

# Living Customs and Taboos in Major Asian Countries

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**Abstract:** Asia is the continent with the largest area and the largest population among the seven continents, and the land spans the cold, warm and hot three zones, and the terrain is complex, with different climate types. Asia is also the birthplace of the three major religions. It has a long history and carries the world's oldest cultural tradition, there is no doubt that Asians and their cultures represent the most important chapters in human history. Due to the influence of various factors such as terrain, climate, culture, and ethnicity, many countries in Asia have their own cultural customs and taboos.

**Keywords:** Living Customs; Taboos; Asian Countries

Asia, is the continent with the largest area, the widest latitude, the longest distance from east to west, and the largest population in the world. By 2020, the total population of 56 Asian countries has exceeded 4.7 billion. Asia is also the birthplace of the three major religions. It has more than half of the world's population and also more than half of the world's historical experience, carrying the world's oldest cultural traditions, no doubt, Asians and Their culture represent the most important chapter in human history. Therefore, Due to a large number of ethnic groups and cultural diversity, many Asian countries have their own different cultural customs and taboos.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1. China

China is a country with 56 ethnic groups, with the precipitation of five thousand years of history and civilization. there are numerous traditional folk customs, with local and national characteristics. Chinese people have always been known for their diligence, unremitting self-improvement, and a sense of hardship. They have a strong sense of family, and harmony is the most valuable to them.<sup>[2]</sup>

A: Living customs. The characteristics of Chinese people's diet are mainly hot food and cooked food. However, the difference in the living environment led to many factions in the Chinese diet, such as spicy Sichuan food, sweet Shanghai food, etc, northerners like to eat pasta, southerners like to eat rice, Chinese people like poly food system, chopsticks and spoons are used on the table. The etiquette principle of Chinese people is to be inferior and respect others.

The national flower of China is the peony, which symbolizes peace, happiness, and wealth.

B: Religious beliefs . China is a multi-religious country. Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, and Christianity have all spread in China. In addition, China has its own unique religion - Taoism. But Confucianism also plays an important role in China.

C: Taboo. When Chinese people give gifts, they should not select the gifts such as clocks, because it has the same pronunciation as the "death" in the Chinese funeral represents not auspicious, at the same time, the Umbrella means separation which also should not as a gift to others. There are many table manners for Chinese people, among which the seats are also arranged according to the age and generation.<sup>[2]</sup> When eating, the chopsticks should not be placed directly upright in the rice, because it looks like the incense inserted in the urn, which is not auspicious. Chinese tradition is that the lucky thing comes in pairs, so avoid using odd numbers in celebrations and weddings.so even numbers are not used in events such as funerals. Chinese people also have a taboo on the number "4", which has the same pronunciation as the "death", so the phone numbers or license plates, etc. should avoid using the number 4.During the Chinese New Year, you can't break anything, or say unlucky words.

## 2. Japan

The Japanese are introverted, competitive, self-esteem, hard-working, and disciplined, they Pay great attention to etiquette and be punctual.

A: Living customs. Surrounded by the sea, the special geographical environment determines the eating habits of the Japanese people, they especially favor all kinds of seafood, especially raw oyster meat, and sashimi. The Japanese pay great attention to the tea ceremony. Being proficient in tea ceremonies in Japan is considered to be an excellent expression of identity and self-cultivation. Japan is famous for its etiquette in the world. In daily life, people are polite and bow for the first time, with a greeting ceremony of 30 degrees and a farewell ceremony of 45 degrees.<sup>[3]</sup>

The Japanese especially love cherry blossoms and regard them as national flowers.

B: Religious beliefs. The Japanese mainly believe in Buddhism and Shintoism, Theism is the religion of the Japanese nation and advocates the spirit of Bushido spirit.

