



The Forbidden City

The Palace of the Emperor of
Heaven



Emperor Qin Huang Di



King Arthur



George Washington

Civilizations of the past and present have created their own myths of former leaders to look up to and attempt to emulate (copy). The Chinese have Shun Di, Huang Di, etc., the British have King Arthur, and the U.S. has George Washington. The Chinese legendary emperors were not really gods, just as King Arthur didn't really pull the sword, Excalibur, out of a rock. Just as George Washington didn't chop down a Cherry tree and say, "I cannot tell a lie." They do give us character traits to try to achieve.

The Mandate of Heaven

天命
tiān mìng

The Chinese version of "Mandate of Heaven"

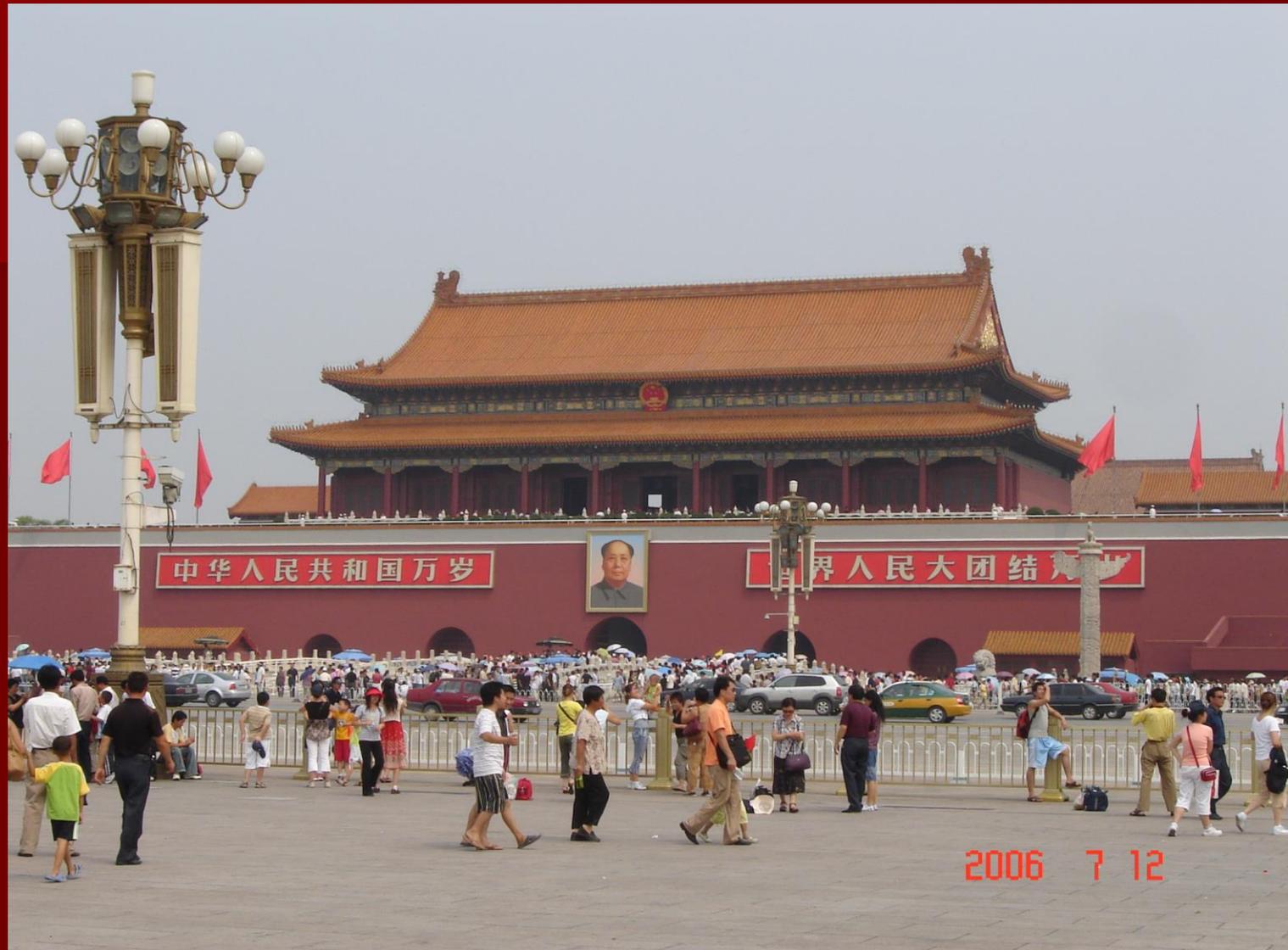


Picture from the movie, *The Last Emperor*.

Chinese Emperors were considered to have the "mandate of heaven," meaning God/heaven backed them up and wanted the Emperor to rule the country in God's name. So, to disobey the Emperor was to disobey heaven! Imagine the power they had!



The Gate of Supreme Harmony in the Forbidden City – The Emperor would rule with the mandate of heaven from inside this spectacular city within the city of Beijing (Peking).



The main gate of the Forbidden City from Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China. Now a portrait of Mao Zedong, the Chinese Communist leader who ruled like a dictator or emperor, hangs above the main door.



The Forbidden City has 9,999 rooms (nine is a masculine/powerful number to the Chinese) and cover more than 124 acres. The palace in heaven is believed to have 10,000 rooms.



Many of the doors have nine rows of nine nails, such as this door with ornate carvings (the picture only shows six, but there were nine...I swear!).



100,000 artisans and a million laborers constructed the Forbidden City in about 14 years. Construction started in 1406 C.E. It also took 20,000 workers to maintain the palace.



This is only one of the decorated ceilings of one of the rooms within the Forbidden City. The ornate artwork and attention to detail is amazing.



The Golden Stream in the Forbidden City Square moves like a serpent/dragon. Only the Emperor could use the center bridge and path.



Only the Emperor walks down the center pathway. The construction/renovations are for the upcoming Olympics in 2008.



The entire Forbidden City is built on a slight angle so all the rain water drains to the Southeast. These dragon heads act as spouts for the draining water.



The male lion (below) is on the right and has his paw over the earth, meaning to feel the pulse of the earth. Other guides said it was meant to be a pomegranate and symbolized power.

Fu Dogs – Imperial guardian lions.

The female lion (above) has a cub under her paw to symbolize future prosperity. The male is supposed to protect the home from intruders, while the female is to protect those inside.





The more statuettes on the roof line, the more important the building. Also, notice the dragon head with the roof beam in its mouth. It is believed that the dragon will hold the roof in place.



The Meridian Gate with Tiananmen Square behind it. Remember, this is only one square within the Forbidden City. It is huge!

The End

- For more information:
<http://www.dpm.org.cn/> (Official Museum Site)