

Brief Introduction of Beijing

Beijing is a metropolis in Northern China, and the capital of the People's Republic of China. Governed as a municipality under direct administration of the central government, Beijing borders Hebei Province to the north, west, south, and for a small section in the east, and Tianjin Municipality to the southeast. Beijing is one of the Four Great Ancient Capitals of China.

Beijing is divided into 14 urban and suburban districts and two rural counties. Beijing is a major transportation hub, with dozens of railways, roads and motorways passing through the city. It is also the destination of many international flights arriving in China. Beijing is recognized as the political, educational, and cultural center of the People's Republic of China, while Hong Kong and Shanghai predominate in economic fields. The city hosted the 2008 Olympic Games.

Few cities in the world besides Beijing have served as the political and cultural centre of an area as immense as China for so long. The Encyclopædia Britannica describes it as 'one of the world's great cities', and declares that the city has been an integral part of China's history for centuries; there is scarcely a major building of any age in Beijing that does not have at least some national historical significance. Beijing is renowned for its opulent palaces, temples, and huge stone walls and gates. Its art treasures and universities have long made the city a centre of culture and art in China.

Beijing is universally acknowledged for its rich history and cultural development. It is also recognized as a modern international metropolis full of energy and vitality. It is located on the northwest part of Huabei Campagna (the North China Plain) about 150 kilometers (93 miles) west of the Bohai Sea. It has been the capital city of many dynasties in Chinese history. The city's grid pattern and original walls were first laid down in the 13th century when it was called Khanbalik, the capital city of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). It was razed, rebuilt and named Beijing by the Han Chinese rulers of the subsequent Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It also served as capital city of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Beijing is world-famous for its trove of historical sites and enchanting natural scenery, making it a compelling tourist destination during people's China travel. It offers a staggering array of attractions including the resplendent Forbidden City; the majestic Tiananmen Square (the world's largest public square); the grand meandering Great Wall, and Beihai Park (Beijing's oldest imperial garden). It's a remarkable city offering an abundance of ancient and modern architecture, temples, gardens, and museums and a variety of colorful local flavors and customs.

No other city in China offers the range of accommodations Beijing does. There are enormous numbers of four and five-star hotels in convenient locations throughout the city. Beijing is also a food-lovers' dream. It is difficult to imagine a city with more

restaurants per square kilometer or a more exhaustive variety of Chinese and foreign cuisines. There is also no shortage of entertainment with the Beijing Opera, Beijing Concert Hall, acrobatic troupes, and teahouses being popular choices.

The face of Beijing is rapidly changing as it continually modernizes. You'll see everything ranging from a Harley Davidson motorcycle dealership to upscale women's fashion boutiques to military displays at the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall. Despite its progress, the city values its great historical culture and its antiquities. You can capture the true essence of Beijing by walking around the Summer Palace and its pavilions or strolling through the courtyards and quadrangle houses or the quaint and serene Hutong. The modernization has also had a salutary impact on Beijing's citizens. Since reform, living conditions and purchasing power have improved dramatically.

Few cities have the unique historical charm of Beijing. Its wide thoroughfares, magnificent gate tower and memorial arch, and grand palaces all speak to the extensive history of this city. It also stands as a symbol of China's grandeur, history, culture and mystery. Beijing is also an approachable and visitor-friendly city.

History

Beijing is a city with more than 3,000 years of recorded history and a centuries-old glorious evolution. Evidence of human ancestry dating back to 700,000 years ago has been found in such places as Zhoukoudian in the southwest part of Beijing, where the remains known as 'Peking Man' were found.

While the city's origins can be traced back to over 2,000 years ago, its true significance came about in the early years of the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century BC-771 BC). During this time the emperor gave the feudal lords under his rule plots of land. One of these plots of land (or feod), called 'Ji City', was the capital of the kingdom 'Ji' at that time. This city was the earliest in Beijing history. By the time of the Eastern Zhou Period (476 BC-221 BC), the kingdom Ji no longer existed, being replaced by the kingdom 'Yan'. However, Ji was still the capital city at that time.

From the time the Emperor Qin Shi Huang unified China in the year 221 BC, Beijing became a strategic place and local kaiserdom center in the northern part of China. From the year 581 to 618 (Sui Dynasty), Beijing was called 'Zhuo' and had a population of 130,000 people. From 618 to 907 (Tang Dynasty), Beijing was called 'You'. During these two dynasties, it was not only a strategic military place but also the major trade center.

