THE CHINESE RECORDER
AND MISSIONARY JOURNAL.

Published Monthly by the American Presbyterian Mission Press,
18 Peking Road, Shanghai, China.

Subscription $3.50 (Gold $1.75) per annum, postpaid.

VOL. XXXVI. JANUARY, 1905. NO. 1.

Etiquette in Chinese Official Intercourse.*

BY MR. LI MOU-HSUN.

Official Calls.

IT is common usage, when notifying a proposed visit, to send a ting-ch'ai a day ahead with the caller's card, with a verbal message to the effect either that a visit is proposed for the next day at a certain hour or asking that a convenient hour on the next day be fixed for the call.

In the first case the ting-ch'ai brings back a message with a card that the official has duly noted the proposed call, or in the second case that the official will be at home either at his office or private residence at a certain hour.

Should the proposed visit be made in writing, a letter as below is usually written :—

I beg to inform you that I, the Commissioner of Customs, intend to pay my respects to you to-morrow at ten o'clock. I therefore write previously to inform you. Card enclosed.

Form of Reply to above.

In reply to your note I beg to inform you that I have received notice of your intention to call at 10 o'clock to-morrow and will await your visit at that time. Card enclosed.

FORM OF CALL.

About half an hour before the call, the ting-ch'ais, chair-bearers and sailors (all in official hats and uniforms) should be in readiness. The caller should start so as to reach, just before the stated hour of visit, the main gate of the Taotai's office. The chair should then stop, but not be let down. In calling on a

* This article, in pamphlet form, with the original Chinese, may be had at the Presbyterian Mission Press, 25 cents, postpaid.

obgynhistory.net

prefect or magistrate the chair can proceed direct to the principal hall (大堂), *i.e.*, the third stopping place before the chair stops. The ting-ch'ai, with the caller's card, will go on ahead and call out in a loud voice: Receive the card (接帖). A head servant will come out, receive the card and hand it on to an interior domestic called a chieh-tieh-mên-ting (接帖門丁). The interior domestic will take the card inside to his master. The master will say: "Request him to enter" (請). The interior domestic will take the caller's card out and say in a loud voice: "Please come in" (請). The gateman will then open the middle part of the principal gate.

The caller's chair will proceed through the main gate (頭門), the second gate called i-mên (儀門) on to the third stopping place, the principal hall (大堂 before the nuan-k'o (暖閣) and the chair will then be set down.

If a prefect or magistrate is being called upon, the chair will go on beyond the nuan-k'o (暖閣) straight to the erh-t'ang (二堂) before being lowered.

The interior domestic, with the card in front of him, will direct the way. The caller will get out of his chair and proceed (not looking to the right or left).

The host will be in the reception room (花廳) *alias* (會客廳) to greet the caller. The host may meet the caller at the erh-t'ang (二堂) or not; in the case of a friend the caller may be conducted straight to the reception room and the host subsequently join him there.

The host and caller at first sight should salute each other without saying a word, but this is optional. The guest should proceed on the left of the host and walk in line to the reception room. They should greet each other with their hands lifted above their noses to the level of the cheeks. Having gained the reception room the host should request the guest to be seated on the k'ang and the host be seated after him on the k'ang also. Tea being brought the host should rise and present tea to the visitor—the host's servant having brought the guest's tea, places it first in the host's hands—the host rises and places the tea on a small table between them by the visitor. The visitor should rise to receive the tea, with a salutation, and reciprocate by appearing to offer the host tea; the host's servant having already placed tea on the table by the host, the guest should gradually move the tea nearer to the host and reseat himself. The guest will then proceed to speak.

obgynhistory.net

FIRST VISIT OF A GUEST.

