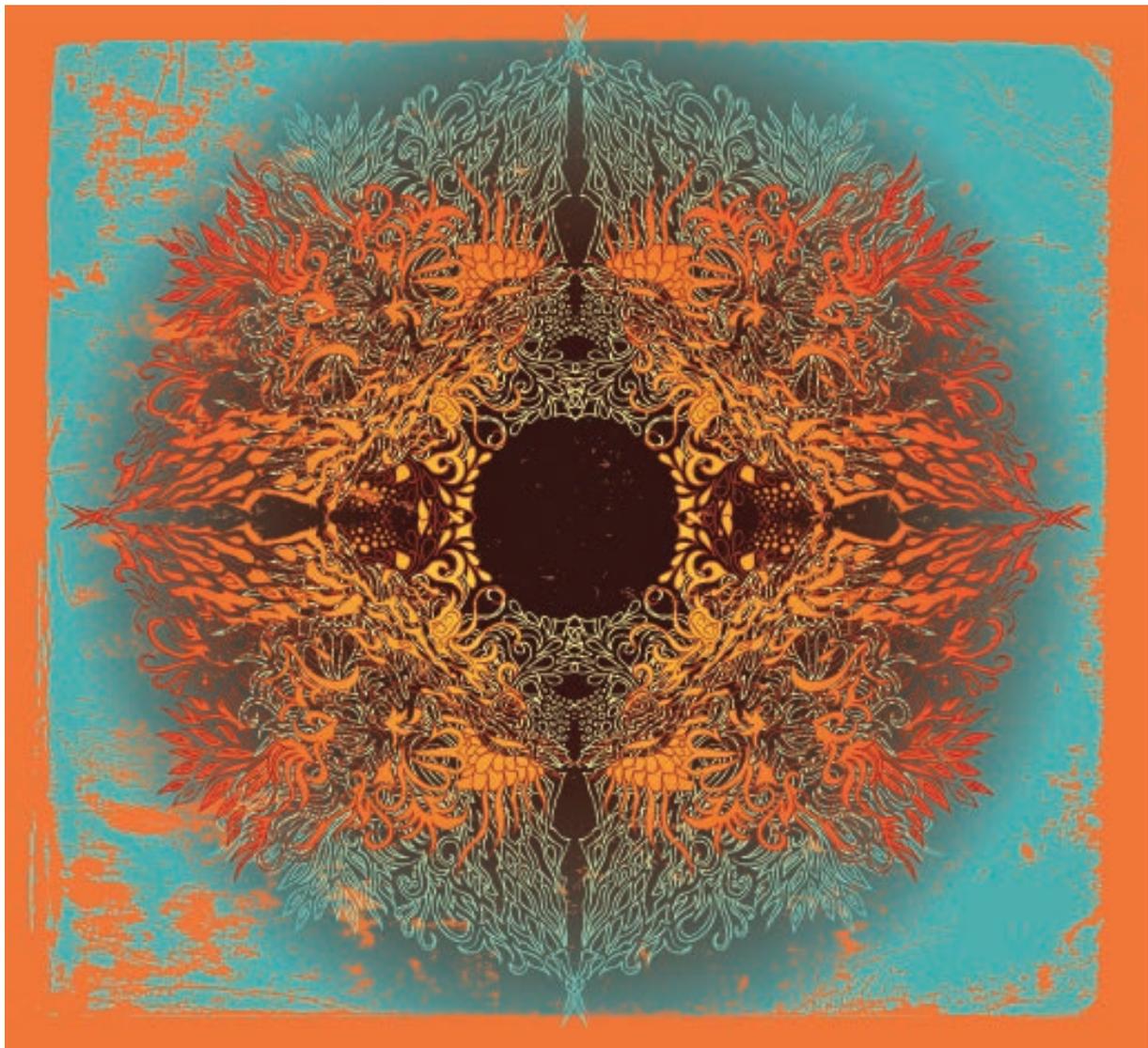


What is Kum Nye?

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This ancient Tibetan healing system, based on the energy systems in body and mind, integrates the physical and psychological to establish true wellbeing, writes Meena Azzollini.
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WHEN we get mired in the chaos and confusion of modern life, we feel overstimulated, demotivated and tense, which leads to the separation of mind from body and between ourselves and the world. Restoring balance is vital to integrating the mind and body, so that we feel nurtured, whole and happy. What we need is a complete overhaul of the negative emotions that course through our mind and body, and to open our senses, relieve stress, and transform those negative behavioural patterns.

