



LIVING TRADITIONS

Newsletter of the Thai Healing Alliance International - Volume 4, 2007

THAI Deepens Connections in Chiang Mai

In February 2007, the Thai Healing Alliance visited affiliate members in Thailand and held a social function for schools, teachers and students in Chiang Mai. The party was held at the Santitham YMCA and was open to the general public. Refreshments and food were served, and over 80 people attended the gathering, including directors and teachers from major Thai massage schools in Chiang Mai. THAI members Josh Scoggins, D'vorah Swarzman, Ralf Marzen, Bob Haddad and others were on hand to help introduce THAI to prospective members.

Representatives from a number of schools were in attendance including Loi Kroh, ITM, Sunshine Massage School, Lanna Thai Massage, Spa Mantra, School for Massage and Health, Sripoom, Aum Massage School, Nerve Touch, and Timmy Massage Training Center. There is a clear consensus that setting basic standards of study and practice outside of Thailand is important for the safe and effective practice of *nuad boran* throughout the world.

Several new teachers and schools became affiliated with THAI during this visit, including Baan Hom Samunphrai, an herbal and massage center outside the city center, and Khunchamnan, a training center run by Amnat & Pam Khunchamnan. Over fifteen Thai citizens joined THAI as Registered Thai Therapists and assistant teachers, and the YMCA joined THAI as an Associate Member, offering special discounts on lodging to all THAI members.

With the help of Advisory Council member Max Scheuermeier (Sunshine Massage School), THAI has begun to print newsletters and other promotional information with a local printer in Chiang Mai.

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THAI now offers limited financial help for members who need assistance in order to further their studies in Thailand. This year, Loi Kroh Massage School, Nerve Touch Massage School and Sunshine Massage School were active partners in the THAI scholarship program, and Egle Puca, RTT and Luis Musa (from Argentina) were the scholarship recipients.

THAI is very grateful for the outpouring of support for the Thai Healing Alliance that continues to be shown by the Thai massage community in Chiang Mai.



Coocky, Picnic and Timmy pose with Bob. They were among 20 teachers from ten different schools that attended the THAI gathering in Chiang Mai.

Lanna Folk Healing at Royal Flora Ratchapruerk

by Bob Haddad

Early in 2007, several THAI members visited the Royal Flora Exhibition in the suburbs of Chiang Mai for what we thought would be an afternoon looking at flowers. What we most enjoyed, however, were not the beautiful floral displays from all over the world, but rather the demonstrations of traditional Lanna folk healing that we came upon in one of the pavilions.

In addition to traditional *nuad boran* sessions and information about Thai herbal healing, we witnessed fascinating demonstrations of two traditional Lanna folk healing styles: *Tok Sen* and *Yam Khang*.

Tok Sen (hit the sen) is a form on sen line stimulation whereby the therapist uses a wooden chisel and hammer to beat on the patient's body in order to open blockages in the sen lines. It is said that this type of therapy increases blood flow, reduces muscular tension and pain, relieves fatigue, and brings about relaxation, mood elevation and stress relief.



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Interview with Chongkol Setthakorn of ITM Massage School, Chiang Mai

Chongkol Setthakorn is the founder and director of International Training Massage School (ITM) in Chiang Mai, Thailand. For many years, ITM has been offering classes in traditional *nuad boran*, and many current teachers and therapists in the west have studied at ITM at one time or another. Here is an interview conducted by Bob Haddad in early 2007 in the Santitham neighborhood of Chiang Mai.

Thank you, Khun Chongkol, for taking time today for this interview.

You're welcome. I enjoyed the articles in the *Living Traditions* newsletter, especially that one about the "blood stops." It is good that you spoke about "opening the gate" because in Thai we never say "blood stop." We say "open the wind gate" (to refer to this technique); to open the free mind for each other, so we share a good feeling from practitioner to client. An open mind, an open window. Those are the real things. Sometimes a doctor will disagree and say, "Oh no", but for over 2000 years no one has died from this (practice); they are happy and healthy.

Except it's good to know the contra-indications: high blood pressure, pregnancy...

Varicose veins, and heart disease....

And the variations are interesting. For example, on a strong or heavy person, we might use our knees to open the gate at the groin. But we shouldn't lean in too deeply.

No, just only enough to balance.

So let me ask you a few questions about your work and about ITM. You are always so busy there, with so many students....

Yes, we're quite busy all year round. We now have two buildings nearby the school, one about 20 meters away and another one next to Spa Mantra. We are renovating them as classrooms so when we have large groups, we can split them and hold classes in the new building. We are also training new teachers to support more students and new courses.

When did you have the idea to start ITM? And please tell us about when you were at Old Medicine Hospital. Which year did you begin to work there?

The first time it was in the 80s. I'm a cousin of Ajahn Sintorn. My mother and his mother are sisters. In my twenties, I studied law, and then I went there to work.

So you graduated law school, and you started to work at Old Medicine Hospital?

No, not yet, I continued to work at my law firm in Bangkok until I got to the top of my career in Bangkok after about 15 years. Then I came back to my home town of Chiang Mai when I was in my late thirties. That was around 1985, I think.

So that is when you began to work at the Old Medicine Hospital, and you were working there first as a lawyer?

