



CHINA

Best Tourist Attractions



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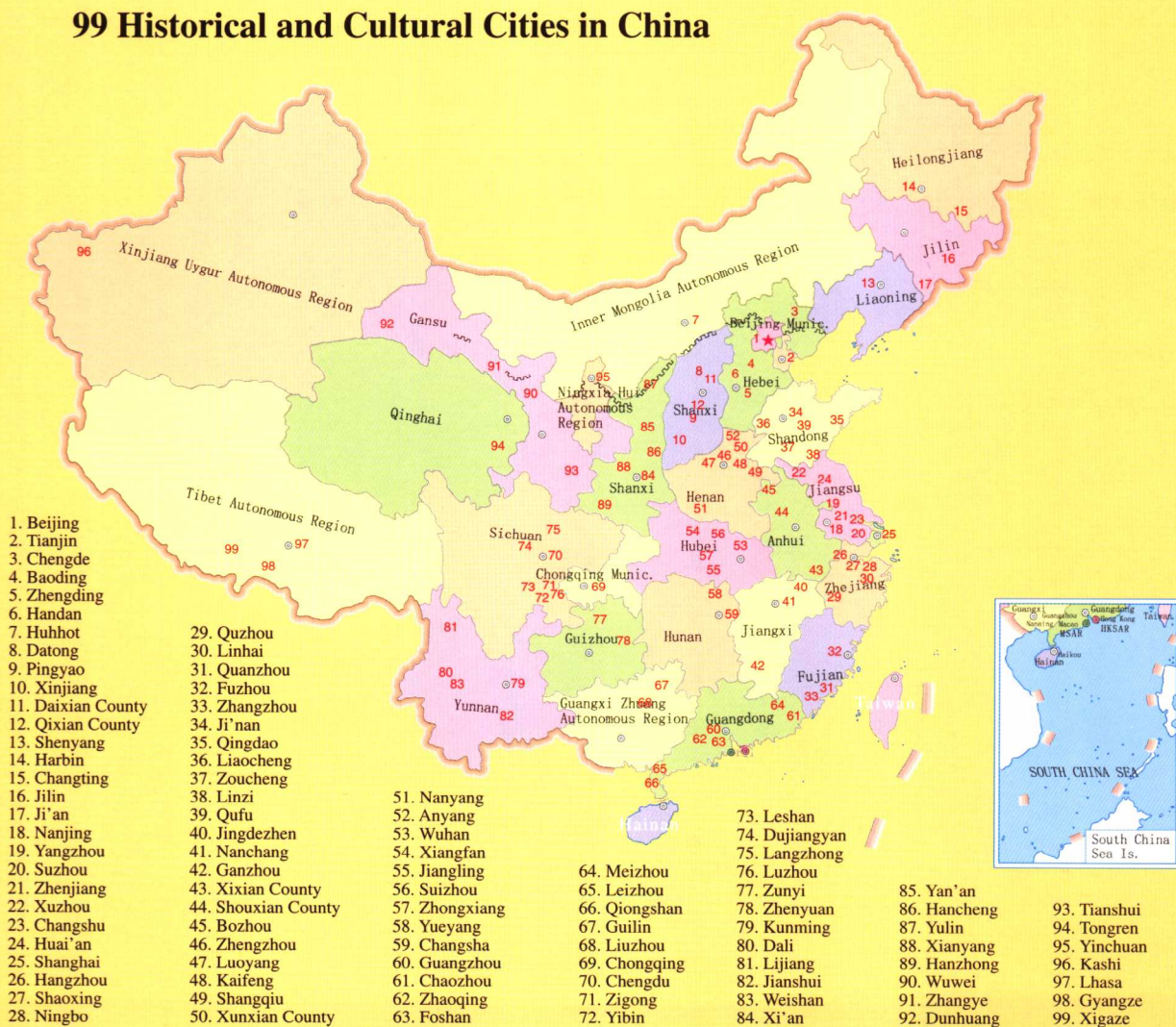