The answer lies in Kum Nye yoga, an ancient Tibetan healing system based on theories of the gross and subtle energy systems of the body and mind that integrates the physical and psychological to establish wellbeing. Gaynor Austen, principal trainer at the Turiya Yoga Foundation, explains: "The term Kum Nye can be translated as 'massage of the subtle body'. Based in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition, Kum Nye works with the energetic, rather than the physical body."

Ancient wisdom

The foundations of Kum Nye yoga practice date from centuries ago, when Tantric yoga practice integrated with the traditions of pre-Buddhist Bon culture of Tibet. Kum Nye has subsequently evolved to the modern adaptation that was introduced to the USA by Tibetan lama Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche in 1969 and is practised today, which draws on 1200 years of healing with links to Buddhism, Ayurveda, Tibetan medical texts, and the ancient Vinaya texts of Buddhism.

Kum Nye yoga addresses three kinds of tension held in the body: superficial tensions, blockages in energy channels, and knots in the chakras, which occur when we cut ourselves off from full experience of our world. The exercises of Kum Nye help us to explore inner feelings and sensations and find balance between the relationship of mind, body and self to the world. "It opens the energetic body to a state of completeness in space," adds Austen. "The initial practice of Kum Nye consists of slow movements and poses, stillness meditation practice, and self-massage exercises, which are all designed to activate the flow of feeling within the body, bringing the energetic body to a condition of flowing wholeness." Subtle breathing is added to the practice, to intensify

awareness of the body on an energetic level and to clear energy blockages while we process our emotions, and create an inner stillness as we move further into meditation. "Finally, this ongoing embodiment of openness is then expressed through the third stage of Kum Nye practice, being the choreographed gestures of Kum Nye dancing," explains Austen. Based on traditional lama dancing, Kum Nye dancing uses physical choreography to invigorate and energise the body, thus opening up the senses. "It emphasises the transformative power of this form of yoga, and expresses the ongoing embodiment of the practitioner," adds Austen.

In Australia, Tarthang Tulku's form of Kum Nye is affiliated with the Turiya Yoga Foundation.

Kum Nye liberates pent-up energy and awakens the consciousness.

You can study Kum Nye directly with Dharma Publishing through email lessons and online webinars and through Tarthang Tulku's three main books - Kum Nye: Tibetan Yoga, The Joy of Being, and Kum Nye Dancing. Most exercises are simple and not physically demanding and can even be performed while seated.

The Seven Gestures of Kum Nye

This term describes the seated meditative pose used before, interspersed with, and following the Kum Nye slow movement exercises. It is also used during Kum Nye meditation.

- Sit with legs crossed
- Place hands on knees, palms down
- Hold the back straight
- Draw the neck in slightly
- Keep eyes open (when practising exercises from the first book, the eyes are half-open, loosely focused downward; for Joy of Being exercises the eyes are open, facing forward, while in Kum Nye dancing, a penetrating gaze is added)
- The mouth remains slightly open, breath being taken in jointly through nose and mouth
- The tip of the tongue lightly touches the palate, just behind the teeth. ✨

✨ Kum Nye for beginners

Flying Stand with arms by your sides. Extend arms out sideways, then up above the head. Slowly take them down again. One cycle of this can take anywhere between two and 10 minutes. Pay close attention to the subtle sensations and quality of experience while doing this exercise, thus linking awareness of body and mind. Repeat 3 times, then sit in the 7 Gestures position for 5 minutes, focusing on feelings within the body.

Healing body and mind

Stand with the body well balanced, and raise arms up in front to overhead, palms facing forward. Exhale and bend to the right, reaching arms out, and with the left arm close to the head. Move your pelvis slightly to the left, and keep the sides of the body long and curved. Inhale, and slowly return to upright, then in a continuous motion, reach to the opposite side while exhaling. Move as slowly as you can, feeling the sensations in the body. Repeat 3, 6 or 9 times, then sit in the 7 Gestures position for 5-10 minutes, focusing on feelings within the body.

Loosening up Sit cross-legged, with hands on knees and arms straight. Facing forwards and breathing naturally through nose and mouth, slowly move the right shoulder forward and the left shoulder back, as far as possible, keeping the right arm straight but allowing the left elbow to bend. Slowly reverse the pose, breathing gently through nose and mouth. Remain facing forward throughout, so that the shoulders move independently of the head. Repeat 3, 6 or 9 times, sitting afterwards in the 7 Gestures position for 5-10 minutes, focusing on feelings within the body.