Yes, as a lawyer and a consultant, whenever they would need me to work with them. And then later I also began to work there as a teacher. That period lasted about 2 or 3 years.

So when did you have the idea to start your own school?

After I came back from America. Rick Gold came to study at the Old Medicine Hospital, and there was a connection for me to come to California, in '89 or '90. Almost one year later, as soon as possible, I went to San Diego. It was the first time I had taught outside of Thailand. I stayed there about six months, teaching and studying. I was studying anything I could find in the school. When I came back, I still continued to work at the Hospital for another year. But when I went to America a second time, there was a problem. I think there was a problem with the length of time I was supposed to be there. Maybe they looked at the ticket and said "Oh, you will stay too long", so they refused to let me in. So they kept me in a holding area overnight, in a type of jail, outside the airport. I felt frightened, but it was OK because I knew I wasn't a criminal. Everybody there had visa problems. I had to wait there just one night, until they could book me on a return ticket to go back home.

Did you come with your wife on that trip?

Yes, and also with my daughter Kate. She was a teenager. But that night the two women slept in a motel (he laughs). For the women it was easier. As a man, I could not stay in the hotel. But they respected us, they didn't treat me like a criminal, and because I was a lawyer, they knew I wouldn't do anything wrong.

That must have been a terrible experience. So when you returned to Chiang Mai, how long did it take before you first opened ITM?

First I rented a room in downtown Chiang Mai and I began to teach some students, but then a month later, I rented a whole house, and then about a year later I began to look for a place to buy. That was in '93, and by then more and more students were beginning to come. Sometimes we had to have two classes - a day class and a night class. It was difficult sometimes. I trained the staff members myself, and we began to create our school.



So now it is 15 years later. How are you feeling about your work?

I am happy. I am happy to be a teacher, more than a therapist. To be a teacher means to always be a good friend. And now we are hoping to buy the building next to ITM, to make the school bigger. And we also have Spa Mantra (at the end of the block, run by daughters Kate and Liz - Ed.) We have an extra room there where we can teach Thai massage.

And you are also teaching Luk Pra Kob (herbal compresses) now?

Yes, Kate teaches that in the spa. We teach students there whenever they want to learn, in small groups or one-on-one. We teach them how to mix the herbs, to wrap the compresses and to use them.

So here you are in 2007, a successful business man with many years of experience teaching traditional Thai massage. What can you suggest to Thai massage therapists, so we can continue to be good practitioners?

To study and practice, that's all. Many people, many (western) massage therapists who come to study with us, always want to begin with the advanced class, without starting with a good introduction. This is a big mistake because Thai massage and western massage are completely different. So we recommend that they try Level I or Level II first. If they feel confident, then they can continue. Some people go to the advanced class for only one day, and then they say "I have a headache, I want to return back to the beginning." And most of them come back to the beginners class. Unfortunately some people in the west still associate Thai massage as a sexual thing, so it is important to make them understand what it really is, so they understand the truth about Thai massage. The two main styles of Thai massage are the Bangkok style, where there is more acupressure, and the Chiang Mai style, which has more stretching. We try to help them become good messengers of our work to the west, and we hope that will work.



Chongkol Setthakorn (center), with his wife Atchara and daughter Chulaluck (Kate) at ITM Massage School.

What can we do to help new students understand to learn slowly, to realize that we are students for the rest of our lives? How can we help to change the western mentality of those who want to become a Thai therapist very quickly?

We always try to tell them to calm down, slow down, don't rush, that's all. Work slowly and try to make it perfect. More experience can only help. Practice and more practice, that's all. That's the whole idea. Two weeks of practice in Thailand is just the first step. Now the government of Thailand requires a minimum of 80 hours. That is enough time to begin to learn, but not enough time to begin working.

You have been a strong supporter of the Thai Healing Alliance, thank you. Do you have any final thoughts about THAI?

Many schools stay alone, and there is no central organization. The government has tried to bring us together, but many schools still stay alone. Some people ask me, "why isn't there a center (an organization) in Thailand?" We do have associations in Thailand, but they are mostly for Thai people. I always tell my students that THAI is a good organization for Thai massage, because everybody can be friends, and share good feelings with each other. THAI is a good organization for all Thai massage therapists in the world. ☺



Our traditional Thai style house features European mattresses, water filtration, bright rooms, and a lovely terrace and garden. Rates begin at 750 baht, including free airport pickup. THAI members receive a discounted weekly rate.

Contact info@santitham.com and visit our web site at www.santitham.com

Stay with us when you're in Chiang Mai!



THAI is now accepting nominations for Executive Council members

If you or someone you know would like to serve on the THAI Executive Council, or if you would like to nominate someone for service, please contact THAI

Volunteer positions available

*Membership Committee
Fund Raising and Publicity
Publications Committee*

Please contact:
info@thaihealingalliance.com

INSTITUTE OF **Thai Massage**

www.thai-massage.org

- **Classes & Workshops** throughout the year held in New Jersey, with Intros, two-week Intensives & Advanced routines
- **Videos/DVDs/Book** (online ordering)
- **Spa Trainings** (top spas are our specialty)
- **Resources** (mats, bells, t-shirts, & more)

Affiliated with ITM in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Approved Provider for THAI and NCBTMB.

