

The background of the book cover is a dark, textured illustration of the Terracotta Army. It depicts numerous life-sized clay soldiers standing in formation, wearing traditional Chinese armor and carrying spears. The figures are rendered in a monochromatic, earthy tone that blends with the overall dark green and brown color scheme of the cover.

TRAVEL NOTES

中国名胜记游

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上海外语教育出版社

Travel Notes

By Wang Jiaosheng

中国名胜记游

王椒升 撰著 张丹子 注释

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FOREWORD

I have read all the travel sketches in this book and enjoyed reading them all.

The author is one of a few of my friends who write almost impeccable English, and the only one that is still prosecuting his English studies in spite of his eighty-odd years. I wish him all happiness as well as all success.

If I can say something about him that I do not think applicable to all my fellow students of English, it is that he studies English both for use and for pleasure, but does not study it merely as a 'subject' or merely for 'a knowledge' of it. Having said this, I hope I have said much.

September 1984

Ge Chuangui

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1. TEMPLE OF THE SLEEPING BUDDHA AND YINGTAOGOU GARDEN (CHERRY DALE), BEIJING

Beijing's Temple of the Sleeping Buddha (Wofosi), nestled in a forest on the slope of a hill northwest of the city, is hard to see until you reach its very gate.

The temple has a history of many centuries, though the exact year of its construction remains a matter of conjecture. Some say it was originally the Doushuai Temple¹, built in the 7th century during the Tang Dynasty². But it is generally believed that the present temple was begun in 1321 in the Yuan Dynasty³. Emperor Ying Zhong⁴, a devout follower of Buddhism, is said to have allocated five million ounces of silver to build the temple, formerly called the Temple of Shouan Hill⁵. The project dragged on for many years and was not completed until 1331. During the Ming and Qing dynasties⁶, the temple went through a series of repairs and renovations, and its name was changed two or three times. It reached its

题注: 北京卧佛寺和樱桃沟花园

present state around 1734, during the Qing Dynasty.

You enter the temple through a four-pillared, decorative archway⁷ of white marble with ornamental patterns of green and yellow glazed tiles⁸. Ancient cypresses⁹ shade the stone pathway leading to the interior, creating a feeling of quiet and seclusion.

The temple buildings form a symmetrical pattern typical of Tang and Song Dynasty architecture, with three rows of main halls and rooms for the abbot¹⁰ and monks¹¹. In the front row is the Hall of the Heavenly Emperor¹², with a belfry¹³ and a drum tower attached. A pond in the courtyard is spanned by a stone bridge. In mid-autumn, the pond is covered with lotus¹⁴ leaves and the fragrance from the blossoming cassia¹⁵ trees fills the air.

The Hall for the Three Generations of Buddhas is in the second row, and beyond it the Hall of the Sleeping Buddha. In the center lies the huge bronze statue of Sakyamuni¹⁶, reclining on a red lacquer bed, with both feet outstretched, his head propped on his right arm and his left hand resting on his body. Weighing about 54 tons and over 5 meters long, the statue is believed to have been cast in 1321, during the Yuan Dynasty. Standing along the wall are 12 disciples¹⁷, who are said to be receiving Sakyamuni's last instructions before he passes into Nirvana¹⁸. But judging by their sad expressions, the disciples seem to

be mourning the loss of their master whose eyes are already closed. Two glass cases exhibit embroidered shoes and caps presented as offering to the Buddha by Qing emperors. In the adjoining courtyard, two ancient *Shorea Robusta* trees¹⁹ (also known as 7-leafed trees) about three meters in girth, supposedly transported from India when the temple was constructed, still survive.

The temple has a depository for Buddhist scriptures²⁰ at the rear, a five-roomed, multi-story building with its back to a thickly wooded ridge. You can climb the ridge along a narrow path and look down on the temple's glazed tile and vermillion walls, half-hidden among ancient pines and cypresses.

Behind the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha, within walking distance, is Yingtaogou Garden (Cherry Dale). It is a quiet nook tucked away in the luxuriant woods and bamboo groves of the Shouan Hill, to the north of Xiangshan (Fragrant Hills)²¹ in the western suburbs of Beijing. Originally there was a temple called Guanghuiguan²² built here in the Ming Dynasty, and in its orchard cherry trees predominated: hence the name 'Cherry Dale'. Leaving the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha, visitors can conveniently make a side-excursion²³ to Yingtaogou by a path running through a ravine north of the temple. Here flows a limpid stream lined by grotesque rocks. In a few

minutes you reach an exquisitely-carved white marble bridge, with an inscription 'Red Star Bridge' written by the late Guo Moruo²⁴. From there a zigzag path leads to the entrance to Yingtaogou Garden, almost concealed from view by a thick bamboo grove. The terraces and pavilions in the garden are on an eminence which overlooks a deep pool, with a splendid view of the surrounding hills and valleys. Ascent is gained by a flight of oddly-shaped stone steps that spiral upwards to give an impression of variety.

