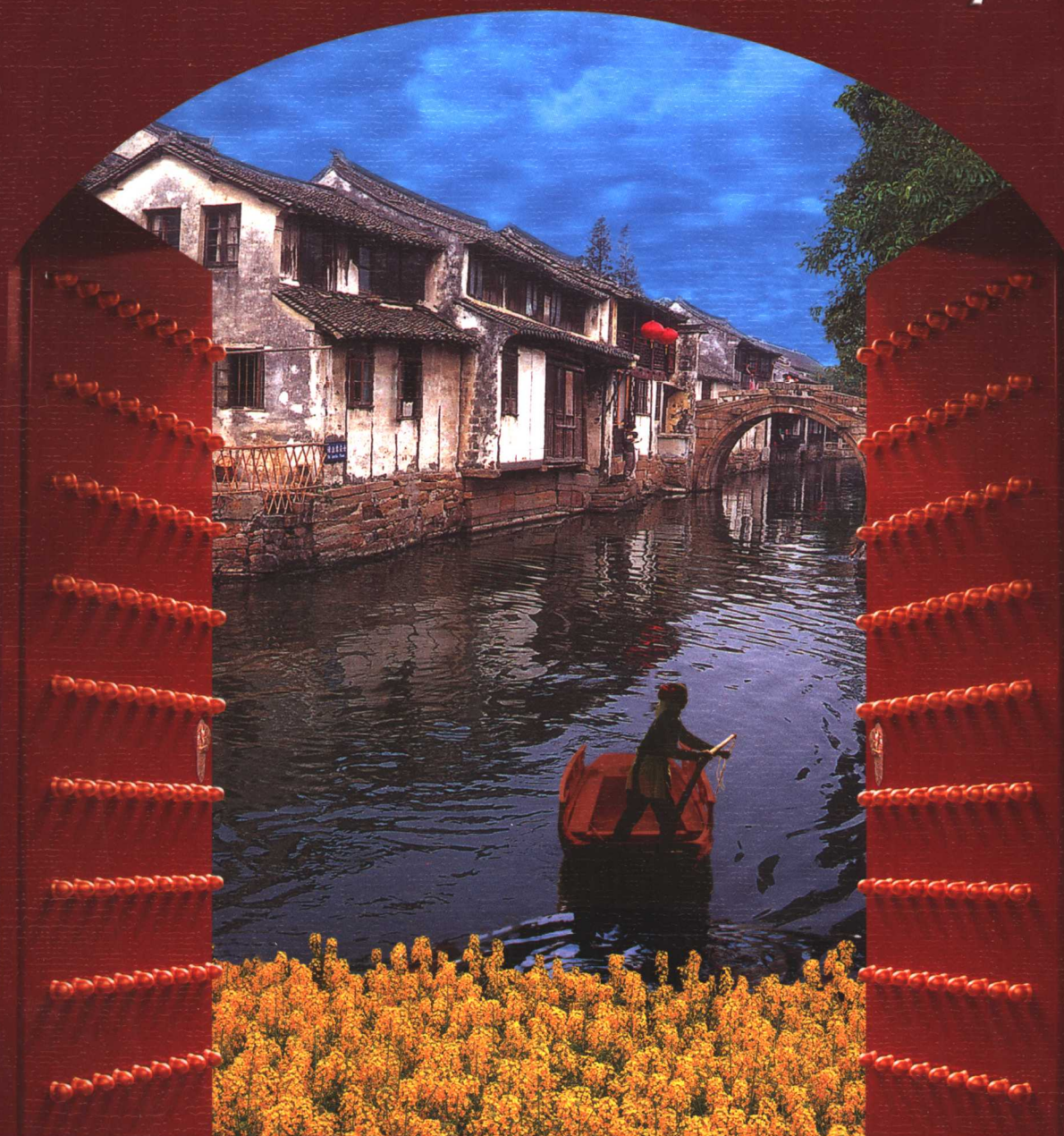


PANORAMIC CHINA

JIANGSU

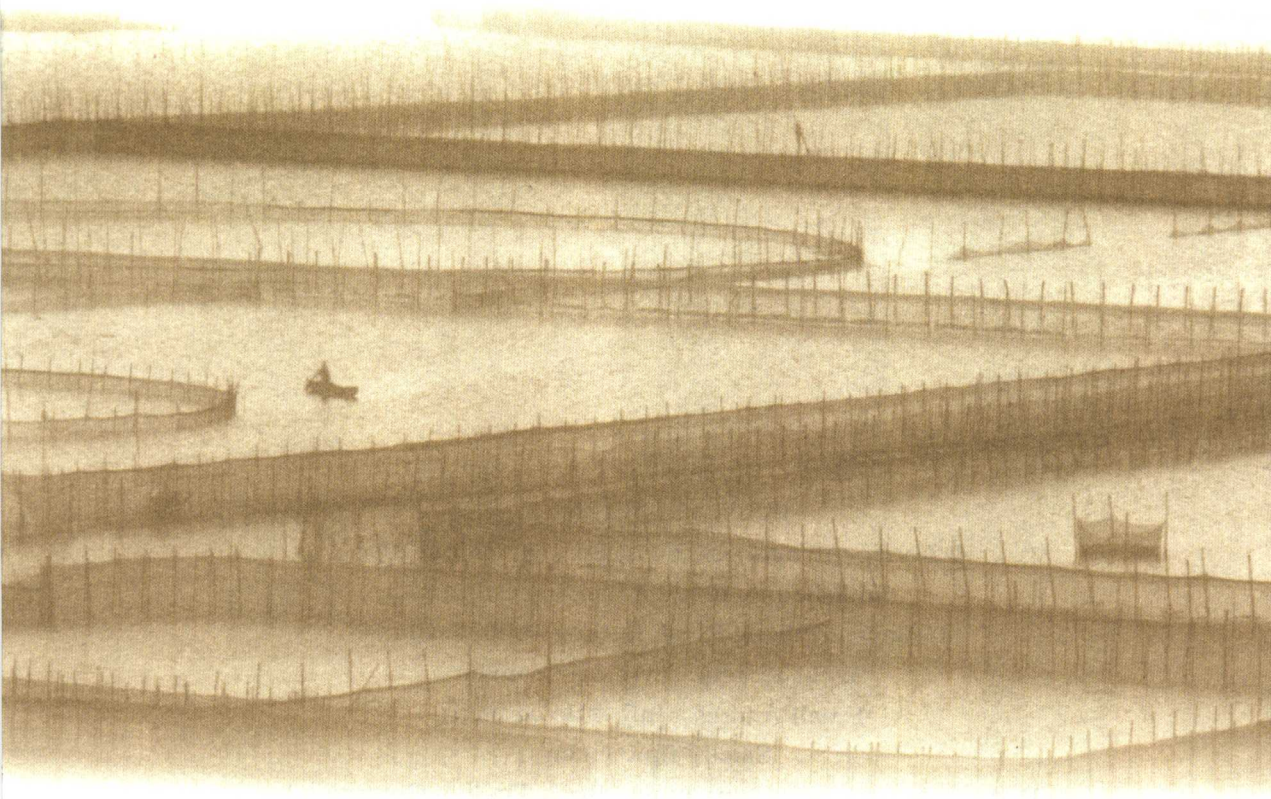
Water Town Journeys



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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撰 稿: 山 谷

摄 影: 缪宜江 于先云 张亦农 樊小世 潘基峰

王虹军 瞿金根 山 谷 万秀棣 楼庆西 兰佩瑾 等

(排名不分先后)

