



Authentic Thai Traditional Massage and Foot Massage

Introduction:

The article explains the history of Thai massage, the concept and differences between Royal and Folk Thai massage, the illnesses that can be treated with Thai massage, and additional research on Thai massage. These subjects are followed with a detailed study of Thai style foot massage.

The essay is written in English, though some typographical and stylistic elements are strongly influenced by Thai grammar and syntax. - *THAI Editor*

The History of Thai traditional Massage

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Thai Traditional massage is a valuable and indigenous body of wisdom from our Thai ancestors. It was seen that Thai massage had an important role for treatment from the past until now. It was believed that Thai massage was originated to cure themselves within the family, for example, husband giving massage to his wife, children giving massage to their parents and grandparents. They gave a massage by using parts of the body such as elbows, knees and feet to self-massage, In addition, Thai-style exercise (Rue See Dad Ton) was used to adjust anatomy by oneself easily. Due to the fact that they had the knowledge of massage within the family, they could give a massage to neighbors. Finally the clients or patients trusted that Thai massage was a popular, efficient and respectable way of curing, and it became one of the most famous occupations.

From the historical evidence on stone inscriptions, it was found that Thai massage was used to treat some illnesses from Sukhothai period in the reign of King Ramkamheang. However, Thai traditional medicine, especially Thai massage, was most prosperous in Ayutthaya period in the reign of King Narai. The evidence of Lalubaire's dispatch indicated that the Siamese used Thai massage to cure some illnesses, to relieve pain or to give birth easily. Rattanakosin period, Thai traditional medicine was descended from Ayutthaya period. During the war some document and textbooks were vanished, however, a lot of folk healers still existed in the rural area, In the reign of King Rama I, 80 statues of hermit, Thai – style exercising and the inscription of Thai traditional massage were created at Wat Po (Medical School) In the reign of King Rama IV, the textbooks of Thai traditional massage and traditional medicine were reviewed and revised. After western medicine came into Thai society in the reign of King Rama VI, Thai traditional massage had been neglected from the royal palace. But folk massage had still an important role for villagers.

Thai traditional massage was continuously evolved and developed. Currently, Thai traditional massage is divided to two patterns; royal Thai massage and folk massage.

Royal Thai massage refers to massage which applying to the King , his royal family and his aristocracy. It's considered that royal Thai massage is very nice because it uses only hands and fingers to control the weight of massage, directly pressed on the pain point. It is said that its characteristic is special unique and the masseur must be expertise and know the theory of 10 Sen, the concept of invisible energy lines running through the body. Royal Thai massage consists of basic massage, arms basic massage (outer and inner arms), shoulders basic massage, massage to trapezius, head massage (front and back head), massage to rectus abdominis

Folk massage refers to massage which applying within the family or general public. It is said that its characteristic depends on local culture. It is suitable for villagers to massage each other by using hands, elbows, knees , forehands and the edge of feet. So, folk massage is well know and widespread in Thai society for a long time.

The differences between folk massage and royal massage

Both folk massage and royal massage are similar to the principle of treatment: diseases and illnesses, however, the effects of treatment are different.

Folk massage: before the masseur starts giving a massage, he must pay respect to the patient in order to ask for permission to touch the patient's body The masseur then begins to massage from feet up to knees, upper legs, stomach, back, shoulders, nape of the neck and head.

Royal massage: the masseur must walk with both knees and hands beside the body toward the patient. Then, he/she sits with legs folded sideways in a distance of 35 cms. Far from the patient. The masseur next pays respect and ask for permission the patient. After the masseur tests the wrist pulse and foot pulse on the same side (right or left) in order to check the symptom, he/ she begins to massage. Therefore, royal massage may be similar to folk massage, but the position of placing his/her hands and the posture of masseur are different from that of folk massage. Royal massage is more polite pattern and more efficient in treatment. In addition, royal massage is used to cure some symptoms such as muscle pain, headache, bone disease, illness from blood circulation and treating for the loosened joint causing from the accident.

