

西式女主人禮儀課程，吸引中國的上流名媛報讀；
商業禮儀課程則受到專注發展事業的學員青睞

Courses on Western-style hosting attract
socialites in China, but the career-minded can
opt for classes on business etiquette

以禮相待

撰文/TEXT MARK GRAHAM

SOCIAL STUDIES

中國人和外籍人士均熱衷報讀北京的禮儀課程，
學習在跨文化互動時要注意的言談舉止

Chinese and expatriates alike turn to etiquette classes in
Beijing to study the finer points of cross-cultural interactions

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界各地正進一步邁向全球化，到海外旅遊及跨境商業活動都非常普遍，人們對外國文化再不會像以往那樣感到不安，甚至有陌生的感覺。然而，這個轉變令人們更需要學習在外國出席正式場合時，如何作出恰當的言談舉止和待人接物方式，而並非只透過電視節目或電影盲目摸索，落得一知半解。

中國的禮儀學校正是以傳授禮儀細節為目標。在高端市場方面，北京有一家禮儀學校專門向中國富豪面授社交技巧，讓他們可以在西方上流社會應對自如。與此同時，首都城內也有不少禮儀基礎課程，特別為中國商界人士及

準備出國旅遊的人士而設，好讓他們對巴黎、倫敦、紐約等地的商務與社交互動方式，有一個基本概念。

另一方面，大量海外資金湧入中國，也促使西方行政人員有興趣學習中國的基本禮儀。遍佈世界各地、旨在推廣中國文化的孔子學院，便舉辦相關課程，讓外國人了解中國社交禮儀的微妙之處和禁忌所在。

在中國提供禮儀課程的其中一位知名業者，是在北京開業的何佩嶸。她開辦為期12天的「女主人禮儀課程」，學費高達100,000人民幣（約126,000港元），但客源不絕，皆因中國富豪把這筆學費視為一項投資，冀能掌握各種技巧，能在社交及商業上大派用場。

在香港土生土長的何佩嶸擁有哈佛大學商學院工商管理碩士學位，並曾於瑞士一間國際禮儀學院修讀課程。現



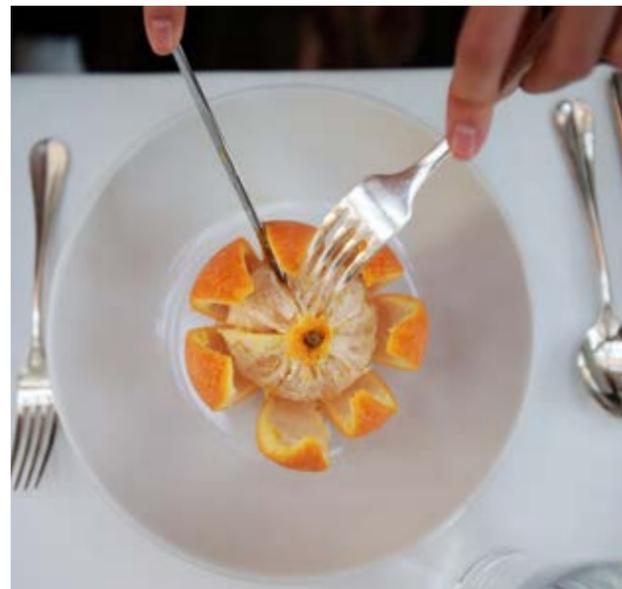
IN AN INCREASINGLY globalised world, in which overseas travel is widespread and businesses commonly stretch across borders, foreign cultures are no longer as intimidating or, indeed, as foreign as they once were. But this shift also makes it more vital to understand the proper ways of conducting oneself in a formal setting overseas, beyond what may be gleaned from cultural depictions in television shows or movies.

Filling in those details is what etiquette schools in China hope to achieve. At the higher end, a Beijing school is equipping well-off Chinese with the social skills necessary to move fluidly through

Western high society. Meanwhile, more nuts-and-bolts courses in the capital city give Chinese businesspeople and travellers a fundamental grounding in the way work and social interactions are carried out in cities such as Paris, London and New York.

The huge influx of overseas investment to China has also led to a demand from Western executives keen to learn the rudiments of etiquette in the country. Confucius Institutes, set up to promote Chinese culture in various cities around the world, run courses that instruct people in the subtleties of social behaviour – and the potential minefields.

