

Wai Kru Ceremony

(A ceremony to salute the teachers)



The **wai khru ceremony** ([Thai](#): พิธีไหว้ครู, pronounced [wâj kŭrū]) is a [Thai](#) ritual in which students pay respects to their teachers in order to express their gratitude and formalize the student–teacher relationship. It is regularly held near the beginning of the school year in most schools in [Thailand](#). *Wai khru* has long been an important rite in the traditional [martial](#) and [performing arts](#), as well as in [astrology](#), Thai Massage and other traditional arts; students and performers of [Muay Thai](#) and [Krabi Krabong](#), as well as [Thai dance](#) and [classical music](#), will usually perform a *wai khru* ritual at their initiation as well as before performances to pay respect and homage to both their teachers and the deities who patronize their arts.

“**Wai ไหว้**” means to bow in Thai and it is also involves bringing your hands together as if saying a prayer. Thai culture fosters a deep respect for educators and the “**wai kru ไหว้ครู**” ceremony is a brilliant way to start the academic year. The ceremony is very formal and decorative but it also is a vital part of the traditional Thai educational system.



The ceremony is held in June on a Thursday. On this day Thai students bring flowers to their teachers as a symbol of their respect and readiness to learn. The traditional offerings for *wai khru* represent a symbolism of student qualities, namely: ^{[3][4]}

- [Ixora](#) (*khem*, เข็ม) flowers, which while closed form pointed buds, symbolizing sharp wit,
- [Cynodon dactylon](#) (*ya phraek*, หญ้าแพรก or Bermuda grass), the rapid growth and resilience of which symbolize perseverance and the ability to learn,
- Popped rice (*khao tok*, ข้าวตอก), which symbolizes discipline, and
- [Eggplant](#) flowers, which bow low when nearing fruiting, symbolizing respect and humility.



Schools usually have a ceremony in the morning for the student body to “wai kru” together. The teachers are called to sit in front of the students as the students repeat a Buddhist chant and sing a song that demonstrates their appreciation for the teachers. The students thank the teachers for having taught well in the past and encouraging their good luck in the future. A few non-Buddhist students sat in the back row and only participated in the presentation of flowers at the end.

First two representatives from the student body, usually from the eldest group of students, present the most senior teacher with a gift on a gold container. Typically, this would be a stack of books. The senior teacher then uses a chalky past to draw a buddhist symbol on the gift. Afterwards two representatives, a boy and a girl, from each class comes forward to present their classroom teacher with an elaborately decorated “paan, พาน” which is a golden container filled with flowers that the students in the class helped to create. The representatives return to their seats before saying another chant. The “paans” are displayed near the Buddhist alter on the stage.

Towards the end of the ceremony, each student must crawl up to their teacher on their knees with their heads down. Then the students bow to their teachers and offer them their individual bouquet of flowers wrapped with candles and incense. The teacher receives the flowers and gives the student advice. Some teachers will also pat the student’s head to encourage the knowledge to absorb into the child’s brain. The flowers from the ceremony were taken by the teachers and staff to decorate their rooms and offices.

Finally, a representative of the teachers comes forward to bestow words of wisdom upon the entire student body. This message usually encourages the students to be disciplined, prompt and respectful during the rest of the school year. The students were dismissed after another speech given by the principal about being disciplined and still during ceremonies.

There is another day which pays respect to teachers which occurs towards the end of the school year, National Teacher Day. Every 16th of January schools are closed in honor of Thai teachers across the country.



References:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wai_khru

<http://iluvthailand.wordpress.com/2007/06/07/wai-kru-thai-teacher-appreciation-day/>

<http://www.oknation.net/blog/butsabong/2008/05/23/entry-4>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s83ntWreSfs>

Thai classical music [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s83ntWreSfs>]

Wai khru ceremonies for [Thai classical music](#) may be held by professional [pi phat](#) ensembles or amateur ensembles attached to institutions such as schools and universities.

บทสวดไหว้ครู (Pray for Teachers)

ปาเจราจริยา โหนติ คณุตระรานุสาสกา	Pajera chariya honti / Khunuttara / Nu sa..Sa ka
ข้อขอประณตน์อมสัการ	Khakho pranot nom sakkarn.....
บุรพคณาจารย์	bu-ra-pa-ka-na-jarn
ผู้ก่อปรเกิดประโยชน์ศึกษา	Poo-kob-kerd-pra-yot-suk-sa
ทั้งผู้ประสาทวิชา	tang-tan-poo-pra-sart-wi-cha
อบรมจริยา	ob-rom-ja-ri-ya
แก่ข้า ฯ ในกาารปัจจุบัน	kae-kha-nai-karn-pat-chu-ban
ข้าขอเคารพอภิวันท์	kha-kho-kao-rob-ob-pi-wan
ระลึกคุณอนันต์	ra-ruk-khun-a-nant
ด้วยใจนิยมนุชา	duay-chai-ni-yom-bu-cha
ขอเดชกตเวทิตา	kho-dej-ka-ta-way-ti-ta
อีกวิริยะพา	ig-wi-ri-ya-pa
ปัญญาให้เกิดแตกฉาน	pan-ya-hai-kerd-tak-chan
ศึกษาสำเร็จทุกประการ	suk-sa-sam-ret-took-pra-karn
อายุยืนนาน	r-yu-yuen-nam
อยู่ในศีลธรรมอันดี	yu-nai-sin-tham-un-dee
ให้ได้เป็นเกียรติเป็นศรี	hai-dai-pen-kiat-pen-sri
ประโยชน์ทวี	pra-yord-ta-wee
แก่ข้า ฯ และประเทศไทยเทอดู	kae-kha-lae-pra-ted-thai-tern
ปัญญาวุฒิ กะเรเตเต	Pun-ya-woot-ti-ka-re-te-te
ทินโนวาเท นะมามิหัง	Tin-no-wa-tay-na-ma-mi-hung