The summary of difference between folk massage and royal massage

1. The royal masseur must be polite and well mannered by walking with both knees toward the patient. While giving a massage, he/she must not bow his/ her head to breathe on the patient.
2. The royal masseur begins to massage from the back feet, but folk masseur gives a massage from the feet.
3. The royal masseur must only use hands, thumbs, and fingers for massage, While giving an massage or pressing without massage in a circular motion, his/her arms must be straight. The folk masseur does not consider his/her arms whether they are straight or twisted.
4. The royal masseur gives a massage to the patient in the posture of sitting, lying face upwards or lying on one's side, but never of lying face downwards. The folk masseur may be set the patient in the posture of lying face up wards.

5. The royal masseur does not bend or twist the joint, back or some parts of the body by force. In addition, he/she must not use knees, elbows for massage. The folk masseur refrains from this practice may be cooperating with the one to assist giving a massage to the patient.
6. The royal masseur must have practical knowledge on Anatomy, because he/she expects to have a good effect on organs and tissue by increasing blood circulation and stimulating the function of nerve.

The folk masseur hopes to have an effect by pressing and massage in a circular motion. If he / she is not careful some points of anatomy, it may be harmful for health such as off-bone joint, bruise muscle, broken blood vessels.

The illnesses treated by Thai traditional massage

1. Facial paralysis: inability to close 12. Dislocated fingers

One's eyelids, inability to raise the 13. Bent and twisted backbone

Eyebrows , twisted mouth 14. Hips trouble

2. Inability to close jaw 15. Sniff legs

3. Inflamed jaw: inability to open 16. Hips trouble

mouth 17. Sniff legs

4. Buzzing in the ears 18. Articular rheumatism

5. Headache and shoulder pain 19. Inability to stretch legs

6. Stiff neck and sore with pain when 20. Kneecaps pain

turning the face 21. Sprained ankles

7. Stiff shoulder with pain 22. Broken arms and legs

8. Elbow discomfort 23. Muscle pain

9. Wrist sprain 24. Paralysis

10. Swollen wrist 25. Constipation

11. Inflamed fingers

Limitations of Thai traditional massage

1. High fever more than 38.5 C
2. Smallpox, chickenpox, herpes zoster, herpes hives
3. Skin diseases
4. Infectious disease such as tuberculosis

Research on Thai Traditional Massage

1. In 1981, Krungkrai Janepanich and Prasertsak Tuchinda, studying the efficacy of Thai massage to blood circular system in 45 healthy persons, 19-72 years old. Giving a massage on the front lower legs together with constantly pressing on the right upper leg for 1 minute known as "Opening wind channel" for 5 minutes while the volunteer was in lying position.

It was found that Thai massage was to increase temperature of both feet, to decrease the heart rate, to decrease the maximum point of blood pressure by statistic significantly in male. For female, there was not change in the maximum point of blood pressure.

2. In 1984, Prayotch Boonsinsuk et al. Found that Thai massage by pressing on the pain point be able to reduce backache at the waist level.

3. In 1990, Krungkrai Janepanich and Prasert Tuchinda, studying the efficacy of Thai massage on the neck and shoulder to the pulse rate and blood pressure. It was found that the pulse rate and blood pressure were significantly decreased. The symptoms of head : dizziness or headache, the symptoms of neck: stretch, strain, and neck pain, the symptoms of shoulders: tighten and stiff were relieved as well. All patients could bow, lift, turn left and turn right their head. In addition, all volunteers got well and they felt their brains, heads, hearts, eyes better. They also breathed easily and felt soft at their shoulders and necks. It was concluded that they satisfied for Thai massage.

4. In 1992, Vichai Ungpinijpong et al, studying the efficacy of physiology on back pain patients causing from the vertebrae degeneration and back muscle inflammation for 38 patients. It was found that Thai massage was to increase the temperature on skin and trunk elastic, and to relieve pain.

