



TOURING CHINA

Selected Tour Commentaries

(Volume I)



CHINA TRAVEL & TOURISM PRESS

TOURING CHINA

**Selected Tour
Commentaries**

(VOLUME I)

**NATIONAL TOURISM ADMINISTRATION
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

CHINA TRAVEL & TOURISM PRESS

责任编辑:程伟进 赵翔翔
责任印制:李崇宝

国书在版编目(CIP)数据

走遍中国:中国优秀导游词精选 = Touring China: Selected tour Commentaries: 英文/国家旅游局编;王军等译。-北京:中国旅游出版社,2000.8

ISBN 7-5032-1757-X

I. 走… II. ①国…②王… III. 旅游指南-中国-英文 IV. K928.9

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2000)第 68324 号

书 名: **Touring China: Selected tour Commentaries**

编 著:国家旅游局

译 者:王 军 等

出版发行:中国旅游出版社

(北京建内大街甲 9 号 邮编 100005)

印 刷:北京 1201 印刷厂

版 次:2000 年 8 月第 1 版

2000 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

开 本:787×1092 毫米 1/32

印 张:11.75

字 数:395 千字

印 数:1—10000 册

定 价:28.00 元

·如发现图书残缺请直接与我社发行部联系调换
(电话:010-65201174)

**Translated by Wang Jun, Liu Lingyan, Chai Jia and
Yu Hui**

Proofread by Char, Connie Y. Tcheng, Chen Jianmin

Editor in charge: Cheng Weijin, Zhao Xiangxiang

**Published by CHINA TRAVEL & TOURISM PRESS
9A Jianguomennei Dajie, Beijing 100005, China
Printed by Beijing 1201 Printing House
Printed in the People's Republic of China**

PREFACE

Under the auspices of the National Tourism Administration, a number of veteran guide-interpreters, trainers and administrators from China's tourism industry have collected, compared and chosen from over 100 pieces of sightseeing commentary to compile this publication, entitled "Sightseeing throughout China: Chosen Tourism Commentaries (a comprehensive volume)." The aim of the compilation and publication of 31 model commentaries is to further boost the professional culture of China's tourism, to promote China's rich tourism resources and economic and tourism achievements since China adopted its reform and open-up policy, to enhance the patriotic mentality within tourism employees and to upgrade guide-interpreter's skills through regulating of tourism phraseology and enriching of commentary contents.

"Sightseeing throughout China: Chosen Tourism Commentaries (a comprehensive volume)" contributes to the development of China's tourism in that:

(1) It is unprecedented that China's tourism employees engage themselves in composition and compilation of commentaries on a large scale. Although China in the past saw the publication of a number of tourism books-most of them brief introductions or commentary pieces, they tended not to facilitate the face-to-face interaction between guide-interpreters and their clients. The compilation and publication of this book, though, is a wholly

new production that based itself on rich and numerous historical and cultural records as well as skills and orally orientated tourism language on the part of guide-interpreters. In some tourism-developed countries, some kinds of special commentary manuals are on demand in a bid to help guide-interpreters accommodate the different needs of various groups. With the ever deepening of China's reform and open-up policy, the speedy development of the nation's tourism as well as the ever-increasing social needs of standardized services, it is ever imperative to put the commentaries up to standard.

(2) The composition and compilation of model commentaries are done at the demand of many guide-interpreters and sightseers. Over the last few years, there were a few individuals working on some tourist attractions who gave commentaries at will or commented in a ignorant, superstitious and vulgar way. They even went so far as to violate the government's policies. This has not only hampered the upbringing of the public's consciousness, but also inflicted damage to the image of the nation. It is therefore an important mandate in terms of making tourism introductions on the basis of scientific and wholesome commentaries.

(3) The composition and selection of model commentaries serves as a boost to the strengthening of our tourism employees, with guide-interpreters in particular. Most of the authors of the chosen 31 pieces of commentary are on-the-spot guide-interpreters, tourism colleague teachers, students, or administration officials. Their pieces of work serve reflect their long-term experiences and hold attainments and high values. This activity has received positive reaction throughout the industry.

(4) This book, as well as other volumes of soon-to-come model commentary series is a must for tourism employees, especially guide-interpreters who hope to improve their professional

Preface

skills. Past experiences have shown that wherever there was a strengthening in the training and education of tour guides, there was an improvement in guiding skills. All in all, this publication could be good news for tourism practitioners and tourists as well.

The selection and publication of the following 30 pieces of model commentary serves as a good start of systematization of model commentaries which will invigorate the development of China's tourism industry. It is my wish that more books of model commentary series could be accepted for publication in an effort to better serve the tourism and contribute to the society.

