



# LIVING TRADITIONS

Newsletter of the Thai Healing Alliance International - 2009 - Special Thailand Edition

## Connecting through organizing - By Gabriel Azoulay, RTT

Since it first appeared in the West, yoga has evolved from an unfamiliar term to a household word evoking everything from images of relaxation to pretzel-like poses. As the practice has expanded and grown, one organization in particular has dedicated itself to informing the community at large about the benefits of yoga and has proven to be a unifying force in this ancient and diverse lifestyle. This organization is widely known today as the Yoga Alliance, a non-profit organization that supports yoga teachers and promotes the diversity and integrity of yoga. The Alliance's tasks run from maintaining a national registry of yoga instructors to helping differentiate yoga from aerobics. When yoga entered the fitness world and became one of the most popular group classes in gyms and athletic centers, there was a strong effort to make sure that yoga maintained its core principles and did not become simply another form of physical exercise.

Similarly, the Thai Healing Alliance International strives to do for traditional Thai massage what the Yoga Alliance has done for yoga. This non-partisan network of professionals engaged in the study and practice of *Nuad Boran* - also known as traditional Thai massage or Thai yoga massage - is adding a level of legitimacy to a practice that has only recently begun to enter the consciousness of Western yoga and bodywork devotees.

THAI endorses students, Registered Thai Therapists, teachers, and schools around the world that follow basic guidelines of study and practice. Lists of registered therapists, teachers, and approved courses are available to the general public on the THAI web site. The online referral service refers clients to practitioners and connects students to teachers. There is a vast archive of information and research available to all members.

Like yoga, traditional Thai massage, is an ancient, powerful form of healing. And much like yoga, Thai massage is a structural and energetic activity that balances mind, body, and spirit. *Nuad Boran* is designed to enhance the flow of energy in the body. The movements and manipulations are based on ancient practices, most of which have been shared via practice. For hundreds of years and still today, people in Thailand have received regular *nuad boran* sessions to rebalance and increase their energy. They also practice traditional Thai massage at home with family members or friends. Thai yoga massage is not only effective and therapeutic for the receiver, but when practiced correctly, it serves as a combined yoga and meditation practice for the therapist. This practice allows the giver to improve his own physical energy flow and mental balance. Each movement is designed so that both parties become more balanced and at peace.

### SPECIAL THAILAND EDITION

Beyond the Physical

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Energy Transference

Jivaka's Treatments

Basic Member Application

With the help of THAI, the public is slowly learning about the amazing value and benefits of this ancient healing art. From improving range of motion, to decreasing the number of physical injuries to therapists, THAI seeks to support the activities of its members, and to help them expand and succeed. At the same time, the organization is constantly bridging the gap between traditional Thai wisdom and the detailed vocabulary of the West.

By choosing to become members of organizations such as THAI, we take an active step toward connection, thus putting into action the meaning of the word *yoga* - to connect.

If you study or practice traditional Thai massage, you should be a member of the Thai Healing Alliance.

## Thai Massage Beyond the Physical

By Robert Henderson

Bob Haddad's piece about Thai Massage on an amputee client (*Living Traditions Vol. 5*) brought up some very interesting points. First and foremost the article shows that as beings we are not limited to our physical bodies. Our levels of consciousness, awareness and feeling, albeit on a 'higher level', exist and extend way beyond the limitations symbolised by the collection of bones, organs, blood, and tissue in a bag of skin, which we call the body.

Secondly, it shows that to use Thai massage as a tool to treat another person on the level of the physical body only is to make a limited use of this healing art. Anyone who has ever received a massage from a true Thai Master such as Chaiyuth or Pichest will have experienced the incredible power of Thai massage, which lies beyond the physical, and the effect it has right across our spirit, mind, emotions, energy, and physical body.

The irony of using *nuad boran* as a purely physical application is that the more we learn about what we can do (in terms of techniques, anatomy & physiology, body mechanics etc.) the less we may be able to achieve with it, as each specialisation is nothing more than a fragment of the holistic order. Our higher level of consciousness is aware that we extend far beyond the physical. But the limitations we place on ourselves may cause deep conflicts which can eventually manifest as physical pain. This pain is not in some of us, it is in all of us. It is an inherited pain we received from our parents, which was passed onto them by their parents. Maybe you have felt it yourself.



