A long, narrow, brightly lit hallway with a repeating pattern of columns and arches, leading to a bright light at the end. The perspective is from the end of the hallway, looking down its length. The walls are light-colored with decorative moldings. The floor is made of large, light-colored tiles. The lighting is bright and even, creating a sense of depth and perspective.

Pathways to Healing:

**Harvard Program
in Refugee Trauma**

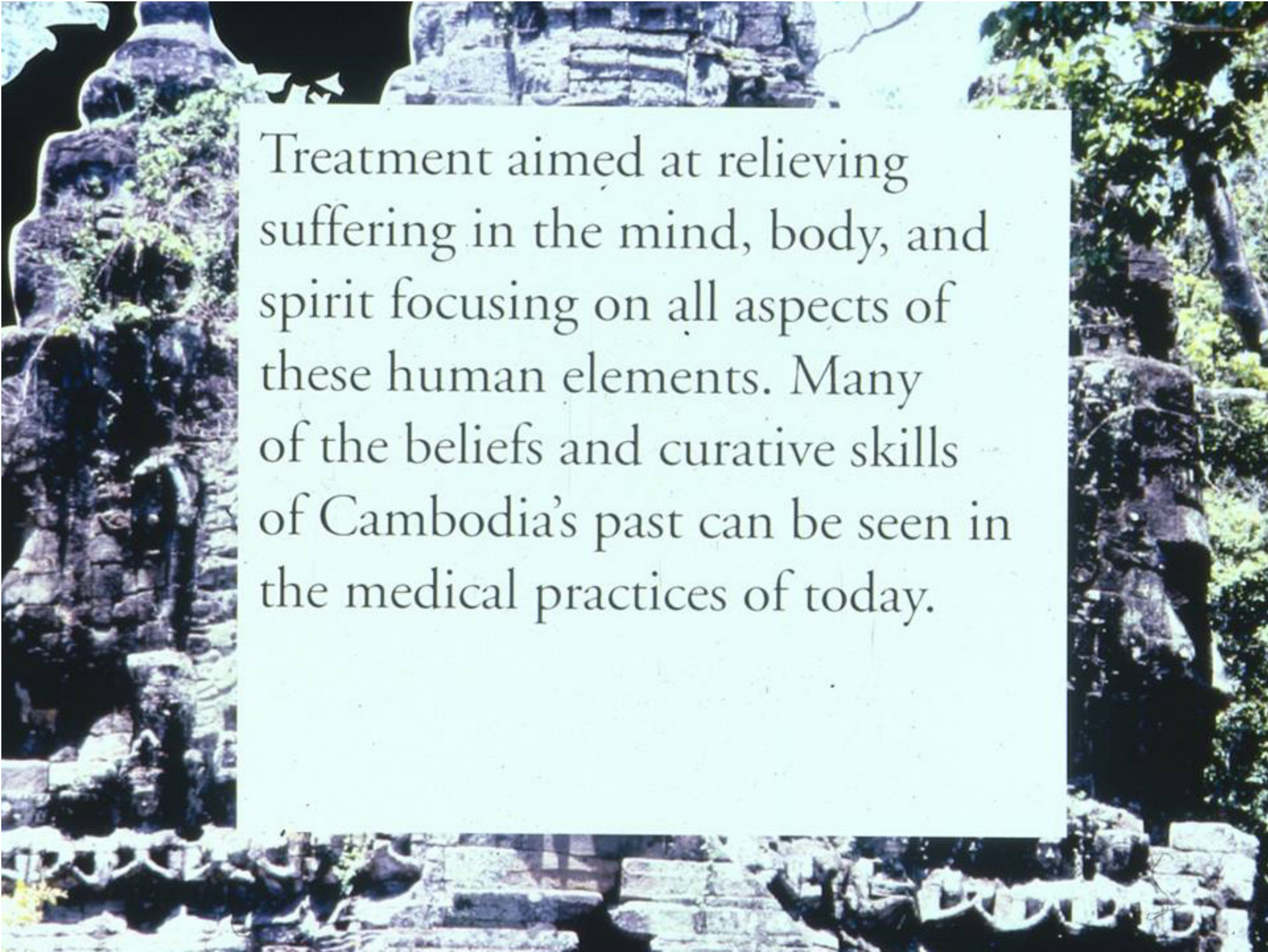
Ancient Healing



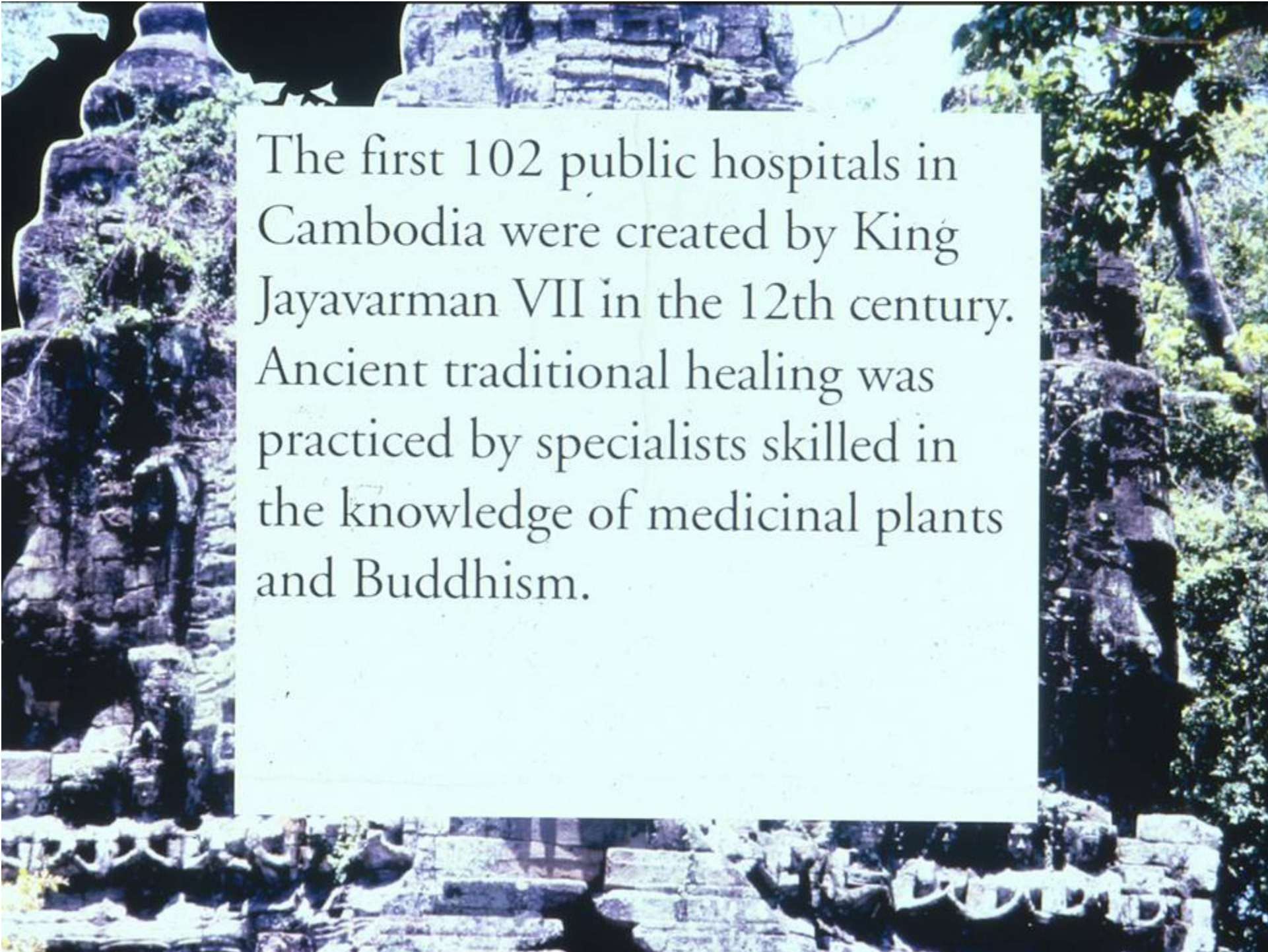
The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone carvings from Angkor Wat. On the left, there is a large, weathered stone face with a serene expression, partially covered in green moss and vines. To the right, another stone face is visible, though less distinct. The overall scene is set against a bright, slightly overcast sky, with some green foliage visible in the upper right corner.

