Welcome to China

General Information

Visas

All visitors to China require a valid passport and visa. Visas must be arranged beforehand through your nearest Chinese embassy. CTS and CITS, China's state travel agencies, also arrange visas and have offices worldwide.

If you plan to spend time in Hong Kong before entering the mainland, visas can be obtained quickly and easily in the SAR within 1 or 2 working days.

For visitors, passports will be the prime means of identification - you will need them to cash travelers checks, buy plane and train tickets and as general identification. In case of theft or loss of a passport, it is a good idea to have photocopies of your passport stashed strategically throughout your luggage.

Temperature

April is spring in Beijing, the golden season with an average temperature of 14.2 degrees Celsius (57 degrees Fahrenheit).

If you come to Beijing in April, you could wear a thin sweater, a pair of sweat pants, and a coat. But sometimes it may be a good idea to bring a warm cap because it is windy and sandy during this period though it is not cold.

Dress Code

We will require all participants to wear business attire on business visits. For other functions, casual wear is sufficient.

Formal Attire

Men: Business suit with dress shirt and tie, and dress shoes.
Women: Business suit (pants or skirt) with blouse and dress shoes.

Occasion: Required for all business events / company visits.

Semi-formal Attire
Cultural Events

Men: Any business casual attire (No jeans or sneakers)
Women: Any business casual attire (No jeans or sneakers)

Occasion: Suggested for all academic and official school related activities

Casual Attire

Occasion: Any occasion not mentioned above

Other Recommended Items

Comfortable walking shoes for day long walking
Hat / Shade to prevent over exposure to sun
GSM compatible mobile phone
Medication for upset stomach

Changing Money: Traveler's Checks and Foreign Currency

Traveler's checks and foreign currency can be changed at international airports, main branches of the Bank of China and major hotels. Hotels may only exchange money for their guests. Traveler's checks generally receive a more favorable rate than cash. It is best to stick to traveler's checks issued from major agencies, such as Thomas Cook, American Express or Citibank.

The exchange rate is set by the government, so shopping around is generally unnecessary. If you are planning to go to a remote area, it is a good idea to bring enough RMB with you and US$ traveler's checks.

The floating currency in use in China is the Renminbi (RBM). The exchange rate is approximately US$1 = RMB 8.05.

If you exchange your money in China at any government sanctioned location you will be issued a receipt, and retain your exchange receipts. They are necessary if you want to change RMB back to your currency at the end of your trip.

ATMs

ATMs that accept foreign cards are few and far between. Do not rely on them as a major mode of obtaining cash in mainland China. Check with your bank or credit card company before you travel. You can find more information at the Mastercard and Visa websites.
Credit Cards

The most readily accepted credit cards are Visa, Master Card, American Express, JCB and Diners Club. Credit cards are gaining acceptance in China, however, count on using them only in major cities. They will, generally, be accepted in major hotels and tourist restaurants. Check if they are accepted in advance. Credit cards are generally not accepted for train ticket purchases.

Cash advances on credit cards may be done at main Bank of China branches in major cities. A 4% commission is usually deducted.

Tipping

Except for some tour guides and hotel porters, no people in China expect tipping.

Food

Every year, millions of people travel long distances to far away places not only to enjoy the beauty of scenic spots, to learn new folk customs, to experience and feel the nature of the people in exotic China, but also to taste delicious dishes and experience the art of the eating.

Chinese cuisine is a bright branch in the treasure-house of Chinese culture, and it is also a dominant one in the field of world cuisine. Like music, dance, painting and drama, China regards eating as an art which is a comprehensive one combining sight, smell, touch, taste and even sound.

The core of Chinese cuisine is taste, and its purpose is to preserve health. It fuses nutrition and color, shape, appearance and the taste perfectly. Thus eating Chinese food can not only satisfy one's appetite but also provide tonic effect.

Main Dish Systems

Among the local dishes all over the country, Chuan, Lu, Su, Yue dishes are the most well-known. They are called the four great dish systems. Plus Zhe, Min, Hui and Xiang, there is a saying of eight great dish systems. Out of these, the numbers of local dish systems are not less than 20, and the vegetarian dish, Beijing dish and Shanghai dish all have complete systems.

Su, Chuan, Lu and Yue dish are called the four great local flavors.
Sichuan dish is abbreviated as Chuan dish, whose dominant feature is using condiments, including chili, Chinese prickly ash, scented vinegar and thick broad-bean sauce, etc. The flavors are mainly litchi, sour and hot, tingling and hot, spicy and piquant.

Shandong dish is abbreviated as Lu dish. It is representative of northern dishes. Jinan dish stresses clear soup and cream soup. Jiaodong dish is good at cooking all kinds of seafood. It pays much attention to keep and highlight the fresh flavor of the stuff. The flavor is mainly light, fresh and tender.

Guangdong dish is shortened as Yue dish. Its features are: the stuff selected is meticulous and extensive; it is good at cooking snakes, racoon dogs and monkeys. The flavor is mainly light, crispy, tasty and refreshing.

Anhui dish is shortened as Hui dish. Its features are stressing oil, sauce color and fire.

Hunan dish is abbreviated as Xiang dish, and it is good at using smoked vinegar as condiments. In cooking respect, it stresses tasty materials and its flavors highlight hot and sour.

Jiangsu dish is usually called Su dish. Its flavors are light and moderate, palatably sweet and salty, nourishing but not greasy. In this system, Huaiyang dish is the most famous.

Zhejiang dish is abbreviated as Zhe dish. It has characteristics as light and fresh, tender and elaborate.

Fujian dish is shortened as Min dish. Careful making, pleasant color, light and fresh flavor, frequent using of scented wine as condiments are its features. The flavor is light but usually sweet and/or sour.

Beijing dish is usually called Jing dish. It selects materials extensively and are crispy, fragrant and fresh.

Vegetarian dish comes from monasteries. The cooking materials are mostly bean products, fungus and some seafood. Animal materials are limited to milk and eggs.
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Transportation

All of China's major cities have good transportation networks. Aside from public buses, there are the tour buses, and taxis. Buses are very inexpensive to ride and each passenger pays approximately 2 yuan or more depending on distance. The starting meter prices for taxis range from 10 to 12 yuan and are easy to flag down in urban areas.

Electricity

Electricity in China runs on 220V, 50 cycles AC.

There are at least 5 different types of plugs currently in use in China. The most frequently found types are the 2 pronged American style and the 3 pronged angled Australian style. Please refer to diagram below. An adapter with the American and Australian styles should be sufficient and should be bought before entering China.
Hotel

You will be staying at the Unisplendour International Center
Tel: +86.10.62791888
The name in Chinese is:
紫光国际交流中心 (Pronounced:
北京市海淀区中关村东路一号院 (清华大学东门西侧)

The hotel has a small gym facility as well as other facilities. 
For more information please visit http://www.uniscenter.com/index.html

Forbidden City

The Forbidden City in Beijing is the place where 24 Chinese emperors ruled China for 500 years.

It also known as the Imperial Palace Museum or Gugong, the Forbidden City was the place where the emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties carried out their administration and lived. Now it is open to the public as a palace museum where people can see the great traditional palace architecture, enjoy the treasures kept in the palace, and learn of the legends and anecdotes about the imperial family and the court.

Lying at the center of Beijing, the Forbidden City, called gugong, in Chinese, used to be the imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is called the Palace Museum now. It lies 1 kilometer north of the Tian'anmen Square, with its south gate, the Gate of Devine Might (Shenwumen), facing the Jingshan Park. 960 meters long and 750 meters wide, the world largest palace complex covers a floor space of 720,000 square meters, having 9,999 buildings. The rectangular city is encircled in a 52-meter-wide, 6-meter-deep moat and a 10-meter-high, 3,400-meter-long city wall which has one gate on each side. There are four unique and delicate structured corner towers overlooking the city inside and outside on the four corners. Generally, it was divided into two parts, the northern half, or the Outer Court where emperors executed their
supreme power over the nation and the southern half, or the Inner Court where they lived with their royal family. Until 1924 when the last emperor in China was driven out of the Inner Court, 14 emperors of the Ming dynasty and 10 emperors of the Qing dynasty had reigned here. About 500 years being the imperial palace, it houses numerous rare treasures and curiosities. It is now listed by the UN as World Cultural Heritage in 1987 and is the hottest tourist magnets.

