

rins' houses are built in similar style. Passing through two outer courtyards, the first being protected from evil spirits by a massive clay wall in front of the gateway, you come to a platform of boards with three painted walls of boards and a roof. The ordinary entrance is from the side behind this platform, but for persons of rank and foreigners the back wall is opened. The platform serves as a courtroom, when the Fuguan tries cases that will bear publicity, for the people are allowed into this courtyard. Private sessions are held in the colonnade of the inner courtyard. The insignia of his rank are placed along the side walls. Crossing this platform you pass through another wall of boards into a rectangular courtyard, at the end of which there is a one-storeyed building with wing-like projections and some wooden columns that support the roof connecting the wings. The house itself is quite small. Lesser gates, in the shape of a rectangle standing on one corner, or round, lead through either side wall of the courtyard into other courts of the space occupied by the yamen's different buildings, surrounded by a common mud wall. In the vestibule formed between the building in the background and the wings, guests are received by the mandarin, who comes to meet them in full official array and adapting his pace so that he reaches the column at the door of the wing where they are received, at the very moment when they enter the last courtyard. His dress consists of a round, black felt hat, the brim of which is turned up almost to the height of the crown, surmounted by a coloured stone or a ball of glass or metal according to his rank, and with a fringe of red silk cords dependent from it over the crown of the hat and a peacock's feather protruding at the back and fastened to the crown by a tube of jade or some other frequently valuable stone. The hat, which has a black silk cord fastened under the chin close to the neck, is worn on the back of the head, the forehead being left uncovered. Over a black Chinese garment reaching to below the knees, with a turned-down collar of light blue velvet and silken cuffs of the same colour, is worn a garment richly embroidered in gold on the chest and of rectangular shaped back, with a design of a stork, a lion, a dragon, or a snake according to the rank of the mandarin. A long necklace of carved brown wooden beads, with a coloured stone or bead here and there, is worn round the neck. Europeans are usually welcomed, at any rate here near the frontier, by a slight shake of both hands. The Chinese greet each other with a graceful curtsy, performed with one leg behind the other, the fingers of the right hand touching the floor. All this is accompanied by one of the smiles in which the Chinese excel. Guests are then escorted into one of the rooms in the wing. These reception rooms in a mandarin's official residence are mostly furnished in similar style. In front of one of the windows a tall, rectangular, polished mahogany table is placed facing an almost square divan, across which its occupant is expected to lie with his head to the wall. Above the divan there are some vases, a mirror or a clock on a shelf along the wall. One of the longer walls is usually occupied by a smaller four-cornered table with an armchair on either side with straight and stiff arms and a back of turned mahogany bars and with red cushions. The opposite wall is not furnished as a rule, but is decorated with Chinese mottoes inscribed on narrow, oblong paper rolls in memory of various episodes in the life of the mandarin or of his family. Such rolls also decorate the other walls of the room, if there is a sufficient quantity of them.