Sen line rendering by Asokananda and Kam Thyee Chow.

## What is the Thai Healing Alliance ?

**Thai Healing Alliance International (THAI)** is a professional organization for students, practitioners and teachers of *nuad boran*, also known as traditional Thai massage. THAI endorses Registered Thai Therapists, schools and teachers around the world who adhere to standard guidelines of study and practice. Hundreds of approved courses and workshops are available worldwide, and a vast online library of information on traditional Thai massage and Thai medicine is available to all members. Lists of approved courses and teachers are available to members and the general public on the THAI web site. A partial list of approved teachers and schools appears on page 6 of this newsletter.

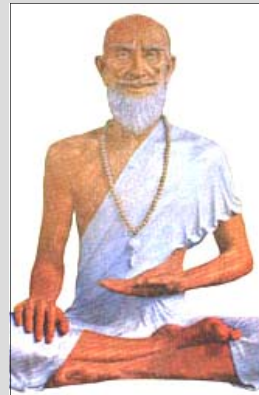
### Member Benefits

Member benefits include a professional certificate, the title of RTT (Registered Thai Therapist), a subscription to the Living Traditions newsletter, a quarterly electronic newsletter, and exclusive use of the THAI client referral service and course lists. All members have access to a members' area of the website which contains:

- The largest online library of valuable articles and research about the history and practice of Thai massage and Thai healing traditions
- A complete directory of all members – great for making connections with colleagues, students and teachers
- Tools for practice, including sample intake forms, client logs, helpful hints, therapy treatments and Thailand travel and study information
- Discounts and member benefits with schools, teachers and other trade organizations
- Affiliate organizations provide access to liability insurance and marketing support to grow your business

**Become a Basic Member** for only \$85 (USD) for 2 years. If you have studied with a THAI-approved teacher or school, you will receive an automatic 25% discount on your first membership cycle. Basic Member requirements are a minimum of 30 hours of formal study of traditional Thai massage with any instructor or institution around the world. Your teachers do not need to be members of THAI. ***It's easy to join - just enter your information on the application form on page 7***, detach it from this newsletter, and send it by mail to THAI. If you prefer to join by e-mail, or if you wish to apply for a higher level of membership, go to ***www.thaihealingalliance.com*** and click on "How to Join THAI". Application forms may be quickly downloaded from the THAI web site.

Other membership levels include **Practitioner / Registered Thai Therapist [RTT]** (150 or more hours of formal study), **Advanced Practitioner** (270+ hours), **Instructor** (450+ hours), **Institution** (450+ hours), and **Associate Member** (no formal study required). Complete details, study requirements and membership fees for each level are available on the THAI web site.



## JIVAKA'S CORNER

### Jivaka as a doctor and a holy man

When Jivaka was a young man, he set off for Takasilá (in current day Pakistan) without his father's knowledge, and studied medicine there for seven years. After his apprenticeship, his teacher gave him some money and sent him away, declaring him fit to practice medicine.

When he finally returned to Rájagaha, Prince Abhaya established him in his own residence. While there, he cured King Bimbisára of a troublesome fistula and received as reward all the ornaments of Bimbisára's five hundred wives. He was appointed physician to the king and the king's women and also to the fraternity of monks with the Buddha at its head. It may have been the preaching of the Jivaka Sutta which brought about Jívaka's conversion to the Buddha's teachings.

After Jívaka became a Sotápanna (first level of realization), he was anxious to visit the Buddha twice a day, and finding Veluvana too far away, he built a monastery in his own mango grove (*ambavana*) in Rájagaha, which he then donated to the Buddha and his monks.

Jívaka's fame as a physician brought him more work than he could cope with, but he never neglected his duties to the Sangha. Many people, afflicted with disease and unable to pay for treatment, joined the Order so that they might receive free medical care. On discovering that the Order was being taken advantage of in this way, he once asked the Buddha to set a restriction that men afflicted with certain diseases might be refused entry into the Order.

Jívaka was declared by the Buddha chief among his lay followers, and was referred to as *aggam puggalappasannánam* (loved by the people). Jivaka is included in a list of those who have been assured of the realization of deathlessness.

