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MARCH 2024

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A project of Childbirth and Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand

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- Mel Habanananda



We are a group offering support and companionship to each other through the early years of parenting.

We offer prenatal and postnatal support, regular playgroups, fundraising for charities and more. If you wish to join, come to our New Members' Coffee Morning or any other regular BAMBI activities. To volunteer or serve on the committee, email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org or visit bambiweb.org.

BAMBI is a project of the Childbirth & Breastfeeding Foundation of Thailand (CBFT).

Mission Statement

The CBFT is a non-profit networking and resource center dedicated to ensuring the best possible start in life for our babies. We believe that this can best be achieved through:

- Encouraging the appropriate use of technology and medication for all births.
- Promoting breastfeeding for every mother and baby in the community.
- Providing information and training to health professionals involved in maternity care.
- Supporting parents through the pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.

For more information on CBFT, contact:

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Thai speaking, Mobile: 081-776-9391;

info@cbfthai.org or

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visit: www.cbfthai.org and www.facebook.com/pages/ChildbirthBreastfeeding-Foundation-of-Thailand

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Sara Chow

Dear BAMBI members,

I hope your year has gotten off to a good start!

In March we're celebrating women and what happens when we focus on being inclusive. When we inspire others to understand and value inclusion, we build a world where women are valued and appreciated. This, in turn, creates a sense of belonging, relevance, and empowerment. March's issue centers around this theme as we honor the journey of women through time and look at how we can instill and teach our kids values of equality, respect, and empowerment.

These teachings will not be a mere aspiration but such an important step toward creating a more just and inclusive world. These values serve as the bedrock upon which our children will build relationships, navigate challenges, and contribute to the betterment of society. Many people already have so much unconscious bias influenced by the generation which raised them, and as a mother, I hope to break the mold and do better for my son and the generations which follow.

We at BAMBI have a lot of exciting events planned for the year! We're also looking for more volunteers, so do check out the Call for Volunteers page on our website, and please don't hesitate to reach out if any of the positions seem a good fit for you. Also, if you're not already following us on Facebook and Instagram, please do—so you don't miss out on all the important updates!

Finally, this will be my last committee letter to you all as I will be stepping down from my roles within BAMBI this month. Volunteering with BAMBI in various positions has been a fun and rewarding journey for the past six years, but the time has now come for me to move on. I will always have fond memories of all the happy times and great friendships I made as a volunteer and member, and I thank everyone who shared them with me.

All the best for an uplifting and empowering month ahead!

Sara
BAMBI playgroups coordinator and executive board member



OUR COVER MODELS

The BAMBI Committee, March 2024: investing in women by creating and promoting opportunities for them to thrive as mothers and more



Sanam Raisa Rahman

At ten, I felt uncomfortable using the open staircase in school because the boys would always try to look up girls' skirts from a flight below. I'd clench the sides of my skirt and curse the person who'd designed a staircase without taking into account that half the students using them wore skirts.

At 20, I always walked the longer route home from uni in the evenings because the shorter route was dimly lit, and I did not want to add myself to the list of women attacked on campus. I'd wondered how many attacks would have to be reported before all campus roads would become well-lit and safe for the "weaker sex".

Now in my thirties, I wonder if my daughters will worry about the same things and more—my career's taking off; can I afford to have a baby now? Who's going to hire me after a five-year maternity break? My child is really sick but childcare is expensive; how can I ask for leave again?

With the patriarchy still dominant in our homes, workplaces and communities, will my daughters and other little girls be able to live freely and equitably in the spaces and situations they find themselves as they grow older?

Are there enough people to ensure their needs, experiences, and capacities are proactively taken into account when making decisions that affect them? More importantly, does their gender—half of the world's population—have a seat at the table to voice their opinions and advocate for themselves?

This month, BAMBI Magazine honors International Women's Day (IWD) and presents content highlighting the value that lies in including women in all decision-making spheres in life.

We have "Inspirational Thai Women" by Sheena Low, which gives an account of ancient and modern influential Thai women whose actions prove that when women get the opportunity to rise to the occasion, they do so with a bang. We also have "For the Women Who Baked Before Me", a heartwarming homage from Anelia Van Zyl to the ancestors she draws strength and motivation from as she charges through life, baking her family's special milk tart.

Fun Corner, also by Anelia, showcases the remarkable contributions and achievements of renowned women from different walks of life. The Neilson Hays Library encourages you to take your readings further with the books in Readers' Corner—"Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music" by Margarita Engle and Rafael López, and "100 Nasty Women of History" by Hannah Jewell.

Jeannie shines a light on women's health in "Your Menstrual Health Matters", and educates us on what a healthy menstrual health cycle looks like from the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

From empowering women to empowering our little ones through literacy, Kelly Patten's "The World Belongs to Those Who Read" suggests ways to incorporate reading into your child's bedtime routine and develop skills that will last a lifetime.

In other non-thematic content, we have "We Need to Talk About Poop" by Joe Barker. If potty-training troubles are keeping you on edge these days, Joe's personal account should offer you the lens to see it for what it really is: hilarious tales to recount at family events in the years to come. And when you've successfully (fingers crossed!) completed all potty-related business for the day, take a few moments to read about how to minimize the risk of one of the most common arm injuries experienced by young children, nursemaid's elbow, in "Within Arm's Reach" by Jaqueline Deeon.

IWD calls upon us to strive and create empowerment opportunities for women. I take pride in being a part of BAMBI, an organization fully aligned with this as seen from the opportunities it presents for women to excel at motherhood and beyond. I have met some super talented, brilliant women during my time with the team, and this month I'd like to especially thank Anelia Van Zyl for her contributions as deputy editor. Anelia, although you are stepping down, we're glad you'll still be with us in a different capacity. You inspire us with your zest for life!

And to all the women reading this magazine, let every step you take be a step forward for all womankind. Happy International Women's Day!

