

Episode14

Cultural Analysis 文化解析

A taboo is something that people do not do or talk about because it may **offend** (冒犯) or shock people. Taboos are usually culture-specific. For instance, in Taiwan, it is fairly common for people who meet each other for the first time to ask questions about age, marital status, or even monthly salary. Most people from the English-speaking world would find these questions and topics of conversation uncomfortable, or “taboo,” as we call it, because they are considered private areas of one’s life. In addition, religion and politics are seen as taboo topics, because usually people have strong feelings about these matters, and may not appreciate views that are contrary to their own beliefs. Sex is another subject that one should not talk about lightly. In comparison, weather and sports are safer topics, especially for small talk.

If you are new to a place, a wise **recommendation** (建議) is that you ask locals about what taboos they have so that you will not offend people without even knowing it. Asking before speaking is also a good gesture to show your respect for the local culture. Before you ask or say anything, also remember to think first and consider whether your question or comment might be personal or offensive in the **slightest** (絲毫). When in doubt, it is almost always safer to **bite your tongue!** (暫時忍住不說)