

INTERVIEW WITH LOI KROH

Loi Kroh is a Traditional Thai Massage School and Salon in Chiang Mai, Thailand, that specializes in private lessons. Coocky Tassanee is the owner and founder of Loi Kroh, and this interview was conducted by Hillary Olsen, RTT.

THAI: *I've heard that you have some beautiful stories from your childhood regarding Thai massage. Can you tell us about them?*

Since the age of 8, I began to help my grandfather ease his numerous aches and pains. Coming from a Thai village, most of my family members worked on the farm, and at the end of the day, they would come back home with aching legs and backs. My grandfather would offer me 50 satang (0.5 baht) to walk on his back, which I gladly accepted. Instead of playing with my friends, I preferred to earn a few baht while holding onto the wall, not really knowing why I was walking up and down my grandfather's back for 30 minutes to an hour, or until I became bored.

My grandmother's sister was the town's midwife. Whenever she had to assist a birth, I would try to help in any way I could. I would often watch the births, since our big house didn't have many rooms to disappear into when someone came over screaming with pain. I grew up accustomed to the traditional Thai methods and remedies. The bamboo knife that cut the umbilical cord never really scared me, or even the bloody scenes of birth. By the time I was 10, my mother would wake me up in the middle of the night with cramps and gas in her stomach, and ask me to work on her. I didn't realize it back then, but she was teaching me how to press these uncomfortable pains away. These late night cramps happened often with my mom, who gave birth to five children.



Coocky Tassanee

THAI: *I've read that Loi Kroh first started as a massage salon in 1998 and then a year later, you began leading private lessons. What first inspired you to open a massage salon? And then what led you to begin teaching a year later?*

As a young adult I rarely had any encounters with massaging. I eventually married a Dutch man and moved to Europe. I became a housewife while he worked in the hotel industry, and we started a small, private souvenir shop for three years. In the 90s we decided to move back to Thailand after living in Europe for more than a decade. Thai massage seemed really interesting to me at the time. I took several trainings and later opened a small massage salon on Loi Kroh road with my friend. We had two mats and could accommodate two customers at a time. Business was OK and it started to go up as the years went on. After a while, a Spanish customer asked me to teach her Thai massage. She wanted to give massages to her friends and family. I agreed to teach her what I knew, charging her the same price as regular massages by the hour. A year later, I opened the school; teaching private one-on-one courses. Recently, we've opened double courses: two students to one teacher. I find it very effective when a student observes the methods from another point of view. They also have a chance to feel the difference between other peoples' bodies. Today, my ex-husband manages the massage salon and I manage the massage school. I'm still learning about the art of Thai massage to this day.

THAI: *You have an extensive training background. It seems you've trained with many different styles and teachers. How would you describe your lineage and style of Thai massage, and how has your diverse background influenced you and Loi Kroh's style of teaching?*

Yes, I have training with many different teachers. When I first decided to train in massage, I took up a course with Mama Lek Chaiya on Thapae Road. I got a really good feeling whenever I gave massages and decided to choose this path. I searched for more schools to study at and completed several more courses with Pichet, the Old Medicine Hospital, and Wat Po to name a few. I don't use 100% of my different trainings! I just pick up the different styles of what is suitable for me. So my style has a little bit of every one of my teachers.

THAI: *Loi Kroh is known for its one-on-one private trainings. Why did you decide to format your trainings in this way? What are the advantages to learning Thai massage in a one-on-one setting?*

The teacher can correct the position or pressure in a better way when it's one-on-one. It is a real advantage for the student. One-on-one is also good for people who don't have time to stay one month in Chiang Mai to learn Thai Massage in a class setting.

THAI: *Loi Kroh is celebrating its 10th anniversary this year. How exciting! Please describe the evolution and changes of your school over this past decade.*

First, when you said this, I didn't realize it... Loi Kroh is celebrating its 10th anniversary! These 10 years passed by so quickly... Loi Kroh is growing every year. We started with three mats and next month the third building will be finished! Here, people come from all around the world, just for fun or for professional training. We are happy to share our techniques with everybody. We don't teach so much theory but more about feeling and intuition. It's our specialty at Loi Kroh.

THAI: *There is a Loi Kroh school and also a Loi Kroh massage salon. Tell us more about receiving massages at Loi Kroh.*

Well, the training school and the massage salon have been operated independently for three years now. But, at the school you can receive massages from our teachers. It's a real advantage, and I recommend that each student receives from their teacher before and during the courses at Loi Kroh. And Loi Kroh school has a very relaxed and open feeling, especially in our private garden.

THAI: Few schools offer trainings in Rue Sri Datton, and Loi Kroh is one of them. For the THAI members that aren't familiar with Rue Sri Datton, please describe this ancient, movement practice and explain the classes and trainings you offer for this style.

Our Rue Sri Datton style is the original one, the same as Wat Po. At Loi Kroh we are focusing on breath to create your external power. This technique helps people who give massage, and it's also very good to detoxify the body. Your body and digestion begins to burn foods better after at least 5 days of R.S.D training. And we also teach a meditation class before and after each practice of R.S.D. Since I began practicing R.S.D, I really felt different and changed in a positive way. It creates very good self protection, strengthens the immune system, and it brings you overall well-being and growth on many different levels.

THAI: What do you think the next 10 years will look like for Loi Kroh? What dreams and goals do you have for your school?

I don't really know. It's so far ahead for me. Life is beautiful, giving massage, teaching... I enjoy it a lot ! For this year, in Loi Kroh school we will develop two new courses: pregnant women Thai massage and baby massage. In March 2008, the new building will be finished so that we can offer a big classroom in Chiang Mai. I'm teaching some interesting courses there in May and June of 2008. And maybe next year I will develop a Loi Kroh school in Europe because I have been living six months a year in France since 2007.

THAI: What are your hobbies and activities outside of Loi Kroh (not that there's that much extra time, I could imagine!), but are there some interesting activities and interests that you'd like to share?

I like to be quiet in nature, go to the temple, I like to touch wood... I also like cooking, planting, gardening, and meditating. And I definitely love to spend time with my daughter and my future husband, Xavier. I like to practice qi gong and tai ji quan. Also, I keep studying about energy and about spiritual work.

THAI: And to conclude, do you have any further information for THAI members - any advice or suggestions for them as they continue their studies and teachings?

I thank you very much for the work at THAI to introduce Thai massage around the world and to bring it in such a positive way to so many people. I wish THAI good luck. Love and Blessings to you !

Loi Kroh may be found on the web at www.loikrohmassage.com



The teaching staff of Loi Kroh on the school grounds

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