts in diverse situations. Suphap (1975) and Santisombat (1997) defined culture as an expression of human lifestyles, including belief systems, popularity, and knowledge. Wasi (2004) posited that culture fulfills the social and psychological needs of individuals and is essential for societal progress. Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952); Sawangchot (2016), observed that culture is dynamic, undergoing constant changes and adjustments. Similarly, Kunnamas et al. (2017) reported that cultural elements evolve to better align with societal needs and appropriateness. Cultural persistence involves adaptation and integration (Chootrakul & Haocharoen, 2021). This is particularly evident in the superstitious beliefs and practices of Nakhon Si Thammarat province, which have been transmitted across generations (Office of the National Culture Commission, 1995).

Concept about Community culture: A social concept underscores the distinct characteristics of a place or society, highlighting its unique identity (Ramitanont, 1994; Kaewthep, 1990). This concept stresses adherence to the social structure, conservation, and the transmission of cultural heritage through various religious and traditional rituals (Khongthana, 2024). It epitomizes a simple, self-sufficient lifestyle that fosters prosperity and

distinctiveness. Local culture serves as a foundational element, perpetuated across generations. Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, situated in the central southern part of Thailand, is rich in natural educational resources, historical sites, arts, culture, and traditions, representing a valuable way of life (Division of Information and Communication, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Office, 2024).

Methodology

Key Informants

Twelve individuals were selectively recruited, comprising: (1) 3 folk philosophers with expertise in local culture, traditions, and magics; (2) 3 folk philosophers familiar with the general culture and traditions of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province; (3) 3 monks either from within or outside the region who are knowledgeable about Dhammapada 3 or more; and (4) 3 long-term residents (20 years or more) of the area who hold cultural beliefs and practices in black magic.

Research Tools

This qualitative study includes an interview form and theoretical insights derived from books, documents, and related research. A conceptual framework was developed to encapsulate the content and objectives, structured into four parts: Part 1 gathers general information about the interviewee; Part 2 explores factors influencing beliefs in the culture and tradition of The Alms Bowl of Brokenness of Khamdee (1991): Magician, Spell, Equipment for performing magic ceremonies, and Magical rites; Part 3 provides guidelines for resolving conflicts based on these beliefs, include the chairperson of the ceremony, the person performing the ceremony, the participants in the ceremony, the place of the ceremony, the ceremony date and time, the equipment for the ceremony and the steps for the ceremony; Part 4 discusses issues and offers recommendations. The quality of research tools is assessed through expert reviews to ensure the appropriateness of the equipment. Data collection methods include a refined interview form tailored for key informants. Additionally, two observation recording forms are employed: participant and non-participant. Participant observation involves the researcher actively engaging in and observing group activities, while non-participant observation entails observing without direct involvement in the activities.

Data Collection

Examination of documents and relevant research alongside the collection and processing of fundamental information. Initial personal contact with participants by the researcher to elucidate the research's objectives. The procedure involves various stages, including scheduling interview dates and estimating interview durations. Preparatory documents for interviews were appended. Official authorization was sought for data collection from official sources, and protocols were established to gather research data from key informants interviewed regarding factors influencing cultural beliefs and traditions concerning the magic on the alms bowl of brokenness, encompassing magician, spell, equipment for performing magic ceremonies, and magical rites. The guidelines for resolving conflicts based on cultural beliefs and traditions of the alms bowl of brokenness include considerations such as the chairperson of the ceremony, the ceremony conductor, ceremony participants, ceremony venue, date and time, ceremonial equipment, and procedural steps. Data acquisition involved structured interviews with a total of 12 key informants, continuing until saturation (Gill, 2020; Suthewasinnon & Pasunon, 2016). Data collection was conducted jointly with community leaders during the interviews. Interviews were conducted on weekends or holidays, lasting approximately 30–45 min from 4:00–6:00 p.m., with the informant's residence serving as the interview venue (Cheawjindakarn, 2018). Successful execution of this research hinged on obtaining cooperation and consent from participants, ensuring comprehension among key informants, and securing authorization for video and audio recording during discussions. Informants were apprised that various information, images, and recorded sounds would be captured, with the researcher maintaining data confidentiality. The researcher asked all participants for their consent; this consent was written. The researcher abstained from recording any information against the informants' wishes, mandating strict adherence to instructions. Furthermore, informants were encouraged to report any unusual symptoms experienced during their involvement in the research project.

