

Starbucks and the Forbidden City

If you heard that there is a McDonald's in Buckingham Palace or a 7-Eleven in the Castle of Fontainebleau, what would you think? Would you think that is a crazy idea? But this crazy thing happened in the Forbidden City, which was the Emperor's biggest palace group in China. There is a coffee shop called Starbucks.

According to the official website which is managed by the Chinese government, the Forbidden City was the Emperor's palace from 1420 to 1924. Twenty-four emperors lived and ruled from this palace during this 500 year span. The Forbidden City is surrounded by 10-metre high walls and a 52 metre wide moat. It covers an area of 720,000 square meters. ("A Brief History...") All Chinese people know that only the emperor, his mother, his concubines, his eunuchs, handmaids and the empress could live in the palace. Common people were forbidden to enter the city.

Today the City is open for visitors, but when tourists are roaming in the city and imagining the emperor's luxurious life, a Starbucks jumps into their eyes. What a

weird thing! The Forbidden City is a piece of cultural heritage, but Starbucks is the product of modern society and commercialism. Putting these two things together makes a mockery of this site. Instinct fashion invades everywhere and everywhen in our lives, even our history times. The Starbucks should be kicked out of the Forbidden City.

However, not all the modern things need to be far away from the City. Some things, like electricity and tap water, should obviously stay. And though candles may make the palace look the way it did in older times, it also can burn the palace easily. Starbucks, on the other hand, is not necessary at all. Some visitors may enjoy refreshments while viewing the site, but there are more tasteful ways of providing this service. A notice could be set near the ticket-selling window reminding tourists to bring drinking water. Otherwise the tea house in the city can be an instead of the coffee shop offering the rest and relaxed site. What's more, food and drinking have an important roll in Chinese culture. Tourists will surely enjoy their visit more if the City remains true to its historical roots.

The majority of Chinese agree with this. A survey by people.com.cn, one of the largest websites in China, shows that 89.2% of those surveyed said Starbucks should be taken out of the City. The permission to place a franchise there was only given 6 years ago and it was a big mistake. Economic factors should not be the only consideration. The Starbucks should be transferred to a good spot in downtown as compensation. But beyond all doubt, Starbucks should be forbidden in the Forbidden City.

Works Cited

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