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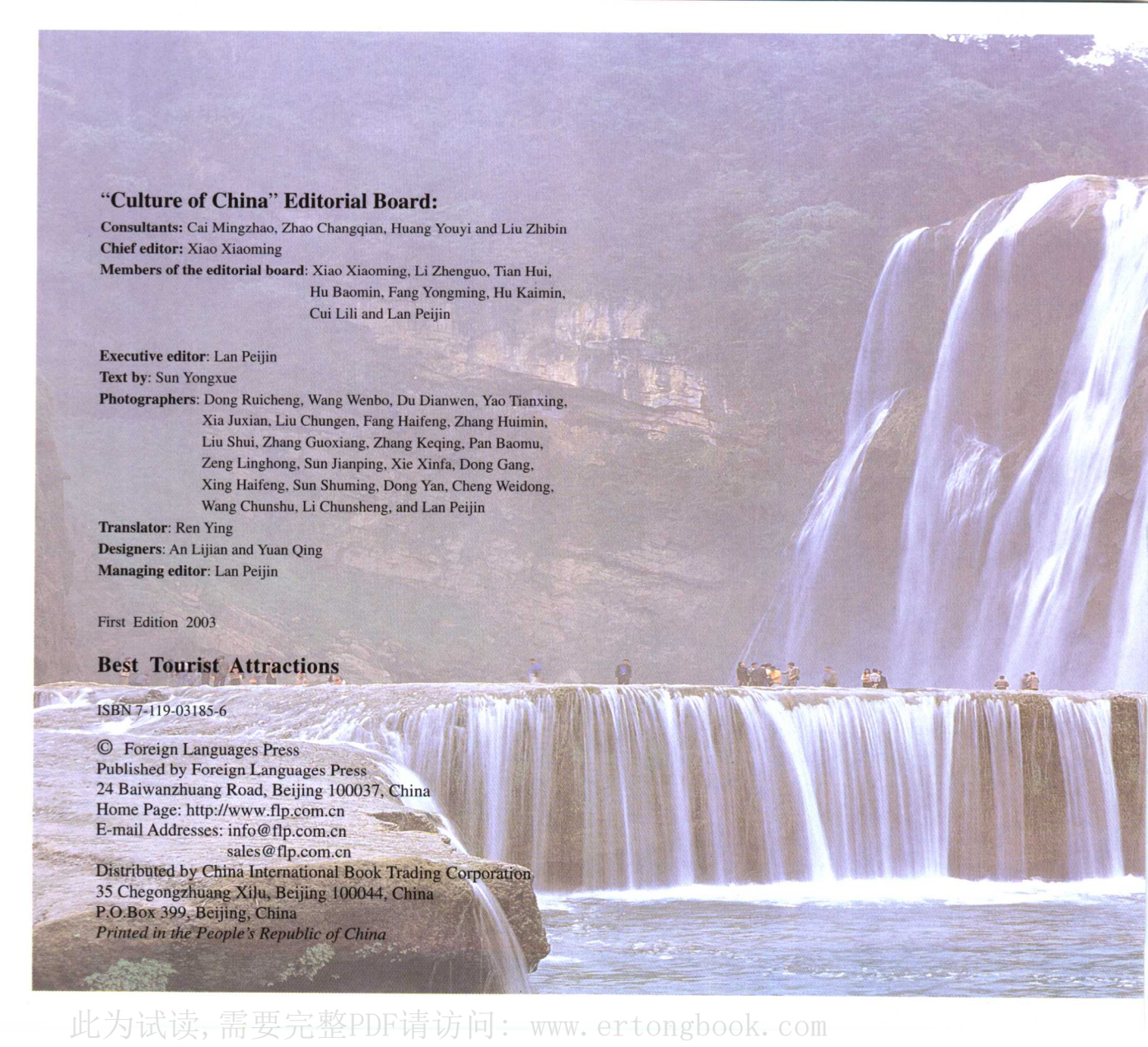
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Best Tourist Attractions