Construction of the palace complex started in 1407, the 5th year of the Yongle reign of the third emperor of the Ming dynasty, and was completed 14 years later in 1420. It was said that a million workers including 100,000 artisans were driven into the long-term hard labor. Stones needed were quarried from Fangshan, suburb of Beijing. It was said a well was dug along the road every 50 meters in order to pour water onto the road in winter to slide huge stones on ice into the city. Huge amount of timbers and other materials were all freighted from faraway provinces. Ancient Chinese people fully displayed their wisdom in building the Forbidden City. Take the grand red city wall for example; the ladder shaped wall has an 8.6 meters wide bottom and a 6.66 meters wide top. The shape of the city wall totally frustrate attempt to climb onto the wall. The bricks of the wall are said made from white lime and glutinous rice while the cement is made from glutinous rice and egg whites, and these incredible materials make the wall extraordinarily strong.

Since yellow is the symbol of the royal family, it is the dominant color in the Forbidden City. Roofs are built with yellow glazed tiles; decorations in the palace are painted yellow; even the bricks on the ground are made yellow in special process. However, there is one exception. Wenyuange, the royal library, has a black roof. The reason is that it was believed black represented water then and could extinguish fire. Nowadays, the Forbidden City, or the Palace Museum is open to tourists home and abroad. Splendid paintings on the royal architectures, grand and deluxe halls, and surprisingly magnificent treasures will certainly satisfy "modern civilians".
Meridian Gate

The Meridian Gate, Wumen in Chinese, is the southern entrance of the Forbidden City. Since Chinese emperors believed that they were sons of Heaven and should live in the center of the universe, and they believed the Meridian Line went through the Forbidden City, the gate was named so. The grand gate, consisting of five openings, is the largest gate and main gate of the Forbidden City, 35.6 meters high and surmounted by five pavilions, named Wufenglou, viz. Five Phoenix Tower. In Five Phoenix Tower, there are drums which were used to announce emperors' departure to the Temple of Heaven and bells which to announce their departure to the Ancestral Temple. Both toll to announce that the emperor was going to receive his ministers in Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony).

There were strict rules to follow when people enter the Forbidden City. Entering through the central opening was the emperors' exclusive privilege, while their empresses were allowed to go through the opening once on their wedding day. The top three in the national examinations, presided by emperors on the final stage, would be honored to strut through the arched hole after receiving emperors' interview. The east opening was for the ministers while the west opening was for the royal family. The other openings were for petty officials. Ordinary people were forbidden to enter the city.

In the ancient time, emperors would bestow foods to ministers on days of important Chinese solar terms. On first October on solar calendar every year, emperors would issue next year' calendar. After wars, Emperors would receive captives themselves here. Also on the left side of the Imperial Way, which goes through the central opening, backline penalty would be executed on those who offended emperors.

Taihemen (Gate of Supreme Harmony)

Behind the Meridian Gate, Wumen, one can see five bridges and the courtyard beyond. Further north in the center, it is Taihemen, the Gate of Supreme Harmony.
The river is called the Inner Golden River and the bridges called the Inner Golden River Bridges. The central bridge is reserved for emperors exclusively. The two flanking it are reserved for royal family members while the two outside are for ordinary officials. The bridges are well decorated with marble balustrades carved with motifs of dragon and phoenix. The river serves as fire hydrant in case of fire as well as decorations.

The courtyard beyond covers a space of 10,000 square meters. There are no trees on the square since in ancient China emperors considered themselves as Son of Heaven, born to reign over the country, so they should occupy the highest position. Nothing was allowed to overwhelm the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the highest building in the Forbidden City and trees were no exception. Certainly there are many other stories about this strange arrangement.

You will be astonished if you are informed that the ground in the palace was laid in a very special way - seven layers lengthwise and eight layers crosswise, totaling fifteen layers to protect assassins from digging tunnels into the palace. And the bricks were specially made to sound nice when walking on. The rooms on each side were said to serve as warehouses for storing such items as fur, porcelain, silver, tea, silk, satin and clothes.

Taihemen, north of the square, is the main gate of the Outer Court and fairly grand. The gate is guarded by a couple of gilded bronze lions which were aimed to show imperial dignity. The east one is male, with its front right paw put on a ball, meaning imperial power extended worldwide. The lioness on the west puts its front left paw on a lion cub, indicating prosperously growing family.

The gate is an important place where emperors' wedding ceremonies were usually held and in the October of the first year under Shunzhi reign of the Qing dynasty, Emperor Shunzhi announced an act of grace.
Entering Taihemen, you will see Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony) across the spacious square, which covers a space of 30,000 square meters. Sitting on a three-tier marble terrace, the grandest timber framework ever in China will overwhelm anyone.

The hall was first built in 1406 and repaired many times later. As the heart of the Forbidden City, the so-called Golden Carriage Palace, used to be the place where emperors received high officials and practiced their rule over the nation. Also grand ceremonies would be held to celebrate new emperor's ascending to the throne, emperors' birthdays and wedding ceremonies and other important occasions such as Winter Solstice, the Chinese New Year and dispatching generals into war fields.

Along the three-tier terrace stairs, there are 18 bronze Dings, a kind of ancient Chinese vessel, to represent 18 provinces of the nation then. On the terrace, which was luxuriously balustraded, a bronze crane and a bronze tortoise can be seen. They were put there to expect everlasting rule and longevity. The marble Rigui, an ancient timer in the east and the Jialiang, an ancient measuring vessel in the west were put there to show that emperors were just and fair. In front of the hall, there are a couple of gilded bronze vats, which were used to hold water in case of fire. Behind, the hall stands.

Since the Hall of Supreme Harmony was symbol of the imperial power, it was the highest structure in the Ming and Qing dynasty in the nation, no other buildings allowed higher than it. The heavily glazed hall is 35.02 meters high and 37.44 if rooftop decoration counted, and 63.96 meters in width and 37.2 meters in length respectively. There are totally 72 pillars standing in six rows to support the roof. Gates and windows were embossed with clouds and dragons.

Inside of the hall, the floor was paved with special bricks which were fired long and then soaked in tungoill to be polished. As a symbol of imperial power, the sandalwood throne, standing on a two-meter high platform, is located in the center of the hall and
enclosed within six thick gold-lacquered pillars painted with dragons. The golden throne is carved with dragons all over. Around the throne stand two bronze cranes, an elephant-shaped incense burner and tripods in the shape of mythical beasts. The hall is heavily painted with dragons, having an aura of solemnity and mystery. In the middle of the ceiling is the design of two dragons playing with pearls. They were made of glass and painted with mercury. The pearl was said to be able to detect any usurper of the imperial power. If anyone who was not the descendant of the Emperor Huang Di usurped the throne, it would drop down and strike him to death.

Hall of Central Harmony

Zhonghedian, the Hall of Central Harmony, was originally built in 1420 and restored in 1627 and again 1765. It is square in shape rather than rectangular as the other two in the Outer Court. It is the smallest in the three main halls in the Outer Court. It served as a restroom when emperors were going to present ceremonies held in the Hall of Supreme Harmony on their way there. Here they would interview their ministers of rite. Annually before their departure to important sacrifice rites held at Temple of Heaven, Temple of Earth and etc., emperors would browse elegiac addresses in the hall. Before their departure to the Temple of Ancestor Farmer, they would also inspect seeds and farming tools they would use in the ceremony. In the Qing dynasty, it was prescribed that the imperial genealogy should be revised every ten years. The ceremony of presenting the revision to the emperor and His Majesty's approving would also be held here.

