

## The Resident from Thailand

Dr. James Barlow, the Chief of Surgery at Milwaukee State Hospital, agreed to supervise four visiting Thai physicians who were sent by their government to the United States for additional training. The first-year residency went very well, and the Thai doctors have been asked to stay on for a second year. A party is being held to celebrate the end of the first year. Toward the end of the festivities, people are seated in small groups, reminiscing about the events of the past year. Dr. Barlow sits with the Thai residents. One of the residents, a particular favorite of Dr. Barlow's, confesses shyly how nervous he had been when he first came to Milwaukee State.

"Yes," responds Dr. Barlow, "but look how much progress you have made. Why, I remember the time you were told to prepare two male beds, and you asked me how you could tell a male bed." Dr. Barlow slaps the resident on the back and breaks into laughter. The Thais exchange glances, examine their watches, and, calling attention to the lateness of the hour, excuse themselves and leave. The next morning, Dr. Barlow finds a letter of resignation on his desk from the young doctor he liked so much.

What precipitated the resignation?

### Possible Explanations

- (1) When the resident returned to his room, he found a message saying that his mother was critically ill in Thailand, and he wanted to fly home to be with her. (Turn to page 126.)
- (2) Dr. Barlow's slap was too forceful, and the resident thought he was being hit for his early mistake. Since the Thais do not use such punishment, the resident was very ashamed. (Turn to page 117.)
- (3) The physicians from Thailand felt a responsibility to their government, and after they left the party, the other residents said he should resign because he had disgraced the Thai government. (Turn to page 127.)
- (4) Dr. Barlow committed a grievous breach of etiquette by embarrassing the resident in front of his friends, and the Thai doctor felt he could no longer work under Dr. Barlow. (Turn to page 147.)

From p. 126

**For The Resident from Thailand, you chose**  
**Answer No. 1**

*When the resident returned to his room, he found a message saying that his mother was critically ill in Thailand, and he wanted to fly home to be with her.*

A Thai would feel compelled to return to the family in the event of a life-threatening illness of a relative, but there is nothing in the story about a sick mother. Go back to page 81 and try again.

From p. 117

**For The Resident from Thailand, you chose**  
**Answer No. 2**

*Dr. Barlow's slap was too forceful, and the resident thought he was being hit for his early mistake. Since the Thais do not use such punishment, the resident was very ashamed.*

A slap, even a light tap, is not considered a friendly gesture in Thailand (or other parts of the world, for that matter), but this is only a partial explanation. Return to page 81 and try again.

From p. 127

**For The Resident from Thailand, you chose**  
**Answer No. 3**

*The physicians from Thailand felt a responsibility to their government, and after they left the party, the other residents said he should resign because he had disgraced the Thai government.*

The physicians from Thailand would feel a responsibility to behave correctly at all times as representatives of their country, but this is not a likely explanation inasmuch as all four had been asked to continue at the hospital for another year. Return to page 81 and try again.

From p. 147

**For The Resident from Thailand, you chose**  
**Answer No. 4**

*Dr. Barlow committed a grievous breach of etiquette by embarrassing the resident in front of his friends, and the Thai doctor felt he could no longer work under Dr. Barlow.*

This is the best explanation. Thai culture, like many cultures in Southeast Asia, strongly condemns scolding or embarrassing a person in front of friends or coworkers, even in a light-hearted manner.