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https://www.100test.com/kao_ti2020/48/2021_2022__E5_8C_97_E4_BA_AC_E6_95_85_E5_c34_48022.htm FORBIDDEN CITY(紫禁城) (In front of the meridian gate)Ladies and Gentlemen: I am pleased to serve as your guide today. This is the palace museum. also know as the Purple Forbidden City. It is the largest and most well reserved imperial residence in China today. Under Ming Emperor Yongle, construction began in 1406. It took 14years to build the Forbidden City. The first ruler who actually lived here was Ming Emperor Zhudi. For five centuries thereafter, it continued to be the residence of 23 successive emperors until 1911 when Qing Emperor Puyi was forced to abdicate the throne .In 1987, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization recognized the Forbidden City was a world cultural legacy. It is believed that the Palace Museum, or Zi Jin Cheng (Purple Forbidden City), got its name from astronomy folklore, The ancient astronomers divided the constellations into groups and centered them around the Ziwei Yuan(North Star). The constellation containing the North Star was called the Constellation of Heavenly God and star itself was called the purple palace. Because the emperor was supposedly the son of the heavenly gods, his central and dominant position would be further highlighted the use of the word purple in the name of his residence. In folklore, the term " an eastern purple cloud is drifting " became a metaphor for auspicious events after a purple cloud was seen drifting eastward immediately before the arrival of an ancient

philosopher, LaoZi, to the Hanghu Pass. Here, purple is associated with auspicious developments. The word jin (forbidden) is self-explanatory as the imperial palace was heavily guarded and off-limits to ordinary people. The red and yellow used on the palace walls and roofs are also symbolic. Red represents happiness, good fortune and wealth. Yellow is the color of the earth on the Loess Plateau, the original home of the Chinese people. Yellow became an imperial color during the Tang dynasty, when only members of the royal family were allowed to wear it and use it in their architecture. The Forbidden City is rectangular in shape. It is 960 meters long from north to south and 750 meter wide from east west. It has 9,900 rooms under a total roof area 150,000 square meters .A 52-meter-wide-moat encircles a 9.9-meterhigh wall which encloses the complex. Octagon shaped turrets rest on the four corners of the wall. There are four entrances into the city: the Meridian Gate to the south, the Shenwu Gate(Gate of Military Prowess) to the north, and the Xihua Gate(Gate of military Prowess) to the north, and the Xihua Gate(Western Flowery Gate)to the west ,the Donghua (Eastern Flowery Gate) to the east. Manpower and materials throughout the country were used to build the Forbidden City. A total of 230,000 artisans and one million laborers were employed. Marble was quarried from fangshan Country Mount Pan in Jixian County in Hebei Province. Granite was quarried in Quyang County in Hebei Province. Paving blocks were fired in kilns in Suzhou in southern China. Bricks and scarlet pigmentation used on the palatial walls

came from Linzi in Shandong Province. Timber was cut, processed and hauled from the northwestern and southern regions. The structure in front of us is the Meridian Gate. It is the main entrance to the Forbidden City. It is also known as Wufenglou (Five-Phoenix Tower). Ming emperors held lavish banquets here on the 15th day of the first month of the Chinese lunar year in honor of their counties. They also used this place for punishing officials by flogging them with sticks. Qing emperors used this building to announce the beginning of the new year. Qing Emperor Qianlong changed the original name of this announcement ceremony from ban li (announcement of calendar) to ban shou (announcement of new moon) to avoid coincidental association with another Emperor's name, Hongli, which was considered a taboo at that time. Qing Dynasty emperors also used this place to hold audience and for other important ceremonies. For example, when the imperial army returned victoriously from the battlefield, it was here that the Emperor presided over the ceremony to accept prisoners of war. (After entering the Meridian Gate and standing in front of the Five Marble Bridges on Golden Water River) now we are inside the Forbidden City. Before we start our tour, I would like to briefly introduce you to the architectural patterns before us. To complete this solemn, magnificent and palatial complex, a variety of buildings were arranged on a north-south axis, and 8-kilometer-long invisible line that has become an inseparable part of the City of Beijing. The Forbidden City covers roughly one third of this central axis. Most of the important buildings in the Forbidden City were arranged along

