

# Understanding Asia: Transnational Care

## Habit and Infrastructure: Dialysis Life in Thailand

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Zoom event

When infrastructural investment has appeared to be a lasting solution for economic growth and especially for public health contestation after the COVID-19 pandemic, such industrial emphasis on development and speculation obscures the habitual dimension that enables infrastructural connections and flows. In this paper, I suggest “maintenance” as an art of infrastructure and identify how it is gendered and engenders life-sustaining relations. By drawing the ways in which the home dialysis program has been instituted in northern Thailand, I shed light on the durational drag and repetitive work of teaching and doing dialysis routines. End-stage renal disease patients who choose or are forced to choose home dialysis can live with their failing kidneys as long as the lines running between hands, dialysis bags, and peritoneum is safely sustained. It is a way of doing infrastructure that does not aim to progress or to transform but rather vow to endure debilitation. By paying close attention to the relation between damaged bodies, structural vulnerabilities, and habits of protection and maintenance, I illuminate the social poiesis of shared life and its implication for creating a feminist commons.

**Prof. Dr. Bo Kyeong Seo** is an anthropologist working on medicine, health inequalities, and experiences of dispossession. Over the last ten years she has been conducting research in Thailand and South Korea focusing on poor and marginalized people’s struggle to access health care in the context of transnational migration and stigmatization. She received Cultural Horizons Prize from the Society for Cultural Anthropology for her article, “Populist Becoming: The Red Shirt Movement and Political Affliction in Thailand.” Her first book, *Eliciting Care: Health and Power in Northern Thailand*, is published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 2020.