

Chapter Four Landscape

Lesson Two Spots in North

1. The Imperial Palace in Beijing

Previously known as the Forbidden City, Gugong (Chinese name for the Imperial Palace) was the imperial palace of generations of emperors from the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. The Wumen (Meridian Gate) is a main gate of Gugong. It joins the eastern, northern, and western wings to form a square. Bells and drums are installed in the two pavilions on the central tower about the Wumen. The bell rang when the emperor was offering sacrifices on the altar, while the drum was played when offering sacrifices in the temple. On occasions of grand ceremonies, the bell and drum would sound simultaneously.



Imperial palaces are grand and magnificent houses accommodating ancient emperors and their households. In feudal China, emperors enjoyed supreme authority. This is reflected in the construction of imperial palaces featuring magnificent and splendid styles. Starting from the construction of Epang Palace in the Qin dynasty to the Forbidden City in Ming and the Qing dynasties, Chinese history had witnessed countless replacements of dynasties in a span of over 2000 years, however, the basic features of these two palaces can still be traced to the same origin.

As the imperial palaces of the Ming and Qing dynasties, Gugong is also the largest and most complete preservation of ancient architecture complex existing in China. Forming the structurally integrated whole with Beijing city, the palace gradually extends

inwards and upwards, imposing on people a sense of stepping into heaven from the earthly world until reaching the place of the “son of heaven”, which represents the supreme imperial power.

Construction of the Gugong began in the 4th year of the Yongle period and was completed in the 18th year. Despite constant reconstruction and expansion, the palace still remains its original layout. The palace covers an area of 720,000 square meters and contains more than 9,000 houses. The palace wall measures about 3,000 meters long, with a 52-metre wide moat circulating around, forming a strongly fortified castle. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, starting from the completion of the palace in 1420 to the end of Qing Dynasty’s rule in 1911, 24 emperors have lived here where they executed their administrative power.

Specifically, the layout of Gugong is still divided into the Outer Court and Inner Court. The outer court centers around the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony, and the Hall of Preserving Harmony, and was the place where the emperor held grand ceremonies and summoned his ministers. Comprising the Palace of Heavenly Purity, the Hall of the Union, the Palace of Earthly Tranquility and the 6th palaces to the east and west. The Inner Court was a place where the emperor dealt with Day-to-day state affairs and was also the residence for concubines and princes. At one end of Gugong’s axis is an Imperial Garden lined with interesting paths paved with cobbles of different colors. These cobbles constitute over 900 pictures depicting certain characters, flowers, scenery, dramas and classical allusions. Walking along the path, visitors would experience enormous delight.

Compared with its contemporary western counterparts, Chinese architecture “laid little emphasis on religious element but stressed the code of ethics. This defines the Chinese philosophy of transcendental consciousness as basically realistic and temporal. It lacks a kind of religious ‘pulling force’ elevating people from the earthly reality to a religious paradise of passion. Chinese people believe that since the immense happiness of life resides on realistic earth, there is no need to construct towering architectures in the hope of ‘conversing’ with the ‘harmonious’ heaven of religion by means of pointed roofs represented in western medieval churches.

Because of this, Chinese palaces are constantly designed as complexes stretching orderly in the four directions of the ground. The Forbidden City of the Ming and Qing dynasties is a perfect exemplification of this point. This kind of order returned between the building space and plane layout finds its value in the geomancy emphasizing the integration of individual buildings and the whole complex. This geomancy symbolizes the solemn and tranquil moral order of the world, and even the supreme authority of feudal emperors.

2. The Great Wall in Beijing

The Great Wall is a massive military project that was built in different periods of ancient China to prevent intrusions by allies of nomadic tribes in the north. Stretching for tens of thousands of li from east to west, the ancient fortification derived its name the “10,000 li Great Wall”. Construction of the Great Wall started in the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States period. The majority of the existing walls belong to the 14th century Ming dynasty walls. According to the announcement made by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Ming dynasty Great Wall measures 8,851.8 kilometers. As a great wonder created by ancient Chinese people, the Great Wall witnessed the long history of China.



