



Thai Yoga Massage *by Renee Price*

Thai Yoga Massage is typically practiced on the floor, on a padded mat. Practitioner and receiver are fully dressed in loose and comfortable clothes- no oils or lotions are used. The Massage Therapist moves you slowly and gently into yoga like stretches. Also incorporated are flowing rhythmic compressions using the palms, fingers, feet, knees, forearms and elbows. You will be in various positions: sitting, lying on your back, on your stomach or side.

Thai Yoga Bodywork not only balances the body's need for movement and stretching, it also produces powerful feelings of well-being and happiness. How does it do all this? In one word: "Metta", which is Sanskrit for "loving kindness". Thai Yoga Massage is a moving meditation. The therapist uses rhythmic rocking motions to keep a "dance" of meditation which benefits the giver and receiver.



This delicious offering of Thai Yoga Massage is over 2,500 years old. The founding father of Thai Massage, Jivaka Kumarbhaccha, was a celebrated yogi and a doctor in the ancient healing tradition of Ayurveda. His unusual skill as a physician and surgeon was so well known that he was called upon to treat kings and princes. Jivaka's most distinguished patient was the Buddha.

Thai Yoga Massage developed over centuries within the environment of the Buddhist temples. The Thai temple, or 'wat', also operates as a center for the health care of the common people. The first Western commentary regarding Thai Medicine was made in 1690 by Simon de la Loubere, a French diplomat, who observed: "When any person is sick at Siam he begins with causing his whole body to be molded by one who is skillful herein, who gets upon the body of the sick person and tramples him under his feet." Even today people go to a Thai Yoga Massage Therapist in the same way as we in the West go to our General Practitioner Medical Doctor. The 'Wats', temples/monasteries have always provided for the health needs of the people.

The most famous monastery is Wat Pho in Bangkok. It dates back to the sixteenth century. In 1832 King Rama III wanted to preserve the art of Thai Massage and had etched in stone 60 carved epigraphs depicting the "sen", the body's 72,000 energy lines. They are still there today. Also, outside the temple is a collection of stone statues that show various poses of the classical Thai Massage techniques. Wat Pho is the national center for the teaching and preservation of traditional Thai medicine.

The theoretical roots of most Eastern healing art traditions derive from the philosophy that all forms of life in the universe are animated by an essential life force. The Chinese call this energy "qi" and the Indians call it "prana", an invisible, silent force that is present in all creation. Prana is extracted from the food we eat, the water we drink, and the air we breathe- and a spiritual energy we are born with. It also circulates along a pathway of 72,000 lines in and around the body, forming a network of vital life force that is essential to the human system or our "kosha" bodies. The koshas are extensions of the physical body and have five forms or sheaths. The first is the physical body, known as the "annamaya kosha." The second, the energy body or "pranamaya kosha," is a layer of life force just above the skin. "Manamaya kosha", the third layer is the mental body, where thoughts and doubts are experienced. The fourth is the intellectual body, or "vijñanamaya kosha", which provides one's identity and sense of self. The fifth is the "anadamaya kosha", the blissful body that allows one to connect with the metaphysical. .



Harmony Farm.

Sometimes there are obstructions to the free flow of energy which results in an insufficient supply of prana. This could lead to mental, physical, and spiritual imbalances, which may be manifested in the form of disease, discomfort, or emotional problems.

Anyone can benefit from Thai Yoga Massage! You do not have to be flexible. It can be adapted to any level. It is common to hear during a session, "I need to have this done every week!" Thai Massage can also be done on a massage table, with the client in loose comfortable clothing. I actually climb on the table with the client. So if you want bodywork that will exercise you, relax you, and heal on a spiritual level, give Thai Yoga Massage a try.