



## LESSON B.4

# ADDRESSING PEOPLE

称呼人们 CHĒNGHU RÉNMEN

# LESSON B.3 REVISION



Construct words/phrases from the below characters:

医  
yī

老  
lǎo

家庭  
jiātíng

首席  
shǒuxí

工  
gōng

公  
gōng

警  
jǐng

司  
sī

邮递  
yóudì

司  
sī

主妇  
zhǔfù

机  
jī

执行官  
zhíxíng guān

员  
yuán

察  
chá

师  
shī

作  
zuò

生  
shēng

# ADDRESSING A CHINESE NAME



- Chinese names 姓名 (*xìngmíng*) all have meaning.
- They start with the **surname** 姓 (*xìng*), then the **given names** 名 (*míng*) which can be one or two characters.
- Children or friends can be addressed by their given names.
- Adults should always be addressed by their full name, or surname with a **title** 称号 (*chēnghào*).
- Unlike English, Chinese title comes **AFTER** the surname.

Li Ling

*(Family name + given name)*

李玲

*lǐ líng*

Miss Li

*(Surname + title)*

李小姐

*lǐ xiǎojiě*

# LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

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- In China, “ladies and gentlemen” are generally pronounced the other way round, i.e. 先生女士 (*xiānshēng nǚshì*).
- There is no need to add “and” between them as together they form a 4-character compound.



<b>李</b> <i>lǐ</i>	+	<b>先生</b> <i>xiānshēng</i>	<b>女士</b> <i>nǚshì</i>	<b>小姐</b> <i>xiǎojiě</i>	<b>太太</b> <i>tàitài</i>	<b>Mr /Sir / Gentleman</b>	<b>Madam / Lady</b>	<b>Miss</b>	<b>Mrs</b>
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# ESSENTIAL WORDS

looking for

找

zhǎo

can/may

可以

kěyǐ

speak

说话

shuōhuà

leave message

留言

liúyán

please

拜托

bàituō

return call

回电话

huí diànhuà

urgent

急

jí

wait

等

děng

tell

告诉

gàosù



# MAKING PHONE CALL



## 打电话 *dǎ diànhuà*

喂，喂，找哪位?

*wéi, wéi, zhǎo nǎ wèi*

Hello, looking for whom?

我可以和黄经理说话吗?

*wǒ kěyǐ hé huáng jīnglǐ shuōhuà ma*

Can I speak to Manager Wong please?

他不在，你想留言吗?

*tā bùzài, nǐ xiǎng liúyán ma*

He is not here, do you want to leave a message?

我姓陈的，拜托您请他给我回电话。

*wǒ xìng chén de,  
bàituō nín qǐng tā gěi wǒ huí diànhuà*

My surname is Chan, please ask him to call me back.

# TELEPHONE CALL



嗯，急吗？

*éng, jí ma*

Um, is it urgent?

不用急，等他有一点時間。

*bùyòng jí, děng tā yǒu yídiǎn shíjiān*

Not urgent, whenever he has a moment.

(Lit. wait he has a little time)

好的，陈小姐，我会告诉他的。

*hǎo de, chén xiǎojiě, wǒ huì gàosù tā de*

ok, Miss Chan, I will let him know.

(Lit. I will tell him)

很好，谢谢您！再见。

*hěn hǎo, xièxie nín! zàijiàn*

Very good, thank you!  
Goodbye.

# RESPECTABLE TITLE



李 *lǐ* +

医生	<i>yīshēng</i>	Doctor
老师	<i>lǎoshī</i>	Teacher
教授	<i>jiàoshòu</i>	Professor
律师	<i>lùshī</i>	Solicitor
校长	<i>xiàozhǎng</i>	Headmaster/Headmistress
经理	<i>jīnglǐ</i>	Manager
老板	<i>lǎobǎn</i>	Boss
主席	<i>zhǔxí</i>	Chairman
主任	<i>zhǔrèn</i>	Director
博士	<i>bóshì</i>	Doctor (of Philosophy)
同志	<i>tóngzhì</i>	Comrade
师傅	<i>shīfù</i>	Master