In the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States period, in order to prevent external invasions, rulers of each state constructed beacon towers and connected them by walls, resulting in the earliest form of the Great Wall. Almost all the subsequent rulers had reinforced or extended the Great Wall. According to the records, the First Emperor of Qin exploited almost 1 million laborers in the construction of the Great Wall, making up one 20th of the Qin Dynasty’s population. The construction was an arduous task, for no machines existed then, and all work was finished by laborers working in an

environment full of high mountains and lofty hills. People living in that period probably have never anticipated that the construction of the wall was to last for thousands of years and reach thousands of miles. It is no wonder that people who have been to the Great Wall, regardless of the time and their nationalities will invariably be impressed by its massive scale and majesty. Therefore, the Great Wall came to establish itself as an eternal theme in literature and art.

Located in Beijing, Juyongguan Pass is referred to as “the most majestic pass in the world”. Here, two mountains stand facing each other with a river flowing in between. The top of the mountain is lined with meandering walls, and the mountain foot is full of city towers soaring up to the sky. Inside the city at Juyongguan Pass, temples, office bureaus, pavilions and storehouses are scattered around; the red walls, glazed tiles and colourful paintings set each other off to form a brilliant scene. The exterior of the city is renowned for its precipitous characterized by the saying “One man guarding the pass will prevent 10,000 enemies from getting through”. Juyongguan Pass not only has a terrain of great strategic importance, but also possesses pleasant scenery. Generations of literati and poets had left behind numerous poems praising the natural beauty of the site. The inscriptions of Emperor Qianlong’s words “居庸叠翠” (The lush green at Juyongguan pass) helped it to become one of the famous “eight scenic spots in Beijing”.

Rising up in Shanxi province. Yanmenguan Pass is sided by Yanmen mountain in the east and Longshan mountain in the west. Wild geese migrate back and forth between northern and southern China via Yanmenguan Pass, hence the name Yanmenguan (wild geese tower). With a perimeter of one kilometer, the city at Yanmenguan Pass is fortified by walls measuring 6 meters high and it contains three gates. A tower called Yanlou (wild geese tower) was constructed on the wall above the east gate, with a plaque bearing the word “天险” (natural barrier). The west gate fortress is a temple accommodating the Shrine of Yang Yanzhao (a military general in the Song Dynasty), with a plaque bearing “地利” (topographical advantages). No towers were constructed on the North gate, instead three bold characters “雁门关” (Yanmenguan) are inscribed on the lintel of the gate. On the left and right sides of the gate, there is a couplet saying “三关冲要无双地，九寨尊崇第一关” (No place matches Yanmenguan Pass in

importance, the Pass is honored as the top among all the nine passes).

The grandeur and magnificence of the Great Wall is universally acknowledged and recognized. It was always be the pride of the Chinese people.

3. The Mount Tai in Taian, Shandong Province

Mount Tai locates in the middle part of Shandong province spanning two cities (Tai'an city and Jinan city) with total area of 426 square kilometers. Mount Tai was called Daizong (means the principal mountain of China) in ancient time and then was renamed as Mount Tai in Spring and Autumn Dynasty went by the name of Dongyue



(the Sacred Mountain of East China) that ranks No.1 among the five most important mountains in China. In 1987, Mount Tai was listed as Cultural and Natural World Heritage site and honored “World Geo-park” in 2006. In China, Mount Tai is among the first group of “National Parks of China”, the state 5A-class tourist attraction, the top 10 best National Civilized Spot in China.

Mount Tai is well known for its spectacular, grandness, elevation, width, steadiness and massiness. The typical character of natural scenery of Mount Tai is imposing, steepy, surprising, serene, secluded, profound, and spacious. The picturesque of the Mount Tai has various sceneries like cragged cliff, deep canyon and gorge, grotesque peak and strange rocks, luxuriant vegetation and the flowing springs and twittering bird...The mountain also has the unique marvelous wonders: the rising sun at dawn, the jade plate of sea of clouds, the aura appearing around Bixia Temple, rosy clouds at sunset etc.

