

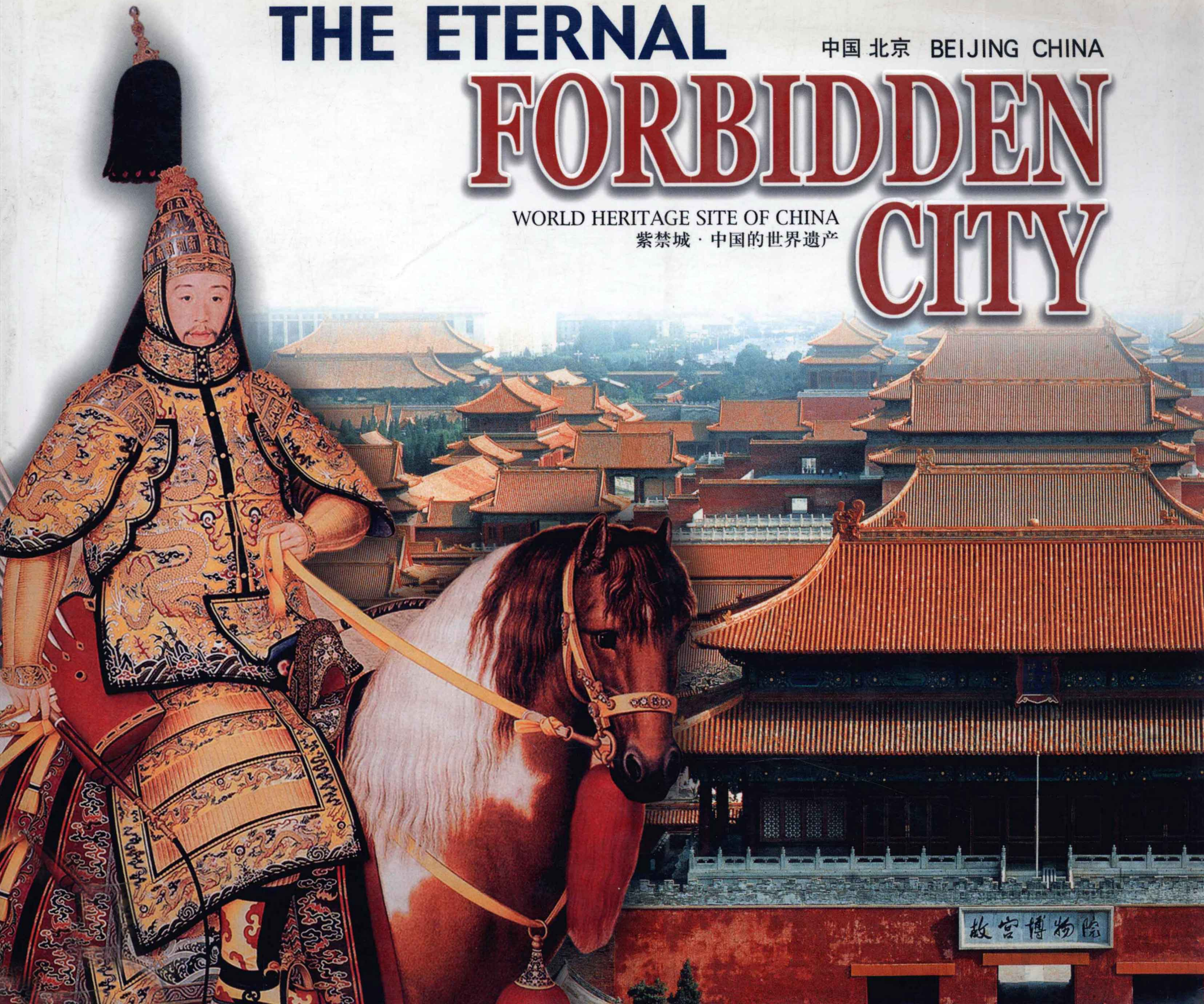
# THE ETERNAL

中国 北京 BEIJING CHINA

# FORBIDDEN CITY

WORLD HERITAGE SITE OF CHINA

紫禁城 · 中国的世界遗产



故宫博物院

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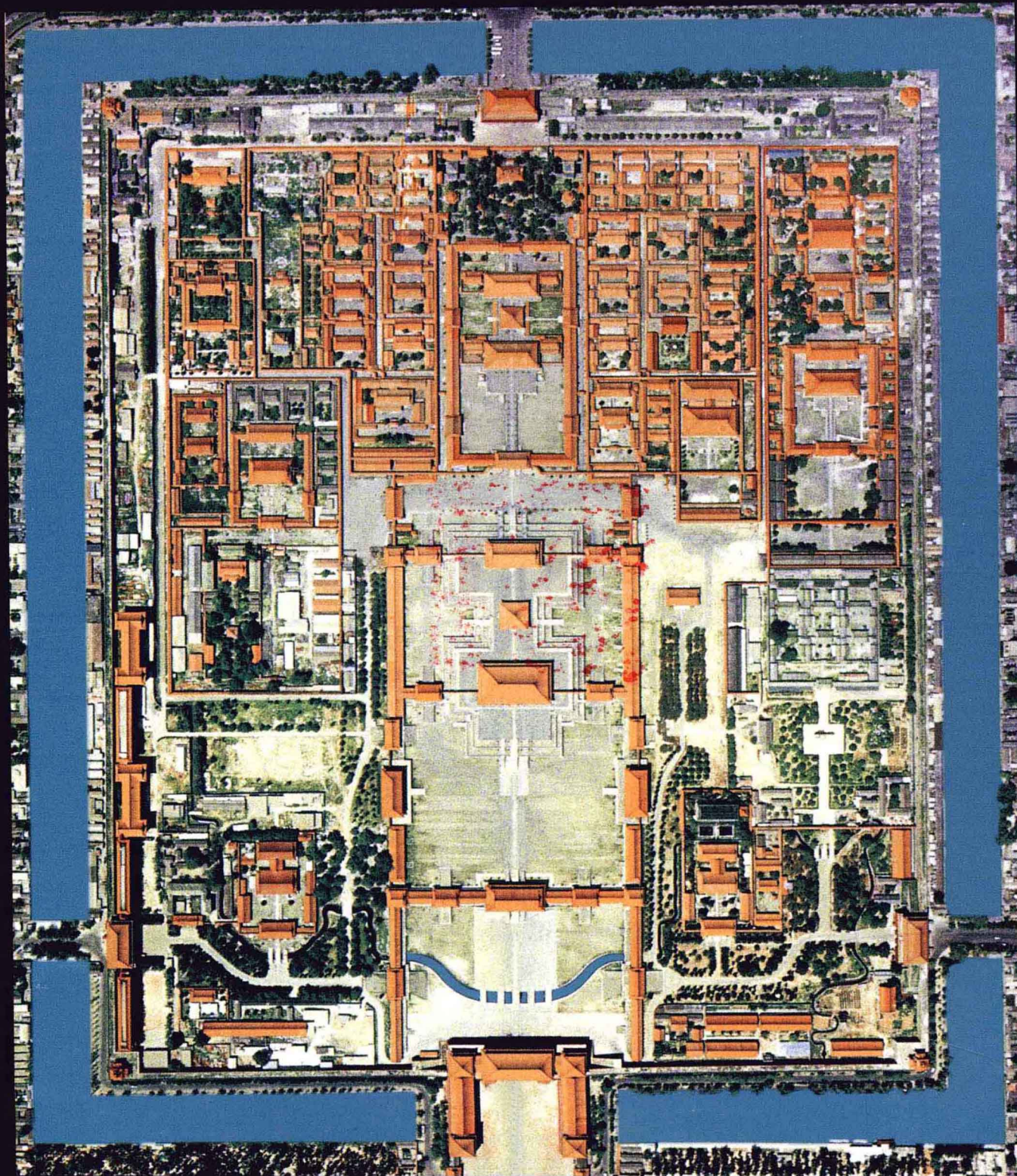
**Forbidden City**

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永远的 紫禁城







An Aerial Photograph of the Forbidden City 故宫鸟瞰全景图

# The Eternal Forbidden City

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# Foreword 前言

During Chinese 2,000-year feudal society period, dozens of power-centered dynasties existed successively, along with many a small government. Emperors of various dynasties would build imperial palaces in their capitals. For them the palaces were not so much a luxurious place for their handling affairs and residing, as well as the manifestation of imperial dignity and supreme power. So they always built their extremely sumptuous palaces with labor-force and money throughout the country. Famous imperial palaces in Chinese history include the Xianyanggong and E'panggong of the Qin Dynasty (221 B.C. – 206 B.C.) in its capital Xianyang (present Xianyang in Shaanxi Province), Changlegong, Weiyanggong and Jianzhanggong of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 25 A.D.) in its capital Chang'an (today's Xi'an in Shaanxi Province), as well as Daminggong and Xingqinggong of the Tang Dynasty (618 – 907) also in Chang'an. Regrettably, they were all destroyed by wars or disappeared along with the flowing years. Today, there is little enough to hang your imagination. You have to picture how fascinating the original must once have been according to the historical records and poems.