this line. The design and arrangement of the palaces reflect the solemn dignity of the royal court and rigidly stratified feudal system. The Forbidden City is divided into an outer and an inner court. We are now standing on the southernmost part of the outer court. In front of us lies the Gate of Supreme Harmony. The gate is guarded by a pair of bronze lions, symbolizing imperial power and dignity. The lions were the most exquisite and biggest of its kind. The one on the east playing with a ball is a male, and ball is said to represent state unity. The other one is a female. Underneath one of its fore claws is a cub that is considered to be a symbol of perpetual imperial succession. The winding brook before us is the Golden Water River. It functions both as decoration and fire control. The five bridges spanning the river represent the five virtues preached by Confucius: benevolence, righteousness, rites, intelligence and fidelity. The river takes the shape of a bow and the north-south axis is its arrow. This was meant to show that the Emperors ruled the country on behalf of God. (In front of the Gate of Supreme Harmony) The Forbidden City consists of an outer courtyard and an inner enclosure. The outer courtyard covers a vast space lying between the Meridian Gate and the Gate of Heavenly Purity. The "three big halls" of Supreme Harmony, Complete Harmony and Preserving Harmony constitute the center of this building group. Flanking them in bilateral symmetry are two groups of palaces: Wenhua (Prominent Scholars) and Wuying (Brave Warriors). The three great halls are built on a spacious "H"-shaped, 8-meter-high, triple marble terrace. Each level of the triple terrace is taller than the one below and all are

encircled by marble balustrades carved with dragon and phoenix designs. There are three carved stone staircases linking the three architectures. The hall of supreme Harmony is also the tallest and most exquisite ancient wooden-structured mansion in all of China. From the palace of Heavenly Purity northward is what is known as the inner court, which is also built in bilaterally symmetrical patterns. In the center are the Palace of Heavenly Purity, the Hall of Union and Peace and Palace of Earthly Tranquility, a place where the Emperors lived with their families and attended to state affairs. Flanking these structures are palaces and halls in which concubines and princes lived. There are also three botanical gardens within the inner court, namely, the imperial Garden, Caring garden and Quailing garden. An inner Golden Water River flows eastwardly within the inner court. The brook winds through three minor halls or palaces and leads out of the Forbidden City. It is spanned by the White Jade Bridge. The river is lined with winding, marble carved balustrades. Most of the structures within the Forbidden City have yellow glazed tile roofs. Aside from giving prominence to the north-south axis, other architectural methods were applied to make every group of palatial structures unique in terms of terraces, roofs, mythical monsters perching on the roofs and colored, drawing patterns. With these, the grand contour and different hierarchic spectrum of the complex were strengthened. Folklore has it that there are altogether 9,999 room-units in the Forbidden City. Since Paradise only has 10,000 rooms, the Son of Heaven on earth cut the number by half a room. It is also rumoured that this half room is

located to the west of the Wenyuange Pavilion (imperial library). As a matter of fact, although the Forbidden City has more than 9,000 room-units, this half-room is nonexistent. The Wenyuange Pavilion is a library where “Si Ku Quan Shu” - China’s first comprehensive anthology - was stored. (After walking past the Gate of Supreme Harmony) Ladies and Gentlemen, the great hall we are approaching is the Hall of Supreme Harmony, the biggest and tallest of its kind in the Forbidden City. This structure covers a total building space of 2,377 square meters, and is known for its upturned, multiple counterpart eaves. The Hall of Supreme Harmony sits on a triple “H” -shaped marble terrace that is 8 meters high and linked by staircases. The staircase on the ground floor has 21 steps while the middle and upper stairways each have 9. The construction of the Hall of Supreme Harmony began in 1406. It burned down three times and was severely damaged once during a mutiny. The existing architecture was built during the Qing Dynasty. On the corners of the eaves a line of animal-nails were usually fastened to the tiles. These animal-nails were later replaced with mythical animals to ward off evil spirits. There are altogether 9 such fasteners on top of this hall. The number nine was regarded by the ancients to be the largest numeral accessible to man and to which only the emperors were entitled. There was a total of 24 successive emperors during the Ming and Qing dynasties who were enthroned here. The hall was also used for ceremonies which marked other great occasions: the Winter Solstice, The Chinese Lunar New Year, the Emperor’s birthday, conferral of the title of empress, the announcement of new laws and

policies, and dispatches of generals to war .On such occasions, the Emperor would hold audience for his court officials and receive their tributes. This area is called the Hall of Supreme Harmony Square, which covers a total of 30,000 square meters, Without a single tree or plant growing here, this place inspires visitors to feel its solemnity and grandeur. In the middle of the square there is a carriageway that was reserved for the Emperor. On both sides of the road the ground bricks were laid in a special way seven layers lengthwise and eight layers crosswise, making up fifteen layers in all. The purpose of this was to prevent anyone from tunneling his way into the palace. In the count yard there are iron vats for storing water to fight fires. In the whole complex there are altogether 308 water vats. In wintertime, charcoal was burned underneath the vats to keep the water from freezing .Why so vast a square? It was designed to impress people with the hall` s grandeur and vastness. Imagine the following scene. Under the clear blue sky, the yellow glazed tiles shimmered as the cloud-like layers of terrace, coupled with the curling veil of burning incense, transformed the hall of supreme Harmony into a fairyland. Whenever major ceremonies were held, the glazed, crane-shaped candleholders inside the hall would be lit, and incense and pine branches burnt in front of the hall. When the Emperor appeared, drums were beaten and musical instrument played. Civilian officials and generals would kneel know in submission. The last Qing emperor Puyi assumed the throne in 1908, at the age of three, His father carried him to the throne. At the start of the coronation, the sudden drum-beating and loud music caught the young emperor

