

Tiananmen

The **Tian'anmen** (also **Tiananmen** or **Tienanmen**) ([tʰjén.án.mǎn]), or the **Gate of Heavenly Peace**, is a monumental gate in the centre of Beijing, widely used as a national symbol of China. First built during the Ming dynasty in 1420, Tiananmen was the entrance to the Imperial City, within which the Forbidden City was located. Tiananmen is located to the north of Tiananmen Square, separated from the plaza by Chang'an Avenue.



Tian'anmen, in a panorama photograph (2009).

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Name

The Chinese name of the gate (天安门/天安門), is made up of the Chinese characters for "heaven," "peace" and "gate" respectively, which is why the name is conventionally translated as "Gate of Heavenly Peace". However, this translation is somewhat misleading, since the Chinese name is derived from the much longer phrase "receiving the mandate from heaven, and pacifying the dynasty." (受命于天，安邦治國).^[1] The Manchu translation, *Abkai elhe obure duka*, lies closer to the original meaning of the gate and can be literally translated as the "Gate of Heavenly Peacemaking."^[2] The gate had a counterpart in the northern end of the imperial city called Dì'anmen (地安門, Dì'ānmén; Manchu: *Na i elhe obure duka*), which may be roughly translated as the "Gate of Earthly Peace."

Gate

Tian'anmen	
<div> <div>天安门</div> <div>天安門</div> </div> <p>"Tiān'ānmén" in Simplified (top) and Traditional (bottom) characters</p>	
Simplified Chinese	天安门
Traditional Chinese	天安門
Hanyu Pinyin	Tiān'ānmén
Literal meaning	"Gate of Heavenly Peace"
Transcriptions	
 Standard Mandarin	
Hanyu Pinyin	Tiān'ānmén
Bopomofo	ㄊㄧㄢ ㄢ ㄇㄣˊ ㄇㄣˊ
Gwoyeu	Tian'anmen
Romatzyh	
Wade–Giles	T'ien¹-an¹-mên²
IPA	[tʰjén.án.mǎn]
 Yue: Cantonese	
Yale	Tīn'ōnmùhn
Romanization	
IPA	[tʰiːn.ɔːn.mùːn]
Jyutping	Tin1on1mun4
 Southern Min	

History

Hokkien POJ

Thian-an-m̄ng

The gate was originally named Chengtianmen (traditional Chinese: 承天門; simplified Chinese: 承天门; pinyin: *Chéngtiānmén*), or "Gate of Accepting Heavenly Mandate", and it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times. The original building was first constructed in 1420 and was based on a gate of an imperial building in Nanjing with the same name and hence inherited the name "Chengtianmen". The gate was damaged by lightning in July, 1457, and was completely burnt down. In 1465, the Chenghua Emperor of the Ming dynasty ordered Zi Gui (自主), the Minister of Works, to rebuild the gate, and the design was changed from the original paifang form to the gatehouse that is seen today. It suffered another blow in the war at the end of the Ming dynasty, when in 1644 the gate was burnt down by rebels led by Li Zicheng. Following the establishment of the Qing dynasty and the Manchu conquest of China proper, the gate was once again rebuilt, beginning in 1645, and was given its present name upon completion in 1651. The gate was reconstructed again between 1969 and 1970. The gate as it stood was by then 300 years old, and had badly deteriorated, partly due to heavy usage in the 1950s and 1960s. As the gate was a national symbol, Zhou Enlai ordered that the rebuilding was to be kept secret. The whole gate was covered in scaffolding, and the project was officially called a "renovation". The rebuilding aimed to leave the gate's external appearance unchanged while making it more resistant to earthquakes and featuring modern facilities such as an elevator, water supply and heating system.^[3]



Play media

(video) Two shots of the gate followed by a shot of inside Tiananmen Square next to the gate, 2017.



Tiananmen in 1901



Tiananmen in 2006



A close-up of the rooftop



Tiananmen at night



Tiananmen from the side, in June 2011

Description

The building is 66 metres (217 ft) long, 37 metres (121 ft) wide and 32 metres (105 ft) high. Like other official buildings of the empire, the gate has unique imperial roof decorations.

In front of the gate are two lions standing in front of the gate and two more guarding the bridges. In Chinese culture, lions are believed to protect humans from evil spirits.

Two stone columns, called huabiao, each with an animal (*hou*) on top of it, also stand in front of the gate. Originally, these installations were designed for commoners to address their grievances by writing or sticking up petitions on the columns. However, the examples in front of the Imperial City were purely decorative and instead connoted the majesty of the imperial government.

The western and eastern walls have giant placards; the left one reads "Long Live the People's Republic of China" (Chinese: 中华人民共和国万岁; pinyin: *Zhōnghuá Rénmín Gònghéguó wànsuì*), while the right one reads "Long Live the Great Unity of the World's Peoples". The right placard used to read "Long Live the Central People's Government"^[4] (Chinese: 中央人民政府万岁; pinyin: *Zhōngyāng Rénmín Zhèngfǔ wànsuì*) for the founding ceremony of the PRC, but after the ceremony it was changed to "Long Live the Great Unity of the World's Peoples" (Chinese: 世界人民大团结万岁; pinyin: *Shìjiè rénmin dà tuánjié wànsuì*). Both placards were changed to use simplified Chinese instead of traditional Chinese characters in 1964. The phrasing has significant symbolic meaning, as the phrase used for *long live*, like the Imperial City itself, was traditionally reserved for Emperors of China, but is now available to the common people.

