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ภาคผนวก

# UNDERSTANDING



# YOUR

# HOST

# FAMILY

From "The Thai & I" Roger Welty & Community Services Bangkok



AFS Intercultural Programs Thailand

## Preparing to Go Abroad.

If you are overly worried, try to manage your anxiety. Think about some of the difficult situations you've faced in the past. How did you cope? How did the situation turn out? Reminding yourself of your ability to succeed in difficult situations can build your confidence.

You can't predict it, all the situations you will meet in the host country. You can't know all the cultural differences you will face or how they will affect your daily life. There are ways to prepare for your exchange year, however, and these preparations will help you get the most out of it. There are several activities you can do on your own to help you prepare for the year ahead. Here are some of them.

**1. Learn the language.** Use any means possible to learn as much of the host-country language as you can before you leave home.

**2. Study your Own Culture.** Years of experience with exchange programs have shown the importance of you understanding your own culture. If you understand of the rules behind your own culture, you may be better prepared to look for the rules in the foreign culture. You have never existed without being immersed in your own culture (which includes such things as your values and beliefs, the rules that govern your behavior, and the way you communicate with and relate to other people.

**3. Write letters to your future host family.** If AFS has provided the address of your host family in sufficient time before your departure, it is an excellent idea to begin the relationship by writing them a letter.

**4. Talk to people from the host country.** These people can help you learn about the country and can provide useful advice about what clothing to take and gifts to pack. People from your country who have lived in your host country will also be able to give you useful information. But be careful. This information may not be objective, especially if the person has strong feelings against or in favor of the country, and it should be compared with information from other sources.

Prepare for your exchange experience by learning as much as you can before you leave. Remember that the learning does not end at that point. There will be even more to learn when you arrive, and you can use the same techniques there as you did at home.

## THE THAI AND I: UNDERSTANDING YOUR HOSTS THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

You've flown half-way round the world and here you are in Thailand. From now on, during your stay in this Kingdom, you are a foreigner. You also may be a *farang* by birth. You cannot change that, either.

### WHAT THAIS CALL YOU

In Thai, a foreigner of whatever race is a *khon tangchat*. This means simply "a person of another race, life, or birth." If you are also a Caucasian, no matter which country you have come from, you are also a *farang*.

*Farang* does not mean "foreigner."

The word *farang* has a long and interesting background, extending farther back than the Crusades. The inhabitants of northern France and even the name of the country have to do with the Germanic name: *Frank*. The Franks of the Crusades, and their Frankish Kingdom, were mostly Western Europeans, and here the word not only includes the French but most Christian Europeans.

The Arabs and Turks who fought these invasions of Palestine called the Franks *ifrangî*, and the Persians picked it up as *farangi*. These Muslim groups had extensive trade relations with Siam.

Thai street children have had a lot of fun calling a passing *farang* a *farang khi nok*, a bird-dropping *farang* after a guava of that name. This is seen by Thais as a nonsensical and harmless pleasure that might annoy the *farang* if he or she understood it. You might also keep in mind that being a foreigner who has come to Thailand to live and work makes you an "expat." This word expat (from expatriate) once indicated one had been exiled or banished but today simply refers to someone who has moved to live and work in a country other than his own. Tourists may qualify as *farang* (if they're Caucasians) but they are not expats. They



are here to enjoy the sights or perhaps to get warm from a cold winter back home, but they don't live here.

### WHAT THAIS CALL OTHERS

Thais have identifying nicknames, not always overly polite, for those of other racial or cultural groups. For example, two large groups present in Thailand are *khon cheen* (*jeen*) and *khon khæk*.

*Cheen* are the Chinese. Saying *khon cheen* makes it more polite. But there is a very common and less polite term "*chek*" which refers to immigrant Chinese who have come to better themselves economically. They often start in lowly jobs such as a pushcart peddler and some go on to become millionaire capitalists.



*Chek* are seen in a denigrating light and are regarded by some Thais as uncultured and uncouth. A rickshaw, for instance, used to be called a *rot chek*, a Chinaman's car.

*Khaek* (literally "guest") includes anyone who wears a turban, writes a language of right-to-left squiggles (Arabic, for instance) and who may well be Muslim. This includes Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indonesians, Arabs of any country, Malays and all Muslim Thais. Many non-Muslim Thais will say a Muslim Thai is a *khaek* and deny he is Thai until pressed on this point.

There are rude nicknames for a few other groups which Thais have identified: *Nikro*, Negro; *farang Asia* (Israelis or Asian whites such as Turks or Iranians); *Ai Yun*, Japanese, from their country's name in Thai, *Yipun*. Aside from such other Asians that Thais have had dealings with, such as Burmese, Laos, Khmers and various hill tribe peoples (recently redubbed *chao thai phu khao*, "Thai people from the hills"), Thais have no real awareness of Bulgans, Czechs, Poles, Lithuanians and on and on, and therefore have no nicknames for them. These are all *farang*.

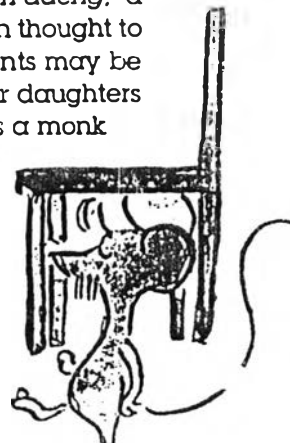
Faced with a dark Paraguayan of Guaraní descent or an American Indian, a Thai might call him *indian daeng*, red Indian, but that helps clarify very little! It would perhaps be best if you yourself don't use the terms described above. They almost certainly would be offensive to the groups involved.

**DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN THAIS**

In the north of the Kingdom you'll see Thais who tend to be of rather light skin colour and have eyes with the epicanthic fold we associate with the Chinese. As you travel to the deep South, near the Malaysian border, you'll find Thais with darker skins, with big liquid black eyes, and sometimes the shorter, broader build of Malay stock. In big cities, such as Bangkok, you may find the men taller than in rural districts, whether because of their diet or perhaps because the racial background is of a different mix. Young Thais tend to be taller than their grandparents. This is almost certainly the effect of generally improved nutrition.

**PREJUDICE**

Despite the wide range of racial and ethnic diversity amongst Thais, don't let anyone try to convince you there is no racial prejudice in Thailand. There is, and one thing it centres on is skin colour. In this, Thais are similar to many other cultures. Yellowish, dark or "black," or a hue called *dam daeng*, a reddish tone of generally walnut colour, is often thought to be indicative of a peasant background. Parents may be much concerned about the colouration of their daughters for it affects their marriageability. When I was a monk there was some talk that black Kenyans or Tanzanians might be coming to join the Order. Some Thais were quite upset at the prospect of black monks, but I thought they'd be striking in the saffron robes. Anyway, they didn't come. But it is unfortunately true that Africans and other black people are thought to be of a lower class or less desirable than lighter-skinned people.





the truth is that many *khæk* people have come to Thailand, made it their home and have done very well for themselves. So some Thais may resent this success. On the other hand, Chinese people started out with the same prejudice against them, but do tend to assimilate very well and "become Thai" more readily than *khæk* people.

Some Thais say of Chinese in Thailand, "They work 25 hours a day, 32 days a month!" I don't understand why the Chinese aren't flattered by this, but they aren't. The Chinese may retort with, "Thais work flat on their backs." This is hardly a compliment, either, if you think about it ...

### YOUR CIRCLE

It's possible that you came to Thailand alone and knew no one when you arrived. Or, you may have come in with your family. It's also possible you already have a



Thai person in your family. Perhaps you are a foreigner with a Thai spouse. Or one of your parents or step-parents is Thai. So let's talk about family first.

