

Reusi Dat Ton - the Origin of Nuat Boran

As the system from which Thai Massage evolved, Reusi Dat Ton is the first and the most important form of physical therapy in Traditional Medicine of Thailand and shares the same theoretical foundation as all other aspects of traditional medicine in Thailand: herbal medicine, physical therapy, divination practices, magic and Buddhism.

by Danko Lara Radic

An essential aspect of Traditional Medicine in Thailand, Reusi Dat Ton, which still remains widely unknown, is a system of exercises including self-massage, dynamic exercises, postures, stretching and breathing exercises, mantras, visualization and meditation. Its principal purpose is to explore one's own body and mind, and to understand how they function. Once we reach that understanding, only then can we also begin to understand how those around us function. If we are unable to keep ourselves in balance, our attempts to help others find balance will inevitably be futile.



Apart from this process of self-realization, performing Reusi Dat Ton exercises can also keep oneself in good health. With significant experience, a practitioner may apply Reusi Dat Ton to others as a specific kind of therapy. Nowadays, most of the chronic illnesses that we come across in a medical practice are the result of long-term harmful habits in our daily lives. Reusi Dat Ton exercises, as an everyday practice, are powerful counter-measures a person can take to remedy unhealthy habits and to improve general health.

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The essence of the theoretical knowledge of these five roots of Thai medicine is encapsulated in the theory of Elements, which offers an understanding of the ways that mind and body function and interact with environment and also explains the functioning of the entire universe known to us. All practical disciplines in Traditional Medicine of Thailand are grounded in this theory, including Thai anatomy and physiology.

Some of the physical therapies, such as Nuat Boran (massage) are distinguished by a bigger emphasis on treating the external body and are applied to produce an effect on the physical body, whereas other therapies, such as Tok Sen, Yam Kahng or Chet Haek, are simultaneously semi-external and semi-spiritual.

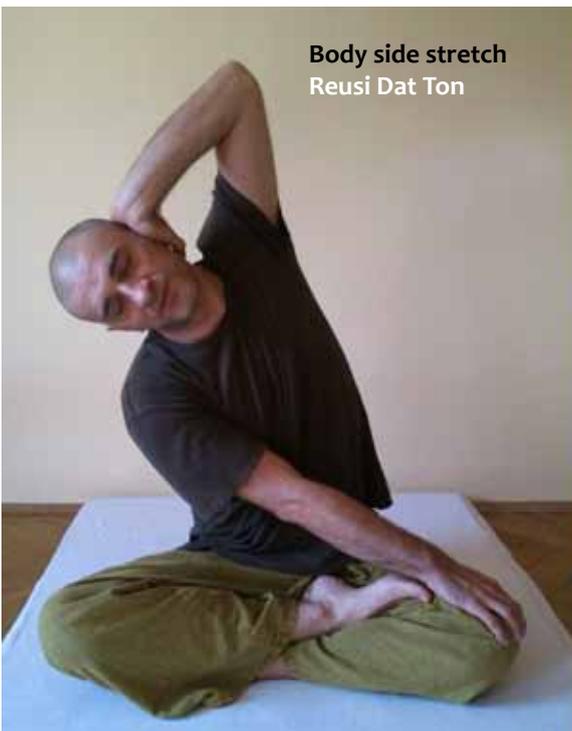
Pressing the back,
opening the chest
Reusi Dat Ton



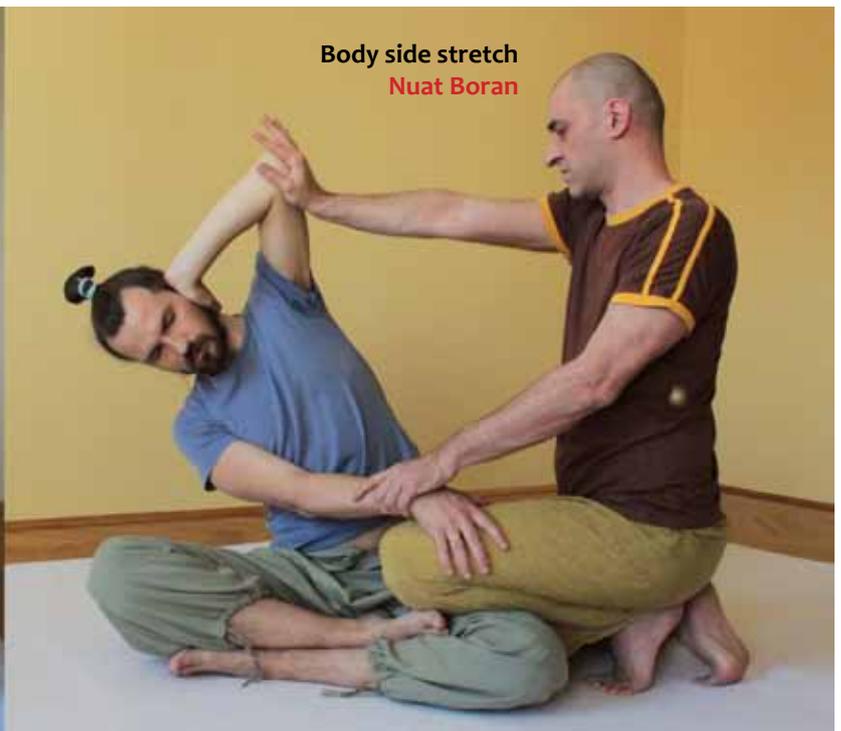
Pressing the back,
opening the chest
Nuat Boran



