



CRIMINAL LAW IN THAILAND Part LIX: Beware of scams VI — it is better to give and not be deceived

One holiday weekend a gaily-decorated car pulled up to the gate of our office in Hua Hin and tooted the horn until we went out. The car was festooned with pictures of the royal family interspersed with those of small children. The driver was a middle-aged man in a costume that can only be described as 21st century piper.

“Help babies,” he said in English.

When the gate was opened, he thrust a notebook filled with pictures of underprivileged children, apparently from magazines, into our hands.

The notebook said something about the King’s charity and he cheerily asked for a donation.

At about this moment a Thai colleague, who had been working in the office, stepped out and asked the gentleman his business. She was told in Thai that he makes his living getting money from foreigners like this on weekends and asked her to please not get involved.

When our colleague explained this, politely, to us, the gentleman stormed off with a screech of tyres as he pulled out of our street.

In fact, there are a number of legitimate charities established by the royal family or under royal patronage. We contacted several and were told that none of them raises funds by door-to-door solicitation.

Any charity that raises funds by door-to-door solicitation, incidentally, must register with the Solicitation Control Committee pursuant to Section 6 of the Solicitation Control Act. Those canvassing without this permission are subject to a small fine and imprisonment of up to one month.

If you want to donate to deserving charities in Thailand, don’t give money to those who can’t properly identify themselves or those who come to the door.

Here are a few legitimate Thai charities that you may consider and through which you can be sure the funds you donate will go to the neediest:

- The Chaipattana Foundation. This was established by His Majesty the King to undertake development projects, social and economic welfare activities and projects that are beneficial to the Thai people as a whole. Visit www.chaipat.or.th.
- The Foundation for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded of Thailand under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. This foundation promotes training, education and social welfare for the mentally disabled and research on prevention and rehabilitation. Visit www.fmrth.com/home.php?lang=en.
- The Foundation for Slum Child Care under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajanagarindra. This operates daycare centres and supports privately supported

daycare for low-income families so as to provide care and education for children aged from four months to five years. It also pursues these goals in private low-income housing, using volunteers. Visit www.fssc.or.th.

- Princess Pa Foundation, Thai Red Cross Society under the patronage of HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha. This supports government and private relief missions for severe flood disasters. Visit www.princess-pa-foundation.or.th/english.

All of the above websites give explicit directions on how to donate. Typically one can do so by sending a cheque or transferring funds at a commercial bank.

What are the tax benefits from making charitable donations? To make a long story short, under Section



47(7) of Thailand’s Revenue Code, you may deduct an amount not exceeding 10% of your income for such donations, after standard deductions and other allowances. To get this deduction, all charities to which you’ve contributed must be ones, such as those mentioned, approved by the appropriate minister and published as such in the *Royal Gazette*. ■

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