Because of its air of seclusion and rugged beauty, Yingtaogou Garden draws quite a number of visitors seeking relief from the bustling urban areas. The noted geologist Li Siguang²⁵ is said to have taken a great liking for Yingtaogou, and lived here for some years. And legend has it that Cao Xueqin²⁶ wrote the great Chinese Classical novel, *A Dream of the Red Mansions*,²⁷ in the pavilions of this garden. The story seems not without foundation, since Cao is known to have spent the last twenty-odd years of his life in his residence at No. 39 Zhenbaiqi Village in Fragrant Hills. A museum in his memory was set up in April 1984 in the Beijing Botanical Garden at the entrance to the Temple of the Sleeping Buddha.

Notes

1. Doushuai Temple 兜率寺

2. the Tang Dynasty 唐代 618—907
3. the Yuan Dynasty 元代 1279—1368
4. Emperor Ying zong 英宗皇帝 (1321—1324)
5. The Temple of Shouan Hill 寿安山寺
6. the Ming and Qing dynasties 明代 (1368 — 1644), 清代 (1644—1911); 明清两代
7. archway /'ɑ:tʃwei/ *n.* 拱门道; 拱门下面的路
8. glazed tiles 琉璃瓦
9. cypress /'saɪprəs/ *n.* 柏树
10. abbot /'æbət/ *n.* 方丈; 住持
11. monk /mʌŋk/ *n.* 僧; 和尚
12. the Hall of the Heavenly Emperor 天王殿
13. belfry /'belfri/ *n.* 钟楼
14. lotus /'ləʊtəs/ *n.* 莲, 荷; lotus blooms 荷花; lotus leaves 荷叶
15. cassia /'kæsiə/ *n.* 肉桂
16. Sakyamuni 释迦牟尼
17. disciple /di'saɪpl/ *n.* 信徒; 弟子
18. Nirvana /niə'vɑ:nə, nə'v-/ *n.* 涅槃 (niē pán); 佛教用语, 指幻想的超脱生死的最高精神境界
19. Shorea Robusta trees = sal-tree 沙罗双树
20. scripture /'skriptʃə/ *n.* (基督教以外, 其它宗教的) 经典; 经文
21. Xiangshan (Fragrant Hill) 香山
22. Guanghuiguan 广慧观
23. side-excursion 余兴游览
24. Guo Moruo 郭沫若

- 25. Li Siguang 李四光(1889—1971)我国卓越的地质学家
- 26. Cao Xueqin 曹雪芹(约1715—1764)清代杰出的小说家
- 27. *A Dream of the Red Mansions* “红楼梦”, 曹雪芹创作的长篇小说

2. YANGXINDIAN (HALL OF MENTAL CULTIVATION), FORMER IMPERIAL PALACE, BEIJING

The Imperial Palace in Beijing is famed as the largest and most comprehensive extant group of ancient Chinese architecture, as well as one of the best-preserved ancient palaces in the world.

On a first visit, one is likely to be lost in its vast maze of innumerable halls and rooms, which house some of China's finest cultural and historical relics.

Entering the palace from Tiananmen Square¹, the visitor is first dazzled by the grandeur of the Three Great Halls with their glittering glazed-tile roofs and vermilion walls, resting majestically on three-tiered terraces of white marble bordered by balustrades² with carved cloud and dragon designs. Further north are numerous rear and side halls, each with its own special characteristics.

Yangxindian (Hall of Mental Cultivation), located to the southwest of Qianqinggong (Palace of Heavenly

题注: 故宫养心殿

Purity)³, was built in the Ming Dynasty. It served as the living quarters for emperors over many centuries and gained added importance when in the reign of Qing Emperor Yongzheng⁴, it became the office where the emperor conducted important affairs of state. It is believed that most of the Qing emperors lived and worked in Yangxindian.

The central hall in Yangxindian was the audience chamber where the emperor read memorials⁵, granted audiences to⁶ officials and summoned his ministers for consultation. Behind the imperial throne⁷ upholstered in yellow satin is a rosewood⁸ screen engraved with a motto⁹ written by the Qing Emperor Qianlong¹⁰, over which hangs a horizontal tablet¹¹ bearing the Chinese characters for "just and benevolent"¹² in Emperor Yongzheng's handwriting. The imposing hall has a magnificent ceiling sculpture¹³ of a dragon frolicking with a huge pearl.

The royal bed-chamber in the rear rooms is divided into three sections, all lavishly furnished. The innermost chamber houses the emperor's ornate bed, with its embroidered silk and satin quilts and tapestried curtains all preserved in their original color and shape.

Historically, Yangxindian is of importance as much for the momentous events that took place within its walls, as for the interesting sidelights it throws on

the life of the Qing imperial family and its internal contradictions in the declining years of the dynasty.