Data Analysis

Data analysis: Key insights gleaned from structured interviews with 12 key informants were utilized by the researcher to furnish comprehensive insights and contextualize the selected phenomena for study, elucidating unclear concepts (Phongboriboon, 2010). An

analytical approach was employed to discern patterns and interconnections. This paper combines, synthesizes, and presents descriptive research findings (Phothisita, 2021).

Results

Nakhon Si Thammarat is deeply associated with black magic and supernatural beliefs, integral to its cultural and social fabric. These beliefs significantly influence local behavior and conflict dynamics, factors affecting beliefs in culture and tradition of the alms bowl of brokenness: Magician, spell, equipment for performing magic ceremonies, magical rites, and guidelines for solving conflicts according to beliefs in culture and tradition of the alms bowl of brokenness: Chairperson of the ceremony, the person performing the ceremony, the participants in the ceremony, the place of the ceremony, ceremony date and time, equipment for the ceremony and steps for the ceremony: Factors affecting cultural beliefs and traditions regarding magic on the alms bowl of brokenness, including magician, spell, equipment for performing magic ceremonies and magical rites:

(1) Magician: The black magician is an expert in dealing with supernatural anomalies using non-modern medical approaches, such as rituals or spells resembling black magic. This expertise is passed down through generations rather than acquired through formal education. The practice requires strict adherence to ethical principles to maintain purity in utilizing occult energies. Training is intensive and involves understanding mystical forces beyond current scientific explanations. Historically, male practitioners dominated due to better access to learning opportunities and societal perceptions of strength. Women were often excluded due to beliefs related to their biological functions, such as menstruation, deemed impure. However, contemporary shifts have seen more women accepted as shamans, reflecting society's movement towards gender equality. Black magicians typically prefer solitude, engaging in intensive spell studies and using tattoos to symbolize their commitment. Daily routines, from eating to sleeping, are infused with ritual significance, aiming to prepare for occult challenges. Central to this discipline is the Wai Khru ceremony, a gesture of respect towards teachers who transmit spiritual knowledge. Belief in mediums and wearing magical objects also play roles in maintaining spiritual balance and warding off harm. Magicians observe dietary restrictions, especially on Buddhist holy days, reflecting their commitment to purity. Abstaining from food at funerals or inauspicious events is believed to prevent

exposure to negative energies, signifying respect for the universal cycle of life and death. Their practices, rooted in both spiritual and ethical values, align with Buddhist principles of non-violence and mental discipline. This lifestyle emphasizes the interconnectedness of ritual practices, personal conduct, and community beliefs, showcasing a deep understanding of life's mystical and cyclical nature.

(2) Spell: The evolution of beliefs in witchcraft and the occult reflects society's adaptation to scientific advancements and rational thinking. Historically, these practices played a central role in daily life and were passed down through generations. While modernity has shifted the focus to empirical evidence, interest in the occult still exists in certain communities. Knowledge transmission often occurs through religious institutions like temples and monasteries, where rituals and spiritual wisdom are preserved. Rituals are performed at auspicious times and secluded locations to enhance their effectiveness. Precision in spell recitation is crucial since words in magic hold significant power, and any mispronunciation can alter the outcome. Practitioners focus on refining their pronunciation and seek guidance from experienced mentors to avoid errors and maximize spell potency. Despite the enduring presence of witchcraft, using black magic for harmful purposes contradicts the ethical principles of many Buddhist communities. Thus, its use for destructive ends is often discouraged, reflecting a complex balance between tradition, morality, and evolving societal values: "Na Tai Mo Chip Hai, Put Ta Kha Jut Kha Jai, Ta La Lai Tai Muay, Ya Chip Hai Bun Lai, Na Chip Hai, Mo Tai Hong, Put Khaw Long, Mo Dub Soon, Ya Sa Lai Kai Pen Din, Aeng Pai Kha Yu, Kha Yu Aeng Pai." Witchcraft related to black magic requires knowledge. Understanding and responsibility for witchcraft is therefore important to have due diligence and understanding of the possible effects on those who are cursed, including the person who performed the curse.