Sanam
Editor



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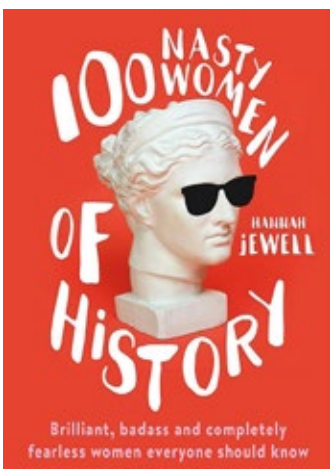
DRUM DREAM GIRL: HOW ONE GIRL'S COURAGE CHANGED MUSIC

by Margarita Engle and Rafael López

This moving poem was inspired by Millo Castro Zaldarriaga, a groundbreaking Chinese–African–Cuban drummer. In 1932, at the tender age of ten, Millo broke barriers to become the first female drummer in Cuba when she and her sisters formed the all-female jazz orchestra, Anacaona. Award-winning poet Margarita Engle does not use specific names, dates, or places in “Drum Dream Girl”; rather, she allows Millo’s story to flow simply in powerful yet universal words.

The musical quality of Engle’s poem is brought to life by artist Rafael López’s vibrant and whimsical paintings. Parents, boys, and girls all gain from this message of perseverance, imagination, inclusion, and courage.

Published by Clarion Books in March 2015. Suitable for ages 3–7. A hardcover copy along with other works by Engle and López can be found in the Children’s Corner of the library.



100 NASTY WOMEN OF HISTORY

by Hannah Jewell

The saying “history is written about men, by men” is backed by statistics, with 72% of all biographies centered on male subjects. Journalist Hannah Jewell breaks the mold in “100 Nasty Women of History: Brilliant, Badass And Completely Fearless Women Everyone Should Know”. The book shines a spotlight on women from across the globe, periods, and walks of life; from Greek poet Sappho, born around 630 BC, to Indian–British unionist Jayaben Desai, who passed away in 2010.

Not only is this book informative and educational, it is hilarious, inspiring, and fun. Jewell combines her diverse journalistic experiences from BuzzFeed and The Washington Post, creating an entertaining and well-researched history lesson. Her writing is conversational, and unlike most history books, the reading experience feels like chit-chatting with a hilarious and bright friend. A word of warning: this book is full of sarcasm and contains profanity.

Published by Hodder and Stoughton, a subsidiary of Hachette Books, in 2017. A hardcover copy and more of Hannah Jewell’s work can be found in the nonfiction section of the library.

Prepared by Angela Chen, a Neilson Hays Library Board Member and the Children’s Program Chair. The Neilson Hays Library is Thailand’s premier English-language library. The Children’s Program offers Saturday Story Time, a cozy Children’s Corner, and special holiday events. Adult Programs include concerts, art exhibitions, book club, and book sales. Located in a beautiful historic building with a garden and cafe on site: 195 Surawong Road, Bangkok 10500, Thailand. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook.

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INSPIRATIONAL THAI WOMEN

Sheena introduces us to some powerful Thai women, both ancient and modern, and highlights the valuable lessons they can teach our children.



About the Author

Sheena Low is an aspiring children's book author, mother to two-year-old August, and runs Super Fly Honey, a pole activewear brand. In December 2020, anticipating the need for a nanny following her surprise pregnancy, she moved from Amsterdam to Bangkok. When August was born, it turned out she wanted to swap her more-than-full-time working hours for life as a full-time mom. She's still baffled how that seismic shift of identity occurred.





Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon: The Sister Soldiers

Have you ever imagined what a journey through the remarkable lives of Thai women from historical times to the present would be like? Well, grab a comfy seat and prepare for an enlightening ride. We're about to explore the lives of some awe-inspiring Thai women, each teaching invaluable lessons and serving as extraordinary role models for our youngsters. Let's embark on this journey of discovery and inspiration!

Maeo Ying Thai Muang: The Queen of Survival

Lesson: The power of resilience

Rewind to the sixteenth century, when Queen Maeo Ying Thai Muang's story of resilience unfolds. When her husband, King Tak Sin, was dethroned, Maeo Ying didn't just witness her world crumble; she took charge, raised an army, and led with an unyielding spirit. Her tale not only tells about royal drama; it's a masterclass in resilience. As parents, we hope to instill this quality in our children—the ability to face life's unexpected challenges with courage and determination. Maeo Ying stands as a towering figure, teaching us that the essence of leadership is not just ruling but rising every time we fall.

Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon: The Sister Soldiers

Lesson: Unity and courage

Fast-forward to the eighteenth century, where we meet Thao Thep Krasattri and Thao Si Sunthon, the sister duo who turned the tide in the defense of Phuket against Burmese invaders. Disguised as male soldiers, these sisters shattered gender stereotypes, demonstrating that bravery and strategic battlefield acumen are not gender-specific. Their story is a powerful reminder for our little ones that courage and intelligence shine equally

regardless of gender. These sisters teach us about strength in unity and the power of standing up against seemingly insurmountable odds. They serve as role models, inspiring our children to be brave, smart, and collaborative.

Thanpuying Plien Phasakoravongs: The Artsy Advocate

Lesson: Advocacy through creativity

In the early twentieth century, Thanpuying Plien Phasakoravongs emerged as a beacon of women's rights and a patron of the arts. She ingeniously used her passion for



culture and her social influence to advocate for women's rights by hosting gatherings where pressing social issues were the main topic. Her life teaches us that creativity and social activism can go hand in hand. Thanpuying Plien acts as a role model for using one's talents and interests to foster change, showing our children that they can use their passions to advocate for a better world. She exemplifies how art and social commitment can intertwine to create a powerful platform for change.