*Excerpted from Buddhist texts - edited by Bob Haddad*

### Why join the Thai Healing Alliance?

Membership in THAI adds a level of professional recognition to your practice. The THAI membership certificate, THAI logo and the title of RTT (Registered Thai Therapist) are symbols of your commitment to integrity in traditional Thai healing arts. The member section of the web site gives you access to students, practitioners and teachers. Your name and contact information is listed in several online directories, and the client referral service will help your practice to grow. You receive a subscription to the *Living Traditions* newsletter and quarterly e-news. The THAI archives, with over 300 fascinating articles and items of research, is accessible with your user name and password.

### ***I'm just learning about traditional Thai massage – can I join?***

Absolutely! THAI welcomes all students of traditional Thai therapies and other bodywork modalities. You may become a Basic Member if you have studied a minimum of 30 hours of Thai massage anywhere in the world, even with teachers who are not yet approved by THAI. Members may upgrade for free to the next level of membership at any time.

# Thai Massage for Dancers

By Peter Wright



Traditional Thai massage therapy can help alleviate ‘snapping hip syndrome’ for young growing dancers who are training at their peak performance level. What is snapping hip syndrome? Snapping hip syndrome (*coxa saltans*) is first noticed by an audible snapping sound when you articulate the leg. This is a surprisingly common problem amongst ballet dancers and especially prominent in people who have just hit puberty or are going through a stage of rapid growth. This problem can come from many sources, but two of the main ones for dancers are:

## 1) Iliotibial Tract snapping

This is the most common snapping syndrome caused when the ‘IT band’ catches on the greater trochanter (the bony prominence over the outside of the hip joint) during extension of the leg. People with this type of condition, if untreated, could develop trochanteric bursitis from inflammation of the ‘bursa’, a fluid-filled sac that allows muscles to move smoothly over bone. Thai massage is excellent for lengthening this hard tendonous tract and its associated muscles — the *tensor fasciae latae* and *gluteus maximus*. This is done through gentle elbow pressure and passive stretching, where the client can be stretched further than they could on their own.

## 2) Iliopsoas snapping

The iliopsoas is a large hip flexor originating from the vertebrae of T12 to L5 and inserting on the *lesser trochanter*. Any snapping in this region is caused by the *iliopsoas* tendon catching over the *iliopectineal* line or the *iliofemoral* ligaments over the femoral head when the leg is extended from a flexed position, or adducted and externally rotated. This usually causes no pain but some dancers can find the sensation extremely distracting from their dance practice.

In the photo above, I demonstrate one of the many comfortable positions a Thai massage therapist can use to sink slowly into the *psaos* muscle, which lies deep under the intestines. It’s important to respond to feedback from the client’s leg in order to release the muscle that can often be holding spasm. I’ve performed Thai massage on ballet dancers who suffer from this problem, and I believe that young aspiring dancers seek a level of physical discipline that sometimes outreaches the capacity of their growing bodies. When this happens, imbalance occurs. During Thai massage the entire hip can be treated from all angles, allowing the dancer to feel rejuvenated after competitive practice. During Thai massage, people can relax into passive stretches, thereby encouraging muscles to reach their maximum length without injury. Dancers enjoy Thai treatments and often leave with more insight into the abilities of their own bodies.

Article and photo courtesy of Thai Massage Brighton. Used with permission.

## THAI HEALING IN ACTION - NOTES FROM THE MAT

I recently had an interesting experience while working with a client whom I’ve seen on a weekly basis for the past year. He’s a big, muscular guy, and I tend to work strongly with my knees and feet as he requires this sort of pressure. His left hip is substantially tighter than his right and at one point in the session, I had him in prone position with his left knee bent off to the side. I was working with my knee in his hip / buttock, especially his piriformis, which was particularly tight.

As I moved medially, I found a spot where I immediately got the feeling that I needed to stay and work. After about a minute of relaxing myself into him, he told me he was beginning to feel nauseous. I released the pressure and he lay there feeling sick for a few minutes. When we talked about it immediately afterwards, I suggested that he may have been having an emotional reaction. Sometimes early trauma is stored in the tissues of our body and when they are touched deeply, the trauma is brought back up through memory and physical reaction.

He looked at me surprised and said that as I worked there, he suddenly began to think about when he got bitten by a big dog at eight years old. It occurred to him as strange that these thoughts would suddenly come to him, since he hadn’t thought of this in ten or twenty years. He looked at me and said, “I guess there’s more to this stuff than meets the eye, isn’t there?” I smiled and secretly thanked Jivaka.

