

作東道主

當你探望朋友時，如果對方跟你說：“今天就讓我一盡地主之誼，由我來作東吧！”那就是說他要宴請你。以“盡地主之誼”和“作東”來表示請客，是十分常見的說法。不過，大家或許不知道這些用語的由來。

作為當地的主人，熱情款客，這份情誼稱為“地主之誼”。“地主之誼”語出《左傳·哀公十二年》：“夫諸侯之會，事既畢矣，侯伯致禮，地主歸餼^{*}，以相辭也。”此句大意是諸侯之會既已結束，諸侯的盟主應向賓客致禮，而當地的主人也應饋贈牲口，以此互相辭別。後人以“地主之誼”代表當地的主人款待或宴請來賓的情誼。“盡地主之誼”，就是盡了當地主人義務的意思。

“作東”即作東道主，語本《左傳·僖公三十年》：“若舍鄭以為東道主，行李之往來，共其乏困，君亦無所

害。”春秋時期，晉、秦兩國包圍鄭國，原因是鄭國對晉國無禮，而且懷有異心，與楚國友好。為了分化晉、秦，鄭國派出燭之武到秦國作說客。燭之武指出一旦鄭亡，只會對晉有利，因為鄭、晉相鄰，鄭地必為晉所吞併。秦與晉聯手滅鄭，豈非徒令晉國壯大而削弱秦國本身？燭之武又向秦國提出，如秦國網開一面，則鄭國願意擔當東路上的主人，為秦國往來的使節供應所需，這於秦而言，亦無害處。鄭國在秦之東，秦出使東面必須取道鄭國，因此鄭國便是秦國的“東道主”。燭之武向秦君力陳利害，最後說服秦國撤兵，秦、鄭兩國因此結為盟友。晉國見秦兵已退，也隨之撤軍。這便是歷史上著名的“燭之武退秦師”的故事。後泛指“作東”為請客，而“東道主”則指招待賓客的主人。

^{*}“餼”，粵音“氣”，古代祭祀或饋贈用的活牲口。



入鄉隨俗

When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do

For those who have never tried eating with their fingers instead of with forks or chopsticks, it may be worth a try when they travel one day to a place like India. It is always advisable to follow local customs wherever one visits, as the proverb “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” says.

Widely taken as an infallible precept, the saying “When in Rome, do as the Romans do” is attributed to Saint Ambrose, one of the most eminent bishops of the 4th century. When Saint Augustine arrived in Milan, he observed that, unlike the practice in Rome, the Church there did not fast on Saturday. He then consulted Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whether religious fasting should be practised on Saturday. Saint Ambrose replied, “When I am in Milan, I do not fast on Saturday; when I am in Rome, I fast on Saturday”, and advised him to follow the custom of the Church where he was. Saint Ambrose’s advice had appeared in English by about 1530 and eventually became “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”.



Saint Ambrose

“When in Rome, do as the Romans do” remains a popular saying and is often shortened to either simply “when in Rome” or to simply “do as the Romans do”. For example, “I don’t usually eat lamb, but I did when I went to New Zealand, well, when in Rome...” and “I know you have egg and bacon for breakfast at home, but now you are on the Continent. So do as the Romans do and take coffee and rolls instead.”

中國幅員廣大，民族有五十六個之多；每個民族各有特殊風俗，例如回族、維吾爾族等忌吃豬肉；蒙古族忌諱坐於蒙古包的西北角；哈尼族不會到產婦家借用家具；佉族忌諱別人摸頭和耳朵。即使同是漢族，也可能因方言互異、地域不同、文化有別而在風俗方面各有所依。有些風俗在外人看來莫名其妙，但對族人來說卻意義重大。尊重別人的風俗習慣，除了是基本禮貌之外，也有助於人際交往。

每到一處陌生地方，首先了解清楚當地的習俗，並按這些風俗習慣行事，此謂“入鄉隨俗”。這個成語出自《莊子·山木》：“入其俗，從其令”，可用以比喻能適應環境，隨遇而安。“入鄉隨俗”也作“入鄉隨鄉”、“隨鄉入鄉”和“隨鄉入俗”。

俗語有云：“千里不同風，百里不同俗”。世界各地都有本身的風俗習慣，前往外地公幹或旅遊時，應盡可能跟從當地的風俗，以示尊重。清楚知道有何禁忌，以免觸犯，也同樣重要。總而言之，只要緊記《禮記·曲禮上》所言：“入境而問禁，入國而問俗，入門而問諱”，便無往而不利。

Customs may not be as wise as laws, but they are always more popular.

Benjamin Disraeli