



## LESSON B.4

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# ADDRESSING PEOPLE

# 称呼人们 CHÈNGHU RÉN MEN

# LESSON B.3 REVISION



2

Construct words/phrases from the below characters:

医  
yī

老  
lǎo

家庭  
jiā tíng

首席  
shǒu xí

工  
gōng

公  
gōng

警  
jǐng

邮递  
yóu dì

司  
sī

司  
sī

主妇  
zhǔ fù

机  
jī

执行官  
zhí xíng guān

员  
yuán

察  
chá

师  
shī

作  
zuò

生  
shēng

# ADDRESSING A CHINESE NAME



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- 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.

李 lǐ

+

|    |                  |                        |
|----|------------------|------------------------|
| 先生 | <i>xiānshēng</i> | Mr /Sir /<br>Gentleman |
| 女士 | <i>nǚshì</i>     | Madam / Lady           |
| 小姐 | <i>xiǎojiě</i>   | Miss                   |
| 太太 | <i>tàitài</i>    | Mrs                    |

# ESSENTIAL WORDS



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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



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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



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嗯，急吗？

*éng, jí ma*

Um, is it urgent?

不用急，等他有一点时间。

*bùyòng jí, děng tā yǒu yīdiǎn shí jiān*

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。

*hěnhǎo, xièxiè nín! zàijiàn*

Very good, thank you!  
Goodbye.

# RESPECTABLE TITLE



李 lǐ

+

|    |           |                         |
|----|-----------|-------------------------|
| 医生 | yīshēng   | Doctor                  |
| 老师 | lǎoshī    | Teacher                 |
| 教授 | jiàoshòu  | Professor               |
| 律师 | lǜshī     | Solicitor               |
| 校长 | xiàozhǎng | Headmaster/Headmistress |
| 经理 | jīnglǐ    | Manager                 |
| 老板 | lǎobǎn    | Boss                    |
| 主席 | zhǔxí     | Chairman                |
| 主任 | zhǔrèn    | Director                |
| 博士 | bóshì     | Doctor (of Philosophy)  |
| 同志 | tóngzhì   | Comrade                 |
| 师傅 | shīfù     | 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 (**tàitai**), 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*).



**Doctor**

医生  
*yīshēng*



**Doctor**

大夫  
*dàfū*





## 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 師傅 (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 師傅 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 wèijūnzǐ*  
**"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 (*zhèngrénjūnzǐ*).
- 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



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



喂  
， 喂.....  
*wéi, wéi*