Her Royal Highness Princess Srinagarindra: The Royal Rebel

Lesson: Breaking barriers

Her Royal Highness Princess Srinagarindra was a trailblazer who defied the conventional expectations of her royal status. She ventured abroad for education and chose a career in nursing, both of which showed a commitment to personal growth and service to others. Her story is an excellent example for our children because it shows them the importance of following their dreams and making a difference in the world. Princess Srinagarindra teaches us the value of breaking barriers and carving our own paths in life. Her legacy is a powerful testament to the fact that one can respect traditions while also forging new trails—a lesson invaluable for the young minds of today.



Her Royal Highness Princess Srinagarindra

Dr. Cindy Sirinya Bishop: The Modern Advocate

Lesson: Turning passion into purpose

In our present day, Dr. Cindy Sirinya Bishop has harnessed her influence and transitioned from supermodel to vocal advocate for women's rights. Her #DontTellMeHowToDress campaign has become a symbol of resistance against harassment and a call for respect and equality. Dr. Cindy embodies the lesson that passion can evolve into a powerful purpose. Her journey from fashion to activism shows our children that their future paths can be diverse and impactful. She's a modern-day role model, demonstrating that with fame

comes the responsibility to advocate for positive change.

Cherprang Areekul: The Idol with a Cause

Lesson: Influence with a purpose

Cherprang Areekul, the charismatic leader of the pop group BNK48, exemplifies how popularity can be used for social good. Her advocacy for mental health and education has demonstrated that being in the limelight can be about more than entertainment; it can be a platform for raising awareness and effecting change. She serves as a role model for young people and shows our children that their voices, no matter how small they may seem, can have

a significant impact on the world.

Each of these extraordinary Thai women, from the annals of history to the pulse of today's social media, offers us valuable lessons. They show us resilience, courage, creativity, independence, advocacy, and purposeful influence. Sharing these stories with our children not only connects them with the rich cultural heritage of Thailand but also provides them with a treasure trove of role models. So, here's to the incredible Thai women who continue to inspire and shape our world, and to our children who will carry these lessons into the future!

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WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT POOP

Deep in the throes of toilet training, Joe comes out of the trenches to share his Tales of Toddlerhood: Poop Edition.



About the Author

Having enjoyed taking his son to BAMBI playgroups over the past months, Joe is excited to volunteer with BAMBI. He and his wife moved to Thailand from the UK in 2018. In 2021 they were delighted to be joined by their son, Martin. They love exploring Thailand as a family, especially anywhere with a playground or sand.





A hot, damp feeling spreads across my lap, and I realize that, once again, Marty is peeing on me. Resisting—just barely—the urge to scream, I plunge into the sea with him, giving us both a much-needed wash. Today I've been peed on twice and pooped on once. I think it's fair to conclude that potty training is not going well. Marty has always been extremely generous with bodily fluids (if only he was as generous with his toys and cake, but that is a discussion for another time), so this is far from the first time I have been so doused and decorated. You will also, I'm sure, have had similar charming experiences. Before I consider the joys of potty training, I think there is time for a potted history of this child's bowels and my interactions with their work.

A lesson in poop

As a young man, I always thought that diapers and poop would be the worst part of being a parent. As Marty was born, I worried whether or not I would be able to deal with dirty diapers. Turns out that they are very far from the worst part of parenting. Quite early in my fathering journey,

I started looking forward to dirty diapers as they broke up the tedium of childcare. An actual task rather than just holding a baby or looking at it lying on the floor until it was ready to nap again. Time positively flew when there was a diaper to change.

With the sleep deprivation and general panic of the first few days of parenthood, I found that I was already a seasoned hand at diaper changing before I had time to think about whether or not I found it revolting. Of course, it helped that those first poops were all milk and so small and inoffensive. Plus I'd never realized the level of mental effort required to change a diaper; who can worry about how disgusting poop is when faced with such an intellectual challenge? Newborns feel so fragile that I had to focus on not dropping him off the changing table or inadvertently ripping off a leg. Then there was the need to mop gently with cotton wool that was damp, but not too damp, warm, but not too warm. All this at 2am, then 3am, and again at 4:30am—when was I meant to find the time to be disgusted by poop?

Extreme diaper changing

I quickly learned that changing tables available in restaurants and public toilets were some sort of Darwinian test that Marty and I were doomed to fail. You, I'm sure, are better people than me, or possibly octopuses, and thus able to balance those precarious tables, precious babies, and an exciting combination of clean, poop-covered and partially poop-covered clothes, wet wipes, toys, and limbs. I cannot manage these tables and the balancing acts they require, and would soon run out of arms and realize that Marty was wriggling determinedly toward a precarious freedom. Deciding that floors are much harder to fall off than tables, I've since changed Marty almost exclusively on the ground. This provokes a mixture of amusement and disgust from passersby, who frequently try to direct me towards those terrifying devices I'm trying to avoid.

Poop on the move

Undoubtedly, the worst Marty pooping incident so far was on our first flight to England, when an



ill-fitting diaper—there has never been an official inquiry, but it was undoubtedly poorly fastened by mommy, whose protestations of innocence are laughably false—leaked from a sleeping Marty all over daddy. Unstrapping myself, grabbing the diaper bag, and getting to the washrooms without waking my wife or smearing the plane with excrement ranks as one of my great life achievements—a life short of truly great deeds—yet my challenge had hardly begun.

Whoever designed plane toilets and their baby changing tables had small circus contortionists in mind rather than a large father with all the grace of a drunken buffalo. I was in a cubicle with a changing table, but if I lowered the table, I could no longer reach the diaper bag, and if I opened the door to make more space, the lights went out. By the time I'd solved this puzzle and extracted Marty's clean clothes, the mirror, changing table, and, somehow, the ceiling were smeared with poop. Once I'd cleaned them enough to lie Marty down, I discovered that I then couldn't reach the bin while holding Marty on the changing table.

