

# SPOTLIGHT: Asian American Religiosity

➔ As Asian immigration to the United States has grown to outpace that of Latinos, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life recently examined religious differences between Asians and Asian Americans. The 182-page report, based on more than 3,500 telephone interviews nationwide, reveals that Christianity is the largest religion among Asian Americans. But they are less likely than the general public to believe in God or pray daily.

• **U.S.** Asian American Protestants exhibit the most diverse religious conversions. Almost a quarter were raised in no religion, while 11% were raised in Buddhism and 13% in Catholicism.

• **CHINA** A quarter of Chinese Americans say religious freedom is equal in the United States and China, despite high government restrictions on religion in China, where most have no religious affiliation (80%).

• **JAPAN** Japanese living in America are 10 times more likely to be Christians (38%) than those living in Japan (3%). They are also the most religiously diverse Asian Americans, with their Christian plurality followed by the unaffiliated (32%) and Buddhists (25%).

• **S. KOREA** Only about 15% of Protestants in South Korea say religion is not important to them, and more attend church weekly (77%) than Korean American Protestants (71%).

• **INDIA** Out of the 45% of Asian Americans who have converted to Christianity, only 1% were raised as Hindus. Yet many Hindus in the United States are adopting Christian traditions, including Christmas (73%).

• **VIETNAM** Vietnamese American Buddhists are more likely to live a very religious life (32%) than other Asian American Buddhists (12%). Eight in ten have shrines in their homes, and about half fast during holy times.

• **PHILIPPINES** Filipino Americans have the highest Catholic affiliation (65%) of any Asian American group; but more Catholics in the Philippines say religion is very important to them (88%) than to Filipino Americans (66%).

**GENERAL** Almost two-thirds of Asian Americans believe that many religions can lead to eternal life. By contrast, most Asian American evangelicals (72%) say Christianity is the "one true faith leading to eternal life" versus half (49%) of white evangelicals.