



## MERCY MINISTRIES FOUNDATION

### CULTURAL TIPS WHEN IN THAILAND

**Greeting:** “Sa Wa Dee Krup” for a man to speak and “Sa Wa Dee Ka” for a woman to speak is used for both hello and good bye. This greeting is accompanied by placing the hands palm to palm, raising them to the face, level with the mouth or chin. A slight bow of the head is normal. Quickly discipline yourself to return this salute, except to younger children where a smile or nod is sufficient acknowledgement.

#### **Manners:**

- Take off your shoes before you go in the house.
- Don't sit on the chairs if older people are sitting on the floor.
- Don't put your feet up on a chair or a table.
- Wait for the older people to start eating first.
- Eat with a spoon not a fork. Don't put a fork in your mouth.
- Don't put too much food on your plate..
- Don't put your feet on a pillow.
- Pay respect to elders. Bend down when you walk pass the elders.

#### **Do's & Don'ts in Thailand**

1. Never touch anyone's head. The head is considered the sacred part of the body. Ruffling children's hair is an exception if done with affection.
2. Never use, point or raise your feet, especially with adults. The Thai considers the foot 'low'. Never move anything with your foot. Always remove your shoes before entering a house or temple.
3. Women should never touch a monk, not even his clothes, and must never sit down by a monk nor hand anything directly to him.
4. Don't kiss in public. Public displays of affection between men and women are frowned upon.
5. Don't lose your temper or get angry in public.
6. Don't climb on or be disrespectful of the Buddha image.
7. Generally speaking, the Thai's are traditionally a soft-spoken people and being over bearing can be threatening to them.
8. Do have fun with cultural and be respectful of their practices even if they seem “different” from your own!

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## **CULTURAL TIPS WHEN IN CAMBODIA**

**Greeting:** “Joom reap sua.” This greeting is accompanied by placing the hands palm to palm, raising them to the face, level with the mouth or chin. A slight bow of the head is normal. Quickly discipline yourself to return this salute, except to younger children where a smile or nod is sufficient acknowledgement.

**Manners:** To call a taxi or a person, use a palm-down motion with your full hand. Do not use your index finger. To receive money or other things, it is polite to use the right hand only.

**Hospitality:** When visiting Khmer people at their home (or when they are visiting your home) it is the host's responsibility to give the guest a glass of water or something to drink. Failure to do this is a breach of common courtesy. It is not the guest's responsibility to drink the water and it is acceptable not to touch it.

### **Do's & Don'ts in Cambodia**

- Never touch anyone's head. The head is considered the sacred part of the body. Ruffling children's hair is an exception if done with affection.
- Never use, point or raise your feet, especially with adults. The Khmer considers the foot 'low'. Never move anything with your foot. Always remove your shoes before entering a house or temple.
- Women should never touch a monk, not even his clothes, and must never sit down by a monk nor hand anything directly to him.
- Don't kiss in public. Public displays of affection between men and women are frowned upon.
- Don't lose your temper or get angry in public.
- Don't climb on or be disrespectful of the Buddha image.
- When speaking with the Khmer people, try to avoid entering too close into “their space” and speak gently and with humility. Generally speaking, the Khmer's are traditionally a soft-spoken people and being over bearing can be threatening to them.
- Do have fun with cultural and be respectful of their practices even if they seem “different” from your own!