unprepared .He was so scared that he kept crying and shouting, ” I don ’ t want to stay here. I want to go home. ” His father tried to soothe him, saying, ” It` all soon be finished .It` all soon be finished ” The ministers present at the event considered this incident inauspicious. Coincidentally, the Qing dynasty collapsed three years later and there with concluded China`s feudal system that had lasted for more than 2,000 years.(On the stone terrace of the Hall of Supreme Harmony) This is a bronze incense burner. In it incense made of sandalwood would be burnt on important occasions. There are altogether 18 incense burners, representing all of the provinces under the rule of the Sing monarchs. On either side of the Hall, 4 bronze water-filled vats were placed in case of fire. Next to the terrace on either side, there is a bronze crane and tortoise, symbols of longevity. This copper-cast grain measure is called ” jialiang. ” It served as the national standard during the Qing dynasty. It was meant to show that the imperial ruler were just and open to rectification. On the other side there is a stone sundial, an ancient timepiece. The jialiang and the sundial were probably meant to show what the Emperor represented: that he was the only person who should possess the standards of both measure and time. In the very forefront of the Hall of Supreme Harmony , there are 12 scarlet , round pillars supporting the roof. The hall is 63 meters from east to west and 37 meters from north to south, It is 35 meters in height. In front of this architechture, there stands a triple terrace with five staircases leading up to the main entrance .It has 40 gold doors and 16 gold-key windows with colored drawings on the pillars and

beams. In the middle of the hall, a throne carved with 9 dragons sits on a 2-meter-high platform. Behind the throne there is a golden screen and in front of it, there is an imperial desk. The flanks are decorated with elephants, Luduan (a legendary beast), cranes, and incense barrels. The elephant carries a vase on its back that holds five cereals (i. e. rice, two kinds of millet, wheat and beans), which was considered a symbol of prosperity. As ancient legend has it that Luduan can travel 18,000 li (9,000 kilometers) in one day and knows all languages and dialects. Only to a wise and just monarch will this beast be a guardian. The Hall of Supreme Harmony is also popularly known as Jinluan Dian (gold bell hall or the throne hall). The floor of the hall is laid with bricks that turn it into a smooth, fine surface as if water has been sprinkled on it. The so-called golden brick, in fact, has nothing to do with gold. Reserved exclusively for the construction of the royal court, it was made in a secretive, and complex way, and, when struck, sounds like the clink of a gold bar. Each brick was worth the market price of one dan (or one hectoliter) of rice. The hall is supported by a total of 72 thick pillars. Of these, 6 are carved in dragon patterns and painted with gold and surround the throne. Above the very center of this hall there is a zaojing, or covered ceiling, which is one of the specialties of China's ancient architecture. In the middle of the ceiling is a design of a dragon playing with a ball inlaid with pearls. This copper ball, hollow inside and covered with mercury, is known as the Xuanyuan Mirror and is thought to be made by Xuanyuan, a legendary monarch dating back to remote antiquity. The placing of the caisson above the throne is

meant to suggest that all of China's successive emperors are Zuanyuan's descendants and hereditary heirs. Now you might have noticed that the Xuanyuan mirror is not directly above the throne. Why? It is rumored that Yuan Shikai, a self-acclaimed warlord-turned emperor moved the throne further back because he was afraid that the mirror might fall on him. In 1916 when Yuan Shikai became emperor, he removed the original throne with a Western-style, high-back chair. After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 the throne was found in a shabby furniture warehouse. It repaired and returned to the hall. (Leading the tourist to the bronze vats either on the east or the west) the water vats in front of the palaces or house were called "menhai," or sea before the door by the ancient Chinese. They believed that with a sea by the door, fire could not wreak havoc. The vats served both as a decoration and as a fire extinguisher. They were kept full of water all year round. During the Qing Dynasty, they were altogether 308 vats in the palace enclosure. They were made of gilt bronze or iron. Of course, the gilt bronze vats were of the best quality. When the allied forces (Britain, Germany, France, Russia, the United States, Italy, Japan and Austria) invaded Beijing in 1900 under the pretext of suppressing the Boxer Rebellion, the invaders ransacked the imperial compound and scraped and gold off the vats with their bayonets. During the Japanese occupation of Beijing, many vats were trucked away by the Japanese to be made into bullets. (In front of the Hall of Complete Harmony) The square architecture before us is called the Hall of Complete Harmony. It served as an antechamber. The

Emperor came here to meet with his countiers and add his final touches to the prayers which would be read at the ancestral Temple. The seeds, snows and prayer intended for spring sowing were also examined here. The two Qing sedan chairs here on display were used for traveling within the palace during the reign of Emperor Qianlong.

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