Since ancient time, Mount Tai is recognized as holy and sacred Mountain and held the accolade as “Most Revered of the Five Sacred Mountains”. Furthermore, Mount Tai symbolized the peaceful life and unified country. Four thousands of years, more than a dozen emperors paid their homage to the mountain. Vast quantities of poetry and stone

inscriptions were left by emperors, poets and scholars of every era. Confucians and Taoists coexist harmoniously on the mountain. And civilians worshiped the mountain with sincere esteem. In other words, the Mount Tai has become the symbol of Chinese spirit. There are also peculiar geologic structures as three grand fracture layers, Komatiite rocks and Zuixin Stone (a swirl shaped allgovite rocks); masterpieces of ancient constructions as Dai Temple, Nantian Gate, Bi Xia temple; precious stone inscriptions of past dynasties as Qin dynasty stone inscriptions, inscriptions rocks of the Diamond Sutra, cliffs with inscriptions of Tang dynasty; ancient trees like pine trees of Qin Dynasty, cypress of Han Dynasty (about 1800 years ago), locust tree of Tang Dynasty (about 1200 years ago). All the above integrate nature scenery and human culture. 7000 stone stairs which runs 9 kilometers long through the mountain from the foot to the zenith looks like the axes of Mount Tai integrating earth, heaven and human as a whole and thus is a road for human beings to heaven. Because of the unique integration of human civilization and natural landscape, Mount Tai is respected by billions of Chinese people and becomes famous all over the world as well as measurably heritage of pan-human.

4. Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum in Xian, Shanxi Province

Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum (Terra-cotta Warriors Museum) is one that is specialized in relic display. The main object exhibited here are the terra-cotta figures of more than 2000 years old. These figures stand for the garrison force that protects Emperor Qinshihuang's mausoleum.

It is already known that the mausoleum consists of two sections, an inner city and an out city, both rectangular in shape. The tomb lies in the southern part of the inner city. Originally, the tomb was 115m high. After over 2000 years weathering, the mausoleum today still remains more than 70m in height. Approximately 500 satellite tombs and pits have been discovered in the vicinity of the mausoleum.



The burial pits of the Terra-cotta Warriors and horses are located about 1.5km east of Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum. In march 1974, local farmers discovered broken pieces of Terra-cotta figures when digging a well. After a year of investigation and excavation, the archaeological team unearthed a large pit, in which approximately 6000 Terra-cotta Warriors and horses were discovered. Following this discovery, in the summer of 1976, they found two other pits. According to the sequence of the discoveries, those pits were named Pit 1, Pit 2 and pit 3 respectively. The Terra-cotta Warriors and horses are all life-sized, and the warriors carry real bronze battle weapons. Orderly arrayed in rows and lines, these figures of warriors and horses make up a great underground army consisting of war chariots, infantrymen, cavalrymen and other armed servicemen. This amazing discovery caused an immediate stir among Chinese archaeologists and soon attracted the attention of the world. People called this find "one of the world wonders" and "one of the greatest archaeological discoveries of the twentieth century."

Covering an area of 56.25sq.km, it took 37 years and around 720,000 labors to build Emperor's mausoleum, standing as the grandest with the richest burial objects among all the imperial tombs throughout Chinese history. It mainly consists of subterranean palace, city walls and gates, various burial objects, burial pits, and all kinds of affiliated architectures. The whole mausoleum was well designed and rich in burial objects. The layout of tomb and arrangement for the ritual facilities, both traditional and innovative, has a far-reaching impact on the imperial mausoleums of subsequent dynasties.

At present, there are already 149 burial pits, 196 burial tombs have been discovered, including the Bronze Chariots pit, the Rare Birds pits, the Barns pits in small and large scales, the Stone Armor pit, the Warriors and Horses pits and other sacrificial pits. All

those together build a massive treasure house. On March 4th 1961, the State Council declared Emperor Qinshihuang's mausoleum a major historical and culture sites protected at the national level, one of the first sited in the country. The mausoleum including the pits of Terra-cotta Warriors and Horses was listed as one of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site on December 7th 1987.

5. Wudalianchi Geological Park in Heihe, Hei Longjiang Province

Wudalianchi scenic spot, located on the bank of Nen River, covers 1068 square kilometers. It is composed of volcanoes of new and old period, five volcano barrier lakes (Wudalianchi), "Stone Dragon" of more than 60 square kilometers (basalt mesa) and low-temperature cold springs with high value of health care. There are rich tourism resources, including a world of green hills, clear water, various lavas and magical medicine spring. That is called China's Natural Volcanic Park, the Textbook on Volcano and well-known Resort of Tourism.

