



ANNABELLE YAO

BEAUTY OF

# CHINESE ARCHITECTURE



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# The Hall of Supreme Harmony

The Hall of Supreme Harmony is commonly referred to as the Golden Luan Hall. It is the largest and the highest-ranking building in the entire Forbidden City. It also ranks at the top of all ancient Chinese architecture regarding its building code and decoration techniques.

The twenty-four emperors of the Ming and Qing Dynasties held grand ceremonies, such as the coronation, the wedding, the empress' appointment, and the announcement of a battle, in the Hall of Supreme Harmony. The emperor also hosted official greetings and banquets on the three major festivals, the Festival of Longevity, Chinese New Year, and the Winter Solstice.

On each end of the main ridge, there is a gigantic ridge ornament of 3.4-meters tall and 4,300-kilograms heavy.



There are also ten diagonal ridge ornaments on each of the eight diagonal ridges. In Chinese palaces, the number and arrangement of ridge ornaments were strictly regulated. The higher the building's rank, the greater number of ornaments the building can use. The Hall of Supreme Harmony is the only building in Chinese palaces with ten ornaments. It is the supreme existence in ancient China.



There is a broad platform in front of the Hall, called Dān Bì, with a sundial (Rì Guǐ) for timekeeping on the left and an appraisal (Jiǎ Liàng) for measurement on the right. In addition, there are a pair of bronze tortoises, a pair of bronze cranes, and 18 bronze cauldrons. Tortoises and cranes both symbolize longevity, and the cauldrons symbolize prosperity.



Supporting the Hall is a three-storied, 8-meter high white marble stone base, surrounded by marble railings. Thousands of stone dragon heads designed for drainage are under the railings, showing a magnificent scene of thousands of dragons spitting water on rainy days.



The Hall of Supreme Harmony was first built in 1420. It is enormous, being 11-bays wide and 5-bays deep, and covers a gross floor area of 2,377 square meters. The hall itself is 27-meters tall, but if including the elevated platform underneath, the Hall of Supreme Harmony reaches a stunning 35 meters in height.

Growing up traveling among Shanghai, Hong Kong, and San Francisco every year for her studies, the author learned to speak five different languages fluently, English, Chinese, French, German, and Shanghainese. Most importantly, she learned to appreciate multiple cultures with a global mindset.

This book on Chinese architecture is not a simple compilation of theoretical knowledge points but an exciting reservoir reflecting the author's versatile interests in math, science, engineering, arts, languages, and history.

Starting from **3D models** of Chinese palaces, the author took readers into the world of Chinese architecture, covering civilian houses, temples, gardens, and contemporary structures. At the end of the book, the author also provided a list of English Chinese translations on some very special terminologies.

With tons of fun facts, high-quality photos, and hand-drawn illustrations, readers of all ages will be able to navigate this book with ease.



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