— Paul Fowler

Recently I had a session with a regular client of mine, whom I’ve seen every 4-5 weeks for the past few years. She usually holds tension in her hips, stomach and shoulders, but that day, in addition to the usual stress areas, she mentioned that her right side seemed blocked. Sure enough, we found some pockets of tension in her upper right torso. I continued to work in supine, and then worked a bit in side position to follow the flow of energy upward. It was a fairly normal session, with nice releases, for the first 90 minutes. Little did I know what was about to happen in the last few minutes of final supine position.

As I continued to dissipate the blockage I sensed in her right lower neck, I suddenly began to feel a sharp pain at the end of my jaw bone, directly below the medial end of my ear lobe. Almost immediately I sensed that this was sympathetic pain; that what I was feeling in my jaw was a signal that I should go there for my client. So I slowly released my pressure on her upper neck and positioned my third and fourth fingers directly on the spot on her jaw where I was feeling my own pain. Immediately, my client began to cough intensely. The pain in my jaw grew sharper, but as she continued to cough violently for about 15 seconds, I felt the pain ease in my jaw, she returned to stillness, and I finished the session, gazing occasionally at my Jivaka altar. After the session she felt light and relaxed, and in an e-mail follow up, she wrote that she believed the release in her jaw had its roots deep inside her belly. She said she was feeling open and spiritually grounded after that experience. My own jaw pain gradually disappeared after about three days.

— Bob Haddad



*Thai Massage Beyond the Physical, cont. from page 1*

As it is an inherited pain, its root lies just behind the navel and travels upwards until it comes out on the top of the left shoulder, on GB21, the 'Human Well', or "the Well from Hell" as I call it, because of the depth of pain this point holds. It is a very deep pain and is one of the most common shoulder complaint areas. I use this example simply to illustrate how believing that we exist only in a physical body causes deep pain, in this case the pain being a 'block' to a greater truth, that we are infinite beings. Apart from the belief that we exist in a human body, there is a staggering range of pains and discomforts whose roots lie beyond the physical: blaming other people for your own condition; doing things you don't really want to do (including eating when you're not hungry); not forgiving others; not forgiving yourself; being afraid of your true power and potential; guilt; the inherited pain of your parents' own childhoods; being judgmental, etc. These are all attitudes and behaviours that cause physical pain and sometimes deep chronic pain. And think for a moment, how many of our clients carry some or all of these attitudes?

Unless the therapist has a deep understanding of these pains, their roots and manifestations, and how you can best release them, physical technique massage may only have a limited effect. Inherited attitudes and behaviour patterns can cause pain beyond the physical. What about clients who have fallen victim to magic, spells, hexes, or possessions, or those who are being blocked by powerful, toxic energy chords? And believe me, if you have been hexed in the back of your heart chakra, no amount of side stretches, spinal twists or back work will release you of this pain, not unless the therapist has the proper understanding and ability to 'see'. My point is, there is a huge range of pains and ills whose roots lie beyond the physical and whose treatment similarly lies beyond the pure physical application of massage. My concern, which may be completely unfounded as I am a bit isolated from the Thai community, is the trend I see in taking a healing art - which is steeped in a culture of Buddhism, spirituality, spirit channeling and guiding, prayer and meditation - and stripping it of all or most of its spiritual roots while exporting wholesale the exercises and techniques only. There is nothing wrong with exercises and techniques when they are used and understood in their proper context, but to practice and teach Thai massage without a Buddha-Shivago foundation is to literally take the soul out of Thai massage. When the remaining generation of Thai masters is gone, who will be left to show the full potential of this healing art? Will there be anyone able to see the 'backpack' or 'heart opening' Pichest sees in his students? And if there is no one left to show us the full potential, what will be left of Thai Massage?

