

Forum on Global Human Rights Governance

Equality, Cooperation and Development:

The 30th Anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and Global Human Rights Governance

VISITING HANDBOOK

June 14-15, 2023

Beijing, China

On the afternoon of June 15, guests of the forum will be chauffeured in groups to visit some of Beijing's cultural landmarks, including Sanli River Park near Qianmen, Pigment Guild Hall, Qingyun No.23 Art Center, and Luolan Bookstore in Dongcheng District, Beijing, about a 15-minute drive from the Capital Hotel (Address: East of the Intersection of South Lucaoyuan Hutong and Qunzhi Hutong, Dongcheng District).

I. Sanli River Park near Qianmen

The formation of the "Sanli River" near Qianmen can be traced back to the Zhengtong Period of the Ming Dynasty. At that time, the residents lived along the river, and theaters and guild halls gathered there, creating a community similar to those small towns in the regions south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. However, as the population increased towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, the Sanli River had gradually been filled up and finally disappeared.

In August 2016, the Sanli River Greening Landscape Project was launched. Restoration was carried out according to the historical location and direction of the river channel, which integrated Hutong blocks and courtyard buildings with the natural environment, showcasing a poetic and picturesque scene of Hutongs, courtyards, and "water of the Sanli River's running through the streets and alleys" and "quiet courtyards". The Sanli River spans approximately 900m in total length.

The landscape construction lasted for eight months, during which nine Hutongs underwent environmental improvements. Meanwhile, the restoration of cultural relics and houses along the river channel was completed alongside the enhancement of landscape supporting facilities. In terms of greening, big trees in their original ecology in the Sanli River area were basically preserved. For instance, Chinese toon trees originally growing in the residents' courtyards and with a history of hundreds of years were conserved in the middle of several mid-lake islands. The stone millstones scattered alongside the river were also those excavated from underground during the construction of the river. All removed old bricks, door piers, wood and stone were retained if deemed useful. Moreover, the stone slabs beneath tourists' feet were all paved using old stone.



Breathtaking sceneries along the Sanli River

The Sanli River is a naturally circulating landscape river. In order to ensure that the water stays clear and transparent, various technologies such as biological activated carbon filters, ecological floating islands, aeration and oxygenation are used to remove pollutants, maintain the condition of water quality, and make sure that the water body is colorless, odorless, and free from impurities. The river also features beautiful gushing fountains in the river channel and aquatic plants such as lotus flowers growing in the river, which not only enhance the scenic view but also help

purify the water.



**A performer of traditional Chinese opera
strikes a pose at Sanli River Park**

The restoration of the Sanli River in April 2017 was a result of years of planning and management, and it serves as a way to respect the area's history and traditional culture while giving new meaning and vitality to the old Hutongs in Beijing.

II. Pigment Guild Hall

Pigment Guild Hall is located at No. 22 Qingyun Hutong, Dongcheng District. Built in the Ming Dynasty by pigment and tung oil merchants from Shanxi Province, it has a rich history of serving as a gathering place for both religious ceremonies and entertainment events. Through multiple renovations, today's Pigment Guild Hall has become one of the few remaining Jin Merchants' Guild Halls that still stands today.



An exterior view of Pigment Guild Hall

In 2009, Dongcheng District restored its historical features through construction efforts and completed renovations and acceptance in the following year. The “Guild Hall Play” premiered amid a deafening clash of gongs in October 2021, bringing the old guild hall back to life. Since then, Pigment Guild Hall has hosted a variety of performances that are “small but beautiful” and “small but sophisticated”, including Kunqu Opera, Pingju Opera, Hebei Clapper Opera, Quju Opera, Quyi (Chinese folk art forms, mainly including ballad singing, story-telling, comic dialogues, and clapper and cross talks) and acrobatics. The venue has also been the site of major cultural events and brand activities. Through the revitalization of the guild halls, Pigment Guild Hall has actively promoted characteristic catering, organized various intangible cultural heritage activities for parents and children, and offered master lectures. The result is the establishment of a vibrant “Guild Hall Play” in Dongcheng District, which has garnered public attention and high praise.

III. Qingyun No.23 Art Center

Qingyun No.23 Art Center consists of courtyards No. 23 to No. 29 of the former Qingyun Hutong. Among them, the South Courtyard (former Qingyun Hutong Courtyard No. 29) was the former residence of Peking Opera master Mei Lanfang. Across the alley from this courtyard lies the theater stage of the Pingyao Pigment Guild Hall. The Middle Courtyard was once home to the High Temple of Guandi, which was once bustling with people offering incense and known for its numerous

halls. The Hutongs and streets nearby were all named after it. The North Courtyard was occupied decades ago by an electronic tube factory that was considered a “fashionable industry” at the time. Visitors can still see the factory’s red brick buildings rising steeply from the ground.



An interior view of Pigment Guild Hall

However, these old buildings and memories have been gradually vanishing. This courtyard of important historical significance had fallen into dilapidation in the vicissitudes of history and lost its original appearance. To breathe new life into this old courtyard, Dongcheng District, with the overall protection of the old urban district as a premise, undertook restorative construction of Qingyun Hutong located on the east side of Qianmen. The architects conducted in-depth research and analysis on the process of land use change, and preserved the historical remains. They carefully selected some damaged areas of the buildings to rebuild, forming a courtyard complex that brings a renewed sense of perception towards the once flawed urban spatial texture.

Upon setting foot in the courtyard today, you may feel as if you were in a modern art museum on “Hutong Culture”. When you stand by the wall of the courtyard on the west and gaze eastward over the mingling of old brick walls from the Ming and Qing Dynasties, red brick houses built in the 1970s and 1980s, and contemporary pavilions crafted from antique bricks and tiles and glass bricks, the passage of time over a century is made evident. The old factory buildings on the north side and the side

rooms of the High Temple of Guandi have been converted into a drama rehearsal studio and small special theaters. The former residence site of Mei Lanfang extends towards the Sanli River to its south, offering scenic river views and drawing visitors inside. The creative space in the center of the courtyard and the old factory buildings on the north side perfectly connect various parts of the courtyards, ensuring that the Hutong's rich history and culture in the old urban district are well preserved for generations to come.

IV. Luolan Bookstore

As a female-themed bookstore, Luolan Bookstore offers books in four main categories including psychology, philosophy, literature, and art.



Luolan Bookstore

The bookstore hosts a variety of salons on music and literature, and organizes weekly reading parties, floral art classes, spring wine parties, and concerts on a regular basis. These activities provide a unique and colorful experience that adds vibrancy to the Pigment Guild Hall.



Floral art class