



CHAPTER 10

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The physical body, which is relaxed and calm, can enjoy peace and wellbeing. This can be achieved in two ways, firstly, by means of meditation and relaxation techniques, and secondly through massage. This book is a study of Thai massage, therefore, it emphasizes on giving and receiving Thai massage accurately and in accordance with the natural laws of the human anatomy and *Prana*.

Thai Massage Benefits to the Community

Thai culture is rooted in family's closeness. Thais practice massage in their homes and use it with family members as part of their living. Massage improves bonding within the family. It has long been a tradition that children massage the elders, and the elders help one another when there is a need to soothe and relieve aches and pains. Human touching increases the sense of love and caring between giver and receiver. This is an alternative method for showing love to one another as Thais are neither used to, nor are comfortable with direct expressions of love and affection by overt touching.



People learned to massage each other at a local health center

An exchange of massage as a gesture of love and compassion brings harmony to the family. The circle of wellness spread from family to neighbors, to community and embraces all.

The Benefits of Thai Massage to Health Care

Thai massage helps the recipient maintain health and wellness. It is an ancient tool used to combat common ailments, increase the effectiveness of body movement and benefit the physiological system. It also helps in longevity due to a strengthening of the body's immune systems and a balance of life energy.

Thai massage can also relieve pain, sprains and inflammation of the muscles, tendons and joints, as well as reduce stiffness of joints, increase muscle strength and improve mobility.



“Phormor” —a therapist at a temple heals shoulder stiffness with Thai massage

Nowadays, the Thai Public Health Care System embraces Thai massage, integrating it into the health care service to the people. It is common to see a Thai massage session, being prescribed by a physician at a clinic as remedy to ache and pain, to relieve some ailments and to improve the quality of life to some terminally ill patients.

Many people choose Thai massage over pills from a hospital when they need to feel better. That is a dramatic change in terms of health care in Thailand. Massage services have sprung up everywhere and can be found in almost all health care centers throughout the country. The benefit of Thai massage has been proven to the public and is well accepted. Hence, one can find massage establishments in places from malls, meeting places, shops, temples, government facilities, gas stations, any events i.e. street walk, flea markets and all the way to the massage practitioners' homes.

Government agencies in Thailand, in collaboration with the private sectors, have sup-

ported ongoing health seminars and classes to raise the awareness of the public to Thai traditional medicine and Thai massage for health care benefits.⁶⁴

Thailand is leaning toward using the ancient art of healing in the modern world more than ever before and is on the long road to creating better health in harmony with nature.



Thai Massage career program offered to community students under the program supported by the Public Health Department



Thai Traditional Medicine exhibition and seminar offers by the Public Health Department in Chiang Mai