He Guangwei
Chairman of the National Tourism Administration

•

CONTENTS

Preface	(I)
Forbidden City	(1)
The Palace Museum	(17)
Summer Palace	(25)
Temple of Heaven	(40)
Chengde Mountain Resort	(50)
Yungang Grottoes	(69)
Hulunbeier Grassland	(81)
Water cave of Benxi	(87)
Heavenly Lake on Mount Changbai	(94)
Shanghai Museum	(105)
Shanghai New Bund	(116)
Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Mausoleum	(124)
Zhuozheng (Humble Administrator's) Garden in Suzhou	(135)
The West Lake in Hangzhou	(150)
Mount Huangshan	(161)
Guyao—A Porcelain Factory in Jingdezhen	(189)
Qufu	(198)
Shaolin Temple (I)	(229)
Shaolin Temple (II)	(234)
The Three Gorges of the Yangtze River	(242)

Selected Tour Commentaries

Temple of The Chen Clan	(262)
Stone Carvings on The Baoding Mountain	
In Dazu County	(276)
The Li River	(291)
The Stone Forest	(309)
Huangguoshu Waterfall	(320)
The Potala Palace	(324)
Xi'an Museum of Stele Forest	(334)
History Museum of Shaanxi Province	(342)
Terra—Cotta Army Museum	(356)
Heavenly Lake in Xinjiang	(361)

FORBIDDEN CITY

(In front of the Meridian Gate)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to serve as your guide today.

This is the Palace Museum, also known as the Purple Forbidden City. It is the largest and most well preserved imperial residence in China today. Under Ming Emperor Yongle, construction began in 1406. It took 14 years to build the Forbidden City. The first ruler who actually lived here was Ming Emperor Zhudi. For five centuries thereafter, it continued to be the residence of 23 successive emperors until 1911 when Qing Emperor Puyi was forced to abdicate the throne. In 1987, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recognized the Forbidden City as a world cultural legacy.

It is believed that the Palace Museum, or Zi Jin Cheng (Purple Forbidden City), got its name from astronomy and folklore. The ancient astronomers divided the constellations into groups and centered them around the Ziwei Yuan (North Star). The constellation containing the North Star was called the Constellation of Heavly God and the star itself was called the purple palace. Because the emperor was supposedly the son of the heavenly gods, his central and dominant position would be further highlighted by the use of the word purple in the name of his residence. In folklore, the term "an eastern purple cloud is drifting" became a metaphor for auspicious events

after a purple cloud was seen drifting eastward immediately before the arrival of an ancient philosopher, Lao Zi, to the Hangu Pass. Here, purple is associated with auspicious developments. The word jin (forbidden) is self-explanatory as the imperial palace was heavily guarded and off-limits to ordinary people.

The red and yellow used on the palace walls and roofs are also symbolic. Red represents happiness, good fortune and wealth. Yellow is the color of the earth on the Loess Plateau, the original home of the Chinese people. Yellow became an imperial color during the Tang dynasty, when only members of the royal family were allowed to wear it and use it in their architecture.

The Forbidden City is rectangular in shape. It is 960 meters long from north to south and 750 meters wide from east to west. It has 9,900 rooms under a total roof area 150,000 square meters. A 52-meter-wide-moat encircles a 9.9-meter-high wall which encloses the complex. Octagon-shaped turrets rest on the four corners of the wall. There are four entrances into the city: the Meridian Gate to the south, the Shenwu Gate (Gate of Military Prowess) to the north, and the Xihua Gate (Western Flowery Gate) to the west, the Donghua (Eastern Flowery Gate) to the east.

Manpower and materials throughout the country were used to build the Forbidden City. A total of 230,000 artisans and one million laborers were employed. Marble was quarried from Fangshan County on the outskirts of Beijing. Five-colored rocks were cut from Mount Pan in Jixian County in Hebei Province. Granite was quarried in Quyang County in Hebei Province. Paving blocks were fired in kilns in Suzhou in southern China. Bricks and scarlet pigmentation used on the palatial walls came from Linqing in Shandong Province. Timber was cut, processed and hauled from the northwestern and southern regions.

The structure in front of us is the Meridian Gate. It is the main entrance to the Forbidden City. It is also known as Wufenglou (Five-Phoenix Tower). Ming emperors held lavish banquets here

Forbidden City

on the 15th day of the first month of the Chinese lunar year in honor of their courtiers. They also used this place for punishing officials by flogging them with sticks.

Qing emperors used this building to announce the beginning of the new year. Qing Emperor Qianlong changed the original name of this announcement ceremony from ban li (announcement of calendar) to ban shou (announcement of new moon) to avoid coincidental association with another Emperor's name, Hongli, which was considered a taboo at that time. Qing Dynasty emperors also used this place to hold audience and for other important ceremonies. For example, when the imperial army returned victoriously from the battlefield, it was here that the Emperor presided over the ceremony to accept prisoners of war.