One of the most well-known etiquette-course



瑞雅禮儀創辦人之一的何佩嶸，向學員示範優雅地品嚐香橙的方法（上圖）和享受英式下午茶時應注意的禮儀細節（左圖）

Sara Jane Ho, who co-founded the Institute Sarita etiquette school, demonstrates the elegant way to eating an orange (above) and the ins and outs of British afternoon tea (left)



在她與合夥人黎展在北京開設的禮儀學校「瑞雅禮儀」，提供一系列課程教授名媛淑女款客之道，例如擺放瓷器及純銀餐具的正確方法、餐桌花藝，以至菜單及客人座席的安排等。此外，學校也為商界和外籍人士開設課程，幫助他們了解中國文化的規矩。基本上，何佩嶸是教導學員如何在國際場合中，表現出自信、從容與體貼別人。

她的課程收費高昂，賣點是可令學員易於融入另一種文化。課程於北京下城區一個住宅單位內舉辦，無論是課室設計或教材品質，都盡量模擬學員將會處身的場合。何佩嶸認為，這正是瑞雅禮儀有別於其他禮儀學校之處。「我們提供頂級課程，採用精美的銀器及餐具上課，成本當然很高。對我來說，在優雅而精緻的環境中教學十分重要。」

安排學員出席正式餐宴是課程一部分，他們也有機會參加使館派對及上流社會的體育活動，如馬球賽與馬術障礙賽等。名媛淑女除了學習如何在派對中談笑風生，還要學習正確讀出各種奢華品牌的名稱，如Ermenegildo Zegna及Christian Louboutin等，而許多西方人有時也會被這些名稱難倒。

何佩嶸被譽為「北京禮儀大師」，但真正令她在中國建立聲望的，卻是「香港哈佛女孩」這個外號。她說：「哈佛

大學商學院令我贏得信任，這是為何一位40多歲的女士也來聽我講課，並且逐字逐句做筆記，只因為她尊重我的學歷和背景。此外，我來自東西文化交融的香港，也是一大原因，亞洲及西方客戶同樣接受我。」

何佩嶸的客戶包括一些企業家，他們深明若了解西方世界各種微妙的處世之道，將有利於日後的業務往來。

商人Jennifer Zhong是瑞雅禮儀的傑出校友。她說：「我想仔細學習各種禮儀、款待客人之道、站立的姿勢，以及餐桌禮儀。在課程中，我同時學習到作為一位優雅淑女的精髓，就是要懂得照顧他人。何小姐真好，她教導我們禮儀規矩，不僅告訴我們要怎樣做，還會解釋原因。」

何佩嶸也向在華工作的外籍人士，傳授中國基本的禮儀規矩。思科企業高級總監Michelle Fleury近期報讀了這個課程，她負責多個中國策略性夥伴的發展與營運事務。她說：「課程最大的得著是讓我掌握紮實的基本禮儀，比如介紹、問好、會面與用餐禮儀等等，還深入了解更為微妙的課題，例如面子和關係（人際網絡）。我所學到的東西，不論在中國或美國均極為有用。」

Fleury又指出：「令我深感詫異的，是兩地對奉行正式禮儀的態度相去甚遠。在中國商業文化中，任何時候都

「北京禮儀大師」何佩嶸擁有哈佛大學MBA學位，並於瑞士修讀禮儀課程。Ho, often called the “Beijing Miss Manners”, has a Harvard MBA and took a course at a finishing school in Switzerland

providers is Beijing-based Sara Jane Ho, who charges top dollar for a 12-day hostessing course. There is no shortage of takers among wealthy Chinese individuals who see the RMB100,000 (about HK\$126,000) fee as an investment that equips them with skills useful in both social and business environments.

Ho, a Hong Kong native, has an MBA from Harvard Business School and took a course at a finishing school in Switzerland. Today she runs Beijing's Institute Sarita, which she founded with partner Rebecca Li. It offers a range of courses for ladies who lunch – setting a table using the correct china and silver flatware, arranging flowers, creating a menu and a seating plan – as well as for businesspeople and expatriates who want to learn the equivalent rules in Chinese culture. Essentially, what Ho is teaching is how to be

confident, comfortable and considerate of others in an international setting.

Although her classes are pricey, what the entrepreneur offers is a way for people to enter smoothly into another culture. Classes are held in an apartment in downtown Beijing that mirrors the world in which her clients will be operating. This, she says, is what sets Institute Sarita apart from other etiquette schools. “We are a premium product; we use fine silver and cutlery, so of course my costs are quite high. For me it is very important to teach in very elegant and refined surroundings.”

Formal meals are part of the training, as is attendance at embassy parties and high-class sporting events such as polo matches and showjumping competitions. Apart from learning how to make small talk at parties, ladies also learn how to correctly pronounce the names of luxury brands such as Ermenegildo Zegna and Christian Louboutin – labels that give many Westerners a hard time.