A Taotai should be designated as kuei-tao (貴道), or X Ta-jên ; a Brigadier General as kuei-chen (貴鎮), if he has the rank of a General-in-chief as kuei-chün-men (貴軍門), or X Ta-jen ; a Prefect as kuei-fu (貴府), if he has a "majority" of rank as ta-jên (大人), or ta-lao-yeh (大老爺); a District Magistrate as kuei-hsien (貴縣), or ta-lao-yeh (大老爺); a Weiyuan is addressed according to the rank he holds ; smaller officials can be addressed as t'ai-yeh (太爺) or lao-yeh (老爺).

All the above mentioned officials can equally correctly be addressed as ko-hsia (閣下).

FORM OF CONVERSATION.

Guest. Is your honourable Taotaiship well ?

Host. Thanks to you. Is your honourable commissionership well ?

Guest. I have long wanted to make your acquaintance.

Host. That is reciprocal.

Guest. Which is your honourable native province ?

Host. Shantung.

Guest. How long has your Honour been here ?

Host. More than three years.

Guest. Is all your honourable family with you ?

Host. Yes, I have brought them all.

Guest. How many sons have you ?

Host. Two.

Guest. How old are you (貴庚) ? (If the host has a beard the question is put thus 高壽).

Host. I am fifty-nine years old.

Guest. Your appearance is very flourishing and portly (豐滿) (not addressed to a thin man) and shows that that is owing to your good fortune.

Host. You are far too complimentary. I really am of no account.

Guest. You are exceedingly modest ; is your official business here very important or not ?

Host. There is not very much work but sufficient.

Guest. The object of my first visit to you is to get your Taotaiship's guidance in all matters.

Host. Don't mention it. It is a case of mutual instruction ; pray don't be so modest.

obgynhistory.net

Guest. There is still a small matter of business, but I will call again and get your guidance.

Host. That doesn't matter. I shall come and return your visit.

Guest. Don't think of troubling yourself to do so. (Whilst saying this, it is usual to lift the tea cup with both hands to the mouth, when the host will give the signal and two or three sips of tea will be mutually imbibed).

The servant seeing the guest lifting his tea cup will call out in a loud voice: "Escort the guest out." The guest will, after sipping the tea, put the cup down and get up. The host will, at the same time, put down his cup and get up. The guest will salute the host and say: "I must leave;" the host, saluting also, will say: "*Au revoir.*"

The guest will first go out, the host accompanying him. The guest arrived at his chair will turn to the host, salute him, and say: "By your leave" (請); the host saluting, will reply: "After you" (請). The guest will turn round and get into his chair and sit down, at the same time giving a salutation—not necessarily looking at the host. The chair will then be raised, and the hands, raised in salutation, will be lowered, and the chair proceed out of the main gate.

The host on seeing the guest enter his chair will salute the chair as a signal for the chair to proceed, and when the guest's chair has been raised and is moving the host will retire.

THE PROCEDURE OF EQUAL OFFICIALS WHEN FIRST TAKING UP THEIR POSTS ON RETURNING A VISIT.

(The procedure up to the handing of tea is as previously described.)

When seated the guest will first say: My greetings.

Host. Don't mention it; mine likewise.

Guest. I recently received the kind notification of your intention to come here to greet me on the return visit.

Host. Thank you so much.

Guest. Where has your honourable Taotaiship been stationed before?

Host. I was in Peking doing duty in the Board of Works. I have also been in Hupei and Szechuan.

Guest. This time when did you start from Peking to come here?

Host. I left Peking in the 10th moon of last year; I first went to Hangchow and reached here only a short time ago from Hangchow.

obgynhistory.net

Guest. Did you come by boat or not?
Host. No, I came overland.
Guest. Did you have any difficulties on your journey?
Host. Thanks; the journey was pretty easy, but there were a good many damp spots, especially in the mountainous parts, which were not good going.
Guest. Did you bring your family with you?
Host. No; they are still at Hangchow.
Guest. I have been very slack in enquiring after your health.
Host. And I likewise. (Here if business is to be talked over, a conversation thereon can ensue).

At the completion of the visit and the guest wishing to leave he handles his tea cup, at the same time saying: "I will come another time to get your instructions."