Inside of the hall, visitors can see there is one golden unicorn on each side of the throne in the center of the hall. The couple of golden unicorns, called luduan in Chinese, were believed capable of traveling 9,000 kilometers a day and speaking many languages. Since the divine beast foresees faraway, it was put beside the throne
to indicate emperors' wisdom and brilliantness. They used to be sandalwood burners. Beside the throne, there are also two sedan chairs, which was used as emperors' vehicles to shuttle around in the Forbidden City.

**Hall of Preserved Harmony**

Baohedian, the Hall of Preserved Harmony, sits on the northern end of the three-tier marble terrace, similar in style but a bit smaller than the Hall of Supreme Harmony and larger than the Hall of Central Harmony. It was first built in 1420, rebuilt in 1625 and renovated in 1765. In the Ming dynasty, emperors usually change their clothes here before ceremonies of conferring empress or crown prince. In the Qing dynasty, imperial banquets usually would be given here. To celebrate a princess's marriage, emperors would invite high officials, the bridegroom and his father, and their relatives who served the imperial government to a banquet. Every year, on the eve of the New Year's Eve, banquets would be held to feast and honor margraves, Mongol princes and civil and military officials.

In 1789, middle of the Qing dynasty, Emperor Qianlong removed Palace Examination, the highest level and final stage of the nationwide imperial examination system, from the Hall of Supreme Harmony to the hall. Emperors would read papers of the top ten candidates to honor them.

In rainy days, visitors will have chance to see the spectacular scene of a thousand dragons draining water. There are 1,412 marble stone dragon heads under the columns of the three-tier terrace on which the three main halls are seated. Chinese artisans smartly combined drainage system with architectural art. Once you get a chance to the Forbidden City, please notice the holes in dragons' mouths. However, the ones in the corners have no holes.
Huge Stone Carving

Behind the Hall of Preserved Harmony, in the middle of the stairway, is a huge piece of marble carving of nine dragons playing with pearls. It is the biggest stone sculpture in the Forbidden City. It was originally sculpted in the Ming dynasty and re-sculpted in the Qing dynasty. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, anyone who was caught touching this holy stone would be punished by death penalty! The huge stone was hauled into the palace all the way from Fangshan, about 70 kilometers away from Beijing city proper. The hard transportation took about a month and 20,000 men and thousands mules and horses. The 16.57 meters long, 3.07 meters wide and 1.7 meters thick stone weighs about 250 tons. It was said that a well was dug every 500 meters and water was pumped out onto the road to facilitate transportation.

Gate of Celestial Purity

Qianqingmen, Gate of Celestial Purity, is the main gate of the Inner Court. In front of the gate, there is a square which runs 200 meters long from east to west and extends only 30 meters from north to south. The square separates the Outer Court and the Inner Court and integrates them.

In the Qing dynasty, it was the place where emperors, sitting on the throne set in the middle of the gate, heard reports and made decisions. The huts standing left and right are duty rooms and waiting rooms for ministers waiting for interviews, etc.

Outside of the gate, against the red wall are ten gilded bronze vats, shining. The huge vats are decorations and reservoirs in case of fire. Every one of these vats weighs 4 tons itself and can hold 4 tons water. There are totally 308 vats in the whole palace, including 22 of this kind.
Palace of Celestial Purity

Inside Qianqingmen (Gate of Celestial Palace), you will see Qianqinggong, the Palace of Celestial Purity, which used to be the bedroom palace of emperors.

The Palace of Celestial Purity is the smaller twin of the Hall of Supreme Harmony. Every item similar with that of the Hall of Supreme Harmony is smaller than the latter. Since it was esteemed inferior to the Hall of Supreme Harmony. However, it is the largest structure in the Inner Court since it is superior to any other structures in the Inner Court. It was built in 1420 and rebuilt in 1798. It didn't survive fires for several times! Ming emperors and the first two Qing emperors live inside the palace and attended to daily state affairs. They also read, signed documents, interviewed ministers and envoys. Banquets and rites occasionally would be held here too. In 1722 and 1785, Banquet for A Thousand Seniors was held here twice. Old men over 60 from the nation presented the events. Emperor Qianlong even sent them presents. Later, Emperor Yongzheng moved his living quarter to the Hall of Mental Cultivation, which is located right to the west of this palace. However, it still played significant role in the imperial life.

Moreover, in the Qing dynasty, no matter where the emperor died, his coffin should be set in the palace for a few days to hold memorial ceremonies. Later the coffin would be moved to Jinshan, and then buried into the mausoleum on a selected day.

In the middle of the palace, the throne is seated on stairs, surrounded by decorations like cloisonne incense burners, long red candles, and big mirrors, which were placed beside the throne to ward off evil spirits. On the columns surrounding, there are two pairs of couplets written by Qing emperors. Over the throne hangs a plaque engraved with 4 Chinese characters, which were written by Emperor Yongzheng and means Justice and Brightness. From Emperor Yongzheng, crown princes' name would be written on duplicate documents and a copy would be hidden in a box behind the plaque. The other copy would be hidden with the emperor. If the designated names on the two copies were the same, the designated prince would take the crown.
**Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union**

Jiaotaidian, the Hall of Celestial and Terrestrial Union, was first built in 1420 and rebuilt in 1655 and 1798 respectively. It indicates the emperor and the empress have a nice marriage. It looks like Zhonghedian, the Hall of Central Harmony in shape and is the smallest among the three main palaces in the Inner Court. Usually empresses would receive formal birthday greetings here. Empresses would inspect preparations before they went to preside over memorial ceremonies for Silkworm God and practise sericulture. Emperor Shunzhi's order that eunuchs should be banned to attend to state affairs were placed here. To the right of the throne, visitors will see ancient Chinese water pot - equivalent of sandglass and to the left there is a chime clock. The two timers used to be the reference of the Drum Tower and the Bell Tower. In addition, the palace also holds 25 imperial seals. Since Emperor Qianlong hoped that the Qing dynasty could last 25 reigns to exceed the East Zhou dynasty, the longest dynasty in China. However history disappointed him, the Qing dynasty only lasted ten reigns.

**Palace of Terrestrial Tranquility**

Kunninggong, Palace of Terrestrial tranquility, was first built in 1420 and restored in 1655. It was the only Manchurian architecture in the Forbidden City and residence palace of the empress during the Ming dynasty and the Qing dynasty. However, in the Qing dynasty, the bridal emperor and empress only lived in the East Warmth Chamber of this palace for a few days. Later the emperor would move to the Hall of Mental Cultivation. The empress would move to other palace. The emperor's bridal chamber in the East Warmth Chamber was painted red and there were palace lamps pasted with red Double Happiness to heat up happy atmosphere. The delicate and exquisite embroidered bed curtain and quilt both features a hundred playing children. The emperors all expected more children to show imperial family's prosperity.

In the West Warmth Chamber, sacrifice would be held every day. On important occasions, emperors and empresses would preside over the ceremonies themselves.
Behind the palace, it is the Kunningmen, the Gate of Terrestrial Tranquility, with imperial doctors' duty room, dispensary and eunuchs duty room flanking it.

**Hall of Mental Cultivation**

Yangxindian, the Hall of Mental Cultivation, is of significance in the Forbidden City. It was built in the Ming dynasty and rebuilt in the Qing dynasty. From Emperor Yongzheng, the Qing emperors lived and practiced their rule here. Three emperors had died here.

The hall has a front hall and a rear hall which was the emperor's bedroom. In the center of the front hall, emperors summoned their ministers to consult state affairs. On the bookshelf behind the throne, there used to be books prepared for a new emperor to show him how to reign. In the East Warmth Chamber, the notorious Empress Dowager Cixi, attended to state affairs behind curtain. The chamber is now displayed same as her time. She ruled China behind a yellow curtain for 48 years here under her policy of quislism. In the West Warmth Chamber, emperors from Yongzheng to Xianfeng interviewed their ministers to consult or give secret orders. The small house in the west end is named Sanxitang (Hall of Three Rare Treasures), since Emperor Qianlong collected and held three outstanding calligraphy masterpieces by Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi, and Wang Xun, three masters in Chinese calligraphy. There still hang plaques written by Emperor Qianlong.