In many ways there is no comparison between what is called Thai massage in the west and what is traditional Thai healing in Thailand. Maybe there should be a forum to actually explain what we mean when we say the words Thai Massage. Reflect, for a moment, if you begin to think that Thai Massage is an ancient healing art practised since the time of the Buddha, and compare it to what you see all around you. Does today's Thai Massage aptly fit this description? If you are a Thai massage therapist reading this and thinking: "But I can't heal someone who has the spirit of their grandfather in their left shoulder, which is causing their shoulder to be stiff and cold", my question to you is: why not? You may answer: 'because nobody taught me' and my reply would be: exactly! Traditional Thai massage - in general as a healing art - has been broken into bits, and only bits are being taught in the commercialized world in the West and also in Thailand. This is not to say that we should not treat our clients on the physical level if they are feeling pain on the physical level. The object of this short article is to nudge and encourage all Thai massage professionals to try to see beyond the physical and to touch and help heal your client in the realms where Bob Haddad touched his amputee client. By seeing beyond the physical, we can develop our practice into a very powerful, healing art. If we are all created equal, what is stopping us from becoming sensitive, intuitive and powerful healers? Why shouldn't we develop our Thai massage practice into the healing art Chaiyuth, Pichest and other great masters have shown it to be?

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## Thai Culture Spotlight : Songkran, the New Year & Water Festival

Songkran is the celebration of Thai traditional New Year, and an occasion for family reunions and celebrations. At this time, people from rural areas who work in the capital usually return home to celebrate the festival. Very often, the streets of Bangkok are empty during Songkran, but this is not the case in Chiang Mai. Although several days before and after are dedicated to relaxation, the actual holiday falls on April 13, when annual festivities are held throughout the kingdom. "Songkran" means to "move" or "change place" in Thai, as it is the day when the sun changes position in the zodiac. It is also known as the "Water Festival", as people believe that water is an agent for washing away bad luck.

This Thai traditional New Year begins with early morning merit-making, offering food to Buddhist monks and releasing caged birds to fly freely into the sky. During this auspicious occasion, many caged animals will also be set free. Praying to the ancestor spirits is also an important part of the day. People also show respect to elders by pouring scented water (*nap op Thai*) over the palms of their hands. Older people, in return, wish the youngsters good luck and prosperity.

In the afternoon, after performing a bathing rite for Buddha images and for the monks, all participants, young and old, playfully splash water all over each other. In Bangkok, the Buddha image "Buddhasihing" is brought out from the National Museum so people can sprinkle holy water at Sanam Luang, opposite the Grand Palace. The most talked-about regional celebration takes place in Chiang Mai, where Songkran is celebrated from April 13-15. During this period, people from all parts of the country flock there to enjoy the water festival, to watch the Miss Songkran contest, to view and participate in the beautiful parades, and to throw water on anyone you might happen to see in the streets.

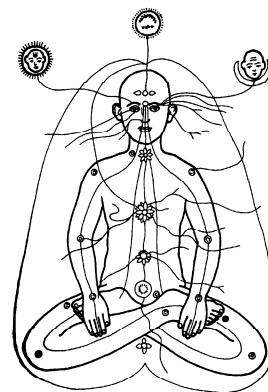
- Adapted from *Essays on Thailand*, by Thanapol Chahchaidee. All Rights Reserved.



# Good Energy, Bad Energy. . . Who Knows?

By Paul Fowler, RTT

In the world of bodywork, we often talk about protecting ourselves from the “bad” energy of the person we are working on. But how often do we think about the “bad” energy we might give to someone else? And what is “bad” energy anyway? I have heard my teacher Ajahn Pichet say, “Oh, tension. . . giving, giving.” By saying this, he is noting that the tension we hold in our own bodies while working may move from us into them. “Cannot relax”, he will say; meaning, since I as the giver am not relaxed, the receiver cannot relax either. For example, if I am pulling them back against my stationary foot, but I am holding tension in my foot, that tension moves into their body. When their body senses this tension, they cannot fully let go. They may be pulled in one direction, but they are holding back and not giving themselves fully to the pose. Our clients may contract muscles all over their body as they (usually subconsciously) resist the stretch. Those of us who practice yoga may more easily recognize this problem. Going deeply into a stretch while you are holding tension or not breathing correctly can make a pose unproductive, and it can also be a cause of injury. When this happens, it may create in the receiver, as Pichet would say, an “amazing (energy) block”, perhaps even in another part of the body. So, when we try to “force” things, we can sometimes cause more problems than we relieve. This is ironic. The more we want to help the person, and the more we want to “fix” them, the less we actually help them. Perhaps this is where our “doing” culture makes things more difficult.



