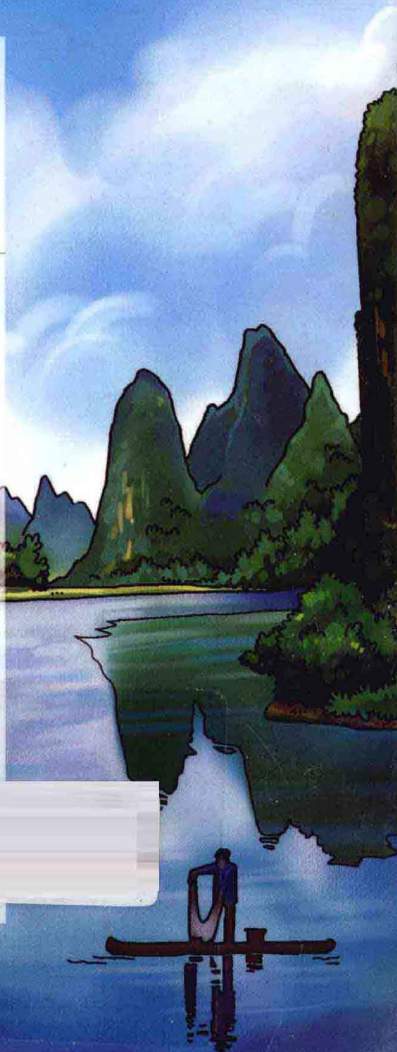


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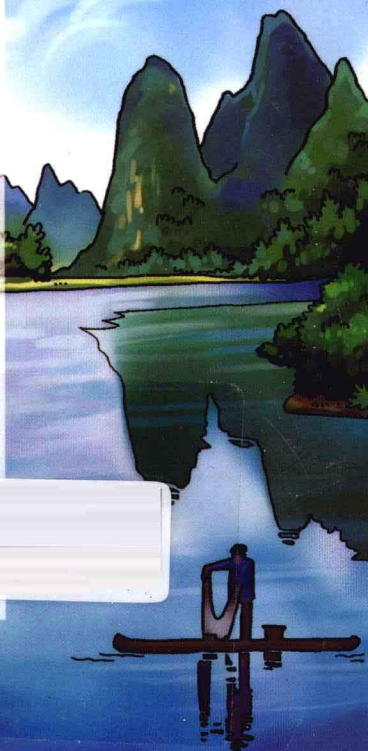
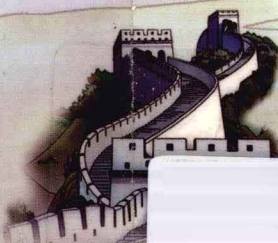


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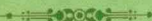
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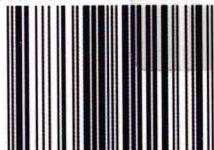
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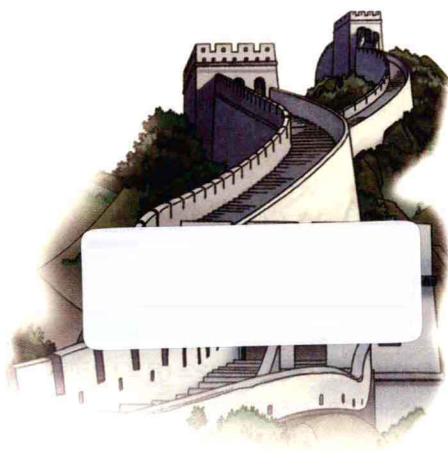
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Preface

China is blessed with a vast area of 9.6 million square km and a time-honored history of thousands of years. The Chinese people have been living in harmony with nature for many millennia. The landscape boasts numerous breathtaking scenic spots and there are an overwhelming number of cultural and historic attractions. These scenic spots, not only showcase China's spectacular natural scenery, but also record the brilliant history and culture of China. Today, many



places of interest have been listed as world heritage sites and are globally cherished as the common cultural wealth of mankind.

As Confucius, a famous Chinese philosopher, said, “The wise man delights in water, the good man delights in mountains.” The Chinese people some 2,000 years ago began to treat the relationship between the natural world and spiritual culture philosophically. For this reason, touring scenic spots for Chinese people goes far beyond mere travel and leisure. Scenic spots have a close link with the cultural life of the Chinese people. Cultural relics that have been left behind by the Chinese in different eras can be found in many famous mountains and rivers, from which we can understand many things about China such as architecture, religion, customs and history. With regard to these natural beauty spots, there are a lot of anecdotes of famous people, folk customs



and myths. These stories, combined with the landscape of the land, comprise an integral part of the cultural connotation of scenic spots in China.

This book introduces the most well-known and representative man-made and natural scenic spots in China, along with the most well-known stories about them. Readers can enjoy these places of interest and the charm of Chinese culture as they read.



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Forbidden City



The Forbidden City, the imperial palace in the old days in China, sits in the very heart of Beijing. In 1987, the Forbidden City was listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO.