The lobby extending between the center of the front hall and the rear hall connects them. There are five imperial bedrooms, one in the center and the other four flanking it. The courtyards east and west of the rear hall, are temporary lodgings of empresses and concubines respectively when they were granted interview and bed time with Emperors. They were forbidden to come here without emperors' permission.

On February 12th, 1912, under the heavy blow of the Revolution of 1911 led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, Emperor Dowager Longyu presided over the final cabinet meeting of the Qing dynasty, and was forced to decide abdication and sign the imperial
Cultural Events

abdication declaration here. However, the imperial family was privileged to stay in the Inner Court until 1924 when they were driven out by General Feng Yuxiang.

**Six Western Palaces**

Xiliugong, Six Western Palaces, lies north of Yangxindian (Hall of Mental Cultivation), three palaces on each side of an alley running from north to south. The complex was originally built with the Forbidden City. The group of palaces includes Yongshougong (Palace of Eternal Longevity), Yikungong (Palace of the Queen Consort), Chuxiugong (Palace for Gathering Elegance), Taijidian (Hall of the Supreme Pole), Changchungong (Palace of Eternal Spring) and Xianfugong (Palace of Universal Happiness). Every palace has its own courtyard, the front hall and the rear hall, and annexes. They were the residences for emperors' women. Since in feudal China, emperors were polygamists, it was exaggerated that they had 3,000 wives. Since polygamied emperors usually had at least dozens of ladies, these palaces were necessary to lodge them. Now they are displayed to the public with original settings untouched.

Chuxiugong (Palace of Gathering Elegance) is the most famous one among the six since the notorious Empress Dowager Cixi lived here for a long period. When hierarch Cixi was in power, although she was behind the throne, she spent huge amount of money to decorate the palace, making it the most luxurious one to celebrate her 50th birthday in 1884. Now it is exhibited to visitors same as that time.

Outside on the stone stands, there are a couple of bronze dragons and a couple of bronze deer. Inside, original delicate pieces of furniture and decorations now on display are all original pieces when Cixi used.

**Hall for Ancestral Worship**

Fengxiandian, Hall for Ancestral Worship, was built in 1656 during the Qing dynasty. It has a front hall and a rear hall, which are connected, by a lobby. Its main function
was to offer sacrifices to imperial ancestors. Grand sacrifices ceremonies would be held in its front hall on important occasions. On the days of their ancestors' birth, death and traditional festivals, ceremonies would be held in the rear hall.

Shrines and statues in the hall were destroyed in the Cultural Revolution and the lobby has been expanded. Now the hall looks almost square inside and is open to the public as Clock and Watch Exhibition Hall. Different kinds of clocks and watches were given as gifts to the imperial family by foreign envoys in the Qing dynasty, worth seeing.

**Six Eastern Palaces**

Dongliugong, Six Eastern Palaces, consists of Jingrengong (Palace of Great Benevolence), Chengqiangong (Palace of Celestial Favour), Yonghegong (Palace of Eternal Harmony), Jingyanggong (Palace of Great Brilliance), Zhongcuigong (Palace of Purity) and Yanxigong (Palace of Lasting Happiness).

The palace complex stands on the east side of the Inner Court. Most of the palaces were restored in the 17th century. These palaces were also the living quarters of the imperial concubines. Now mostly of them have been turned into exhibition halls where Chinese treasures used to be collected by the imperial family are displayed to the public.

Jingrengong (Palace of Great Benevolence) now holds exhibition of more than 500 pieces Bronze wares of ancient China with other two halls, Zhaigong and Chengsudian. Visitors will see magnificent bronze wares displayed there.

In Chengqiangong (Palace of Celestial Favour) and Yonghegong (Palace of Eternal Harmony), now the Pottery and Porcelain Exhibition Hall, visitors will be privileged to appreciate pottery and porcelain wares dated from the Neolithic Age to the Qing dynasty.
Jingyanggong (Palace of Great Brilliance) has turned into an exhibition hall displaying lacquer wares, jade wares, stonewares, glasswares and metal wares etc. from the Ming and Qing dynasties. It is now Ming and Qing Crafts Exhibition Hall.

Zhongcuigong (Palace of Purity) was the palace where the crown prince lived in the Ming dynasty.

Nine Dragon Screen

Nine Dragon Screen is one of the three famous Nine Dragons Screens in China, the best and the biggest in China. The glazed tile screen was built in 1771 under the reign of Emperor Qianlong, and is 3.5 meters high and about 30 meters long. It is composed of 270 pieces glazed tiles, depicting 9 surging dragons playing with pearls with a background of clouds and seawater. The relief screen applies yellow, blue, white and purple and looks gorgeous.

The screen indicates emperors' supremacy by arranging nine dragons in the front and 5 on the edge, since they did believe nine is the largest single number and 5 the middle, representing Heavenly Son in combination.

The belly of the third white dragon was inserted with a piece of wood. A story tells that it was fired broken in the kiln, which meant nobody would be alive. A carpenter repaired it with a piece of wood. And the imperial inspector did not discover.

Palace of Tranquil Longevity

The group of structures were first built in 1689, and named Ningshougong (Palace of Tranquil Longevity). When rebuilt in 1772, the name was replaced with Huangjidian (Hall of Imperial Supremacy). However, the rear hall was still named Ningshougong (Palace of Tranquil Longevity). The structures here were shrunken Forbidden City since it was rebuilt for Emperor's abdication.
Now painting exhibition is held here to show famous paintings dated from the Jin dynasty to the Qing dynasty. The halls and adjacent houses have a collection of more than 100,000 pieces.

Standing at Huangjimen, the Gate of Imperial Supremacy, look south and you can see Nine Dragon Screen.

The north side of Ningshougong (Palace of Tranquil Longevity) is Leshoutang (Hall of Joyful Longevity).

_Hall of Joyful Longevity_

The hall was Emperor Qianlong's study after his abdication. It is spacious and has lobbies around. In 1894, Emperor Dowager Cixi, pretending to return power to Emperor Guangxu, lived here also and slept in the west warmth chamber. Her 60th birthday celebration was also held here.

Outside of the northern gate of the hall, the largest jade sculpture in the Forbidden City is placed. The sculpture is named Duyu Trying to Control Water and weighs 1.07 tons. The jade was dug from in Xinjiang, and freighted to Beijing then Yangzhou to be carved. After it was finished and shipped back to Beijing, ten years pasted. The delicately designed and superbly sculpted jade is very eye-catching.

Now the hall and adjacent Yangxingdian (Hall of Temper Cultivation) hold exhibition of ancient gold wares, silver wares, jade wares and imperial costumes etc. The treasured ivory mat deserves special attention. It is 216 cm long and 139 cm wide, made of delicate ivory strips. It is said that the mat was woven about 250 years ago.

_Imperial Garden_

Outside of the Gate of Terrestrial Tranquility is Yuhuayuan, the Imperial Garden, which was built in 1417 in the Ming dynasty. The rectangular garden covers an area of about 12,000 square meters and was the private garden of the imperial family. It
was the most typical imperial garden in China. There are about 20 structures, of different styles. One will be astonished that structures can keep harmony with trees, rockeries, flowerbeds and bronze incense burners in such a small space.

Qin'andian, the Hall of Imperial Peace is the main structure in the garden and the only one on the central axis and stands in the center of the garden, encircled in a rectangular wall. It was first built in the 15th century. In front of the hall, there is a 400 years old consort pine, symbolizing harmony of the emperor and the empress. Two gilded unicorns, supposed to protect the hall from evil spirits, guard the door. Inside the hall, Zhenwudadi, God of Water in the Taoism, was worshiped, since he was supposed to protect the Forbidden City from fire.

