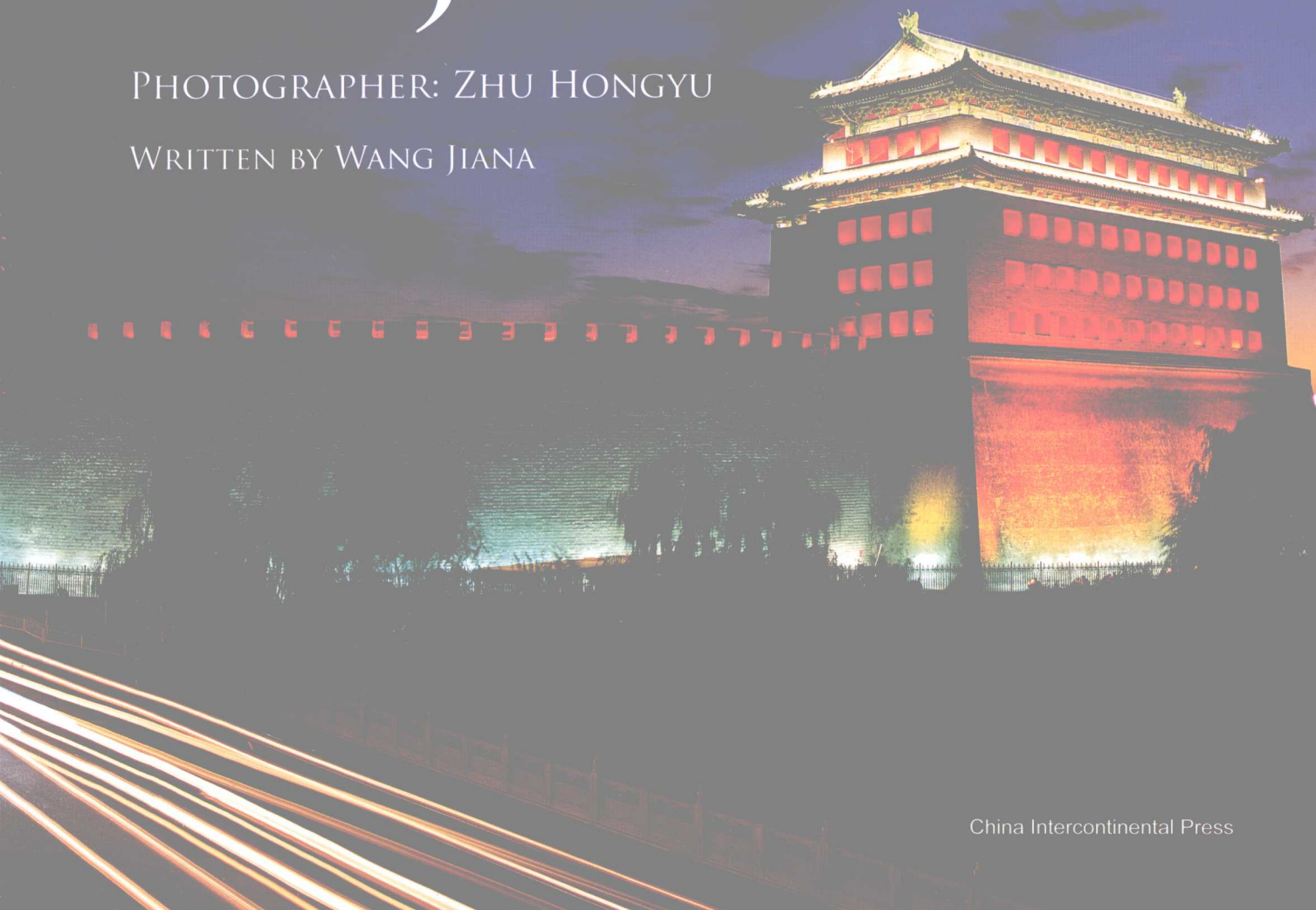


Peace and Dynamism:

NIGHTS IN BEIJING

PHOTOGRAPHER: ZHU HONGYU

WRITTEN BY WANG JIANA



China Intercontinental Press

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Possibly no correct answer can be given if asked at what time night arrives in Beijing.

But a symbolic ceremony may be able to do so.



The flag-raising and flag-lowering ceremonies on the Tian'anmen Square attract visitors worldwide. For many first-time visitors to Beijing, these are must-visits to take pictures.

THE FLAG-LOWERING CEREMONY

“When the sun falls to reach the horizon, the time for flag-lowering comes.” The time to lower the flag has given a relatively precise start for the night in Beijing. Attentively, every day's times of raising and lowering flag can be found in a corner of the Beijing Evening, precise to seconds. The interaction between the two seemly irrelevant clues - the falling sun and the flag lowering, like the interaction between the dynamism and the peace, marks the unique charms of the old capital's night time. Accompanying sacred images in the Tian'anmen square, night, arrives gently....



Accompanied by sunrise and sunset,soldiers responsible for flag-raising and flag-lowering experience the most unforgettable period of their life.

NIGHT IN BEIJING





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PEACE

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BEIJING AT NIGHT:

PEACE

OLD BEIJING OBSERVATORY

As early as thousands of years ago, ancient Chinese were used to run daily life following the rise and the fall of the sun – “Starting with the sunrise and finishing with the sunset”. Thus “day” became the basic time unit. Observation and detection of the sky have never stopped for thousands of years. China, which keeps the earliest and the most complete observatory record worldwide, is the best recorder of astronomic phenomenon before the renaissance. The Dengfeng Observatory in Henan Province and the Old Beijing Observatory are both the best preserved ones out of various others.

The Old Beijing Observatory, which was rebuilt in the Yuan Dynasty (AD 1206-1368) from the Southeast turret of the Grand Yuan Dynasty Capital, was destroyed in the early Ming (AD 1368-1644) warfare. It was then rebuilt in the Reign Year 7 of Emperor Zhengtong (AD 1442) of the Ming Dynasty. The eight large bronze astronomic equipments, which were built by adopting European astronomic measure equipment and structures, became the proof of then cultural exchange between the East and the West.

The Observatory keeps the longest working record among all the old observatories worldwide by conducting astronomic observation for 500 years consecutively from the Emperor Zhengtong's reign years (AD 1436-1449) to 1929. The construction, which experienced hundreds of years' lows and highs, has become the proof of history. The Old Observatory today has been rebuilt to the Beijing Ancient Astronomic Equipment Museum, continuing its role in the domain of science.



TEMPLE OF HEAVEN

From the old, the Chinese people have kept a kind of extraordinary reverence to the heaven. Even the emperor would modestly name himself as “the Son of the Heaven”. The tradition of “Heaven cult” (jitian) has been succeeded by the emperors albeit the rise and fall of their dynasties.

The Temple of Heaven, started in AD 1420, was constructed with two walls (inner and outer) enclosed to the temple. Square in the south and round in the north, the style of the temple, the largest ancient heaven cult establishment worldwide, symbolizes Square Earth and Round Heaven. The emperors after the Reign Years of Ming Dynasty's Yongle Emperor (AD 1403-1424) would make sacrifice in the temple three times a year respectively on Winter Solstice (December 22nd), First Summer, and in between the first and the tenth of the lunar month, for the nation's good fortune.

The temple, echoing each other with the Charles's Wain, is nowadays still a first-choice for a number of large-scale etiquette activities including the APEC Meeting and the launch of the Olympic emblem.



