An Urban History of China

In this accessible new study, Toby Lincoln offers the first history of Chinese cities from their origins to the present. Despite being an agri cultural society for thousands of years, China had an imperial urban civilization. Over the past century, this urban civilization has been transformed into the world's largest modern urban society. Throughout their long history, Chinese cities have been shaped by interactions with those around the world, and the story of urban China is a crucial part of the history of how the world has become an urban society. Exploring the global connections of Chinese cities, the urban system, urban governance, and daily life alongside introductions to major historical debates and extracts from primary sources, this is essen tial reading for all those interested in China and in urban history.

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supportive of my work throughout, and it is to her that this book is dedicated.

Pinyin is now the standard system for Romanizing Chinese characters, and I have used it throughout this book, with the exception of a few instances where people's names are more commonly known via other systems. For ease of use I have converted some names to pinyin.

Introduction

We begin this book with a description of Hangzhou in the thirteenth century as seen by the Venetian traveller Marco Polo.

In each of the squares is held a market three days in the week, frequented by 40,000 or 50,000 persons, who bring thither for every sale every possible necessary of life ... Then there are the shambles where the larger animals are slaughtered ... Those markets make a daily display of every kind of veget ables and fruits ... Any one who should see the supply of fish in the market would suppose it impossible that such a quantity could even be sold ... All the ten market places are encompassed by lofty houses, and below these are shops where all sorts of crafts are carried on, and all sorts of wares are on sale ... All along the main street that we have spoken of, as running from end to end of the city, both sides are lined with houses and great palaces and the gardens pertaining to them, whilst in the intervals are the houses of trades men engaged in their different crafts ... The houses of the citizens are well built and elaborately finished; and the delight they take in decoration, in painting and in architecture, leads them to spend in this way amounts of money that would astonish you.[1]

We continue with a glimpse of the Shanghai nightscape at the start of the third millennium.

Standing on the roof, we looked at the silhouettes of the buildings lit up by the streetlights on both sides of the Huangpu River, especially the Oriental Pearl TV Tower, Asia's tallest. Its long, long steel column pierces the sky, proof of the city's phallic worship. The ferries, the waves, the night dark grass, the dazzling neon lights, and incredible structures all these signs of material prosperity are aphrodisiacs the city uses to intoxicate itself. They have nothing to do with us, the people who live among them. A car accident or a disease can kill us, but the city's prosperous, invincible silhouette is like a planet, a perpetual motion, eternal.[2]

[1] Henry Yule (trans and ed.), *The Book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian Concerning the Kingdoms and Marvels of the East, Vol. II* (London: John Murray, 1903), 201 4.
[2] Wei Hui (Bruce Humes trans.), *Shanghai Baby* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2001), 14 15.

These descriptions of two Chinese cities show how vibrant urban life has been throughout history. In this book, I tell the story of how China's imperial urban civilization emerged, and how it was transformed into what is now the world's largest modern urban society. Despite being an agricultural empire for more than 2,000 years with the majority of people living in the countryside, many Chinese lived in cities, where they constructed many different types of buildings from large palaces and temples to small houses and gardens. They set up businesses, mingled in markets, visited friends, drank in taverns, and produced poems and paintings depicting their lives. This was China's urban civilization. Then, beginning sometime in the nineteenth century, a combination of the global forces of industrial capitalism and imperialism, together with a succession of states that were committed to the development of cities, caused an increase in the rate of urbanization. The number of people moving from the countryside to the city really took off in the final decades of the twentieth century. Now there are more Chinese people living in the city than in the countryside, which makes it the world's largest urban society.

This book is a history of cities on mainland China, and as such does not deal very much with Hong Kong, Macau, or Taiwan. Taiwan was part of the international maritime network that interacted with the mainland for hundreds of years, but it was only sporadically part of the Chinese empire. Moreover, its modern history has diverged from that of the rest of China. It was a Japanese colony from 1895 until 1945, and since 1949, it has not been ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Its divergent urban history, reflecting indigenous Taiwanese, Japanese, and more recently mainland Chinese influences, is now beginning to be told in its own right. Both Hong Kong and Macau, although now part of the People's Republic of China (PRC), were established as colonies and so had different governments until very recently.[3]

In the rest of this introduction, I ask three questions. What is a city? What is urban history? What is Chinese urban history? I then conclude with some recommendations for students and teachers on how to use this book.

What Is a City?

This is at once a very easy and a very difficult question to answer. We all know when we are in a city. Buildings are taller and more closely packed

[3] On Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, see, for example, John Carroll, *A Concise History of Hong Kong* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); C. X. George Wei, *Macao: The Formation of a Global City* (London: Routledge, 2013); Joseph Allen, *Taipei: City of Displacements* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

together, more people are crushed together in less space, and there is more noise by day and light by night. We also know when we are in a large city as opposed to a small one. Skyscrapers, subway systems, airports, and endless vistas of apartment blocks are some of the physical signs that alert us that we are in a large urban space. As large numbers of people come together, their relationships become ever more complex, and complexity is another way of thinking about what a city is. Lewis Mumford, one of the first people to theorize about cities, recognized this:

> The essential physical means of a city's existence are the fixed site, the durable shelter, the permanent facilities for assembly, interchange, and storage; the essen tial social means are the division of labor, which serves not merely the economic life but also the cultural process. The city in its complete sense, then, is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theater of social action, and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity. The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater.[4]

Mumford views the city first and foremost as a physical space, and it is in that physical space that people interact with each other not only to satisfy their basic economic needs to survive, but also to channel their creative urges to produce urban culture.

Similarly, we can think of cities as serving economic, social, political, defensive, and cultural functions for their human residents. To do this, they need resources to sustain themselves over time. These include food, water, lots of different types of raw materials, and people. The supply of these resources connects a city to its immediate hinterland in the countryside, and through trade to other cities, sometimes very far away. This support system works best during periods of stability, and financial, legal, and political systems have developed to ensure that resources can flow to and from the city, and that its people can live in relative safety. Such systems, together with the flows of resources that sustain cities, often break down during periods of instability caused by war, drought, famine, or flood. Finally, cities need sociocultural belief systems, which help their residents to live closely together in communities and provide them with a rich cultural life.[5]

To summarize, cities are complex spaces fulfilling a variety of functions for their human residents, sustained by multiple flows of resources, and connected to the outside world. However, they do not look and feel the same to everyone living in them. A person's experience of a city differs

[4] Quoted in Steve Pile, 'What Is a City?', in Doreen Massey, John Allen, and Steve Pile, eds., *City Worlds* (London: Routledge, 1999), 16.

[5] Penelop J. Corfield, 'Conclusion: Cities in Time', in Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 828.

depending on a range of factors, including but not limited to age, gender, ethnicity, social status, income, nationality, education, and, perhaps most importantly, personality type and mood on any particular day. You know this yourself. If it's raining, you've had a long, hard day, and you are tired, you might choose to stay at home rather than go out with friends, thus choosing one nightlife experience over another. If it's your birthday, it's sunny, you took the afternoon off work or school, and you've booked a table in a restaurant or a booth in a club, you'll have another nightlife experience of the city. It's also easy to imagine the ways in which ethnicity, gender, income, religion, nationality, age, and many other factors influence how a particular birthday celebration might play out in urban space, and when we think that on any given night in thousands of cities around the world, there are millions of birthday celebrations, we begin to understand why Mumford chose to describe cities as theatre.

What Is Urban History?

The study of urban history is nothing less than the study of the totality of what makes up a city. 'The urban historian considers the multiple variables that together constitute the city as both a historicized subject and an object for historical study. The city is thus accorded an agency in its own construction and synthesis; its spaces, both imagined and real, shape, structure and represent the human relationships that take place within its borders.'[6] To explain this, it is worthwhile telling briefly the history of the study of urban history, since it will help us to contextualize how historians have studied the history of cities in China.

Although people had written about cities for many years, they became the object of study as scholars sought to solve some of the problems created by the Industrial Revolution. Urban history was initially the preserve of sociologists like Max Weber, Georg Simmel, and Walter Benjamin. They saw the city in functional terms and argued that industrialization had given rise to a new kind of urban condition. Weber in particular was interested in how social relations in Western cities had caused historical change. In the 1920s and 1930s, Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, and Louis Wirth were at the heart of the Chicago school of urban sociology that saw the city as a laboratory in which to study human society. By the mid-twentieth century, writers such as Lewis Mumford and Jane Jacobs had not only combined an historical and social analysis of the city, but were arguing that urban social life and culture could not be reduced to the models of the urban planners. At the same time, urban

[6] Shane Ewan, *What Is Urban History?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 11 12.

historians began to focus on studying cities from the bottom up. In England, the father of urban history is H. J. Dyos, whose history of the suburb of Camberwell during the Victorian era explained how large historical processes such as industrialization and migration affected the everyday lives of the inhabitants of this part of London. It was Dyos, as much as any other scholar in the West, who established the importance of studying the city through the combination of different approaches to achieve a holistic understanding.[7]

The study of the history of cities now reflects their multifaceted nature and combines all the methodologies and perspectives that historians have developed to bring as much of the past world to life as the sources allow. The city now speaks to us with a cacophony of voices from various social strata, ethnicities, genders, ages, and even non-human actors such as animals and plants. The result is that we now have textured understandings of many cities, although there are others where far more work remains to be done. At the same time, it is perhaps harder than ever to distinguish urban history from histories of class, gender, consumption, the environment, childhood, and all the other elements of the past that we study.

The problem of distinguishing urban history from other types of history is something that was recognized by its earliest practitioners. Dyos asked how the historical study of the city should be related to other processes such as industrialization or population growth. In a similar vein, Charles Tilly argued that urban historians should address large questions such as the impact of the development of capitalism, the rise of nation states, and technological change on the lives of individuals, and in doing so challenged them to stop thinking of cities as either merely undifferentiated sites within wider processes or to only explore them as bounded entities, untouched by the world outside.[8] The urban theorist Henri Lefebvre offered this solution to the problem.

> The city always had relations with society as a whole, with its constituting elements (countryside and agriculture, offensive and defensive force, political power, States, etc.), and with its history. It changes when society as a whole changes. Yet, the city's transformations are not the passive outcomes of changes in the social whole. The city also depends as essentially on relations of immediacy, of direct relations between persons and groups which make up society (families, organized bodies, crafts and guilds etc.).[9]

[7] Ibid., 12 22.

[8] H. J. Dyos, 'Agenda for Urban Historians', in H. J. Dyos, ed., *The Study of Urban History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), 9; Charles Tilly, 'What Good Is Urban History?', *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 22, no. 6 (1 September 1996), 705.

[9] Henri Lefebvre, 'The Specificity of the City', in Henri Lefebvre (Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas trans.), *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 101.

A fundamental question that urban historians must grapple with is how far to limit their studies to what happens merely within one or several cities, or to reach out into society as a whole and relate their work to larger historical processes. The answer for most, I suspect, lies in the type of history they wish to write. Histories of architecture or urban form are perhaps the most likely to be concerned with what happens within the city, although there are links to histories of technological change or ideas. Urban history also lends itself to microhistories, of communities, streets, houses, and individuals, but here also there are connections to larger stories, such as the rise of new social classes or social groups, histories of gender, science, medicine, and healthcare. Then there are the ways in which cities serve as case studies for research that is concerned primarily with global processes, such as migration, industrialization, commercialization, state formation and transformation, war, and environmental change. Cities therefore remain vibrant sites for the study of the past, and this is just as true of China as it is of any other part of the world.

What Is Urban History in China?

The first specifically urban history of China was written in 1926 by prominent reformer and intellectual Liang Qichao. During the 1950s and early 1960s, advances in Chinese archaeology saw work on the urban form of ancient cities, particularly imperial capitals such as Chang'an and Luoyang. Meanwhile, Liang Sicheng, the son of Liang Qichao, wrote the first histories of Chinese architecture. Urban history in China really took off in the 1980s, a response to the increasing pace of urbanization. By the new millennium, articles on urban history were regularly appearing in the major Chinese journals, and journals such as *Shilin* (*Historical Review*) and *Chengshi shi yanjiu* (*Studies in Urban History*) either had articles on urban history in each issue or were devoted to the topic. At the same time, major research centres emerged. These are the Shanghai and Tianjin academies of social sciences, Sichuan University in Chengdu, and more recently Hangzhou and Shanghai normal universities. The study of urban history outside China has not been focused on an institution or a journal. Research has appeared in all the major journals that regularly publish on China as well as *Urban History* and the *Journal of Urban History*. Since the 1980s, scholars in China, Taiwan, Japan, and the West have drawn on each other's work to explain the growth of Chinese cities. They meet at international conferences and have established organizations such as

the Urban China Research Network or more recently the Global Urban History Project.[10]

The study of the history of Chinese cities is clearly in good health. A full historiography of the field is yet to be written, and given the amount of material to read in several languages, would most likely have to be a collaborative effort. However, it is possible to summarize some of the main debates, and in doing so, I also describe how historians have traced the emergence of China's urban civilization and its development into a modern urban society.