Some 20 minutes later, Marty was finally clean and clad in fresh clothing. No one had been hurt, bad language had been kept to a minimum, and most of the surfaces were fit for the next bathroom user. There just remained the comparatively simple task of changing daddy's entire outfit while keeping Marty out of the toilet and off the floor. I returned triumphantly to my seat to find my wife still asleep and that another hour of our flight had passed. Time flies when you're playing with poop.

Toilet training: it's funny when it happens to other people

Somewhere around Marty's second birthday, potties appeared in our house. Initially, these were widely ignored, except when used as toy carriers or headgear, but there came a day when a first pee was done in a potty, and there was applause and congratulations all around. After that came triumph after triumph: a first poop, asking to take his pants down, taking his pants down. The boy's a pooping genius, we declared.

Naturally, there were hiccups along the way. Well done for sitting on

your potty, but next time take your pants down before peeing. Yes, that is an amazing poop, but please don't run around the house showing it to everyone. Yes, we do tip it out now that you've done it, but, and this is very important, we tip it out in the toilet, not on the floor. NO, Teddy doesn't want to swim in it. Yes, mommy did use lots of loud and interesting words when you tripped and dropped the full pot on her, and yes, I know daddy laughed, but that doesn't mean we should do it again.

Despite these incidents, he seemed to have got the hang of using his potty. How wrong we were. Toilet training regression has hit with a vengeance. Now he'll rip his diaper and pants off and proceed to spray pee and poop anywhere but in his potty. The floor obviously, but also off balconies, into toy trucks, bins, and Lego bricks, onto books, cushions and clothes—nothing is safe. It seems like willful malice on his part when he had been so good at using his potty, but it probably isn't and he will eventually use it again. I hope!

Photos from Canva.

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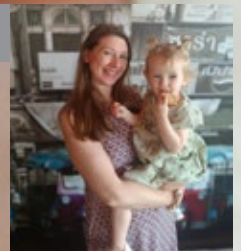
THE WORLD BELONGS TO THOSE WHO READ

Offering your child a head start in life can be as simple as reading with them. Kelly shares simple strategies to incorporate literacy into your child's bedtime routine.



About the Author

Kelly is currently a stay-at-home mom who has lived in Bangkok for over seven years. She previously worked as a primary educator and literacy specialist. Kelly loves reading fiction books, listening to podcasts, and exploring Thailand with her family.





Every evening, around 6pm, we start our daughters' bedtime routine. At times it feels like a complete circus with all the pieces of the bedtime puzzle needed for a toddler and a newborn. Perhaps your evenings also feel a bit chaotic?

My toddler shrieks and moans about hair washing to the point the neighbors probably think we are waterboarding her. My six-week-old hits her witching hour right about when we are wrestling both into pajamas. More tears ensue; we beg the toddler to brush her teeth, and finally, it's time to read our bedtime stories.

It can be tough to muster the energy for an engaging read-aloud before bed, especially when your child wants to read the same story over, and over, and over. The Gruffalo again?! I feel your pain. However, the benefits of reading aloud to your child cannot be overstated.

What are the benefits of reading aloud?

Reading aloud is a powerful experience. A study from the Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics showed that parents who read at least one book per day with their child will expose them to over a million more words than children who are never read to by the time they reach kindergarten (1). The simple act of reading a book together expands your child's vocabulary and deepens comprehension. You may have heard

that books offer us "windows and mirrors". Not only does reading expand background knowledge, it also gives your child the chance to identify and connect with characters, problems, and places. Reading fiction stories has been shown to promote social-emotional intelligence and greater empathy in the reader.

How can I support my child?

Start from birth and make it a habit. Reading aloud can start the day a child is born. Hearing your voice and cuddling is an excellent way to bond with a new baby.

As your child gets more mobile, it can feel frustrating to try to read together. You sit down on the couch to read, and two pages in your toddler jumps up and runs off to play with something new. Continue reading as they play and hold up the book to share the pictures even if they are across the room.

Reading aloud doesn't have to stop once your child is school-age; instead choose chapter books to read aloud as a family. Consider doing a buddy read with preteens or teenagers. Read the same book and choose your favorite parts to share and read aloud.

Introduce concepts of print

As adults, we take for granted all of the pieces that work together to tell a story. Frequently point out the book



cover and mention that the author is the person who writes the words. As you read, share with your child that books use both words and pictures to tell a story. Use your finger to track the words on the page.

Make it interactive

Are there noises or actions in the book? For example, in "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" a page reads: "One Sunday morning the warm sun came up and – pop! – out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar." On the word "pop" you can model shouting it out and jumping up. No energy for jumping up? Encourage your child to jump or use your hands to act out actions and words.

Think aloud

As you read, share your inner dialogue with your child. Occasionally pause and pose a question or talk about a picture. Hmm, I wonder how that character is feeling? What do you think will happen next? Uh oh, I think there's a problem. I love this picture; it makes me laugh!

Model for your child what it looks like to be an active reader.

Being a parent is tough. We are constantly barraged with the next best thing. From baby-led weaning to Montessori toys to gentle parenting—there's always something new to learn and it can feel exhausting. However, reading books together is simple. Just a few minutes each day can provide your child with invaluable, lifetime skills.

Photos from Canva.



References

1. Logan JAR, Justice LM, Yumus M, Chaparro-Moreno LJ. When Children Are Not Read to at Home: The Million Word Gap. *Journal of Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics*: March 20, 2019.

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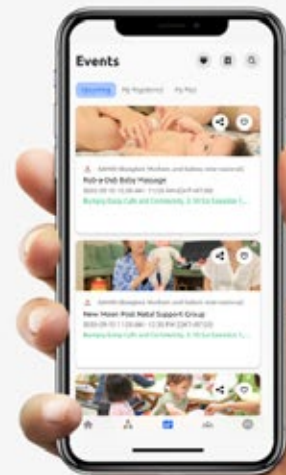


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FOR THE WOMEN WHO BAKED BEFORE ME

Anelia shares a simple, but delicious, family recipe that has been passed down by the strong and resilient women in her family. These women continue to inspire her to this day.