San Xi Tang¹⁴ (Room for Keeping the Three Rare Pieces of Calligraphy)¹⁵ gives insights into the private life of Emperor Qianlong who ruled when the Qing Dynasty was in its heyday. Occupying only about ten square meters in the west wing of Yangxindian, this sanctum¹⁶ is a reminder of his reputed patronage of calligraphy¹⁷. Unpretentious but daintily furnished, it has an air of elegance that makes it quite different from most of the ornately-decorated halls and rooms in the former Imperial Palace. Under the southern window is a wooden *kang*¹⁸ covered with a velvet blanket on which stands a rectangular *kang* table. The royal seat rests on a soft cushion at the upper end of the *kang*. On the wall at the back hang two pieces of the Emperor's handwriting: a tablet with the three characters for 'San Xi Tang', flanked by a couplet¹⁹ which reads: 'At heart I embrace things ancient and modern²⁰; In brush and paper repose my deep thoughts.'²¹ Writing brushes and inkstones arranged to a nicety adorn the window-sill. It is said that Qianlong spent much of his leisure, especially during the winter months, in this cosy little room, browsing among his favorite masterpieces of calligraphy, and writing poems and inscriptions to express his appreciation.

The origin of the name San Xi Tang can be understood if you read a scroll written by Qianlong himself in a cursive hand²² which hangs on the northern wall of the room. In it he tells how he kept here for his private enjoyment what he considered the three rare pieces representative of Chinese calligraphy at its best: 'Sunny Weather After a Sudden Snowfall'²³ by Wang Xizhi of the Jin Dynasty²⁴, 'Mid-Autumn' by his seventh son Wang Xianzhi²⁵, and 'Bo Yuan' by Wang Xun²⁶, one of Wang Xizhi's distant nephews. An interesting painting on the west wall depicts the three great calligraphists gathered in a spacious hall beside a stream at the hillside. The precociously-talented Wang Xianzhi, then only a boy of seven or eight, is seen at his desk, engrossed in the practice of calligraphy, with his parent gazing fondly behind him. The man sitting in an inclined position by the window is supposed to be Wang Xun.

San Xi Tang is remembered today chiefly for a famous anthology entitled *San Xi Tang Book of Model Calligraphy*²⁷ which was compiled under Emperor Qianlong's orders in 1747. Containing rubbings²⁸ of the three rare pieces as well as of the works of no less than 132 other representative calligraphists from the Jin down to the Ming Dynasty, the anthology is highly esteemed as by far the best and most comprehensive collection of its kind still extant, and for its

memorable contribution to the unique Chinese art of calligraphy. The original steles²⁹, numbering 495, are now housed in the Library for Perusing Ancient Calligraphy³⁰, built in 1754 in a quiet corner of Baihai Park³¹. It is a two-storeyed building of antique style surrounded by beautiful park scenery, with its rooms tastefully laid out around a central courtyard in which two ancient trees grow luxuriantly.

Tishuntang (Hall of Manifesting Obedience³²) to the east of the imperial bed-chamber, which used to be Empress Longyu's³³ living room is reminiscent of a tragedy in the Qing imperial family during the reign of Emperor Guangxu³⁴. Legend says that Longyu was chosen by the Empress Dowager Cixi³⁵ to be Guangxu's empress against his own wish, so that he never lived with her except on the night of the wedding, nor did he subsequently visit her rooms.

But not long afterwards he became passionately attached to Zhen Fei³⁶, a favorite concubine who ardently shared his views of political reform and incurred the displeasure of the Empress Dowager. Longyu, deeply jealous of Zhen Fei and taking advantage of her being out of favor with the Empress Dowager, is said to have spread malicious gossip about her so-called infidelity, and held many secret meetings with the powerful eunuch³⁷ Li Lianying³⁸ in Yangxindian, in order to lay plans to persecute Zhen

Fei.

In 1900, when the Allied Forces of the Eight Foreign Powers³⁹ were advancing on Beijing, Cixi and her court fled the capital in panic. On the eve of her flight, Cixi tried to induce Zhen Fei to jump into a well. When Zhen Fei resisted, Cixi ordered a courtier⁴⁰ to push her in. Then Cixi escaped by a back door and headed for Xi'an. The well, named Zhen Fei Well in memory of the ill-fated imperial concubine, is today often visited by tourists.

The eastern side room in Yangxindian is of historical interest because it was here the Empress Dowager Cixi took charge of state affairs behind a screen⁴¹ for many years, a political phenomenon previously unheard-of in the annals⁴² of the Qing Dynasty.

When Emperor Tongzhi⁴³ ascended the throne in 1862 at the age of six, the Empress Dowagers Cixi and Ci'an⁴⁴ both sat on a throne in Yangxindian, which was separated from the emperor's throne in front by a screen, to assist him in the conduct of state affairs.

This practice continued when Emperor Guangxu succeeded to the throne in 1875 at the age of four. But with the sudden death of Ci'an one morning in 1881, many believe through an intrigue of Cixi's state power passed entirely into Cixi's hands. She nominally gave up her authority on Guangxu's coming of age⁴⁵ in