Healing Scenes from Angkor Wat

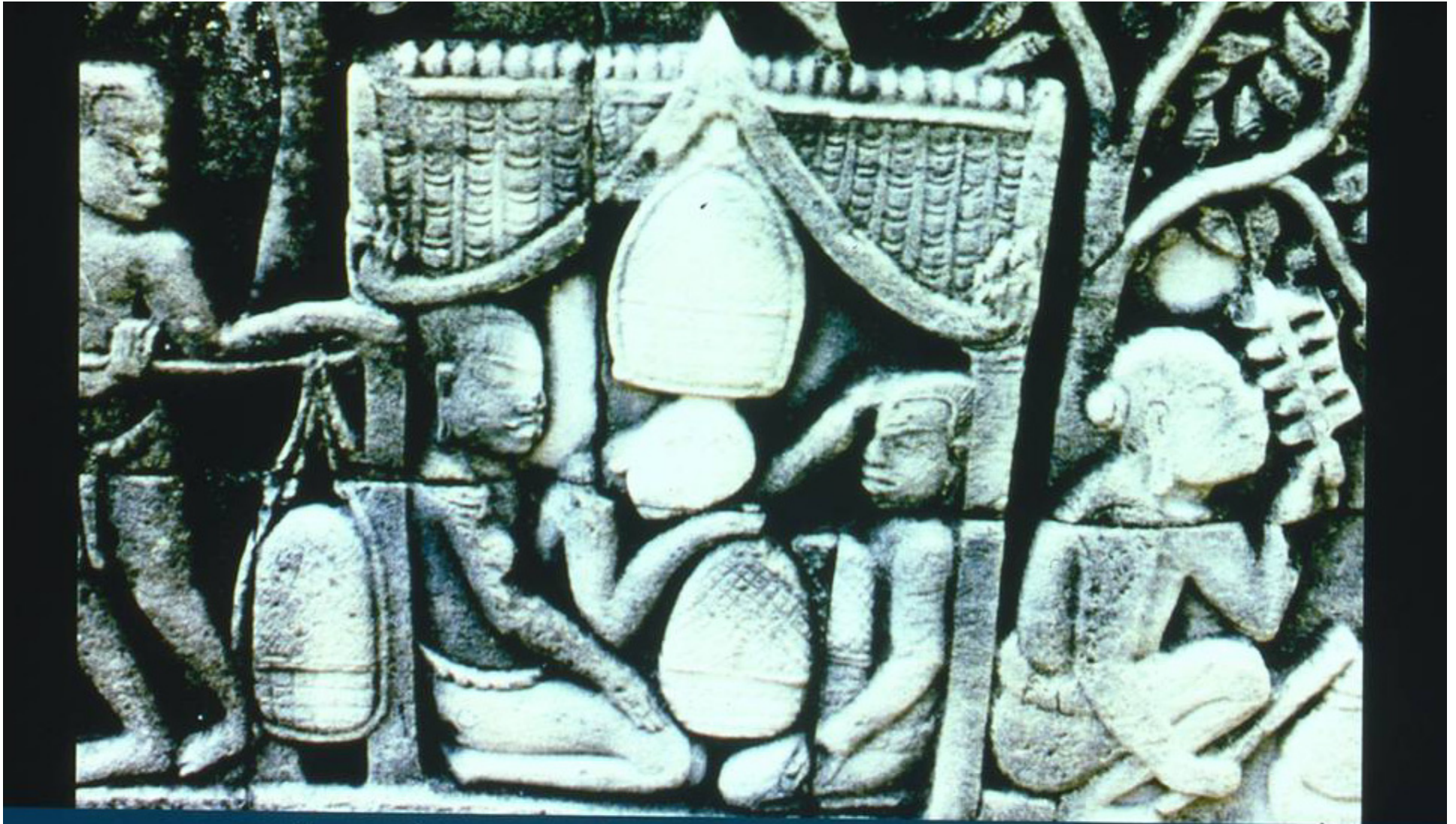
Cambodian society has an ancient healing tradition. The beautiful scenes that follow are from the temples of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap province built from the 7th to 11th centuries. They reveal many aspects of Cambodian healing.

The background of the slide features ancient stone carvings. On the left, a large, weathered stone face with a serene expression is visible, partially covered by green moss and vines. To the right, another stone carving depicts a figure, possibly a deity or a person in a specific pose, also showing signs of age and nature's growth. The overall scene is set against a backdrop of lush green foliage and trees, suggesting an ancient temple or historical site in a tropical environment.

Treatment aimed at relieving suffering in the mind, body, and spirit focusing on all aspects of these human elements. Many of the beliefs and curative skills of Cambodia's past can be seen in the medical practices of today.

The background of the slide features a photograph of ancient stone ruins in Cambodia. The image shows weathered stone structures with intricate carvings, including what appears to be a large, partially obscured face or figure. The ruins are surrounded by lush green foliage and trees, suggesting a jungle environment. The lighting is bright, highlighting the textures of the stone and the vibrant colors of the plants.