Urban Civilization

Studies of imperial Chinese urban history have until quite recently had at their heart a tension between the idea that cities had no distinct urban identity or community and that the political function of cities was dominant, which made them unique in the global history of the premodern era. This springs from Weber's analysis of Chinese cities as lacking law, municipal control over administration, and communities such as guilds that were autonomous from the state. He argued these features were key characteristics of European cities that emerged during the early modern period, and that they were not to be found in China or anywhere else for that matter.[11] This idea of a lack of a distinct urban identity was taken up by Frederick Mote, one of the first generation of scholars outside China to study its urban history. Granted, the Chinese city was multifunctional. 'The administrative and the economic functions were only the most obvious ones; those of the military, of transport and communication, of religion, of cultural life, of intellectual activities, and of education were also part of the Chinese urban scene.'[12] However, in attempting to work out what might be distinctive about the Chinese city, Mote follows Weber.

> The Chinese city had no 'civic monuments': furthermore it had no 'citizens', and it possessed no corporate identity, no government distinct from that of the surrounding countryside. It had no need of a town hall as 'a place of assembly where citizens could exercise their civil rights'. It did not defend itself; its defenses

[10] 熊月之Xiong Yuezhi and 张生Zhang Sheng, '中国城市史研究综述 Zhongguo chengshi shi yanjiu zongshu (1986 2006) (Review of Studies in Chinese Urban History)', 史林 *Shilin* (*Historical Review*) 1 (2008), 21 4; http://mumford.albany.edu/chinanet/index.html; www.globalurbanhistory.org/.

[11] Max Weber (Don Martingdale and Gertrude Neuwirth trans.), *The City* (New York: Free Press, 1958), 81 3.

[12] F. W. Mote, 'The Transformation of Nanking, 1350 1400', in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1977), 110.

were built by the authority of the central government, to which all alike were subservient, and as part of the nationwide defense system.[13]

Mote does more than deny an autonomous political identity to Chinese cities. He argues that there was no urban culture distinct from the countryside as well. He famously summed this up in a quote about urban form. 'In these essentials of design, in materials used, and in style and ornamentation, Chinese urban structures were indistinguishable from rural structures.'[14] These ideas that Chinese cities are unique during the imperial era because they are dominated by their political function while at the same time lacking a distinct autonomous political identity separate from the central state, or a cultural identity that distinguishes them from the surrounding countryside, have remained remarkably persistent.[15] They all take the European course of urban history as the norm and judge Chinese cities by this standard. Urban history is not alone in this, since until recently studies of imperial China were dogged by such questions as why did it fail to industrialize and why did it not develop representative democracy?

While historians of China sought to emphasize uniqueness, urban historians were seeking similarity. In his work on ancient cities, Gordon Childe argued there were ten characteristics common to cities across the world: large size and population, workers not engaged in full-time food production, taxation of agricultural surplus, monumental public buildings, a ruling class, writing, counting systems, an artisan class, the import of scarce materials, and a political and economic community. Moving on from this, Trigger found other similarities such as a tendency for leaders to accumulate wealth and the spending of vast sums on temples and other artefacts connected to religion. However, there were also differences created by specific local conditions, such as agricultural practices and population density. More recently, Smith has argued that in cities with strong states, there was less commercial activity and vice versa.[16]

These studies all suggest that there was nothing unique about Chinese imperial cities, but that does not mean that the course of urban history in China is exactly the same as that the world over. Political functions were certainly important in ancient Chinese cities. One of the characters for *city*, 城 *cheng*, means wall, and this reflects the importance of city walls.

[13] Ibid., 114. [14] Ibid., 115.

[15] Victor Sit, *Chinese City and Urbanism: Evolution and Development* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), X XI.

[16] David L. Stone, 'Economy', in Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 131 2; Mario Liverani, 'Power and Citizenship', in Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 165.

During the early imperial period, Chinese urban form, particularly that of the capital city, came to symbolize the cosmos with the emperor at the centre. The second character in the word *city*, 市 *shi*, means market, and this reflects the fact that cities had commercial functions. There is general agreement that these became more important during the Tang and Song Dynasties, when Chinese economic development led to the emergence of large commercial cities filled with bustling street markets in sprawling suburbs outside the walls. This is in part because of the work of Chinese scholars in the 1980s, who drew on ideas first expressed by G. William Skinner about the development of the Chinese urban system into distinct regional economies. Walls around and within cities continued to symbolize their place in the central imperial administrative bureaucracy, but in many, this political function was now superseded by their economic importance. At the same time, informal governance mechanisms developed apart from the official bureaucracy. Religious institutions such as Buddhist and Daoist monasteries took on some of the responsibility for aid during times of crisis, and Chinese guilds played an increasingly important role in governing many aspects of urban life. They constructed or used public spaces such as temples and teahouses, and this allowed people to gather to solve problems, debate pressing issues of the day, and create and disseminate urban culture. By the late imperial period, people living in cities were producing paintings, poetry, and prose that described architecture, street life, and religious festivals, waxed lyrical on the pleasures and dangers of travelling to and between cities, and advocated for connoisseurship of luxury commodities.[17]

This is nothing less than an urban civilization. It is a civilization that does not privilege any one urban function across all Chinese cities, although individual cities may have been predominantly political, economic, religious, defensive, or cultural. It is a civilization that changed over time, and it is a civilization that emerged in part because of China's interaction with other parts of the world, and it bears the imprint of these global links. It is a civilization which shares many similarities with that in other countries, but also has differences. One is the importance of the state in Chinese cities, which after all did not develop an official autonomous government, although there were plenty of ways in which urban space was managed according to the unique characteristics of that city. Kristin Stapleton puts it like this:

[17] N. Steinhardt, 'China', in Peter Clark, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 120 1; Xiong and Zheng, 'Zhongguo chengshi shi yanjiu zongshu', 25 30; Liu Haiyan and Kristin Stapleton, 'Chinese Urban History: State of the Field', *China Information*, Vol. 20, no. 3 (1 November 2006), 391 2, 397 8, 405.

Chinese urban history is characterized, in administrative theory and often in practice, by an unusually well integrated model of multiple scales of regulation that is well suited to the age of metropolitan expansion. Although the national government creates a basic framework that outlines the responsibilities and powers of units at smaller scales, much community building and economic development is the product of negotiation between multiple groups, including urban neighbourhoods, private and state managed enterprises, municipal and provincial governments, and agencies with even larger geographic jurisdictions, such as river conservancies and the military.[18]

A second difference concerns that way that urban culture found its expression in a rural empire. As Fei Siyen notes, 'the preponderant attention to the countryside, even in the extreme case of the Ming, did not prohibit the emergence of cultural practices expressing sentiments and needs unique to urban environments; it was only that they were registered through the same vocabularies across the urban-rural division.'[19]

Urban Modernity

One of the consequences of seeing Chinese imperial cities as unique was that their modern transformation was explained by the impact of foreign imperialism, and this has also influenced scholars in China, some of whom argue that it ushered in a century of national humiliation.[20] Historians across the world now tend to agree that urban modernity in China was the result of both foreign interactions and indigenous factors, and some argue that there were antecedents to modernity reaching as far back as the Tang and Song Dynasties. Moreover, while it remains important to point to the cruelties of foreign imperialism in China, just as it does anywhere else in the world, the effects of Sino-foreign interactions, which must include China's war with Japan from 1937 to 1945 and the influence of the USSR after 1949, are too complicated to either uncritically praise or condemn.

Rapid urbanization in the Reform Era helped to kick-start the study of urban modernity in the 1990s, when access to new sources coincided with the emergence of historical approaches such as cultural and gender history that allowed historians to understand more about different communities in Chinese cities. A bibliography of Western language scholarship

[18] Kristin Stapleton, 'In Search of Frameworks for Productive Comparison of Cities in World History', *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (2016), 243.
[19] Fei Siyen, *Negotiating Urban Space Urbanization and Late Ming Nanjing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2010), 25.
[20] Fei Siyen, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 13; Xiong and Zheng, 'Zhongguo chengshi shi yanjiu zongshu', 31.

published in the *Journal of Urban History* helps us to understand some of the constituent parts of urban modernity in China. There has been work on urban industrialization, with books on the Chinese working class linked to those of the Communist Revolution. Scholars have looked at the emergence of mass consumerism in places like Nanjing Road in Shanghai. There are works that explore new innovations in urban planning, together with the influence of international architectural and planning trends. These now include studies of the influence of the USSR on Chinese cities after 1949. Other scholars have studied urban governance, tracing the emergence of autonomous municipal institutions across the country. Such work explains how new governments in China in the twentieth century worked with industrialists or criminal gangs to govern cities. It is connected to research on social institutions such as charities and guilds, which continued to play an important part in many people's lives. One of the most positive developments in the study of Chinese urban history, but particularly in these emerging modern cities, is the scholarship on different communities. So we now know much about workers, beggars, the middle class, women, and even children. Finally, there is a wealth of scholarship on all types of urban culture, which includes the new urban literatures of Beijing and Shanghai, cinema, music and dancing, the teahouse, and food.[21]

The scholarship on how a modern urban society has been built on the foundations of Chinese imperial urban civilization suggests that rather than seeking to define urban modernity, we should search for some of its most important constituent parts. In so doing, we can begin to explain how and why Chinese cities have become modern. An underlying cause was the expansion of global industrial capitalism into China. This caused rural-to-urban migration and the rise of large cities and more recently megacity regions. It also set the rhythm of life for these migrants. They no-longer woke and slept with the sun, but with the factory whistles that called them to work in the morning, marked the time when they ate, and announced the end of the long working day. After 1949, factory life for many urban residents became almost their whole life, and it was in factories that they participated in Maoist political campaigns. More recently, migrants have been the largely forgotten heroes of Chinese urbanization. Global industrial capitalism has also created the consumer culture that has led to an aspirational urban lifestyle, with ideas of style and taste now very much created by international brands.

[21] Shi Mingzheng, 'Secondary Sources in Chinese Urban History: A Topical Bibliography', *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 27, no. 1 (November 2000), 114 24.

Perhaps the most innovative aspect of urban modernity for China was the rise of municipal governments with councils and mayors. National and regional bureaucracies never left the urban stage, but the municipality as both an institution and an idea burst onto the scene and remains an important scale on which governance works in China. At the same time, new organizations such as charities, chambers of commerce, and more recently residents' committees have negotiated complicated power relationships with the official bureaucracy to ensure that cities continue to function. Cities are now planned according to national standards and laws, and they have evolved to incorporate many ideas from around the world on urban design. As Chinese cities now accommodate more people than anywhere else on the planet, officials, planners, and architects have sought to build them to improve the lives of their citizens, even though they are often thwarted by the pursuit of profit that is built into the urban land system.

Urban modernity in China also manifested itself in writing about the city in a new vernacular, and this new urban style escaped the page and became inscribed onto the architecture of new buildings, which in the case of Shanghai developed its own unique art deco style. People across China now expressed their urban identity in multiple new ways, and although this became somewhat constrained during the Maoist Period, Chinese cities have found their modern urban identity in the Reform Period. While this reaches outwards to borrow and adapt global culture, it also reaches into the long past of China's urban civilization. Shanghai relies on its colonial past to project its contemporary globality, while Luoyang reconstructs its city walls and harks back to the era when Wu Zetian, China's only female emperor, made it her capital.

Just as the idea of the city does not lend itself to a simple definition, so urban modernity in China defies a simple analysis. It is perhaps possible to capture it in an emotion, though, and that is that life in the city is somehow better than that in the countryside. To be sure, this is not the same for everyone, and in every country there have always been people who prefer a quiet rural life over a hectic urban one. However, over the past 100 years or so, the call of the city in China has been strong for policymakers and for people. This is expressed succinctly in the phrase for the 2010 Shanghai expo, 城市让生活更美好 *chengshi rang shenghuo geng meihao*, translated by the organizers as 'better city, better life'. A more literal translation should actually be 'the city makes life even better,' and this points to how for the majority of people in China, and certainly for the country's elites, being in a city has been the foundation of material, social, political, and cultural improvement in the modern era.

The Organization of This Book

This book has been written for students, scholars, and others who are interested in Chinese urban history. It tells the story of how Chinese imperial civilization developed into the world's largest modern urban society, and also introduces urban history to those who may not be familiar with it.