Fortunately, the imperial palace of China's last two feudal dynasties, the Forbidden City at the center of Beijing, is well preserved. This former imperial palace of the Ming (1368 – 1644) and Qing (1644 – 1911) dynasties, is the China's extant largest ancient palace complex.

The construction of Forbidden City started from the Ming Dynasty. During the dynasty's beginning 53 years, the Ming court had its capital at Yingtianfu (present Nanjing, Jiangsu Province), a city located at the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Beijing, known as Beipingfu at that time, was an important military strongpoint in north of China, and the enfeoffment of Zhu Di, the fourth son of Zhu Yuanzhang, who founded the Ming Dynasty and reigned between 1368-1398. Amongst the 20-odd regional princes enfeoffed by Zhu Yuanzhang, Zhu Di, who was eye-catching for his military and political talents, was regarded highly by his father. In accordance with the rule at that time, Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang's heir should be his eldest son, Zhu Biao, however, Zhu Biao died during Zhu Yuanzhang's reign. So before his death in 1398, also according to the traditional rule of succession, Zhu Yuanzhang willed the imperial throne to his grandson Zhu Yunwen, the eldest son of the deceased Crown Prince Zhu Biao. Aware of the threat posed by his enfeoffed uncles, especially Zhu Di, the new emperor, reign-titled Jianwen, acted to curtail their powers. Zhu Di wasted no time in launching an insurrection against the young emperor, by name of "Jingnan (Resolving the National Crisis)". In the aftermath of the four-year civil war between the uncle and his nephew, Zhu Di took the throne and Emperor Jianwen ran away.

In 1402, Zhu Di, whose posthumous title was Chengzu, ascended the throne in Nanjing, and he changed his reign title to Yongle the following year. In 1421, the 19th year of Emperor Yongle's reign, the capital of the Ming Dynasty was moved from Nanjing to Beijing. It was in the new-completed Forbidden City that Emperor Zhu Di received the paying of respects and congratulations from his officials, making him the first ruler lived in the city. For some five centuries thereafter, the Forbidden City continued to be the residence of 23 successive emperors of both Ming and Qing dynasties.

Construction of the palace complex began in 1407, the 5th year of the Yongle's reign. The first completed hall was Fengtiandian (Hall for Heaven Worship, the predecessor of today's Taihedian). The large-scale construction of the Forbidden City started in 1417, the 15th year of Yongle's reign, and it was not completed until the end of 1420.

Manpower, financial and material resources throughout the country were used to built the Forbidden City during the Ming Dynasty. It took 14 years to finish the massive project. About 300,000 soldiers, civilians and artisans took part in the construction, and the building materials were from all parts of the country. For example, the rare timber was from Sichuan, Huguang, Jiangxi,

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Zhejiang and Shanxi provinces; the bricks were made in Lingqing, Shandong Province, and Suzhou, Jiangsu Province; stone need was quarried from Fangshan, a southwestern suburb of Beijing; and the glazed tiles of different colors were also made in the suburbs of Beijing.

Modeled on the palace complex in Nanjing, the Forbidden City continued to be laid out according to the Chinese ancient architectural rule, which indicates that the court should be built in the front part while the market area built in the rear, with the ancestral temple on the left and altar of earth and grains on the right. The fact is: the front part of the Forbidden City is flanked by the Ancestral Temple, where emperor's ancestors were dedicated, and the Altar of Earth and Grains, where the gods of earth and grains were enshrined; all structures catering for emperor's granting audience face south; a regularly-opened market was established to the north of the palace city. As to its layout – the Outer and Inner courts, the Six Eastern and Western palaces, Wenhudian (Hall of Literary Glory) on the left and Wuyingdian (Hall of Martial Velour) on the right, as well as associating with water in the south and against a hill in the north – the Forbidden City, including the names of halls and gates, is a replica of the imperial palace in Nanjing, except the fact that its scale is much larger than that in Nanjing.