(After entering the Meridian Gate and standing in front of the Five Marble Bridges on Golden Water River)

Now we are inside the Forbidden City. Before we start our tour, I would like to briefly introduce you to the architectural patterns before us. To complete this solemn, magnificent and palatial complex, a variety of building patterns were applied. Most important, all of the palaces and their accommodating buildings were arranged on a north-south axis, an 8-kilometer-long invisible line that has become an inseparable part of the City of Beijing. The Forbidden City covers roughly one-third of this central axis. Most of the important buildings in the Forbidden City were arranged along this line. The design and arrangement of the palaces reflect the solemn dignity of the royal court and the rigidly-stratified feudal system.

The Forbidden City is divided into an outer and an inner court. We are now standing on the southernmost part of the outer court. In front of us lies the Gate of Supreme Harmony. The gate is guarded by a pair of bronze lions, symbolizing imperial power and dignity. The lions were the most exquisite and the biggest of its kind. The one on the east playing with a ball is a male, and the ball is said to repre-

sent state unity. The other one is a female. Underneath one of its fore claws is a cub that is considered to be a symbol of perpetual imperial succession. The winding brook before us is the Golden Water River. It functions both as decoration and fire control. The five bridges spanning the river represent the five virtues preached by Confucius: benevolence, righteousness, rites, intelligence and fidelity. The river takes the shape of a bow and the north-south axis is its arrow. This was meant to show that the Emperors ruled the country on behalf of God.

(In front of the Gate of Supreme Harmony)

The Forbidden City consists of an outer courtyard and an inner enclosure. The outer courtyard covers a vast space lying between the Meridian Gate and the Gate of Heavenly Purity. The "three big halls" of Supreme Harmony, Complete Harmony and Preserving Harmony constitute the center of this building group. Flanking them in bilateral symmetry are two groups of palaces: Wenhua (Prominent Scholars) and Wuying (Brave Warriors). The three great halls are built on a spacious "H"-shaped, 8-meter-high, triple marble terrace. Each level of the triple terrace is taller than the one below and all are encircled by marble balustrades carved with dragon and phoenix designs. There are three carved stone staircases linking the three architectures. The Hall of Supreme Harmony is also the tallest and most exquisite ancient wooden-structured mansion in all of China. From the Palace of Heavenly Purity northward is what is known as the inner court, which is also built in bilaterally symmetrical patterns. In the center are the Palace of Heavenly Purity, the Hall of Union and Peace and the Palace of Earthly Tranquillity, a place where the Emperors lived with their families and attended to state affairs. Flanking these structures are palaces and halls in which concubines and princes lived. There are also three botanical gardens within the inner court, namely, the Imperial Garden, Cining Garden and Qianlong Garden. An inner Golden Water River flows eastwardly within the

inner court. The brook winds through three minor halls or palaces and leads out of the Forbidden City. It is spanned by the White Jade Bridge. The river is lined with winding, marble-carved balustrades. Most of the structures within the Forbidden City have yellow glazed tile roofs.

Aside from giving prominence to the north-south axis, other architectural methods were applied to make every group of palatial structures unique in terms of terraces, roofs, mythical monsters perching on the roofs and colored, drawing patterns. With these, the grand contour and different hierarchic spectrum of the complex were strengthened. Folklore has it that there are altogether 9,999 room-units in the Forbidden City. Since Paradise only has 10,000 rooms, the Son of Heaven on earth cut the number by half a room. It is also rumoured that this half-room is located to the west of the Wenyuange Pavilion (imperial library). As a matter of fact, although the Forbidden City has more than 9,000 room-units, this half-room is nonexistent. The Wenyuange Pavilion is a library where "Si Ku Quan Shu"—China's first comprehensive anthology—was stored.

(After walking past the Gate of Supreme Harmony)

Ladies and gentlemen, the great hall we are approaching is the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the biggest and the tallest of its kind in the Forbidden City. This structure covers a total building space of 2,377 square meters, and is known for its upturned, multiple counterpart eaves. The Hall of Supreme Harmony sits on a triple "H"-shaped marble terrace that is 8 meters high and linked by staircases. The staircase on the ground floor has 21 steps while the middle and upper stairways each have 9.

The construction of the Hall of Supreme Harmony began in 1406. It burned down three times and was severely damaged once during a mutiny. The existing architecture was built during the Qing Dynasty. On the corners of the eaves a line of animal-nails were usu-

ally fastened to the tiles. These animal-nails were later replaced with mythical animals to ward off evil spirits. There are altogether 9 such fasteners on top of this hall. The number nine was regarded by the ancients to be the largest numeral accessible to man and to which only the emperors were entitled.

There was a total of 24 successive emperors during the Ming and Qing dynasties who were enthroned here. The ball was also used for ceremonies which marked other great occasions: the Winter Solstice, the Chinese Lunar New Year, the Emperor's birthday, conferral of the title of empress, the announcement of new laws and policies, and dispatches of generals to war. On such occasions, the Emperor would hold audience for his court officials and receive their tributes.

