

This document contains a carefully curated collection of questions frequently asked by people in Germany about everyday life, society, culture, education, and perceptions related to China. The questions serve as orientation and conversation prompts for the *Living Sinothek* and are intended to enable open, respectful, and safe exchange—particularly in intercultural and academic contexts.

The *Living Sinothek* was developed as part of the *ChinakomMitt* project and is inspired by the Danish NGO *Human Library*. It serves as a communication platform where people from the Chinese cultural sphere can share their personal stories and experiences by acting as so-called “living books.” Users have the opportunity to “borrow” these books and, through personal conversations, learn more about Chinese culture, traditions, and individual life paths.

The questions compiled here are not intended as a mandatory catalogue but as a supportive foundation. Which topics are actually discussed is determined by the “living books” themselves—as is whether conversations take place digitally or in person.

**You are also welcome to answer one or several of these questions in a short text, which we can then publish on our website (anonymously if desired):**  
<https://www.uni-marburg.de/de/international/profil/china-kompetenz-marburg/lebendige-sinothek>

## 1. Everyday Life and Culture

- What is particularly important to you in everyday life in China?
- What role does family play in everyday social life in China?
- What role does nature play in the lives and thinking of many people in China?
- What does a typical day in China look like?
- How do people spend their free time or socialize?
- Do people tend to eat together or individually?
- How do children learn to eat with chopsticks?
- How does typing Chinese on a keyboard work?
- Which festivals or holidays are particularly important culturally?
- Is Halloween (or something similar) celebrated in China?

## 2. Food & Traditions

- What characterizes everyday Chinese cuisine?
- How is Peking duck traditionally eaten?
- Why do noodles play such an important role in Chinese food culture?
- What is the significance of guardian lions in front of restaurants?
- What symbolism do so-called “fortune cat” (招财猫, *zhaocai mao*) have?

## 3. Society, Values & Identity

- Which values are particularly important in Chinese society?
- What is considered a socially recognized life goal?
- With which characteristics would people describe their country?
- Which three things do you personally like most about your country?
- How do people experience regional identity in comparison to national identity?
- Do people feel more connected to their region or to China as a whole?
- What fears or concerns about the future are widespread in society?
- How is LGBTQ+ life perceived and lived in China?

## 4. Education & Youth

- How does the education system work in general?
- Is teamwork or individual performance emphasized more at school?
- Is the school system more authoritarian or participatory?
- What is the general pedagogical orientation of educational institutions?
- How do young people decide on a field of study or career path?

## 5. University & Studies

- How does the university system work (application, admission, tuition fees)?
- Are there admission restrictions comparable to a *numerus clausus* (NC)?
- Do students tend to live in dormitories or shared apartments?
- What does everyday student life look like?

## 6. Working Life & Careers

- How does working life function in China?
- How would you describe the relationship between work and private life?
- What does success or happiness mean to you?

## 7. Beliefs & Worldviews

- What role do religion or belief systems play in everyday life?
- What do people tend to believe in more: religion, economic success, freedom, or something else?

## 8. Global Perceptions & Intercultural Perspectives

- How is Europe perceived in China?
- What perceptions exist of the United States, Africa, and Russia?
- What could other countries learn from China?
- What could China learn from other countries?
- Are there attitudes or behaviors that differ strongly from those in Europe?
- Is communication in China generally more indirect than, for example, in Germany?