C: Taboo. The Japanese do not like the lotus pattern, thinking it is an unlucky flower that is used to pay tribute to the dead. The chrysanthemum is considered a noble flower. Although it is deeply loved by people but cannot be given as a gift at will. It is not

welcome to send camellias, cyclamen, white flowers, and yellowish flowers when visiting patients.<sup>[1]</sup>In Japan, it is also taboo to give combs as gifts, because the Japanese pronunciation of combs is similar to "death". In addition, ballpoint pens, T-shirts, matches, and advertising caps are not considered respectful gifts.

The Japanese generally have a favorable impression of odd numbers and dislike even numbers. The taboo numbers are 4 and 9 which means unlucky.

Please remember, when sending letters to Japanese friends, do not put the stamps on the envelope upside down which means a sign of breaking up the friendship in Japan.<sup>[3]</sup>

### 3. South Korea

A: Living customs

Koreans are proud of their long culture. They pay attention to politeness and hospitality. Koreans attach great importance to the first impression of their contacts. They believe that manners are crucial before establishing a close working relationship with someone. If you follow their way when negotiating business, it will be easier to succeed. Koreans like spicy food, especially Sichuan cuisine in Chinese cuisine.<sup>[3]</sup> They mainly eat rice and cold noodles. They like to eat kimchi, roast beef, roast dog meat, ginseng chicken and use spoons and chopsticks for Tableware

Hibiscus is the national flower of Korea.

B. Religious belief

Koreans believe in Buddhism, Christianity, and Catholicism.

C: Taboo

You should take off your shoes and leave them at the door when you enter the house for Korean. You should talk less about politics and more about Korean culture and art with Koreans. If you have a working meal with Koreans, don't talk while eating. For numbers, Koreans also don't like "4", Influenced by Western culture, many young Koreans do not like the number "13".but Koreans like odd numbers and don't like even numbers.<sup>[1]</sup>

### 4. Singapore

A: Living customs

Singapore is a garden country, more than three-quarters of the population are Chinese. The Singaporean Chinese have a strong sense of locality and always have the virtues of diligence, humility, and reliability. Singaporeans have a strong sense of time and pay attention to hygiene. Rice and buns are their staple food, they prefer Chinese Cantonese cuisine, but those who believe in Islam like to eat curry beef.<sup>[4]</sup> Zhuo Jin Vanda orchid (a kind of orchid), also known as Orchid is the national flower of Singapore.

B. Religious belief

Although Singapore is a small country, it is a multi-ethnic country, Singaporeans believe in Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, and so on.

C: Taboo

Those who travel or do business in Singapore should pay special attention to abiding by various rules and regulations, pay attention to cleanliness, and protecting the environment, or you will be severely punished by local laws, not only to pay high fines but also to be exposed to the public. When talking to Singaporeans, avoid talking about politics and religion, it is better to talk about Singapore's economic achievements. Red, green and blue are popular with Singaporeans, while black, white, and yellow are taboo colors. Taboo numbers are 4, 7, 13, 37, and 69.

### 5. India

A: Living customs

India is one of the four ancient civilizations in the world. In social occasions, people pay attention to rank and identity. There are also many etiquettes in daily life. The Namaste ceremony is the most commonly used for greeting. Indians eat rice as their staple food, and love curry and Oil fried, grilled, and fried food, especially interested in Chinese Sichuan cuisine.<sup>[1]</sup> In middle-class families in India, housewives bathe and change clothes before cooking, because the kitchen is considered a sacred place, Indians wash their hands before meals and use their right hand to eat

The national flower of India is the lotus.

B. Religious belief

Most Indians believe in Hinduism, and a small number believe in Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, etc.

C. Taboo. Indians who believe in Hinduism regard cows as sacred things, and especially food made of beef and cowhide is forbidden. The upper-class Hindus are vegetarians. They are disgusted with drinking, they believe that drinking is against religious habits. It is taboo for people to eat on the same plate and eat food that others have touched. Passing things and food with the left hand and rubbing the child's head are also perceived as disrespectful. The colors that most Indians dislike are white, black, and gray. They think white means sadness, and black and gray mean negativity; "1", "3", and "7" are numbers they don't like; they put many animals (Such as cows, peacocks, and snakes) are humanized and deified.<sup>[4]</sup>

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