On the four corners of the garden, there is one pavilion at each, symbolizing the four seasons respectively. The Pavilion of Myriad Springs is the most famous one and lies in the east corner of the garden. It was built in 1535 and restored during the Qing dynasty. This pavilion symbolizes the spring, and undoubtedly, there are also three other pavilions which represent the summer, autumn and winter respectively.

Duixiushan, Gathering Beauty Hill is a little artificial mountain with a cave. It is located in the northeast. Yujingyuan (Pavilion of Imperial View) sits on top of the mountain. Emperors would climb up to the pavilion on the Double Ninth Festival to enjoy the scenery with the royal family.

In the garden, visitors will find some footpaths paved with colorful pebbles, which form different patterns, usually symbolizing luck and fortune. However, careful visitors may see a group of pictures depicting shrews punishing their husbands. It is very confused that such pictures would appear in the imperial garden in feudal China when androcentrism and emperorcentrism were dominant.

The north end of the garden is Shenwumen, the Gate of Devine Might and the rear gate of the Forbidden City.

**The Great Wall of China**
The Great Wall of China, one of the greatest wonders of the world, was enlisted in the World Heritage by UNESCO in 1987. Just like a gigantic dragon, the Great Wall winds up and down across deserts, grasslands, mountains and plateaus stretching approximately 6,700 kilometers (4,163 miles) from east to west of China. With a history of more than 2000 years, some of the section of the great wall are now in ruins or even entirely disappeared. However, it is still one of the most appealing attractions all around the world owing to its architectural grandeur and historical significance.

**Part I**

**History of the Great Wall**

No one can tell precisely when the building of the Great Wall was started but it is popularly believed that it originated as a military fortification against intrusion by tribes on the borders during the earlier Zhou Dynasty. Late in the Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC - 476 BC), the ducal states extended the defense work and built "great" structures to prevent the attacks from other states. It was not until the Qin Dynasty that the separate walls, constructed by the states of Qin, Yan and Zhao kingdoms, were connected to form a defensive system on the northern border of the country by Emperor Qin Shi Huang (also called Qin Shi Huangdi by westerners or the First Emperor). After the emperor unified the country in 214 BC, he ordered the construction of the wall. It took about ten years to finish and the wall stretched from Linzhao (in the eastern part of today's Gansu Province) in the west to Liaodong (in today's Jilin Province) in the east. The wall not only served as a defence in the north but also symbolized the power of the emperor.

From the Qin Dynasty onwards, Xiongnu, an ancient tribe that lived in North China, frequently harassed the northern border of the country. During the Han Dynasty, Emperor Wu (Han Wu Di), sent three expeditions to fight against the Xiongnu in 127 BC, 121 BC and 119 BC. The Xiongnu were driven into the far north of the Gobi. To maintain the safety of the Hexi Corridor (today's Gansu Province), the emperor ordered the extension of the Great Wall westward into the Hexi Corridor and Xinjiang
region. The ruins of the beacon towers and debris of the Han Wall are still discernible in Dunhuang, Yumen and Yangguan. A recent report shows that ruins of the Han Wall have been discovered near Lopnur in China's Xinjiang region.

Further construction and extensions were made in the successive Northern Wei, Northern Qi and Sui dynasties.

The present Great Wall in Beijing is mainly remains from the Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644). During this period, bricks and granite were used when the workers laid the foundation of the wall and sophisticated designs and passes were built in the places of strategic importance. To strengthen the military control of the northern frontiers, the Ming authorities divided the Great Wall into nine zones and placed each under the control of a Zhen (garrison headquarters). The Ming Wall starts from Yalujiang River (in today's Heilongjiang Province), via today's Liaoning, Hebei, Inner Mongolia, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Ningxia provinces, to Guansu. The total length reaches 12,700 li (over 5,000 kilometers). The Shanhaiguan Pass and the Jiayuguan Pass are two well-preserved passes at either end.

Today, the Wall has become a must-see for every visitor to China. Few can help saying 'Wow!' when they stand on top of a beacon tower and look at this giant dragon. For centuries, the wall served succeeding dynasties as an efficient military defence. However, it was only when a dynasty had weakened from within that invaders from the north were able to advance and conquer. Both the Mongols (Yuan Dynasty, 1271-1368) and the Manchurians (Qing Dynasty, 1644-1911) were able take power because of weakness of the government and poverty of the people but never due to any possibility of weakness of the Wall.
# Chronology of the Construction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Wall Built</th>
<th>Delineation or Location</th>
<th>Length (km)</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring and Autumn</td>
<td>Wall of Qi</td>
<td>South bank of the Yellow River in Pingyin County (Western Shandong)</td>
<td>Over 500</td>
<td>c.685-281 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(770-476 B.C.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-northern slopes of Mount Tai-Yimeng Mountain area-seaboard in Jiao County</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warring States</td>
<td>Wall built under the Jianluo reign of Qin</td>
<td>West bank of Luo River in Shaanxi</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>461-409 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(475-221 B.C.)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tao River in Min County (Gansu)-Ningxia-Northern Shaanxi-eastern part of Ordos Plateau</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>c.287 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall built under the reign of King Zhao of Qin</td>
<td>East bank of Luo River in Shaanxi-east bank of Yellow River on Ordos Plateau, called &quot;the wall west of the Yellow River&quot;</td>
<td>About 700</td>
<td>361-352 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall of Wei, west of the Yellow River</td>
<td>Yu County, Hebei-southern slopes of Yinshan Mountains, Inner Mongolia-Langshankou Pass, also in Inner Mongolia</td>
<td>About 1000</td>
<td>c.299 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall of Zhao</td>
<td>Southeastern Inner Mongolia-northern slopes of Yanshan Mountains-Liaodong</td>
<td>About 1000</td>
<td>c.311-279 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qin Dynasty</td>
<td>The Great Wall of Qin</td>
<td>Upper reaches of Tao River Gansu-bank of the Yellow River-northern slopes of Yinshan Mountains-Liaodong, called the 10,000-li wall of Qin</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>214 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(221-207 B.C.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Han Dynasty</td>
<td>Wall of Han</td>
<td>A reinforced version of the wall of Qin, with deviation to the north or south at certain points all the way to Liaodong</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>205-127 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(206 B.C.-A.D. 24)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wall west of the Yellow River</td>
<td>Lanzhou, Gansu-Yumen Pass-Lop Nor in Xinjiang</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>121-101 B.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Guanglu Castle in central Inner Mongolia</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wuchuan County, Inner Mongolia-Urad Rear Banner, also in Inner Mongolia-People's Republic of Mongolia</strong></td>
<td><strong>About 1,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>102 B.C.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juyan Castle in northwestern Inner Mongolia</strong></td>
<td><strong>Jiayu Mountain, Gansu-Ejun Banner, Inner Mongolia-People's Republic of Mongolia</strong></td>
<td><strong>About 750</strong></td>
<td><strong>102 B.C.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Wei (386-534)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wall of Northern Wei</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chicheng, Hebei-Urad Banners, Inner Mongolia</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>A.D. 423</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Northern Qi (550-577)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wall of Northern Qi</strong></td>
<td><strong>Luliang Mountain, Shanxi-Hengshan Mountains-Yanshan Mountains-Juyong Pass near Beijing</strong></td>
<td><strong>About 1,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>552-565</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sui Dynasty (581-618)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wall of Sui</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yellow River Bend in Ningxia-Inner Mongolia-Shanxi-Hebei-coast of the Bohai Sea, where Yu Pass was built</strong></td>
<td><strong>About 1,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>581-608</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liao Dynasty (916-1125)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Wall of Liao and ditches</strong></td>
<td><strong>Present-day Heilongjiang and Jilin, characterized by ditches in front of the wall</strong></td>
<td><strong>About 1,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>From 908, before inauguration of the dynasty, to 1058</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jin (Jurchen) Dynasty (1115-1234)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ditches of Jin</strong></td>
<td><strong>Morin Dawa Banner in Hulun Bair League (Inner Mongolia) -southwestern slopes of Greater Hinggan Mountains-northern slopes of Yanshan Mountains -western slopes of Yinshan Mountains, also characterized by ditches in front of the wall</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>1200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Great Wall of Ming</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yalu river in Liaoning-Hebei-Shanxi-Inner Mongolia-Shaanxi-Ningxia-Jiayu Pass in Gansu</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,300</strong></td>
<td><strong>1368-1644</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part II

Construction of the Great Wall

The Great Wall is reputed as one of the seven construction wonders in the world not only for its long history, but its massive construction size, and its unique architectural style as well.