In the year 938 of Liao Dynasty (916-1125), the city became the alternate capital of the kingdom of 'Liao' which was founded by the minority ethnic group Qidan who lived in the northeast of China. Because Beijing of that time was located in the south

part of their kingdom, it was renamed 'Nanjing' (in Chinese, 'Nan' means 'in the south place').

In 1115, the Nvzhen ethnic nationality perished the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) to set up the Jin Dynasty (265-420) and founded its capital Beijing, which was called Zhongdu of Jin. The golden Imperial Palace, an extremely grand luxurious construction, was established in Zhongdu at that time. This was the first time in Beijing history that the city became a truly significant capital. The world-famous Marco Polo Bridge (Lugou Bridge) was built at that time during the Jin Dynasty.

In 1267 Kublai Khan, the leader of the Mongolian ethnic minority, gave an order to construct a new city in the northeast suburbs of Zhongdu. Four years later, Kublai Khan, ascending the emperor's throne in the new city, under construction at that time, established the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). The building of the city was finished in 1276 and became the capital of the Yuan Dynasty. The Italian traveler Marco Polo wrote in his travel notes that he considered it to be the 'incommensurable city even in the world'.

The current name 'Beijing' comes from more than 500 years ago during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). In 1403, Zhu Di captured the throne. After that, he moved the former capital to Beiping and then changed its name to Beijing. In 1406, the Ming Dynasty reconstructed Beijing city. The original imperial palace built during the Yuan Dynasty had been burned down during the time when Zhu Yuanzhang overthrew the Yuan Dynasty. The imperial palace reconstructed in the Ming Dynasty is the Forbidden City at present in Beijing. The construction, design, structure and other aspects of this building epitomize the excellent quality of Chinese architecture in ancient times.

After the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) immediately seized hold of Beijing, the city was called 'Shuntian Prefectural Capital'. During this period, the botanical garden was constructed. The Summer Palace, Old Summer Palace and many other botanical gardens were built at that time. The Summer Palace, that has the beautiful views of rivers and lakes characteristic of small towns of northern China, has retained its appearance. On October 10, 1911, the Bourgeois Democracy Revolution erupted in China, and in next year's February, the emperor of Qing Dynasty was forced to announce his abdication thus ended the last Chinese feudal dynasty and the history of Beijing as the imperial capital was over.

As the important gateway of China, Beijing was military land and the scene of many battles in Chinese history. The chaos caused by war was continuous and the sovereignty of the city was changed many times, making Beijing a city which has undergone much balefulness and adversity.

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was established and Beijing once again became the newborn capital of China. The history of the old city had turned a new page. A city's history is the history of a country. As the imperial capital city of several generations and today's capital of China, Beijing is the miniature of Chinese history and present actuality. Beijing is an archaic city with 3,000 years' brilliant civilization but simultaneously is also a city that glows with beauty and youth. Now Beijing is appearing in the world in its grand, lovely, fresh and modernized guise, and changing with each passing day.

Feature

Beijing, the political and cultural centre of modern China, was the capital of many dynasties in ancient times. When breathing in this city, you can virtually sense its up-to-the-minute modern aura along with a kind of historical dignified sensation that encourages feelings of deep respect for this city which holds so many stories that date back to its origins. Hutong, quadrangle, defensive wall, old city gate and Beijing Opera are the prime indicators that reveal its historical beauty and stories affording much further consideration.

Beijing Opera

Beijing Opera, the Chinese artistic treasure with nearly 200 years of history, is highly reputed as the 'quintessence of China' by its infinite artistic charm. It is the very popular and most representational and outstanding opera of all the Chinese traditional dramas. Beijing Opera is the richest in the list of plays, finest on its performance and the most widespread on popularity, deeply admired and loved by Beijingers and even its universal audience.

Hutong

The thoroughfare is the sign of Beijing, but an equally important symbol is its Hutongs which proliferate in this city. Walking around modern Beijing, most visitors are not as interested in the tall buildings and wide streets extending in all directions as they are in the small winding and profound Hutongs. These are ancient city alleys with their residences so characteristic of Beijing.

Quadrangle

The quadrangle is the epitome of old China and has a kind of grieving beauty. It is the medium of traditional Chinese culture holding profound cultural overtones manifesting in the traditional Chinese residential concept. It is kind and tranquil, full of strong life vitality and the suitably sized courtyard is square and broad. Family members obtain the exchange here, which plays a very important role to create a genial life space.