Ho has been called the “Beijing Miss Manners”, but it is the term “Hong Kong Harvard girl” that provides real cachet in China. “Harvard Business School gives me credibility, which is why a 40-year-old woman will come and listen to me and take notes word for word, because she respects my education and my background,” she says. “Also the fact that I am from Hong Kong – East meets West – makes me acceptable to both Asian and Western clients.”

Customers include entrepreneurs who know that learning the more subtle ways of the Western world could be useful tools in future business dealings. “I wanted to learn details of etiquette, how to serve, how to stand and table manners,” says Jennifer Zhong, a businesswoman and an alumna of Institute Sarita. “During the course I also learned something of the spirit of being an elegant lady – how to take care of others. Sara is great. She taught the rules for etiquette; she not only told us how to do it, but she also told us why.”

Ho also offers courses that teach expatriate workers in China the fundamentals of the country's own etiquette rules. Among the recent students was Michelle Fleury, who is a Corporate Senior Director at Cisco Systems, responsible for the development and operation of several strategic partnerships in China. “Key takeaways for me included a solid understanding of the basics



克尼格禮儀學院的課程，幫助商界和政界人士學習基本的西方禮儀

Knigge Akademie focuses on the fundamentals of Western etiquette to help clients in business and government

要保持正式的禮儀，而且要禮貌至上；但美國的商業文化則隨意及直接得多。」

德國克尼格禮儀學院在北京開辦的課程，則著重教授西方禮儀的基本要點，讓商界人士及政府官員對禮儀具備一定的認識，幫助他們無論在國內與外賓會面或出國外訪時，都能避免出現尷尬情況。他們並會教導學員各種衣著禮儀細節，當中有些連西方人也不一定很清楚，例如男士穿上三扣式西裝時，應該扣上哪幾顆鈕扣；又或是女士出席商務場合時，應該佩戴多少件珠寶首飾等。

監督克尼格禮儀學院北京課程的劉會忠指出：「學員或許曾經在電視上看過某些西方禮儀，卻未必知道箇中原因。我們也提供有關西方餐飲的訓練，包括如何點菜、進餐，以及怎樣祝酒。」

克尼格禮儀學院以Adolph Freiherr Knigge命名，他於1788年撰寫的《On Human Relations》一書討論社交關係的基本要點，後來成為學習禮儀的寶典。時至今日，克尼格協會已是德國教授禮貌和禮儀的權威。克尼格禮儀學院北京課程的賣點，是導師均專程由德國遠道而來。劉會忠又指出，許多中國人認定德國代表著精密與準確，因而令克尼格學院舉辦的課程深受歡迎。

所謂各處鄉村各處例，相信來自任何國家和文化背景的旅客和外籍人士，都會認同即使再多的禮儀訓練，也無法確保學員絕對不會出洋相。但對初學者來說，基本的禮儀知識，已經可以改變一些想法。劉會忠談及克尼格禮儀學院一些學員時說：「當他們知道某些禮儀，與他們在中國習慣的舉止行為大不相同時，可能會很驚訝。」

– introductions, greetings, meeting and meal etiquette, etc. – and a deeper sense of much more subtle topics, such as face and *guanxi* [networking],” Fleury says. “All of what I’ve learned has been valuable to me – in China and in the US. The difference most striking to me is the degree to which formal etiquette is practised. In Chinese business culture, formal etiquette is ever-present and politeness is the rule, while the American business culture is more casual and direct.”

At the Beijing classes taught by the Knigge Akademie, a German company, the coaching leans more towards the nuts and bolts of Western etiquette, giving businesspeople and government officials the fundamentals to help them avoid embarrassments when meeting overseas guests in China or when venturing abroad. They also teach the finer points, including some that even Westerners may not know, such as which buttons should be closed on a man’s three-button suit jacket or how many pieces of jewellery a woman should wear to a business function.

“They see it on television, but they don’t always know why people do certain things,” says Eric Liu, who supervises the Knigge courses in Beijing. “We have training sessions on Western food, how to order dishes, how to eat them and how people toast each other with drinks.”

The Knigge Akademie takes its name from Adolph Freiherr Knigge, whose 1788 book *On Human Relations*, which discusses the basis of social relationships, has also become a handbook on etiquette. Today, the Knigge Society is the German authority on manners and etiquette. A large part of the school’s appeal in Beijing is that courses are taught by trainers from Germany; according to Liu, many Chinese associate Germany with precision and accuracy, which is what makes the Knigge courses popular.

While no amount of etiquette training can completely safeguard against committing *faux pas* – as travellers and expatriates of any country and culture can attest – for the uninitiated, the basics can change a foreigner’s mind-set. Referring to some of the students at Knigge, Liu says: “It can be a surprise for people that they are expected to behave differently to the way they do in China.” ■