“Monk Chat” & Meditation Program offered at Wat Suan Dok By Bob Haddad

For those of us who travel to Chiang Mai to study and practice, an excellent way to learn more about Buddhism and meditation is to participate in the free programs offered at Wat Suan Dok. The wat is located due west of the western wall of the old city, and can be reached by walking from the center western-most gate, Suan Dok gate. Allow for a 20 minute walk from the gate, or just take a tuk-tuk from any part of town.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday night from 5 pm – 7 pm, there is a “Monk Chat” program, which pairs up tourists with English-speaking monks. No reservation is necessary for the monk chat. Arriving at the wat, follow the signs for “Monk Chat” and you’ll arrive at a large room, with tables and chairs. A monk will greet you and you will be assigned to one of the monks in attendance. You are then free to speak with him at for as long as you wish. Tea and snacks are sometimes served. Most conversations are held in English, though a few of the monks also speak other languages. They use this opportunity to share their ideas on life as a monk and their beliefs in Buddhist values. It’s an excellent way to have close personal contact with a monk, and to share ideas and concepts.



If you have a full 24 hours to spend, you might consider the free meditation program at Wat Suan Dok. To attend, you must bring personal belongings for an overnight stay, including toiletries and a towel. This is a 24 hour meditation program and is offered totally free to all tourists. It’s a fabulous way to spend time with the monks and with other people in a spiritual environment and is highly recommended for all visitors to Chiang Mai.



Reservations must be made in advance to attend the meditation retreat sponsored by Wat Suan Dok.

For more information, or to make a reservation, contact: thaimonkchat@yahoo.com

For general information on these programs and other activities at Wat Suan Dok, visit www.monkchat.net



Photos (clockwise from top): Monks chat with a “farang” family; meditation participants practice walking meditation and alms offerings. (All photos courtesy Wat Suan Dok)

The meditation retreat schedule, which is offered every Tuesday/Wednesday of the week, appears on the next page.

Free Meditation Schedule at Wat Suan Dok

1st day: Tuesday

2:15 p.m.	Assemble at Wat Suan Dok
2:30 p.m.	Introduction to Buddhism and meditation
4:00 p.m.	Departure for Training Center
5:00 p.m.	Free time / tea and snacks
6:00 p.m.	Dinner
6:30 p.m.	Evening chanting and meditation
9:00 p.m.	Bedtime

2nd day: Wednesday

5:00 a.m.	Morning gong (wake up)
5:30 a.m.	Morning chanting, yoga, and meditation practice
7:00 a.m.	Alms offering and breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Discussion on Buddhism and meditation
9:30 a.m.	Meditation practice
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:40 a.m.	Meditation practice
11:30 a.m.	Offer food to monks / Prepare & eat lunch
12:30 p.m.	Assembly and group photo
1:30 p.m.	Return to Wat Suan Dok / Farewell



Elements of Thai Foot Massage

Therapeutic massage has a long history in Thailand, and some techniques have passed unchanged through the centuries. Nowadays, there are many different kinds of massage practiced in Thailand, and one of the most interesting of these is foot massage. The theory is simple, but the practice is far more complex because the force applied by the fingers must be very carefully and precisely directed to specific points on the foot. Each part of the foot is linked to another, often distant, part of the body, and correlations extend to vital organs as well. Here are 16 basic principles and techniques commonly used in Thai foot therapy.

1. Wash the feet thoroughly and adopt a comfortable position that allows you to reach all parts of the foot.
2. Lubricate the feet with a skin lotion when carrying out the massage.
3. Start to push firmly at the base of the 4th toe. The nerve in this location links directly to the heart. Pain when you push in this spot means that there is a problem with the heart and lengthy yet gentle massage will ease the pain and improve the health of the heart.
4. Pressing at the base of the second toe will stimulate the nerve controlling the lungs and the entire bronchial system that are necessary for breathing.
5. In between the first and second toes are the nerves that influence the head. If you have a headache, pressure between these toes will soon make the ache pass or may prevent headaches altogether.
6. Stress in the eyes will be relieved by massaging between the third and fourth toes. This may not only relieve tired eye muscles but also improves clarity of vision.
7. Stretching and pulling the big toe on either side of the nail will relieve pain in the temples, as well as symptoms of sinusitis.
8. Rotary pressure in the ball of the foot will greatly ease the symptoms of stomachache and also promotes healing of the kidneys, the bladder, and other parts of the excretory system.
9. Similar pressure applied to the front of the heel is therapeutic in problems of the genital glands of both men and women. It also has similar effects to number 8 above.



10. Stretching the skin backward beneath both sides of the ankle bone is beneficial to the reproductive tracts of both sexes.
11. Pulling a knuckle backwards along the instep greatly eases pain in the spine and may help to achieve better posture.
12. Grasping the foot with both hands, so that the thumbs are between the tops of the first and second, and the fourth and fifth toes, and massaging with the thumb-tips from side to side will alleviate pain in the inner ear and in the chest.
13. Take a firm hold of the foot, from the outside, with one hand, so that the knuckles of that hand are on top of the inner edge of the foot. Massage in this way, while you press the knuckles of your other hand against the inner edge of the foot to stimulate the diaphragm.
14. Place the thumbs of both hands beneath the heel, and the knuckles of the first finger just beneath the ankle bone. Rhythmically push with the knuckles for relief from sciatic pain and to stimulate the lymphatic system, which is responsible for clearing the body of bacteria and toxins.
15. Taking a firm hold of the foot, raising it, and massaging the back of the calf with the free hand is effective in relieving muscle stress in that leg.
16. With one hand holding the heel and the other cradling the toes, rotate the foot, without causing pain, to gain an overall sense of relaxation, ease and well-being.