When I began practicing in 1999, I was “doing” 90 percent of the time and “listening” only 10 percent. Now I think the healthiest practice is “doing” 10 percent and “listening” 90 percent. I once asked Pichet how he understands the problems in a person’s body so quickly and clearly, but he had no verbal answer. He just moved his body into lotus meditation posture. “Listening” was the unspoken answer. But how can we listen when our minds are filled with so much? Here are some examples that you might recognize: “Is my client enjoying this?” “Am I doing the right thing for him/her?” “What does he/she expect from me?” “When I’m in this position it hurts me a little, but it seems like this is what they need.” “I’m afraid to skip this position because they are expecting me to do it.” “This person had a Thai massage from someone else before. I wonder if he’ll like me as much as the other therapist.” “I can’t tell if he is enjoying this, maybe I should impress him with a dramatic position.” I admit it -- all of these thoughts have been in my head at one time or another. Most of the time, they pass through subconsciously, causing tension in my mind and body. Then, I may unknowingly transmit this tension to my client. But when I become conscious of these thoughts, recognize that they come from misunderstanding, and then enter into the present moment, only then I can relax and truly “listen” to what their body is asking for. So, perhaps the “bad” energy we are giving to someone else comes from our “monkey mind” -- our fears, our anxieties, the difficulties we face in recognizing our motivations and their potential consequences. We are never free of tension. Tension comes in layers. When we release one layer, we find another one below it. We see it in our clients all the time. We should never think that we are tension free. We should always be aware that we can let go more. So as we work, we should try to become aware of the tension we hold in each position, in each movement, and in each breath. It is only through awareness that we can let it go. We should be okay with it, recognize it constantly, and breathe into it. As we relax, “good” energy can move through us, and into the other person in a profound, healing way.

So how can we remedy this situation? One word: meditation. We talk about Buddhism as being the spiritual foundation of our practice, and the cornerstone of Buddhism is meditation. Through meditation we learn to recognize the tension in our mind and body. Through meditation we learn to release. Through meditation we learn right understanding, right thinking, right attitude, and right effort. We open to the truth of the moment.



## Lanna Folk Healing - The Art of Yam Khang

*Yam Khang* is a healing art that incorporates heat, oil and massaging the body with the feet. Only the therapist’s feet are used to work the body, and no hands are used. It is quite a dramatic sight to see, since large flames sometimes shoot out of the pot that is used to generate the heat. The patient lies down on a mat, with most of his body exposed. To the side of the mat lie two bowls of oil and a charcoal-fired metal bucket with a metal flange on top. The therapist dips his foot first in sesame oil, then in *plai* oil - (a type of ginger) - and then places his foot directly on the metal flange to contract heat from the scalding pot.



Immediately, and by using a wooden stick for balance, he begins to work the body with his hot foot, using his heel, sole and toes to work the sen lines. The foot can stay warm for a minute or so, until he repeats the oiling and heating process again. The massage continues in this fashion for up to one hour.



(photos by Bob Haddad)

## Thai Healing Alliance International - 2009 Instructors and Schools

### THAILAND

Aum Health School - Chiang Mai  
 Baan Hom Samunphrai - Chiang Mai  
 International Training Massage (ITM) - Chiang Mai  
 Lannathai Massage School - Chiang Mai  
 Loi Kroh Massage School - Chiang Mai  
 Mama Nit Thai Massage - Chiang Mai  
 Nerve Touch Massage School - Chiang Mai  
 Old Medicine Hospital - Chiang Mai  
 Phussapa Massage School - Bangkok  
 Ajahn Pichest Boonthumme - Hang Dong  
 School of Massage for Health, Sripoom - Chiang Mai  
 Sunshine Massage School (SMS) - Chiang Mai  
 Thai Massage School / Chiang Mai (TMC) - Chiang Mai  
 Therdchai (Mac) Chumphoopong - Chiang Mai  
 Timmy Thai Massage—Chiang Mai

### CANADA

Circle of Life School of Thai Massage - British Columbia  
 Kristin Nuttall, RTT - British Columbia  
 Francine Petit, RTT - British Columbia