I come from a line of strong women, some of whom faced challenges during the Anglo-Boer War and in British concentration camps. My grandmother, Hendrina, from the Free State, South Africa, worked hard alongside her husband, displaying remarkable strength and determination. She was tough—a true example of resilience, determination, and hard work.

My grandmother had seven children, including my mother, Christa, who sadly passed away in 2005. My mom was a remarkable woman, deeply passionate about classical music and literature. Her life exemplified kindness, compassion, and unwavering moral integrity. She set a standard of virtue that left a lasting impact on everyone that knew her.

After losing my mother, her youngest sister, Drice, became my closest companion. Through our highs and lows, she has proven to be a steadfast presence—one I can turn to for support and guidance in times of need. This aunt isn't just an

amazing cook; she is also a bundle of energy and dynamism, with a voice that can bring any song to life, just like my mom's captivating singing.

Despite facing some troubles, my aunt stands as an example of the transformative power of determination and unwavering commitment. She has shown that with resilience, one can overcome any obstacle and reach remarkable heights.

This month, I pay homage to my ancestors—my grandmother, my mother, and my aunt—by sharing this traditional South African delicacy, Melkert (milk tart). This is a tart that my grandmother and mother used to make, and one that my aunt still makes!

These remarkable women have taught me that when life offers you milk, the art is in crafting a delicious milk tart!



My grandmother, Hendrina circa 1940

My mother, Christa circa 1980

My aunts, Drice (left), and Gladys (right) 2023



Equipment

- Medium-sized tart / pie dish
- Pot
- Whisk
- Spatula
- Tablespoon
- Measuring cups
- Food processor / rolling pin and sealable plastic bag
- Large bowl

Ingredients

Crust:

- 200 g digestive biscuits
- 100 g unsalted butter, melted

Filling:

- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs
- 5 ml vanilla extract
- Pinch of salt

Topping:

- 10 g cinnamon powder
- 20 g sugar

Instructions

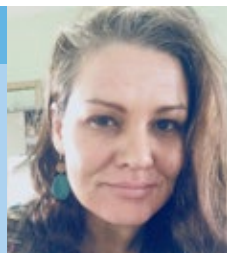
1. Crush the digestive biscuits into fine crumbs. You can use a food processor or place the biscuits in a sealed plastic bag and crush them with a rolling pin.
2. In a bowl, mix the biscuit crumbs with the melted butter until well combined.
3. Press the mixture into the base of the dish to form an even crust. Use the back of the spoon to compact the mixture.
4. Place the crust in the refrigerator to set while you prepare the filling.
5. In a large pot, combine the milk and condensed milk over a medium heat. Heat the mixture until it just starts to simmer, but do not let it boil.
6. In a separate bowl, whisk together the cornstarch, flour, eggs, vanilla extract, and the salt until smooth and well combined.
7. Slowly pour the egg mixture into the simmering milk mixture while continuously whisking to avoid lumps.
8. Continue to cook and whisk the mixture until it thickens to a custard-like consistency. This takes about five to seven minutes.
9. Once thickened, remove the mixture from the heat and let it cool slightly.
10. Pour the milk filling over the chilled crust.
11. Smooth the top with a spatula to create an even layer.
12. Allow the milk tart to cool to room temperature and then refrigerate for at least two hours or until set.
13. Combine the cinnamon and sugar then sprinkle over the tart before serving.

Note: This no-bake South African Melktert can be stored in the refrigerator for several days. It's best consumed within three or four days for optimal freshness and flavor. The crust may soften over time, but the flavor should remain delicious.

Photos courtesy of the author.

About the Author

Anelia is a performing artist from South Africa. She has been living and working as a teacher in Thailand for nine years. She also writes educational children's books, makes music, and loves to spend time in the kitchen. Follow her adventures on IG @aneliavz.





BANGKOK SUPPORT GROUPS

There are a range of support groups in Bangkok. Most are open to everyone, some ask for a small donation, and some require a reservation.

The groups listed here are run independently of BAMBI, except where otherwise noted. This listing is provided for informational purposes only, and inclusion does not constitute endorsement by BAMBI. Please contact the respective groups for more information.

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+66 (0)2 003 5185 | purpleelephant.samakee@elc.ac.th



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YOUR MENSTRUAL HEALTH MATTERS

In the spirit of empowerment through education, TCM expert, Jeannie, shares what menstrual health from a TCM perspective looks like.



About the Author

Jeannie is currently pursuing an honors degree in psychology with a focus on clinical applications. Prior to this, she was an acupuncturist specializing in fertility, stress management, and pain relief in

Sydney for 12 years. With her unique blend of Eastern and Western therapeutic approaches and maternal perspective, as feature writer, Jeannie promises a valuable contribution to BAMBI magazine.

International Women's Day (IWD) is a day to celebrate the achievements, resilience, and voices of women around the world. It's also a day to acknowledge the challenges we still face, and one crucial area that demands attention is our health. As a fertility acupuncturist with 12 years of experience working with women, I have witnessed firsthand the struggles many face navigating their gynecological and reproductive health.

It's alarming to see how often women are given inaccurate and insufficient information about what a healthy menstrual cycle should be like. This can lead to accepting pain and discomfort as typical, which isn't the case. Endometriosis, dysmenorrhea (painful periods),

and other period disorders are not something to suffer through silently.

Unfortunately, the medical industry often overlooks women's health concerns. For example, in a survey of 758 women, an astounding 50% of participants were misdiagnosed with endometriosis by gynecologists (1). Other evidence shows that many women feel unheard and dismissed when seeking help for their symptoms, affecting health-seeking behavior and their health outcomes (2). Even a world-renowned expert in endometriosis has raised a call to action for doctors to listen to their female patients (3). This is why it is crucial to advocate for yourself. Don't be afraid to ask for further investigations, such as blood tests or ultrasounds, and second opinions if

you feel your concerns aren't being addressed adequately.

