

## **Lao Etiquette**

### **Social Etiquette**

1. Always “nope” and say sabaidee when greeting someone older than you are
2. Always “nope” and say “korp jai” when someone older than you gives you something
3. Always “nope” when you say good bye. Make sure to always say goodbye to all of your elders. Lao proverb “pai hai la, ma hai wai.” If you are leaving you must say goodbye and when you come you must “wai” or “nope.”
4. When you enter the house, always take off your shoes.
5. When walk pass an elder always bow your head lower than theirs. If they are standing, you bow lowly as you walk pass, if they are sitting, you crawl pass.
6. Never step over someone (it is rude and disrespectful). Lao people consider the head as high and the foot is low. Therefore you should never step over someone or anything living thing.
7. Never point your feet at anything or anyone. The foot is considered a low thing and it is disrespectful.
8. Never play with someone’s head, touching, slapping, etc.

### **Lao Etiquette at the Temple**

1. When you enter the temple, even if you are not Buddhist or believe in Buddhism, take off your shoes and bow three times to the floor one for the Buddha, one for the Sangha, and one for the Darhma. When you leave, you bow again three times. This is a show of respect for the culture.
2. Giving alms is part of Lao culture, it is believed that the spirits of your ancestors should be respected. When you give alms, you are doing good karma (good deed) for your ancestors as well as yourself. They benefit from you doing good and it will help them in the after life.
3. After you give alms, you must drip water, yad nam. Like living people, once you eat, you must drink. The water is when you get to say your own prayers to your ancestors and to make sure that your good deed for the day goes to them.
4. When you go to the temple to give alms, you should ware a shash and it should be over your left shoulders.