

# Teacher's day essay



Kids dressed up for Wai Kru Day in Thailand – copyright C. James At the beginning of every school year in Thailand, (usually in October but some schools do this in January or even June), every Thai student participates in Wai Kru Day or Teacher's Day Even though each school holds Wai Kru Day in different months, one thing is consistent – Wai Kru Day is held on a Thursday, as this is thought to be an auspicious day by Thai Buddhists. Wai Kru Day is the day of the year when Thai students show respect to their teachers by participating in a big school ceremony.

At this time, they thank their teachers for the knowledge they have given them, for the gift of learning, and wish them good luck in the future school year and in their future lives. Western kids could learn a lot from Thai kids and Thai culture, when it comes to paying respect on Teachers' Day. On Wai Kru Day in Thailand, students come to school with flowers and gifts for their teachers. Many of them dress in traditional Thai costumers.

At many Thai schools, especially the government schools where the children are poorer than at private Thai schools, the students make their own floral arrangements. They use traditional Thai flowers and plants, banana leaves and incense in the larger arrangements, all of which have different meanings (for example, patience, respect and discipline). These are given to the teachers at an elaborate ceremony during which time every child at the school is expected to wai their teachers (hold their hands in the prayer position) and pay them respect.

Some schools have small ceremonies within each classroom; other schools have enormous school-wide ceremonies where thousands of kids take part in

the same ceremony. Students will make floral garlands out of flower buds, small circular floral rings, made to fit around the wrist of the teacher. For teachers in Thailand, Wai Kru Day means getting dressed up in your nicest clothes or your smartest school uniform. You are expected to sit on a stage in front of the whole school, while your students are paraded in front of you.

They will prostrate themselves at your feet, and present you with the flowers and gifts, while parents will look on, many of them crying from the sheer emotion of the ceremony (and I've seen a few western teachers with nary a dry eye too! ). The Wai Kru ceremony is actually very moving as, for many of the kids, they do love their teachers and want to show them that they do. If a teacher is very popular, back in the classroom, they will also receive lots more gifts from the kids and their parents – snacks, candy, clothing, books, ornaments, and much more.

Honestly, as a teacher in Thailand, not only on Wai Kru Day but every day, you certainly feel liked and respected. In Thailand however there are also a lot of western teachers, a large number of whom are quite shady characters. If you read any of the chat rooms where these men hang out (and yes, they are mostly men), you will hear them berating the Thai system and Wai Kru Day especially, talking about how it's a ' forced day of respect' and that the kids don't mean it.

Some of them even go as far as to refuse to take part in the Wai Kru ceremony (a stupid decision, and one which is likely to make the western teacher not liked by the Thai staff, kids and the parents). It just goes to show how many westerners live in Thailand, make no effort to understand the

culture and, in fact, lord themselves above it acting as if their culture is superior to the Thai culture. It's not. In fact, if Western kids were made to pay respect to their teachers more often, maybe the incre.