Having a Thai member of your family may prove a great asset to you in getting

to know the country and learn the ways of its people. You, as an expat with a Thai spouse, will have someone to rely on who can take care of the myriad things that settling in requires—getting a phone installed, electricity connected and

advice on where and how to live. Your spouse, as with many Thai couples, may do a lot of the in-city driving. If you are a male employee and your Thai wife hasn't forgotten the Thai language, she can smooth the way for all your expat-Thai relationships, particularly in handling servants, officials and repairmen.

If your partner hailed from the Northeast, Isaan, and still speaks that language, s/he will prove invaluable in dealing with people from there. When it comes to hiring and firing, buying and selling, you're a lucky person.

When it comes to your social life, however, you may not fare so well if your wife was originally from the servant class. There may be problems of acceptance into your world. In social situations, one often sees the men and the *farang* women gathered in one room, and the Thai women in another. Some Thais may be more comfortable this way, particularly if the women have fewer language abilities.

On the other hand, it often happens that the husband's friends may be unknown to the wife, and her friends may be strangers to her husband—particularly if he doesn't know enough Thai to get along.

If, as is happening more and more often, the *farang's* Thai wife comes from a higher class—highly educated, the monied—that lady might feel less than happy at being relegated to socialising with other Thai women with whom she has little in common. Education, language, class—and always "face"—may all be involved in this situation.

Invitations may prove to have awkward or distressing outcomes for expat-Thai relations, and may arise from *farang* wives who are used to giving dinner parties for their husbands' associates. Invitations for a business or working dinner in Thailand are usually extended to the employee and exclude the spouse. Social functions, on the other hand, generally include the spouse. Nowadays, decisions regarding whether or not to include spouses on invitations may be made according to the costs or expenses involved, not protocol. In

some instances, while the invitation may not include a spouse, the invitee may nonetheless show up with a guest.

An even more serious difficulty the expat hostess may run into is the Thai guest who brings along more than one uninvited guest. As most Western food is served by the plate, and places are counted, it can be very disturbing if 12 people are invited and 16 come. This can happen. Or it would be disappointing to the hostess if she invited 12 and only six showed up. Etiquette regarding responses to invitations is spotty at best. Most invitations now request a "regrets only" response rather than an R.S.V.P. Even so, most hosts and hostesses agree that a 50% response rate is good. Calling to confirm whether or not the invitee plans to attend is very common, whether the guest list is for 10 or 100!

The only solution for all of this is to relax, take it easy, expect the unexpected, be flexible, keep a cool heart (*chai yen*) and above all, smile.

## FRIENDS

With regard to children, if one parent is Thai and they're of mixed race (*luk khreung*), there will have to be some adjustments made. Thai kids are expected to be respectful of their parents and obedient (so far as it can be seen!) and never, never to talk back. Not all children play this part well if they've been raised in the U.S.A. or other permissive societies where children enjoy a kind of independence that is seldom allowed a Thai child.

Yet the Thai child, if you study the situation, may be far more independent in reality than the foreign one who boasts more about it.

For kids to have Thai friends is, of course, a very good thing, but it may also be a situation that is dangerous, depending upon the kids, whether Thai, part-Thai or expat.

Although Thai and expat pre-schoolers may be playmates, once past school-entering age, there is a tendency for Thai and other children to separate. They have different needs and

are under different kinds of stress. A Thai child in a Thai school is under pressure to conform, to study, to be polite and to pass exams.

It's not quite the same for the expat child because he will be in a school that is less rigid than the Thai. He may not have to wear a school uniform, which he may see in a very different light than the Thai student does. Western children often dislike uniforms. Asian children often wear theirs with pride, for not all Thai children get into school and on into university. Fewer Thai than expat students will stay with their education and successfully finish. To fail an exam may derail them; lack of money may deter them.

In contrast, many expat kids finishing high school will probably go on to university. Just at the critical juncture of finishing high school, Thai students are faced with fierce, Kingdom-wide exams to finish high school and again to get into the most desirable upper institutions. They may have to buckle down and study at special prep schools just as the expat kids are loosening up and having their school-ending proms and senior trips. This situation militates against expat-Thai friendships during school years, though it is true, many Thai university students get along very well with expats who're still in high school.

#### ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEX

One problem with friends is that while a friendship may elevate one, it may also do the opposite. Drugs, drink, sexual experimentation, sometimes crime, may arise from friendships that are ill-matched or perhaps too-well-matched on a low and descending level. Many Thai schoolboys experience sex at age 15 or 16, most often with a prostitute, attending upon her with a group of buddies. By age 17, most have become sexually experienced.

While the percentages of boys who've had sexual experience by 17 may be similar amongst expats and Thai, the expat affairs are fewer with prostitutes than with girlfriends who are classmates.

This custom, by the way, is maintained by Thai men who work together. Inviting their expat colleague to go along can lead to domestic problems for him. Expat businessmen who travel with colleagues may sometimes run into a problem when they're included in their hosts' arrangements to visit a brother after dinner. The expat bears the responsibility for finding a culturally appropriate way to handle these invitations. Practically every businessman will be faced with this dilemma, so it's best to plan ahead. This must be done in a way that will save everybody's face. One might say, "I'm very tired," or "I'm too drunk and need to sleep." If you know the colleague very well, you might more directly say, "My culture deals differently with things like this, so I'm not going to join you." Making a joke also can work, if it makes fun of nobody.

To illustrate the traditional Thai attitude that sex with prostitutes is just a form of recreation without much social backlash, let me tell this story. Once upon a time when I was a university lecturer, I was invited by my students to go on an overnight bus trip to act as chaperone. We loaded up our baggage, the long drums and cymbals for the percussion band in the back of the bus, the other chaperones and students, male and female, and off we roared—*chingkachang, chingkachung!*—

First stop: a gas station to fill 'er up for the 600-kilometre journey. Second stop: a row of shops, upstairs of which was a busy brothel. Most of the boys leapt out with a loud cheer and made for the entrance. The rest of the boys, the girls and the teachers stayed behind on the bus, chatting till the business had been finished.

However, about half our boys clattered down the stairs and got on the bus rather glumly. It wasn't that they were so fast, it was that the brothelkeeper, upon seeing so many stalwart, hyped-up students, simply doubled the tariff, from 50 to 100 baht. That was too rich for many of my students, who then reboarded the bus and remained celibate along with the rest of us. All aboard, once again, we set off with a great cheer and blonging from our *ching-chap* band in the back, promptly forgetting about wayside brothels.

One thing that impressed me was that this all seemed so normal to everybody. Not to mention the ability of the young women to accept without complaint or comment the shenanigans of their fellow classmates. Everything was simply accepted. A Thai would say, "Mai pen rai," or it doesn't really matter.

If your friends are not merely "Thai fleas on the flank of a *farang*," as I've heard it put, you will find friendships quite close and helpful. One newspaper columnist reported that after some years here he had never made one Thai friend and was quite negative about the possibility of finding any. This is absurd! This person may have been interpreting the term "friendship" in some narrow or peculiar way. In fact, although Thais do not become emotionally intimate in the same way as some Westerners do, they are a warm and gregarious people. Once you get to know them, they are as good friends as any other. You may well have to make the first move, but once it's made, so is the friendship!

Thais, like some other groups, do not entertain much at home. Wealthy Thais may prefer hotel settings, or large and fancy restaurants, though there are those who do cater dinner in for their guests. You may, however, receive an invitation from a

Thai friend to visit his parents' home, or to go to his village for a weekend, not uncommon among simpler people who may like you and not feel they have to pretend to be wealthy.