Covering an area of 72 hectares, the north to south and 750 meters wide from 15 hectares. In ancient China, the square bay, or a room, so the largest building, which has 72 columns in 6 rows, counts counting, there are now 8,704 bays totally arranged symmetrically in a hierarchical from Wumen (Meridian Gate) in the south the north. The groups of building are knit into a harmonious whole, and each, being an independent unit, has a role to play in beautifying the palatial complex. The Forbidden City's axis was also that of Beijing City at the time, which extended to the Yongdingmen (Gate of Eternal Stability) in the south and to the Zhonggulou (Bell and Drum Towers) in the north, lengthening 8 kilometers. During the construction of Beijing City in his reign, Ming Emperor Yongle inherited ancient architectural tradition of Chinese feudal capital, and projected it into the layout of his capital. Everything in the palace demonstrated the supremacy of imperial power and the strict hierarchic rules, for instance, the central axis running through the city, the palace situating in the heart of the city, the red palace wall, the yellow glazed tiles covering the roof, marble terraces and balustrades, etc. And even the numbers of doornails were used symbolically.

Many of the buildings in the Forbidden City have been repaired and rebuilt during some 500 years, but their basic form and layout remain in their original state. A moat encircles a high wall which encloses the complex and has a gate on each side. Unique and delicately-structured corner towers rest on the four corners of the wall. The Forbidden City is divided into two parts: the Outer Court and Inner Court. The former was where the emperor held grand ceremonies and exercised his supreme power over the nation. The later was the place he handled daily state affairs, and lived and entertainment with his royal family, as well as paid homage to the gods. The Outer Court is centered by Three Grand Halls – Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), Zhonghedian (Hall of Complete Harmony) and Baohedian (Hall of Preserved Harmony) – which are flanked by Wenhudian



Forbidden City is 960 meters long from east to west, and the total floor space is space between columns is counted as a Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), as 55 bays. Using this special method of in the Forbidden City. All structures were order along the central axis stretching to Shenwumen (Gate of Devine Might) in

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(Hall of Literary Glory) and Wuyingdian (Hall of Martial Velour). The Three Grand Halls were originally named Fengtiandian (Hall for Heaven Worship), Huagaidian (Canopy Hall) and Jinshendian (Hall of Cautiousness) respectively during the Ming Dynasty, same as halls in the imperial palace in Nanjing, former capital of the dynasty. They got their present names in the Qing Dynasty. In front of the Taihedian is a square which covers a total of 30,000 square meters. Positioned on the central axis south to the square are five gates – Taihemmen (Gate of Supreme Harmony), Wumen (Meridian Gate), Duanmen (Upright Gate), Tian'anmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace, named Chengtianmen, or Gate of Heavenly Succession, in the Ming Dynasty), and Daqingmen (Grand Qing Gate, named Damingmen, or Grand Ming Gate, in the Ming Dynasty) in turn. Each two gates are separated by a square or linked with a paved path. The palace city extends for 1.5 kilometers to the imperial city on both sides of south and north. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Outer Court contained all the five gates aforesaid, in accordance with the architectural regulation of imperial buildings that a palace should have three courts and five gates. The Grand Court, Regular Court and Daily Court were collectively known as the Three Courts, corresponding with the Three Grand Hall. All five gates keep their original states except that the Daqingmen was demolished.

Aligned with the central axis, the Three Rear Palaces – Qianqinggong (Palace of Celestial Purity), Jiaotaidian (Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union), and Kunminggong (Palace of Terrestrial Tranquility) – are core structures of the Inner Court, flanked by the Six Eastern and Western Palaces resided by imperial concubines, as well as the Five Eastern and Western Abodes, the former residences of imperial sons. To the south of Six Eastern Palaces are Fengxiandian (Hall for Ancestry Worship, also known as the Inner Ancestral Temple), Zhaigong (Palace of Abstinence) and Yuqinggong (Palace of Celebrating Nurturing), while to the south of Six Western Palaces is Yangxindian (Hall of Mental Cultivation). Located outside of Six Eastern Palaces, known as the Waidonglu (Outer Eastern Route), is a complex centered by Ningshougong (Palace of Tranquil Longevity), which was built during the Qing Dynasty and later rebuilt by Qing Emperor Qianlong for his evening life after abdicating. Such main structures as Cininggong (Palace of Kindliness and Tranquility), Shouangong (Palace of Longevity and Peacefulness), the living quarters of empress dowagers, were built west side of the Six Western Palaces (Outer Western Route), along with the Buddhist and Taoist temples.