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中文审定: 廖 频

责任编辑: 蔡莉莉

翻 译: 汪光强 等

英文审定: Sue Duncan 郁 苓

装帧设计: 蔡 荣

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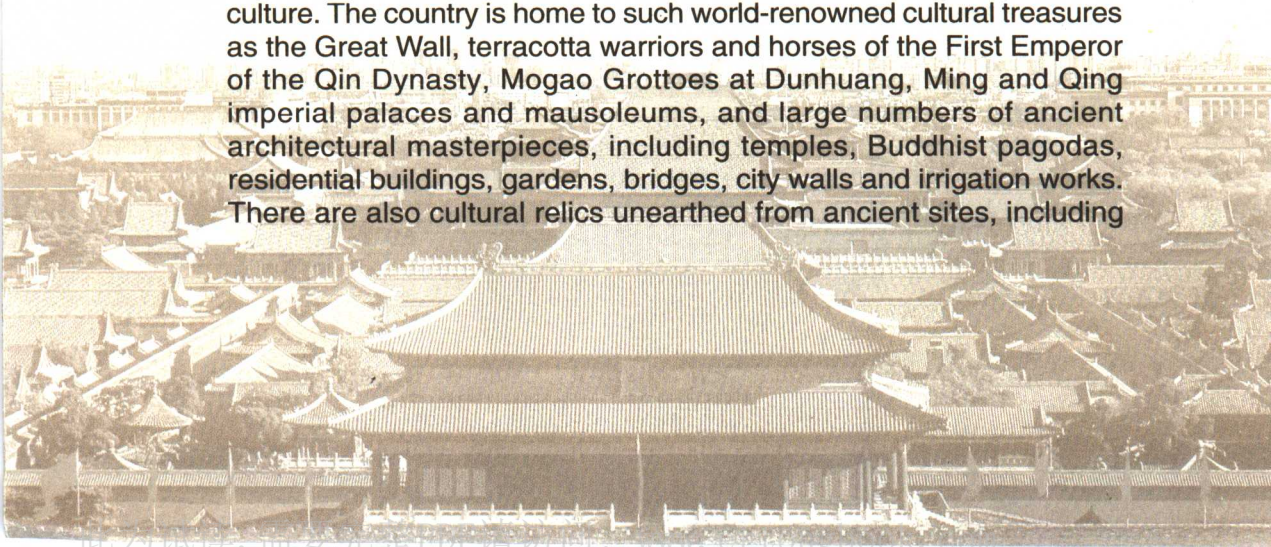
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Introduction

China has 23 provinces, four municipalities directly under the Central Government, five autonomous regions and two special administrative regions. Due to geographical and topographical differences and climatic variations, each area has its own unique natural scenery. The mountains in the north of the country are rugged and magnificent, the waters in the south are clear and turbulent, the Gobi in the northwest shines brilliantly in the sunlight, the hills in the southeast are often shrouded in floating fog, green waves of sorghum and soybean crops undulate over the vast fields of the northeast, and the mountains in the southwest, with sequestered villages and terraced fields, look tranquil and picturesque.

There are 56 ethnic groups in China. The Han, making up the overwhelming majority of the population, mainly live in the eastern and central parts of the country, while many ethnic groups with smaller populations live in the west. In China, all ethnic groups, regardless of size, are equal and respect each other. Each ethnic group has its own folk customs, religious beliefs and cultural traditions, and most use their own language and script. Regional autonomy is practiced in areas where ethnic minorities live in compact communities. All the ethnic groups call themselves "Chinese." They are courteous and friendly. In the ethnic-minority areas, the quiet environment, quaint buildings, exquisite fashions, unsophisticated folk customs and hospitality of the local people hold a great appeal to visitors from afar.

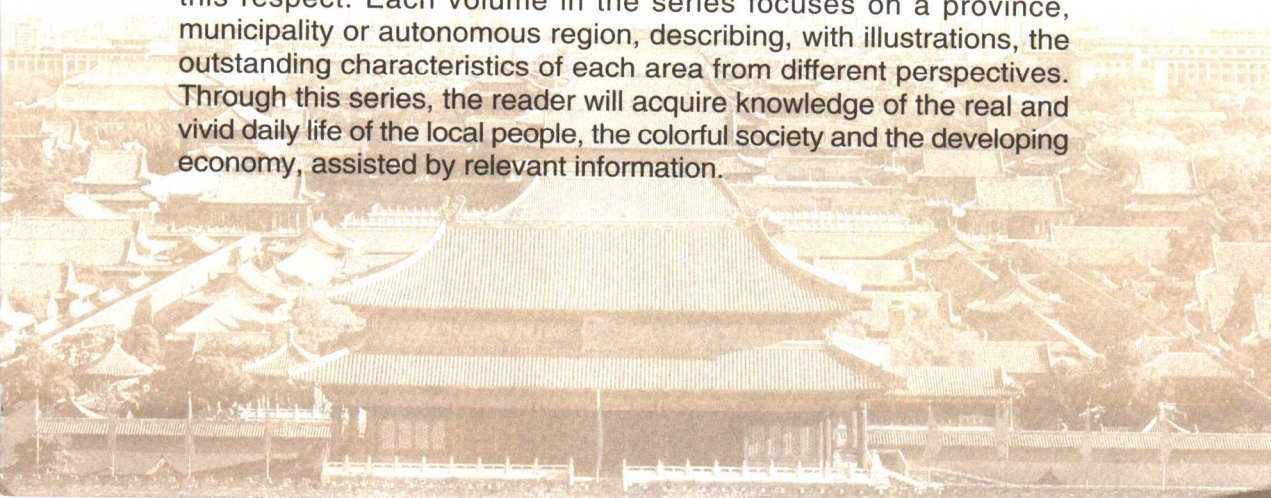
China boasts 5,000 years of recorded civilization and a brilliant culture. The country is home to such world-renowned cultural treasures as the Great Wall, terracotta warriors and horses of the First Emperor of the Qin Dynasty, Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang, Ming and Qing imperial palaces and mausoleums, and large numbers of ancient architectural masterpieces, including temples, Buddhist pagodas, residential buildings, gardens, bridges, city walls and irrigation works. There are also cultural relics unearthed from ancient sites, including



