

# Traveling in Asia

an interview with Mary Murray Bosrock

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE COUNTRY?** There is no place on earth like Hong Kong; East and West meet to create dazzling contrasts. Rolls Royces drive through markets that sell shoes and chicken feet. Spectacular hotels and restaurants coexist with quaint medicine shops and dim sum eateries in one of the world's most dynamic business communities.

**WHAT COUNTRY IS MOST DIFFICULT AND WHY?** India is a land of staggering contradictions. It is a fascinating place but not an easy one. With one billion people and growing, India is home to one-fifth of the world's population. Its residents speak 100 different languages and practice a variety of religions. Having suffered decades of poverty, India today is becoming one of the world's largest economies. This country is exciting and not to be missed—if you can handle chaos.

**WHAT ARE THE MAJOR FAUX PAS THAT AMERICAN TRAVELERS SHOULD AVOID?** The most common negative comment made about Americans is that we know nothing about the rest of the world and don't seem to have any interest in learning. This attitude projects arrogance and an attitude that our way is the only way. To avoid projecting this image, don't do the following:

- Preach about women's rights, human rights, or Christianity.
- Denigrate others' values and customs.
- Assume your way is the right way.

**ARE THERE COMMON RULES FOR DOING BUSINESS IN ASIA?**

Yes. To put your best foot forward, follow this advice:

- Never embarrass anyone publicly or make them "lose face."
- Take time to build relationships.
- Show respect for others' cultures even if they seem strange.
- Even if it once swam, flew, or crawled, eat what is offered. Eat as the locals do, using chopsticks or your hands.
- Appearance counts, so dress well.
- Learn a few polite phrases and a toast in the local language.

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**Mary Murray Bosrock** is a writer, lecturer, and well-known expert on cross-cultural communication. She is the author and publisher of the award-winning Put Your Best Foot Forward series, endorsed by corporate and government leaders nationally. As former international editor of *Foreign Trade* magazine, Mary has worked and traveled in countries all over the world. She is a popular radio and television guest, appearing on CNN, CNBC, Fox News, and the A&E Network, among others.





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Traveling in Asia: An Interview with Mary Murray Bosrock *continued*

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**HOW ARE AMERICANS VIEWED IN THE WORLD TODAY?** America was once admired as the land of the free and home of the brave. After 9/11, nearly the whole world loved us. We were viewed as leaders in human rights, and America was seen as a can-do country that was able to build a powerful economy and military but still value the individual. However, our occupation of Iraq, perceived abuse of our political prisoners, and neglect of our poor after Hurricane Katrina have dimmed our image worldwide. Individual Americans are still judged by their behavior, but our leadership is viewed very negatively.

**WHICH ASIAN COUNTRY HAS CHANGED THE MOST?** China is changing at a breathtaking speed. Every time I return, the cities look as though they have doubled in size. Recent reports state that over 40 percent of the world's building cranes are in Shanghai. With the Olympic games beginning August 8, 2008 (8 is the luckiest number in China), the Chinese are working 24/7 to prepare their people and their cities to make a great impression.

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