The construction of the Great Wall began between the 7th and 8th centuries B.C. when the warring states built defensive walls to ward off enemies from the north. It was only a regional project then. Until the Qin Dynasty, the separate walls were joint together and consequently it stretched from east to west for about 5000 thousand kilometers and served to keep nomadic tribes out. The Wall was further extended and strengthened in the succeeding dynasties. Especially during the Ming dynasty when the northern nomadic ethnic groups became very powerful, the Ming rulers had the Wall renovated 18 times. As a result, not the remains from the Qin dynasty were restored, but some 1000 kilometers were constructed to a full length of 6,700 kilometers.

The architectural style of the Great wall is a marvel in the history of construction in the world. Since the weaponry only consisted of swords and spears, lances and halberds, and bows and arrows in the ancient times, walls with passes, watchtowers, signal towers, together with moats became an important strategy. To ensure the safety of the dynasties, the feudal rulers strove to improve the construction of the Great Wall after it took shape in the Qin dynasty. In particular, the Ming dynasty saw the creation of a sophisticated defense system along the wall embracing garrison towns, garrison posts, passes, blockhouses, additional wall structures, watchtowers and beacon towers, each given a different status and designed mission. The system enabled the imperial court to stay in touch with military and administrative agencies at various levels, including those at the grassroots, and provided the frontier troops with facilities to carry out effective defense.
The Great wall we see today is mostly from the Ming dynasty. With an average height of 10 meters and a width of 5 meters, the wall runs up and down along the mountain ridges and valleys from east to west. It stands as a witness of the Chinese history, culture and development.

**Construction Material of the Great Wall**

As we all know, the Great Wall is the treasure of China - even the world. It really is a great masterpiece of mankind, with its beautiful scenes and grand construction. What many people may not know, however, is that in different periods of Chinese history the material of the Great Wall is different in different areas.

Before the use of bricks, the Great Wall was mainly built from earth, stones and wood. Due to the large quantity of materials required to construct the Great Wall, the builders always tried to use local sources. When building over the mountain ranges, the stones of the mountain were exploited and used; while in the plains, earth was rammed into solid blocks to be used in construction. In the desert, even the sanded reeds and juniper tamarisks were used to build the Great Wall.

Before and during the Qin Dynasty (221BC-206BC), because the earth buildings could withstand the strength of weapons like swords and spears and there was low technology of productivity, the Great Wall was basically built by stamping earth between board frames. As such, only walls of plain earth or earth with gravel inside were built. No fortresses were constructed along the wall, nor bricks used in the construction of gates at the passes. Some of the walls were even made only from piles of crude stones. Around Dunhuang City in Gansu Province, Yulin City in Shaanxi Province and Baotou City in Inner Mongolia, sites can still be found from the Great Wall of Qin, the Great Wall of Han and the Wall of Zhao. The Wall of Zhao was built during the Warring States Period using board frames, and the layers of earth can still be clearly seen.
During the period following the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD), earth or crude stones were still popular building tools. The construction material did not reach a new level until the middle of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644); however the principle of using local material was maintained. Three hundred million cubic meters (393 million yards) of earthwork were used in the construction of the Great Wall, and with the appearance of large brick and lime workshops, some parts were also built with these new materials.

Bricks were used in a lot of areas during the Ming Dynasty, as well as materials such as tiles and lime. Attempts were always made to produce the materials locally, so kiln workshops were established to burn the crude material. In a construction team there was Material Supply Department. For example, in Juyongguan Pass names of supply departments such as kiln workshops, stone ponds and material supply departments were recorded. Some materials, such as the timbers for the construction of the passes, did have to be transported from outside areas when there were none available locally.

Bricks were more a convenient material than earth and stone as their small size and light weight made them convenient to carry and thus quickened the speed of construction. Bricks are also the ideal material to bear the weight. According to a sample experiment experiencing gravity and erosion over a hundred years, the compressive strength, resistance to freezing and absorbency of the bricks of the time are similar to today's common bricks. A huge brick from a hundred years ago showed a high level of technological skill for that time. For further ease of construction, different shapes of brick were also burned and made to stuff into different positions.

Stone, however, still has its advantages. Stones cut in rectangular shapes were mostly used to build the foundation, inner and outer brims, and gateways of the Great Wall. In the Badaling section, the Great Wall is made almost entirely of granite, some of green and white stones and some of white marble. The stone material was found to better resist efflorescence than bricks.
It is not only because of the high level of productivity of the time that hard material like bricks and stones were used in the construction of the Great Wall, but also because of the development of weapons. Before the Ming Dynasty, the Great Wall was built from board frames and, although not very solid, could withhold simple weapons like swords, spears and bows. But during the Ming Dynasty, gunpowder became available. The musket, blunderbuss and cannon appeared. Due to the use of these weapons, more solid bricks and stones were required to build a stronger Great Wall.

The Great Wall of China embodies the great systems of defense created during the wars of the time; moreover it indicates a great achievement in architecture.

**Labor Force**

The labor force used by various dynasties for the construction of the walls was no less impressive than the wall itself. The well-organized defenses of the Great Wall were built by the arduous work of millions of workers. For example, when the Great Wall was first brought together under the direction of General Meng Tian over a period of 10 years during the Qin Dynasty, 300,000 troops were used. In addition to the frontier soldiers, the builders included conscripted laborers and convicts in exile. Later in 555 A.D. under the Northern Qi Dynasty, a 450-kilometre section of the wall was built from Nankou, Beijing, to Datong, Shanxi. 1.8 million people were forced to join the ranks of the laborers. Owing to the arduous work and poor conditions both for living and construction, a lot of people died in the course of this project. Some of their remains were even buried in the wall.

**Varied Terrain and Peculiar Structure**

The construction of the Wall began in the 7th century BC and continued over a period in excess of two thousand years to the 17th century (the Ming Dynasty). The materials
and the technology used varied in each period depending upon the terrain, social conditions and the engineering technology at the time. But one common principle in every dynasty ensured the designer tried to make maximum use of the natural terrain such as steep mountains, river gorges or narrow passes as they built the wall using as many indigenous materials as possible.

**Secrets of the Qin Wall**

Qin Wall was built to serve as a defence system in the northern part of the empire. As it followed the ridges of steep mountains or sides of deep gorges, it served well as a mighty barrier to prevent the cavalry attack of Xiongnu. Passes, barriers and beacon towers were added to reinforce the defensive effect. In this period, the Wall was made of layers of compacted earth. The section remaining at Linzhao in today's Gansu Province is a typical example. From the exposed transverse section, scientists have found that the foundation comprises a layer of raw earth, over 1.5 meters thick at the bottom, with further loess above, some three meters thick. The wall was built on this foundation from layers of tamped-earth. The tamped-earth process began with a simple wooden frame. Workers filled the frame with loose earth, which was then tamped into a compact layer 4 inches thick. The process was repeated layer upon layer, and the wall slowly rose four inches at a time. So you can imagine how long it will take to build a seven-meter high wall. Detritus was mixed into the wall to make it more solid.

**Secrets of the Han Wall**

The Wall constructed in the Han Dynasty (206 BC - 220) was more massive than that in the Qin Dynasty. The Han emperors not only reinforced the Qin Wall, but also extended it from Linzhao to the west part of China where much of the terrain is deserts. This presented a new challenge: how to build a wall through the Gobi Desert? Unlike the construction during the Qin Dynasty, on the plain and in the Gobi region moats formed the main fortification. Along these moats at intervals of 1.25 kilometers, a beacon tower was built. In some regions, the mountains and rivers also
served as barriers so no wall or moat was necessary but towers and castles were built in key points to ensure the continuity of the defenses.