- courtesy of www.chiangmai-chiangrai.com All rights reserved.

Woman who sought 'ozone therapy' dies

A New Zealand woman who travelled to Thailand for a bogus cancer cure which made her so sick she passed out, died after returning home from Thailand. Melissa Taylor, 33, a mother of two from Christchurch, had a rare adrenal cancer which had spread to her liver and lungs. Taylor's condition was brought into the spotlight after she sought treatment from Hellfried Sartori, an Austrian citizen.

Sartori was arrested at his home in Chiang Mai after treating Taylor with "liquid ozone" there. Sartori also administered his special treatment in hotel rooms in Chiang Mai, or instructed "patients" via the internet on how they should self-administer his cancer "cures".

Mrs. Taylor's relatives, who witnessed the treatment, said Sartori used a syringe to withdraw liquid from a small metal cylinder, then injected three doses into Ms Taylor, in veins in her chest and neck. She passed out shortly after the injections. She was rushed to the intensive care unit of Chiang Mai-Ram Hospital, where she spent two weeks recovering, and was then discharged to return to New Zealand.

Sartori served two prison terms in the United States -- in New York state in May 1992 and in Washington DC in July 1998 -- after administering his so-called "ozone treatments", Thai police said. His websites claim the ozone treatment cures everything from HIV and cancer to allergies and hardening of the arteries. His treatments consisted of injections of "liquid ozone", usually into a vein.

Thai police charged him with fraud and falsely claiming to be a medical doctor. Sartori could be jailed for up to five years if convicted of falsely representing himself as a doctor and fraudulently inducing an American man to pay him a deposit of \$37,000 for treatment which he never received. Sartori denies any wrongdoing.

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THAI welcomes these new members

Tanee Boonsom	Instructor	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Centro Brillo Del Sol	Institution	Buenos Aires, Argentina
Willie Buchanan	Basic Member	Vancouver, Washington
Homprang Chaleekanha	Instructor	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Katie Daniels	Basic Member	Minneapolis, Minnesota
Jody Ford	Basic Member	Greenbriar, Arkansas
Rebecca Hagman-Torkelson	Basic Member	Litchfield, Minnesota
Erica Hardin	Basic Member	San Diego, California
Amnat Khunchamnan	Instructor	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Wilaiwun Kaossaard	Instructor	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Kim Landry-Ayres	Basic Member	Eau Claire, Wisconsin
Jessica Layton	Practitioner	Bend, Oregon
Consuelo Mero	Practitioner	Oakland, California
Heidi McAllister	Basic Member	Stillwater, Minnesota
Amber McCornack	Basic Member	Albert Lea, Minnesota
Elaine Morgan	Basic Member	Vacaville, California
Rebecca Neal	Basic Member	Nashville, Tennessee
Jerrie Lee Parpart	Practitioner	Keizer, Oregon
Jenn Posterick	Basic Member	Stillwater, Minnesota
Egle Puca	Instructor	Buenos Aires, Argentina
Kath Rutland	Practitioner	Millarville, Alberta, Canada
Adrienne Snow	Practitioner	Reno, Nevada
Alysha Stalsworth	Basic Member	Dassel, Minnesota
The Naga Center	Institution	Portland, Oregon
Timmy Massage Center	Institution	Chiang Mai, Thailand
Charity Vera	Basic Member	Beaufort, South Carolina
Ruengphimon Wongman	Instructor	Chiang Mai
YMCA International Hotel	Associate Member	Chiang Mai, Thailand

The above members joined THAI before March, 2007. Members who have joined since then will be featured in the next issue of the *Living Traditions* newsletter.

Lanna Folk Healing, continued from page 1

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 - (ginger family) - 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 Web link exchange program

A free service for THAI members who have their own web sites

Here's how it works:

If you maintain a web site for your practice or teaching of traditional Thai massage, you are entitled to exchange links with the THAI web portal. In order to qualify for the link exchange, you must be an active member of THAI at the Practitioner level or higher, and you must agree to place a THAI logo/link on the main page (home page) of your web site. In exchange, a link to your web site will appear alongside your name in the RTT directory, located on the main page of the THAI web site.

Here's how to do it:

To place a THAI logo on the home page of your web site, follow these steps:

- Sign in to the Members' Area by clicking on "Member Login" on the main page of the THAI web site. Enter using your username and password.
- Once you enter the THAI site, go into the Members' Area (blue box) and click on "Download THAI logos." On the right side, click on "Logos for the web." You will see several logos at the bottom of this page. Choose the logo you think will look best on your web site, and then copy and paste the code for that logo onto the home page of your web site where you want it to appear. This will place a fixed-size logo on your web site. If you want the THAI logo to appear smaller or larger on your web site, you'll need to save the logo to your computer, re-size it, edit the code to remove the image path and then upload both the code and the new graphic to your web server. Any web designer can do this very quickly.
- After the THAI link and logo is in place on your home page of your web site, send an e-mail to info@thaihealingalliance.com and include a link to your web site. Make sure the subject heading mentions the words "web link request." When THAI verifies that you have established a THAI link on your site, a hyperlink to your web site will be placed next to your name on the list of Registered Thai Therapists, which is accessible to the general public and to all members of THAI.