The Forbidden City was enmeshed in the concepts of philosophy and astronomy in ancient China. Astronomers at that time divided the stars into three enclosures, 28 lunar mansions and other constellations. Of these, the Purple Forbidden Enclosure (covering the region around the Polestar)



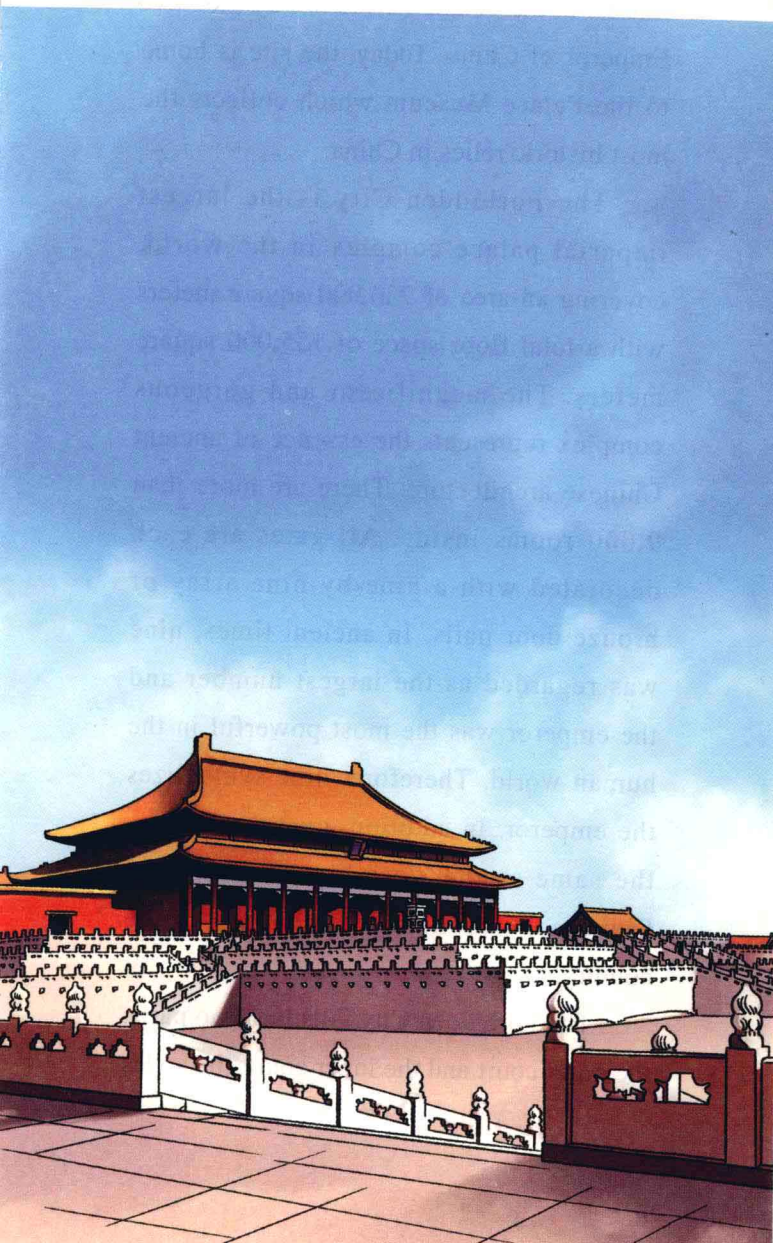
stands at the center of all constellations, the position of which is permanent for all time. Therefore, it represents the Lord of Heaven. Emperors in China claimed to be the Son of Heaven, and their palace the Purple Palace in the sky. They wished that they could live in the Purple Palace and maintain the stability of the country. In order to assert their authority and dignity and to ensure security, the imperial palace, built in the Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911), looks spectacular but is also closely guarded. As ordinary people were not allowed to enter the imperial palace hence the palace was referred to as the “Forbidden City”.

The construction of the Forbidden City started in the fifth year of the reign of Ming Emperor Chengzu, known as the Yongle Period (in 1407), and ended in the 18th year under his reign (in 1420). With a history of nearly 600 years, it was home to 24 emperors ranging from Ming Emperor



故宫

Forbidden City



Zhu Di in the Yongle Period to Puyi, the last Emperor of China. Today, the site is home to the Palace Museum which collects the most historic relics in China.

The Forbidden City is the largest imperial palace complex in the world, covering an area of 720,000 square meters with a total floor space of 155,000 square meters. The magnificent and gorgeous complex represents the essence of ancient Chinese architecture. There are more than 9,000 rooms inside. All gates are each decorated with a nine-by-nine array of bronze door nails. In ancient times, nine was regarded as the largest number and the emperor was the most powerful in the human world. Therefore, nine symbolizes the emperor. In addition, nine pronounces the same as the word “long-lasting” in Chinese, symbolizing the stability of the country.

The Forbidden City falls into two parts: the outer court and the inner court, the styles