The poor quality of the sandy soil and the lack of bricks and stone give rise to the question, 'how could these towers be built in the arid Gobi Desert?' Some ruins of beacon towers in Dunhuang give us the answer. First, the workers laid a bed of red willow reeds and twigs at the bottom of a wooden frame. Then, they filled the frame with a mixture of water and fine gravel, which was tamped solid. When the mixture had thoroughly dried, the wooden frame was removed, leaving behind a solid slab of tamped earth, strengthened by the willow reeds just as modern concrete is reinforced by steel rods.

The beacon towers were constructed along the Wall at an interval of 15 to 30 miles. Columns of smoke were used to warn defenders of an attack. One smoke column meant an outpost was being threatened by a force of fewer than 500 troops and two columns meant an attacking force of fewer than 3,000. The Han found the beacon system relayed messages faster than a rider on a horse. Due to the dry climate, today in Dunhuang, you can also see the remains of these towers and even the firewood used to light the smoke.

**Secrets of the Ming Wall**

The greatest of all the wall builders were the Ming, whose astounding accomplishments dwarfed what had been done earlier by the Qin and the Han. The Ming not only built a bigger, more solid and imposing one, but also added advanced fortification structures to the Wall. The great progress made by the Ming meant that the wall was built with a tamped-earth interior between kiln-fired bricks and stone slabs forming the outer layers. The popularly toured Badaling section in Beijing is of this type. The workers mixed lime and sticky rice as a mortar between the bricks. This form of cement made the wall solid. The Ming Wall is divided by today's Shanxi Province, into the eastern part and the western part. The wall in the east winds its way
along the ridges of mountains and here the wall has a facing of brick and stone while
the section to the west of Shanxi, was built from tamped earth with no covering.

The construction of the military fortifications on the Wall reached its peak. More
passes and reinforcements were added. Double walls were built in some military
zones with strongholds and passes. For example, Juyongguan Pass, Jinziguan Pass
and Daomaguan Pass are three passes built on the double walls north of Beijing.
Watchtowers of various shapes and sizes served as beacons, fortresses, shelters or
simply as a signal station along the wall. For example, the shelter towers were built
with large interiors to store food, arms and served as the living quarters for soldiers. A
staircase from the interior led up to the top of the tower. On each side of the wall were
small holes for lookouts. The structure of a signal station was either round or square
shaped and solid in the centre. The overall defences were enhanced with a variety of
features that included the use of artillery. To this day rusting iron canons can be seen
at various locations along the wall.

Design for the Fortifications

Passes

Situated at key positions, usually on trade routes, passes were needed to allow
controlled entry to and exit from Chinese territory. A straight forward gate would be
vulnerable to attack and for this reason complex constructions were necessary. These
could vary from a simple double wall to a virtual castle with a maze like format to
enable the defending forces to control any attempt at an invasion. An important
consideration in design was that the fortifications should always be such that a small
number of defenders should have the ability to repel a much larger attacking force.

The ramparts were reinforced with huge bricks and stones with earth and crushed rock
as a filler. Great bastions that measured some 10 meters (30 feet) in height and up to 5
meters in width at the top enhanced the protection afforded by the wall. Access to the
top of the wall for both horses and men was provided by ramps and ladders within the pass. Outer parapets were battlemented to give cover for archers and a low wall approximately 1 meter high ran along the inner side for the safety of both men and horses.

There were occasions when it was necessary for troops to go out into the countryside beyond the wall and it was the gate within the passes that gave them access to the outside whether is was to mount a counter attack or merely go on patrol.

The gate would be protected by enormous double timber doors secured with huge iron bolts and locking rings. Above each gate there was a tower. Typically these would be two or three storeys high to give the garrison the advantage of a lookout from which it was possible to see the approach of travellers or marauders who could be a threat. These towers were of timber or brick or both. What was known as a weng-cheng, a semicircular or polygonal construction was built outside the gate to provide cover against direct attack. At certain of the more important and therefore more vulnerable gates an additional fortification called a luo-cheng was constructed. This would have the benefit of a tower upon it and so could act as an additional lookout or post from which troops could be directed during any hostilities. The ditches formed by the excavation of soil to fill the walls would be extended to create a protective moat around the entrance to the gate providing a further device to slow down the progress of invaders and thereby giving the defending forces a greater opportunity to repel them.

Beacon Towers

Communication between the army units along the length of the Great Wall was of prime importance. Not only was it necessary to be able to summon reinforcements in the event of an attack but it was necessary to be able to warn other garrisons of the movements of enemy forces. Making full advantage of hill tops and other high points along the wall for their location signal towers were built. These would vary from being complex structures of more than one storey in height to simple beacons. During
daylight hours smoke signals were widely used and to create varying colors and density of smoke many different materials were used. Possibly one of the most bizarre of these was wolf dung! At night lanterns and beacon fires were used. Other means of signalling included the use of flags, clappers, drums and bells. The invention of gunpowder also proved to be an asset to the signal system as the firing of cannon made a sound that could carry over long distances. Codes were devised that included a combination of cannon fire and smoke signals as well as other devices. For example, during the Ming Dynasty a single column of smoke plus a single gun shot would indicate the approach of a hundred enemy soldiers. Multiple columns of smoke combined with an appropriate number of gun shots would give an indication of the size of the invading army.

The complex signal towers would provide accommodation for soldiers as well as storage for ordinance and even stabling for livestock and horses.

Walls

Those responsible for the construction of the wall made maximum use of natural features and it is this that accounts for the dragon like appearance as the structure wends its way across the terrain. Mountains, rivers and sheer cliff faces were natural defences and these were enhanced by the wall rendering the boundary virtually impenetrable. The average height of the wall from the base upon which it was built was some 8 meters (26 feet) while it would be some 6.5 meters (21.3 feet) wide at the base tapering to 5.8 meters (19 feet) at the top. The materials used in the construction varied according to what was available on site. While some sections were composed of local stone or bricks with an infill of crushed rocks or earth, others would be of adobe or tamped earth between timbers. The contrasting styles of construction can be seen by comparing the stone faced walls near Badaling with the much less sophisticated rammed earth and adobe walls in the western desert region.

The stone and brick construction permitted the builders to add a variety of refinements that gave the defending army cover and other advantages over their enemies. These included steps leading to the top of the ramparts where the outer side of the wall was crenelated to provide cover for archers. Openings enabled the guards
to keep a look out for any threat of invasion. At regular intervals of approximately 200 to 300 meters (217 - 860 yards) platforms were set up. There were three different types designed to give the defenders a better viewpoint as well as being a vantage point from which to fire upon the enemy, especially if they were attempting to use scaling ladders.

**Platforms**

The first type was fairly simple with four walls topped with battlements for use by archers.

The second was normally brick built and of two storeys. The upper floor would be supported on a number of arches, while the outer facing walls had embrasures for archers. The rooms thus created were used by the soldiers as living quarters and store rooms. Depending upon the size of the platform access to the upper level could be by stairs or merely a rope ladder. The upper storey would provide for further archers to be posted and could also be used as a lookout or in view of its elevation could facilitate signaling to other guard positions along the wall. Signaling devices could vary from torches, to bells, clappers or gongs. The platforms had gates in them so that soldiers could move along the wall.

The third type was a substantial block house that was either square, oblong or even rounded. These were normally built where there was a steep cliff or precipice. It would be kept stocked with arms and ammunition.

There were some 1,200 blockhouses and watchtowers along the stretch of wall between Beijing and the Shanhai pass. The normal complement of men would be 60 including the officers. Their duties would be organised to include the guarding of the platform and the length of wall under their control. Large jars of gunpowder would be on hand, as well as a stock of arrows and other armaments and missiles that could be hurled down upon any attackers.

