

Monks are accorded the status of superior beings regardless of their social origin. The acceptance of alms from lay people by monks is not viewed as begging, but as assisting common people in their religious and moral improvement. Females of all ages must avoid any physical contact with monks.

Buddha images should be treated with respect, not used as objects of bodily or interior decoration, nor as souvenirs.

Respect for the monarchy is demonstrated both through reverence to earlier kings in the Chakri dynasty and to the persons of the present royal family. National symbols, which are also royal symbols, such as the anthem and flag, are always accorded full respect.

Thai people normally demonstrate respectful behaviour towards elders, and would not encourage easy familiarity between generations. This approach can even transcend social class, as elderly female servants are often called "mother."

Good Thai manners require one to speak softly, smile easily, always act politely, and to display full consideration for the comfort and dignity of others.

Any show of anger or impatience, however apparently justified, is viewed as unsophisticated and unruly. Loud speech and abrupt mannerisms are associated with the behaviour of monkeys. A business person who attempts to drive a hard bargain in an overt or loud manner will find this approach counter-productive.

The public display of physical signs of affection, such as kissing or hugging, is considered improper, even between husband and wife.

For the Thai, the head is viewed as the seat of the soul, and according to tradition, if it is offended against, sickness could result. It is thus appropriate to avoid touching the heads of others, or placing objects near or over them. Even hats must be stored in high places.

By the same token, the feet are viewed as base objects. It is proper to make one's feet as inconspicuous as possible. In sitting, men should avoid sitting cross-legged so that one ankle rests on the knee, especially with the soles of one's feet pointing towards anyone or towards an image of Buddha. It is preferable to cultivate the posture of crossing one's feet at the ankle. For women, sitting on the floor, the position of the "Mer-