The first 102 public hospitals in Cambodia were created by King Jayavarman VII in the 12th century. Ancient traditional healing was practiced by specialists skilled in the knowledge of medicinal plants and Buddhism.



A male traveler seeks shelter, rest and rejuvenation at a rest area for Khmer people.



A woman of nobility comforts a young man in distress and demonstrates compassion and care.



A pregnant woman with a strong abdominal pain is being helped by a midwife and three assistants.



In the waiting room of a medical clinic, an ordinary person and a princess wait to see the doctor.



An ill woman lies on a big basket. Her two worried sons are trying to help her. The man with a scarf, her husband, is opening the basket to get her medicine.



A patient from a noble family rests on a big pillow. One man comforts the patient by putting his hand on his head; the other man asks for medication.



Prasat Neak Poan, built by King Jayavarman VII to treat the illnesses of his subjects, represents the World and the power of traditional healing.



At Prasat Neak Poan, the Horse Palaha in Mahayana Buddhism provides help and safety to people suffering from illness.



Prasat Taprum Kel is the best preserved example of the 102 hospitals built by King Jayavarman VII in Cambodia.

Theoretical Foundation



Mental Illness

▲ *Definition:* Every society has a way of classifying emotional distress associated with illness. In Western countries this is called mental illness. A person is considered to have a mental illness when *emotional suffering* is associated with problems in *thinking, behavior* and *deterioration in functioning*.

Mental Illness

▲ The more severe the emotional suffering becomes, the more functioning becomes impaired. As the patient recovers, functioning usually returns to normal. Patients express their emotional distress through physical and emotional symptoms. Some may feel spiritually disturbed.

Mental Illness

▲ Many patients will show signs of abnormal thinking and actions at work, home, and in the community. The signs and symptoms of mental illness are labeled and treated in Western medicine as “mental disorders” and “psychiatric diseases”.

Mental Illness

▲ Since these terms for mental illness are not known in traditional Khmer society, we use the term *Cambodian Categories of Emotional Distress* (“CED”) to describe the Cambodian way of classifying states of emotional distress.

Categories of Emotional Distress/CED

▲ *Definition:* CED is a system of classifying states of emotional distress used by Cambodian society. Specific CEDs are popular diagnoses given by the community. Each CED has its own signs and symptoms which can be observed and identified by the ill.

CED

▲ person, family and friends, or the traditional healer. A person who is ill from a CED is expected by the community to seek help from a Kruu Khmer, a Buddhist healer, or a family elder. Rarely does the community or the ill person believe that their illness should be treated by a medical doctor.

CED

▲ However, the patient will bring his CED symptoms to the medical doctor seeking a cure, especially if traditional treatments have failed. CEDs have never been written down; they have been informally passed along from generation to generation.

DSM-IV

▲ *Definition:* The DSM-IV is a collection of psychiatric diagnoses used by Western doctors, particularly in the United States. The doctor makes a DSM-IV diagnosis by examining the patient, collecting a list of signs and symptoms, and consulting the DSM-IV manual to match the list to the diagnosis.

DSM-IV

▲ Generally, the Western patient has little familiarity with the definition and meaning of the DSM-IV diagnoses. Similar to the CED, the patient feels ill and is experiencing painful symptoms of emotional distress which may be interfering with their daily activities.

DSM-IV

▲ Unlike the CED, the patient, family members, or the community never make a DSM-IV diagnosis. Western doctors believe that DSM-IV diagnoses are mental disorders that need to be treated by the doctor and the medical system.

DSM-IV

▲ Western patients, in contrast to Cambodian patients, expect the doctor to treat their symptoms of emotional distress, especially if severe. DSM-IV diagnoses and CEDs can cause great embarrassment and shame to the patient and family if they become known by the community.

Models of Mental Illness

▲ The following diagram shows how CED and DSM-IV diagnoses overlap. The symptoms of some CED and DSM-IV diagnoses are very similar. For other CEDs there are no comparable DSM-IV diagnoses.

Models

▲ Western medical doctors will explain what causes DSM-IV diagnoses using their medical model. Similarly, the Cambodian traditional healer will also have explanations based on their model of what causes CEDs. Explanation of the causes of the Cambodian CEDs and DSM-IV diagnoses may be extremely different.

Models

▲ Each framework will result in a treatment approach consistent with their healing principles. Despite the differences in diagnosis, theory and treatment, Western doctors and Cambodian traditional healers ideally are able to communicate with each other because they share the common goal of relieving human suffering.

Models of Mental Illness

DSM-IV

CED

Signs and
Symptoms



Signs and
Symptoms

Diagnosis

Root
Causes



Root
Causes

Explanation

Medication
&
Counseling



Traditional
Healing

Treatment





CED and DSM-IV

Symptoms and Diagnoses

General Symptoms of Emotional Distress

▲ Cambodian patients frequently use the following symptoms of emotional distress when they feel ill. These symptoms are not associated with any specific CED or DSM-IV diagnosis.

Emotional Distress

▲ If these symptoms are given by the patient as their chief complaint, the doctor must check to see if the signs and symptoms of a specific CED are also present. We call this approach “Getting Below the Line”. Only by making a proper diagnosis can the doctor offer effective treatment.

Emotional Distress

Signs and Symptoms

1. Dizziness
2. Weakness
3. Breathing problems
4. Vision problems
5. Headache
6. Sadness
7. Fainting
8. Ringing in the ears
9. Warm inside the body

Emotional Distress

Signs and Symptoms

10. Cold hands/cold feet
11. Sweating
12. Joint pain
13. Difficulty falling asleep
14. Poor appetite
15. Loss of memory
16. Forgetfulness
17. Loss of ambition
18. Shortness of breath



Pruoy Cet
Major
Depression

Pruoy Cet

▲ *Definition:* Pruoy Cet is the deep sadness inside a person with extreme suffering that leads the person to withdraw from the world. The sadness is noticeable to others as the person is obviously upset.

Pruoy Cet

Signs and Symptoms

1. Withdrawal and self-isolation
2. Hopelessness
3. Very sad, quiet, and pitiful
4. Suicidal thoughts
5. Tearful
6. Poor appetite
7. Sleep disturbance
8. "Blank mind" and poor concentration

Major Depression

▲ *Definition:* A clinical state characterized by feelings of sadness, dejection, and despair, difficulty in thinking, and change in bodily functions lasting weeks, months or years. The symptoms cause impairment of social and work function and can lead to suicide, if untreated.

Major Depression

Signs and Symptoms

Five or more of the following symptoms during the same time period that are present almost everyday:

1. Depressed mood most of the day
2. Loss of interest or pleasure
3. Weight loss
4. Insomnia

Major Depression

Signs and Symptoms

5. Psychomotor agitation or psychomotor retardation
6. Fatigue or loss of energy
7. Worthlessness; excessive guilt feelings
8. Unable to think or concentrate; indecisiveness
9. Recurrent thoughts of death
10. Suicidal thoughts or plan

Major Depression

Signs and Symptoms

Patients with major depression may also have symptoms of psychosis, severe withdrawal, and melancholia (described as a complete lack of pleasure in all activities and marked by severe psychomotor retardation).