When you are introduced to your friend's parents or grandparents, show every respect to them, waving, and accepting whatever goodie or drink is offered you. Thais may "know" you are fearful of Thai food and of the water, so when you're offered a Coke, unopened, in a dust-covered bottle, with no ice, say, "Thank you" and smile.

Take a sip if you wish, and set it to one side. The offer is considered polite and hospitable, and

the acceptance, too, but no one requires you to drink it. And be sure to rave over the rare beauty and cleverness of a grandchild, just as you would anywhere else in the world. You may well be a hit with that friend's family, which is all to the good.

## SERVANTS AND THEIR THAI TRAITS

We're dedicating a whole chapter to the ins-and-outs of employing domestic staff. The purpose of talking about them here is that many expats' first exposure to Thais and Thai culture is through relating to their servants. A household full of expats can learn a lot from them. If you can find a language to communicate in, besides that of giving a half-dozen commands, your servants might have wonderful tales to tell about their earlier lives, their families, their homes and lots more. They might even be able to show you some of the tricks of the servants' trade. Thai cooking, for instance, and how to go to a market other than the air-conditioned supermarket you'd feel more at home in.

Servants can take care of your children when you're out if they are trained for it. Some are terrific with expat kids, and some are completely inexperienced. Just remember that your kids may be able to get your servants to remain silent, or "forget," or tell mild lies.

"Noi, what time did Tommie come in last night?", asks an expat mother who'd gone off to some social function the night before.

"Oh, madame, Tommie not late. Not too late."

"Was he alone? Had he been drinking?"

"Tommie, he come very alone. Not drinking, too."



phone won't work for a few days. That's the same as having no phone, right?

Am I lying? No, I am being properly intercultural, acting like several of my Thai friends. I am smoothing social relationships, perhaps saving face for myself or somebody else.

## MISCONCEPTIONS

It may take you a little while to become aware that most Thais don't know a whole lot about expats. But you will find that they may know more about you than the average person in your country knows about Thailand.

"Have you ever seen cow-playing?" I was asked by a Thai who knew I had lived in Spain and Mexico for several years.

I didn't get it, but you may have. "Cow-playing" is bull fighting.

The only other thing my Thai friends "knew" of Spain was that all Spaniards were romantic and strummed guitars to show it.

The first and most basic misconception Thai people have is that expats are all rich. Even the baggy shorts-wearing, hairy-legged, sandal-shod backpacker may have a camera and American Express cheques in his rucksack. Even dressed like coolies, we are—to many simple Thais—rich beyond belief. They arrive at this conclusion if only by virtue of our having been able to travel here at all.

*Farang* like to travel alone (but Thais find their fun in groups);

*Farang* live exclusively on pizza, hamburgers and bread for every meal. Bread is our rice;

Thai women and *farang* men fall in love easily because Thai women are taught to be polite and unassuming and helpful, while *farang* men are usually brought up to be polite and gentle to women;

Americans, Australians and Germans are big and loud-mouthed;

"Brits" have sharp noses and narrow nostrils (which are highly regarded by the more flat-nosed Thais);

All *farang* are honest and can be used as reliable witnesses at the police station. (No one seems yet to have heard of robbery or murder of taxi drivers in *farang* land.);

Few *farang* can eat spicy Thai food;

The French are standoffish.

Few other nationalities are distinguished by most (i.e. non-Westernised) Thais.

Thais of higher class, richer, better educated and Westernised may find these misconceptions off-putting. Let them stand as the exceptions, while the misconceptions are those of more modest classes who haven't had a chance to go abroad to shop, visit or study.

#### HAND AND BODY LANGUAGE

As soon as the chance presents itself for you to participate in a cross-cultural workshop, do go. There is a lifetime of learning to be had there, plus some mistakes to avoid. Some *faux pas* can be seriously inhibitive of good intercultural relationships. Expats often give signals that can be offensive to a Thai or simply not understood, and the other way around, too.

How we sit, stand, move, gesture, speak may become a bombshell in our ongoing daily lives. How do you call a waiter's attention in a restaurant? Hiss like a displeased cobra, as in Spain? You'll not only get the attention of your waiter but the attention of all the other waiters and diners and no one will flash a friendly smile at you.

Take a trip on a *khlong* boat and see how Thais wave Hello! at you. They hold their palm out, flapping the hand left and right, or right and left, at the end of their wrist, their arm turning back and forth as if on an axis.

Try smiling as if you don't really mean it. It's been said that Thais use 16 or so different smiles for different purposes. Maybe so, but some are called "dry smiles" and aren't meant in love or

friendship. It would be good to learn some of the different nuances.

**WARNING!**

- **Don't pat a monk on the head with your bare foot or with anything else.** While tossing offenders to the crocodiles is passé, I can imagine that action might bring back the practice. Patting on the head is usually seen as impolite, unless the head is a small child's.
- **Don't point at people and things with your feet and don't shunt things aside with them.** Feet are for walking on and for aching if you've been out on them all day. Don't call needless attention to your corns or bunions, and if you have to refer to your feet or legs always precede it with, "Excuse me..."
- **Don't speak loudly or shout.** It will definitely prove better to scold and reprimand in private.

Unless your use of Thai is very good, don't try sarcasm. It doesn't work well amongst Thais even if they understand it.

- **Don't criticise everything under the Thai sun.** Remember, if you're upset at corruption or criminality here, just think of Chicago in the violin-case-carrying days. Not everyone is as aware as you. Of course they may be, but are just keeping their cool about it.

Complain about traffic if you wish, but you'll bore your listeners just as the traffic bores you. People might start singing a line or two from a popular song, *Buea khon bon...* "I'm bored with grumblers..."

- **Don't offer money and other things with the *left* hand.** The left is mainly reserved for other bodily functions.
- **Don't expect your Muslim servants to wash your pet dog.** It's against their religion.
- **And finally, don't fail to learn as much as you can as quickly as you can.** This way you'll enjoy life here more fully.

## WEB OF RESPONSIBILITY

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Of other social values traditionally held important in Thailand, one is the "web of responsibility" that Thai people generally go by.

These responsibilities include:

Your King, to respect him and obey his laws;

Your parents, to obey them, pay respect and care for them;

Your brothers, sisters and other relatives, to protect them;

Your children (such as your responsibility to see they marry well, to provide proper wives for your sons for the benefit of them and the family);

Your employees and, in olden times, your slaves, to take care of them;

Your teachers—to respect and protect them and to obey their teachings.

This web of social obligation and responsibilities is taught everywhere in Thailand, at home, in school, in the media, seemingly in the very air the Thais breathe.



### PHI-NONG

One of the most easily observed of Thai social values is embodied in so-called *phi-nong* relationships, those between elders, *phi*, and younger people, *nong*. These two words can be translated as Elder Brother or Elder Sister, and Younger Brother and Younger Sister, but they do not require people to be related. In a school, for instance, the members of the senior class are *phi* to the members of the junior class. In a working situation, the *phi* is elder to the younger worker, his/her *nong*. It is fun to listen to and watch two Thais, who have just met, probe about in an attempt to determine who is who.

The *phi* deserves respect, protection of his reputation, obedience and respectful service.

The *nong* deserves protection and to be advised and cared for by his *phi*.



This is very important in Thai culture. Although obedience may not mean always and forever doing services and following instructions, it is not acceptable for a *nong* to flout the elder's instructions or advice by ignoring them. Nor will you hear in Thailand, when a *phi* asks his *nong* to fetch him a Coke, "Get it yourself!" This expression of attitude would shock a lot of Thais.