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Preface

China is a vast country with beautiful scenery, 5,000 years of brilliant history and a wealth of cultural relics. If you have the chance to visit China, you will feel the charm of its ancient civilization.

There are many wonders in China, and the Great Wall is one of them. According to historical records, the earliest Great Wall emerged in the 7th century BC. From the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC) to the 16th century, there were 20 dynasties that were involved in the construction of the Great Wall. The greatest projects included the Qin Great Wall, built by Emperor Qin Shi Huang (246-209 BC), the Han Great Wall built by Emperor Wudi (140-87 BC), and the Ming Great Wall built by Emperor Taizu (1368-1399). The garrisoned cities, passes, beacon towers and tunnels form a complete military protection system. Long walls and countless watchtowers were built according to the topographic features of the mountains. The dragon-like Great Wall is symbolic of the hardships of the ancient people and the wisdom of our ancestors.

Grotto art is another wonder with a long history. The famous grottoes are the ones at Dunhuang, Yungang and Longmen. Dunhuang Grottoes, which were first carved in the year 366, number 492, with over 1,000 niches, 2,415 colored sculptures and

45,000 square meters of mural paintings. The Yungang Grottoes were first carved in 453, with 53 niches and 51,000 statues. The Longmen Grottoes were carved after Emperor Xiaowen (471-500) moved his capital to Luoyang, in Henan Province. There are 2,100 niches and 100,000 statues. Besides, there are dozens of grottoes scattered on the Maiji Mountain, at the Bingling Temple, on the Tianlong Mountain and at Dazu, with countless statues. The common characteristics of these grottoes are that they were all carved on cliffs, and the statues of Buddha are carved in a simple way with smooth lines, beautiful postures, and vivid body language. The contents of many grottoes are like a TV series, depicting China's long history and brilliant culture. These grottoes attract millions of people to explore their art and pursue the mystery of China's ancient civilization.

Tombs of emperors are a rare wonder as well. The earliest one is the tomb of the Yellow Emperor. The tombs of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, Emperor Wudi of the Han Dynasty, Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty, Emperor Taizu of the Song Dynasty, the 13 tombs of the Ming Dynasty, and the East and the West tombs of the Qing Dynasty all took tremendous amounts of human and financial

resources. Among the tombs excavated so far, the mausoleum containing the terracotta army of Emperor Qin Shi Huang is the largest in scale. According to historical records, he started the construction of his tomb soon after he took the throne. The mausoleum took 37 years and 700,000 laborers to complete. There are palaces, rows of officials and military arrays in the mausoleum, indicating the emperor's courage and insight to unify China. The Ming Tombs near Beijing were constructed for the 13 emperors of the Ming Dynasty. So far, only the Tingling Tomb of the 14th emperor and his two empresses has been excavated. There were 26 boxes filled with over 3,000 pieces of jewelry and jade wares found in it. It is virtually an underground palace

The most representative cultural relics in China are palaces. Palaces are the most significant part of China's architectural art. In history, emperors constructed their palaces immediately after they came to the throne. Emperor Qin Shi Huang constructed the Epang Palace, that covered an area of 150 kilometers, and it still had not been completed when the dynasty fell. It is said that the fire that destroyed it lasted for three months. It is estimated that the Hanyuan Hall and Linde Hall in the Daming Palace

of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), now in ruins, were as magnificent as the Hall of Great Harmony in Beijing's Forbidden City. According to Tang Dynasty illustrations, the palaces were like fairy towers. The Changle Palace, Weiyang Palace and Changxin Palace of the Han Dynasty were all famous palace complexes in Chinese history. However, they were all destroyed during upheavals. The most complete and magnificent classic buildings preserved so far are the Forbidden City in Beijing, the Forbidden City in Shenyang, the Ligong Palace in Chengde, and the Potala Palace in Tibet. They are all imposing, luxurious, and magnificent with splendid halls, towers and pavilions. The original structures still remain, although they have been renovated several times.

Gardens fall into the category of cultural relics as well. They are divided into imperial and official gardens. Imperial gardens are large and magnificent, with real mountains and rivers in the background, such as Beihai Park, the Summer Palace and Ruins of Yuanmingyuan in Beijing, and the Summer Resort in Chengde, with green mountains, blue rivers, green trees, and pagodas and halls. Official gardens are exquisitely structured with artificial hills and streams. There are many in Suzhou, Hangzhou, Wuxi and Yangzhou. Their

elegance comes from making full use of trees, hills, lakes and stones.