painted pottery, jade ware, bronze ware, large and ornate tombs and foundations of historical buildings, and many more as yet undiscovered. The museums of China's various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions house thousands of cultural relics and works of art, among which are treasures rare in the world, displaying the long history of China and the splendid Chinese culture from different aspects. The strong, deep-rooted Chinese culture has always influenced the mentality and moral standards of the Chinese people, having developed continually in pace with the civilization. A careful study of today's Peking opera, *Kunqu* Opera, shadow plays, calligraphy, painting, paper-cutting, and even the flower-shaped steamed buns on the kitchen range of farmers will reveal elements of traditional Chinese culture as well as replications of the art of the past.

Like other countries of venerable age, China has suffered grievous calamities. During the century and more before the 1950s, the Chinese people made unrelenting struggles for the prosperity of the country, and national independence and liberation. A large number of insightful people and revolutionaries, cherishing all kinds of dreams for a strong China, studied the ways of the West in a quest for prosperity and strength, and borrowed the revolutionary experience of foreign countries. At last, the Communist Party of China, proceeding from the reality of China, and relying on the working people, founded a brand-new country, the People's Republic of China, in 1949. Since then, the Chinese people have made persistent efforts and explorations for the grand revitalization of the Chinese nation. The Chinese people's efforts in the past two decades and more have resulted in outstanding achievements, with rapid social progress, a well-developed economy, and a modern civilization and traditional culture enhancing each other.

It is easy to have a quick look at China's past and present, but it takes time to gain a panoramic knowledge of China. The "Panoramic China" series is meant to assist readers, especially those overseas, in this respect. Each volume in the series focuses on a province, municipality or autonomous region, describing, with illustrations, the outstanding characteristics of each area from different perspectives. Through this series, the reader will acquire knowledge of the real and vivid daily life of the local people, the colorful society and the developing economy, assisted by relevant information.







- ▲ Spring in a water town
- ▶ Shantang Street, the best known street in Suzhou







Water Town Idylls

There is a Chinese myth that goes as follows: In very ancient times, the tribal chief Gong Gong fought with Zhuan Xu for the dominance over the world. Enraged at losing, Gong Gong dashed his head against Buzhou Mountain, the supporting pillar between earth and heaven, causing the mountain to collapse. As a result, heaven slanted towards the northwest, dislocating the sun, the moon and the stars whilst the earth sloped southeast, thus forming a topography high in the west and low in the east. As a consequence, rivers and floods flowed from the west to join the sea in the east, sweeping soil along with them.

The low-lying area in the southeast where passing floods deposited a thick layer of silt, its coasts washed by the Yellow Sea and East China Sea, is present-day Jiangsu. The province is China's lowest region, the greater part of Jiangsu being less than 50 meters above sea level. The Changjiang (Yangtze) River, the longest river in China and the third longest in the world, empties into the sea via Jiangsu; the Huaihe River and Hongze and Taihu lakes also flow across this region. For some time in the past, Jiangsu was the flood area of the Yellow River (the second longest river in China) and known as a "Flood Corridor."

Jiangsu is a magically endowed land. The silt that is swept into the East China Sea is pushed back onshore by the meridian tide and becomes land at a rate of 3,000 hectares a year, the result being the formation of the vast and fertile Huanghuai (Yellow and Huaihe rivers) Plain and the Yangtze River Delta. The Yangtze River has created an alluvial plain to the south, whilst the alluvial plain to its north is the work of the Huaihe River and Hongze Lake.