Host replies: Ever so many thanks. On subsequent visits we can get information from each other without unnecessary formality.

Guest. That will be well. No ceremony is the better way.

After this the guest drinks his tea, puts the cup down and gets up saying: "I shall have to lose the pleasure of your society. *Au revoir.*"

The guest returns to his chair, the host escorting him as before.

THE INFORMAL VISIT.

Being seated, and the usual health enquiries being made, the following conversation ensues:—

Guest. I have not recently had the opportunity of being favoured with your instruction.
Host. I, also, have been lacking in paying you my respects.
Guest. I heard a short time back that you had not been very well (有點貴恙) or (有點欠安).
Host. Yes, I have been a little "under the weather".
Guest. Are you all right again now?
Host. Yes, thanks to you, I am nearly all right.
Guest. This year there has been a great deal of rain and snow; the weather is very cold.
Host. Yes, it is cold indeed.
Guest. This place is far warmer than Peking.
Host. Yes, there is a great deal of difference.
Guest. You must take a great deal of care of yourself and not exert yourself too much.

obgynhistory.net

Host. Yes, that would not be bad. (Here any important business can be discussed).

At the end the guest can say: "I must be leaving" and handling his tea cup can add: "In a short while I must come again to enquire further about your health."

Host. Please don't. Sit down awhile; why are you in such a hurry?

ONE OFFICIAL CALLING ON ANOTHER TRANSFERRED.

After being seated.

Guest. My greetings: good promotion to you.

Host. Thanks; the promotion is not of much account.

Guest. When do you expect to start?

Host. It is not actually decided on; as soon as I have handed over the seals of office, I expect to be away.

Guest. You have been here several years and your work has been conspicuous by ability and fairness. I consequently respect you greatly.

Host. Please don't say so; you praise me too much; my good points are few indeed.

Guest. After our separation I don't know where we shall meet again.

Host. That is so, but should there be an opportunity, it can easily be managed.

Guest. Your leaving at present causes a feeling in me of not wishing to be separated from you.

Host. Your expressions are very kind. The feeling is mutual.

Guest. We can in future correspond by letter.

Host. Yes, we can keep ourselves thus in constant intercourse so as not to forget one another.

Guest. That is so. I am coming shortly to bid you farewell.

Host. That is exceedingly kind. By your leave (請).

Guest. After you (請).

TO BID ACTUAL FAREWELL.

Being seated.

Guest. Good luck, good luck; may the winds bring you a prosperous journey; we shall meet again; take care of your health.

Host. Excuse me not escorting you further, etc., etc.

Guest. Best thanks, please retrace your steps.

Host. I shall write and thank you for your visit, etc., etc.

obgynhistory.net

VISITS AT THE NEW YEAR.

Being seated.

Guest. Good luck ; good luck. My best wishes. May the New Year bring you what you wish. May you receive promotion and make money. (Should the host have no sons, it is proper to say : "May this year bring you a son.")

Host. My reciprocal wishes.

On the occasion of New Year and on a visit of congratulation for promotion or for a son, such a visit is called a tao-hsi (道喜) visit, or if a visit on a birthday it is called a pai-shou (拜壽) visit.

On personal visits the main gate is not entered but is stopped at, and should the person called on not be able to receive, a servant comes out and says : "Please don't trouble to enter, as my master is engaged ;" that is called tang-chia (擋駕) ; a return visit is called hsieh-p'u (謝步).

Dinners.

If an invitation is sent out to a wine party a hsia-t'ieh-tzŭ (下帖子), a red card of invitation, enclosed in a red envelope with a red slip pasted on the outside addressed to the invitee, is despatched.

FORM OF INVITATION.