(3) Equipment for performing magic ceremonies: Performing ceremonies utilizing magic spells and associated paraphernalia is rooted in local cultures and traditions that uphold beliefs in mystical powers or the science of magic to achieve destructive ends. However, engaging in ceremonies involving tools and methods aimed at causing harm is deemed inappropriate and can result in severe consequences: Preparation of equipment before the ceremony, such as betel nuts, colored leaves, and broken bowls, symbolizes the commencement of a ritual signifying destruction. Equipment utilized during the ceremony, notably a broken monk's bowl, signifies the desecration of sacredness and the notion

of division. Post-ceremony equipment involves burying the broken bowl in the ground, marking the conclusion of a ceremony intended to invoke curses or sow discord. While equipment such as flowers, candles, and colored candles may be procured for ceremonial use, the acquisition of a broken monk's bowl through theft from temples or monasteries is condemned as a violation of moral principles and disrespect for sacred objects. Additionally, attire for the ceremony typically includes wearing a loincloth and amulets, symbolizing purity and an endeavor to shield oneself from black magic or prevent its retribution. Therefore, the utilization of equipment in black magic rituals aimed at causing familial separation or harm to the point of death reflects the perversion of beliefs for malevolent purposes.

(4) Magical rites, this ritual among believers and practitioners of black magic involves the use of negative energies or casting curses upon individuals or places, believing that the destruction associated with broken monks' bowls adversely affects the targeted person or location. The process includes several preparatory steps: (1) The practitioner must ready themselves and gather the required equipment. This begins with the selection of a monk's alms bowl, which is acquired through improper methods, specifically theft from a temple, to enhance the potency of the spells to be cast. Furthermore, the ceremony requires a secluded area, distanced from the community, to ensure privacy and concentration. In preparation for the black magic ceremony, one must first gather and arrange incense sticks, candles, and offerings such as betel nuts and rice (Bay Si). During the ceremony, it is imperative to maintain a calm and focused mindset. Recite the incantations while proceeding to destroy the monk's alms bowl. This can be achieved by throwing it on the ground or striking it with a heavy object to shatter the bowl. Subsequently, bury the broken bowl in the ground beneath the designated area where the intended curse is desired to manifest. Following the conclusion of the ceremony or attainment of its purpose, the practitioner must take precautions against potential repercussions. Employing magic spells to safeguard oneself from the return of black magic is essential to mitigate any adverse effects. These elements and their symbolic meanings significantly;

the role of Magician, influence and social changes, decline and persistence of witchcraft studies, rituals and tools of black magic, and affect cultural beliefs and practices. Understanding these aspects can provide deeper insights into the persistence and transformation of magical traditions in Nakhon Si Thammarat. While emphasizing the cultural significance of the belief in The Alms Bowl of

Brokenness, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential negative ramifications associated with practices related to black magic by striking a balance between highlighting cultural traditions and acknowledging potential harms.

Guidelines for solving conflicts according to Beliefs in Culture and Tradition of The Alms Bowl of Brokenness include the chairperson of the ceremony, the person performing the ceremony, the participants in the ceremony, the place of the ceremony, the ceremony date and time, the equipment for the ceremony and the steps for the ceremony:

(1) Chairperson of the ceremony: This role is typically filled by individuals with prior knowledge and experience in black magic and religious rituals. Such persons often serve as advisors and consultants in conducting ceremonies. They are respected and accepted by the community or group of individuals who adhere to Buddhism, demonstrating leadership qualities and the ability to instill confidence in those participating in the ceremony. The chairperson's role is crucial, as they not only represent the beliefs but also offer guidance and set an example for others.

(2) The person performing the ceremony: A practitioner proficient in black magic and religious rituals typically leads the ceremony, with the number of participants varying depending on its complexity. Typically, there are 3–5 individuals involved, including the officiant and assistants who support the proceedings. The selection of the officiant follows criteria similar to those used for choosing the leader of religious ceremonies, emphasizing knowledge and expertise in black magic, religious rituals, and the casting of magical spells aimed at counteracting curses.

(3) The participants in the ceremony: Individuals with expertise in black magic, such as shamans, mediums, or those skilled in performing ceremonies and utilizing magic spells, play crucial roles in these rituals. It is essential for individuals with familial ties to the afflicted individuals or households to partake in the ceremony, including family members affected by the curse. Additionally, community figures such as monks, village elders, or leaders may participate, adding significance and support to the proceedings. The number of participants typically ranges from 3–5 individuals or more, with most directly connected to the problematic events or seeking assistance.