The menstrual cycle from a TCM perspective

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) takes a holistic view of the menstrual cycle. This alternative perspective offers insight into what a healthy cycle looks like.

In TCM, the menstrual cycle is viewed as a rise and fall between Kidney Yin and Kidney Yang that generally lasts four weeks and involves four phases (4). When referring to the menstrual cycle, Kidney Yin is associated with cold and blood, while Kidney Yang is associated with heat and dynamic Qi.

THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF TCM

Qi

Qi is the energy which flows through our bodies along highways known as meridians.

Yin and Yang

Yin and Yang is one of the most well-known dualistic principles outside of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Yin and Yang cannot exist without each other. Yin is typically associated with cold, internal, and resting states, while Yang is commonly known to be associated with warm, external, and active states. Every person has Yin and Yang within them, but the amount of Yin and Yang can change depending on lifestyle habits, such as diet, and major life changes, such as surgery or giving birth.

Diagnosis and Treatment of Disease in TCM

TCM diagnosis traditionally incorporates a combination of three theories and approaches to allow practitioners to offer a holistic approach to diagnose and treat patients:

Eight Principles

The Eight Principles are used to diagnose disease, which are diagnosed as states of Excess or Deficiency. They are:

- Yin and Yang
- Internal (within the body) and External (outside or superficial regions of the body)
- Hot and Cold
- Qi and Blood

Five Organ Elements

The Five Organ Elements explain how the body works and correspond to specific organs within the body. They are:

- Fire (Heart, Small Intestine, Triple Energizer, and Pericardium)
- Earth (Spleen and Stomach)
- Metal (Lung and Large Intestine)
- Water (Kidney Yin, Kidney Yang, and Bladder)
- Wood (Liver and Gall Bladder)

The TCM organs refer to the meridians in the body through which Qi, Blood, Yin and Yang flow. The Five Elements require a smooth flow of Qi through each Element, known as the "Mother and Son cycle". In a healthy Five Element cycle, energy is smoothly passed on from the Mother element to the Son element. Occasionally, this flow gets disrupted if there is an imbalance of power between the

Mother and Son, for example, an overpowering Mother and a weak Son leads to the Mother controlling the Son.

A disrupted flow between Mother and Son elements presents as either physical or emotional symptoms. A commonly seen example of a controlling Mother on a weak Son is the Liver controlling the Spleen. This typically occurs when a person has a diet high in sugar and/or fat (which causes Spleen deficiency) while also experiencing extreme stress (which causes Liver excess). Eventually, the Liver controlling the Spleen can present as irritability, stomach pain, loose stools, fatigue, and insomnia in a person.

Root and Branch Diagnosis and Treatment

The Root and Branch approach to diagnosis and treatment generally explains that TCM treatments can treat either the "root" of the problem (for example, treating the Liver TCM organ to treat mood swings, period pain, headaches, bloating, and shoulder pain) or the "branch", or symptoms (for example, using Stomach meridian points to treat digestive problems).



The first phase is menstruation, which traditional texts state should last about five days, and in most women, Kidney Yang is at its highest, while Kidney Yin is at its lowest. During this phase, the Liver, Spleen, and Heart organs in TCM are responsible for the uninterrupted flow of menstrual blood. Abnormal menstrual flow includes menstrual clots, dark menstrual color, temporary ceasing of menstrual blood for one day (for example, bleeding on days one to three, no bleeding on day four, then bleeding again on days five and six), or light menstrual flow.

In the second phase (post-menstrual), which typically lasts for seven days, the reproductive system prepares for ovulation.

Phase three is the post-ovulation stage, which typically lasts one week. During this time, Kidney Yang starts to increase while Kidney Yin decreases and is akin to the thickening of the endometrial lining, which allows for a fertilized egg to implant and, therefore, pregnancy.

Phase four is the premenstrual phase, where Kidney Yang rises to keep the uterus warm if a woman is pregnant, while Kidney Yin slowly decreases.

Abnormality can occur in either one phase or a combination of two to four phases, leading to reproductive health problems, such as period pain, miscarriages, extremely long (over 35 days) or extremely short cycles (less than 24 days).

What does a healthy period look like?

TCM defines a "healthy" period as (5):

- Fresh red blood for two to three days. Day one of a menstrual cycle is considered a full flow of fresh red blood. (Note: some menstrual bleeds can deviate from fresh red blood. When this occurs, TCM considers this as a pathological abnormality of Qi / Blood / Yin / Yang due to either the Kidney, Liver, Spleen, or Heart, or a combination of two to four of these organs.)
- No premenstrual spotting or prolonged bleeding (for more than seven consecutive days).
- No premenstrual or accompanying symptoms (e.g., bloating, cramps). TCM considers the presence of any premenstrual symptoms to be a sign of deficiency or stagnation within the body. For example, irritability or headaches before a period can be due to Liver Qi stagnation and/or Liver Blood stagnation.

Another example is a pattern of loose stools or constipation five to seven days before a menstrual bleed that can be due to Spleen Qi deficiency, Liver Blood stagnation, or dampness (excess fluid in the body).

- No menstrual pain requiring painkillers.

This does not mean every cycle will be identical, but if you experience significant deviations from this baseline, it is best to consult a gynecologist and advocate for further investigations. Remember, you are your own best advocate for your health.

Five top tips for a healthy menstrual cycle

A few TCM principles can be used as guidance to experience a healthy menstrual cycle.

(Note: the following tips focus on general practices and should not be misconstrued as medical advice. Please also remember that individual needs may vary.)

1. Embrace warmth

Choose warm, nourishing foods like cooked vegetables, soups, and stews leading up to and during your menstrual cycle. Warm foods are thought to promote Blood

circulation in the body according to TCM principles (5).

