

THE ROYAL BEE HERBAL SHOP

By David Bliss

Those who have wandered down the Soi alongside Wat Po are familiar with the numerous medicine vendors and their shops. Most sell an assortment of pills, powders, balms and various massage paraphernalia. There is not much to distinguish one shop from the rest other than the personalities of the vendors and perhaps the size of their space.



Streetside display of herbal compresses, creams, ointments and medicinal soaps

After one or two visits, the realization sets in that you only need visit one of the many nearly identical stands. This, however, all changed four months ago when the Royal Bee Herbal Shop moved into the neighborhood.



Luk Pra Kob herbal compresses.

I first noticed the Royal Bee Herbal Shop while on a routine visit to Wat Po. As I was on my way, I spotted a new store unlike the rest. What stood out most were the balms and liniments they offered. Whereas most of the shops in the area offer the typical “Wat Po” brand balms, this shop had something unique. As I stopped to look at their selection of medicine, I noticed a multitude of rare books as well.

What I ultimately found was that the storeowners were even more rare and spectacular than the vast array of herbs.

Mr. Damrongrak Singtokham was patiently instructing his customer on how to use the medicine she was purchasing. He explained to her, in great detail, how to prepare and take the herbs. Mr. Damrongrak is a graduate of Wat Po's Traditional Medicine School and makes his own medicine. His wife and co-owner of the Royal Bee Herbal Shop is Ms. Nongcran Sophitsakol, a knowledgeable healthcare practitioner in her own right. Ms. Nongcran is a Physical Therapist who has learned the deeper theories, philosophies and practices of Traditional Thai Massage. The two make an amazing duo capable of answering most, if not all, questions that any patrons might have. Although they are just starting out, the potential of these two practitioners and their shop is enormous.



Royal Bee medicinal balms and oils for sale at the shop.

All of the products at the Royal Bee Herbal Shop are of the best quality. Their specialty is the store's namesake, a balm made with top grade beeswax. They also make their own liniments and camphor inhalers. Because Mr. Damrongrak is a Traditional Medicine practitioner, he insures that all of the medicines sold are either Food and Drug Organization approved or personally tested by himself.

Having been to many of the other shops, I can personally attest to the quality of their products and the knowledge of Mr. Damrongrak and Ms. Nongcran. We are currently in the process of setting up a Medicinal Cooking class for foreign students with Mr. Damrongrak. At present, I suggest that all those visiting Thailand, and specifically Wat Po, pay a visit to the Royal Bee Herbal Shop to pick up some of their top quality products and chat with the owners. They are both a great source of information and quite friendly as well.



Entrance to the Royal Bee Shop, Bangkok.