This type of relationship may occur between boss and employee, teacher and pupil, *bhikkhu* and novice or "dek wat" (a boy who lives in the temple), husband (always the *phi* in the house, regardless of true ages) and wife, and so on.

Expats sometimes treat lower status Thais too "highly" and high status Thais too "normally," both of which can get the *farang* in trouble at home, work or with friends. So learn how to tell the differences in status between yourself and everyone else, and learn who are your "phi" and who are your "nong."

### GROUP-ORIENTED

I originally came to Thailand from Spain by a combination of walking, hitchhiking, bicycling, riding trains, buses and ships. When I reached Thailand, people would ask, "How many were travelling in your group?"

When I answered, "Just me, all alone," they would sometimes look puzzled and then dismiss my way of travel with "Mai sanuk"—not fun. Thais don't consider being alone, or doing things alone, as acceptable fun or even normal. For one thing, there's no real Thai word for "privacy" and no concept that a person might just enjoy solitary peace and quiet in a beautiful place or at home. No Thai would ever say, like Garbo, "All I want is to be alone!"

Every Thai will have his own secrets or dreams he may not share with anyone, but keep in mind that, as a rule, there are no secrets for long in Thailand. This may seem to contradict what was just said about the importance of the group and the strangeness of the concept of privacy. But think of it this way: a Thai's privacy is internal, where a Westerner's may be external and physical. So Thais are group-oriented and private within themselves at the same time.

### MAI PEN RAI

"...Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..."

This portion of the Alcoholics Anonymous "Serenity Prayer" is certainly believed and acted upon by many Thais. How deep the serenity may go when a student has just flunked out of his university because of having failed a key course, or when your long-awaited new car is crumpled up by a ten-wheel truck, or you fail to get hired for the job you've been hankering for, I don't know, but the Thais I have known certainly deserve the *Tukkata Thong* (the Golden Doll, equivalent to Hollywood's Oscar) if they're merely play-acting that they're not disappointed. I think the truth is that they may feel disappointed but they're going to accept it, and move on. Mai pen rai!

The title of a book of her experiences in Thailand by the late Carol Hollinger, and a very funny book it is, *Mai Pen Rai* is based on the Thai expression that is usually translated as "Never mind." It's what you say when a fellow bus passenger tromps on your ingrown big toe nail, or when the landlady's representative tries to explain why the repairman has not yet come and it's only ten days since he promised to. It's a "You're

welcome," when someone thanks you for a gift. It's a common expression that will defuse most situations that have a bit of tension in them.

It doesn't mean you don't care, but if there's nothing to be done about a situation, use it at least as an opener and to get everyone off the hook.

"Oh, you'll have to excuse the postman. He dropped the letters in a puddle when he slipped on the steps. Here they are, a bit damp."

"*Mai pen rai*. They'll dry out in front of a fan."

"I'm so sorry I'm late for our meeting. The traffic is terrible."

"*Mai pen rai*. No one can beat the traffic."

"My secretary was off sick today, so she hasn't typed our contract yet."

"*Mai pen rai*. Tomorrow will be soon enough."

*Mai pen rai* is not necessarily a cop-out, or an indication of your disinterest, but rather it simply means that you're not going to get all worked up at this moment. Of course you couldn't use it to anyone in response to the announcement of his/her mother's death. In this situation it would show a cold-heartedness that would repel everyone, even a very detached, unemotional person. But for lesser matters, particularly things that have happened already and you couldn't prevent, it's adequate as a short, immediate response. Expats should learn to use it, and learn to accept it.

We recommend Carol Hollinger's book for some happy reading of Thailand as it was 30 years ago. Despite the subsequent development, you may recognise the place and the people and get a good idea why so many expats before you fell in love with the country, its people and their ways.

If you can find it, acquire W(illiam) A(lfred) R(ae) Wood's collection of short stories, *Consul in Paradise*, which deals with the period from just before the end of the century to the 1950's or so. His pen name was Lotus. Sent out in 1896 as a Siamese

language interpreter, he was assigned to take care of the British Legation's elephants.

These two books, Hollinger's and Wood's, give an excellent and amusing introduction to the Thailand and Siam that was, and how others before you learned to work and live amongst the Thais.

The whole concept of "*mai pen rai*" strikes me as pretty healthy. By comparison, I was standing outside a hospital in Palermo, Italy, when an Italian man rushed out, threw himself over the car and began to beat it, wailing and carrying on something terrible. I assumed his beloved wife had just died in childbirth—what else could warrant such a display of wild emotion? But do you know what had happened? No wife or baby died. No, he had merely locked the car keys in the car and had no spare. That's all. No "*mai pen rai*" there.

### CO-OPERATION

Until the emergence of the economic forces that are remaking Thailand, "competition" was something of a dirty word. Buddhist teachings downplay ambition as unwholesome and productive of pain and unhappiness. I think U.S. President Reagan, for example, would have been a poor Buddhist because of his insistence on the virtue of competing in studies, work and life. The Buddha taught "kinder, gentler" values, particularly those that lead to satisfaction rather than to dissatisfaction. It is interesting to note how the international Outward Bound schools teach co-operation. No group of students gets credit until all members of the group have passed the test, be it scaling a wall, or rappelling down a cliff-face. Instead of hailing a few star performers, the entire team can smile at the successful result of their total effort. That is what is meant in Thai philosophy by co-operation. Even though Thai people are competitive, even intensely so sometimes, there is this rich vein of co-operation which connects everybody. Again, reconciling this seemingly contradictory state of affairs is a fascinating study.

### SENIORITY

This is a concept known world-wide, although today it is being discarded in some places as an impediment to economic development. Some old geezer holds the job till he dies or retires. He will not be thrown out for some bright, beady-eyed and eager young cub coming up the line of promotion as in the seniority system. This produces a great and unchanging social calm until the ambitious young'un forces a change, chases out the elders and takes their place. This, then, becomes a revolution.

The seniority system is safer and more socially stable since everyone knows where he stands. But one must be patient and wait for the Old Fogeys to move on. It was dissatisfaction with waiting for a turn at power that caused the young, French-educated bureaucrats and military men to conspire to overthrow King Rama VII and his uncles in 1932.

The power of seniority, in Thai called *aruso*, is still quite common in the government, military, civil service and in businesses. To throw established elders out of their positions of rank and power into what are called inactive posts is one way of disempowering them, keeping them satisfied, or at least quiet, and preserving their face.

Now that the value of elders is diminished somewhat by modern theories, there remains a problem of how to keep them out of mischief. Retirement with honours is one way that is less dangerous to the interests of the new power group than to simply toss them out of their offices. This explains the delicacy with which the Thai government handles traitors in the military who have staged unsuccessful coups d'état, such as the one in 1991. No Thai government can afford to arouse the enmity of the military establishment.

In an attempted coup in the mid-'80's, an intra-military struggle found its dénouement in the murder-execution of one of the generals. This kind of outcome is rare in Thai politics because the seniority system and its stability have value. Even though ideas are changing in this area, it is not wise to ignore seniority in any social or professional setting in Thailand.

### ACCEPTING AUTHORITY

Closely tied to the hierarchical attitudes of Thai society, these further concepts of group-orientation, seniority and the acceptance of authority tie together well. Many a businessman has discovered that to schedule a meeting of his employees may produce nothing of initiative, innovation or frankness. Everyone waits for the boss to tell them what to do, think or say. There is an atmosphere of acceptance ("Whatever you say, boss!") till the businessman feels he's surrounded by spongy matter, not people with ideas and drive. In fact, Thais are taught that accepting authority is the mark of a polite person. Self-starting or assertive behaviour is seen as rude or aggressive. This causes a lot of problems in all sectors: at home with the maid, at work with Thai managers or with your friends.