Benefits:

Exchanging links increases traffic to web sites. A hyperlink placed next to your name on the THAI home page makes it easier for new clients to contact you directly and to learn more about your practice. And when you display the THAI logo on your home page, it shows that you are serious about your practice and associated with a professional organization. Thai Healing Alliance International is the only non-partisan organization in the world to set standards for traditional Thai massage.

Increase traffic to your site — Display your professional affiliation with THAI

JIVAKA'S CORNER



Jivaka Komarbhacca

The source figure and patriarch of traditional Thai healing is Jivaka Komarbhacca (Kumarbacca) - known in Thailand as Shivaga Kormapaj, Shivaka Gomarapato or simply

"Gomalapaj." This historical figure is revered by the Thai people as the father of their healing and medicine traditions.

The legend surrounding Jivaka's birth is that his mother, a courtesan of the king, hid the fact that she was with child for many months, and that upon birth, she left the infant lying on a garbage heap so that passers by could see. The Prince, while on his morning walk, noticed something on the heap and asked the people what it was. When they replied that it was a newborn baby, he asked, "Is it alive?" They replied "jivati", meaning "he is alive". This is how Jivaka got his name.

Jivaka is mentioned in ancient Buddhist texts as a renowned physician and healer who treated many important people of his day, and who became a devotee of the Buddha, his contemporary. He is believed to have traveled with, and to have personally treated the Buddha, and is also known for his donation of free medical services to the *sangha*, the Buddhist monastic order.

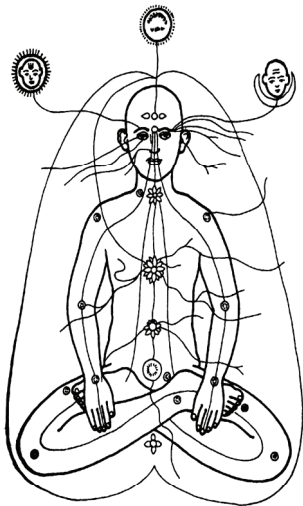
There are several common misrepresentations about Jivaka and about the early spread of Ayurvedic healing principles in Thailand. One is that Jivaka personally transmitted the earliest practice of Thai massage to Thailand. This is not true, because Jivaka never set foot in Thailand, since Buddhism began to spread from India (now southern Nepal) to Southeast Asia hundreds of years after his own death.

Another often-heard claim is that Jivaka taught Buddhist monks how to administer Thai massage, and that the monks in turn were responsible for spreading this healing art throughout Thailand. In actuality, it was probably not the monks themselves who practiced and helped spread the earliest forms of *nuad boran*, but rather the Ayurvedic doctors who accompanied and treated the monks as they spread news of Buddhism and sought converts.

- written by Bob Haddad



THAI HEALING IN ACTION



I recently completed a one week intensive training at Loi Kroh Massage school in Chiang Mai. It was entirely one-on-one and in a very different style to what I've studied before. I learned some great new techniques/approaches to mix into my own style. Most importantly, I learned more about grace and softness.

My Thai massage practice is essentially a meditation practice, and as in a meditation practice, the thoughts wander. I constantly "play" or "work" with staying focused...staying in the present...recognizing those thought patterns and not judging - smiling when my brain wanders yet again and bringing it back on track.

My practice is also a practice in patience. Each person's body is different. Each person brings a different set of emotional and physical needs. It is important to be grounded, loving, patient, soft, and graceful with each person.

This is what my Thai massage practice is all about. Part of my life process on this Earth is helping others and helping myself towards physical and mental peace and balance. My teacher this week, Dom, has displayed ALL of this to me.

Even with her minimal English abilities...she showed me grace and softness. She is meditation. She is peace. She gave SO much to me in only one week. I feel renewed in so many ways. - Hillary Olsen

When I received my first Thai massage, the experience and the effect was unlike anything I had ever known..

During the session itself, it felt as if things were moving around inside my body, not only on the surface where I was being touched and compressed. There were clear connections between different parts of my body that I would have previously thought unimaginable. Following the therapist's advice, I gave more awareness to my breath, and to the effect my breath had on my state, which was on of continual release and relaxation.

After the therapist left the room, I opened my eyes and I immediately noticed that my senses had been enhanced. My vision, smell and awareness had dramatically improved.

- Dwight Parrodin



Luk Pra Kob herbal compresses (above) and home made Thai herbal medicines (below) are among the items for sale at The Royal Bee Apothecary in Bangkok.



THE ROYAL BEE HERBAL SHOP

Those who have wandered down the soi alongside Wat Po are familiar with the numerous medicine vendors and their shops. Most sell an assortment of pills, powders, balms and various massage paraphernalia. There is not much to distinguish one shop from the rest other than the personalities of the vendors and perhaps the size of their space.