Buddhist holy sites have an important position in Chinese architectural history. They are famous for their unique designs, and primitive and simple styles. The most representative ones are Mount Wutai, Mount Putuo, Mount Jiuhua and Mount Emei. There are 47 temples preserved on Mount Wutai. Although Xiantong, Zhenhai, Nanshan and Longquan temples on Mount Wutai are magnificent, their original aspects have been lost due to constant renovations. However, the Nanchan Temple and Light of Buddhism Temple preserve the styles of the Tang Dynasty. Mount Putuo has the most temples of any area in China, the biggest being Puji, Fayu and Huiji temples. The temples on Mount Jiuhua, known as a "Buddhist Kingdom," are the largest in scale. At one time, there were 300 temples and 4,000 monks there. Huacheng Temple and Diyu Temple still attract many disciples. Mount Emei was first sacred to Taoism, and later became sacred to Buddhism, with 100 big and small temples. Of them, Wannian Temple and Baoguo Temple are the biggest. All the Buddha statues in the halls are gilded. The White Horse Temple, Hanshan Temple,

Shaolin Temple and Hanging Temple all display the essence of ancient Chinese architecture.

Buddhist and Taoist temples are scattered all over China. Mount Taishan in the east, Mount Huashan in the west, Mount Hengshan in the south, Mount Hengshan (in different handwriting from the former one) in the north and Mount Songshan in the center preserve colorful cultural relics and are set in beautiful natural scenery. The huge Bixia Ancestral Hall is divided into two courtyards. The Temple of the Jade Emperor was constructed on the top of Mount Taishan. Its simple, primitive and magnificent buildings are rare in China. The Zhenyue Palace on Mount Huashan is located between Fairy Peak and Lotus Peak, surrounded with pine trees, serving as an ideal place for cultivation. The statue of the Jade Emperor was worshiped in the Central Hall. The Nantai, Jingtu, Hanging and Fuyan temples are on Mount Hengshan in the south. Zhurong Temple is built on a cliff, with the blue sky above and a valley underneath. Its 40 halls contain over 80 statues of Buddha. The two big halls, in the north and in the south, are linked by a plank road. Songyue Temple and Shaolin Temple, with red walls and yellow tiles, on Mount Songshan are

magnificent. Some temples are located in front of hills, some are hanging, some are set among pine trees and some are on top of hills.

Exotic mountains and precipitous hills are major components of the natural scenery in China. The well-known Mount Huangshan has hundreds of valleys and peaks, and "sea of clouds" coats it frequently. When exotic pine trees, grotesque rocks and the "sea of clouds" are in harmony, the scenery is breathtaking. The Wulingyuan Nature Reserve is a rare natural scenic spot, in which the highlights are the Zhangjiajie Nature Reserve, Tianzi Mountain and Huang's Family Village. Over 2,000 peaks, like stone bamboos, rear their heads in an area of 800 square kilometers. The place is also famous for its green trees, and rare wildlife. The Stone Forest in Yunnan Province is a unique sight, covering an area of 26,800 hectares. There are over a dozen scenic spots including the Greater Stone Forest, Lesser Stone Forest, Lion Hill, Purple Cloud Cave, Stone Forest Lake and Sharp Peak Pond. The exotic stones and rocks look like forests when seen from afar.

Rivers, lakes and seas are works of nature. On the Yangtze River, traversing China from west to east, the most magnificent scenery is found at the

Three Gorges — Qutang, Wuxia and Xiling. The Yellow River is the symbol of the Chinese nation. Its Hukou Waterfall thunders in the valley. The Lijiang River in the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region has world-famous natural scenery. The Jiuzhaigou Nature Reserve is surrounded by snow-capped mountains, deep valleys, primitive forests, and 100 lakes and waterfalls without any pollution.

Forests, plains, deserts and islands are other components of the scenery in China. Green bamboos in southern China, white birch trees on the Changbai Mountains, poplar trees in Xinjiang, primitive forests in the Greater Hinggan Mountains are like nature's own pictures. The Western Liaoning, North China, Shandong and Western Sichuan plains are the four largest plains in China. Of the deserts located in northwestern China, the Taklimakan is the biggest one, and is famous for its huge dunes. China's islands are countless. The Zhoushan islands look like pieces of green jade scattered and shining in the sea.

Best Tourist Attractions is an album with beautiful pictures and explanatory text, introducing China's history and natural scenery. It is both erudite and readable, with high artistic and appreciation value.