Standing at the northernmost tip of the central axis is the Imperial Garden, which reflected Chinese traditional palace layout that a palace was built in the front part while a garden was in the rear. Architectural structures in the garden – pavilions, water-houses, chambers, towers and halls – are arranged symmetrically in hierarchical order, dotted with rare flowers and trees, pond and layered rocks. From the neat layout, the architect sought to use diverse forms of buildings and their supplements to play up the imposing royal manner, and to exhibit densely characteristics of garden as well. Besides the Imperial Garden, there are three gardens in the Forbidden City: Ningshougong Garden (or Qianlong Garden), Cininggong Garden and Jianfugong (Palace of Establishing Happiness) Garden.

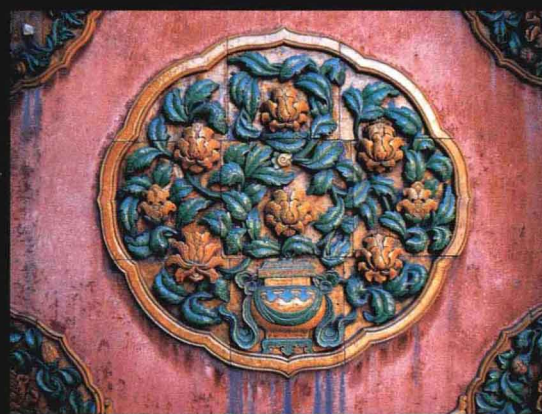
The Imperial Garden has four main gates. Three of them leading to the Three Rear Palaces and Six Eastern and Western Palaces respectively are on the south, and the north one is Shunzhenmen (Gate of Obeying and Faithfulness), out of which is the Shenwumen (Gate of Devine Might), north gate of the palace. To the north of Shenwumen is Wansuishan (Longevity Hill), the Garrisoning Hill of Forbidden City (also known as the Coal Hill), which was called Jingshan (Prospect Hill) in the Qing Dynasty. It was in the early Ming Dynasty that the earth from the digging of the moat around the Forbidden City and Taiyechi was piled up onto the hill. Five pavilions were built on the top of Jingshan. The central one, Wanchunting (Everlasting-Spring Pavilion), with

three eaves, four upturned roof corners and yellow-glazed-tile-covered roof, occupies the highest place of Jingshan. Sitting in the pavilion, no one can fail to see the ocean of palaces in the Forbidden City and appreciate a spectacular vista of the city of Beijing. To the east and west of Wanchunting are Zhoushangting (Pavilion of Surrounding Views) and Fulanting (Panoramic View Pavilion) respectively, both being octagonal and having double-eaved roofs covered with green glazed-tiles. To the east of Zhoushangting is Guanmiaoting (Pavilion of Wonderful Views), while to the west of Fulanting is Jifangting (Harmonious-Fragrance Pavilion). They two are small round pavilions with double eaves and a roof of blue glazed-tiles. Other buildings including halls, towers and chambers were built at the foot of the hill. Covered densely by flowers, pines and cypress trees, Jingshan was another famous imperial garden in the past.

Jingshan is famous for its witness to the fall of the Ming Dynasty. On March 18, 1644, the peasant rebels led by Li Zicheng flooded into Beijing City and steadily closed in on the Forbidden City. Hopelessly, the Ming Emperor Chongzhen wounded Princess Changping and killed Princess Zhaoren with his own hands, and ordered the empress and one of his concubines to commit suicide. Before dawn next day, he ran out of the palace and hanged himself from a tree beside the Shouhuangting (Pavilion of Imperial Longevity) on the Jingshan. Emperor Chongzhen was the last Ming emperor resided in the Forbidden City. 41 days later, Li Zicheng withdrew from Beijing. In September the same year, Aisin Gioro Fulin, the Emperor Shizu of the Qing Dynasty, whose reign title was Shunzhi, had the capital shifted from Shenyang to Beijing, starting the dynasty's 267-year-ruling over China. On February 12, 1912, the last emperor of China, Puyi, was forced to abdicate, and in 1924, he was driven from the Forbidden City. The restricted zone for some 500 years was open to the public after the founding of the Palace Museum in 1925 here.