I once taught an English course at the largest Thai bank. I must confess my students sure taught me a lesson in Thai culture and behaviour.

To stir up conversation I went around the room asking my students, "What do you think of General de Gaulle as President of France?"

I got absolutely nowhere and very fast at that. Not a single student, all university graduates holding down good jobs at the bank, had any opinion of Gen. de Gaulle, who was big in the newspapers of that time. Not one stated approval or disapproval. It was as if no one had ever heard of de Gaulle.

One of the students, an unusually assertive young man, meaning he'd dare to express an answer at least, asked me in turn, "Why should I have an opinion about General de Gaulle?" That stopped me then, and it stops me now. Why indeed, *must* we have an opinion on General de Gaulle? Or on so many other matters that clutter our minds and memories? How often is it that our opinion is merely that of our grandfather? Or of our teachers? This young man was expressing the beginnings of thinking for himself rather than just waiting to be told what to think. But authoritarian views are still more common here in Thailand. Thus many liberation movements are alien here, although recently there are some signs that more free-thinking ideas are coming.

Another learning experience I had in the class at the bank was the effect on my class of a student of rank. Every once in a while, the president-founder's secretary would sit in on my class. Though she was a student, she was very busy and her duties took precedence over mere English study, so she played hooky quite often. When she came, though, the class was not the pleasant, relaxed group it usually was. She had an inhibiting affect that killed spontaneity. The reason for this is that by comparison, she was of higher status than all of the others. Thus, she had more authority—even more than the teacher. She was impressive in her manner, what I'd term formidable.

Still I tried to act the teacher. I asked the class to catch the error in an intentionally incorrect sentence or to define a word. Once she had spoken, it was amazing how everyone else came up with the same answer, even our more assertive young man. Even when her answer was wrong, no one dared say so by correcting the exercise. It was awe-inspiring and I could see why expat businessmen in Thailand sometimes fail to adjust to working with Thais. This makes training for working in a cross-cultural setting so essential.

Luckily, CSB and a few companies offer just such training. Unfortunately, many firms do not engage the services of such training companies. And so the Western executive, who may have enjoyed huge success back home, totally fails to adjust to realities here and may have to be relocated elsewhere. This represents a great expense to a company and to all the people involved, both financially and emotionally.

### SAVING FACE

Connected to all this is the concept of "face," and the massive effort (natural to Thais and most other Asians, but hard to learn for expats) to save both yours and others'. To have corrected the lady-secretary in public would have meant a massive loss of face for her amongst her juniors in the bank. No one would

ever correct her. Everyone would recognise the situation and work to save her face by not mentioning it. Had anyone done otherwise, it might have served to sever his relationship to the bank. If I had done it, it would have endangered my job too!

Everywhere in Thailand: in government, the military, in the monkhood, in academe, at home, with friends and in business, saving face is supreme. The government has the inactive posts mentioned above to save the face of someone who, in another society, might be fired or be made to resign. In Thailand, he is shunted to a position where he cannot repeat his mistake because he will have no authority to make damaging decisions. This is done despite whatever efficiency must be sacrificed.

Sudden reassignment is usually a sign that someone has booted but no one wants to say it outright. An inspection trip to Europe or America may be the equivalent of the inactive post, a sort of golden banishment. It gives the public time to forget whatever the infamy was.

The Thais have a remarkable ability to forget for face-saving purposes. The Thai newspapers may rage about someone's fallibility, anything from corruption to murder, and within weeks it has totally disappeared from the public consciousness. Part of that may be due to censorship which forbids the press from pushing ahead with a certain story that is disagreeable to the powers-that-be, but sometimes it is face-saving at work.

Then, when the matter seems to have blown over, when that same miscreant is named for something equally bad, no one seems to recall that he is a second-time bounder. Well, it reduces the temperature for a while. That's the purpose of face-saving anyhow.

### INDIVIDUAL VALUES

There are, of course, many other values that govern a Thai's behaviour toward others. To some extent, these co-ordinate with the overall social values already explained. Some of the most important of these values are discussed below. The subheading is the romanised spelling of the Thai word.

#### KRENGCHAI (OFTEN WRITTEN -JAI)

Literally, this term means considerate, unassuming, unwilling to push oneself onto others or to cause inconvenience to status superiors. It means staying intentionally in the background or not putting oneself forward. *Krengchai* is always applied by status inferiors toward those of superior status. A son would be *krengchai* of his father and not ask for pocket money. An employee would be *krengchai* of his employer and not ask for an extra day off. The employee or father, will not be *krengchai*

Giving honour, dignity and respect, such as attending a wedding. You may be asked to say a few words or give a blessing to the couple. You might even be asked by the Master of Ceremonies to sing. Other ways of being respectful, or giving someone honour or dignity, can cross cultural barriers very readily. So use common sense in this area. Remember this is a society that is very proud and sensitive to perceived slights, so bending over backward to give respect is a good idea. This is true even in relation to status inferiors. You will be seen as a very honourable person if you learn to give respect (and therefore face) to status inferiors while maintaining your own status and remaining aware of your own place in the social hierarchy as well. This is a fascinating area for further study. The longer you stay in Thailand, the more subtle will be the cues you are able to discern in how face and status and *hai kiat* all mesh to work together in this society.

#### NAMCHAI (LITERALLY, WATER OF THE HEART)

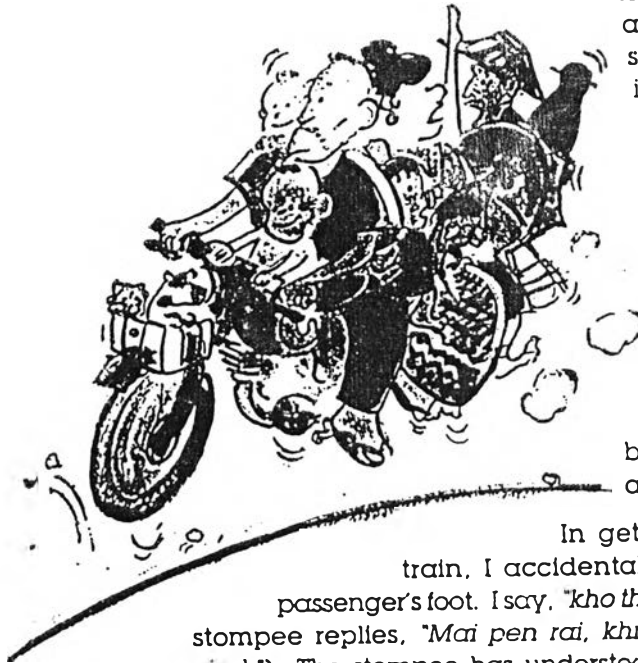
Extending generosity, without expecting anything in return for it.

#### SAKSRI

This concept concerns dignity, self-image and self-esteem. Once again it includes both oneself and relationships with others. Becoming bolsterous in a bar, putting people in a position of ridicule, is hardly guarding one's own *saksri* or that of the other person.

#### HEN CHAI (LITERALLY, TO SEE THE HEART)

Sympathetic understanding, perhaps of a person in trouble, or one unable to do what he wants and needs or what you want or need him to do. Your secretary, in a hurry to get home to tend a sick child, makes a mistake in a letter she's typed. Do you insist she stay late to retype it? Or do you say, "Never mind, I'll correct it by pen and send it off." "Never mind," *mai pen rai*, may lead to sloppiness when letting people off the hook, but it is also forgiving of a minor error.

