


TRAVELING



The Vacation Times

MAY, 2019

FIND YOUR
HAVEN &
DISCOVER
CHINA'S
CULTURE

BEST IN THE CHINA

Forbidden City
Great Wall
Back Lakes

THE TAMPLE
IN CHINA

Temple of Heaven
In Beijing

MONTAIN
OF GUILIN

Xiangshan
District

ADVENTURE
IN XIAN

Terracotta Warriors



The Forbidden City is a palace complex in central Beijing, China. The former Chinese imperial palace from the Ming dynasty to the end of the Qing dynasty (the years 1420 to 1912), it now houses the Palace Museum. The Forbidden City served as the home of emperors and their households as well as the ceremonial and political center of Chinese government for almost 500 years. Constructed from 1406 to 1420, the complex consists of 980 buildings and covers 72 hectares (over 180 acres). The palace exemplifies traditional Chinese palatial architecture, and has influenced cultural and architectural developments in East Asia and elsewhere. The Forbidden City was declared a World Heritage Site in 1987, and is listed by UNESCO as the largest collection of preserved ancient wooden structures in the world. The name “Zijin Cheng” is a name with significance on many levels. Zi, or “Purple”, refers to the North Star.

The Meridian Gate front entrance to the Forbidden City

The Forbidden City is surrounded by a 7.9 metres (26 ft) high city wall and a 6 metres (20 ft) deep by 52 metres (171 ft) wide moat.

The walls are 8.62 metres (28.3 ft) wide at the base, tapering to 6.66 metres (21.9 ft) at the top. These walls served as both defensive walls and retaining walls for the palace.

They were constructed with a rammed earth core, and surfaced with three layers of specially baked bricks on both sides, with the interstices filled with mortar.

At the four corners of the wall sit towers (E) with intricate roofs boasting 72 ridges, reproducing the Pavilion of Prince Teng and the Yellow Crane Pavilion as they appeared in Song dynasty paintings.

Forbidden City

Outer Court or the Southern Section

Traditionally, the Forbidden City is divided into two parts. The Outer Court or Front Court includes the southern sections, and was used for ceremonial purposes. The Inner Court or Back Palace includes the northern sections, and was the residence of the Emperor and his family, and was used for day-to-day affairs of state. (The approximate dividing line shown as red dash in the plan above.)

Generally, the Forbidden City has three vertical axes. The most important buildings are situated on the central north–south axis. Entering from the Meridian Gate, one encounters a large square, pierced by the meandering Inner Golden Water River, which is crossed by five bridges. Beyond the square stands the Gate of Supreme Harmony (F). Behind that is the Hall of Supreme Harmony Square. A three-tiered white marble terrace rises from this square. Three halls stand on top of this terrace, the focus of the palace complex. From the south, these are the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the Hall of Central Harmony, and the Hall of Preserving Harmony.

The Hall of Supreme Harmony (G) is the largest, and rises some 30 metres (98 ft) above the level of the surrounding square. It is the ceremonial centre of imperial power, and the largest surviving wooden structure in China. It is nine bays wide and five bays deep, the numbers 9 and 5 being symbolically connected to the majesty of the Emperor. Set into the ceiling at the centre of the hall is an intricate caisson decorated with a coiled dragon, from the mouth of which issues a chandelier-like set of metal balls, called the “Xuanyuan Mirror”. In the Ming dynasty, the Emperor held court here to discuss affairs of state. During the Qing dynasty, as Emperors held court far more frequently, a less ceremonious location was used instead, and the Hall of Supreme Harmony was only used for ceremonial purposes.



The Golden Water River

An artificial stream that runs through the Forbidden City.

The Inner Court is separated from the Outer Court by an oblong courtyard lying orthogonal to the City's main axis.

It was the home of the Emperor and his family.

In the Qing dynasty, the Emperor lived and worked almost exclusively in the Inner Court, with the Outer Court used only for ceremonial purposes.