5. In 1992, Prayatch Boonsinsuk et al, studying the efficacy of Thai massage on the patients of 3 days muscle and joint pain. It was found that the physical temperature, pulse rate, maximum and minimum hypertension was not changed. The pain level was reduced about one level (from 6 levels) after giving a massage. The patients of muscle pain felt better than that of other pain. After the third massage, the pain symptom was approximately decreased 2 levels.

6. In 1994, The Center of Thai Traditional Medicine, Prachinburi Province, studying the efficacy of applying royal Thai massage in public health care services. It was found the result of royal Thai massage was that the patients remained normal 60.16%, got better 28.98%, did not improve 10.86%.

7. In 1997, Pennapa Subcharoen et al, studying the application of Thai traditional medicine theory to give the patients service in 29 public health care services. It was found that 51.8% of health care services had Ayurved doctors, Thai massage, herbal steam bath, herbal hot compress and herbal drug, as well as producing herbal drug.

8. In 1988, Narumol Leelayuwat et al., studying the efficacy of physiology of Thai massage for relieving pain, muscle function and complication in 300 patients, 18-60 years old, having back pain at least 6 months and stopping taking drug at least 7 days. It was found that the efficacy of relieving pain was approximately reduced one level continuously at least 2 day and increased the flexibility of muscle. It was not found the complication or physical pathology. It had only Short-term effect such as tiredness, cool, pain, sore, tight, back pain, and numb. However, these symptoms would disappear after giving a massage.

9. In 1998, Yodchai Boonprakob et al., comparative studying the efficacy of the changing of flexibility in back and hips muscle between Thai massage by the masseur and massaging stick in 30 healthy volunteers and no physical pathology of back pain. It was found that both Thai massage by the masseur and massaging instrument were to increase the muscle inflexibility of back and hips.

The History of Thai Foot Massage

The history of foot massage was said that Chinese popularly used foot massage for treatment for 5,000 years ago. Then it was disseminated in Thailand. Therefore, Foot massage was improved, developed and applied for health care, especially for relieving muscle pain, relaxing and curing some diseases because Foot massage could stimulate the function of physical organs to balance.

Dr. William H. Fitzgerald, the American, specialist of ear, neck and nose, was interested in this treatment and called "Zone therapy" that gave a massage on one point area but appeared the effect on the other distant area. In 1930, Dr. Eunice D. Ingham, the American, had improved the course of Dr. Fitzgerald. He was interested in foot massage and developed many techniques and methods that called "Ingham Reflex Method of Compression Massage". Ingham-style massage was known as Reflexology.

Foot massage refers to give a massage on the parts of foot for preventing and curing some diseases in order to stimulate all parts of foot for preventing and curing some diseases in order to stimulate all parts of foot such as left and right side. Backside, internal and external foot. It is said that the foot massage is the art of treatment which Chinese and Indian used to diagnose and cure some diseases more than 3,000 years before Christ. It was expected to arise together with acupuncture. Then, Foot massage was well-known around United States of America and Europe. At present American, Belgian and French are interested in the course of Foot massage.

Health for the older. For economic purpose, Foot massage is not extravagant and applied with folk instrument such as coconut shell, bamboo, aromatic essential oil and herbal hot compress to giving more efficiency.

However, the caution for the older and diabetes patient must be careful of the power of pressing because it makes the skin bruised and scraped. It is seen that Foot massage for health has a good effect and suitability for promoting in primary health care by self-reliance within family.

Foot massage – materials needed

1. Two cotton cloths, 20 x 45 cms. for wrapping around foot
2. Moisturizing cream
3. Balm for stimulating skin
4. Wooden stick for pressing on foot points
5. Tissue for cleaning
6. Powder

Research on Foot Massage

In 1998, Vichai Ungpinjpong and Nikra Montri, Studying the efficacy of primary physiology of applying foot massage in 20 healthy persons, 21-50 years old for 45 minutes by integrating Thai massage; pressing in the bodyline with pressing in Chinese style: The patients got well and relaxed.