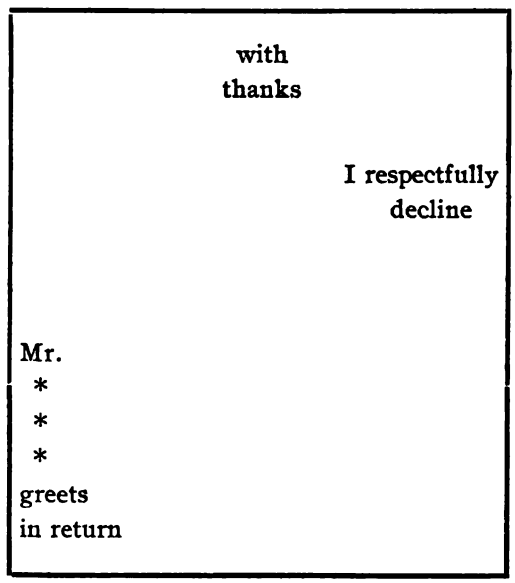
	guidance with
	care I
	have fixed
	on the 2nd
	day of the
	moon at
Mr.	noon for
*	cleansing my
*	cups and
*	will
invited	await
	your

obgynhistory.net

When an invitation arrives—in case of acceptance—the invitation card is retained and a visiting card returned, on which is written: "I shall certainly come to-morrow and put you to much inconvenience"; in case of refusal the invitation is also kept and a red form used, stating: "I beg to refuse; thanks all the same," or "I am exceedingly grateful for your kind thought".

The refusal form is sent back in an envelope with the invitation card and a servant despatched with it; this is called the declining card (壁帖子).

FORM OF REFUSAL.



THE BANQUET.

Instructions are given to the ting-ch'ai to take charge of the card of invitation which, on arrival at the host's house, he hands back to his master.

On entering the guest-room the host is saluted and the ting-ch'ai hands over the card of invitation.

The guest should then give, with both hands, the card of invitation to the host, which, on reception by him, will be acknowledged by a counter-salutation with thanks.

On being seated.

Guest. I have been the recipient of your kind summons. I feel deeply ashamed of myself and excessively grateful to you.

obgynhistory.net

Host. Don't mention it. I am honoured by your presence.

Guest. There are some other guests who haven't arrived yet; aren't there?

Host. There are no other guests except a few friends, excluding His Excellency Mr. Fu, who hasn't arrived yet but will probably be here in a short while.

If other guests subsequently arrive, the host rises and goes out to greet them and bring them in. The guests previously arrived will all rise; the host will bid the newly-arrived one be seated and then all will reseat themselves.

Should a secondary guest first arrive the host will put him in the principal seat, but when the host goes out to greet the principal guest, the secondary guest should place himself before the secondary seat until the principal guest enters the room. There should be mutually depreciatory remarks when all should reseat themselves.

Supposing the principal guest to arrive first; as soon as a secondary guest arrives, the former should rise and offer the latter his seat and salute him; the host must then say to the principal guests: "This banquet is given specially for you, and the others are invited here as friends of mine to meet you. Don't be too modest." The secondary guest should say to the principal guest: "We are invited here to-day for the purpose of meeting you. Don't be too modest."

The principal guest hearing this will salute the secondary guest and seat himself with self-depreciatory remarks.

When all are present, cakes are brought to be eaten, or not, at option. At times no cakes are brought.

The servants seeing that all the guests have arrived, will say: "The banquet is ready."

The host will get up and urge on the guests to be seated. The guests will get up, but be preceded to the dining room by some servant.

The principal guest will say to the others: "Go on, first, please," but will eventually go first himself; the others following in regular order to the dining room.

All place themselves before seats, waiting for the host to present the wine.

Placing guests in their seats is called *sung-hsi* (送席), or *an-hsi* (安席).

How this is effected is by the host raising the wine cup in both hands to the level of his nose and placing the wine

obgynhistory.net

before the seat each guest is supposed to occupy, at the same time saluting the guest. The guest should salute and say: "I am unworthy of this seat; there are more important guests who should by rights occupy it." The host will say: "Don't be on ceremony." The guest must still plead his inability to occupy the seat. The host will say: "Don't underestimate yourself. There is no one better fitted for the seat."