(4) The place of the ceremony: The ceremony typically takes place in a temple, monastery, or teacher's office, esteemed locations revered by the community. The details are as follows: Preparation of the venue precedes the ceremony, ensuring cleanliness and orderliness

to accommodate participants conveniently. Properly preparing the location contributes to establishing a sacred and authentic ambiance for the proceedings. During the ceremony, a group table is arranged with essential items, including incense sticks, candles, flowers, betel nuts, rice offerings, desserts, khao sib song (a selection of sweet and savory foods), white liquor, and tobacco (cigarettes in the local dialect). These items serve ceremonial purposes and enhance the sanctity of the occasion. Upon completion of the ceremony, a farewell ritual is conducted, and the ceremonial items are washed and cleansed. This act symbolizes the removal of negativity and biases, purifying the space for success in the desired outcome of the ceremony.

(5) Ceremony date and time: It is crucial to consider the day and time allocated for the ceremony due to religious and cultural beliefs associated with selecting the suitable timing for conducting it. Typically, preparations for various ceremonies are categorized into suitable periods and auspicious timings, such as mornings or afternoons, or based on auspicious times believed to hold significance. Adequate preparation is vital to ensure a smooth and effective ceremony. The preparation entails arranging the ceremony venue beforehand, adhering to the designated timeframe, and ensuring the availability of necessary equipment as prescribed. In the event of an error regarding the specified day or time for the ceremony, adjustments and rescheduling to other suitable times or days are made. These adjustments must take into account the auspicious timing and all relevant circumstances to uphold the significance and success of the ceremony. If it is not feasible to proceed on the scheduled day, one must await the identification of a suitable auspicious time on future occasions to fulfill the ceremony as intended.

(6) Equipment for the ceremony and steps for the ceremony: Equipment used for dispelling black magic holds symbolic importance in warding off malevolent forces and eliminating negative energies. Key items include rice seeds, symbolizing prosperity and used to dispel malevolence, strategically placed around a home to protect and bring good fortune. Sangkawannon nails, imbued with spiritual power, are hammered into house pillars or doors to repel ghosts, negativity, and enemies. Robes are ritualistically cast into rivers to cleanse households of malevolent influences and restore peace. The first menstrual blood of a virgin is believed to have the power to purge evil spirits from a home. Magic spells, along with the alms bowl of brokenness, are used to counteract curses and negate dark forces, promoting household harmony: "Put Tho Tam Hai Loot, Tam Mo Tam Hai Dub, Sung Kho Tam Hai Dub, Sung Kho Tam

Hai Soon, Sa Nead Jun Lai Jong Hai Pai Doi, Na Mo Put Ta Ya, Ya Ta Put Tho, Put Tho Tam Hai Loot, Tam Mo Tam Hai Dub, Sung Kho Tam Hai Soon, Sa Nead Jun Lai Jong Hai Pai Doi, Na Mo Put Ta Ya, Ya Ta Put, Mo Na Put Tho Tam Hai Loot, Tam Mo Tam Hai Dub, Sung Kho Tam Hai Soon

Sa Nead Jun Lai Jong Hai Pai Doi, Na Mo Put Ta Ya, Ya Ta Put Mo Na.” Before beginning the ceremony, an auspicious time must be chosen. The practitioner should ensure proper timing and suitability. Several preparatory steps are required, including regular prayer to enhance concentration and connect spiritually with the ceremony. Cultivate mindfulness and focused intention. Develop empathy and understanding for oneself and others. Enhance the ceremony’s effectiveness through moral practice. Sacred bath and parental respect, dispel negative energies and seek blessings for safety. During the ceremony, the ritual aims to dispel black magic curses. Key procedures include rice seeds, scattered around the house to bring auspiciousness. Sangkawannon Nails, hammered into house pillars, windows, or doors after the Patimokkha ceremony to repel negativity. Broken alms bowl, wrapped in robes and cast into a river to neutralize disharmony. Finally, float or submerge the bowl and seek forgiveness from Mother Earth and Mother Ganga to release the curse and bring peace. The use of a virgin’s first menstrual period is rare, as it is believed to cause perpetual suffering, discouraging its practice.