**Pibaak Cet
Dysthymic
Disorder**

Pibaak Cet

▲ *Definition:* Emotional suffering and distress due to misfortune (Sanskrit “vipaka”—distress, misfortune).

Signs and Symptoms

1. Sad looking
2. Frustration
3. Agitation
4. Irritability

Pibaak Cet

Signs and Symptoms

5. Suicidal thoughts
6. Poor sleep
7. Poor appetite
8. Headache
9. Shortness of breath
10. Hopelessness
11. Excessive worries

Dysthymic Disorder

▲ *Definition:* A mild to moderate depression usually lasting years. It is similar but less severe and more chronic than major depression.

Signs and Symptoms

- Depressed mood for most of the day

Dysthymic Disorder

Signs and Symptoms

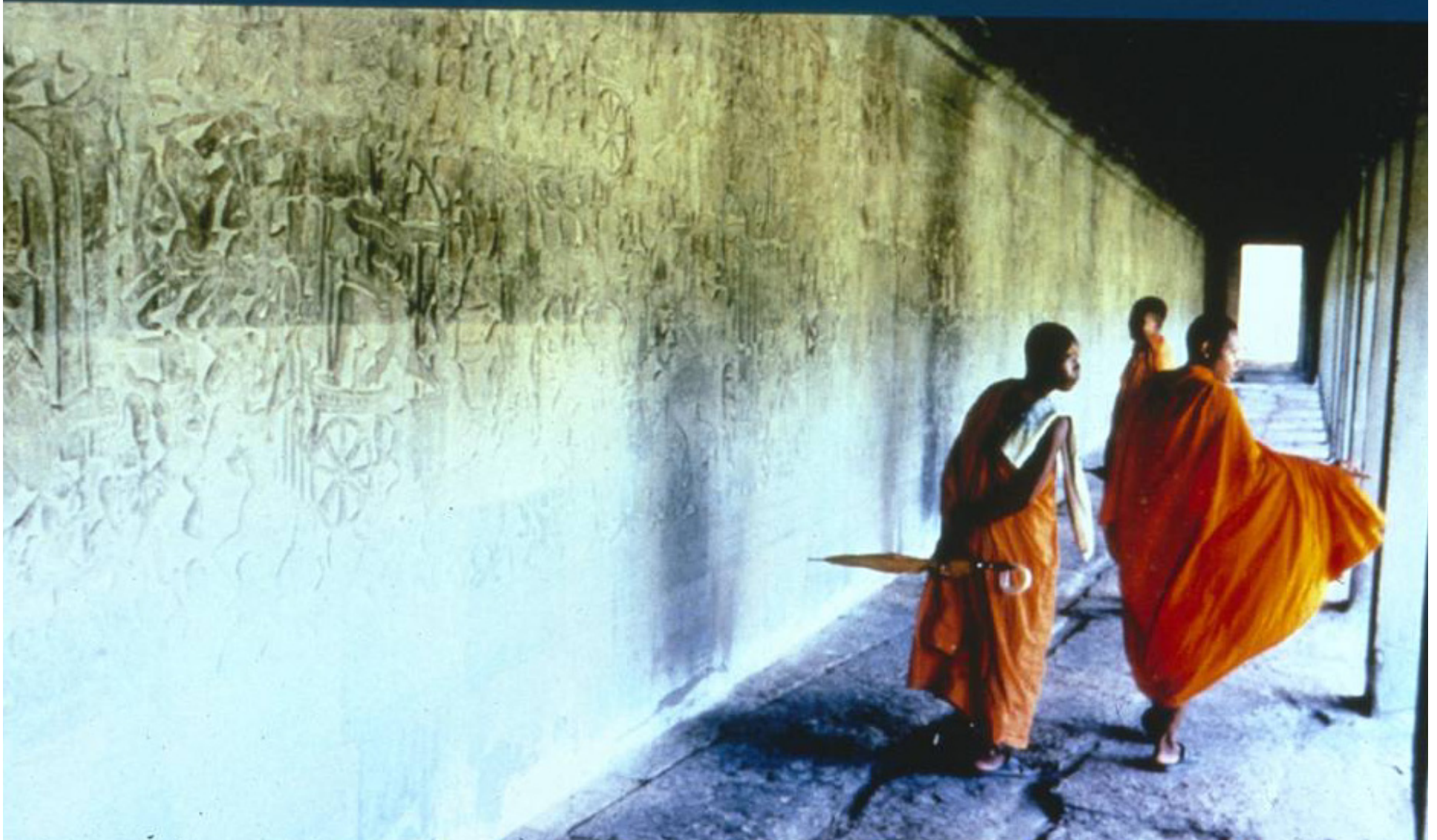
- Presence when depressed of two or more of the following symptoms:
 1. Poor appetite or overeating
 2. Insomnia or hypersomnia
 3. Low energy or fatigue
 4. Low self-esteem