The host will lift up with both hands the chop-sticks of the guest; the guest at the time saluting the host, and will smooth the seat carefully with his hands and bid the guest, with a salutation, to be seated. The guest should return the salutation.

Sometimes the host can simply present the wine; chop-sticks are not presented, nor the seat smoothed.

The guest should appear to be embarrassed, and should say: "I am truly not worthy of this seat of honour, but I must defer to your instructions."

The principal guest should then turn to the rest and say: "I am exceedingly honoured by being allowed to sit here."

Upon saying which he should remain standing beside his chair until all the guests have been presented with their glasses of wine.

The principal guest turns to the host and presents him with a glass of wine and salutes him. In all these formalities, such as presenting chop-sticks, wine, and smoothing of seat; the procedure of the host should be exactly followed.

The other guests should also salute the host in like manner afterwards. The host returns their salutations.

Should the host not go in for like formalities, the guests should correspondingly not perform such formalities.

The principal guest should turn to the host and say: "I have received your kind favour;" the host replying: "I shouldn't hear such complimentary remarks."

The principal guest then turns to the other guests saying: "I am arrogating to myself by taking this seat." They all reply: "It is your right." Then all seat themselves. The host turns to the guests, lifting his glass and says: "Please (drink)" (請). They reply: "Many thanks. Please do so also" (請).

The host and guests then enter into general conversation.

After three or four courses have been served, a guest says: "You must have been at a lot of trouble to provide such a bounteous repast." The host replies: "It does not amount

obgynhistory.net

to much; please don't laugh at me for it;" or the guest may say: "By your kind favour such fine and delicate food has been so admirably prepared that we have had a surfeit of food and drink."

Host. Nonsense; there is really nothing fit to eat; I have been very remiss. Your capacity will surely allow of your having another glass.

Guest. Many thanks. The wine is excellent, but I am afraid my capacity has been taxed to the utmost.

Host. Don't stand on ceremony; take some cakes or meat as you feel inclined.

Guest. Please don't press me. I have had quite enough.

Host. If that is so, I will obey your orders and not press you.

If the host and guests are great friends the host can first suggest "guessfingers" or "forfeits", just as they like. The guests acquiesce in the host's wishes.

PROCEDURE AT DINNER.

Meat (cakes). Boils and roast (roast sucking pig).

The dishes at the side of each guest and the broken victuals being removed the big meat dishes and the porridge is brought on (accompanied by towels to wipe the face and the mouth).

Host. As there are not many courses I cannot offer you wine.

Guest. You have gone out of your way as host; we are fully repleted with wine and food.

Host. You can rise now.

Principal Guest. Very good.

All the guests rise. The host requests the guests to return to the reception room (the ceremony of seating themselves is done as before.) Tea is brought. The principal guest lifting his tea cup says: "We have put you to much inconvenience." Host replies: "I have behaved very rudely."

The servants outside, when the roasts and boils are brought on, should prepare themselves and when the principal guest lifts his tea cup should shout out in a loud tone: "Escort the guests out."

Each guest should rise, salute the host and say: "I must thank you again and again."

Host. Don't mention it. *Au revoir.*

Guests. Please don't escort us out.

Host. I am very rude.

(The departure of guests and escorting to chairs is done as before).

obgynhistory.net

INFORMAL DINNER.

If it is a case of meals between great friends, a chih-tan (知單) is used instead of an invitation card (請帖).