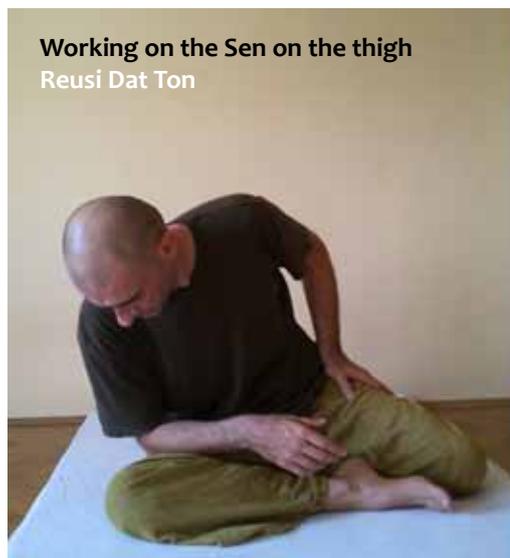
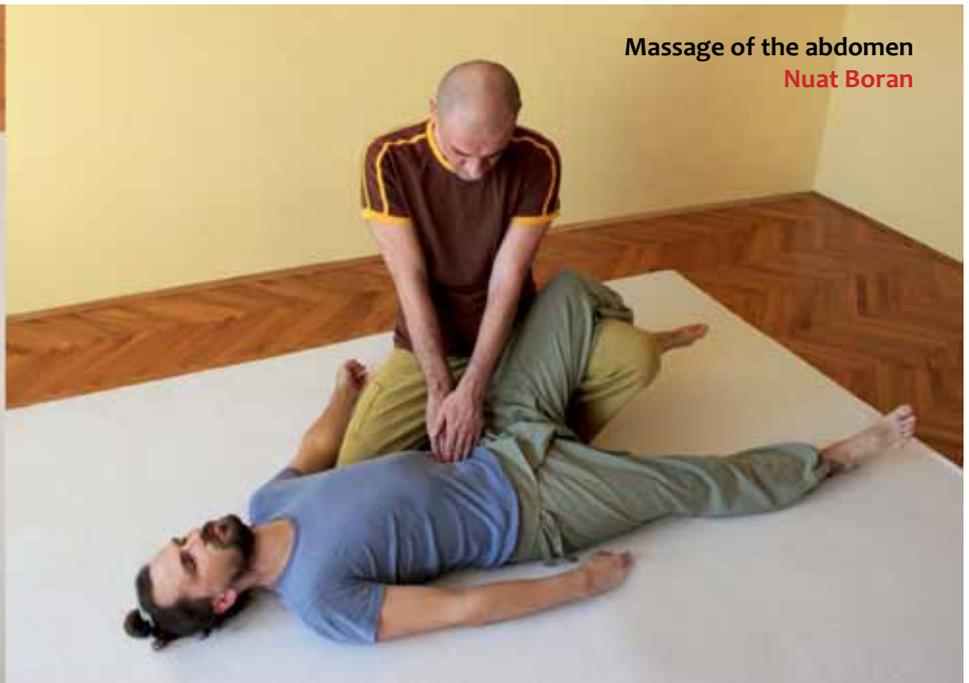
Body side stretch
Reusi Dat Ton



Body side stretch
Nuat Boran



In treating the physical body, a practitioner is treating both the body and its functions. The physical body itself is made of the elements Earth and Water, while the functions of the body consist of the elements Fire and Wind. The application of massage techniques to the physical body (Earth and Water) primarily balances the Wind element, which indirectly addresses the other elements.