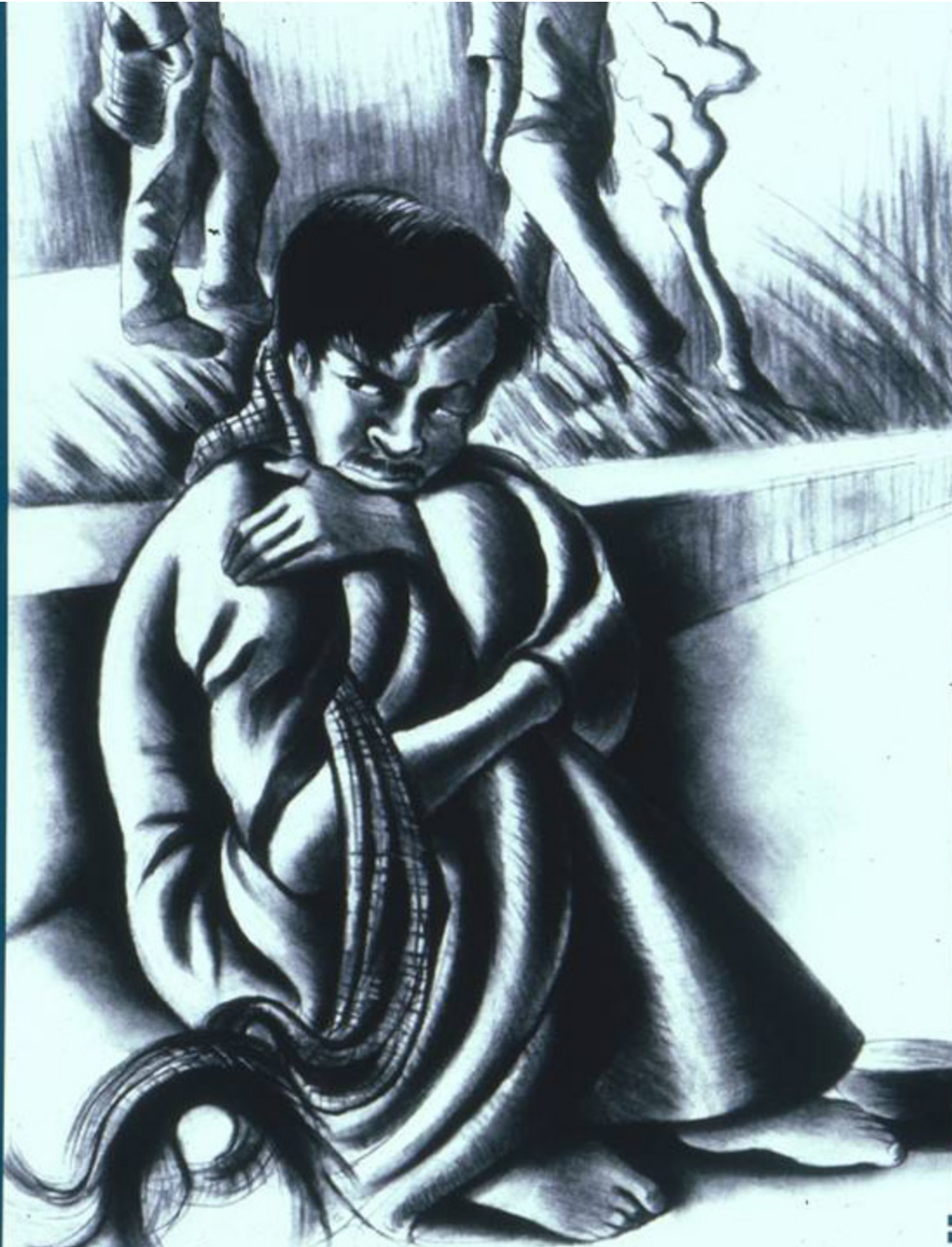
Dysthymic Disorder

Signs and Symptoms

5. Poor concentration or difficulty making decisions
 6. Feeling of hopelessness
- The functional impairments of dysthymic disorders are chronic, not as severe as major depression, and have been persistent for many years.

Pathways to Healing





Ckuot

**Schizo-
phrenia**

Ckuot

▲ *Definition:* Ckuot is a condition revealed by changes in normal behavior, thinking, and acting due to having lost contact with reality. A person in this state may also exhibit abnormal thoughts and wild gestures.

Quot

Signs and Symptoms

1. Talking to oneself
2. Singing, dancing, and screaming alongside the road
3. Laughing at oneself
4. Unreasonable fear
5. Wild eyes and wild movements
6. Auditory hallucinations

Quot

Signs and Symptoms

7. Visual hallucinations
8. Physical harm to others without reason
9. Wild and disorderly conduct
10. Poor sleep
11. Wears strange clothes and make-up
12. Incontinent of urine and feces

Schizophrenia

▲ *Definition:* An illness characterized by disturbance in thinking (out of touch with reality), feeling (inappropriate, flat, or ambivalent attitude), difficulty controlling emotions, behavior (bizarre), difficulty making decisions, and gradual deterioration in functioning.

Schizophrenia

Signs and Symptoms

- Two or more of the following symptoms:
 1. Delusions
 2. Hallucinations
 3. Disorganized speech
 4. Grossly disorganized or catatonic behavior
 5. Negative symptoms (flat affect)

Schizophrenia

Signs and Symptoms

- Serious functional impairment
- Duration of at least six months
- Psychotic symptoms not due to major depression, drugs or alcohol abuse or medical disorders.



**CED not
described.**

**Organic
Brain
Syndrome**

Organic Brain Syndrome OBS

▲ *Definition:* Psychological or behavioral problems because of impaired functioning of the brain. The organic factor may be a head injury, drugs or alcohol, brain disease, or other medical illness that affects the brain.

OBS

▲ The most common organic feature symptoms fall into three categories: delirium, dementia, and intoxication/ withdrawal.

OBS/Delirium

Signs and Symptoms

- A.** Inability to pay attention to current activity or to shift attention to new activities.
- B.** Disorganized thinking.

OBS/Delirium

- C.** Two or more of the following:
1. Reduced level of consciousness
 2. Perceptual disturbances: misinterpretations, illusions, or hallucinations
 3. Disturbance of sleep
 4. Increased or decreased psychomotor activity

OBS/Delirium

5. Disorientation to time, place, or person

6. Memory impairment

D. Clinical features develop over a short period of time (usually hours or days) and tend to fluctuate over the course of the day.

OBS/Delirium

E. Either (1) or (2):

- 1.** Evidence from the history, physical examination, or laboratory tests of a specific organic factor.
- 2.** Without such evidence, an organic factor can be presumed if the disturbance cannot be accounted for by other CEDs or DSM-IV diagnoses.

OBS/Dementia

- A.** Impairment of short- and long-term memory.
- B.** One or more of the following symptoms:
 - 1.** Impairment in abstract thinking
 - 2.** Impaired judgment

OBS/Dementia

3. Other disturbances of higher cortical function, such as aphasia, apraxia, agnosia, and constructional difficulty
 4. Personality change
- C.** Disturbances in A and B interfere with work and social functioning.
- D.** Not occurring exclusively during the course of delirium.