The complex of Forbidden City is a wonder of Chinese architectural history, and it is also a miracle that it could be preserved intact to this day. Built of bricks and wood, the structures in the palace are prone to fire because of the lamp, thunder and flash. The Three Grand Halls and Qianqinggong (Palace of Celestial Purity) were all once destroyed by fire, and then rebuilt. The Forbidden City was plundered twice in history. In 1644, the present uprising armies led by Li Zicheng burnt most of halls and rooms before they withdrawn from Beijing. The Qing court renovated the palace according to its original layout after moving the capital to Beijing. In 1900, the Forbidden City, again, ravaged by the Eight-Power Allied Forces. In the aftermath of the devastation, everything valuable was taken away, buildings were destroyed, and ruins overgrown with weeds. It was fortunate that the Forbidden City was not burnt to ground like the Yuanmingyuan (Garden of Perfection and Brightness), otherwise, visitors would not be predestined to appreciate the palatial complex. No one could estimate how much attractiveness Beijing would lost if there was no the Forbidden City.

The Forbidden City was reborn after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. In 1961, it was included in the first group of historical and cultural relics under top state protection. The imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties was inscribed on the List of World Heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1987.

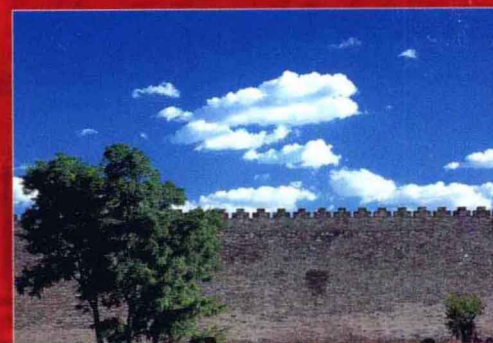




# Palace City

城池

Part I





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## Palace City 城池

According to Chinese mythologies, the heavenly god resided in the Ziweiyuan (Purple Palace), a constellation in the center of the sky and surrounded by other constellations. Because the emperor was supposedly the son of the heavenly god, his central and dominant position would be further highlighted by the use of the word "purple" in the name of his residence. Additionally, the imperial palace was heavily guarded and off-limits to ordinary people. Only could the palace maids, eunuchs and safeguards, as well as those who were summoned by the emperor, be permitted in the palace. Therefore, the Palace Museum was called Zijincheng (Purple Forbidden City) in the past.

The Forbidden City stands in the heart of Beijing City, just like the Ziweiyuan lying at the center of sky. Encircled it are Imperial City wall, Inner City wall and, what is more, a section of wall enclosing the south part of Inner City, known as the Outer City. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, ordinary people were forbidden from even approaching the wall of Imperial City, let alone the Forbidden City. Scattered in the Imperial City are the Ancestral Temple, Altar of Land and Grain, imperial gardens, and other buildings such as offices, workshops, and so on, all catering for the emperor.

Though ringed by three high walls, the emperor still didn't feel secure enough. So a high and extraordinarily strong wall and a wide and deep moat were built additionally around the palace and, furthermore, over 700 houses garrisoned by soldiers were constructed along the inner bank of the moat.

With a circumference of more than 3 kilometers, the palace wall of the Forbidden City has an 8.62 meters wide base reducing to 6.66 meters wide at the top. It was built of rammed earth and lined with *Chengjiang* Brick, each weighing about 25 kilograms. The process in the making of such a brick was very complicated, requiring over dozens of processes. For instance, to make an unburnt-brick had so many processes as soaking, depositing, filtering and sun-baking. The cement is made from glutinous rice and egg whites.

Out of the lofty palace wall is the moat, 52 meters wide and 6 meters deep. The moat, also known as Tongzihe (Tube River), was well decorated. The banks were all paved with stone slabs. In clear days, its transparent wavelets and weeping willows aside both banks swept by breezes make the moat look like a colorful ribbon; while a misty scene in the morning or at sunset liken the Forbidden City to a fairyland.

The 3,400-meter-long lofty palace wall and deep moat make Forbidden City a heavily guarded castle. However, one day in May 1615, the 43rd year during the Ming Emperor Wanli's reign, a man forced into the palace with a wooden stick in his hand. He attacked anyone he saw, and was not controlled until he reached the Crown Prince's residence. The event resulted in just executing the man, for it might concern an imperial concubine. This is one of the most famous unsettled cases of the Ming Dynasty, named "The Court Beating Case".

