

Tibetan Kunye Massage Training with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

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Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo is the international Director of the School of Tibetan Medicine and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is its' founder. The Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine is the first

Tibetan Medicine school established in the West, and it offers a four-year curriculum. The tradition of Tibetan medicine integrates the highest aspects of the culture's science and spirituality into an excellent system of health and healing. It is an ancient form of natural medicine indigenous to the Tibetan people. "According to Tibetan medical science, each kind of cure comprises four fundamental elements: diet, behavior, medicines, and diverse kinds of external therapies." (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, [ChNN], *The Practice of Tibetan Kunye Massage*, 2003, p. 7)

Dr. Phuntsog is visiting Dzamling Gar for the beginning of this year, and giving courses in Tibetan forms of healing, and recently she presented a course in Kunye Massage. "Kunye represents a marvelous massage and a marvelous therapy...Massage has been known and widespread in traditional medicine since the most ancient times." (ChNN, 2003, p. 7).

An important point stressed by Dr. Phuntsog was that Kunye massage can be easily practiced by any man or woman who has learned to understand its methods as well as benefits, and consequently – it is not necessary to be a highly trained yogi or doctor to practice this type of massage. "*Ku* means 'applying creams and unguents for massage', *nye* indicates the actual massage itself. There are also other methods of the therapies related to Kunye, such as 'pressing with the fingers' like in Japanese Shiatsu, 'stroking', 'tapping' and 'applying compresses' such as a warm or coldstone." (ChNN, 2003, p.8).

The recent January course at Dzamling Gar covered oral instructions and practical application of massage to the feet, hands, and head while the client was seated in a chair, and many theories of Tibetan Medicine were also presented. The course was structured with 3 hours of lecture in the morning, and then 2.5 hours of practical application of massaging other students in the afternoon; and a certificate of completion was awarded to the participants at the conclusion of the course.

A good massage is enjoyed by most people, and the feelings we can get are that of reducing muscle pain and stress, while many times it also restores us from feeling fatigued. It usually gives us quite a good feeling, and the message can also be therapeutic as it nurtures us. Since massage is one of the oldest and most basic ways of healing in history, it is also amazing that no equipment or technology is required. All we all need is learn to apply some intuitive knowledge along with some learned techniques, and then we can use our own individual capacities to help others. Even though massage is natural and very simple, it is very useful in addressing many human situations such as tension and stress, and helping people to feel more relaxed and happy with a sense of well-being as well.

In these classes with Dr. Phunsog, we learned about the external therapy of Kunye massage, and the three parts of the body focused on were the feet, the hands and the head. In regards to these three parts of the body, we learned some of Tibetan medicine's approach to bodily function and the different senses. These include our feelings, mental conditions, body types, digestion, internal organs, energies, causes of disease, as well as techniques to differentiate types of physical, mental, and behavioral observation.

“Tibetan medicine identifies three humors, or energies, that arise from various combinations of the elements and form the basis for the functioning of the human body. Air and space combine for form wind energy, fire and water bile energy, and water and earth...When they are in balance and in proper relationship to each other, we have a perfect state of health. If they are imbalanced, in excess or deficit, or abnormal in their interaction with each other, we experience disorders and diseases.” (ChNN & F. Andrico, *Tibetan Yoga of Movement*, 2013, p.xv) Kanye massage can help to restore this balance for people of all ages, and includes benefit to those with a dry and/or rough skin problems, those with constipation disorders, as well as those with ‘lung’ (wind) energy and insomnia issues.

This Kunye type of massage can bring us to a state of balance promoting a healthy situation, and can be is a very important practice for living a harmonious, healthy and happy life. It brings into balance body, energy and mind, as we work to optimize our own health and develop new healthy habits for our self-improvement. A regular massage (even self-application to ourselves to bodily areas such as the feet) can help to stabilize and clarify emotions and freshen life. The benefits of continued massage have been scientifically established, and can reduce stress as well as relieve physical, mental and emotional imbalances. This type of massage can improve our feeling of well-being, as well as improving the health as our cardiovascular and immune systems, as our body responds to this restorative practice of Kunye massage.

References:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, 2003, The Practice of Tibetan Kunye Massage, Shang Shung Edizioni, Arcidosso GR, Italy

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and Fabio Andrico, 2013, Tibetan Yoga of Movement, The Art and Practice of Yantra Yoga, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA, and Shang Shung Publications, Arcidosso (GR), Italy