

Honoring Ajahn Pichest Boonthumme

A short obituary by Bob Haddad

At the end of 2023, the world lost an extremely important figure in traditional Thai healing arts. Ajahn Pichest Boonthumme passed away in his sleep at his home in Hang Dong, just south of Chiang Mai, Thailand. Ajahn Pichest was one of the last remaining true masters of his generation, and was an extremely elevated being. His connections to meditation, healing, Thai massage, and the spirit realm were profound, and the lessons he taught to me and others about compassion, healing and self-awareness are transcendental and everlasting.



Pichest began studying massage at an early age, and treated patients at the Shivagakomarpaj clinic (Old Medicine Hospital) for many years before practicing at his home in Hang Dong. During his time at the Old Medicine Hospital, he treated local Thai patients for many disorders and orthopedic conditions, and worked alongside traditional Thai doctors and herbalists. Along with Ajahn Chaiyuth Priyasith, he was one of the first people in Northern Thailand to teach foreigners in private lessons and to use them as interns. One of his first foreign students was Asokananda Harald Brust.

After he began teaching from his home in Hang Dong, he trained many accomplished therapists and teachers in the West, and he was my mentor and guide for almost 20 years. We maintained regular contact in person each year in Thailand, and also spoke by phone. Only 10 days before he passed away, we had a wonderful and lively video chat, and I'm grateful to hold that last memory in my heart.

I and many others around the world will always feel honor, respect, love and appreciation for this great teacher and amazing human being. His spirit, wisdom and guidance lives in us and is transmitted to the people we touch.

Rest in Peace, Pichest Boonthumme.