Avoid cold or raw foods that can aggravate painful periods, as these types of foods tend to be culprits of Qi and Blood stagnation (6). Pain, according to TCM, is associated with any form of stagnation.

2. Manage stress

Stress can exacerbate menstrual symptoms (7). Incorporate gentle mind-body practices like yoga, meditation, or deep breathing exercises to manage stress and promote overall well-being (8).

3. Sleep well

Poor sleep quality is a risk factor for PMS and dysmenorrhoea (9). Healthy habits for good sleep quality include regular bedtime, aiming for seven to nine hours of sleep per night (10), and limiting the use of electronic devices before bedtime (11).

4. Explore holistic medicine options for pain and discomfort

Consider exploring the world of natural therapy treatments. Research suggests that therapies like acupuncture, heat therapy, counseling, massage, transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS), and physiotherapy can be as effective as pain medications (12). These holistic approaches not only

address the physical discomfort but also have minimal short-term side effects.

5. Seek professional guidance

A qualified TCM practitioner experienced in treating menstrual issues can conduct a comprehensive assessment and develop a personalized treatment plan based on your individual needs and medical history.

The assessment for menstrual health typically involves questions about your cycle (including the age of your first period, length of menstrual cycle and bleeding, the color of menstrual blood, presence of clots / stringy blood, spotting, pain, mood swings, bowel or sleep changes before or during your menstrual bleed); fertility history (such as several pregnancies, miscarriages, IVF cycles); what you generally eat daily (including caffeinated and alcoholic beverages); bowel motion habits (number of stools per day / week and quality of stools), sleep quality (including trouble falling or staying asleep); quality of energy levels; migraines (location of migraine, description of pain); and more.

Physical assessment for menstrual health typically includes observation of your tongue and feeling the pulse on your wrists. (Fun fact: the pulse



strength and tone are different on both right and left!) The tongue and pulse give TCM practitioners crucial insight into the quality and quantity of your Yin, Yang, Qi, and Blood for various organs.

If you experience significant menstrual irregularities, persistent pain, or any other concerning symptoms, you should consult a gynecologist for diagnosis and appropriate medical treatment.

By empowering ourselves with knowledge and advocating for our health, we can break the silence on women's health issues. This IWD, let's prioritize our well-being, listen to our bodies, and embrace a holistic approach to managing our menstrual cycles. Remember, you are not alone. Together, we can create a world where women's health is understood, respected, and supported.

Disclaimer: This article is for informational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice. Always consult a qualified healthcare professional for personalized guidance.

Photos from Canva.



References

References and further reading available online at bambiweb.org.

BAMBI PLAYGROUPS & ACTIVITIES

BAMBI holds regular playgroups and activities around town, open to both BAMBI members and non-members. BAMBI playgroups are characterized by free play and the use of venues' toys and playgrounds. BAMBI Activities provide a wide range of activities for children aged one to six years old to develop their athletic, creative and cognitive skills.



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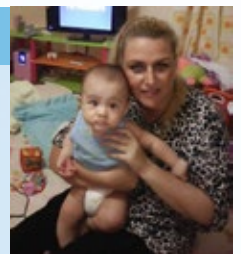
WITHIN ARM'S REACH

Jaqueline tells us about the common toddler injury known as nursemaid's elbow and suggests some ways we can minimize its risk while still allowing our kids to be kids.



About the Author

Writer and editor Jaqueline Deeon has lived in South-East Asia for 12 years. She is married to a local artist from Khanom. She has written a book about the pink dolphins and hawksbill turtles in the area to educate young children learning to read and hopes her stories will encourage them to grow up to be responsible earth citizens with a love for nature. You can find her in her tea shop, Auntie Moon's Tea: facebook.com/AuntieMoonsTea.





Toddlers are energetic, tough, tactile little people who want to touch, taste, and experience everything around them. So when they move quickly toward something potentially harmful, our natural reaction as their parent or caregiver can be to grab their little hands or arms to pull them out of harm's way. But did you know that this instinctive action can cause them injury?

While our intentions are good, this action of "saving" them from something worse can result in a pulled elbow, also known as "nursemaid's elbow".

What is nursemaid's elbow?

Nursemaid's elbow occurs when the head of one of the bones in the forearm slips partially out of place and traps the ligament it is connected to (1).

According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, this injury commonly happens to children under four years old because the bones and muscles of young children are still developing, so very little force is needed to cause a partial dislocation. The medical term for this pulled elbow is "radial head subluxation" (2).

How does nursemaid's elbow happen?

The term "nursemaid's elbow" hints at one of the main causes of the injury. In the days when it was common for nursemaids to take care of children, these caregivers would often get blamed for causing injuries by pulling too hard on a child's arm.

These days, nursemaid's elbow commonly happens when a parent or caregiver pulls a young child back by the hand or arm to stop them from falling, touching something dangerous, or stepping into danger. It can also happen when:

- swinging your child by the hands while playing.
- pulling toys or other objects out of your child's hands.
- pulling your child's arms through the sleeves of a jacket or T-shirt.
- (less commonly) your little one falls onto outstretched arms (3).

What does nursemaid's elbow look like?

It may not be obvious at first that your child has nursemaid's elbow as you might not have seen the action happen that caused it. Nursemaid's elbow also doesn't result in any

bruising or swelling. However, if your toddler tells you—either verbally or by crying—that their wrist, forearm or elbow hurts, and they avoid moving their arm below the shoulder or refuse to rotate their palm upwards, they could have nursemaid's elbow (4).

What should I do if I suspect my child has nursemaid's elbow?

The pinched ligament can sometimes get "unstuck" by itself, but more often than not, a healthcare professional needs to gently move the arm to get the ligament out from between the two bones, so it is important you seek medical support. This is also crucial to rule out any other potential damage or injury.

The process of reducing the partial dislocation can be uncomfortable, but this will be short-lived and your child will feel much better as the ligament relaxes back into place (5).