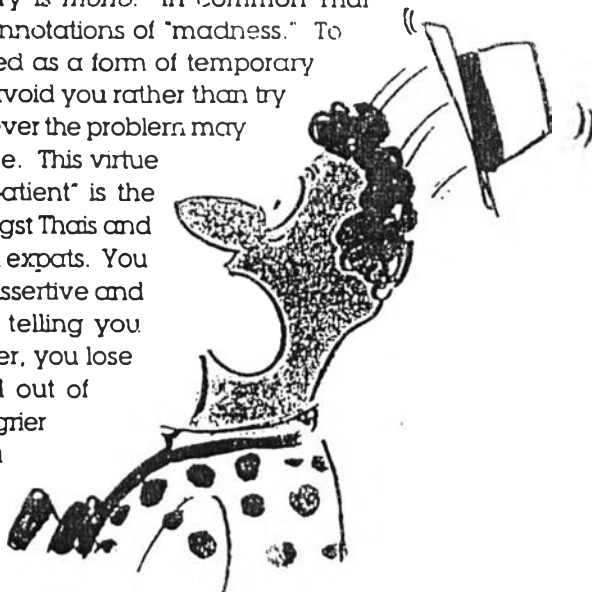


In getting on the crowded train, I accidentally stomp on another passenger's foot. I say, "*kho thot!*" ("Excuse me!") The stompee replies, "*Mai pen rai, khrap (or kha).*" ("Never mind.") The stompee has understood that because of the crowding on the train, I couldn't help my action and has sympathised with my embarrassment. In this example, I exhibited *hai kiat* by apologising and giving respect to the injured party. The person I stomped on has shown *hen chai* in his response. So you see, some of these social values aren't so foreign to you as some of the others might seem.

## CHAI YEN (LITERALLY, COOL HEART)

A "cool mind," not "cold-heartedness." One of the worst flaws anyone can reveal in Thailand is to become "hot-hearted."

visibly angry or ill-tempered, and, by the Thai definition, out of control. To become angry is *moho*. In common Thai parlance it also carries connotations of "madness." To "lose your cool" is regarded as a form of temporary insanity, and people will avoid you rather than try to deal with you and whatever the problem may have been in the first place. This virtue of "keeping cool, being patient" is the one most inculcated amongst Thais and most often found lacking in expats. You may have learned to be assertive and direct, but Thais are also telling you that if you show your anger, you lose face and are considered out of control. The rule is: The angrier you are, the more you smile. That is a tough one for Westerners to adapt themselves to.



## CHAI RAWN (LITERALLY, HOT HEART)

This is the opposite of "cool mind" and is not at all respected in Thailand. Whatever the cause, don't become "hot-hearted." Keep your dignity (or *hai kiet*), don't shout and turn red, an apt description of the out-of-control-expat. From a Thai point of view, there is no justification for allowing this emotion full play. If a Thai shows anger this visibly, something has gone drastically wrong. Mayhem may not be far away. Unless, of course, the Thai has been Westernised by living abroad, and has the same problem adjusting to Thai values as you did when you first arrived.

## MOH SOM

This term is translated as appropriate, suitable, fitting. Again, older Thais found great value in being *moh som*. This includes the way one dresses, speaks, moves and talks. Attending a funeral in Levi's and a T-shirt is not *moh som*. Nor is chewing gum, combing your hair or licking an ice cream cone as you walk along the street. Women in particular, but not alone,

used to face many rules—and not only Thai women, but just about all women over the world—that were intended to preserve their dignity or femininity. Whatever one called it, that was close to the Thai *moh som*.

As one dressed up for the opera or to go to the theatre in the old days, so in Thailand still one bathes and dresses up even to go to Foodland for shopping on a Sunday afternoon, or to travel by train or plane. Another aspect of *moh som* is that of body modesty: topless or nude sunbathing at beaches is not *moh som*! Consider the following story:

A young Northern European educator flew into Bangkok to take up his contract for teaching his language to Thai university students. He was welcomed by his Thai colleagues-to-be and taken to a large house on the beach. He was assigned a room there and told about meal hours. Make yourself comfortable, unpack, enjoy a bath, and then come down for dinner, say, at 18.00."

"*Khob khun maak, khrap,*" said the newly arrived European, essaying his first phrase in Thai to a real Thai. (It means "Thank you very much.")

As he had always done back home, our European lecturer took off his clothes after he'd stepped into the bathroom, which was a large, tiled room with a number of shower heads around the walls. He neatly piled everything on a shelf near the door, walked to a convenient shower, and turned on the water.

Squeezing some of his shampoo out of its tube, he worked it into his hair. A great fuzz of lather coursed down his face, blinding him. But he found it a great relief after 14 hours on a non-stop flight.

He groped on the floor for the bar of soap which had escaped his grasp, scooting it across the room, and as he groped, the shower washed the suds from his eyes. At that same moment, he opened one eye to look for the soap ... and discerned a bare foot.

Standing up, he passed his hands over his face and looked about. To his surprise, there were now several other men in the bathing

room, each busily soaping or rinsing or shampooing, and all of them staring at him. Soon it registered on him that all the others were wrapped in some kind of colourful cloth; he realised with a shock that he was the only one in the room stark naked.

Quickly he jerked around, turning his back to the others, and let the spout wash off his soap and shampoo. Then, grabbing his clothes from the shelf, he shot out of the bathroom, only to run into two dressed women who were coming down the steps from the floor above. They arrived just in time to get a bare rear view of the new teacher as he dashed for his room.

Nothing further happened, but he had learnt that Thais do not normally bathe naked. They use a *sarong*-type tube of cloth to hide in, wriggle around to soap everywhere and then stand to splash it off. Still wet, the bath-cloth wearer will slip into a dry cloth before leaving to get dressed. It's very modest, and the Thais are modest. More modern Thais still will shower in public places in their underwear, then put on dry underwear afterwards, underneath a towel or *sarong*.

During the Japanese occupation in Thailand during World War II, Japanese soldiers would march naked, brush and soap in hand, from their barracks to the nearest *khlong* for their bath, and march back equally bare. The Thais have never forgotten this and call naked bathing a "Japanese bath."

Even intimates will rarely be naked together. It's just not Thai, and not *moh som*.

The times, and what's fashionable, are changing everywhere nowadays. For Thais to pay respects to the coffin of H.M. the King's mother, they were told in the public media what to wear and what was not acceptable and would not be allowed in the palace. In the old days, everybody would have known already, except for *farangs*, perhaps.

The driver of a *tuk-tuk* was elected to Parliament. For the opening session, he drove his *tuk-tuk* up the drive to the Parliament House and just as quickly back down the drive again: the guards would not allow him to come to Parliament in his low-status vehicle. Another man, a farmer, tried to ride



his water buffalo to Parliament but was turned back, too. These<sup>137</sup> vehicles, however honest their owners' professions, were not considered *moh som*. Western suits and ties, as foreign and uncomfortable as they may be, were considered *de rigueur*.

#### PHAK-PHUAK

(Pronounced *puk-pooak*, your "gang," your buddies, your group.) There is no escaping *phak-phuak* and its ramifications in Thai business, politics, the military and even between individuals or families. This is the network of friendships, often made in school or the military academy, that can affect everyone. Often, it is between the students of a particular class or year. It is about the only relationship in Thailand that might supersede family relationships for the demand on a Thai's loyalty. The expat is often mildly surprised to learn that the university rector and a dean or department head may be cousins. It comes as a deeper revelation to find that the janitor may be a cousin, too! *Phak-phuak* comes into play often in a Thai's life, and an expat is at a great disadvantage if he or she does not develop one or join one. The absence of a *phak-phuak* leaves one isolated, unsupported and alone. This is a situation which is almost unimaginably horrible to the average Thai. And woe to the unaware expat who makes a Thai enemy. He hasn't made just one. Everyone in that person's *phak-phuak* are now his enemies as well. It can work both ways.

