

**Waiting on Officialdom**

The government big-wig has not come.

In his office-courtyard kola-trees  
Twist from the ground like hurt green dragons  
Stiffened in their agonies.

A gaggle of clerks and sub-assistants  
Scurries around like who knows what.  
Again and again I ask his minions  
“Is he coming or is he not?”,  
And some say nothing, some prevaricate,

Some inspect their nails, and some  
Turn away with a sour expression.

His gateway darkens. He will not come.

— *Li Ho (791-817)*

*(Translated by Graeme Wilson)*