OBS/Dementia

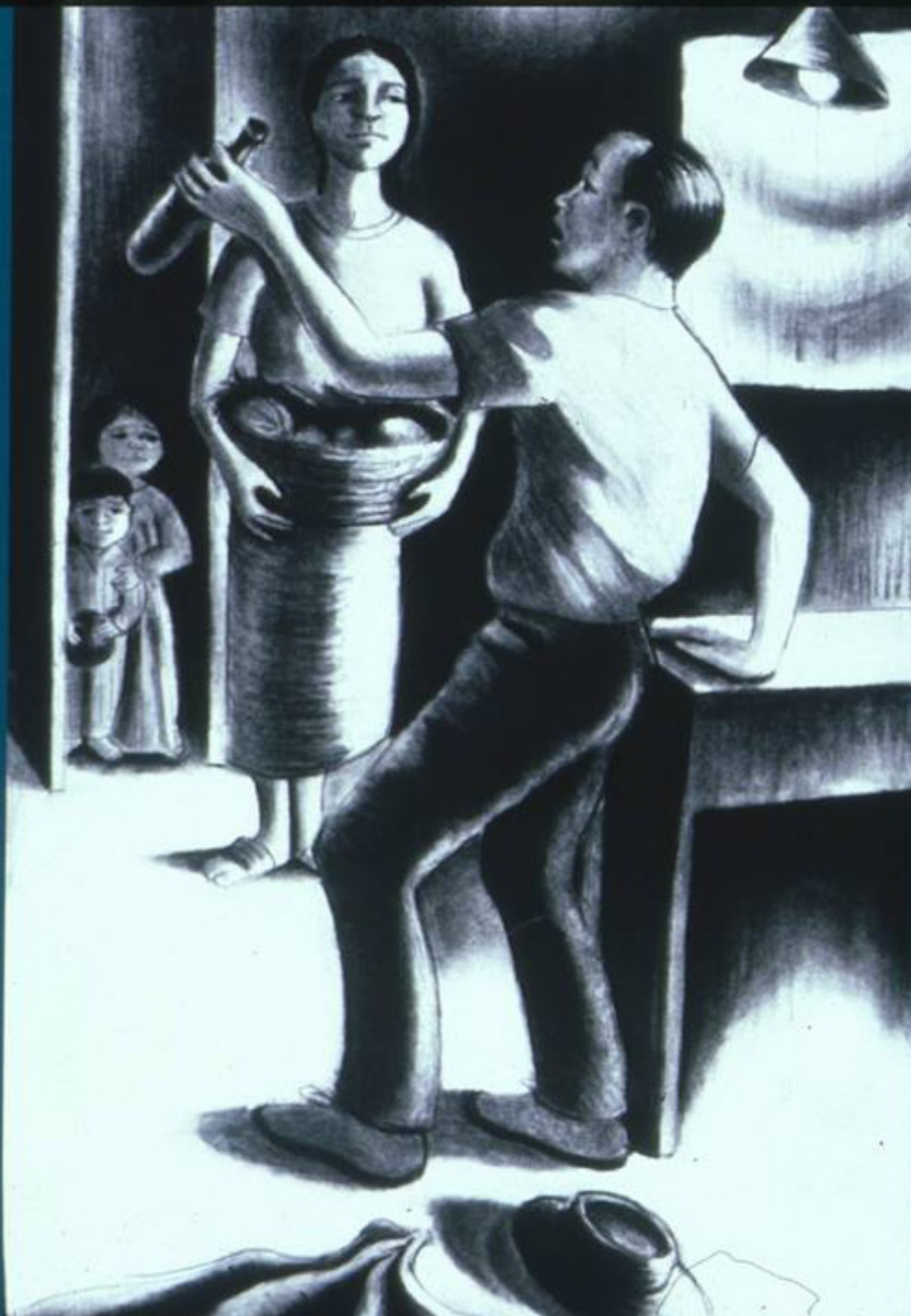
Either (1) or (2):

- 1.** Evidence from the history, physical examination, or laboratory tests of a specific organic factor.
- 2.** Without such evidence, an organic factor can be presumed if the disturbance cannot be accounted for by other CEDs or DSM-IV diagnoses.

OBS: Intoxication/Withdrawal

Signs and Symptoms

(See section on Alcoholism)



**Kaa Saeb
Soraa**

Pramek

Alcoholism

Pramek

▲ *Definition:* “Kaa Saeb Soraá” describes someone drinking without any reference to a drinking problem. “Sraveng Khuop” means drinking in excess as in throughout the day and into the night.

Pramek

▲ “Dos Mee” or “Nhirn Suraa” refers to the condition of having consumed large quantities of alcohol over a long period of time. “Pramek” is the Cambodian term used to describe a person who is addicted to alcohol.

Pramek

Signs and Symptoms

1. Forgetfulness
2. Confusion
3. Loss of balance
4. Nausea
5. Poor appetite
6. Slurred speech
7. Wickedness
8. Arrogant, boldness
9. Sleeping on sidewalk

Pramek

Signs and Symptoms

- 10.** Physically abusing wife and children
- 11.** Throwing objects
- 12.** Swollen face, arms/legs
- 13.** Reddened face
- 14.** Shaking arms and legs
- 15.** Overly talkative
- 16.** Bloodshot eyes

Kaa Saeb Sora

Stages of Drinking

1. Elevation of eyebrow; feeling relaxed
2. Feeling like a giant (great self-importance)
3. Acting like a "big" demon (wild gestures)
4. Disinterested in food
5. Filled up with music (stops talking; euphoric mood)

Kaa Saeb Sora

6. Self pity
7. Speech sounds like a ghost
"Khmooch" (slurred speech)
8. Bad reputation (behaving poorly)
9. In need of a wide flat basket
to fan oneself (agitation)
10. Stare aimlessly, glaring at
flies (to stare angrily)
11. Drink water drop by drop in
order to quench thirst

Alcoholism

▲ *Definition:* A dependence on alcohol beyond the accepted social norm involving the deterioration of physical and mental health of the individual and impairment of social and work functioning.

Alcohol Intoxication

▲ *Definition:* Intoxication involves consuming enough alcohol to cause maladaptive behavior such as impaired judgment, aggressiveness, or impaired social or work functioning. May begin as liveliness, a sense of happiness and well-being, and progress to irritability, emotional lability, uncoordinated movement and slurred speech.

Alcohol Intoxication

Signs and Symptoms

- Recent drinking of alcohol
- Inappropriate behavior (sexual, aggressive, moodiness)
- One or more of the following physical signs:
 1. Slurred speech
 2. Uncoordination

Alcohol Intoxication

Signs and Symptoms

3. Unsteady gait
 4. Nystagmus
 5. Impairment in attention or memory
 6. Stupor or coma
- Symptoms are not due to a medical condition or mental illness.



**CED not
described.**

**Alcohol
Depen-
dence**

Alcohol Dependence

▲ *Definition:* Physical dependence on alcohol characterized by either tolerance or development of withdrawal symptoms when alcohol drinking is stopped or reduced. Physical dependence results in maladaptive behavior and impairment in social and work function.

Alcohol Dependence

Signs and Symptoms

- Tolerance
 1. Over time increased amounts of alcohol needed for intoxication.
 2. Over time the same amount of alcohol has less effect.
- Withdrawal
 1. alcohol withdrawal symptoms
 2. Another drug abused to relieve or avoid withdrawal symptom

Alcohol Dependence

- Greater use than intended.
 1. Persistent desire for alcohol and/or unsuccessful efforts
 2. Much time and effort is spent seeking and using alcohol.
 3. Alcohol use impairs relationships and ability to work.
 4. Drinking despite knowledge that alcohol is causing physical or psychological problems.

Alcohol Withdrawal

▲ *Definition:* When heavy drinkers who are alcohol dependent stop or decrease drinking, it can result in physical withdrawal symptoms such as weakness, tremors, nightmares, insomnia and progress to hallucination, seizures, and delirium.

