

## Characteristic of Khmer in general

Character is considered to be more important than physical appearance and descriptions of a person are more likely to be given in terms of his character.

Ideally a person should be respectful to older people, friendly, adaptable, honest, not proud, well-educated and not flirtatious.

Woman is expected to be more reserved than a man, gentle and graceful in her movements.

Express feeling:

- Open and direct displays of feelings are discouraged. Self control is valued and the outward show of emotion seldom matches depth of feeling. Negative emotions like anger, irritation or a reluctance to hurt other people and a fear of being criticized and losing face outbursts of anger are not forgotten easily and reflect badly on the individual involved.
- Positive feelings of joy and pleasure are expressed more readily but still often not shown strongly.

Informative:

- Family and friends were preferred as sources of information as they work to be more reliable than strangers.

Correcting:

- While people usually correct close friends or family directly, they are more reluctant to correct older people, people of higher status or people who are not close to them.
- To an older person, advice is not expressed as strongly and would not be offered without being requested. Politeness would be shown by general manner and tone of voice and the advice often would be expressed more tentatively.

Complaining:

- People prefer to avoid open conflict and are usually reluctant to complain. Rather than voice their feelings, they often keep them to themselves.
- It is also common to complain about fate when something goes wrong. An older person would be expected to tell a younger person what to do rather than to ask.

*Reference: Genevieve Louise  
Language and culture Kampuchea 1984*