#### THE FIVE S's

Here are some further qualities which a Thai usually thinks important. They are sometimes taught in Thai schools as "The Five S's."

#### SA-AT

Clean or in order. This means "clean" in a moral sense as well as simply the physical absence of dirt.

#### SUPHAP

Polite, sometimes in odd ways. A bus driver can be "*suphap*"

if he stops long enough to allow passengers to disembark safely and doesn't cut off other vehicles. Wearing trousers instead of a *phakhaoma* (bath cloth) or a *sarong* may be "*suphap*" when entertaining guests at home. Too tight slacks for girls, or too short shorts, are usually *mai suphap* (not polite). For Muslims, Burmese and Malays, *sarong* for men are *suphap* as they are part of the national or religious dress. How one speaks or behaves is either polite or not polite. Many things are *suphap* or *mai suphap* across cultures, so this one may be a bit easier to learn than some of the others.

#### SAMRUAM

This means decorous, restrained and proper behaviour. You can see its connection with *jai yen* and *jai rawn* above. Sometimes it's okay to give this one up though. An example might be the traditional Thai New Year's celebration in mid-April, called *Songkran*. Officially, and in common practice, everybody starts off with a quality of proper comportment, *samruam*, sprinkling



a few drops of perfume on the Buddha images, then on the monks and grandparents and parents. But very shortly the affair gets raucous and boisterous and is not at all *samruam*, as water by the bucketful, and even from fire hoses, is tossed everywhere.

A monk, out on his alms-receiving round for food, should walk decorously, his eyes on the ground ahead of him. If he sashays about, his eyes glancing to the left and right, then he is not *samruam* and he will be criticised for this.

### SANUK

It's extremely important that an activity, film, game, play, book, anything, really, be fun, *sanuk*. Frequently, Thais consider *sanuk* things the *farang* expat may not react to very well. To laugh (inappropriately, according to *farang*) during the sad scenes in a movie is tantamount to behaving badly. But the Thais can find this *sanuk* quality in many very ordinary situations.

A word in Thai that helps the jollity of the Thais is *ngaan*. *Ngaan* means work, but it also means pleasure. Illustrative of this are several terms all using *ngaan*. Study these and you'll see how central pleasure and having fun are in Thai life and values:

*ngaan liang* a party, a dinner party

*taeng ngaan* wedding, to marry

*ngaan khuen pi mai* New Year's party

*ngaan chalong* festival, celebration

*ngaan chalem* royal celebration, celebration of a royal birthday

*ngaan lilat* dancing party, dance

*ngaan wat* a temple fair

and so on, for many other words and concepts. *Ngaan* then is the kind of word that shines a light on Thai attitudes toward "work," "function" and "pleasurable occupation."

### SADUAK

This literally means "convenient," though perhaps not always as expats might judge things.

When I first came to Thailand over thirty years ago, roads and bridges were being built all across the Kingdom. One result was that the boat services were slowly being discarded in favour of buses. When I asked where the nearest boat pier was, I'd often get the response, "*Pai rot di kwa*" or "Go by vehicle is better." By that they meant "more *saduak*," more convenient, also. It's easy for me to let a bus pass me by so long as I have an alternative. The boat services were more fun, more interesting and less crowded. Also, the boats were not equipped with "ghetto blasters" to render me simple with their noise. Boat engines were loud enough, thank you, and while all the Thais were going by bus, I hung out for boats wherever I could. That may be hopelessly old-fashioned, but then as a *farang*, I'm considered weird by Thais anyhow. "*Pai ruea di kwa!*" is what I taunt now. "Go by boat is better!"

This *saduak* business in its negative, *mai saduak*, "not convenient," covers lots of territory and often gives an excuse for not doing things that don't have to be expanded upon. Something, like cleaning the refrigerator this morning, might well be avoided by declaring the task to be *mai saduak* right now. Maybe later...perhaps. Remember, too, that if it has rained, is raining, or looks like it might rain, you can use *mai saduak*, the inconvenience of trying to get around, as an acceptable pretext for not doing whatever it is you're avoiding. Come to think of it, you can use it as an acceptable excuse even if the skies are clear blue! It would be *mai suphap* to ask any further questions if you say that something or other was *mai saduak*.

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## A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FIRST DAY WITH YOUR NEW HOST FAMILY

### แบบคำถามสำหรับวันแรกที่ท่านเข้าอยู่กับครอบครัวอุปถัมภ์

| Question and translation<br>คำถาม และ คำแปล  | Pronunciation in Thai  |
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| <p>1. What do I call you? Mom or Dad or.....?</p> <p>จะให้ฉันเรียกคุณว่าอย่างไร คุณแม่ คุณพ่อ หรือว่า.....</p>   | <p>ja hai chan riak khun wa yang rai</p> <p>"Khun Pou" or "Khun Mae" or</p> <p>"Khun....."?</p>  |
| <p>2. What am I expected to do daily other than?</p> <p>คุณต้องการให้ฉันทำอะไรที่นอกเหนือจากที่ทำทุกวัน</p> <p>- making my bed</p> <p>จัดที่นอน</p> <p>- keep my room tidy at all time</p> <p>เก็บห้องนอนให้สะอาดเรียบร้อยอยู่ตลอดเวลา</p> <p>- Clean the bathroom spotlessly every time I use it.</p> <p>ล้างห้องน้ำทุกครั้งที่ใช้เสร็จ</p> | <p>"Khun ja hai chan tum arai tee nok</p> <p>nue jak tee tong tum tuk wan"</p> <p>"jud tee non"</p> <p>"jud hong non hai riab roy"</p> <p>"lang hong nam tuk krung tes chai set"</p> |
| <p>3. What is the procedure about dirty clothes?</p> <p>Where do I keep them until wash day?</p> <p>จะให้ทำอย่างไรกับเสื้อผ้าที่ใช้แล้ว จะให้เก็บไว้ที่ไหนจนกว่า</p> <p>จะถึงวันซักผ้า</p>   | <p>"ja hai tum yang rai gup pah tee</p> <p>chai laew" "ja hai gep wai tee nai</p> <p>jon gwa ja tung wan suck pah"</p>   |
| <p>4. Should I wash my own clothes</p> <p>จะให้ฉันซักผ้าเองหรือเปล่า</p>   | <p>"ja hai chan suck pah eng rue</p> <p>plao"</p>  |
| <p>5. What is the procedure for ironing clothes</p> <p>ต้องรีดผ้าอย่างไรบ้าง</p>   | <p>"long reed pah yang rai bang"</p>   |
| <p>6. May I use the iron, washing machine?</p> <p>ฉันขอใช้เตารีด เครื่องซักผ้าได้ไหม</p>   | <p>"chan khor chai <u>tao reed/kreung</u></p> <p><u>suck pah dai mai</u>"</p>  |
| <p>7. Where can I keep my bathroom toilet accessories?</p> <p>จะให้ฉันเก็บเครื่องใช้ในห้องน้ำของฉันไว้ที่ไหน</p>   | <p>"ja hai chan gep kreung chai nai</p> <p>hong nam khong chan wai tee nai"</p>  |

8. When is the best time for me to use the bathroom on weekday in the morning?

ในวันปกติฉันควรใช้ห้องน้ำตอนเช้าในช่วงใดจะเหมาะสมที่สุด

"nai wan pokati chan khuan chai hong nam ton chao nai chuang dai ja moh som tee sud"