Alcohol Withdrawal

Signs and Symptoms

- Cessation of heavy alcohol use
- Two or more of these symptoms, developing after the person stops drinking: (hours or minutes)
 1. Sweating
 2. Pulse rate greater than 100
 3. Hand tremors
 4. Insomnia
 5. Nausea or vomiting



**Tierur-na-kam
Torture-Trauma Syndrome**

Tierur-na-kam

▲ *Definition:* Tierur-na-kam derived from the Sanskrit Pali words daruna and kama refers to an act of savagery, cruelty and barbarism. The torture-trauma syndrome is a new Cambodian CED, which describes conditions associated with severe and violent experiences or torture itself.

Tierur-na-kam

Signs and Symptoms

1. Fearfulness, horror
2. Nightmares and poor sleep
3. Irritable, angry, frustrated
4. Obsessive thoughts, revengeful
5. Cowardice, weakness
6. Apathy, withdrawal, debilitated
7. Sad and suffering
8. Absent-mindedness, forgetful
9. Meanness, cruelty, viciousness



Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

▲ *Definition:* Describes a set of physical and emotional symptoms that one may develop after experiencing severe stress, trauma or torture. Although normal responses to severe trauma, these may cause intense suffering and serious disability.

PTSD

Signs and Symptoms

The person has experienced or witnessed a serious trauma event: actual or threatened death or serious injury causing intense fear, helplessness, or horror.

PTSD

The trauma event is re-experienced with one or more of the following:

1. Recurrent memories of event.
2. Recurrent dreams/nightmares.
3. Feeling the event is re-occurring.
4. Intense distress at exposure to similar situations.
5. Increase in blood pressure, pulse rate, sweating and other physiological responses when reminded of the event.

PTSD

Avoidance of situations and numbing of emotions associated with the event(s) with three or more of the following:

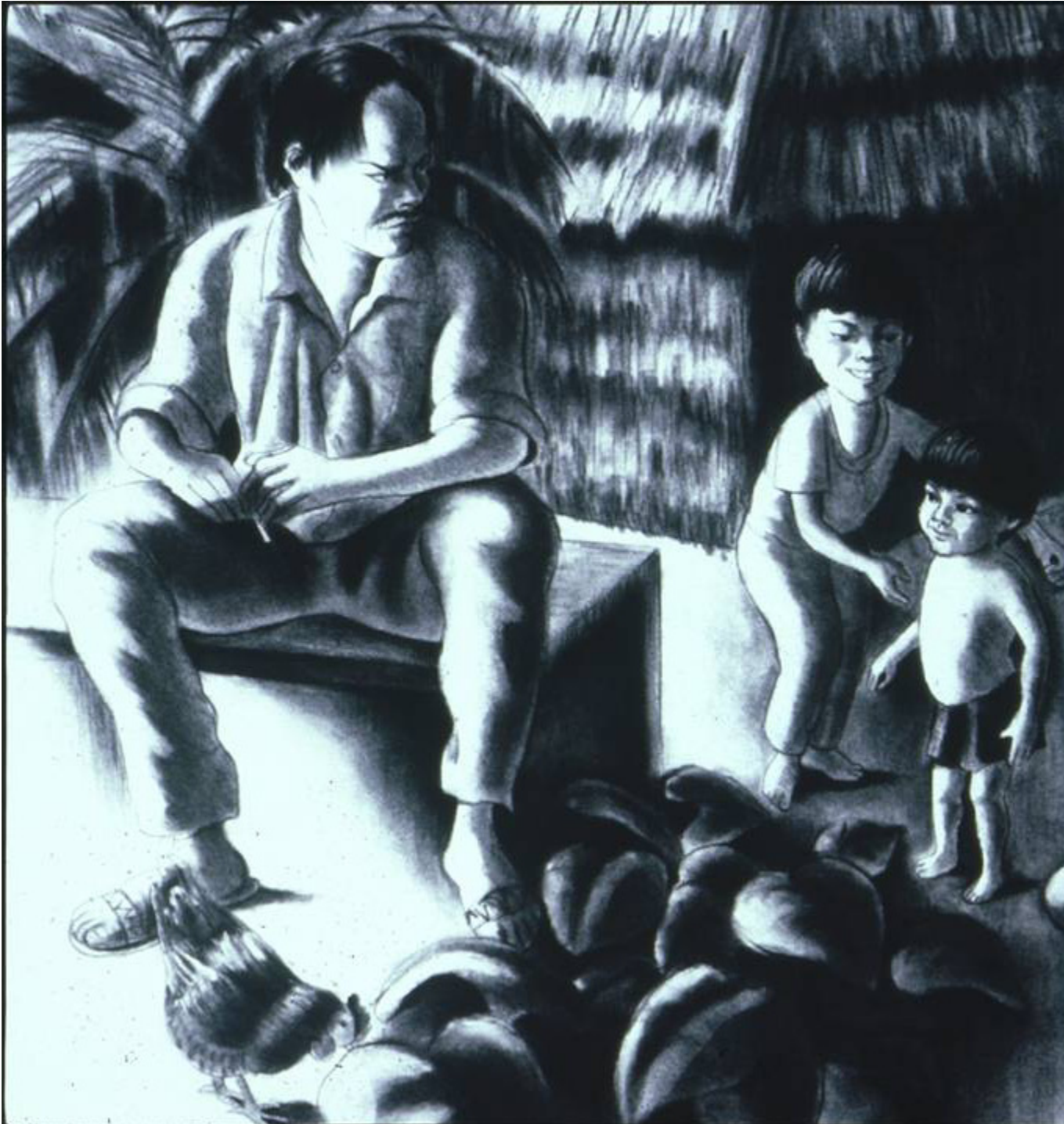
1. Avoiding thoughts, feelings, and conversations
2. Avoiding activities, places or people
3. Inability to recall important aspects of the trauma.

PTSD

4. Diminished interest or participation in daily activities.
5. Feeling detached or estranged from others.
6. Unable to have feelings such as love or hate.
7. Feeling a lack of future

PTSD

- Persistent symptoms of increased arousal not present before the trauma with two of the following:
 1. Sleep problems
 2. Irritability or outburst of anger
 3. Poor concentration
 4. Hyper-vigilance
 5. Exaggerated startle



**Panhaha
Kruosar**

**Family
Problems**

Panhaha Kruosar

▲ *Definition:* Panhaha Kruosar means a problem in the family.

Signs and Symptoms

- General symptoms of emotional distress
- Commonly associated with other CEDs:
 1. Pibaak Cet
 2. Pruoy Cet
 3. Pramek

Family Problems

▲ *Definition:* Describes a difficulty in family relationships and interactions that may lead to impairment of individuals or the family functioning. The difficulties may cause or be caused by medical or mental disorders.

