ICE PALACES AND JUNGLE TRIBES

No one lives in this fabulous palace.

Nor is this a city at night. Both are phantasmagorical sculptures of translucent ice. There are scores more like it here, each competing to be more creatively beautiful and spectacular than the other. There's nothing like it on earth.

Where are we? In *Harbin*, in China's far, far north (top right corner of the map):

So far north that in terms of geography and climate, Harbin is in Siberia with winters of Siberian cold. People would come here to enjoy pleasant 70-degree summers but it was unthinkable to visit in winter. So, with a classic with-lemons-make-lemonade attitude, the city decided to convert the unthinkable into irresistible enchantment.

Thus they created *The Harbin International Snow and Ice Festival*, with the world's biggest snow sculptures by day…

And a vast Ice City filled with palaces, castles, pagodas and cathedrals lit at night from within, shimmering in brilliant colors changing every minute – breathtakingly beautiful, so entrancing it's like "Walt Disney on LSD."

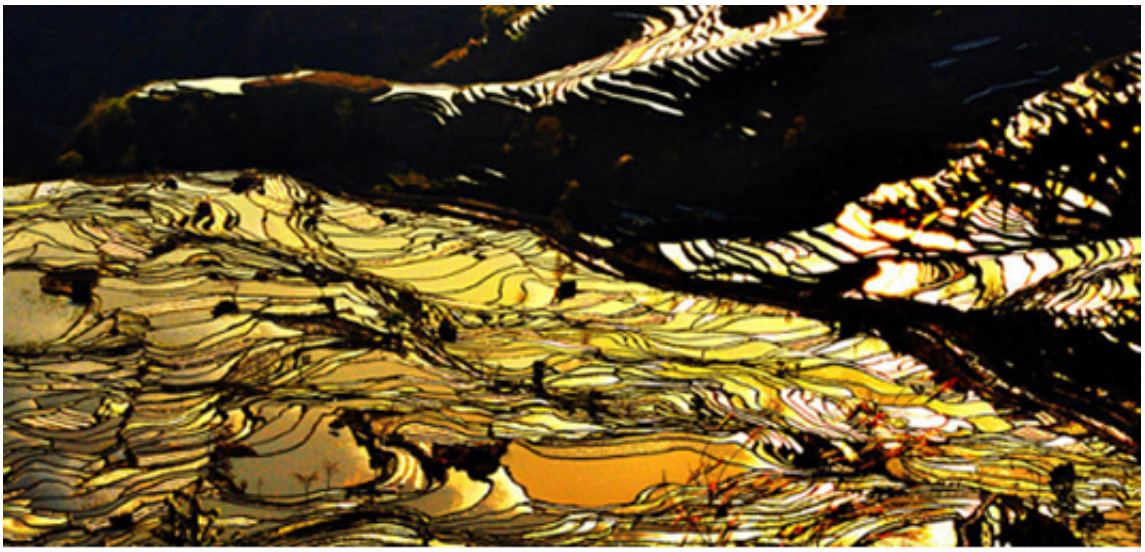
Oh, yes, Harbin also has the *world's largest tiger preserve*. The Siberian Tiger is the world's

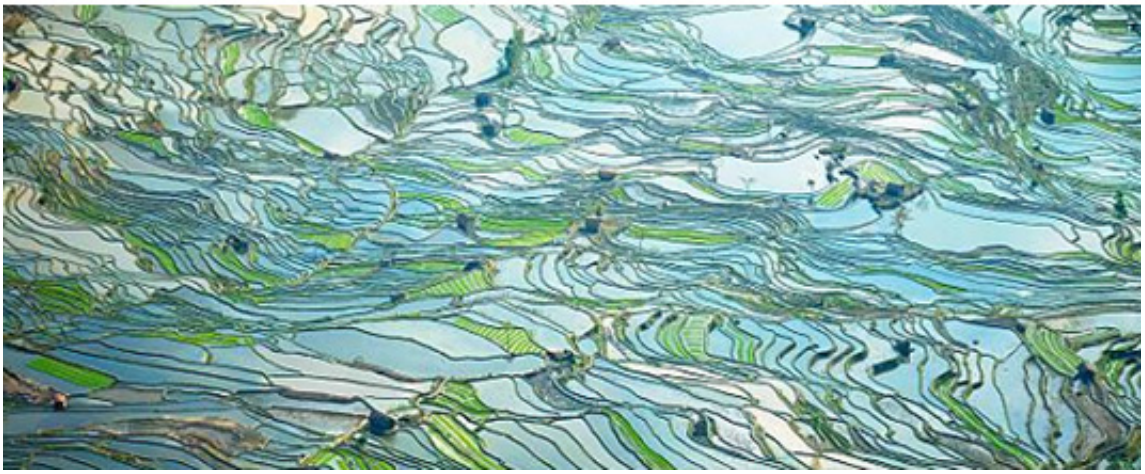
biggest cat, and there are over 800 wild Siberian Tigers here in their natural (albeit safely enclosed) habitat. Watching them being fed live game close up is a memorable sight:

After two nights of this Siberian mind-blow, you're ready for warmth, so let's head for the Land of Eternal Spring, Yunnan in China's far south…

Here we'll discover one of the greatest man-made wonders on our planet.

For 13 centuries, the Hani people have been growing rice on countless terraces cascading down the steep slopes of their mountains. The light reflecting off the water-filled terraces create an unearthly beauty. The World Heritage Site of the Hani Rice Terraces is one of the true photographic paradises of our planet. The Hani people call their terrace system The Ladder of the Sky.





The Hani are not Chinese. They are wonderfully friendly tribal people who love to dress colorfully – especially the young ladies:

Venturing to the very bottom of Yunnan near the border with Burma and Laos is a warm tropical land of wild elephants and exotic rainforest tribes.

Here we'll find *Wild Elephant Valley*, where private viewing treehouses allow you to watch wild Asian elephants in their native habitat:

In the jungle rainforest hills surrounding the valley live a welter of ancient tribal peoples such as the Dai, Aini, and Jinuo. We'll visit villages like this of the Aini…

To be welcomed by people who still live their colorfully traditional way of life…

You'd do this in deep winter, of course – the best time would be right after New Year's, when we can slip away and not be missed until business gets serious again by mid-January.

Believe it or not, *you can do all of this – and more – leaving home for China on Thursday January 3rd and be back home on Saturday January 12th*.

If you'd like to know how, *just let me know here*, and I'll get the details off to you. Let's start off 2019 having a great adventure together!