In primeval times the "Huaiyi" tribe inhabited the lower reaches of the Huaihe, and the tattooed "Jingman" tribe proliferated around Lake Taihu. They traveled by boat, lived on fishing and hunting, grew mulberry trees, raised silkworms, wove silk and hemp, and planted rice. They carved boats out of tree trunks, felled trees for fire, and hunted and farmed to earn their livelihood. With their primeval diligence, knowledge, and unique lifestyle they created one of the earliest human civilizations. This land of rippling waters they inhabited

Crisscrossed by waterways, boats were once the most important means of transportation in Jiangsu.

Jiangsu is one of the cradles of modern industry in China. Many manufacturing and mining enterprises born of the Westernization Movement in the second half of the 19th century sprang up in the province. Among them were the Suzhou Yangpao (Foreign Cannon) Bureau — China's first mechanized factory, the Jinling Machine Building Bureau, Qinglongshan Mine, Xuzhou Mine, Sulun Cotton Mill, Sujing Silk Reeling Mill and Dasheng Cotton Mill.

During World War I, Chinese capitalism underwent major growth in Suzhou, Wuxi, Nantong and Changzhou, where manual production of commodity grain, cotton and raw silk prospered into modern textile, silk reeling and flour industries, and a group of famous entrepreneurs emerged, among them

Zhang Jian, Rong Desheng and Liu Guojun.

Since China's reform and opening up, Jiangsu, with the geographical advantage of riverine and coastal location, has marched into the leading ranks of Chinese economic development. In 2004, its GDP of 1,551.24 billion yuan was the second largest in China. Jiangsu is one of the country's most economically active areas and one of the first developed areas to achieve a comfortable standard of living. It is home to such famous industrial conglomerates as Chunlan Group, Yangtze Petrochemical Group, Panda Group and Suzhou Industrial Park (a China-Singapore joint-venture). Nearly 200 of the world's top 500 enterprises have investments in Jiangsu.

On the alluvial plain of Jiangsu, criss-



Citizens with a lust for life in the province of abundance

still seems to echo to their cries as they chased their prey and to the work songs they sang to synchronize their moves in heavy labor.

The story goes that in remote antiquity the world was ravaged by rampaging floods until the flood-conqueror Yu the Great captured and overwhelmed the flood monster at the lower reaches of the Huaihe River. At the same time, he convened with local chieftains at Yuqi Mountain and Linwu Cave south of the Yangtze, leading their tribes to fight floods and create fields and waterways around Taihu and Hongze lakes and between the rivers and the sea, thus gradually changing Jiangsu into a "Land of Fish and Rice."

Flat land accounts for 69 percent of Jiangsu's 100,000-square-kilometer territory; 14 percent of its area is low hilly land in the southwest and along the northern border of the province; water surfaces account for the remaining 17 percent. Jiangsu has China's largest area of water territory.

The Yangtze River Valley, as with the Yellow River Valley, was a cradle of Chinese civilization, and Jiangsu, without a doubt, was one of the earliest human settlements in the Lower Yangtze. During the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BC), its smelting and forging of bronze ware was already famous. In the fourth century, large numbers of people fled the incessant fighting in the north and migrated southward, where virgin land was opened up. At the same time as large tracts of wilderness in the coastal area of north Jiangsu were being opened up for cultivation, the southern towns of Jiankang (today's Nanjing), Jingkou (today's Zhenjiang) and Danyang were also prospering and growing into busy urban centers. In the early

seventh century, the Grand Canal, which was first built in the Spring and Autumn Period, underwent large-scale extension, the economic center of the country shifted south, and cities along the canal prospered. Yangzhou, at the southern tip of the Jianghuai Plain (the plain south of the Huaihe River in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River), became the transit center in southeast Jiangsu for grain, salt and iron. By this time too, Suzhou, further southeast, had already developed into a city famous across the entire province. Words that testify to the importance of these places can be found in ancient records, such as "The world looks up to the southeast for ideas," and "Most of the tax revenues came from the Jianghuai area." Particularly from the 14th century and the several centuries after, Jiangsu's "farmland tax accounted for one-sixth of the national total; commodity tax, for seven-tenths; and salt tax, three-fifths." Convenient irrigation and water transportation, mild climate, fertile soil and abundant produce made Jiangsu China's most famous grain producer and a main contributor to the imperial treasury, "feeding and clothing half the empire." To ensure the efficient supply of grain and other commodities transported along the canal, rulers of various dynasties paid great attention to Jiangsu. During his reign (1662-1723) the Qing Emperor Kangxi made six trips to the Lower Yangtze within a period of 23 years, the first in 1684. His main purpose was to control waterways, solve the problem of floods and dredge the rivers that flowed into the sea. People living along the lower reaches of the Huaihe were the greatest beneficiaries of such work, and the areas south and north of the Yangtze prospered further.