To help with this, each chapter is divided into three parts. The first part describes the urban system, the second part urban form and governance, and the final part urban culture and daily life. Broadly speaking, each section deals with the following themes. The first section analyses urban economies, how these are connected through trade, and how together cities make up an urban system. In each chapter, I attempt to estimate the total urban population of China, and describe some of the largest cities in the country. The second section explores how Chinese cities were designed and constructed. It describes similarities and differences in Chinese urban form across the country, and maps changing architectural developments. I then explain how Chinese cities were governed by both state and private organizations. The final section looks at how people living in cities reflected on their distinctive urban culture through writing, painting, photography, or film. These sources often provide glimpses into the daily lives of urban residents, and I describe how different social classes and genders experienced the city.

The tripartite division of the chapters in this book introduces the main elements of urban history: a city's economy, politics, society, and culture. This also offers different ways to use the book for students and teachers. For those teaching or taking classes in either Chinese urban history or urban history more generally, the book can be used in conjunction with other readings or as a standalone textbook. Sections on different time periods can also be used in classes where they are relevant. It is my hope that students will find both the arguments in each chapter and the primary source material useful for essays and dissertations on different topics. I also hope that readers who are not primarily interested in urban history may find sections of the books useful. For example, students of historical geography may wish to only read the first section of each chapter, while those studying the built environment might want to focus on the second section. Finally, for readers whose primary focus is contemporary cities, and who may feel that studying the planning of Han Dynasty Chang'an or the vibrant commercial spaces of Song Dynasty Hangzhou has little direct relevance to them, I say this. Chinese cities are changing so rapidly, and modern urban society is certainly very different from societies of yesteryear. However, it has elements that have existed for centuries. I believe

that this historical perspective, as with so much else, can throw new light on contemporary issues. For if a problem has been experienced before in a certain part of the world, then that experience, no matter how long ago, may offer a clue to a solution that a mere focus on contemporary methods might miss. After all, if in seeking to provide a better life for those in our urban society we constantly search for examples from other countries, we can also look to the past, which as the old adage has it, is also another country of a sort.

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1 The Emergence of China's Imperial Urban Civilization (Antiquity to 220 CE)

Introduction

People have been living in the territory that is now China for more than 1 million years, but the first settlements date from around 6000 BCE. The Shang Dynasty from around 1600 to 1050 BCE is the first dynasty for which written evidence matching the archaeological record exists. It was replaced by the Western Zhou in 1045 BCE, which was succeeded by the Eastern Zhou in 771 BCE, which in turn is divided into the Spring and Autumn and then the Warring States Periods. As the name suggests, the Warring States Period was characterized by multiple states competing for domination, and it was out of this that the first imperial dynasty, the Qin, emerged in 221 BCE. This was a short-lived dynasty, and was replaced by the Western Han in 206 BCE, with its capital in Chang'an. Luoyang became the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty in 25 CE, and this fell two centuries later. Over this long period, many of the characteristics that were to define Chinese imperial urban civilization emerged.

The urban system developed from a loosely linked collection of cities held together by the personal power of the king into an imperial network with the main capital, Chang'an, as the political, economic, and cultural centre. During the Western Han Dynasty, this city had a population of more than 1 million people, and it was the largest city in the ancient world. Although there were settlements across China, most of the largest cities in the urban system were on the central plains around Luoyang and Xi'an. During the Qin and Han Dynasties, roads and waterways connected the cities of the empire, allowing goods and people to flow safely. Meanwhile, trading routes to the west linked China to central Asia and beyond, and it was along these that new religions such as Buddhism and Daoism began to influence Chinese thought.

From their origins as small settlements with earthen walls, Chinese cities developed according to prescribed plans that linked imperial power on earth with divine power in heaven. These were set out in the *Record of*

Investigation of Crafts (*Kaogongji*), an ancient Chinese text. Cities were laid out according to strict plans that designated where walls and gates should be, and although urban form changed over time, these early plans remained influential throughout the imperial period. Meanwhile, Chinese architecture developed some distinctive styles, such as the curved roof, that became common in later centuries. At first China was ruled by kings, and in common with other cities around the world, many of the largest urban buildings were palaces and temples. This was also the case after the emergence of the empire, which is conventionally dated to 221 BCE when the Qin ruler completed his conquest of rival states and took the title of emperor for himself. Chinese cities became nodes in a centralized bureaucracy that reached out and down from the capital to the county at the local level. This meant that there was no official autonomous municipal government, although in Chang'an and other capital cities, there were officials who dealt with policing and other aspects of urban management.

Chinese cities developed a complex urban culture. Chinese kings and later emperors lived out their lives largely safe from public view. They emerged to conduct rituals, such as sacrifices to ancestors and gods, and these connected the physical spaces of the capital cities to the empire as a whole. As the imperial bureaucracy developed, it became staffed by an administrative elite organized in a complex system of ranks, who studied classical texts and took exams to gain jobs in government. Merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans traded goods within and between cities and set up a wide variety of businesses, many of which are described in detail in the *Kaogongji*. Markets in Chang'an and other Chinese capitals were described in the first poetry to discuss urban life in detail, which also provides a window into the lives of emperors and their families.

Urban System

Kingdoms and Early States: Neolithic China to the Western Zhou

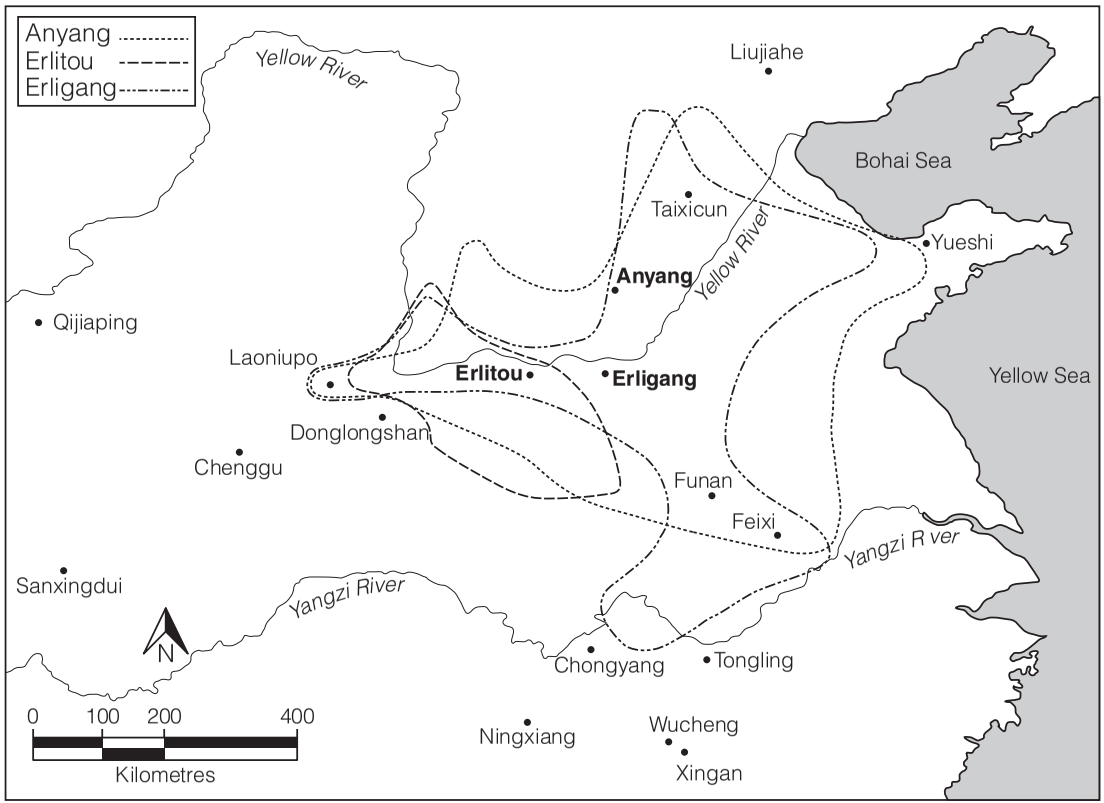
Pottery dating from 20000 to 10000 BCE is among the earliest evidence of Chinese settlements. Some of these settlements developed into the Yangshao Culture, lasting from 5000 to 3000 BCE. Many were located along the Yellow River and its tributaries in Henan, and further east close to present-day Xi'an. Other settlements emerged in Shandong, in the middle Yangzi region in Hunan, in the Lower Yangzi Delta, and in Guangdong and Guangxi in south China. By the late Yangshao period, the largest settlements along the Yellow River had populations of as many as 1,000 people, and the discovery of similar pottery and jade artefacts

proves that there must have been frequent exchange between them. Between 3000 and 2000 BCE, Yangshao Culture was replaced by Longshan Culture, which is characterized by the wide diffusion of black or grey patterned pottery. Walled settlements were built along both the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers, and humans also appeared near present-day Chengdu. The best excavated site is Taosi in Shanxi, which has walls that are up to 10 m wide, enclosing an area of 280 ha, which is three times as large as most of the other fifty-four sites that have been excavated in this region.[1]

The period between the end of Longshan Culture and the beginning of the Shang Dynasty marks the emergence of the region known as *guanzhong* (the central plains) along the Yellow River as the centre of China's ancient urban civilization. Erlitou, discovered in 1959 by Chinese archaeologists who had gone in search of evidence for the Xia Dynasty, believed by some to be the first Chinese dynasty, is situated 20 km to the east of present-day Luoyang. Covering an area of 500 ha, it was occupied from *c.*1900 BCE to *c.*1500 BCE. Peak population estimates range from 18,000 to 30,000 people, and there were several smaller settlements within a radius of 25 km.

The Shang Dynasty lasted from around 1600 to 1050 BCE, and is divided into three phases (see Map 1.1). The cities of Yanshi, just 5 km from Erlitou, and Zhengzhou, 90 km to the east, are most closely identified with the first phase. Erligang is the name of an excavation site in Zhengzhou, and so the early Shang Dynasty is also referred to as Erligang Culture. Zhengzhou was the larger of the two cities, and Yanshi probably served as a smaller regional centre. They were at the apex of an urban network comprising a densely settled core in northern Henan with other fortified sites such as Dongxiafeng and Nanguan to the east in Shanxi, and Panlongcheng in the middle Yangzi Valley in Hubei, which was a source of copper for the bronze foundries of Erlitou and Erligang. Anyang, the last capital of the Shang, lies along the Anyang River. The city covered a large area with multiple smaller settlements surrounding it. Beyond this, regional centres were closely connected to the capital. For example, the Taixi community north of Anyang in Hebei may have produced alcohol for the royal court, while oracle bones, pieces of ox bone, and turtle shell used for divining such things as the weather or the fortunes of the royal family, discovered in Daxinzhuang, are testament to the spread of literacy. The resources required to build and supply Yanshi,

[1] Gideon Shelach, *The Archaeology of Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 49 60, 70 1, 99 102, 103 6, 123 5, 130 2; Li Feng, *Early China: A Social and Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 18, 22 5, 30 2.



Map 1.1 Cultures of the Shang Period (1700–1050 BCE)

Zhengzhou, and Anyang included manpower, bones for tools, copper for bronze, grain, and ritual or luxury objects such as cowrie and turtle shells. They were probably transported along rivers, but by this time long-distance road transport existed, and Panlongcheng was a transport hub along an ancient road that stretched from the north to a crossing over the middle Yangzi River.[2]

Historical debates on the development of China's urban system up to the Shang Dynasty concern the point at which a state with a recognizably Chinese culture emerged. K. C. Chang's thesis of a Chinese interaction sphere, which posits that settlements emerged in multiple places independently and acquired similar characteristics through diffusion of artefacts such as pottery and jade, has superseded the earlier idea that Chinese culture spread out from its origins along the Yellow River. Some scholars identify Taosi and Wangchenggang in the Longshan Period as capitals, perhaps of city states.[3] Scholars are on firmer ground when it comes to determining whether Erlitou was a state, in part because there is evidence of long-term movement of salt and copper ore, which required a high level of organization that only a state could provide. However, there is still substantial debate about whether Erlitou was the capital of the Xia Dynasty. Certainly texts from later periods, including from the pen of the famous Han Dynasty historian Sima Qian, attest to the existence of the Xia Dynasty at the same time and in the same region in which the archaeological evidence proves that a state existed. However, the lack of textual evidence from Erlitou makes it impossible to prove whether it was the capital of the Xia Dynasty.[4]

The existence of oracle bones means that historians are confident that Anyang was the capital city of the Shang Dynasty. However, there is still some debate as to how the Shang government worked. Some see the Shang as a territorial state characterized by a large urban centre at the core, which dominated a periphery that provided it with goods and services. However, it is probably better not to think of the Shang in these terms. Shang kings may have spent up to half of their time travelling outside Anyang, making alliances with regional rulers. Independent Bronze Age states stood as far afield as Gansu and south of the Yangzi River, many of which were enemies of the Shang. Additionally, Sanxingdui on the Chengdu plain, which was less likely to have had