Apart from a body, the human being also has a mind, which is also influenced by Wind element and has the nature of the Space element. The Wind manifesting in the physical body is called gross Wind, whereas the Wind manifesting in the subtle body, or the mind, is called subtle Wind. The gross Wind is all the movements of the physical body, while the subtle Wind is the movement of the mind, for example, thoughts. The gross aspect of the Wind moves through physical Sen channels, while the subtle aspect of the Wind in the body and around the body moves through psychic Sen channels.

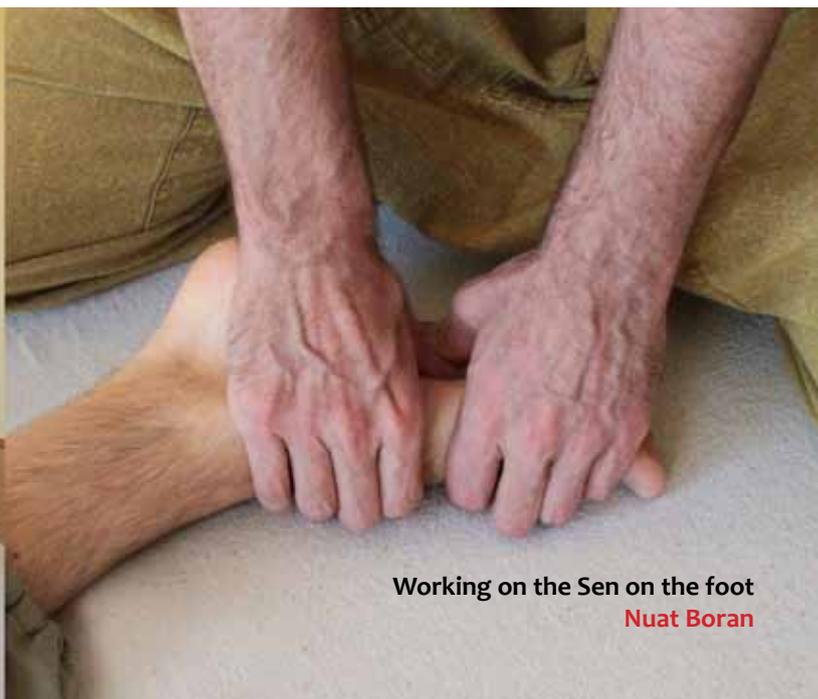


Hitting the back of the leg
Reusi Dat Ton

Hitting the back of the leg
Nuat Boran

Like many varieties of Hindu and Tibetan yoga, Reusi Dat Ton is a system with a holistic approach of the human being, meaning there is an understanding that the practices affect both the mind and the body. And, like other yoga systems, Reusi Dat Ton cultivates the physical body and the mind together. However, these individual yoga systems are distinguished from one another by view and by the theoretical concepts from which each has respectively evolved.

Working on the Sen on the foot
Reusi Dat Ton



Working on the Sen on the foot
Nuat Boran

Rotation of
the hip joint
Reusi Dat Ton



Rotation of
the hip joint
Nuat Boran



As with the other physical therapies of Traditional Medicine of Thailand, Reusi Dat Ton primarily works upon the Wind element. Self-massage, dynamic exercises, postures and stretching have a stronger effect on gross Wind, whereas the techniques of mantras, visualization and meditation have a stronger effect on the subtle Wind. However, it should be stressed that both gross and subtle Winds are fully interconnected and mutually dependent; they are the two aspects of the same element.

With serious examination and practice of Traditional Medicine of Thailand, it becomes clear that all of the different aspects, including massage, Reusi Dat Ton, Herbal medicine, Magic, Divination or Tok Sen, are all infused with the same spirit, complement one another, and together form a complete living system. Like an ocean, the depths and interconnectedness of the system are unfathomable, and it is better to dive deep into it than to keep swimming in circles.

About the author

I have been practicing Reusi Dat Ton on a daily basis for several years now and I am writing this essay based on my own personal experience, as an initiated practitioner of Traditional medicine of Thailand and having been taught by a living Reusi. For the last fifteen years I am committed to the preservation, research and teaching of Thai physical therapies. I live and work in Belgrade, Serbia. I teach both in Belgrade and abroad.

I would like to thank Jessica Dafni for the final edit of this article.