There are four entrances into the city – Donghuamen (East Flowery Gate) to the east, Xihuamen (West Flowery Gate) to the west, Wumen (Meridian Gate) to the south and Shenwumen (Gate of Devine Might) to the north – each with an imposing tower above it. The north gate was originally called Xuanwumen during the Ming Dynasty. Xuanwu (Black Tortoise), was supposedly the God of Northern Lunar Mansions, who was one of the Gods of Four Directions and guarded the north, the other three being Zhuque (Red Phoenix, south), Qinglong (Blue Dragon, east), and Baihu (White Tiger, west). During the Qing Emperor Kangxi's reign, to avoid coincidental association with his name, Xuanye, which was considered a taboo at that time, the name of gate was changed into present name, Shenwumen. The gate-tower above the Shenwumen houses bells and drums which were beaten in the morning and in the evening respectively to

mark time. During the Ming Dynasty, the work was done by eunuchs, while the members of Luanyiwei (Department of Imperial Insignias) were in charge of it in the Qing Dynasty. The back-gate of the imperial palace, Shenwumen, generally speaking, was used for empresses, imperial concubines and royal family members. When the emperor made an imperial inspection tour, he went out through the Wumen, however, the entourage of his consorts had to use the Shenwumen. As a matter of fact, the emperor sometimes went back the imperial palace from this gate when he finished his tours or holidays. Tens of houses were built along the palace wall inside the Shenwumen, which were known as the “Langxiajia (Home under Veranda)” during the Ming Dynasty. They were used as residences and dining rooms for emperor’s entourage of eunuchs as well as imperial warehouses. The emperor and imperial consorts never came to the area during the Ming and Qing dynasties except for the reign period of Ming Emperor Wuzong (1506-1521). He converted this area into an imperial market in the palace with six shops – namely, Baohe, Heyuan, Shunning, Fude, Fuji and Baoyan – and a wine-shop. The merchandise was articles of tribute, and the shop keepers were played by eunuchs. Emperor Wuzong often “went shopping” and drank here for amusement. The wine sold here was made by eunuchs with Chinese dates, which came from the trees around Langxiajia. To the emperors of both Ming and Qing dynasties, the Shenwumen was an inauspicious gate. It was said that during the end of Ming Dynasty when Li Zicheng’s peasant rebel armies closed in on the Forbidden City, it was through this gate that the last emperor of the dynasty, Chongzhen, ran out of the palace and hanged himself on the Jingshan. Also through this gate, in 1900 when the Eight-Power Allied Forces invaded Beijing, Qing Emperor Guangxu and Empress Dowager Cixi fled to Xi’an. In 1925, the Palace Museum was founded, and Shenwumen became the front gate of the museum. Now a wide street runs in front of the gate, stretching from Tongzhou District in the east to Shijingshan District in the west, the middle section of which was one of the major streets inside the Imperial City. Along the street are many marks left by history – white dagoba of the Beihai Park, five pavilions on the Jingshan, vast expanse of Beihai (North Lake), Zhonghai (Central Lake) and Nanhai (South Lake) extending to horizon, and such buildings as pavilions, terraces, towers and water-houses scattering at the waterfront – and the different styles of the architectures represent the culture of that era. They form a wonderland only in mythologies, and bring visitors back to the past times.

Towers were built on all the four main gates of the Forbidden City, and that of Wumen (Meridian Gate) was the most splendid among these four. Chinese ancients took the north as *Zi*, while the south as *Wu*. They believed the Meridian Line went through the Forbidden City, so this gate was named accordingly. Wumen was first built in 1420, the 18th year of Ming Emperor Yongle’s reign and rebuilt in 1647, the 4th year of Qing Emperor Shunzhi’s reign. This gate is surmounted by five towers, also known as the Wufenglou (Five-Phoenix Tower). The main gate-tower sitting in the front with a multi-eaved hip roof, is flanked by massive wings to the east and west, making a shape like a huge upside-down English capital letter “U”. On each wing are two square double-eaved towers connected by covered galleries. Wumen is the main entrance to the imperial city. With a height of 38 meters, it is the highest structure of the Forbidden City, and even of the Beijing City in the past. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, such grand ceremonies as dispatching the generals into fields of war, accepting prisoners of war, celebrating victories and announcing the new calendar for the following year, were held here. Additionally, this was also the place emperor punished the offending officials by beating them with sticks, known as the “Court Beating”. It was a frequent sight that the Ming officials were beaten to death on the spot. According to the historical records, in 1519, Ming Emperor Zhu Houzhuo got infuriated and 130 officials got beaten, and