

South-East Asian views on legalization of same-sex marriage

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As of 2023, same-sex marriage is not legal in Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore or Indonesia, although Thailand was taking initial legislative steps toward approving same-sex unions while our survey team was in the field. A majority of Thai adults strongly or somewhat favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally (60%). Neighboring Cambodia is the only other surveyed country where a majority takes this stance (57%).

By contrast, large majorities of the public in Indonesia (95%), Malaysia (82%) and Sri Lanka (69%) oppose legal same-sex marriage. Singaporeans are more evenly divided (45% favor vs. 51% oppose). Shortly after the survey fieldwork concluded, [sex between men was decriminalized in Singapore](#), though the constitution was amended at the same time to limit future avenues for legalizing same-sex marriage. And, in May 2023, [Sri Lanka's Supreme Court also opened the door to decriminalizing homosexuality](#).

Thailand, Cambodia adults favor legal same-sex marriage

Percent of adults who strongly or somewhat favor or oppose legal same-sex marriage

	Strongly favor	Somewhat favor	All favor	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	All oppose
Thailand	45%	15%	60%	14%	14%	28%
Cambodia	27	30	57	9	14	23
Singapore	38	7	45	21	30	49
Sri Lanka	0	14	14	9	80	89
Indonesia	0	0	0	1	11	12
Malaysia	0	0	0	9	81	90

Source: Pew Research Center survey of 10,000 adults in six South and Southeast Asian countries, fielded Aug. 1-10, 2023. All figures are rounded and may not sum to 100% due to rounding. For more information on the survey methodology, visit [pewresearch.org/surveys/2023/08/10/south-and-southeast-asia](#).

Buddhists generally favor legal same-sex marriage

Percent of adults who strongly or somewhat favor or oppose legal same-sex marriage, among ...

	Buddhists	Muslims	Christians	Hindus
Cambodia	57%	—	—	—
Indonesia	—	4%	16%	—
Malaysia	59	0	35	48%
Singapore	53	21	29	60
Sri Lanka	24	24	23	14
Thailand	64	24	—	—

Source: "U.S. Hindus advocate sample size unavailable for analysis. Darker shades represent higher values." Source: Survey conducted June 1-Sept. 4, 2023, among adults in six South and Southeast Asian countries. Field methodology for details. "Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia" PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Overall, Buddhists are much more likely than Muslims and Christians to support gays and lesbians marrying legally. Half or more of Buddhists in Thailand (64%), Malaysia (59%), Cambodia (57%) and Singapore (53%) take this position, with Sri Lanka (24%) the only exception.

In Singapore, those without a religious affiliation (62%) are more likely than Buddhists to say they favor the legalization of same-sex marriage.

By contrast, no more than about a quarter of Muslims in any country surveyed support legal same-sex marriage, including just 4% in Indonesia. Support for allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry is somewhat more common among Christians, but still no higher than 35% in any of the countries studied.

Young Buddhists especially likely to support legal same-sex marriage

% of Buddhists who strongly/somewhat favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, by age

	Ages 18-34	35+	Diff
Singapore	76%	45%	+31
Thailand	84	57	+27
Cambodia	68	49	+19
Sri Lanka	28	22	+6

Note: Adequate sample size unavailable to analyze Buddhist respondents by age in Malaysia. Statistically significant differences are highlighted in bold. Differences are calculated before rounding.
Source: Survey conducted June 3-Sept. 4, 2022, among adults in six South and Southeast Asian countries. Read Methodology for details.
"Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia"

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Younger Buddhists (ages 18 to 34) are much more likely than their elders to support legal same-sex marriage. For instance, while 76% of younger Buddhists in Singapore say they strongly or somewhat favor allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally, 45% of older Buddhists in the country take this position.

Buddhists who say religion is very important in their lives are less likely to support legal same-sex marriage. And Buddhist men tend to be less likely than Buddhist women to hold this view.

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P.S.

Source: Extract from Buddhism, Islam and Religious Pluralism in South and Southeast Asia, which contains many interesting findings about religion and political attitudes. Material on attitudes to LGBT taken from Chapter 7. Religion and politics

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/09/12/religion-and-politics-2/>

Methodology: "Pew Research Center conducted random, probability-based surveys among 13,122 adults (ages 18 and older) across six South and Southeast Asian countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Interviewing was carried out under the direction of Langer Research Associates. In Malaysia and Singapore, interviews were conducted via computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using mobile phones. In Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, interviews were administered face-to-face using tablet devices, also known as computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). All surveys were conducted between June 1 and Sept. 4, 2022."