# APPENDIX: IS IT RUDE TO SAY “WEI”

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hi

喂

wèi or wéi

*My name is  
not 喂!*

- **Phone conversation:** It is acceptable to answer the phone by saying 喂 (wéi) first, maybe followed by 您好 (nín hǎo) out of politeness.
- **Bad manner:** 喂 (wèi) is often used to interject to get the attention, start a conversation or greet someone, similar to say “hi”. It is okay to use 喂 to **close friends**, as long as they do not mind. If they do mind, the common response is “喂 is not my name”. 喂 is considered **rude and too casual** when interacting with the senior, boss, teacher etc.
- **Addressing stranger:** 喂 (wèi) sounds **blunt but necessary**. When you want to call somebody you don't know on street or even the waiter in a restaurant, you can say 喂. Posh people don't use 喂 at all. The polite way to address stranger is Sir 先生 (xiānshēng), Mrs/Madam 太太 (tāitāi), Miss 小姐 (xiǎojiě), guy 小伙子 (xiǎohuǒzi) etc. But these titles are way too formal and may come across as pretentious. This is a **paradox** really. Note, the Chinese seldom use “excuse me” as commonly used in Western countries.
- **Exclamation:** similar to “hey”, 喂 (wèi) can be used in the beginning of a sentence to express surprise and doubt. For example: 喂喂! 你笑什么? (wèi wèi! nǐ xiào shénme) “Hey, what are you laughing at?”
- **Feeding:** as a verb, 喂 (wèi) means “to feed”.

# DO YOU KNOW – EAST VS WEST MEDICAL TITLE

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- In China, we have a specific title for doctor practising traditional Chinese medicine 中医 (*zhōngyī*) to distinguish it from doctor practising western medicine 西医 (*xīyī*).
- Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is based on a medical practice of 2,500 years in China.
- This includes various forms of herbal medicine 草药 (*cǎoyào*), acupuncture 针灸 (*zhēnjiǔ*), massage 推拿 (*tuīná*), exercise 气功 (*qìgōng*) and dietary therapy 饮食疗法 (*yǐnshíliáofǎ*).





## Comrade 同志 (tóngzhì):

- Regardless of profession, age and status, **everyone** can be referred to as "comrade" in China. Comrade means "friend", "mate", "colleague", or "ally".
- In recent years, however, this meaning of the term has fallen out of common usage, except within Chinese Communist Party discourse and among people of older generations.
- In contemporary Taiwan and Hong Kong, the term mainly referred to the LGBT people instead of the traditional political usage.

## Master 师傅 (shīfu):

- As Western notion, master is a title for and role of a skilful person.
- In modern China, we take it further and call someone as **师傅** out of respect, irrespective of age, gender and profession.
- The common examples are **chef, carpenter, physiotherapist and architect**.
- The more usual term of address for those accomplished in the visual arts is **大师** (dàshī), which means "**great master**".

## Old, Young 老, 小 (lǎo xiǎo):

- Despite being politically incorrect, it is quite common in China to refer someone as old or young among colleagues.
- In general, a senior colleague can be respectfully addressed as "**Elder x**" 老X (lǎo x). A younger colleague or less experienced colleague can be fondly called "**Junior x**" 小X (xiǎo x).

# CHINESE IDIOM - 宁做真小人，不做伪君子

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**níng zuò zhēn xiǎo rén, bù zuò wèi jūn zǐ**  
"Rather be a true villain, not a hypocrite"



- A gentleman **绅士** (*shēnshì*) in China is poetically known as **君子** (*jūn zǐ*), a man of virtue.
- The character **君** is composed of two radicals for “hand” and “mouth,” meaning that a person of refined upbringing should have proper manners of speech and deportment.
- However, there is a world of difference between a **true gentleman** **真君子** (*zhēn jūn zǐ*) and a **hypocrite** **伪君子** (*wěi jūn zǐ*). **真** means real whereas **伪** means bogus. A man of honour is also referred as **正人君子** (*zhèngrénjūn zǐ*).
- Another derogatory term is **真小人** (*zhēn xiǎo rén*), a **real villain**. Literally it means a real little person.



Hypocrite

伪君子

*wěi jūn zǐ*

Who disgusts you  
the most?



Real Villain

真小人

*zhēn xiǎo rén*



# CLASSROOM EXERCISE B.4 – MAKING PHONE CALL

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- Role play: working with the person next to you, make a simple phone call.