City Gate & City Wall

The city wall and the city gate is the reticent recorder of Beijing's gorgeous history. They reflect the prosperity and fame of the city's history more successfully than any house or temple. All these marvelous constructions manifest the artistic value of the capital's ancient architecture.

Panda

Pandas are called Xiong Mao in Chinese, meaning "bear-cat", because it looks like a bear in shape and a cat in face. It actually is a member of the bear family. It has black furs on ears, nose, eyes patches and shoulders and the rest is white. Today, there are only one thousand pandas in the wild and mostly in central China.

General Information About Tsinghua University

Tsinghua University was established in 1911, originally under the name 'Tsinghua Xuetang'. The school was renamed 'Tsinghua School' in 1912. The university section was founded in 1925. The name 'National Tsinghua University' was adopted in 1928.

The faculty greatly valued the interaction between Chinese and Western cultures, the sciences and humanities, the ancient and modern. Tsinghua scholars Wang Guowei, Liang Qichao, Chen Yinke and Zhao Yuanren, renowned as the 'Four Tutors' in the Institute of Chinese Classics, advocated this belief and had a profound impact on Tsinghua's later development.

Tsinghua University was forced to move to Kunming and join with Peking University and Nankai University to form the Southwest Associated University due to the Resistance War against the Japanese Invasion in 1937. In 1946 The University was moved back to its original location in Beijing after the war.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the University was molded into a polytechnic institute focusing on engineering in the nationwide restructuring of universities and colleges undertaken in 1952. In November 1952, Mr. Jiang Nanxiang became the President of the University. He made significant contributions in leading Tsinghua to become the national center for training engineers and scientists with both professional proficiency and personal integrity.

Since China opened up to the world in 1978, Tsinghua University has developed at a breathtaking pace into a comprehensive research university. At present, the university has 14 schools and 56 departments with faculties in science, engineering, humanities, law, medicine, history, philosophy, economics, management, education and art. The University has now over 25,900 students, including 13,100 undergraduates and 12,800 graduate students. As one of China's most renowned universities, Tsinghua has become an important institution for fostering talent and scientific research.

The educational philosophy of Tsinghua is to ‘train students with integrity’. Among over 120,000 students who have graduated from Tsinghua since its founding are many outstanding scholars, eminent entrepreneurs and great statesmen remembered and respected by their fellow Chinese citizens.

With the motto of ‘Self-Discipline and Social Commitment’ and the spirit of ‘Actions Speak Louder than Words’, Tsinghua University is dedicated to the well-being of Chinese society and to world development.

History of Tsinghua University

Located in the northwestern suburbs of Beijing, Tsinghua University was established in 1911 on the site of ‘Qing Hua Yuan (Tsinghua Garden)’ —a former royal garden of the Qing Dynasty. Partly funded by the ‘Gengzi Indemnity’, also known as ‘Boxer Indemnity,’ it functioned at first as a preparatory school called ‘Tsinghua Xuetang (Tsing Hua Imperial College)’ for those students who were sent by the government to study in the United States.

On April 29, 1911, Tsinghua Xuetang began its first term of study, and from that year on, the Tsinghua’s anniversary has fallen on the last Sunday of April. The name was changed to ‘Tsinghua Xuexiao (Tsing Hua College)’ after the 1911 Revolution.

In 1925, Tsinghua launched its four-year undergraduate programme. In 1928, its name was changed to “Guoli Tsinghua Daxue (National Tsinghua University),” and in the autumn of 1929 its graduate school was set up.

Following the outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan in 1937, Tsinghua University, Peking University and Nankai University merged to form the National Southwest Associated University in Kunming. After the war, Tsinghua University moved back to its original Beijing campus.

Three years after the founding of the People’s Republic of China, a nationwide restructuring of institutes of higher education began, and in 1952, Tsinghua University became a multidisciplinary polytechnic university specializing in training engineers. In November of that year, the Ministry of Education appointed Jiang Nanxiang as President.

Since 1978, Tsinghua University has strengthened its teaching in sciences, economic management, humanities and law. In 1999, Tsinghua opened the School of Arts and Design by merging with the Central Academy of Arts and Design. Today, Tsinghua has become a leading university: while its teaching is focused on engineering, it concurrently offers degrees in other sciences, the liberal arts, management and law.