The Hall of Central Harmony is a smaller, square hall, used by the Emperor to prepare and rest before and during ceremonies. Behind it, the Hall of Preserving Harmony, was used for rehearsing ceremonies, and was also the site of the final stage of the Imperial examination. All three halls feature imperial thrones, the largest and most elaborate one being that in the Hall of Supreme Harmony. At the centre of the ramps leading up to the terraces from the northern and southern sides are ceremonial ramps, part of the Imperial Way, featuring elaborate and symbolic bas-relief carvings. The northern ramp, behind the Hall of Preserving Harmony, is carved from a single

piece of stone 16.57 metres (54.4 ft) long, 3.07 metres (10.1 ft) wide, and 1.7 metres (5.6 ft) thick. It weighs some 200 tonnes and is the largest such carving in China. The southern ramp, in front of the Hall of Supreme Harmony, is even longer, but is made from two stone slabs joined together -- the joint was ingeniously hidden using overlapping bas-relief carvings, and was only discovered when weathering widened the gap in the 20th century was used west. Since 2012, the Forbidden City has seen an average of 15 million visitors annually, and received more than 16 million visitors in 2016 and 2017.

THE BEAT ACTORS OF 2018



YOO AH-IN FILM: “BURNING”

What if we’ve been wrong about watching paint dry? What about the upsides? It’s true that, while the paint sets, you could be folding clothes or streaming an entire season of some TV show. At first, as you watch Yoo Ah-in move through “Burning,” slowly undertaking the most mundane tasks (chitchatting with a lonely cow; masturbating), you might think, a little resent-

fully, I’m watching paint dry. But eventually his methodical manner darkens outward into a kind of cosmic alienation. How Yoo goes from recent college graduate and struggling writer to vengeful stalker without outlining how, exactly, he got there — that’s the drying of the paint, and it’s riveting.

The movie, a slow-boiling thriller that Lee Chang-dong directed and adapted from a Haruki Murakami story, needs Yoo to do more listening and looking than talking. His character, Jong-su, befriends a girl who seduces him and then asks him to feed her cat while she’s away, which means driving to Seoul from the failing rural farm of his incarcerated father. She returns with a smooth yuppie whose seeming indifference to her subsequent disappearance arouses Jong-su’s gathering suspicion.

Yoo is a big, charismatic star in South Korea. Through Lee, he achieves a kind of sleight of hand, conjuring a state of bemusement that deepens into anomie. He’s almost anticharismatic — almost. He’s still got that open, handsome face, so you’re drawn to him, which allows for a grand misperception. It’s entirely likely that the person we’re left with at the end of the movie was also there in the opening minutes. All that drying paint has become an abstract painting — grim and stunning. W.M.

“BURNING”

Burning is a 2008 South Korean psychological drama mystery film directed, produced and co-written by Lee Chang-dong. Based on the short story “Barn Burning” from The Elephant Vanishes by author Haruki Murakami.

This film-in barest outline a love triangle, liberally adapted from “Barn Burning,” short story by Haruki Murakami from 1983- is as interested in negotiating our emotional distance from his protagonists as it is in all of the bad luck that befalls them. Ambiguity is never sacrificed at the altar of his disdain, which means that his characters do not get to be anything as basic as passive martyrs or agents of triumph. Like most of us, they tend to fall somewhere in between.

In the film’s opening scene, Sleepy-eyed, pillow-lipped Jong-su(Yoo Ah-in) is a long-lost childhood acquaintance who hails from the same provincial suburb Haemi(Jun Jong-so) does. The



two reconnect at a Seoul department store where she’s been working as a promotional dancer, raffling off prizes to passersby. He doesn’t recognize her initially(“plastic surgery”, she explains), but after a quick smoke, a round of sex, and a gig as her cat-sitter, Jongsu finds himself obsessed.

He has competition, through, in a “friend” she’s picked up on a recent soul-searching trip to Africa, a place she only ever talks about magi-

cal terms. Ben-played with quiet menace by Steven intimidatingly pedigreed, sleekly groomed Gatsby figure who turns out to be no less elusive than Haemi herself. Later, as if contradict his own enviable image, he confides to Jongsu his habit of burning down abandoned greenhouse.

Film Stage

United States

MAN AT HIS BEST
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MAY, 2019



THE BEST ACTORS OF 2018

YOO
AH-IN

"BURNING"

The Best Film of 2018

"Black Panther"
"Gavagai"
"Pow Wow"
"Minding the Gap"
"Bisbee '17"