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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/449/2021_2022__E5_AF_BC_E6_B8_B8_E8_B5_84_E6_c34_449888.htm (Inside the South Gate of the Temple of Heaven)Ladies and Gentlemen:Welcome to the temple of Heaven. (After self-introduction) preserved cultural heritages of China. There are basically two kinds of visitors who come here: local pensioners who do exercises here in the morning and evening and sightseers both from home and abroad. All in all ,there are 12 million visitors very year. Now we are going to go along the route that leads to the alter. It will take roughly one hour. Mind you ,the emperor also walked along this route to pay tribute to the God of Heaven. (Along the Southern Sacred Road leading to the Circular Mound Altar)The largest group of architectures ever to be dedicated to Heaven ,the Temple of Heaven served as an exclusive altar for Chinese monarchs during the Ming and Qing dynasties. It was decreed that rulers of successive dynasties would place altars in their own capitals to worship Heaven and pray for good harvest. But why ?The ancient Chinese believed that Heaven was the supreme ruler of the universe and the fate of mankind ,and thus worshipping rites dedicated to Heaven came into being.The Heaven the ancient Chinese referred to was actually the Universe, or nature. In those days, there were specfic rites of worship. This was especially true during the Ming and Qing dynasties when elaborate ceremonies were held.The Temple of Heaven was built in 1420 during the reign of Emperor Youngle of the Ming Dynasty. Situated in the southern

part of the city ,this grand set of structures covers an area of 273 hectares. To better symbolize heaven and earth ,the northern part of the Temple is circular while the southern part is square .The whole compound is enclosed by two walls, a square wall outside a round one. The outer area is characterized by suburban scenery, while the inner part is used for sacrifices. The inner enclosure consists of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvest and the Circular Mound Altar.(Along the Imperial Passage leading from the Southern Lattice Star Gate in front of the Circular Mound Altar)the Circular Mound Altar is enclosed by two walls ,each containing four groups of Southern Lattice Star Gate, each in turn consisting of three doors, with 24 marble doors altogether. Standing on the passage facing north, you will notice that with each pair of doors on is narrower than the other. This reflects the feudal hierarchy: the wider door was reserved for monarchs, while the narrower one was used by courtiers.On the day of the ceremony ,the emperor would don his ritual costume and be ushered in by the official in charge of religious affairs. He ascended the three terraces in the forefront to pay tribute at the alter.(Atop the Circular Mound Alter)we are now on the top terrace of the Altar, or the third terrace .Each terrace has a flight of 9 steps. At the center of this terrace lies a round stone surrounded by 9 steps. At the center of this terrace lies a round stone surrounded by 9 concentric rings of stone. The number of stones in the first ring is 9, in the second ,18, up to 81 in the 9th ring. Even the number of carved balustrades on these terraces is a multiple of 9. But why?According to ancient Chinese philosophy, yin and yang were

two opposing factors. Heaven and the odd numbers belonged to yang while the Earth and even numbers belonged to yin. Nine was the largest heavenly number accessible to man . What is more, the ancient people also believed that heaven consisted of nine layers and that the emperor`s abode was on the uppermost tier. Once more look at the round stone in the center. The upper terrace is nine zhang (a Chinese unit of length, one zhang equals 3.3 meters) in circumference ,while the middle is 15 zhang, the lower, 21 zhang. Classified as yang numbers, the sum of these numerals is 45 zhang which was meant to symbolized success. What is more, by applying the concept of odd numbers and strengthening nine and its multiples, the concept of heaven was thus illustrated and realized . The concept of nine will also be mentioned when we visit some other buildings. Now I will give you a brief account of what happened here annually on the Inter Solstice. The memorial tablet dedicated to Heaven would be set up on the north side of the terrace, while tablets dedicated to the emperor`s ancestors would be enshrined on the flanks. The service would begin around 4 o` clock in the morning. All of the lanterns would be lit .In the foreground, a sacrificial calf is being barbecued. On the square in front of the altar, the emperor, under heavy escort of nearly a thousand courtiers, princes of royal blood ,musicians, dancers and uniformed soldiers, would slowly ascend the altar to offer sacrifice and pray in honor of Heaven. When the service drew to a close ,the sacrifice offered in front of the memorial tablets would be incinerated .All of participants would watch the thick smoke rise upward as if they were seeing God off

. Music and dancing would follow . In the end , the emperor would return to the Forbidden City secure in the belief that he would be blessed and protected by Heaven until the next winter Solstice. It is interesting to note that , the stone in the very middle of the altar was of major importance , since it was where the emperor used to stand to say his prayer. The stone , which is known as the God`s heart Stone, is peculiar in that it is characterized by a specific acoustic phenomenon: it made the emperor`s voice clearer and louder, thus adding to the mystic atmosphere of the service . You can try this out by yourself. (Proceed northward to pass through the Lattice StarGate)(In front of the Gate of glazed tiles) this structure is known as Heaven`s Storehouse. It is entered through the Gate of glazed Tiles. The roofing , beams, and brackets are all made of glazed tiles or bricks. This is the only structure of its kind in china today . the Heaven`s Storehouse was where memorial tablets dedicated to the gods were kept. Douglas Hurd, a former British foreign secretary , once said , “ God attends to His affairs on the Cir4cular Mound Altar but stays here. ” Now let`s go in to to see it (Go through the left side door)(In the courtyard of Heaven`s Storehouse) this is the Imperial Vault of Heaven, the main structure of Heaven`s Storehouse. It was built in 1530 and is 17 meters in height and 19 meters in diameter. The structure feature blue roofs topped by a gilded ball , and carved wooden doors and windows. It is decorated with colored paintings. Founded on a 3-meter-high round marble terrace , the building also features a gigantic carved marble ramp laid in the stone staircase leading up to the front entrance.. The ramp is carved in “ Two

dragons Playing with a pearl ” design in relief. We will enter the main hall by going up the stone staircase on the eastern side. 100Test
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