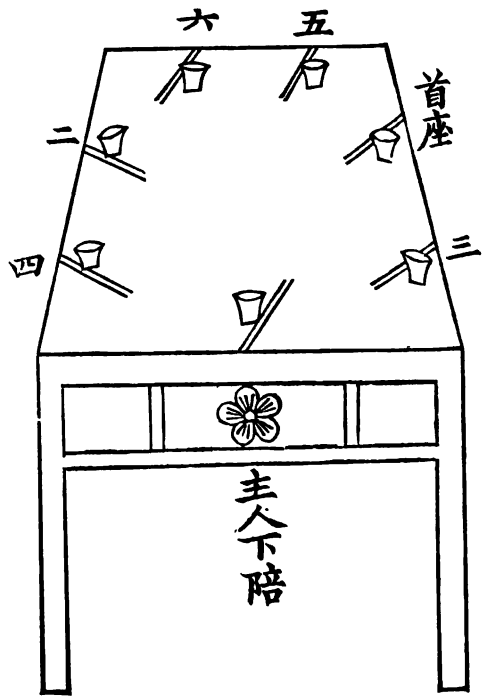
[For form of chih-tan, see next page].

When the chih-tan arrives, if the invitation is accepted, the guest writes chih (知) or pei (陪) or ching-pei (敬陪) under his name; if declined, hsieh (謝), or ching-hsieh (敬謝) or hsin-ling-hsieh (心領謝).

ORDINARY DINNER.

(*Position of Seats*).

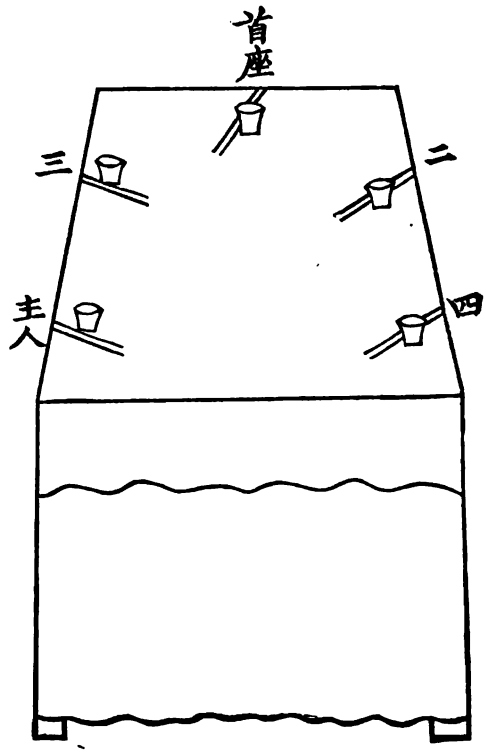
The left is the place of honour.



THE FORMAL BANQUET.

(*Position of Seats*).

If there are two principal guests two seats are placed at the top.



Prepared by Li Mou-hsün (李懋勳), whose *hao* is hsi-ch'êng (希程), writer in the Wenchow Customs, and translated by C. T. B.

obgynhistory.net

FORM OF CHIH-TAN. (See page 12).

Red paper is used and the invitation written slantingly.

	lustre on
Mr. Mr. Mr. H. E. H. E. Chao Li San Chien Chao	.....
	day
please return	at one
your card	o'clock
	I shall
Mr.	await
***	
invites	your

Letters from an Old Missionary to his Nephew.

(Concluded from p. 609, December Number).

YOU may or may not have had your attention called to the fact that the Chinese use tones, but in case you have not, allow me to do so. The statement that the use of tones is of value to the foreigner is one that has been much controverted, and I do not doubt that sooner or later you will hear much chatter on the subject. Those who use them, affirm that they are of great value; those who do not use them, deny the fact. I have, however, noticed that many who deny their value, have little or no idea of tune or music. They could scarcely distinguish Rule Brittania from the Old Hundredth. Or they are as the Highlander, who, on hearing twenty or thirty bagpipes playing different airs at the same time, said it was heaven begun below.

The Chinese, for the purpose of poetic composition, divide their tones into 平 and 仄, the even and oblique. This is quite enough for them, but not for us. They use more in speaking, and we, if we would speak as they do, must imitate them. If you were learning some of the southern dialects instead of mandarin, you would have to distinguish some seven or eight tones, but in mandarin, you have only to deal with five at most; in many

obgynhistory.net