14 volcanoes of Wudalianchi are arranged like the shape of Chinese "#", including Yaoquan Mountain, East and West Long Men Mountain, Wohu Mountain, South and North Gelaqiu Mountain, East and West Jiaodebu Mountain, Molabu Mountain, Wei Mountain, Xiaogu Mountain, Heilong Mountain and Huoshao Mountain. 12 of them erupted ten thousands of years ago, even several hundred thousands of years ago. Two relatively younger volcanoes named Heilong Mountain and Huoshao Mountain were formed between 1719 and 1721. That was written in history book "Heilongjiang Unauthorized Biography" and "Ninggu Tower Brief Biography". After the volcano erupted, the rolling lava divided Bai River (the tributary of Nen River) into five parts that are linked like beads. They are volcanic barrier lakes. They are the first pond, the second pond, the third pond, the fourth pond and the fifth pond. They are called Wudalianchi by people. Five ponds, the total length is more than 20 kilometers and the area of lakes is up to 40 square kilometers, are connected by underground rivers. 14 volcanoes, decorated with five ponds whose water is clear, and the vast basalt mesa constitute a set of unique landscape between mountains, rivers and stones.



There is a beautiful legend about the mineral water of Wudalianchi. It is said that there were towering old trees and thick weeds in Wudalianchi long before. A hunter from Oroqen shot a sika deer. The sika deer ran with the wound and the hunter ran after it following the trace of blood. To the hunter's surprise, the sika deer did not run towards the deep mountain, but ran into a pond. On the bank, the hunter saw that the deer in the water washed its wound and licked it with the tongue. After it returned to the bank, the blood stopped, then it ran into the deep mountain at a brisk pace. The hunter came to the pond and held some water with his hands, then took a mouthful, he was full of vitality at once. From then on, every time there was something wrong with the hunter, he would come to the pond and drink the spring water, he would be fine at once. So the spring was called Holy Water. On May 5th of the lunar calendar of every year, people will come here early in order to drink "Zero Hour Water". It is said that the people who drink "Zero Hour water" can get rid of misfortunes and illnesses and live longer.

Five lakes of Wudalianchi are connected like beads. There is lava at the bottom of each lake and strange rocks on the bank. The water of lakes is so clear that people can see the fish swim in the lake. In summer, the flowers are in full bloom and green grass is overlapping. In winter, the surface of the lake is calm and clear like a mirror. The only "Wen Bo" near the first pond is full of steam. That is rare and unique scenery of volcanic weir-block lake. Five tranquil and sparkling lakes look like five bright pearls that the fairy throws from the palace in the heaven. They distribute among 14 volcanoes that form a crescent-shaped lake whose ponds are linked.

Five lakes of Wudalianchi are more than 20 kilometers long with the water capacity of 170,000,000 cubic meters or so and a total area of more than 40 square kilometers. Five lakes are connected by the underground rivers. What is more amazing is that five lakes present different colors. The water of the first and the second pond is light brown

with light green. The third pond is blue with light purple. The water of the fourth pond is yellow and yellow with green. The fifth pond is green with light yellow. It was a mystery in the past that the water has different colors. In recent years, according to scientific study and analysis of test samples, the result is that the lava here contains a variety of mineral and because the lakes has different minerals, they will show different colors when the minerals are dissolved in the water. In addition, that different colors of sediment and algae at the bottom of the lakes set off each other, also makes the lakes show a variety of colors. Another reason is the weather. When the intensity and angle of sunshine are different, the pond will also present different colors. The color of the lake is not the same, even though it is in the same day. The rising sun adds a veil of orange red for the ponds in the morning. The blazing sun adds a veil of golden yellow for the ponds, when it directly shines the surface of the water at noon. The setting sun dyes the sky and the surface of the lake red. The scenery is wonderful at night. The bright moon, calm surface of the lake and the glittering stars like pearls add a more mysterious veil for Wudalianchi.

Questions:

1. Do you know some other name of The Imperial Palace?
2. Do you know the length of The Great Wall? Give the accurate figures.
3. Naming the five most important mountains in China.
4. What was the main object exhibited in Emperor Qinshihuang's Mausoleum Site Museum?
5. Could you repeat the legend about the mineral water of Wudalianchi?