9. When is the best time for me to use the bath -a.m. or p.m.?

เวลาใดที่เหมาะสมจะให้ฉันใช้อ่างอาบน้ำ ตอนเช้าหรือตอนเย็น

"wae la dai tee moh ja hai chan chai ang-arb-nam ton chac rue ton yen"

10. When are the meal times?

เวลาอาหารคือเวลาใด

"wae la ar-harn kue wae la dai"

11. Do I have a permanent job at meal time?

ฉันมีงานประจำที่ต้องทำตอนเวลาอาหารหรือไม่

"chan me ngan pra jum tee tong tum ton wae la ar-harn rue mai"

- set the table, clean the table, wash up, dry up, put everything away after meal, empty the rubbish bin, etc

ตั้งโต๊ะอาหาร, เช็ดโต๊ะอาหาร, ล้างจาน, เช็ดจาน, เก็บโต๊ะ, ทิ้งขยะ, ฯลฯ

"tung toh ar-harn, ched toh ar-harn, lang jan, ched jan, ting kha-yah, ...."

12. May I help myself to food and drinks (non alcoholic)

in moderation at anytime or must I ask first?

ฉันจะหยิบอาหารและเครื่องดื่มทานได้เลยหรือไม่ หรือฉันต้องถามก่อน

"chan ja yib ar-harn lae krueng-deum tan dai loei rue mai rue chan tong tam korn"

13. What are your feeling about me drinking alcohol?

คุณคิดอย่างไรหากฉันดื่มเหล้า

"khun kid yang rai hak chan deum lao"

14. Do you object to me having wine at the table with you or the occasional beer?

คุณจะว่าอะไรหรือไม่หากฉันจะดื่มไวน์หรือเบียร์ที่โต๊ะอาหาร ระหว่างรับประทานอาหารร่วมกัน

"khun ja wa arai rue mai hak chan ja deum wine rue beer tee toh ar-harn rawang rub pra tan ar-harn ruem gun"

15. May I smoke?

ฉันจะสูบบุหรี่ได้ไหม

"chan ja soob buree dai mai"

16. Which areas are strictly private?  
ที่ใดบ้างที่เป็นที่หวงห้าม  
"tee dai bang tee pen tee huang  
harm"
17. May I put up pictures or posters in my bedroom?  
ฉันจะติดรูปภาพหรือโปสเตอร์ในห้องนอนของฉันได้ไหม  
"chan ja tid roob parb rue poster  
nai hong non khong chan dai mai"
18. Where can I store my suitcases?  
ฉันสามารถเก็บกระเป๋าเดินทางไว้ที่ไหนได้บ้าง  
"chan samart geb kra-pao-dern-  
tang wai tee nai dai bang"
19. What time must I get up on weekday mornings?  
ในวันธรรมดาฉันต้องตื่นนอนตอนกี่โมง  
"nai won tumrada chan tong teun  
non torn kee mong"
20. What time I must get up on weekends or holidays?  
ในวันหยุดฉันต้องตื่นนอนตอนกี่โมง  
"nai won yud chan tong teun  
non torn kee mong"
21. What time must I go to bed on weekdays?  
ในวันธรรมดาฉันต้องเข้านอนตอนกี่โมง  
"nai won tumrada chan tong khao  
non torn kee mong"
22. Do I have to ask you if I want to go out?  
ฉันต้องขออนุญาตก่อนหรือไม่เวลาที่ฉันต้องการออกไปข้างนอก  
"chan tong khor anuyard korn rue  
mai wae la tee chan tong karn ork  
pai khang nok"
23. What time must I be in at night if I go out?  
Can exceptions be made by special arrangement?  
ฉันต้องกลับถึงบ้านตอนกี่โมงหากฉันออกไปเที่ยว  
หากมีกำหนดการพิเศษจะยกเว้นได้หรือไม่  
"chan tong klub tung ban torn kee  
mong hark chan ork pai tiaw" "hark  
me kurnnod-karn pi-sed ja yok  
went dai rue mai"
24. Can I have friends to stay overnight?  
เพื่อนฉันสามารถนอนค้างที่บ้านได้ไหม  
"puen chan samart non kang tee  
ban dai mai"
25. Can I invite friends of both sexes around during the day?  
ฉันสามารถที่จะเชิญเพื่อนทั้งชายและหญิงมาที่บ้านในตอน  
กลางวันได้ไหม  
"chan samart tee ja chern puen  
tung shy lae ying ma tee ban nai  
torn klang won dai mai"

26. What are the rules about local phone calls?  
การใช้โทรศัพท์ทางไกลมีกฎอย่างไรบ้าง  
"karn chai torasab tang klai me kod yang rai bang"
27. May my friends phone me?  
เพื่อนฉันจะโทรศัพท์มาหาบ้างได้ไหม  
"puen chan ja torasab ma har bang dai mai"
28. What are the rules about domestic calls?  
การใช้โทรศัพท์ทางไกลในประเทศมีกฎอย่างไรบ้าง  
"karn chai torasab tang klay nai prated me kod yang rai bang"
29. What are the rules about overseas calls?  
การใช้โทรศัพท์ทางไกลต่างประเทศมีกฎอย่างไรบ้าง  
"karn chai torasab tang klay tang prated me kod yang rai bang"
30. What is the procedure for posting letters?  
การส่งจดหมายมีขั้นตอนอย่างไรบ้าง  
"karn song jod mai me kun-torn yang rai bang"
31. Do family members have any dislikes or hates?  
(wearing curlers at the table; chewing gum; loud music; unpunctuality; people interrupting while reading the newspaper; smoking)  
มีสิ่งใดที่สมาชิกในครอบครัวไม่ชอบหรือเกลียดบ้าง (ใส่โรล ม้วนผมขณะอยู่ที่โต๊ะอาหาร, เคี้ยวหมากฝรั่ง, เปิดเพลงเสียงดัง, ไม่ตรงต่อเวลา, คนรบกวนขณะอ่านหนังสือพิมพ์, สูบบุหรี่)  
"me sing dai tee samachick nai krob-krua mai chob rue klead bang (sai roll muan pom kanah yoo tee toh ar-harn, keaw mak farung, perd pleng sieng dung, mai trong tor wae la, khon rop kuan kanah arn rung-sue-pim, soob buree)"
32. How do I get around? Is there a bus route? Do I get a bicycle?  
ฉันจะไปที่ต่างๆได้อย่างไร มีรถประจำทางผ่านหรือไม่ มีรถจักรยานให้ฉันใช้ไหม  
"chan ja pai tee tang tang dai yang rai" "me rot prajumtamg pahn rue mai" "me rot jukkrayan hai chan chai mai"
33. What are your feelings or rules about transportation?  
คุณมีกฎหรือความรู้สึกอย่างไรในเรื่องการเดินทาง  
"khun me kod rue kwam roo suek yang rai nai rueng karn dern-tang"

### ประวัติผู้เขียน

นางสาวธิดารัตน์ กนิษฐนาคะ เข้าร่วมเป็นนักเรียนแลกเปลี่ยนโครงการ เอ เอฟ เอส ไปประเทศออสเตรเลียในปี 2534 สำเร็จการศึกษาปริญญาตรีอักษรศาสตรบัณฑิต เอกภาษาอังกฤษ จากจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัยในปีการศึกษา 2538 และเข้าศึกษาต่อหลักสูตรปริญญาโทศึกษาศาสตร์มหาบัณฑิตในปีการศึกษา 2540