

State of Wisconsin, USA fails to mention *nuad boran* by name in proposed new bill

The following is a letter to Representative Jon Richards of Wisconsin from THAI regarding the bill that does not specifically mention Thai massage from the list of energy-based modalities that are exempt from regulation by local authorities.

Dear Representative Richards,

I am writing with regard to Assembly Bill 588, Wisconsin's proposed revision of the legal guidelines for massage therapy and bodywork. Specifically, I request that you include *nuad boran* / traditional Thai massage as one of the exemptions to this new revised law. I am aware that other practitioners in your state have written you to make the same request, and I hope my words here will be helpful in making your determination. *Nuad boran* is also known as "traditional Thai massage" "Thai yoga massage", and "Thai yoga bodywork."

Thai Healing Alliance International (THAI) is the world's international organization for proposing standards of practice and study of traditional Thai massage. THAI is a non-profit organization which operates entirely and exclusively within the sphere of traditional Thai medicine, unlike other organizations such as AMTA, AOBTA and others who include Thai massage as one of the many modalities they recognize, but do not regulate. THAI members live and practice in over 25 countries, and THAI is endorsed by major organizations and press around the world as being the point of reference for the professional practice of Thai massage. THAI has inseparable ties to the major schools and teachers in Thailand, and THAI practitioners and instructors must meet very stringent standards, and ascribe to a professional code of ethics. THAI sets stringent standards; to be recognized as Registered Thai Therapist (RTT), a member must complete a minimum of 180 hours of Thai massage training, carry out 150-200 hours of documented practice sessions, provide health history documentation for their clients, and meet other requirements. Instructors in THAI must have a minimum of 500 hours of Thai massage training, none of which can be based on western massage training.

I realize that professional practitioners of traditional Thai massage, especially those who are members of THAI, will be presumed to be exempt under the new proposed legislation (per the guidelines in Sections 17 through 19). However I sincerely request that along with Rolfing, Feldenkrais, Trager, polarity therapy, reiki and the others, "*nuad boran* / traditional Thai massage" be specifically exempted by name in your new bill. Doing so now will show that Wisconsin is progressive and forward-thinking in scope and will avoid or minimize any problems that might be presented in the future with regard to legal practice of *nuad boran* in your State.

Traditional Thai massage (*nuad boran*) is a long-established healing art, much older in practice than any western modality. It is not related to any other type of therapy. In fact, western bodywork modalities have fused aspects and techniques of *nuad boran* into their own practices. The fact that Thai medicine is unique and separate from any other system makes it worthy of its own distinction.

Thai yoga massage has often been misrepresented in the west, and especially among the (western) massage community, it is believed to be something that it is not. It is not massage, but there is contact with the human body. There is no kneading, nor oil, nor need for a massage table. There are no stroking movements, no direct manipulation of tissue, no topical rubbing of muscles and ligaments. Clients are fully clothed. Thai medical theory is, much like the concept of Chinese acupuncture, based on locating and dissipating energy blockages that are found along the major energy pathways in the body through pressure, rocking movements and assisted yoga stretches, however those pathways take a much different form than those used in Chinese medicine, and the pharmacopoeia of herbs used to treat disorders is wholly distinct. Traditional Thai massage is an ancient healing art, with thousands of years of history and development. It is not like reiki, polarity therapy or even shiatsu, which were developed in modern times. Because of the unique combination of reflexology, acupressure, and yoga, traditional Thai massage should be exempted by name from western massage regulations. Surely no regulatory agency or proposed bill would attempt to regulate yoga or yoga training, and reflexology and acupressure appear to be exempted under the current proposed legislation. These three elements form the manipulatory basis of Thai massage.

But the most important element of Thai massage is that it is based on energy healing. Traditional Thai medicine theory is based on addressing the energy system of humans, not the physical body. *Nuad boran* is, at its very essence, an energy healing modality. It is considered as such in Thailand and all around the world.

Your Section 19 says that anyone who "*uses touch, words, and directed movement to deepen a client's awareness of...patterns of movement, and to suggest ... new patterns of movement*" is exempt. Likewise, anyone who *uses touch to affect the energy systems of the human body* is exempt. And subsection b) states that the person must be recognized by, or meet the standards associated with a professional or credentialing organization, such as Thai Healing Alliance International.

I regret not being able to personally address the group at the hearing today, but I hope you will see fit to include by name "*nuad boran*" and/or "Traditional Thai Massage" or "Thai Yoga Massage" into your current list of exemptions, alongside the aforementioned modalities. In my opinion, doing so now, rather than facing an amendment or a potential problem at a later date, will make your new legislation more clear and concise, and will be in the overall best interests of the State of Wisconsin.

For more information on traditional Thai massage and Thai Healing Alliance, please see www.thaihealingalliance.com

Do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of further assistance. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Bob Haddad, RTT, Director

February, 2010

History of the Thai Calendar

The Thai solar calendar, or *suriyakati* calendar is used in traditional and official contexts in Thailand, although the Western calendar is used for business.

The months and days of the week are the same as those used in the Western calendar, only their names differ. The year however is counted from the Buddhist Era (B.E.), which is 543 years earlier than the Christian era (A.D.). For example, 2003 A.D. is equivalent to 2546 B.E. The era is based on the death of Gautama Buddha, which is dated to 543 BC by the Thai.

Until 1888 Thailand used a lunar calendar, in which the date of the New Year (*Songkran*) was between April 13 and 15. The new calendar, decreed by King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), was called *Ratanakosinsok*, and was nearly identical with the western Gregorian calendar. However the New Year date was fixed to April 1, and the year numbering started at the founding of Bangkok, 1781. King Vajiravudh (Rama VI) eventually changed the year counting to Buddhist Era in 1912.

In 1940 Prime Minister Pibunsongkram changed the official New Year to January 1. Now both New Year's days are public holidays. The Buddhist feasts and holidays are still calculated according to the lunar calendar, so they change their date in the solar calendar every year.