### JAPAN

Academy of Thai Yoga Massage

### NEW ZEALAND

Sunshine Network New Zealand

### USA

Institute of Thai Massage - New Jersey  
 Oregon School of Massage - Oregon  
 Spirit Winds School of Thai Massage - California  
 Tanya Boigenzahn, RTT - Minnesota  
 Elyse Briggs, RTT - California  
 Paul Fowler, RTT - Illinois  
 Richard Gold, RTT - California  
 Bob Haddad, RTT - North Carolina  
 Tim Holt, RTT - California  
 Martin Misenhimer, RTT - New York  
 Hillary Olsen, RTT - Colorado  
 James Peckham, RTT - New Mexico  
 D'vorah Swarzman, RTT - Oregon  
 Souri Sisavath, RTT - Texas  
 Eric Spivack, RTT - Washington  
 Al Turner, RTT - New York  
 David Weitzer, RTT - Oregon

### EUROPE

British School of Thai Massage - England  
 Institute of Thai Massage Belgrade - Serbia  
 Thai Massage Organisation - Scotland  
 Davor Haber, RTT - Croatia  
 Hans Lütz, RTT - Germany  
 Ralf Marzen, RTT - England  
 Fiona Smith, RTT - England

## TIMELINESS & TIMELESSNESS

By Richard Gold Ph.D, L.Ac., RTT

The giving and receiving of Thai massage can create an experience of timelessness for both the recipient and practitioner. Indeed, this can be seen as one of the many valued therapeutic goals of the work. When the mind rests, and the incessant chatter of the mind ceases, a deeply therapeutic experience may be achieved. For the recipient, there is the possibility to experience their own body in entirely unique ways. At times, there may be an experience that the body is floating in water: buoyant, flexible, open, and less encumbered by gravity.

Many practitioners and recipients of traditional Thai massage are able to experience self-transcendence during sessions. This type of experience is often marked by a sense of self-forgetfulness. Both participants become fully absorbed in the experience. Specific place and time become unimportant. Personal concerns and issues fade out of awareness. Concentration is totally focused. Ego does not dominate the experience. When ego concerns are not dominating, then we are able to experience a sense of transpersonal identification. Transpersonal identification is a feeling of connectedness to everything - accompanied by a deep reverence for life. Along with these feelings of connectedness often comes an opening of one's intuition: an instinctive knowing without the conscious use of rational, mental processes.

The experience of self-transcendence is one of life's most wonderful blessings. Self-transcendence brings human beings closer to the source of our being on this wonderful planet Earth. Still, there are practical aspects to the application of this healing work that must always be considered. Although we seek to create an experience of timelessness, we are also working within the context of time constraints and time-based obligations. Practitioners are encouraged to develop a routine that they really enjoy giving. In addition, practitioners always want to find out from their clients what their personal needs and desires are from a session. Removing the guesswork of designing a session allows the therapist (especially a new practitioner) to simply focus on the work, moment to moment, being in the Now.

The timed routines that we establish should not be structures that confine us, but rather strong foundations that build confidence and empower us to be liberated and free. Once the practitioner becomes proficient and confident in their work, then the fixed routines we first learned become less important, and improvisation and intuition comes into play. Practitioners sometimes discover procedures they enjoy performing so much, that it is difficult to not include them in a session. In this case, these procedures may always be included. In addition, and depending on the needs of the client, each session may be modified to satisfy individual needs and desires. Finally, the practitioner must be aware of any health issues that the recipient might have. Any procedures that are contra-indicated for a particular condition must be avoided.

It is important to realize and remember that even though a Thai session is being given in a time-sensitive situation, the possibilities for timelessness and self-transcendence remain viable. Hold this as an intention in your heart and mind when you perform traditional Thai massage.



Thai Healing Alliance International

# Form B Basic Member Application

You qualify for Basic Membership in THAI if you have studied between 30 and 150 hours of nuad boran (traditional Thai massage, Thai yoga therapy, etc.) After completing this form, send it by mail. Remember to include your credit card information in the spaces below.

Date of application:

day month year

Your primary school or teacher's name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1: Personal Information *Enter information in the white spaces*

<b>first name</b>	<b>last / surname</b>	<b>middle / other</b>	
<b>business name (if applicable)</b>	<b>date of birth (day/month/year)</b>		
<b>address</b>			
<b>city</b>	<b>state / province</b>	<b>zip / postal code</b>	<b>country</b>
<b>e-mail</b>	<b>web site</b>	<b>telephone</b>	

## Section 2: Documented study

In the blank space below each column heading, list the name of each course or program you have studied, the name of your instructor or school, the location and date of completion for each workshop or course, and the total hours you studied for each course. It is not necessary to submit photocopies of your study certificates.