Age-old gardens can be found in both south and north Jiangsu. Unlike the imperial gardens of north China, most gardens in the south were built as private properties. Old sayings testify to their popularity, such as “the gardens of Jiangnan are the best in the world,” and “Suzhou gardens are the best in Jiangnan.” The term Jiangnan refers to the provinces and cities of the lower Yangtze. The majority of these gardens are located in Hangzhou in neighboring Zhejiang province and in Jiangsu’s Suzhou and Yangzhou. The abundance of such private gardens can be attributed to historic and economic factors.

Concomitant with its economic prosperity, Jiangsu has been a culturally developed area since ancient times. Between them, artists, dramatists, musicians, novelists and outstanding gentleman all-rounders have created a rich humanistic legacy. In the modern age, Nanjing has emerged as an educational center of China and is home to many institutions of higher learning. Jiangsu is also famous for its technology.

Jiangsu’s history is written in its rivers and canals whose infinity, serenity and diversity embody that of Jiangsu’s culture and natural charm. It was water that created and nurtured this land of abundance and made it China’s most characteristic water province.

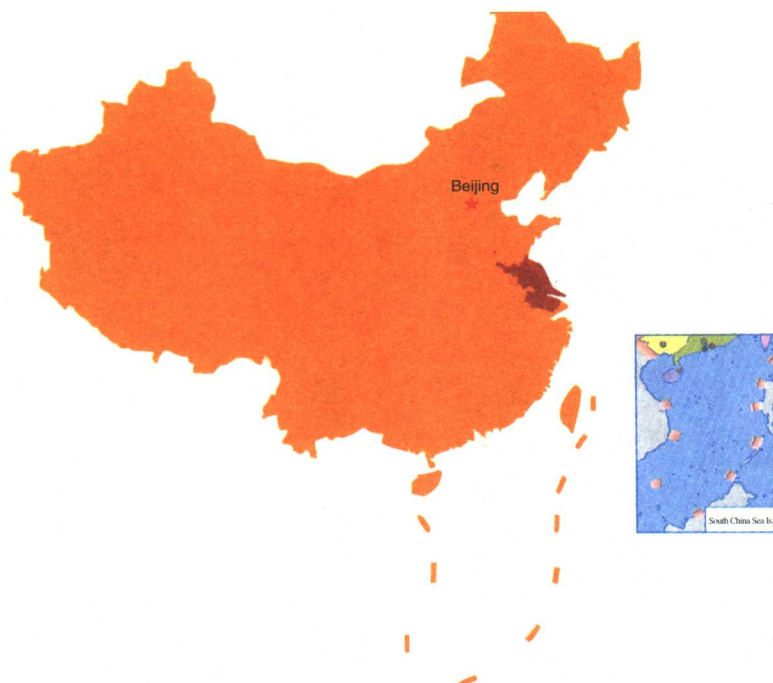
- ▲ Kunqu opera music in a Suzhou garden, evoking water town geniality and elegance
- Fine food, beautiful scenery and comfortable living have earned Jiangsu the epithet “paradise.”
- ◀ The Slender West Lake, Yangzhou



crossed by rivers and canals, sit seven government designated historical and cultural cities—Nanjing, Suzhou, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Xuzhou, Huai'an and Changshu—more than in any other province or equivalent administrative region. These places have become popular with tourists, drawn by Nanjing's rich relics from the Six Dynasties and other periods when it was the capital, Suzhou's classical gardens, Wuxi's picturesque Lake Taihu, Yangzhou's cultural legacies from the Han and Tang dynasties, Xuzhou's Qin and Han relics, and Zhenjiang's mountain temples. In addition, Jiangsu has 14 national-level forest parks, two national-level wildlife reserves and 53 key cultural relic sites under national-level protection.



Location of Jiangsu Province within China



Administrative Regions of Jiangsu Province