[2] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 167, 191 3, 198 9, 222 3; Li Feng, *Early China*, 43, 45 8, 56 60, 66 76, 83 4.
[3] Li Feng, *Early China*, 18 20, 37 40; Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 150 4; Sit, *Chinese City and Urbanism*, 39.
[4] Li Feng, *Early China*, 48 53.

connections with the Shang, also displays evidence of Bronze Age technology.[5]

The Zhou Dynasty is divided into two eras, the Western Zhou characterized by strong rulers who asserted authority over a wide area, and the Eastern Zhou, when powerful regional rulers paid the Zhou kings lip service but fought among themselves. The Zhou people emerged in the Wei River Valley near Xi'an, and in 1059, King Wen probably saw the rare conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus, and Mercury as a sign that his invasion of Shang would be successful. If so, his prediction proved to be correct, and within a few years, King Wen's successors had conquered the remaining Shang lands, building five royal cities in the process. They were Feng and Hao, with Qiyi, also known as Zhou, to the west. Zheng, the ancestral home, was supposedly further to the west, and Pang was to the east. Zhou kings and relatives of the royal family founded regional states, most of them on former Shang sites or along major transport routes. Their establishment involved the transfer of everything a new ruler needed, including land, people, weapons, and produce.[6] Many of these states were military strongholds, and the relatives of the king formed an armed nobility that presided over a servile peasantry. This system worked well while the Zhou state was expanding, but throughout the ninth century BCE, gifts of land decreased in size, and conflict between rulers became more common. In 771, the defeat of the Zhou and the transfer of the capital to Chengzhou in the east left these small fiefs as independent states.[7]

During the Spring and Autumn Period, there may have up to 200 states of real political importance, but there were probably also hundreds of smaller fortified towns. One estimate gives 600 cities in thirty-five different states.[8] They created alliances that recognized a ruler of one of the larger states as leader. The Zhou king gave him the title of hegemon and charged him with protecting the Zhou realm, leaving the king as a ritual figurehead of power. The states in the Zhou heartland near Luoyang consisted of a walled city with a small hinterland, and most deserve the title city states. Mencius notes that 100 li (*c.*30 miles) per side was the minimum size needed to maintain a state, although some were much smaller.[9]

[5] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 220 2; Li Feng, *Early China*, 107 10.
[6] Li Feng, *Early China*, 117 31.
[7] Richard von Glahn, *The Economic History of China from Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 26 8; Mark Edward Lewis, *The Construction of Space in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 138.
[8] 何一民He Yimin, 中国城市史 *Zhongguo chengshi shi* (*Chinese Urban History*) (武汉大学出版社, Wuhan: Wuhan daxue chubanshe), 102.
[9] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 140 3.

States also emerged outside the Zhou heartland. King Helü of Wu built his new capital city on the site of what would later become Suzhou after deposing the previous monarch in 515 BCE. He led a successful campaign against the neighbouring state of Chu, but was killed while fighting Yue in 496 BCE. His son King Fuchai successfully defeated Yue before launching a series of campaigns against some of the states in the Zhou confederacy, but was taken prisoner by the Yue army and committed suicide in 473 BCE.[10] Walled cities proliferated in Wu. The most remote was Hongcheng (Wild Swan Walled City), which was just over 62 km east of the capital. Other walled cities include the Eastern Walled City less than 10 km from the capital, which was one of a number of battlefield sites from the time of the Wu invasion of Yue; Wulicheng (Shaman's Walled City), a mere 6 km from the capital, where the king met ambassadors from other states; and the Old Walled City, where Helü's concubines lived.[11]

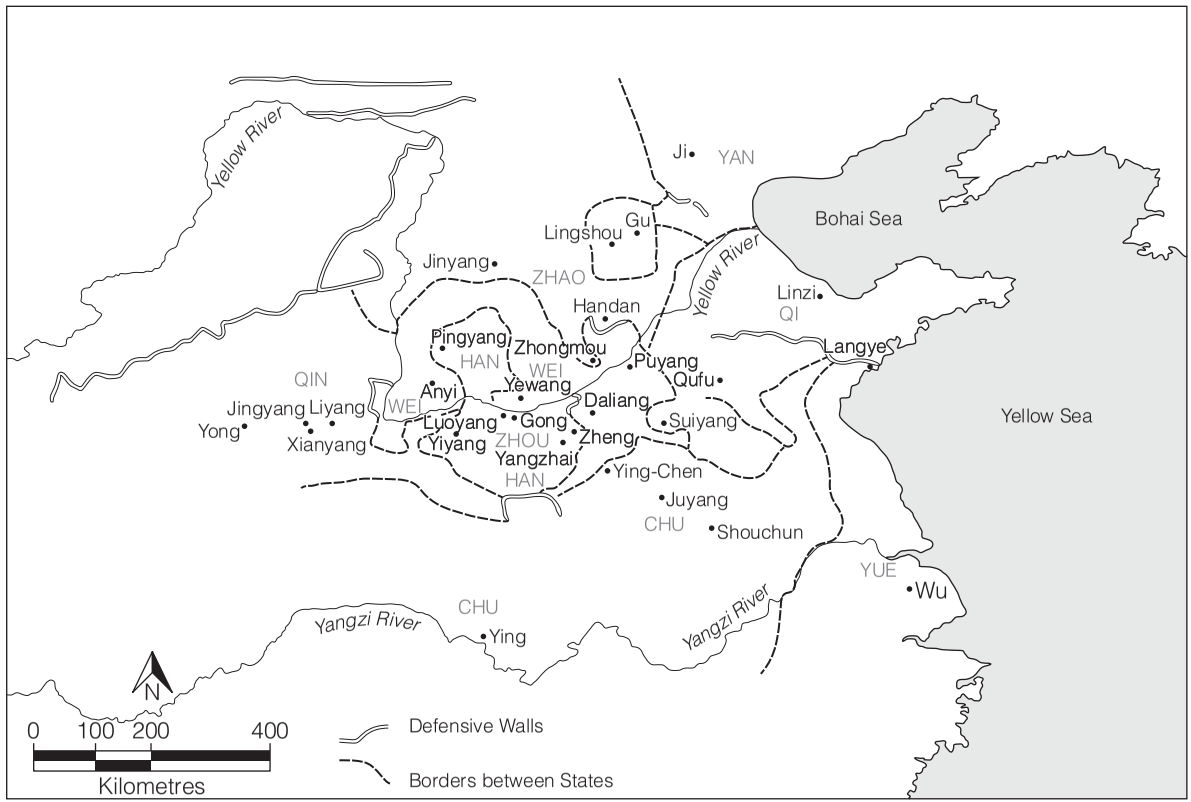
Within these larger states, rulers continued to grant nobles land or cities as fiefs, which often created more conflict. Over the centuries, concentration of power meant the number of states decreased, and by the early third century, China was dominated by seven states: Wei, Zhao, Han, Qi, Qin, Chu, and Yan, which were constantly at war with each other. Between 535 and 286 BCE, more than 350 interstate wars took place, many between alliances of these larger states. Map 1.2 shows the borders of these states, which were concentrated in the central plains, and some of the major cities during the Warring States Period. Also worthy of note is the defensive walls that were constructed between states, which are a precursor to the Great Wall.

Commanderies and Counties: The Emergence of the Imperial Urban System

This incessant warfare gave rise to a new form of urban administration, which became the basis of the imperial bureaucracy. As early as the eighth century BCE, King Wu of Chu appointed a magistrate to govern a newly conquered city, and this set the precedent for the creation of *xian* (counties) in the Nanyang Basin in southern Henan. Meanwhile, to the northwest, the state of Qin created counties in newly conquered lands in Gansu and Shaanxi. Counties were under the direct control of the king, which gave him easy access to tax revenue and manpower, both crucial to

[10] Olivia Milburn (trans.), *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China: Gazetteers for the City of Suzhou* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 9 10.

[11] 'Tales of the Lands of Wu', in Olivia Milburn (trans.), *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China: Gazetteers for the City of Suzhou* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 48 53.



Map 1.2 Regional states of the Warring States Period

successful warmongering.[12] The culmination of this centralization of power came with Shang Yang's reforms in the fourth century BCE in the state of Qin. He reallocated land from nobles to households, implemented direct taxation, allowed promotion through military service, introduced a new harsh penal code, standardized weights and measures, and moved the capital to Xianyang. These changes laid the foundation for Qin military success, and as the Qin state grew in size, a new larger unit of territorial administration, the *jun* (commandery), was established. This consisted of several counties and allowed for better mobilization of the peasantry for military service. The Qin Empire was divided into 36 commanderies with as many as 900 counties. This expanded to 57 commanderies and 1,000 counties in the first decade of the Han Dynasty, and to 103 commanderies and 1,314 counties by the end of the first century CE.[13] In almost all cases, county bureaucracy was in a walled city, and there were between 800 and 900 cities in the Qin, with perhaps as many as 250 of a significant size, their number rising to well over 1,000 during the Eastern Han.[14]

The Western Zhou state was organized along the same lines as the Shang Dynasty. It was not therefore a state with a centralized administrative apparatus governing a territory with clearly demarcated borders. However, neither was it a system of city states all vying for power over one another. Instead, as Li Feng argues, it is best to see Western Zhou cities as part of a delegatory kin-ordered settlement state. The Zhou king delegated authority to regional rulers to govern, but at the same time their legitimacy and the legitimacy of the whole polity originated with King Wen, the founder of the Zhou, and was maintained largely through the ancestral cult. Excavations of Zhou have revealed a temple complex, but similar complexes existed in the other royal cities, and probably in regional cities as well. This meant that while the ancestral cult could be traced to one city, religious and political power was not yet concentrated in one capital. Meanwhile, the ease with which the Zhou king moved from one royal city to another suggests that goods moved freely around the Western Zhou, creating economic as well as political connections between cities.

It is worth emphasizing that while regional states in the Western Zhou had some autonomy from central control, they were not yet fully independent city states. The concept of the city state is derived from the Greek *polis*. Their key characteristics include a city defended by a wall or water,

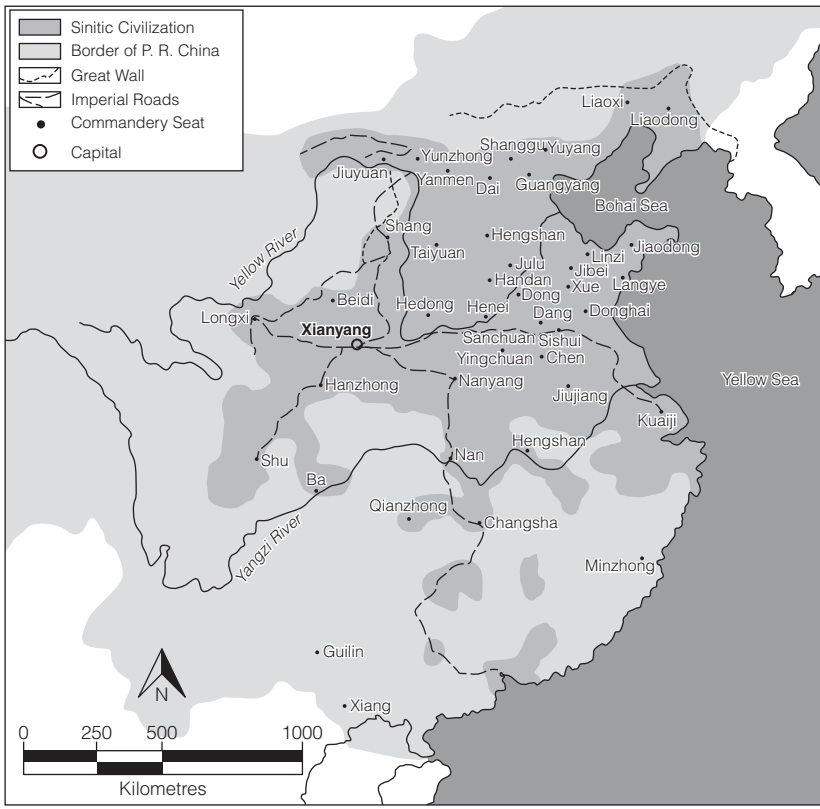
[12] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 138 41; Li Feng, *Early China*, 167 71.
[13] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 568; Li Feng, *Early China*, 194, 246, 286.
[14] He Yimin, *Zhongguo chengshi shi*, 129, 149.

supported by an immediate hinterland and having a sense of shared language, culture, and history with other city states in the region, but political independence and de facto authority over the land under its control.[15] This definition applies most readily to the majority of states during the Spring and Autumn Period, but some survived into the Warring States Period. The whole of the Zhou Dynasty should be seen as a transitional period in which political links in the urban system based on kinship relations between rulers were replaced by a centralized imperial administration. This resulted in an empire of commanderies and counties. However, this does not mean that cities ceased to exist as independent entities. Instead, cities administered their own region, but were absorbed into an administrative hierarchy at the top of which sat the Han Dynasty capital, Chang'an.[16]

Administrative changes were not the only factor driving the development of the urban system as the Chinese empire emerged. New technologies such as irrigation and the use of iron supported increased commerce, which in turn caused urbanization. As many as 400 walled cities have been discovered from the Warring States Period, the largest with populations of 200,000, although most county-level cities probably had populations of 1,000–10,000. They were connected to a dense network of commercial towns, particularly on the central plains. In 289 BCE, when Qin armies recovered a portion of the state of Wei, they captured more than sixty walled towns.[17]

Maps 1.3 and 1.4 show the extent of the urban system during the Qin and Han Dynasties, with road networks centred on the capitals of Xianyang and Chang'an. The number of towns and cities increased throughout the Warring States and early imperial periods, but it is difficult to be sure of the proportion of the total population living in cities. The earliest census in 2 CE records nearly 60 million people in the empire, with a fall to 21 million fifty years later, reflecting the disruption between the fall of the Western Han and the rise of the Eastern Han. Nevertheless, by 100 CE, the population had recovered to more than 50 million people. Most lived on the central plains. Outside the capital city, of the twenty cities with populations of 30,000–100,000 people, most were in this region. However, there were sizeable concentrations of people in other parts of China. The census of 2 CE records Kuaiji Commandery, which encompassed the former kingdom of Wu, as

[15] Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China: Governing the Western Zhou* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 159 62, 272 5, 284 7.
[16] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 150 1.
[17] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 66 74.