After one or two visits, the realization sets in that you only need visit one of the many nearly identical stands. This, however, all changed four months ago when the Royal Bee Herbal Shop moved into the neighborhood.

I first noticed the Royal Bee Herbal Shop while on a routine visit to Wat Po. As I was on my way, I spotted a new store unlike the rest. What stood out most were the balms and liniments they offered. Whereas most of the shops in the area offer the typical "Wat Po" brand balms, this shop had something unique. As I stopped to look at their selection of medicine, I noticed a multitude of rare books as well.

What I ultimately found was that the storeowners were even more rare and spectacular than the vast array of herbs. Mr. Damrongrak Singtokham was patiently instructing his customer on how to use the medicine she was purchasing. He explained to her, in great detail, how to prepare and take the herbs. Mr. Damrongrak is a graduate of Wat Po's Traditional Medicine School and makes his own medicine. His wife and coowner of the Royal Bee Herbal Shop is Ms. Nongcran Sophitsakol, a knowledgeable healthcare practitioner in her own right. Ms. Nongcran is a physical therapist who has learned the deeper theories, philosophies and practices of traditional Thai massage. The two make an amazing duo capable of answering most, if not all, questions that any patrons might have.

Although they are just starting out, the potential of these two practitioners and their shop is enormous. All of the products at the Royal Bee Herbal Shop are of the best quality. Their specialty is the store's namesake, a balm made with top grade beeswax.

They also make their own liniments and camphor inhalers. Because Mr. Damrongrak is a Traditional Medicine practitioner, he insures that all of the medicines sold are either approved by the Food and Drug Organization or personally tested by himself.

Having been to many of the other shops, I can personally attest to the quality of their products and the knowledge of Mr. Damrongrak and Ms. Nongcran. We are currently in the process of setting up a Medicinal Cooking class for foreign students with Mr. Damrongrak. At present, I suggest that all those visiting Thailand, and specifically Wat Po, pay a visit to the Royal Bee Herbal Shop to pick up some of their top quality products and chat with the owners. They are both a great source of information and quite friendly as well.

- By David Bliss



POST-NATAL THERAPIES IN THAILAND

These days in Thailand there's a revival in traditional midwife practices. Even a few trendy Bangkok spas are now offering urban, working moms the painstaking program that was once practiced by every new mother throughout the country. It is believed that these traditional post-natal therapies help detoxify and rebalance the body after the rigors of childbirth.

During the pregnancy itself, mothers are taught to avoid certain foods that might harm the fetus. For example, it is believed that pregnant mothers should avoid ingesting bamboo, and should not drink alcohol or fermented products during the first trimester. Herbal soups and ivy gourd leaf are believed to be especially nourishing, however.

There are also certain massage techniques for the lower back and legs, designed to relieve the strain of carrying the extra weight.

A post-natal therapy called *Yuu Fai*, meaning "staying by the fire," is well known to generations of Thai women. The treatment involves submitting the new mother to an herbal sauna of excruciating heat. The heat is generated by a charcoal furnace containing a blend of herbs that help heal the stitches, sterilize the childbirth wounds, and get the womb back in shape.

For best results, the mother carries out a program of hot compresses, Thai massage, herbal steam and herbal sauna daily for 7 days immediately following the birth. This helps to heal the body and assists in weight loss.

The herbal steam treatments are continued for six to twelve months afterward in order to help rebalance the body and encourage weight loss.

One heat treatment specific to Thai post-natal care is the hot salt pot treatment, an ancient technique rarely used today because few people know how to carry it out.

Despite its name, it's not the pot, but rather a special blend of herbs that provide the healing effects of this treatment. The key ingredient is a tuber called *waan chak mod luuk* that helps to heal the womb after childbirth. Some of the other ingredients are *prai*, turmeric and *naad* leaf, although different practitioners make their own recipes using other herbs.

Rick Gold's Book Released in New Edition

In 1988, Rick Gold arrived in Thailand for the first time. His visit came after a period of his life where he had studied traditional medicine in China, had completed doctoral studies and had received his license to practice traditional Chinese medicine and acupuncture.

Dr. Gold was fascinated with Thailand from the very moment he arrived, and became inextricably drawn to the study and practice of traditional Thai massage. Years later he authored a book on traditional Thai Massage, and although it was translated into several languages, it was expensive and hard to find.

Now the original book, along with many new entries and updates, has been released in an all-color second edition: *Thai Massage: A Traditional Medical Technique*. (Mosby, St. Louis, MO, USA © 2007, 224 pages)

With color photographs and a DVD highlighting a basic routine, this is a valuable introductory book for beginning students, and a good resource for current practitioners and teachers of traditional *nuad boran*.

The book is written from a humble and sensitive perspective, with respectful reference to the ancient healing traditions of Thailand. The color photographs feature two women and one man, and the models are shown using excellent body mechanics.

Chapter one contains the author's introduction, a brief history of Thai medicine including its Ayurvedic influences, plus illustrations and descriptions of the 10 major sen lines.

The fifteen pages that follow feature a general overview of techniques, notes on body awareness, general concepts for application, and a section on precautions and contraindications.

Throughout the book, arrows are overlaid on the photographs to indicate the direction in which pressure should be applied for each maneuver.

