



Southeast Asian countries. Suu Kyi of Myanmar is an example. The first President of Indonesia, Sukarno (1901–1970) also had only a given name, but the first President of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969), had the given name Chi Minh and the family name Ho. This is the Chinese way to write a name, which is typical

of the East Asian region. This shows that although Vietnam neighbors Cambodia, the Chinese influence over the country is strong due to over 1,000 years of Chinese rule over Vietnam.

In East Asia, chopsticks have been used for festivals since 3,500 years ago and are now synonymous with this cultural area. A set which includes a small spoon is widely used in regions such as China, Vietnam and also by the Khmer Krom. On the other hand, in the Southeast Asian region, people still use their hands to eat. Urban Cambodians usually use spoons while those living in rural areas still use only their hands. Cambodia is part of the Indian cultural area and has only recently started to use spoons.

Moving on to religion, the prevalent sect of Buddhism in East Asia is Mahāyāna Buddhism, which was founded in India. It then spread to China, where the scriptures were translated into Chinese, then was introduced into Japan and finally to Vietnam. People in Cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar believe in Theravāda Buddhism. This Buddhism came via Sri Lanka with the scripts in ancient Indian Pali. A major difference between these two sects of Buddhism can be found in their altars. In the altars of Mahāyāna Buddhism, figures of various Buddhas are lined up while the altars of Theravāda Buddhism have only the figure of Śākyamuni. In the pagodas of the Khmer Krom, with very few exceptions, you will find only the Śākyamuni figures typical of Theravāda Buddhism.

Theravāda Buddhism strictly forbids the killing of living creatures. Therefore, unlike other Vietnamese who make their living as fishermen, the Khmer Krom do not fish for their livelihood.

In the latter half of the 20th century, the Khmer Krom have adopted two