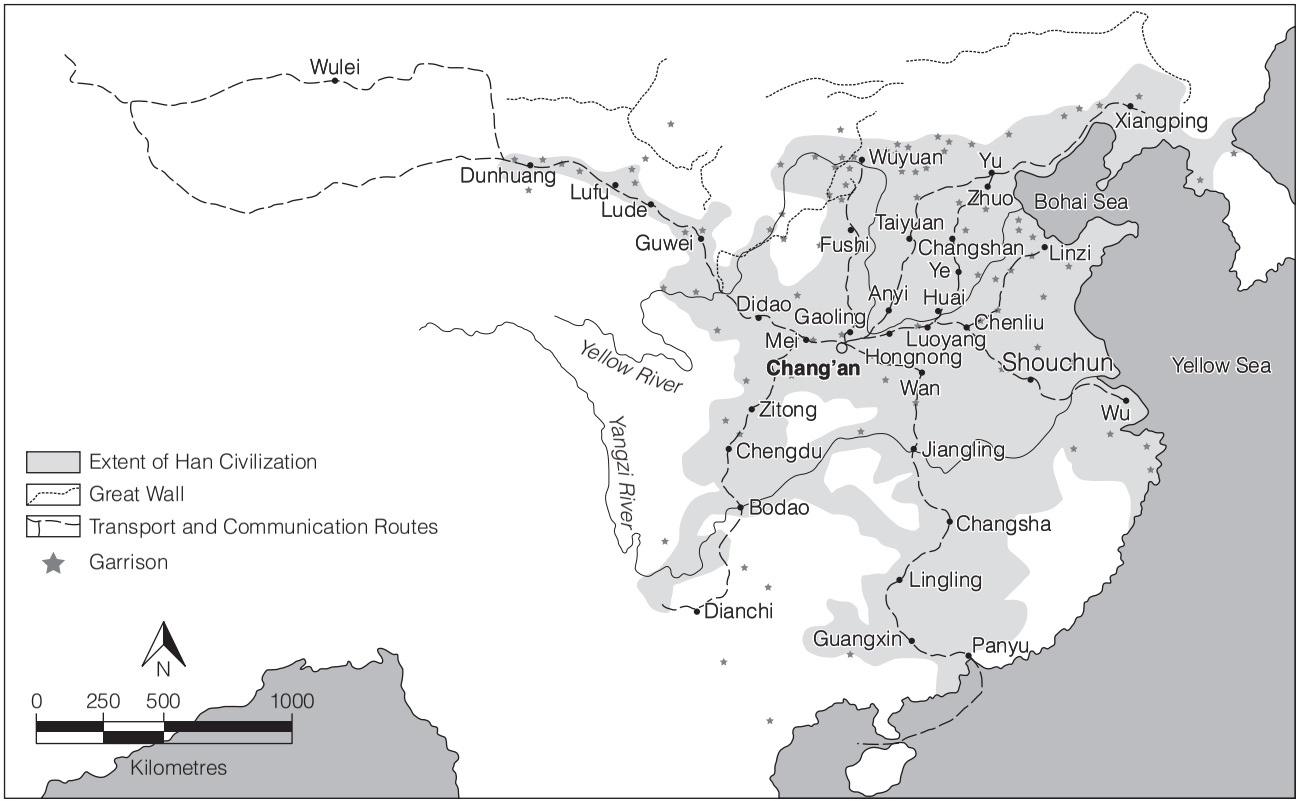


Map 1.3 The Qin Empire (210 BCE)

having just over 1 million people, although it is not clear how many of them lived in cities.[18]

Trade between cities became more frequent. Rivers and canals provided easy passage for goods, but the imperial road system was extensive. Like city walls, roads were made of pounded earth, and so few have survived, but Maps 1.3 and 1.4 show the major arteries connecting cities in the Qin and Han Dynasties. Roads were important for imperial control, including the so-called *zhidao* (straight road), which ran north some 800 km from the capital, Xianyang, and was lined with forts and watchtowers. The widest roads had a central lane reserved for emperors, and

[18] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 14 15, 151; Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 20.



Map 1.4 The Han Civilization (2 CE)

strict regulations separated social classes since officials were required to travel in carriages or chariots. Post travelled quickly along the road system, with official messages traveling 200 miles in one day, and double that in a crisis. Goods transported included agricultural products such as grain, cattle, silk, and alcohol, items for manufacturing like copper, iron, and timber, and luxury goods such as gemstones, pearls, and ivory.[19] The imperial state was a major buyer of weapons, textiles, bronze, ships, lacquerware, and other daily products, and it had monopolies over iron and silk production. There were also a substantial number of private enterprises, which could be highly profitable. Profits of 20 per cent a year were not uncommon.[20]

Roads also connected China to the rest of the world via the Silk Route, and although there was no direct link to the Roman Empire, there was a lively trade with central Asia and India. Much of this went through walled towns near oases in the desert, whose inhabitants traded exotic products such as amber, jade, wine, peacocks, monkeys, and lions.[21] Merchants or officials travelling from city to city in the sweltering heat entered the Han Empire at Dunhuang, which was then a military stronghold protected by large earthen walls and high watchtowers. There they were given a pass, which was a wooden tablet with some basic details such as name, age, and place of origin, and a list of their possessions. Travelling along the 1,200 km road from Dunhuang to Chang'an, merchants and officials stayed at postal stations, which were small, largely self-sufficient communities set up every few kilometres. Urgent official decrees were carried on horseback and woe betide a courier who was late or delivered a letter with a broken seal.[22]

Urban Planning and Governance

Early Settlements: Neolithic China to the Western Zhou

Before the Yangshao Period, there is no evidence that settlements were planned. Jiangzhai, near present-day Xi'an, is representative of Yangshao

[19] Michael Nylan, 'The Power of Highway Networks during China's Classical Era (323 BCE 31 CE): Regulations, Metaphors, Rituals, and Deities', in Susan Alcock, John Bodel, and Richard Talbert, eds., *Highways, Byways, and Road Systems in the Pre modern World* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 37 40, 42 3; Nishijima Sadao, 'The Economic and Social History of the Former Han', in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 1, The Ch'in and Han Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 578 9.

[20] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 146 8.

[21] Julia Lovell, *The Great Wall: China against the World, 1000 BC AD 2000* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 73.

[22] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 154 6; Michael Loewe, *The Government of the Qin and Han Empires: 221 BCE 220 CE* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 2006), 109 10.

sites along the Yellow River. It was organized around an inner courtyard ringed with residential structures, storage pits, and pottery kilns, which was protected by a ditch, with graveyards outside. Walls and other fortifications were common in Longshan settlements along the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. At Taosi, pounded earth walls up to 10 m high surrounded the whole site, and there was also an internal wall marking out an elite enclosure. Houses were single-room or multiroom dwellings, which were often at least partially subterranean, and may have had brick floors. In Taosi and other large settlements, public structures built on pounded earth platforms indicate the possible emergence of elite residences. By this time the major features of Chinese wooden buildings were well developed, with a rammed earth base supporting wooden pillars and beams, on top of which sat the roof, which was probably thatched. Longshan houses in north China were similar to those along the Yellow River, but in the Lower Yangzi Delta, pole houses were constructed to protect against flooding.[23] While there is still some doubt as to the exact purpose of some buildings in earlier settlements, it is commonly thought that the central area of Erlitou was some sort of palace complex. It is 11 ha in size, and unlike the city as a whole, it was enclosed by pounded earth walls. Seven platforms have been discovered, with at least two thought to be palaces which opened to the south to a large walled courtyard. Outside were smaller structures that are thought to be elite residences, while other abodes resemble Neolithic houses in their design. The site also displays evidence of state control of production, notably a bronze foundry, and graves show some evidence of social stratification.[24]

Early Shang cities were heavily fortified with walls of pounded earth. To construct these, workers first dug foundation trenches, then placed earth between wooden frames and pounded it to make a solid core, which was supported by more earth piled on each side after the wood had been removed. This construction method created walls with wide bases, and those at Yanshi and Zhengzhou were 15–25 m wide and 10 m high. Both cities had inner and outer walls, and in Erligang, six large structures have been unearthed which were probably palaces. Outside the walls in both Yanshi and Zhengzhou, there is evidence of houses and of bronze, bone, and ceramics workshops. Unlike earlier Shang cities, Anyang was not walled, although the palace zone was protected along its southern side by a deep moat. Archaeologists divide the buildings into three clusters. Cluster B, with twenty-one foundations, is the centre of the complex,

[23] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 73, 81 3, 98 9, 104 6, 122 3, 132 44, 154 6; Li Feng, *Early China*, 27 35.
[24] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 167 77, 186 9; Sit, *Chinese Urbanism*, 51, 57 60.

and most of the buildings probably had religious functions. Cluster C to the southwest probably consisted of temples – it contains a large number of sacrificial pits. Cluster A to the north of cluster B consists of fifteen buildings, and this area is believed to have been where the king and his family lived. Across the river to the north is Xibeigang, where the Shang royal cemetery was located. Anyang was far more than just a ritual centre, as a large bronze-casting foundry and bone workshop have both been discovered at the site.[25]

Historical discussions of the morphological changes in China's earliest settlements and cities concentrate on the extent to which they reflect religious or political trends. Those who argue that Longshan sites are the capitals of city states see internally demarcated compounds as palace complexes, with temples and other ritual sites having the same roles that they were to play in the Shang Dynasty. Victor Sit goes so far as to claim that what he argues is a palatial structure at Dadiwan should be seen as a forerunner to those described in the *Kaogongji* because of its north-south orientation. However, without more evidence about what these larger structures in Longshan sites were actually used for, this is impossible to prove.[26] Moving on to Erlitou and Shang Dynasty cities, their morphology reveals what some scholars believe are characteristics peculiar to Chinese cities. Writing in the 1970s, Paul Wheatley coined the term *ceremonial complex* to describe how cities in China grew out of a religious centre which gave legitimacy to rulers and provided them with justification to mobilize and therefore establish control over whole populations.[27] Erlitou, Yanshi, and Zhengzhou certainly contained buildings that had religious functions, and these were located within palatial compounds. However, these cities were also centres of production and commerce, while other features such as walls and moats were probably built as much for defence as for religious purposes.

Anyang was certainly an important ritual centre. The Shang Dynasty religious rituals recorded on the oracle bones provide evidence of the origin of the beliefs that influenced both the relationship of imperial capital cities with the Chinese understanding of the cosmos, and the behaviour of rulers in them. The high god was the most important object of worship, and this deity presided over the ancestral cult and therefore

[25] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 200 4; Li Feng, *Early China*, 56 60, 68 75; Sit, *Chinese Urbanism*, 74 9.

[26] Sit, *Chinese Urbanism*, 23 7, 42 3; Li Feng, *Early China*, 37 40; Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 154 8.

