

The Unique Age Counting System of Korea

by Kim seo young | 승인 2021.05.24 11:46

How old am I in Korean age?



Korea has an atypical age counting system. It is also a culture that places social importance on an age of a person. For this reason, the "age calculation method" in Korea is significant, but it is one of the factors that most foreigners find difficult. If you get to know and use the method correctly, you can understand many parts of Korean culture.

Korea uses two different calculation methods than the international age. First, in Korea, when a child is born, it turns to 1 year old. There are various theories for this, but the most famous assumption is that the ten months in the mother's womb as a fetus is

approximately one year. Second, all Koreans age every 1st of January, not on their birthday. Every 1st of January, all Koreans are getting one year older. And stay the same age throughout the year.

According to the Korean age calculation method, a baby born in December will officially turn two years old in January, a month later. It is 11 months apart from the child born in January, who will be two years old after a year, but the official age is the same. To avoid this confusion, children talk in months up to the age of three to four. From the time a child goes to kindergarten, then they will use the usual age counting.



When a child enters school, the student of the year and all classmates are of the same age, except in limited cases. In Korean age, children go to elementary school at the age of 8, middle school at the age of 14, high school at the age of 17, and they graduate from high school and become adults at the age of 20.

Age also affects the 'friend culture' in Korea. In Korea, 'friend' is commonly used to mean 'same age.' That is because the culture is formed in class with friends of the same age for 12 years at school. Also, in Confucian culture, smiling respect is considered significant, so even a year apart, one year older than the older sister and older brother are given a higher title. Friends of different ages referred to as 'friendly' + 'title.'

In Korea, age is the most efficient and quick way to identify the other person. If you know their age, you can decide on a title, discern if you can call it a friend and if you can share a subject and adolescent culture. In the case of students, it is possible to know whether they are freshmen or graduates and whether they are adults or not. That's why Koreans ask about their age.

When a Korean asks about his age, how should I answer it? An easy way to convert your age to Korean age is to add 1 when your birthday is over and 2 when it is not. Not only do many people ask in Korea, but it is also necessary for hospitals and bars, so it is good to know.



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