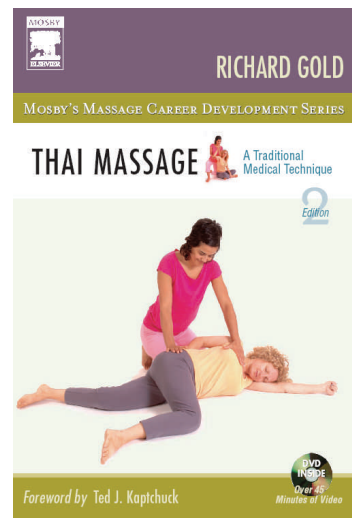
The last section of the book presents forty one pages of muscle figures excerpted from another Mosby publication.

The book has a list price of \$36, and is available at major retail stores and online outlets such as amazon.com.

- Bob Haddad



Detail of the altar at the Old Medicine Hospital, Chiang Mai.



Pali: The Language of Theravada Buddhism

by John Bullitt © 2005 John Bullitt. This excerpt is reproduced with permission of the author. All rights reserved.

The language of the Theravada canonical texts is Pali (lit. "text"). Pali is based on a dialect of Middle Indo-Aryan that was probably spoken in central India during the Buddha's time. Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and close personal attendant, committed the Buddha's sermons (*suttas*) to memory and thus became a living repository of these teachings. Shortly after the Buddha's death, (ca. 480 BCE), five hundred of the most senior monks — including Ananda — convened to recite and verify all the sermons they had heard during the Buddha's forty-five year teaching career. Most of these sermons therefore begin with the disclaimer, "*Evam me sutam*" — "Thus have I heard."

After the Buddha's death the teachings continued to be passed down orally within the monastic community, in keeping with an Indian oral tradition that long predated the Buddha. By 250 BCE the Sangha had systematically arranged and compiled these teachings into three divisions: the Vinaya Pitaka (the "basket of discipline" — the texts concerning the rules and customs of the Sangha), the Sutta Pitaka (the "basket of discourses" — the sermons and utterances by the Buddha and his close disciples), and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (the "basket of special/higher doctrine" — a detailed psycho-philosophical analysis of the Dhamma). Together these three are known as the Tipitaka, the "three baskets." In the third century BCE Sri Lankan monks began compiling a series of exhaustive commentaries to the Tipitaka; these were subsequently collated and translated into Pali beginning in the fifth century CE. The Tipitaka plus the post-canonical texts (commentaries, chronicles, etc.) together constitute the complete body of classical Theravada literature.



An ancient stone tablet inscribed in the Pali language.

Pali was originally a spoken language without an alphabet of its own. It wasn't until about 100 BCE that the Tipitaka was first fixed in writing by Sri Lankan scribe-monks who wrote the Pali phonetically using their own Sinhala alphabet. Since then the Tipitaka has been transliterated into many different scripts (Devanagari, Thai, Burmese, Roman, Cyrillic, to name a few). Although English translations of the most popular Tipitaka texts abound, many students of Theravada find that learning the Pali language — even just a little bit here and there — greatly deepens their understanding and appreciation of the Buddha's teachings.

No one can prove that the Tipitaka contains any of the words actually uttered by the historical Buddha. Practicing Buddhists have never found this problematic. Unlike the scriptures of many of the world's great religions, the Tipitaka is not regarded as gospel, as an unassailable statement of divine truth, revealed by a prophet, to be accepted purely on faith. Instead, its teachings are meant to be assessed firsthand, to be put into practice in one's life so that one can find out for oneself if they do, in fact, yield the promised results. It is the truth towards which the words in the Tipitaka point that ultimately matters, not the words themselves. Although scholars will continue to debate the authorship of passages from the Tipitaka for years to come (and thus miss the point of these teachings entirely), the Tipitaka will quietly continue to serve — as it has for centuries — as an indispensable guide for millions of followers in their quest for awakening.



Left: Students, Practitioners and teachers of mud boran from 8 countries gather at the THAI reception at the Chiang Mai YMCA in February, 2007.

Right: Thai massage teachers Aimee, Nang and Aom pose with a student.



TRADITIONAL THAI HERBAL HEALING

Thailand has a longstanding tradition of herbal medicine that, like many aspects of Thai culture, derives its origins from ancient India. Thai herbal medicine has its roots in ancient Indian Ayurvedic practices and arrived in Thailand along with Buddhist missionary monks, who were trained as healers. This medical knowledge was passed on to Thai monks along with the Buddhist teachings. Temples became centers of learning and healing – and remain so in Thai culture today. Aside from the Ayurvedic influences, there was an existing tradition of local folk medicine and herbal lore that involved animism, spirituality and astrology. Since monks themselves were folk people, some of the folk medicine practices were absorbed into the temple teachings. Because monkhood prohibited physical contact with women, a specialized midwife tradition developed in which women were trained in post-natal care using herbal medicine.

Each village had a traditional healer who practiced using a combination of herbal knowledge and shamanism. Traditional herbal practice was combined with elements of spirituality, such as the performance of rites and rituals when picking certain plants and flowers. Traditional practitioners believed that herbal healing is based on the healer's belief in the power of nature and earth, and the ability to harness the power of plants and minerals for energy. The practice was kept within families, with knowledge passed down orally from generation to generation. Thus, certain families in some provinces gained fame for their particular skills.

