

Case Study: Shoe Removal in a Chinese Buddhist Home

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A home health care nurse in the US pays a visit to an elderly Chinese patient. The patient asks her to remove her shoes upon entering the house. The nurse explained that she is not allowed to remove her shoes due to liability and safety issues. The patient becomes quite concerned and insists that she cannot enter the house while wearing shoes. The nurse suggests that she wear shoe covers in order to enter and deliver needed health care while maintaining safety protocols. The patient offered the nurse indoor slippers instead.

Reflection:

- What are some of the competing needs in this case?
- Would shoe covers be an appropriate compromise?
- What are some ways the nurse could approach this issue?
- What are the origins of shoe removal in certain cultures?

Additional Resources:

Koon, Wee Kek, “Opinion | Shoes on or off inside? The Chinese Haven’t Always Agreed,” South China Morning Post, February 28, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/short-reads/article/2187916/shoes-or-inside-chinese-havent-always-been>.

Naoko Muramatsu et al., “Slips, Trips, and Falls Among Home Care Aides,” *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 60, no. 9 (September 2018): 796–803, <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000001355>.

Wei Yan Aung, “On This Day | ‘Shoe Thein Maung’ Fought to Stop Colonists Trampling on Buddhist Customs,” *The Irrawaddy* (blog), March 11, 2019, <https://www.irrawaddy.com/specials/on-this-day/shoe-thein-maung-fought-stop-colonists-trampling-buddhist-customs.html>.

Wordie, Jason, “Opinion | Why Homes in Asia Maintain a Strict Shoes-off Rule,” South China Morning Post, December 13, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/post-magazine/short-reads/article/3041781/why-homes-asia-maintain-strict-shoes-rule-often>.