Family Problems

Signs and Symptoms

Family problems are interactions between family members that may or may not be a result of a medical or mental disorder, and are associated with the following behaviors among some or all of the family members:

Family Problems

Signs and Symptoms

- Symptoms of emotional or physical illness
- Impairment in ability to function
- Breakdown of the social relationships in the family
- Difficulty managing a medical or mental illness



**Cuum
Noeur
Aarupey**

**DSM-IV
not
described**

Cuum Noeur Aarupey

▲ *Definition:* Cuum Noeur Aarupey is the belief that a spirit (Pro Loeung) has entered a person's body and mind. There are four kinds of spirit possession:

1. Khmoc Cuol is the spirit of a deceased relative.
2. Neak Ta Cuol is the guardian spirit.

Cuum Noeur Aarupey

3. Baareamey Sontheet is a hero or an ancient ancestor spirit.
4. Breay Yayee is a demon spirit.

These spirits are invisible and they enter the person in order to give a message to the person, their family or the community.

Cuum Noeur Aarupey

Signs and Symptoms

1. Fever
2. Strange behavior
3. Talking nonsense
4. Abdominal pain
5. Headache
6. Seizures
7. Abnormal movements

Symbolic Landscape of Healing



In summary, the synthesis of a doctor's approach to healing includes getting beyond the chief complaint and arriving at a comprehensive view of the patient's illness.

This process has been described in our landscape metaphor, which shows the doctor as part of Cambodia's historical tradition of caring for the suffering.



The Cambodian landscape can be used as a symbol of the primary care physician's understanding of the mentally ill patient.



If the doctor stops at the foreground, i.e. the chief complaint, the patient will only receive a temporary solution to his/her suffering.



The middle ground gives the doctor a deeper view of the patient's illness and the effects of the illness on the patient's physical, personal, social, and spiritual life.



The background allows the doctor to “see” the root causes of the patient’s illness, leading to a proper diagnosis and treatment.

KCBM

In Cambodian culture the patient will seek many pathways to healing. We have defined these healing approaches as **KCBM**.



KCBM

▲ *Definition:* KCBM is an acronym used to describe treatment approaches to emotional illness which use the best healing practices of Western and Cambodian medicine. The letters of KCBM represent:

KCBM

- **K:** Kruu Khmer healing practices
- **C:** Western and Cambodian styles of counseling
- **B:** Buddhism
- **M:** Western medication



KCBM: K stands for Kruu Khmer healing approaches which use herbal medicine, steaming, cupping, incantations and fortune telling.



KCBM: C stands for counseling by an individual respected in the society such as an elder, a traditional healer or a medical doctor.

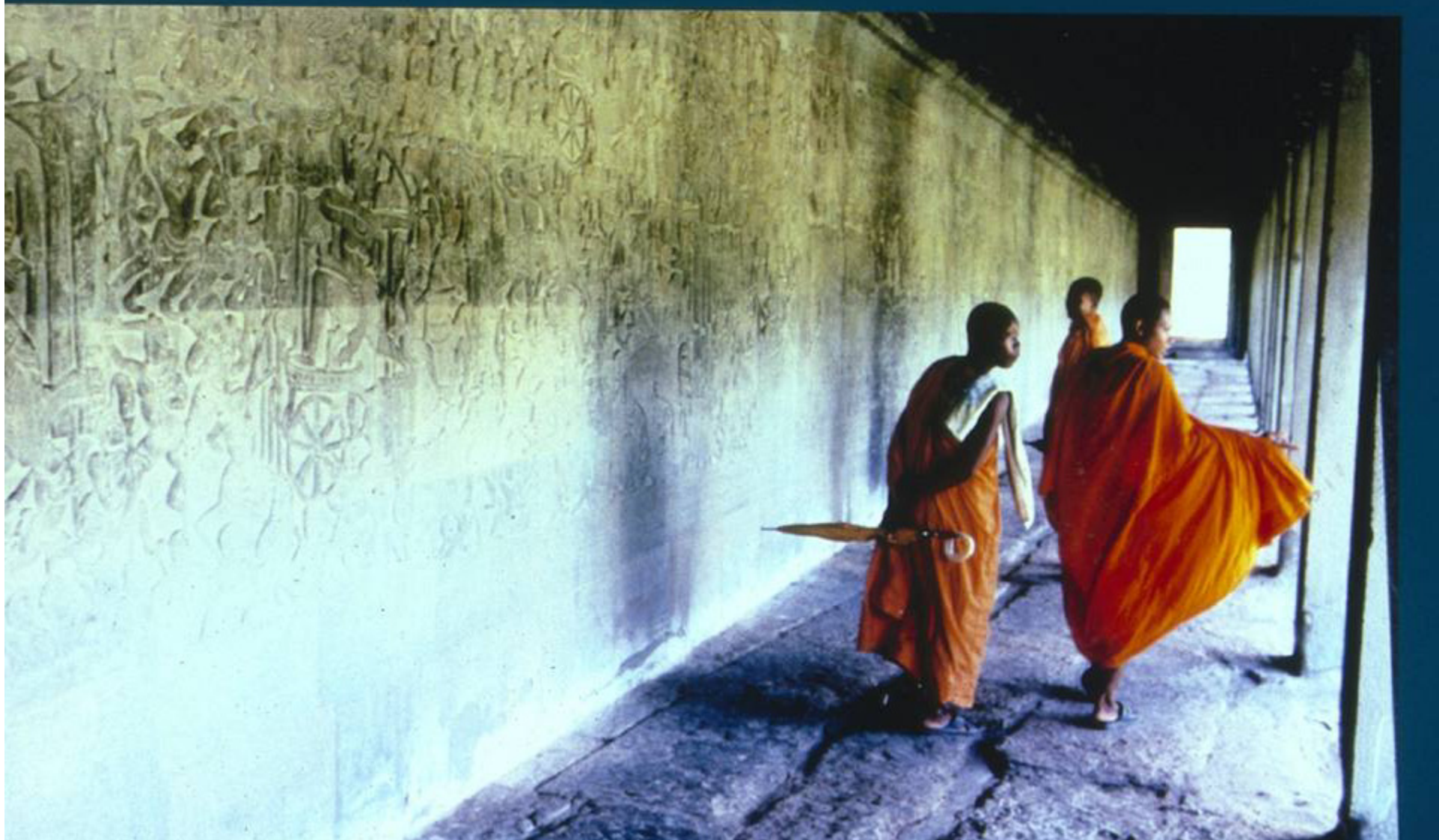


KCBM: B stands for Buddhist healing including religious ceremony, meditation and herbal medication.



KCBM: M stands for Western medication used for the treatment of DSM-IV diagnoses.

Pathways to Healing



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