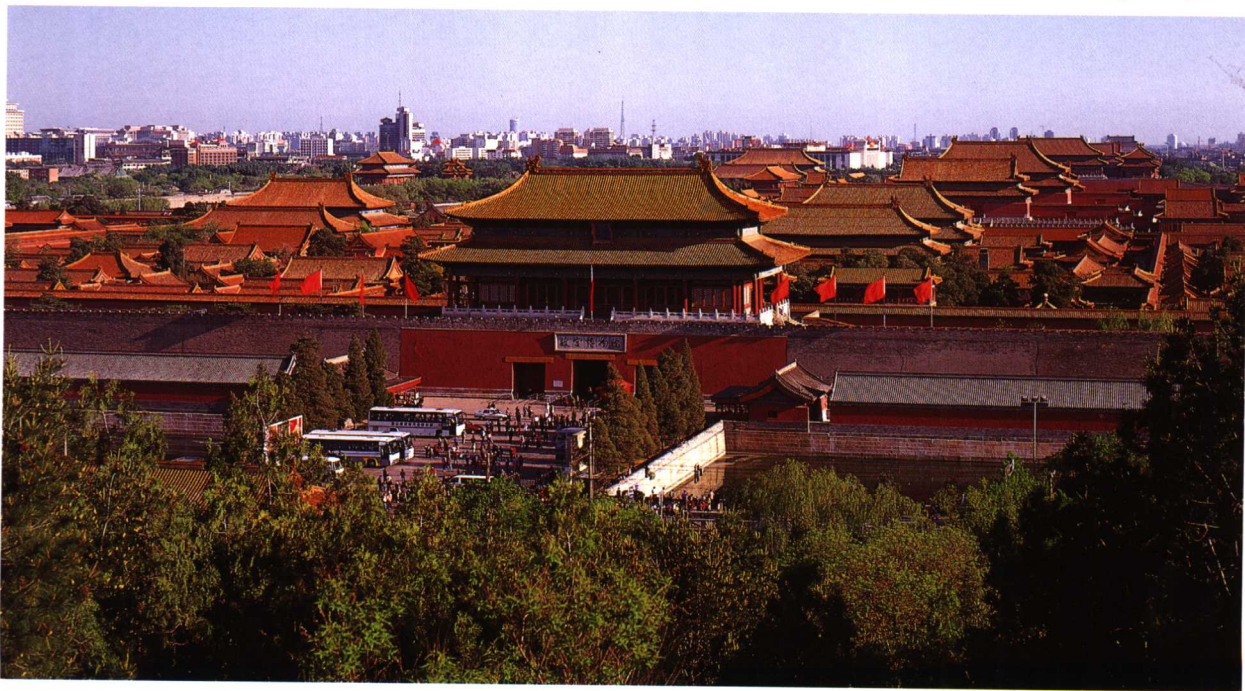
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Beijing As the capital of the People's Republic of China, Beijing is a cultural city with a long history. It boasts magnificent classical buildings and other cultural relics. The Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, Beihai Park, and the Ming Tombs symbolize the essence of the ancient architectural art in China.



Posing in front of the Tian'anmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace).