To fully implement the 'China Education Reform and Development Program', Tsinghua University has set new development targets for the next 15 years. Educational quality and effectiveness will be improved and disciplinary structure will be readjusted. Building on our strength in engineering, the university will promote the development of science and management departments. High academic standards will also be pursued in the humanities and social sciences.

In less than 100 years, Tsinghua University has witnessed and shared the hardships and glories of the nation. The University's motto of 'Self-discipline and Social Commitment' has inspired many generations of Tsinghua teachers and students to struggle for the prosperity of China. Now, striving to build Tsinghua University into a world-class university by its 100th anniversary in 2011 has become the objective of each member of the teaching staff and the student body.

Famous Site on Campus

Tsinghua Garden



Tsinghua Garden is architecturally unique. It preserves original architectural features over three centuries old. The garden retains a traditional Qing private garden design and style with painted corridors connecting every room. It has functioned as the university's head office for many years. Due to its distinctive characteristics, it has become a major attraction on campus.

The more popular name of the garden is Gong Zi Ting -- which in Chinese means H-Shaped House. Viewed from above, the central part of the house resembles the

letter "H", with its two halls in the front and back connected by a short corridor in the middle.

The garden started out as the residence of a Qing emperor's brother's family. In the early days of Tsinghua School, founded in 1911, the garden was used as the school's first head office building. Student enrollment lists were posted on the wall at the front gate. For some years in its history, the east room in the front section was used as the Music Center, the west room as the teacher's reading room and the back section to accommodate distinguished foreign guests. The great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore stayed there when he visited China in 1924.

Tsinghua School



Tsinghua School, a two floor German style building, was one of the main buildings of the school at its early stage. It was a student dormitory building.

The west wing was built during 1909-1911. The east wing was built in 1916. The total construction area was 4650 m².

The four Chinese characters painted above the main entrance read "Tsinghua School", the first name of the institution when it was founded. The inscription was by Na Tong, a Great Scholar and Grand Minister in late Qing Dynasty.

In the last few decades, it was used as teaching building and classrooms. Now it is the offices of some main administration departments: the Graduate School, the undergraduate academic department and the R&D department.

Auditorium



Located at the heart of the oldest area on Tsinghua campus is the imposing auditorium. Mixing Greek and Roman architectural styles, the 1,200-seat auditorium has a rounded roof, a brass gate, and four large white marble columns. It possesses few design embellishments; its magnificence is evident in its simplicity.

Construction on what is now one of the favorite buildings on campus began in September 1917 and concluded in March 1920. The auditorium was one of the four major building projects carried out by Tsinghua School, together with Tsinghua Xuetang, the old library, and the gymnasium.

In its day, it was the largest auditorium of its kind at a university in China, and could seat the entire faculty, staff and student body for school assemblies.

Shui Mu Tsinghua



Shui Mu Tsinghua, which means "clear water and trees surrounding Tsinghua," is one of the most captivating spots in Tsinghua Yuan. Located near the rear gate of the H-shaped Hall, Shui Mu Tsinghua is often compared by Tsinghua students to the Garden of Harmonious Interests in Beijing's famed Summer Palace. It is a "garden within a garden."

Shui Mu Tsinghua has many charms. Unusual rock formations abound, and a variety of trees, which change color from season to season, encircle an expanse of calm, clear water. On the northern bank are two ancient, graceful pavilions. The four Chinese characters "Shui Mu Tsing Hua" painted on the top of the main gate, were copied from an inscription by Emperor Kang Xi.

The Old Gate



The Old Gate was built in 1909. In May of that year, the Qing dynasty government approved the application from the Department of Foreign Affairs to establish a school in the suburbs of Beijing. Tsinghua Garden was chosen as the site for the school. The Gate was the main entrance to the school campus at that time.

At that time, the Gate was not only stately and graceful, but also heavily guarded. In those years, underclassmen were not allowed to go beyond the gate without permission from school authorities. In addition, for the sake of preserving the sanctity of the learning environment, people not on official school business were forbidden to pass through the gate.

In 1933, after the expansion of the residential area, the former enclosing wall was moved to further out. A new gate, now Tsinghua's West Gate, became the new main entrance. Ever since, the original gate has been called Er Xiao Men (means "the second school gate").

The Old Gate was demolished in 1960's. Donated by Tsinghua University Alumni, it was rebuilt in 1991, following the original design.