There have been many beliefs governing traditional herbal practice, such as the regulation of the times and places for collecting herbal ingredients. For example, it's known that evening flowers such as jasmine and ylang ylang are best collected at night, when their powers are most potent. It's also known among herbal specialists that the best plants come from certain locations, due to the varying qualities of soil. The time and date of picking herbs is also crucial – the full moon time is best, when the energies of the earth, moon and sun are at their most powerful.

Though traditional herbal medicine went out of fashion in Thailand in the 20th century with the advent of western allopathic medicine, it is currently enjoying a spectacular revival thanks to the current international spa boom and holistic wellness trends that eschew chemical and surgical solutions in favor of natural remedies. In recent years, the Thai Ministry of Public Health has added degree courses in traditional herbal medicine to its curriculum, while traditional medicine hospitals like Chao Phraya Abhaibhubejhr Hospital in Prachinburi are thriving in the light of unprecedented public attention and sales of in-house branded herbal health products.

While Thai massage is the most famed of the ancient healing traditions, a number of treatments that have become popularized in modern-day Thai spas are now becoming as familiar to foreigner visitors as they are to local Thais. The use of heat therapies combined with herbal ingredients is a distinguishing trait of traditional Thai healing practices. One of most popular of these is the Thai herbal steam or sauna, whose healing secret lies in the ingredients; among them the key ingredients are indigenous Thai herbs turmeric, prai, lemongrass, camphor and kaffir lime. Aside from providing an overall health and complexion booster, Thai herbal steam is one of the most effective methods of weight loss if done consistently over an extended period of time.

Another ancient Thai healing therapy is the use of *prakob*, or hot herbal compresses made of medicinal herbs wrapped in bundles of cloth, steamed, and then kneaded on the trouble areas of the body, like tense shoulders or rheumatic joints. The key to healing lies in the combination of medicinal herbs and heat. Until recently, Thai herbal healing was common among simple country people and was mainly practiced in rural temples and villages. Thanks to this rich cultural tradition, current holistic wellness and lifestyle trends have helped revive what was once the country's dying herbal heritage, so that now Thai herbal healing can be administered in modern day spas, and natural Thai herbal products are becoming more available around the world.

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Chanting the Om Namō

Most serious practitioners of traditional *nuad boran* are familiar with the traditional prayer that is offered to the founding father, Jivaka Kumarbhaccha. This mantra, passed down over many generations in the Pali language, is often recited aloud by students, practitioners and schools before the start of a Thai massage class, or even silently before beginning a session.

But how many of us know the precise melody in order to chant this prayer? Many long term students and practitioners who have studied where this prayer is chanted (such as with Ajahn Pichest Boonthumme or at the Old Medicine Hospital) are familiar with the basic tones of inflection, but not the precise melody.

The Thai Healing Alliance is now transcribing the melody so it can be made available to THAI members and the greater Thai massage community. It is transcribed from a version sung by Pichest Boonthumme, and is annotated not with music notes, but in an easy to use, 3-line format that can be followed by everyone. Watch for it in the next newsletter.



How about a strong cup of coffee, and then



Storefront sign in downtown Chiang Mai offers a stiff cup of coffee followed by a nice, relaxing Thai massage. (photo Bob Haddad)



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Letters & Commentary

This is for us, people! You and me. To increase awareness of Thai massage with the general public, generate more requests by clients, have more access to teachers, ...share articles and information.....If you are serious about Thai massage, be a part of it. - *Rose Griscorn, ITM-USA, New Jersey*

THAI is a truly international organisation, and its board members come from around the world. Many respected teachers in Thailand support the group. It doesn't matter who your teachers are, or how much Thai training you have so far, THAI wants to support all practitioners. - *Kath Rutland, Alberta, Canada*

For me, Thai massage is a way of helping others. I joined THAI to be in contact with colleagues, to receive guidance, to develop and grow. - *Javier Levis, Argentina*

Some people ask me, "why isn't there a center (an organization) in Thailand?" We do have associations in Thailand, but they are mostly for Thai people. I always tell my students that THAI is a good center for Thai massage, because everybody can be a good friend, and share a good feeling for each other. THAI should be OK for all Thai massage therapists in the world. - *Khun Chongkol Sethakorn, ITM Massage School, Chiang Mai, Thailand*

Being a member of an organization dedicated to standardizing (Thai massage) practices is very important for public recognition, respect and legitimacy. *Sean Folster, Bronx, NY*

I want to be a member of an international association for networking, as well as to provide standards...for my students and clients. - *Nabila Welk, Costa Teguse, Spain*

I appreciate those who have established this organization with the goal of maintaining the integrity of Thai massage, particularly as it moves from an Eastern to a Western cultural context. - *Emily Weber, Ontario, Canada*

I would like my clients to know that I am interested in lifelong learning. I want to meet the standards set forth by THAI. - *Katie Daniels, Minnesota, USA*

I strongly support the work that THAI is doing in the areas of research and professional development, but also, in particular, its efforts to set guidelines for standardization... - *Jon Mandeville, Tennessee, USA*



Thai Healing Alliance International

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Inside you'll find great information on traditional Thai massage