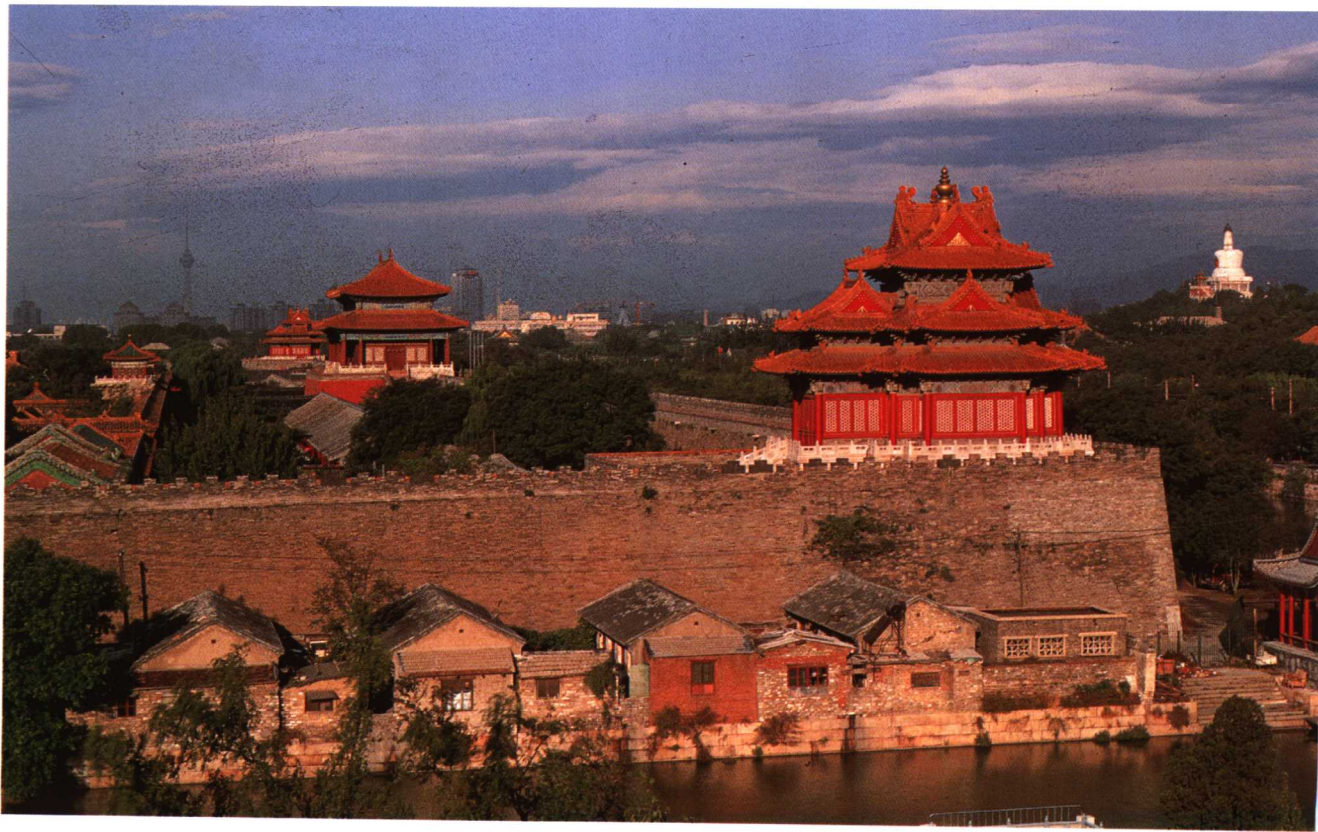


An inside scene of Palace of Heavenly Purity in the Forbidden City.



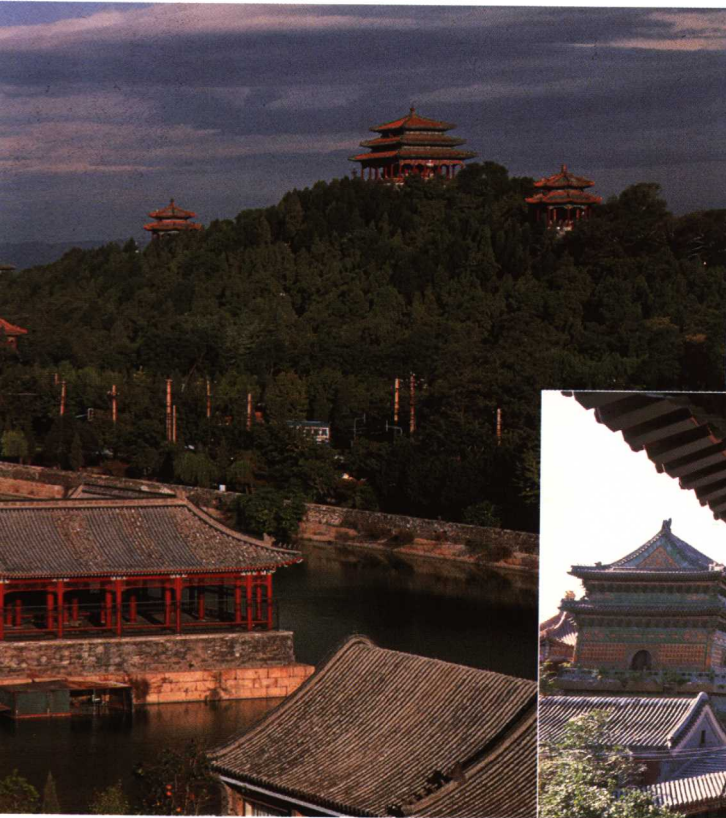
Sunset at Jingshan Park.

A scene of Beijing.





Nine-dragon Wall at Beihai Park.



Tranquil Heart Study.





Ancient-style touring boat on the Kunming Lake.



Tower of Buddhist Incense at the Summer Palace.