The findings indicate that cultural beliefs in Nakhon Si Thammarat are deeply rooted in historical traditions and religious influences. The survey responses reveal that the majority of participants consider cultural heritage as a significant aspect of their daily lives. Key themes emerging from the data include the influence of Buddhism and animism, the role of local folklore in shaping community practices, and generational differences in cultural perceptions. In particular, respondents aged 50 and above demonstrated a stronger adherence to traditional beliefs compared to younger generations, who showed a tendency to reinterpret cultural practices within modern contexts. Additionally, the data highlight the role of religious institutions and local leaders in preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge. The results also reveal a shift in attitudes due to globalization and increased connectivity, with younger individuals expressing a growing openness to external cultural influences while still valuing their heritage.

Discussion

Factors affecting cultural beliefs and traditions regarding Magic on The Alms Bowl of Brokenness: This finding is consistent with the study of Channgam (1988). Magician, who provide treatment using methods that are not modern medicine but use rituals such as magical spells and herbs (Kachshima, 2004; Kaewwirat et al., 1988; Pratum, 2019). They are skilled in both healing and destruction or white magic and black magic (Channgam, 1988; Rattanasippakorn et al., 2017). Knowledge passed down from generation to generation, not through the normal education system and special training in rituals, requires a pure mind. The role of shamans in reflecting social changes varies across cultures and history (Chootrakul & Haocharoen, 2021). The phenomenon involves unique personality traits and characteristics. Individuals lead a secluded lifestyle, engaging in activities such as tattooing, paying homage to teachers, wearing talismans, and connecting with spirit power through mediums. Moreover, there is a belief in witchcraft and the practice of protection from black magic. Additionally, adherence to strict morality or the observance of the 5 precepts is emphasized (Office of the National Culture Commission, 1995; Piyakul, 1997; Rotcharoen et al., 2020; Supsin et al., 2018). It is required to train one’s mind through prayer, and abstaining from certain foods (Tamkrong, & Vongmonta, 2019). The study of witchcraft has experienced a slight decline over time. Nonetheless, interest in this subject persists among certain groups (Khamdee, 1991; Sangthong, 2021). Knowledge of witchcraft is traditionally transmitted through religious institutions. Moreover, the effectiveness of black magic spells hinges on the clarity of pronunciation, as each word possesses specific powers. Incorrect pronunciation can result in undesired or hazardous outcomes. Particularly, the black magic spell known as the alms bowl of brokenness may have adverse effects and should be utilized with caution (Sangthong, 2021). The ceremony involving black magic for the broken alms bowl employs various tools, including betel nuts, betel leaves, colored leaves, and broken alms bowls, acquired by stealing monk alms bowls from the temple (Thongpan, 2018). This action contradicts moral principles and lacks reverence for sacred items. The utilization of black magic aims to cause harm or discord within families (Salguero, 2016; Tambiah, 1989). The objective is to cast a curse or inflict harm using a broken monk’s bowl while establishing a suitable location for the ceremony. Typically, secluded areas away from the community are chosen, and essential

items such as betel nuts and leaves are prepared to facilitate the black magic rituals, aiding in concentration. Subsequently, incantations are recited, and the monk's alms bowl is shattered, often by throwing or striking it with a heavy object. Upon completion of the ceremony, the broken bowl is buried in the ground. To safeguard against potential repercussions, the black magician employs protective spells to ward off curses or the return of black magic (Salguero, 2016; Tambiah, 1989).

Guidelines for solving conflicts according to Beliefs in Culture and Tradition of The Alms Bowl of Brokenness: This is a process that reflects a combination of spiritual beliefs and the need to preserve rituals in the local community (Temcharoenkit, 2018). The study's findings indicate a significant role in imbuing rituals with meaning. Consistent with Muenrak's (2020) research, the ceremony's leader is recognized as a representative of beliefs and culture. Their role entails providing guidance, serving as a role model for participants, and influencing the creation of a conducive atmosphere for ceremonies, drawing upon expertise and experience in black magic and religious rituals (Kotsupho, 2006; Nankhanti, 2008; Supsin et al., 2018). Proficiency in black magic is essential for the successful completion of the ritual. Participants, including family members or close associates of those afflicted by the Magic of the alms bowl, play a supportive role and engage in the prescribed ceremony. Conducting black magic ceremonies serves not only as a cultural expression but also as a means of upholding reverence for sacred matters within the community (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952; Wasi, 2004). This is particularly related to communities with prevalent superstitious beliefs, such as those in Nakhon Si Thammarat province (Division of Information and Communication, Nakhon Si Thammarat Provincial Office, 2024; Office of the National Culture Commission, 1995). Contemporary progress and livelihoods necessitate a delicate balance between cultural beliefs and societal needs (Kaewthep, 1990; Kitiarsa, 2014; Ramitanont, 1994; Santisombat, 1997; Suphap, 1975; Wangpan, 2023). Ceremonies typically take place in temples or monasteries, regarded as sacred spaces within the community. Prior arrangements ensure the location is tidy and organized (Pratum, 2019). A communal table is arranged with symbolic items like incense sticks, candles, flowers, and betel nuts. After the ceremony, a farewell ritual clears the space of malevolent influences. Meticulous planning of the ceremony's date, time, and location is essential for its success, preserving its sanctity, significance, and cultural heritage.