This area is called the Hall of Supreme Harmony Square, which covers a total of 30,000 square meters. Without a single tree or plant growing here, this place inspires visitors to feel its solemnity and grandeur. In the middle of the square there is a carriageway that was reserved for the Emperor. On both sides of the road the ground bricks were laid in a special way: seven layers lengthwise and eight layers crosswise, making up fifteen layers in all. The purpose of this was to prevent anyone from tunneling his way into the palace. In the courtyard there are iron vats for storing water to fight fires. In the whole complex there are altogether 308 water vats. In wintertime, charcoal was burned underneath the vats to keep the water from freezing. Why so vast a square? It was designed to impress people with the hall's grandeur and vastness. Imagine the following scene. Under the clear blue sky, the yellow glazed tiles shimmered as the cloud-like layers of terrace, coupled with the curling veil of burning incense, transformed the Hall of Supreme Harmony into a fairyland. Whenever major ceremonies were held, the glazed, crane-shaped candleholders inside the hall would be lit, and incense and pine branches burnt in front of the hall. When the Emperor appeared, drums were beaten and musical instrument played. Civilian officials and generals would kneel down in submission.

The last Qing emperor Puyi assumed the throne in 1908, at the age of three. His father carried him to the throne. At the start of the coronation, the sudden drum-beating and loud music caught the young emperor unprepared. He was so scared that he kept crying and shouting, "I don't want to stay here. I want to go home." His father tried to soothe him, saying, "It'll soon be finished. It'll soon be finished." The ministers present at the event considered this incident inauspicious. Coincidentally, the Qing Dynasty collapsed three years later and there with concluded China's feudal system that had lasted for more than 2,000 years.

(On the stone terrace of the Hall of Supreme Harmony)

This is a bronze incense burner. In it incense made of sandalwood would be burnt on important occasions. There are altogether 18 incense burners, representing all of the provinces under the rule of the Qing monarchs. On either side of the Hall, 4 bronze water-filled vats were placed in case of fire. Next to the terrace on either side, there is a bronze crane and tortoise, symbols of longevity. This copper-cast grain measure is called "jialiang." It served as the national standard during the Qing Dynasty. It was meant to show that the imperial rulers were just and open to rectification. On the other side there is a stone sundial, an ancient timepiece. The jialiang and the sundial were probably meant to show what the Emperor represented: that he was the only person who should possess the standards of both measure and time.

In the very forefront of the Hall of Supreme Harmony, there are 12 scarlet, round pillars supporting the roof. The hall is 63 meters from east to west and 37 meters from north to south. It is 35 meters in height. In front of this architecture, there stands a triple terrace with five staircases leading up to the main entrance. It has 40 gold doors and 16 gold-key windows with colored drawings on the pillars and beams. In the middle of the hall, a throne carved with 9 dragons sits on a 2-meter-high platform. Behind the throne there is a

golden screen and in front of it, there is an imperial desk. The flanks are decorated with elephants, Luduan (a legendary beast), cranes, and incense barrels. The elephant carries a vase on its back that holds five cereals (i. e. rice, two kinds of millet, wheat and beans), which was considered a symbol of prosperity. As ancient legend has it that Luduan can travel 18,000 li (9,000 kilometers) in one day and knows all languages and dialects. Only to a wise and just monarch will this beast be a guardian.

The Hall of Supreme Harmony is also popularly known as Jinlun Dian (gold bell hall or the throne hall). The floor of the hall is laid with bricks that turn it into a smooth, fine surface as if water has been sprinkled on it. The so-called golden brick, in fact, has nothing to do with gold. Reserved exclusively for the construction of the royal court, it was made in a secretive, and complex way, and, when struck, sounds like the clink of a gold bar. Each brick was worth the market price of one dan (or one hectolitre) of rice.

The hall is supported by a total of 72 thick pillars. Of these, 6 are carved in dragon patterns and painted with gold and surround the throne. Above the very center of this hall there is a zaojing, or covered ceiling, which is one of the Specialities of China's ancient architecture. In the middle of the ceiling is a design of a dragon playing with a ball inlaid with pearls. This copper ball, hollow inside and covered with mercury, is known as the Xuanyuan Mirror and is thought to be made by Xuanyuan, a legendary monarch dating back to remote antiquity. The placing of the caisson above the throne is meant to suggest that all of China's successive emperors are Xuanyuan's descendants and hereditary heirs. Now you might have noticed that the Xuanyuan Mirror is not directly above the throne. Why? It is rumored that Yuan Shikai, a self-acclaimed warlord-turned emperor moved the throne further back because he was afraid that the Mirror might fall on him. In 1916 when Yuan Shikai became emperor, he removed the original throne with a Western-style, high-back chair. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the