The efficacy was followed:

1. The efficacy of physiological system consisted of blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate and physical temperature. It was found that blood pressure, pulse rate, respiratory rate and physical temperature were not changed before and after giving a massage. It was assured that foot massage was safety.
2. The efficacy of back- feet area temperature, back-feet blood circulation , hips and trunk flexibility was found that it was to increase the temperature and blood circulation on the back-feet, as well as hips and trunk flexibility.

It was useful for preventing from the ischemia skin such as pressed wound, feeling cool at the tip of hands and feet, dysfunction of blood circulation, tighten and weaken on the muscle of back and hips from work or exercise , and myofascial pain syndrome. In addition, everybody had the satisfaction of foot massage.

The study of the National Institute of Thai Traditional Medicine found that Thai massage was safety for health care. It was easy to solve health problem and cure some non-server symptoms such as neck pain, muscle pain and relaxation.

The results of Foot massage

The masseur must check the points on foot beneath skin called “Crystalline or Gritty” . If the client has Crystalline on his/her foot, it means that some organs (on the map) have health problem. When the masseur slightly pressing on this point, the client feels very painful.

The function or result of foot massage

It is accepted that the physical organs are related to skin having the same nervous, for example the problem of diaphragm refers to have symptom on shoulder pain. When the skin is stimulated, it affects to inner organs.

The Benefit of Foot massage

1. To stimulate the function within the body systems for health promotion such as stimulating the circulatory system of blood and lymph.
2. To prevent and relieve some diseases such as constipation, asthma, cystitis, headache, renal disease, cholelithiasis, migraine, sinusitis and stress
3. To be good for mental health, especially the older person, and to make a good relationship within the family
4. To be self-reliance

Thai – style Foot massage

Sen Ittha, Pingkhala, Sumana, Kalathari is pressed to treat diseases of the digestive system, indigestion, hernia, paralysis of arms and legs, knee pain

Sen Sahatsarangsi, Thuwari is pressed to treat redness and swelling of eyes

Sen Sikini, Sukhumang is pressed to treat hernia, frequent urination, female infertility, impotence, precox ejaculation, irregular menstruation, uterine bleeding, retention of urine, diarrhea, abdominal pain

It is seen that Thai-style Foot massage is related to giving a massage and pressing on the foot point which effects to other physical organ for stimulating all lines on foot to flow the energy starting from left and right side, backside to leg.

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Applied Foot massage

Unofficial Thai massage or folk massage refers to give a massage all the body starting from foot. Royal Thai massage is to give a massage on inner-leg and upper-leg with pressing the foot point.

After the masseur giving a massage on leg and foot, he/she uses the thumb to press on foot point (foot map) to find Crystalline. Crystalline on foot means having health problem, following to foot map, on related organs.

The interested person should learn by self – experience, remind the foot map, try to massage his/herself or relatives appropriately for self-reliance.

For modern medicine purpose, Foot massage is not harmful but useful for stimulating circulatory system of blood, lymph and nervous system, promoting mental

Steps in Foot Massage for Health

Before massaging, the clients should wash their feet with warm water and soap, then dry with towel, next begin to massage by using cloth to wrap the clients' foot.