[27] Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters: A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971), 477 9.

had power to directly influence human affairs. Below this were the earth powers, which included the Altar of the Soil, the sun, and specific mountains and rivers. The most important cult was that of the royal ancestors, who it was believed, had real power to influence human affairs. In Anyang, religious rituals, particularly sacrifices to royal ancestors, took place at Xibeigang, but worship of earth powers occurred across the Shang territory, and the king also worshipped royal cults as he moved around the Shang realm accompanied by his wives and army.[28] With the Shang king often away hunting and consolidating his authority in regional centres, it is best to characterize Anyang as 'a base of operation, a cult center, a necropolis, or an artisanal center rather than simply a fixed administrative and redistributive center'.[29]

Wangcheng *(King's City): The Emergence of Chinese Imperial Urban Form*

During the Western and Eastern Zhou, urban form developed many of the characteristics that later distinguished imperial Chinese cities, but it wasn't until the Han Dynasty that cities took their place within a broad cosmology connecting urban planning and empire on earth directly with heaven. Building on the arrangement of cities in the Shang, and developments in the Western Zhou, what would become the ideal urban form was codified in what is probably the first text on urban planning anywhere in the world, the *Kaogongji*. Widely recognized as dating from the fifth century BCE, this was a list of artisans in the royal court of the state of Qi in Shandong, and is an excellent guide to manufacturing, commerce, and material culture in a typical Warring States capital. It contains the following oft-quoted instructions on building a capital city:

> The capital city forms a square plan having sides of nine *li*, with its three gates on each side. In the city, three main longitudinal and three main transverse streets are marked out. Each street, which has three roads, is nine chariot gauges broad. On the left is the temple of ancestors, on the right is the altar of the gods of the land and grain. In the front are the courts, and in the rear are the market places.[30]

The *Kaogongji* is often thought to refer to the city of Luoyi which was constructed near present-day Luoyang. It was the seat of the Zhou king during the Eastern Zhou, and is often cited as the model for all other city types throughout imperial China. Excavations have revealed a northern

[28] Li Feng, *Early China*, 99–103; Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 136–7.
[29] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 137.
[30] Jun Wenren, *Ancient Chinese Encyclopedia of Technology Translation and Annotation of Kaogongji, the Artificers Record* (London: Routledge, 2014), 95–6.

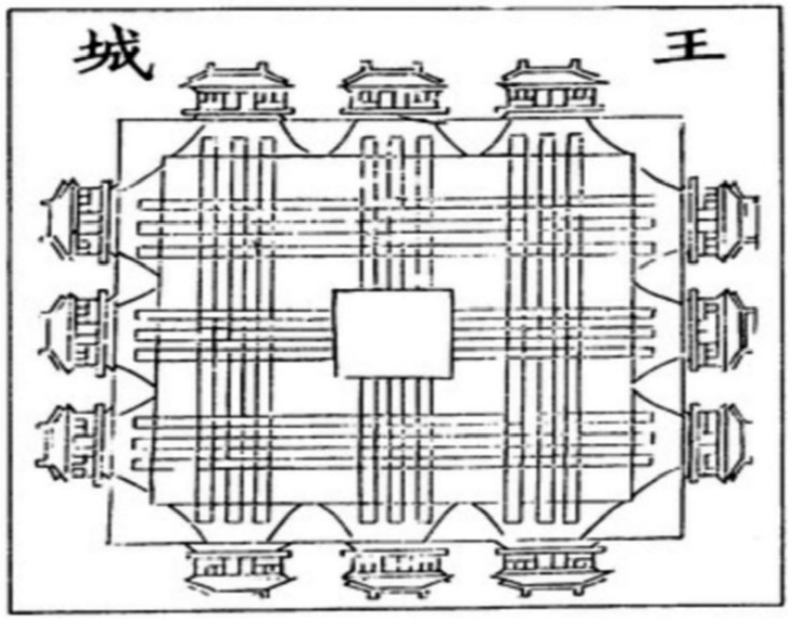


Figure 1.1 *Wangcheng*, drawing of the King's City as described in the *Kaogongji*
Source: 纳兰成德Nalan Chengde, ed., 三礼图*Sanli tu* [*Illustrated Three Ritual Classics*] Pt. 1, juan 4/2b (1676).

wall about 2.89 km in length, and sections of a southern wall, but no gates have been discovered. A palatial area with walls and a moat has been unearthed in the southwest, with tombs to the north. Textual sources describe royal ancestral temples, ritual sites such as the Altar of the Soil, the presence of an inner and outer city, and its division into wards. However, without more archaeological evidence, this cannot be confirmed. Central walled palatial areas existed in many cities. These include Ludu near present-day Qufu, Anyi the capital of the state of Wei in Shanxi, and the Jin state capital in the same province. However, there was variation in urban morphology. For example, in Linzi, the capital of Qi in Shandong, the inner city joined the outer one at its southwest corner. The city also had eleven gates with ten major roads running through the urban area, and an underground sewage system.[31]

[31] Victor Xiong, *Capital Cities and Urban Form in Pre modern China: Luoyang, 1038 BCE to 936 CE* (London: Routledge, 2018), 20 6; Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 45 7, 49 50.

Some cities may have diverged significantly from the ideal type as portrayed in the *Kaogongji*. Both cosmological and practical considerations were behind the construction of Helü Dacheng.

> King Helü asked [Wu] Zixu once upon a time: 'My kingdom is located in a southeastern backwater, in a dangerous and damp [place]; it suffers harm from both rivers and the sea. We have no internal defenses and no external protection, we have established neither granaries nor storehouses, nor have we opened up new land for cultivation.' . . . Then Zixu persuaded him to build inner and outer city walls, to establish defenses, build granaries, and create an armory.[32]

Helü Dacheng had three walls, the outer one nearly 30 km in circumference, with the city walls between 3 and 4 km in length and the citadel enclosed by a wall nearly 5 km in circumference. There were eight gates in the walls, each with a story. For example, Artisan's Gate was purportedly so named because the king had asked Gan Jiang to make swords there, but the metal would not melt. His wife questioned him as to why this was happening, and he replied his master had this problem but when he immolated himself, the metal could be forged. On hearing this, his wife threw herself into the forge, and Gan Jiang was able to make his swords. While this story is highly unlikely to be true, its repetition in more than one source is an excellent example of how myths and legends can become attached to specific places or cities over time. We know very little about what was in Helü Dacheng, but after Yue was conquered by Chu in the third century BCE, the city came under the control of Lord Chunshen. He built granaries and a prison, and there was a new palace and a market that apparently breached the city walls in two places.[33]

It is clear that in some respects at least Helü Dacheng resembled cities further north that conformed more closely to the ideal type of the Chinese city as set out in the *Kaogongji*. However, there were also some key differences. These included irregularities in its shape, a variation in the number of usable gates, an apparent lack of defensive structures, and the importance of canals and the bridges over them in providing internal transport instead of a grid system of roads. It is not possible to determine with certainty whether the city contained altars to the soil and grain or where they might have been situated. Shrines to ancestors probably date from the Eastern Han, and were destroyed in 40 BCE, when these structures located in counties and commanderies were

[32] 'Supplementary Records to the "*Illustrated Guide to Wu Commandery*"', in Olivia Milburn (trans.), *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China: Gazetteers for the City of Suzhou* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 113.

[33] 'Record of the Lands of Wu', in Olivia Milburn (trans.), *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China: Gazetteers for the City of Suzhou* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 48, 55 6, 71.

banned.[34] It is clear, then, that Helü Dacheng cannot be seen as a typical Zhou Dynasty city, and some scholars have suggested that it may be best to see it as a snail city. This was a type of design used by the Bai Yue people, who settled in flat, often water-logged land across south China and what is now Vietnam. Cities were built on islands with a central citadel guarded by outlying islands that made it very difficult to attack along the well-defended waterways. Yancheng in Jiangsu is another example of a snail city, and they illustrate that the influences on urban planning in different parts of China are far more diverse than those found within a few short paragraphs in the *Kaogongji*.[35]

In truth geographical features such as mountains and rivers were just as important as idealized city plans in dictating urban form. However, common characteristics include city walls and divisions between an elite class of rulers and officials and merchants, artisans and peasants. New building methods meant that height now symbolized state power, as it demonstrated ties to celestial spirits. This contrasted with the spatial arrangement in the Western Zhou, where the inner courtyard was reserved for the ancestral temple, and the outer courtyard was where nobles were enfeoffed. Terraces were built of mounds of rammed earth, often with rooms cut into them, which were supported with wooden columns. The external wooden exterior and roof was then added to give the impression of large, multi-storeyed structures. This building method was used in Warring States capitals such as Linzi, in the Qin capital Xianyang, and in cities throughout the Han Dynasty.[36]

In the Eastern Zhou, cities continued to be religious, political, and economic centres without yet having the status of imperial capitals. Bronze inscriptions reveal Zhouyuan, the Western Zhou capital, to contain the temples of the deceased Zhou kings, together with a temple complex that was copied in other cities across the empire. This supports the idea that Zhou kings ruled through granting land to their relatives, who then in turn honoured ancestral cults and other ritual practices. However, Zhouyuan was not just a religious centre, as there were aristocratic tombs, government offices, and facilities for bronze, bone, and ceramic production.[37] As cities developed in complexity, they required

[34] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 209 6, 218 25; Xu Yinong, *The Chinese City in Space and Time: The Development of Urban Form in Suzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 42 4.

[35] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 226 9.

[36] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 153 4; Fu Xinian, 'Representations of Architecture on Vessels of the Warring States Period', in Fu Xinian and Nancy Steinhardt, eds. (Alexandra Harrer trans.), *Traditional Chinese Architecture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 26 30.

[37] Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*, 160 9, 294 8.

management. One official had command of all the military units stationed in the five royal cities, which were responsible for public security. Another was in charge of water management, and a third was responsible for peasants residing in cities. Regional rulers had some autonomy, and local officials organized food provision and oversaw construction. As Zhou power declined during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, autonomy became independence. Local nobles now set up their own hereditary offices and ancestral temples. Rulers shared power with their nobles and at times called upon the whole of the city's population for support in making important decisions such as waging war or moving the capital. Rulers might also elicit support through philanthropy, and assemblies usually took place at the ancestral temple, the court, state altars, and the market. Meanwhile, rituals connected to the altars of the soil and grain helped to forge the city as a self-conscious political unit.[38]

Xianyang, located in the Wei River Valley near the sites of the Zhou capitals Feng and Hao, was the first capital of the Qin Empire, and it sat atop a new administrative hierarchy of commandery and county cities. Construction began under Shang Yang in the fourth century BCE. The city expanded in size as replica palaces of the states that the first emperor had conquered were constructed north of the Wei River. To the south was the Xin Palace, completed in 220 BCE, and connected to the northern city by a walkway, one of a number of corridors and passages that hid the emperor from sight, thereby increasing his mystique and protecting him from harm. With its replica palaces, Xianyang was supposed to embody the whole world, and this was true of the emperor's tomb as well. A double wall surrounded a complex estimated to be between 35 and 60 square km, which makes it probably the largest burial complex in the world. Within are the famous terracotta warriors, tombs of high officials, and it was reportedly filled with models of palaces and towers and surrounded by a model of the earth, with rivers of liquid mercury. Despite all this pomp and circumstance, Xianyang did not contain the temples to the major deities, which were instead located at the older Qin capitals of Yong and Longxi. This meant that Xianyang embodied not so much the Chinese empire, but rather the first emperor's conquest of his enemies.[39]

Chang'an, the capital of the Western Han Dynasty, had an area of 35 square km and a population of about 1 million people. Its walls were

[38] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 143 7.

