

Excerpts from *Da Ming huidian* Collected Statutes of Great Ming, translated in about 1992 by Sarah Schneewind studying with Professor Pei-yi Wu, Columbia University.

Ming Huidian 59/1455 my notes pp. 10h-i

Etiquette of the common people

The common people (*min shu*) establish precedence by age. Retired officials arrange themselves according to rank, or when the rank is the same, according to age, but when they go somewhere with relatives and clansmen, they don't bother about rank.¹

HW 5: The villages rank according to age. Among the people, the gentlemen, farmers, artisans and merchants when they meet on ordinary occasions and at the seasonal festivals, the bowing etiquette is that the younger does it first. The seating order is that the older sits above. If a tenant meets his landlord, regardless of age, he also should follow the etiquette of the junior serving the senior. If they are relatives, then regardless of who is master or tenant, they should just carry out the etiquette for kin.²

HW 12 (1379): Provincial and capital officials when they retire and are living in the countryside should arrange themselves into honored and humble according to the patrilineal order. [Meetings with mother's parents and

1. but just use kin etiquette.

2. This is from Huang Ming Zhaoling HW5.5.

wife's kin should use kin etiquette as well]³ but if there is a feast then different tables should be set up since retired officials may not sit below anyone without official status.

If there is a gathering with other retired officials, then they shall be ordered by rank, or if the rank is the same, by age. Upon meeting someone of an unrelated family with no official members, the retired official need not return the salutation. Commoners (*shu min*) shall follow official etiquette in visiting retired officials. If there dare to be any who insult [retired officials, they shall be] sentences according to the law.

HW 26: It was stipulated: Among the people any son, grandson, younger brother, nephew through brother or sister, or son-in-law seeing an elder or better; or any pupil seeing his teacher; or male or female slave seeing the master of the house, if there is going to be a long separation, shall prostrate him/herself four times. Ordinarily, for a brief separation, s/he just does a bow. In the case of other relatives, old and young according to their proper standing in the case of a long separation shall do two prostrations, but ordinarily, for a short separation, they just bow. and the same for those of equal status.

3. I'm not clear about the precise translation here, but this is the gist, according to Wu Pei-yi.