1. Use both hands to massage in a circular motion at the ankle.
2. Use both soles to massage at the tiptoes.
3. Apply lotion and balm on the foot and massaging the foot to the tiptoe.
4. Use both hands to pat the tendon of heels.
5. Put both thumbs on the middle of heels and other four fingers at the back of foot, then massage to ward the masseur.
6. Put one thumb on the other thumb at the middle of foot, then massaging the foot by spreading the thumbs to the different direction toward the side of the foot.
7. Use the knuckle to press from the plantar arch to the heels for 10 times.
8. Use the knuckle to press the little toe to the thumb toe for 10 times.
9. Use the knuckle to press the little toe to the thumb toe for 10 times.
10. Use the wooden tool to press on the side of the sole from thumb toe to heel for 10 times.
11. Use the wooden tool to press at the tiptoe to other toes, each toes for 5 times, then repeat in the opposite direction.
12. Use the wooden tool to press and rotate between the toes, each toe for 5 times.
13. Hold the tiptoe with left hand and the other hand to use the wooden to press at the outer side of foot from the little toe to heel for 10 times.
14. Repeat step 12, starting from the little toe to thumb toe.
15. Press from the thumb toe to the little toe, each toes for 5 times, then repeating the opposite direction.
16. Press every toe for thumb toe to little toe, each toes for 5 times.
17. Use the wooden to press around the thumb toe for 10 times.
18. Use the wooden to press from the fore toe to the little toe for 10 times.
19. Use the wooden to press along to the middle of foot, the thumb toe and the little toe, each toe for 5 times.
20. Use the wooden to press at the side foot, up for 5 times and down for 5 times.
21. Use the wooden to press at the heel (“V” turndown) , the inner foot for 5 times, the outer food for 5 times.
22. Use the wooden to press down at the heel for 10 times.
23. Integrate the fingers by using the thumb to press at the side of thumb toe for 10 times.
24. Use the thumb to press around the thumb toe by using other four fingers to rotate, repeating for 10 times.
25. Hold the tiptoe with right hand, using the left hand of knuckle to turn down and to press down at the inner side of foot from thumb toe to heel for 10 times.
26. Use the knuckle to rotate and to massage under the anklebone for 10 times.
27. Touch at the heel by using the index finger to press at t he heel beside the tendon for 10 times.

28. Hold the foot arise with right hand , using the left hand of knuckle. Using the index and middle fingers of knuckle to press down around the tendon heel from calf (????) to heel for 10 times.
29. Repeat step 25-28 by changing to apply on the outer foot.
30. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right hand of knuckle to turn down and to press with rotating around the back foot.
31. Use the knuckle to press transverse the back foot to the little toe for 3 times.
32. Use the left hand to support the foot, using the right hand of knuckle to press from the ankle to tiptoe for 10 times.
33. Touch under thumb toe by using right thumb, using the index finger to scratch under toenail, each toes for 5 times from thumb toe to little toe and repeating the opposite direction.
34. Use both hands to support the back foot, putting both thumb on the middle of heel to massage up to tiptoe, repeating for 10 times.
35. Press between toes from thumb toe to little toe, the middle of back foot for 10 times.
36. Use the thumb and the index fingers to massage around the ankle up to the tiptoe, repeating for 10 times.
37. Use both thumbs to touch at the back foot , to press from middle toe down to the ankle and press turn around both sides of ankle bone, repeating for 10 times.
38. Use both knuckles to touch at the anklebone and to massage up and down for 10 times.
39. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right hand to touch ;the ankle and using the thumb to press under the inner anklebone to the ankle for 10 times, then , using the thumb to rotate around the anklebone for 10 times.
40. Repeat step 39 by changing to apply on the outer foot.
41. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right thumb to touch at the back foot of middle toe and to press down to the ankle, repeating for 5 times and changing to apply by the left hand for 5 times.
42. Put one thumb on the other thumb at the ankle and pressing down for 10 times.
43. Press down at the points following the pictures.
44. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right hand to apply balm and lotion on the knee, to massage in a circular motion around kneecap and the inner leg.
45. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right thumbs to press along the inner shinbone and changing to press along the outer shinbone for 10 times.
46. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the right thumbs to press up and down on the inner calf and changing to apply on the outer calf.
47. The clients sit with knees upward. Use both hands to massage on the calf muscle and to pat up and down to the ankle, repeating for 10 times.
48. Use the knuckle with the thumb touching at the shin and massing in a circular motion around the calf under knee to ankle, repeating for 3 times.
49. Relax the muscle by massaging around calf to ankle.
50. Use the thumbs to press down between each toe, repeating the opposite direction.
51. Use the index and middle fingers to hold the thumb toe and pulling every toe.
52. Use both hands to massage at the ankle and both soles to massage at the tiptoe.
53. Hold the tiptoe with left hand, using the back right hand to pound slightly around the side foot and heel.
54. Use cloth to wrap on the left foot and changing to massage on the right foot from step 1.

Notice: While giving a massage, the masseur should constantly apply lotion and oil to increase moisture and viscosity of hands and feet.