[39] Ibid., 169 75; Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 52 3; Tang Xiaofeng, 'The Evolution of Imperial Urban Form in Western Han Chang'an', in Michael Nylan and Griet Wankeerberghen, eds., *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 57 8.

finished in 190 BCE, and internally it was arranged very much according to the dictates of the *Kaogongji*. The city boasted eight major roads connecting to twelve gates, three to each of the city walls. Each of the roads had three lanes, with the central lane reserved for the emperor, and they may have been lined with trees. The city was divided into the palace complexes, the markets, and the residential wards. Changle Palace to the north and Weiyang Palace to the south had been built on the remains of palaces in Xianyang, and they were both separate, walled enclosures. The two palaces were connected by covered passageways, which continued the tradition of hiding the emperor and his officials from the public. They contained granaries, factories producing ceramics and iron, and a mint for coins. Under Emperor Huidi, who succeeded Gaozu, the founder of the Han Dynasty, the city wall was completed, a temple to Gaozu and the West Market were built, and the ancestral temple was moved to the north of the city. Emperor Wudi's additions included Cassia, Mingguang, and Jianzhang Palaces. He also restored Shanglin Park to the south of the city, filling it with pavilions and palaces and an artificial lake. Emperors Chengdi and Wang Mang added ritual structures. These included altars to the soil and grain and the imperial ancestral temple, which was moved to the southern suburbs. However, temples to deceased emperors were established in mausoleum towns that developed into major urban centres in their own right. With populations of between 200,000 and 300,000 people, they provided officials for the imperial bureaucracy and helped to ensure that power was concentrated near the capital. Temples to Gaozu and other emperors appeared in cities across China, while other cults such as cosmic and natural deities were also spread far from the capital.[40]

Outside the palace complexes, Han Dynasty Chang'an contained two large markets. The eastern market was about 0.5 km square and the west market about 0.24 km square, and both were walled with eight gates and two major roads running through them. Much of the rest of the city was comprised of 160 wards, probably of a rectangular shape, with a gate leading to one major road running down their length. It is likely that some wards were occupied by one or two high-status families, while others were home to hundreds of poorer households. These households were in turn divided into units of five or ten, and so this meant that wards could be similarly divided and, according to Ban Gu, a Han Dynasty official,

[40] Michael Nylan, 'Introduction', in Michael Nylan and Griet Wankeerberghen, eds., *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 21 4; Tang Xiaofeng, *Evolution of Imperial Urban Form*, 60 2, 65 9; Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 176 9.

historian, and poet, Chang'an had nearly 1,000 wards and internal gates.[41]

Luoyang, capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty, was smaller than Chang'an, and more closely resembled the ideal Chinese city, although it was not completely rectangular and the twelve gates were not spaced evenly along its four walls. As with Chang'an, the city's major roads began at the gates, were up to 40 m wide and were divided into three lanes. The two palace complexes were aligned along a north-south axis and were connected by a covered walkway. The southern palace contained among other structures the palace library and the residence of the crown prince, while its larger northern counterpart contained a basilica and grand courtyard capable of holding up to 10,000 people, where the emperor received foreign dignitaries and held audiences. There were three markets, the gold market within the walls, and the horse and south markets just outside. As early as 26 CE, Luoyang had an ancestral temple and altars to soil and grain, and these were joined by other ritual structures such as the Hall of Brilliance (Mingtang), a place where the emperor issued decrees and the Numina Estrada (Lingtai), from where observations of important phenomena were conducted.[42] This consolidation of all the ritual structures in one place meant that the construction of Luoyang marked the culmination of a gradual shift from a state based on kinship relations in the Shang and Western Zhou to an empire with a capital city that was the centre of economic, political, and religious life. This is best illustrated by the replacement of ancestor worship as the primary cult with the worship of heaven. This cult, which could be moved with the capital, linked the emperor and the bureaucracy under him directly with heaven, and meant that the capital was now a physical manifestation of the cosmological relationship between earthly and heavenly power.[43]

Building on the reforms of Shang Yang, the Qin and Han Dynasties established a complex administration that was capable of ruling the whole empire. This included a central government located in Chang'an and then Luoyang, commandery governors, and county magistrates. The government of Chang'an and Luoyang was split between the court and the city. Of the nine senior ministers of state, several were responsible for various aspects of urban management. In Chang'an, the superintendent

[41] Zhang Jihai (Jianye He trans.), 'The Residential Wards of Western Han Chang'an', in Michael Nylan and Griet Wankeerberghen, eds., *Chang'an 26 BCE: An Augustan Age in China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 180 8.

[42] Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 68 71; Xiong, *Capital Cities and Urban Form in Pre modern China*, 32 44.

[43] Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 180 4.

of the guard provided security for the imperial palace, and the superintendent of transport managed the emperor's travel. Many of these positions also existed in Luoyang, and we have more information about how these offices of state were conducted. For example, the superintendent of ceremonial managed the academician, who ran the Imperial Academy, which by the middle of the second century AD was training 30,000 officials. There were some changes. For example, the privy superintendent of the lesser treasury ensured the emperor and his household were well taken care of and managed the imperial harem, palace grounds, and parks, while the empress had her own officials to manage her affairs. There were also officials who were part of the central government, who managed various aspects of the wider cities of Chang'an and Luoyang. The superintendent of the capital was responsible for law and order, and in Luoyang managed the arsenal of weapons, while the court architect was responsible for construction and maintenance of imperial buildings.

In addition to being the centre of royal power, both Chang'an and Luoyang were metropolitan areas and so fell under the command of governors, who had the same status as those of commanderies throughout the empire. In Luoyang, it was the job of the governor to manage the three markets in the capital, one of the large granaries on the outskirts of the city, and some aspects of law and order. This put him in a difficult position, since it could lead to conflict with imperial officials. Governors of commanderies across the empire had more autonomy and were based in one of the main counties of whichever region they administered. As with the central government, commandery administration was organized into bureaus, which had a range of responsibilities. Those most relevant to governing cities and the urban system included managing granaries, markets, the postal system, and infrastructure construction and repair. Below the commandery, the county was the lowest level of official imperial administration, and as it was to do so throughout the imperial period, the county seat consisted of a walled city in which resided a magistrate, who had a range of responsibilities including law and order, registration of individuals and property, tax collection, management of famine relief, and mobilization of people for state labour.[44] This system even extended to the borders of China, where walled cities such as Dunhuang existed to defend the empire. Local officials supplied granaries, exacted customs

[44] Michael Loewe, 'The Structure and Practice of Government', in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 1, The Ch'in and Han Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 468 9; Hans Bielenstein, 'The Institutions of Later Han', in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 1, The Ch'in and Han Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 472 4, 494, 499 509.

duties from merchants, established agricultural colonies to supplement food supplies, and helped to oversee troop movements. They were also on the lookout for Chinese tax dodgers or criminals fleeing the long arm of justice.[45]

Urban Life

From Tribes to Kingdoms: Neolithic China to the Founding of the Qin Dynasty

Evidence of goods used in daily life shows that Yangshao and Longshan sites were not just political and religious centres and provides clues as to the nature of social stratification. Ceramics and stone and bone tools were in common usage, while elites possessed luxuries such as jade ornaments inlaid with semi-precious stones. In the north, millet was the staple food, although soybean and rice have been found in the remains of storage pits. Dogs, pigs, chickens, and silkworms had all been domesticated, and hunting wild animals supplemented the diet of these early settlers. Further south, rice was far more common. Single-room and multiroom houses in Longshan sites across north China, the central Yangzi region, and in Chengdu suggest nuclear families may have lived side by side, and that society may have been organized according to kinship relations. By this period, the reproduction of shapes and designs in pottery also suggests the emergence of professional artisans, who may have been divided into potters, kiln masters, and other sub-specializations. The jade industry of the Lower Yangzi region was also similarly specialized, and bronze artefacts have been found at the Taosi site, a craft that required technical knowledge.[46]

Life for many in Erlitou and Shang Dynasty cities probably did not change very much from the Neolithic period, although bronze utensils were now regularly used. These included cups, heating vessels, and cauldrons, as well as weapons, knives, and chisels. Many were produced in bronze foundries, and the one in Erlitou was probably controlled by the elite class, who may have also run a workshop producing turquoise ornaments, which were luxury pieces. Bone workshops continued to produce utensils for daily use, and there is some evidence of weaving. In Erlitou, the remains of ceramic sewage pipes under the palace foundations and tracks of roads outside the palatial compound provide evidence that some system of water management had been constructed and vehicles of some

[45] Lovell, *Great Wall*, 80, 83 4.
[46] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 86 95, 113 18, 144 8; Li Feng, *Early China*, 35 6.

kind were in use. Similarly, in Yanshi, ditches leading into the moat drained excess water away from the city. In Zhengzhou, while political and ritual activities were concentrated inside the palatial compound, between the inner and outer city walls there were two bronze foundries, a ceramics workshop and a bone workshop, ample illustration that this was a multifunctional city.[47]

During the Shang Dynasty, much industrial activity was controlled by the court. Six bronze workshops in Anyang produced a range of products, which included parts for chariots as well as objects for ritual use and daily life. One cauldron, the largest bronze artefact in the world, stands at 1.33 m high, and could have been built by as many as 1,000 people working on a production line. Three bone workshops produced such luxury items as pins and hairpins as well as things for daily use. These workshops are evidence that some urban inhabitants at least were probably employed in a professional capacity, although it is likely that production also took place on a household level in the city. The tomb of Lady Hao, the wife of the Shang king Wu Ding, who may have led armies in her own right, contains more than 2,000 artefacts, including more than 700 articles of jade, and nearly 500 bronzes. Clearly the elite in Shang China had a very luxurious lifestyle by the standards of the day.[48]

Prior to the emergence of written records, it is very difficult to say much about the structure of ancient Chinese society. It is certainly not possible to conclude that ancestor worship and other ritual practices that later came to define Chinese culture emerged in the Longshan era. Most scholars seem happy with the idea that despite the ambiguity associated with the term *chiefdom*, this is an adequate description of Longshan society. There is significant historical evidence dating from after the Western Zhou that describes legendary kings and the Xia Dynasty that followed. The chronology outlined in Sima Qian's history and in other works matches that between the end of the Longshan Period and the beginning of the Shang, and this suggests that kings may have indeed engaged in the same ritual activities that became central to Chinese culture. However, without further written evidence, this is impossible to prove.[49] While most of the evidence that we have for this period concerns elite groups, it is clear that Anyang and other cities in this period were multifunctional. Production of goods for rituals, war, luxury and daily use meant that urban residents were engaged in a wide range of activities.

[47] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 167 75, 188 9, 200 3; Li Feng, *Early China*, 43 7, 56 60; Sit, *Chinese Urbanism*, 49 51, 56 60.
[48] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 209 16; Li Feng, *Early China*, 75 8.
[49] Shelach, *Archaeology of Early China*, 98 9, 122 3, 154 6, 159 60; Sit, *Chinese Urbanism*, 25 6, 32 6; Li Feng, *Early China*, 37 40, 48 53.

The evidence on Zhou Dynasty cities paints a similar picture of complex urban daily life. In the Western Zhou, governments in different states probably had monopolies over some aspects of production, but aristocratic families established what might be considered business empires. For example, the Wei family traded leather goods and chariot ornaments for land, and there is speculation that they may have bought their aristocratic title with their wealth. By the time of the Warring States Period, larger states on the periphery such as Qin had tight control over production, particularly of weapons, and products were marked with the name of the artisan and his supervising official so that quality could be controlled. In smaller states on the central plains, artisans and merchants had more autonomy.[50] The 'Market Laws' from the state of Qi note that a 'kingdom of middling size profits from commerce, and a small kingdom utterly depends on it. The market is the source of the hundred goods and the measure of the resources at the ruler's disposal'.[51]

The division of Chinese society into four groups of scholars, farmers, artisans, and merchants is found in the earliest Chinese texts and remained important throughout the imperial period. The hierarchy, such as it exists, is from the perspective of the state, which explains why farmers were more important than merchants, since it was on their work that a dynasty's survival and prosperity depended.[52] The *Kaogongji* provides some insight into the lives of artisans in the Warring States Period. Occupations were hereditary since: 'It is the men of wisdom who invent tools and machines. The skilful men maintain their traditions, and those who keep in the same line of occupation generation by generation are called artisans.'[53] Often production required high levels of technical skill and went through many stages. In chariot making, the wheel was assembled from wood and leather according to strict design specifications that required treating the wood with fire and ensuring that its dimensions were exact enough so that it ran true on the road. Other parts of the chariot included the basket, which carried the rider, and the pole linking the chariot to the horse or the ox. Of course chariots were just as likely to be used in war or hunting as for transport in the city, but the main urban thoroughfares were designed to be wide enough for nine chariots, so it is easy to imagine them thundering past, splattering pedestrians with mud on a rainy day. We have seen how the *Kaogongji* set out the rules for the

[50] Li Feng, *Bureaucracy and the State in Early China*, 163; Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 144; Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 26, 68 73.
[51] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 73.
[52] Philip A. Kuhn, 'Chinese Views of Social Classification', in Penelope J. Corfield, ed., *Language, History and Class* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 231 2.
[53] Jun Wenren, *Ancient Chinese Encyclopedia of Technology*, 3.

planning of the city, but it also contains information on the construction of its various components. This includes the dimensions of temple entrances, and gates and watchtowers on the walls of palace complexes.[54] Other craftsmen listed in the *Kaogongji* include potters, ironmongers, lacquerware makers, and craftsmen of other luxury goods.

