

February 13, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S
PARTY

FROM:

DWIGHT L. CHAPIN

SUBJECT:

General Information

1. The Chinese are always on time. It is imperative that all members of the U.S. party be aware of punctuality. You should always be on time if not a few minutes early.
2. The Chinese will encourage you to dress warmly. They are very concerned when you do not dress properly with a heavy coat, scarf, and hat.
3. The Chinese are very pleased in assisting Americans to learn simple Chinese phrases. The gesture of asking how you say, "Thank you" and "Goodnight" is appreciated. The interpreters speak excellent English.
4. The Chinese usually step back and let a guest go through a doorway first. The gesture of letting your Chinese counterpart go through first would be most appreciated.
5. The Chinese do not usually give their names. It is suggested that you always ask. It is felt that this is appreciated by the Chinese. It is appropriate to use the surname with Mr. or Mrs. such as Miss Wong, Mr. Chiang or to use the titles such as Vice Minister, Director, etc.
6. The Chinese take great pride in their food and to compliment the various courses and dishes is also recommended. Often times you will be asked to criticize various food, preparation, dishes, wines, and other similar items. You are advised to simply refrain from making comments unless they are complimentary. Also, you should not say anything if it is not truly meant. As you know, they watch everything you say and do very closely and have a tendency to read quite a great deal into what you say and do.

7. Instructions on currency exchange will be available by calling Mr. John Thomas once we are in Peking. It is anticipated that when members of the party visit the various Friendship Stores that currency exchange be handled right on the spot.
8. It is anticipated that there will be opportunities for the party to go shopping in all three cities. Members of the party should not begin asking to go shopping until they have been in Peking for two or three days. The PRC Protocol Office is aware that all the members of the American party would like to visit the various Friendship Stores. We will alert you once the arrangements for shopping have been worked out with our hosts.
9. Virtually, every time one moves to a meeting or to an event, there will be time for rest and tea. There are always Chinese cigarettes which will be offered to you. You should be aware that these cigarettes are different from American cigarettes and if inhaled too deeply may cause some uncomfortable effects. In the various sitting rooms, you will be given a cup of tea which could either be black Chinese tea, green tea, or jasmine tea. Their tea is classified as a stimulant and that is the reason it is served during rest periods as well as during meetings.
10. One of the first things that the Chinese will do after you have been seated on many occasions is to offer a cigarette. They appreciate your taking one of their cigarettes which they would also attempt to light. If you do not smoke, you simply say very politely, "No, thank you". If members of the party do smoke, you should not smoke an American brand until you have smoked one or two Chinese cigarettes. You may wish to offer an American cigarette first to your Chinese friend and attempt to light his cigarette. Generally, Chinese women do not smoke and the women members of the party will probably not be offered cigarettes.
11. The Chinese are graced with a good sense of humor. Although they have some difficulty understanding American humor, they will try very hard. You will find that they very much appreciate trying to learn American phrases and cliches and one is often asked to take time to explain the nuances of our expressions.

12. At the banquets and during the meals at the Guest Houses, you will find there will be three glasses in front of you. The water glass is for either beer or juice. The other two glasses are the wine glass and the Mao Tai glass. You can drink from the water glass any time during the meal. However, at banquets, the wine and Mao Tai are for toasting only. These glasses should not be raised without toasting one of your Chinese friends.
13. When entering or leaving a doorway, always look for a cross board approximately 6" high. This is particularly true in the Forbidden City.
14. Do not leave important or classified papers unattended. At each location there will be a "secure" room where these papers may be left.
15. Keep the switchboard aware of your location at all times.
16. Do not discuss anything in your residence, or car or at any other times that the Chinese should not hear.