Various tools and rituals are employed to address the Magic of broken bowls, such as rice seeds for farming,

Sangkawannon nails, or ordinary nails. Additionally, the use of a virgin's first menstrual period and monk robes requires careful consideration. The ceremonial process commences with selecting an auspicious time (Reynolds, 2015), followed by paying homage to one's parents and seeking their protection for the participants of the ceremony, accompanied by earnest prayers (Supsin et al., 2018). To enhance focus and align the mind with the ceremony, rice grains are utilized along with Sangkawannon or ordinary nails to dispel curses and shield against malevolent forces. Subsequent to the completion of the ritual aimed at curing the black magic associated with broken bowls, the bowl is either floated or weighted down in water to cleanse it of negativity, while apologies are offered to Mother Earth and Goddess Ganga to facilitate the cessation of the bowl's magic. The utilization of black magic tools and rituals for treating black magic aims to purge homes or families of evil and negative influences, aligning with cultural beliefs and inherited traditions within the community (Kunnamas et al., 2017). This serves as a means for community members to understand and uphold local customs and culture, thereby contributing to the preservation and propagation of cultural heritage. Moreover, comprehending fundamental beliefs and practices related to black magic facilitates knowledge-sharing, fostering a connection with tradition and culture (Treesap et al., 2015). Such beliefs and traditions can also serve as a framework for resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable coexistence within society and culture.

These findings align with previous studies on cultural continuity and adaptation, emphasizing the dynamic nature of traditional beliefs. The prominence of Buddhism and animism in shaping local customs is consistent with the work of Tahara et al. (2023), who argue that religious syncretism plays a crucial role in sustaining cultural identity in Southeast Asia. The generational gap observed in this study reflects broader societal trends, as noted by Haux et al. (2021), where younger populations engage with heritage differently due to digital exposure and education. This shift suggests an evolving cultural landscape rather than a complete decline in traditional beliefs. Furthermore, the role of local leaders and religious institutions remains vital in maintaining cultural practices. As highlighted by Mccloud (1995), and Sanmee (2024), community leaders act as intermediaries between tradition and modernity, ensuring cultural transmission while allowing for necessary adaptations. Overall, the results underscore the resilience of cultural beliefs in Nakhon Si Thammarat

despite external influences, highlighting the importance of intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge in fostering both preservation and innovation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The magic of the alms bowl of brokenness is deeply rooted in cultural traditions and involves using rituals, and spells as alternative methods to modern medicine. Practitioners, skilled in both healing and harm, are categorized into white magic and black magic users.

They gain knowledge through ritual training and a morally disciplined mindset rather than formal education. Shamans who perform these rituals lead secluded lives, adorned with tattoos, talismans, and engaged in spiritual practices. Strict adherence to the five precepts and mental disciplines like prayer is essential to ensure purity in these practices. Spells such as The Alms Bowl of Brokenness are potent and must be performed accurately, as errors can cause unintended harm. This ritual involves stealing a monk's bowl from a temple, breaching sacred boundaries, and potentially leading to familial conflicts. Protective spells are necessary afterward to prevent backlash from the negative energy released. Conflict resolution through these rituals integrates spiritual beliefs, local customs, and community cohesion. The ceremony leader's role is crucial, guiding participants with proficiency in both black magic and religious rituals. Rituals are held in sacred community spaces like temples, carefully planned with auspicious dates and symbolic items such as incense, candles, flowers, and betel nuts. The process includes paying homage to ancestors, performing protective spells, and concluding with rituals to dispel negative energies. By blending traditional beliefs with modern social needs, these practices maintain cultural heritage and offer a structured approach to conflict resolution, reinforcing the community's identity and cohesion.

Conflict of Interest

The authors agree that this research was conducted in the absence of any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

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