The reviewing stands in the foreground are used on International Workers Day (May Day) and on the National Day (October 1) of the People's Republic of China.

In front of the stands is the Imperial City's moat, still filled with water but now containing decorative illuminated fountains.

In ancient times, the Tiananmen was among the most important gates encountered when entering Beijing's Imperial City along with the Qianmen, the Gate of China. Proceeding further inward, the next gate is the 'Upright Gate', identical in design to the Tian'anmen; behind it is the southern entrance of the Forbidden City itself, known as the Meridian Gate.



Stone column (*huabiao*) with depiction of dragons and phoenixes decorates the surroundings of the Tiananmen gate.

Portrait

History

Because of the gate's position at the front of the Imperial City, and historical events that have taken place on Tiananmen Square, the gate has great political significance. In 1925, when China was ruled by the Nationalist government, a large portrait of Sun Yat-sen was hung at the gate after his death. In 1945, to celebrate the victory over Japan, Chiang Kai-shek's portrait was hung.^[5]

On July 7, 1949, pictures of Zhu De and Mao Zedong were hung to commemorate the Second Sino-Japanese War.^[6] Since then, from the founding date of the People's Republic of China, a portrait of Mao has been hung at the square on October 1. Each year the old portrait is replaced before October 1, the anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. However, on certain occasions the picture has been different. For example, on March 9, 1953, a picture of Joseph Stalin was put up due to his death.^[6]

In 2011 Alexander Pann Han-tang, chairman of the Asia Pacific Taiwan Federation of Industry and Commerce, and a close friend of Taiwanese president Ma Ying-jeou, proposed that the picture of Sun Yat-sen be displayed at Tiananmen Square instead for the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China.^[7] However this proposal was rejected.^[7]

Incidents

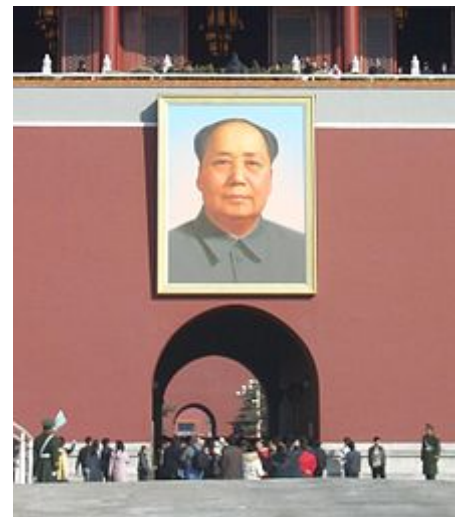
The portrait weighs 1.5 tonnes and is generally replaced by a spare when it is vandalised.^[8] In 1989, three dissidents, including Yu Dongyue, attacked the portrait with eggs during the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989. Yu was sent to prison and was not released until 17 years later in 2006. On May 12, 2007 the portrait of Mao caught fire. A 35-year-old unemployed man from Urumqi was arrested for the incident. About 15% of the portrait was damaged, and had to be repaired later.^[9] On April 5, 2010, a protester threw ink in a plastic bottle and hit a wall near the portrait. He was then arrested.

National symbol

Due to its historical significance, Tiananmen is featured on the National Emblem of the People's Republic of China. It has also been featured in the designs of stamps and coins issued by the People's Republic of China.



Portrait of Chiang Kai-shek on the Tiananmen in Beijing, Republic of China



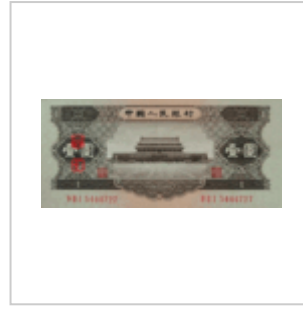
Portrait of Mao Zedong at the Tiananmen gate made by Ge Xiaoguang



National Emblem



1950 postage stamp



1-yuan note in 1961

Public access

Tiananmen is open to the public each day of the week from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.^[10]

Line 1 of the Beijing Subway has stops at Tiananmen West and Tiananmen East, on either side of Tiananmen.

City buses 1, 2, 5, 52, 82, 120, 观光1, 观光2, 夜1, 夜2, 夜17 stop near Tiananmen.



Route 1 bus passing Tiananmen

See also

- Gate of China, Beijing

References

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7. [Replacing Chairman Mao with Sun Yat-sen. Call for reassessment of Sun Yat-sen from 'pioneer' to 'father of the nation' . South China morning post. 29 March 2011.]
8. Foster, Peter. Chinese protestor throws ink at portrait of Chairman Mao. (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/7565768/Chinese-protestor-throws-ink-at-portrait-of-Chairman-Mao.html>) *The Daily Telegraph*. 8 April 2010.
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10. (Chinese) "参观天安门城楼时刻表及门票价格和乘车路线" (<http://www.lxjia.net/guide-lxjia-gonglue5194.html>) Accessed 2012-02-06

External links

- [Tian'anmen -- the Gate of Heavenly Peace \(http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/beijing/30801.htm\)](http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/beijing/30801.htm).
China.org.cn
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