For Basic Member level, you must have a minimum of 30 hours of formal study of Thai massage.

course name	teacher or institution	location	date	hours
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## Credit Card Information *Enter credit card information below and send your application by mail.*

<b>credit card number</b>	<b>exp. date (mm/yy)</b>	<b>Master Card or Visa?</b>	<b>verification #</b>
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Basic Member  
\$85 USD  
per 2 year cycle

*Include your credit card info or a check or money order in US dollars, and send this application to:*

THAI P.O. Box 16247 Chapel Hill, NC 27516 USA



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## Member Comments

I've applied for membership (in THAI) because so I can keep up with the latest news about Thai healing arts, as well as be supported by this network of practitioners. *Helene Walravens, Surrey, UK*

Nuad Boran has become part of my personal and professional life. I wish to continually refine my knowledge and technique. *Andrew Kmeta, New York, USA*

I am impressed with the information offered, and I would like to have the professional affiliation with a legitimate and recognizable organization. *Nicole Arel, Connecticut, USA*

I hope to have a connection that has standards in the traditional form of Thai work, as it is an art, and should be practiced and preserved in its truest form. *Nathalie de Meyenburg, Indiana, USA*

I would like to be part of a professional and international organization specifically for Thai massage. I researched (THAI) online and find the information useful. *Annette Caesar, Alberta, Canada*

I am interested in supporting the organization and...(using) the archival area for study and research. *Richard Willis, New Mexico, USA*

I believe (THAI) is playing an important role to promote and expand the knowledge and value of Nuad Boran. *Gabriel Azoulay, Arizona, USA*

I believe membership in a professional organization lends credibility to my work and supporting an organization, in turn, lends credibility to the field. *Elizabeth Zebold, Washington, USA*

## OM NAMO ... (WHAT?)

Every serious practitioner of traditional Thai massage is familiar with the famous prayer to the founding Father of Thai massage. We may recite it silently before practicing, or aloud in a group before beginning our lessons. But what is that ancient Pali chant really saying?

Don't ask the average Thai person! Pali is an ancient language from India, and although some Thai people still chant in Pali, it's much like when Christians would recite prayers in Latin, without really knowing what they were saying.

In addition, many hundreds of years of transliteration have made it difficult to understand the meaning of the original Pali text. Compare these two translations which are quite different from one another. Which one do you like best?

*All homage to you Shivago,*

*you who established the  
basic rules and precepts*

*I pray that everything may  
come through you; kind-  
ness, wealth, and medicine*

*I pray to you. You bring  
light to me, just like the sun  
and the moon*

*You have perfect wisdom  
and know many things.*

*We respect you.  
You are without  
defilement, and you are  
near to enlightenment*

*We all come to pray to you.  
I pray to you. I pray to the  
Buddha*

*I pray that with your help,  
all sickness and disease  
may be released from the  
one whom I touch.*

*We pray to you Shivago,*

*you who led a saintly life*

*We pray that you bring us  
knowledge and that you  
allow our prayers to bring  
us the true medicine of  
the Universe*

*We pray that you will  
bring us health and  
all good things*

*The God of healing lives in  
the heavens, and we live in  
the world below*

*We pray to you so that  
heaven may be reflected in  
the world below, and that  
healing medicine may  
encircle the world*

*We pray for the one we  
touch, that he will be  
happy, and that all illness  
will be released from him.*

### Om Namō Shivago

**Silasa Ahang**

**Karuniko Sapatānang**

**Osata Tīpa Mantang**

**Gomalapato Paka Sesi**

**Wantami Bantito**

**Sumetaso Aroha**

**Sumana Homi**

**Piyo Tewa Manussanang**

**Piyo Proma Namutamo**

**Piyo Nakha Supananang**

**Pininsiāng Namō Mihang**

**Namō Puttaya Navon Navien**

**Nasatit Nasatien Ehi Mama**

**Navien Nawe Napai Tanvien**

**Navien Mahaku Ehi Mama**

**Piyong Mama Namō Puttaya**

**Na-a Na-wa Roh-ha**

**Payati Vinasanti**