It is naturally traumatic for small children when they experience pain. In the first instance, you can apply ice to their elbow (6). Visiting the doctor can be very stressful for the little people in our lives, and having a stranger manipulate their limbs is



also stressful. Try to keep calm and support them during the procedure. Also acknowledge that it can be traumatic for you too, and you might feel guilty about what has happened. Remind yourself that nursemaid's elbow is a very common injury.

There are incidences when a child will refuse to use the arm after suffering a nursemaid's elbow event, even once the doctor has helped to get the arm working again, because they are afraid of the pain or discomfort they felt before. In these cases, the doctor might put their arm in a sling and prescribe pain medication like acetaminophen (7).

Can nursemaid's elbow happen to my child again?

Unfortunately, yes. Children who have had a nursemaid's elbow once are prone to getting it again because the original injury may stretch the ligaments, making it harder for the bone to stay in place. However, as your child grows, their bones and ligaments will develop, and the injury will become less likely (8).

How can I prevent nursemaid's elbow from happening?

We can't stop our little ones and their boundless energy from

exploring, but we can do our best to keep them within arms reach, make their environment safer, and learn how to handle them safely.

Andrew, a former teacher in Bangkok, and his wife, Yanisa, are first-time parents to their busy toddler, Alisa. Andrew shares his experience on being aware of the potential for nursemaid's elbow:

"We're always watching Alisa and trying to anticipate when she might get into trouble, while also allowing her to explore independently. We're also very conscious of not holding her outstretched arms when possible, and we're extra vigilant in ensuring we pick her up correctly."

Staying close to your toddler while they explore is a must—as is being aware of potential hazards, such as slippery floors and sharp corners. If you do ever need to scoop your child up quickly, always try and lift them by placing your hands under their armpits or by putting one arm around their torso and the other under their bottom.

Bangkok streets can be especially hazardous for curious explorers with their uneven sidewalks, crowds, and motorcycles riding close to





the edge of the road. Holding your toddler in front of you, positioning them in a suitable carrier, or using a stroller can help keep them safe from injury until you reach a place they can safely explore on their own two feet.

Other ways you can minimize the risk of nursemaid’s elbow include:

- avoiding swinging or lifting your child up by the hands, wrists, or arms when playing. This kind of play can be fun for both you and them, but you should always pick them up from under the armpits (9).
- being careful not to pull too hard on your wriggling toddler’s hands as you try to get them through

the sleeves of a T-shirt or vest.

- keeping an eye on their energy levels and either carrying or putting them in a stroller when they get tired and unstable on their little feet. This way they are less likely to fall and need to be caught.
- not jerking your child upwards if they do start to fall. Instead, try to catch them by wrapping your arm(s) around their torso.

Remember to communicate these means of preventing nursemaid’s elbow with everyone who cares for and plays with your child—parents, grandparents, older siblings, nannies, and other caregivers.

While there are things you can do to

minimize your child’s risk of injury, remember that accidents still can and do happen. Andrew concedes:

“Now that Alisa is walking, it’s hard to avoid holding her arms. Sometimes I’m holding her arm while she is walking, and she slips. There are also times and situations where, for her own safety, I have to grab her by the arm.”

Always do what you can, but remember to have fun with your toddler, help them to explore safely, and enjoy watching them reach their milestones as they familiarize themselves with the amazing world around them.

Photos from Canva.

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- (8) See ref. 6
- (9) See ref. 4



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Want to have fun, work together with other great parents, brush up on your professional skills, and do something for the BAMBI community? This is your chance.

BAMBI is run by a group of lovely and dedicated volunteers, and from time to time, a number of critical roles need to be filled to ensure ongoing service to our members. BAMBI is a fun and welcoming community of like-minded parents trying to support and improve the parenting experience for all families in Bangkok. If you have some time and passion to spare, come and join us. To apply or if you have any questions about these volunteer opportunities, please email vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org, detailing which position(s) you are interested in. Please note that as per BAMBI's constitution, interested candidates are required to have an active membership at the time of applying.

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BAMBI

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BAMBI is managed by an elected committee of volunteers and all BAMBI members are encouraged to volunteer. Vacancies can be found on the Call for Volunteers page in this magazine and are posted online; you are welcome to contact vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org with inquiries.

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events@bambiweb.org

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Simmi Rajkitkul | advisor@bambiweb.org

Treasurer | Ritika

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activities@bambiweb.org

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playgroups@bambiweb.org

Editor, BAMBI Magazine | Sanam

editor@bambiweb.org

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media@bambiweb.org

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chairwoman@bambiweb.org

Charities Coordinator | Lynda

charities@bambiweb.org

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websitesast@bambiweb.org

Executive Board | Chiaki / Sara / Rocky

vicechairwoman@bambiweb.org

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database@bambiweb.org

VOTING/EX OFFICIO/BY INVITATION

Bumps & Babies Coordinator | Jo

bumps@bambiweb.org



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Yaz: bumps@bambiweb.org

Bumps & Babies Team |
Jenifer

Assistant Playgroups Coordinators |
Gienna: playgroupassist1@bambiweb.org
Sassy: playgroupassist@bambiweb.org

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Rieko: treasurerasst4@bambiweb.org
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Phorn: bookkeeper@bambiweb.org

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Anelia: depeditor@bambiweb.org

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Monisha: assisted2@bambiweb.org
Joe: assisted5@bambiweb.org
Chanelle: assisted08@bambiweb.org

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Sara: chineseordinator@bambiweb.org

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Momoe / Ami

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Aya: japancoordinator@bambiweb.org

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Aya: me-time@bambiweb.org

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Lynda: benefits@bambiweb.org

Pop Up Playgroups & New Members Team Sayoko /
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Promotional Designer |
Yumi: design@bambiweb.org

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Finn Balslev
Phone: 02 943 7166-8 Ext. 116
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Fax: 02 943 6618
Email: finn.scandmedia@gmail.com

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