The chain of command along the wall varied somewhat during various stages of its history. Emperor Qin Shi Huang (Shi Huangdi of the Qin) had twelve prefectures along the Great wall and by contrast, during the Ming Dynasty it was organised as the
Nine Border Garrisons. These nine sectors each had a commanding officer who would have been selected for both his administrative ability as well as his military skills.

When you visit the Great Wall of China, you can impress your fellow travelers with your expertise if you know a few words of Chinese that describe certain of the features:

Duo kou: (垛口) This is the name for the crenelated battlements on the outer side of the wall. It provided cover for archers who were able to fire onto the enemy through specially constructed slits. These were narrow on the inside but wide on the outside so that the archers had the advantage of a wide angle of vision while enjoying maximum protection. These openings were set at a lower level for use by archers and higher up for lookouts.

Nu chiang: (女墙) This is the low parapet on inner side of the wall, usually one meter high. It is built for the safety of both men and horses.

The Single Parapet Wall: (单边长城) These sections ran along steep ridges which formed a natural defence. Quite narrow compared with the more substantial stretches, this part of the structure varied between two to four meters in height. As the terrain formed a barrier the wall facilitated defence of the border by giving the Chinese soldiery the advantage of height and also cover should enemy forces try to make a crossing. The so-called 'Heavenly Ladder' that can be seen in Simatai (120 miles northeast of Beijing in the north of Miyun County) is a fine example. In mountainous country where there are rocky outcrops, natural undressed stone was used in the construction.

Barrier wall: (障墙) This is a row of embrasured walls built vertically to the main body of the Wall (Great Wall).

Ma dao: (马道) Ramps and ladders within the pass provided access for both horses and men to the top of the wall. The ramp is five to six meters wide with one-meter-high Nu chiang running on the inner side of it. The incline was approximately 30 degrees and to give the horses a foothold raised courses of bricks were set across the ramp. This was usually achieved by laying these rows of bricks side-on whereas the bricks were laid flat to form the main carriageway.
Drainage system: (排水系统) Drainage channels and waterspouts were built at intervals through which the rain drained away. The waterspout usually extended for one meter beyond the wall and a stone receptacle below it ensured the water was directed away from the foundations.

Wen cheng: (瓮城) This is the parapet shielding the top of a gate. It is usually built in a shape of "匚" on the main direction of approach of the marauders who could be a threat.

Luo cheng: (罗城) This is the extended protection outside the gates of Wen cheng, often topped with a watch tower. So it is the first defensive wall against invaders.

Pu fang: (铺房) This is a shelter, often made of wood, that protected the guards on a platform.

Chuanmen: (穿门) This is a door leading to a flight of steps built into the body of the wall and giving access to the top and other structures such as the towers.
PART III

Protection of the Great Wall

No one who has seen something of the Great Wall of China can deny that this wonder of ancient military fortification is a fantastic relic from the past that also bears witness to human endeavour. The Wall attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year from all parts of the world. The Great Wall is probably the most widely recognised and enduring symbol of China and it has been rightly said, "The man who doesn't visit the Wall has never been to China."

In its entirety, the Great Wall, or to give it its Chinese name Wan Li Chang Cheng, stretches over 10,000 li or 5,000 kilometres. Following a forty-five day long survey of 101 sections of the Wall in different provinces, the China Great Wall Academy reported on December 12, 2002 that this distance is now merely an historic record. The forces of nature and destruction at the hand of mankind are bringing about the gradual reduction of its extent with the result that less than 30% remains in good condition. The Academy has called for greater protection of this important relic.

Fight against natural calamity

Although the government has had a forestation programme in place over the past two decades, sands drifting in the winds from Mao Wu Su Desert to the north continue to wreak havoc, especially in springtime. Much of the ruined Wall has been buried by sand and the only clue to its whereabouts is the scattered beacon towers. Photographs taken of the recent excavations of the Western Gate of Chang Le Bu indicate clearly how this once grand fortress had been completely lost under the sand.

While the effects of nature are gradual and may take effect over a quite lengthy period, the deliberate destruction by man could totally deplete the Wall in a very short space of time.
Should the new be built from the old?

In Ningxia, Shanxi, and Gansu Provinces as well as in Inner Mongolia thousands of miles of the tamped earth wall have been quarried. The rich soil from the ramparts has been used as fertilizer, while in some areas bricks have been taken for road construction as well as reservoir and house building. Some parts have been dynamited and the stone sold off. This means that traces of the wall are hard to find in some areas.

Rebuild or destroy it?

In Hebei Province, a research group found a section of the wall was being restored. It had been whitewashed and the whole section appeared like a lime wall. This kind of restoration is more akin to defacing rather than protecting. In another location, the Report states that "new" sections have been built on the original site of the Wall. This had been done with bricks and stone, whereas the according to historical record the original Wall was of tamped earth. It is as a consequence of this kind of thing that it becomes difficult for archaeologists to trace the actual ruins.

Swarms of tourists from all over the world have come to see this ancient Chinese wonder with the result that it has become trendy to walk along the Wall. The current problem is to strike a balance between the need to protect our cultural heritage and the economic benefit it engenders through the tourism it brings to the country. So many questions remain to be answered with regard to preservation and the development of tourism. Clearly, steps have to be taken to preserve the Wall in a manner that does not detract from its cultural importance while keeping it in good condition for the benefit of future generations.
PART IV

Culture of the Great Wall

As one of the Seven Wonders in the world, the Great Wall of China has become the symbol of the Chinese nation and its culture. Lots of beautiful legends and stories about the Great Wall took place following along the construction, and since that time these stories have spread around the country. Those that happened during construction are abundant, such as Meng Jiangnu's story and the legend of the Jiayuguan Pass. Meng Jiangnu's story is the most famous and widely spread of all the legends about the Great Wall. The story happened during the Qin Dynasty (221BC-206BC). It tells of how Meng Jiangnu's bitter weeping made a section of the Great Wall collapse. Meng Jiangnu's husband Fan Qiliang was caught by federal officials and sent to build the Great Wall. Meng Jiangnu heard nothing from him after his departure, so she set out to look for him. Unfortunately, by the time she reached the great wall, she discovered that her husband had already died. Hearing the bad news, she cried her heart out. Her howl caused the collapse of a part of the Great Wall. This story indicates that the Great Wall is the production of tens of thousands of Chinese commoners.

Another legend about the Jiayuguan Pass tells of a workman named Yi Kaizhan in the Ming Dynasty (1368BC-1644BC) who was proficient in arithmetic. He calculated that it would need 99,999 bricks to build the Jiayuguan Pass. The supervisor did not believe him and said if they miscalculated by even one brick, then all the workmen would be punished to do hard work for three years. After the completion of the project, one brick was left behind the Xiwong city gate. The supervisor was happy at the sight of the brick and ready to punish them. However Yi Kaizhan said with deliberation that the brick was put there by a supernatural being to fix the wall. A tiny move would cause the collapse of the wall. Therefore the brick was kept there and never moved. It can still be found there today on the tower of the Jiayuguan Pass.

In addition to the above-mentioned stories about the construction of the Great Wall, there are also plenty of stories about current scenic spots. A famous one is the legend
of the Beacon Tower. This story happened during the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century BC-711 BC). King You had a queen named Bao Si, who was very pretty. King You liked her very much, however Bao Si never smiled. An official gave a suggestion that setting the beacon tower on fire would frighten the King's subjects, and might make the queen smile. King You liked the idea. The subjects were fooled and Bao Si smiled at the sight of the chaos. Later enemies invaded Western Zhou, King You set the beacon tower on fire to ask for help. No subjects came to help because they had been fooled once before. Thus, King Zhou was killed by the enemy and Western Zhou came to an end.

Beautiful stories and legends about the Great Wall help to keep alive Chinese history and culture. In each dynasty after the building of the Great Wall, many more stories were created and spread.