



(From left) Marshall Cavendish Deputy Head and Director, Christina Cheong; Dato' Sri Ng; Dato' Paduka Noor Aini and Founder of Friend to Mankind, Dhyan Vimal

Story by **Raja Azuni** Pictures by **Syazuan Sulaiman**

# Etiquette made easy

Afraid of making a *faux pas*? Help is at hand

**T**hough Malaysians are generally gracious hosts and will usually not hold a foreigner's social blunders against him, he would automatically earn some measure of respect, should he take the trouble to observe some local customs.

Since Malaysian culture is so diverse, it helps to have a little guide book such as *Malaysian Customs & Etiquette* which highlights appropriate and approved local norms and practices. Authored by Dato' Paduka Noor Aini Datuk Abdullah, the book was first published in 1991 and has since sold more than 20,000 copies.

This new edition, launched by Tourism Minister Dato' Sri Ng Yen Yen on Sept 6, includes two new chapters – Sabah & Sarawak and Corporate Protocol. The author, the youngest daughter of a former diplomat, shares personal knowledge and experience in Malaysian protocol and etiquette, including some interesting anecdotes in the practical handbook.

"Malaysian culture is multi-faceted yet respectful of all communities. Foreigners get a basic and important glimpse of things that they should be aware of," says Noor Aini.

Not only does the book tell you what you should or should not do, it also provides insights into or the rationale behind certain customs. It starts by addressing basic practices such as taking off your shoes before entering homes, greeting gestures as well as do's and don'ts, plus suitable variations depending on the host's background.

In addition, the reader should get a rather comprehensive understanding of what's expected from chapters such as Table Manners that gives tips on eating with your fingers, chopsticks or fork and spoon; Major Festivals that covers open houses and important celebrations; Births, Birthdays, Weddings and Funerals according to Malay, Chinese and Indian customs; as well as Correct Forms of Address for Heads of States, Royalties and the titled.

If you believe that "When in Rome, do as the Romans do", the 131-page guide makes for a good reference true to the saying – you can never have too much manners.

Published by Marshall Cavendish, the handbook is available at all leading bookstores for RM29.90. 

