

## With new pride in its past, China raises the curtain on the Forbidden City

For much of the past century, the Forbidden City has been an **imposing** void in the otherwise **bustling** heart of Beijing.

imposing 壮观的; 印象深刻的

bustling 熙熙攘攘的

The 180-acre compound, where emperors and their advisers **plotted** China's course for centuries, was **stripped** of its purpose when the last emperor **abdicated** in 1912. Since then, the palace grounds have at times lain empty or been treated as a museum, with most of the halls closed to the public and the few that were open **crammed** with tourists on package tours.

plot 谋划

strip 拆卸; 剥夺

abdicate 退位

cram 塞满; 突击准备

But as the Forbidden City approaches its 600th birthday next year, a dramatic change has been taking place, with even dark and dusty corners of the palace restored to their former glories for all to see.

As recently as 2012, only 30% of the vast complex was open to the public. Now, 80% is accessible — quickly filling with exhibition spaces, bookstores, and gift stores, as well as quiet walkways, shady stands of trees and odd **nooks** that invite **contemplation** of bygone dynasties.

nook 角落

contemplation 沉思; 注视

Most visitors are still part of package tours that quickly **funnel** people through the central part of the complex. But taking a slower, more **meandering** path through the Forbidden City is a better way to **soak up** the history and discover some of its secrets.

funnel 漏斗

meandering 漫步; 漫步的

soak up 吸收

For a visitor willing to take some time, the most *notable* and pleasant spots are the wings of the palaces and the courtyards that are now open and where one can sit, drink a tea and watch the *vermilion* walls *shimmer* in the summer sun.

notable 著名的; 名人

vermillion 朱红的

shimmer 闪光