Beijing is a municipality directly under the Central Government and the capital of the PRC, with an urban population of 7.34 million. It is not only the nation’s political center, but also its cultural, scientific and educational center, and a key transportation hub. Situated on the north edge of the North China Plain, it is sheltered by chain upon chain of mountains to the west, north and east. Its southeastern part is a plain. Beijing’s temperate continental climate produces four clearly contrasted seasons: a short spring, rainy and humid summer, long and cold winter, and a very pleasant autumn. Beijing emerged as a city as far back as the Western Zhou Dynasty (11th century-770 B.C.), then known as Ji. During the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) it was the capital of the State of Yan. Ji had ever since remained a city of strategic importance and a trade center for the north for well over a thousand years. Then, in the early 10th century, it became the secondary capital of the Liao Dynasty under the name of Yanjing. Between 1115 and 1911, it served in succession as the capital of the Kin, Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, thus becoming a storehouse of Chinese culture, and leaving many superb historical legacies, such as the Tiananmen Gatetower, the symbol of Beijing as well as of China; Tiananmen Square, the largest city square in the world; the former Imperial Palace (the Forbidden City), the largest and best-preserved ancient architectural complex of the world; the Great Wall at Badaling, one of the wonders of the world; the Temple of Heaven, the largest of all existing temples in the world, where the emperors of the Ming and Qing dynasties worshiped Heaven and prayed for good harvests; the Summer Palace, the largest imperial garden in the world; the Ming Tombs, the largest imperial tomb group in the world; and Prince Gong’s Residence. Of these, the former Imperial Palace, the Great Wall and the site of the discovery of Peking Man at Zhoukoudian have been listed as world cultural heritages by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.