Early Imperial Capitals in Chinese Poetry

The *Rhaposdy on Two Capitals*, presented to the Han court in 65 CE, the *Rhapsody on the Western Metropolis*, and the *Rhapsody on the Eastern Metropolis* dating from a few decades later are stunning literary portraits of Chang'an and Luoyang. They were written to demonstrate how over time the capital became the physical symbol of the Chinese empire, and how after the adoption of Confucianism as state orthodoxy, an austere morally upright existence as depicted in Luoyang was preferable to the licentiousness of Chang'an. When not fulfilling their duties, emperors and nobles relaxed in lavish style. A festival in Shanglin Park in Chang'an featured all manner of performers such as magicians who,

> Changed appearances, sundered bodies,
> Swallowed knives, exhaled fire,
> Darkened the arena with clouds and mist.
> They drew on the ground and created rivers,
> That flowed like the Wei, coursed like the Jing.[55]

The poem then records that the emperor, having become intoxicated, went out into the city incognito, where he proceeded to the pleasure lodges, and:

> He discarded faded beauties,
> Consorted with the pretty and graceful.
> They snuggled together on a narrow mat in the center of the hall,
> And feathered goblets made the rounds countless times.
> Rarely seen dances were performed in succession;
> Marvelous talents showed off their skills.[56]

Moving away from imperial palaces and high elites, Chang'an was a bustling city. On one hand, walled markets were sites of political control, since:

[54] Ibid., 18 28, 101, 104.
[55] Zhang Pingzi, 'Western Metropolis Rhapsody', in David R. Knechtges (trans.), *Wenxuan, or Selections of Refined Literature Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 233.
[56] Ibid., 237. Xia Ji was one of the more notorious women of ancient China who was married seven times, and by all accounts continued to attract men into her old age.

> Joined by encircling walls, girdled by gates,
> From the flag pavilions, five storeys high,
> Officials looked down to inspect the countless shop rows.[57]

On the other hand, they were hives of activity, full of goods from across the empire, and places where men and women mixed as buyers and sellers.

> There was no room for people to turn their heads,
> Or for chariots to wheel about.
> People crammed into the city, spilled into the suburbs,
> Everywhere streaming into the hundreds of shops.
> Red dust gathered in all directions;
> Smoke blended with the clouds.
> Thus, the people being both numerous and rich,
> There was gaiety and pleasure without end.[58]

The unwary visitor could be easily be fooled.

> Male and female vendors, selling cheap,
> Sold good quality mixed with the shoddy,
> Dazzling the eyes of country bumpkins,
> Why exert oneself in performing labor,
> When devious earnings were so plentiful?[59]

It was not only traders who were likely to scam the unwary. The two terms to describe beggars, *liumin* (floating people) and *youmin* (wandering people) date from the Han Dynasty. The floating population were more likely to be refugees fleeing from natural disaster or conflict, but it was the wandering population who just as in later eras developed a variety of ruses to get people to part with their money. Cities were dangerous places, as residents were robbed or killed, and gangsters served as assassins for wealthy families. Butchers were often ex-assassins, who could be bought out of retirement if the price was right. Aside from what might best be described as professional criminals, gangs of youths were engaged in low level violence, and when not making trouble could be found drinking and gambling in market places. Such men could also be employed to support rebellions, and so like shamans were seen as threats to the state. Indeed, Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty was said to have preferred spending his time in bars

[57] Ibid., 203.
[58] Ban Mengjian, 'Two Capitals Rhapsody', in David R. Knechtges (trans.), *Wenxuan, or Selections of Refined Literature Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 105.
[59] Zhang Pingzi, 'Western Metropolis Rhapsody', 203.

to working on his father's property.[60] Chang'an wasn't the only city where the elite feasted, and the rest of the urban populace bartered, drank, and fought in the streets. In Nanyang, at the Lustration Festival, which was held on the third day of the third moon, participants purged themselves of disease in the river.

> Chariots in double lanes, side by side, arrive
> For purgation rites on the southern bank.
> Vermilion coach curtains, with cords attached,
> Dazzle the fields, glisten the clouds.
> Men and women, beautifully attired,
> March by in a continuous line.
> Beauties splendidly adorned, displaying bewitching allure,
> Full of grace and charm,
> Gaze furtively, cast sidelong glances,
> Their pretty eyebrows drawn in arching curves.[61]

Away from the hustle and bustle of the highways, byways, and markets were the residential areas. Han houses were not particularly large, with one excavated in Luoyang just over 13 m along one side. The house had two entrances and was surrounded by a wall of pounded earth. Houses could be single-storey or multi-storey and came in various types including courtyard house, I-shaped, and L-shaped.[62] For the richest residents of Han China, houses could be luxurious, quiet places of contemplation, complete with ornate gardens, as in the case of the house constructed by General Liang Ji.

> Both the public and private chambers had hidden and exposed parts. The rooms were so interconnected they appeared like the interior of a cave . . . The windows were covered with strips of the highest quality of silk, painted with floating clouds and immortal spirits. The platforms and pavilions were close enough together so as to see from one to the next. The flying beams and stone steps made it possible to cross between water and land. Gold, jade, and pearls, precious objects from exotic places, were all gathered here.[63]

There can be no doubt that by the end of the Han Dynasty, cities across the empire had distinctive urban cultures, which writers described in detail. They did so not so much to bring that urban culture to life, but rather to comment on the behaviour of the emperor and the nobility.

[60] Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers: A Cultural History of Beggars* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 18 19; Lewis, *Construction of Space in Early China*, 164 5, 168.
[61] Zhang Pingzi, 'Southern Capital Rhapsody', in David R. Knechtges (trans.), *Wenxuan, or Selections of Refined Literature Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 327.
[62] Liu Xujie, 'The Qin and Han Dynasties', in Nancy Steinhardt, ed., *Chinese Architecture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 46 7.
[63] Ibid., 48.

Conclusion

The emergence of the Chinese urban system saw the earliest kingdoms transformed into city states and then into an empire. Although the largest cities were located in the central plains, the Han Dynasty extended out to the northwest, linking China to central Asian trade routes. Chinese cities were always multifunctional, and the imperial capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang were the heart of empire-wide political and commercial networks. By the Qin Dynasty, Chinese urban form had evolved into its characteristic shape, and walled capitals signified the emperor at the centre of his earthly and celestial realm. However, there was variation in urban form across the empire, and even in the carefully planned capitals space was given over to bustling markets and busy workshops. Well before the Chinese empire was formed, many different groups of people lived in cities. The urban culture of the first imperial capitals was captured in a literature that, although not focused on the city for its own sake, described China's imperial urban civilization.

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2 The Expansion of China's Imperial Urban Civilization to the South (220–755)

Introduction

The Han Dynasty fell in 220 CE and was succeeded by three kingdoms: the Wei in north China, the Shu centred on Sichuan, and the Wu in central and southern China, with its capital at Jianye near present-day Nanjing. This is referred to as the period of the Three Kingdoms. In the north, Sima Yan, head of one of the powerful families in the Wei, established the Western Jin Dynasty in 265, with its capital at Luoyang. The kingdom of Shu had already been incorporated into Wei, and Wu was conquered in 280, and so for a short period of time, China was reunified into this new dynasty called the Western Jin. However, family infighting meant Luoyang was sacked in 311, and the court fled south, establishing the Eastern Jin (317–420) in Jianye, which was renamed Jiankang.

Meanwhile, in the north, political authority broke down, and during a period known as the Sixteen Kingdoms, sixteen states vied for dominance until reunification under the Tuoba, a nomadic tribe that established the Northern Wei Dynasty in 386. The capital was initially located at Pingcheng, near modern Datong, but was moved to a rebuilt Luoyang in 493. Rebellion broke out in 534, and the following year, the dynasty divided into the Eastern Wei with its capital at Ye to the north of Luoyang, and the Western Wei with its capital at Chang'an.

These states were succeeded by the Northern Qi (550–577) and the Northern Zhou (557–581) respectively, which maintained their capitals at Ye and Chang'an. In 420, Liu Yu took control of the army based at Jiankang, overthrew the Eastern Jin, and declared the foundation of the Song Dynasty. China was now divided into northern and southern dynasties. The latter ruled from Jiankang and were the Southern Qi (479–502), Liang (502–557), and Chen (557–589) Dynasties.

In 581, in the north, Yang Jian usurped the throne to become Emperor Wen of the Sui, and he established the Sui Dynasty capital at Chang'an. The dynasty lasted only a few years, but was the foundation of the Tang

Dynasty that succeeded it in 618, and which continued to rule from Chang'an for much of the next three centuries.[1]

Between the fall of the Han Dynasty and reunification under the Sui Dynasty, the urban system was divided. In the north, the regular movement of capitals and disruption of trade during periods of disorder prevented the development of an interlinked urban network. Meanwhile, migration to the south underpinned the development of new regional economies, especially in the resource-rich Lower Yangzi Delta. New cities emerged as centres of commerce and communication, and after the reunification of China, they were connected to the northern capitals via the Grand Canal. At the same time, Chinese cities were linked to the medieval international world through land routes over what has become known as the Silk Road, and over sea via Guangzhou.

A pivotal moment in the development of Chinese imperial urban civilization was the An Lushan Rebellion in 755. Afterwards, the Tang Dynasty gradually withdrew from direct control over much of north China, and an ever greater number of people migrated southwards. The Grand Canal became the spine of the Chinese urban system for the remainder of the imperial period, linking the highly urbanized Lower Yangzi Delta with the northern capitals. This chapter ends with the flowering of the Tang Dynasty in the first half of the eighth century, which laid the foundations for China's late imperial urban civilization.

The new rulers in the north and south inherited the legacies of Han Dynasty urban planning. Cities continued to be walled and divided into wards, capitals had some or all of the main ritual symbols of imperial power, and urban form reflected the continued influence of the *Kaogongji*. This form of planning and urban management found its apotheosis in the capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang in the Sui and early Tang Dynasties. By now, foreign rulers in the north had made their mark on cities, while in the Lower Yangzi Delta, cities were more open – a reflection of local geography and of their overriding commercial character. All this time, the gradual spread of Buddhism and Daoism into China along the Silk Road and through other trading routes brought monasteries and temples into cities. Not only did they grace the urban skyline, but monks began to take responsibility for aspects of urban governance that did not fall within the purview of the official governmental bureaucracy, which remained similar to its Han forebear.

[1] Alfred Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 2 10; Fu Xinian, 'The Three Kingdoms, Western and Eastern Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties', in Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil, 200 600* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 62 3.

The legacies of Han Dynasty imperial planning meant that wards divided cities socially just as they did physically. The imperial family remained largely isolated from the rest of the populace, appearing during important festivals, as Confucian and other rituals allowed them to display their power. The wealthy enjoyed lavish lifestyles and were able to mould the urban landscape through building mansions, donating to monasteries, and constructing gardens, which spread to other cities from the south. The influx of foreign goods and people made cities more cosmopolitan, and despite strict rules governing movement, especially in the Tang Dynasty, festivals gave people the opportunity to mix in temples and other public spaces. This urban civilization was also something that writers reflected on in their poetry, which although still tending to dwell on capital cities, explored their literal and figurative meaning both past and present.

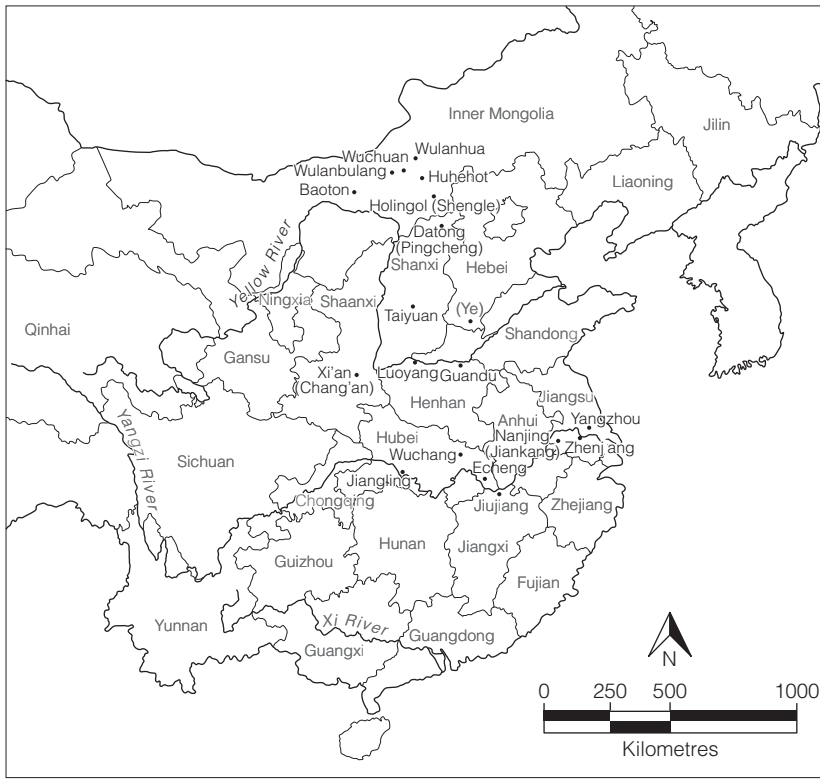
Urban System

China Divided: The Northern and Southern Dynasties

The fall of the Han Dynasty decimated China's population, which in the census of 280 was recorded as 2.46 million households, only a quarter of the 10.68 million recorded in 157, the last census of the Eastern Han.[2] The fall in population was caused in part by migration to the south, and the trickle turned into a flood with the sack of Luoyang in 311, as the Jin court, many rich families, and their slaves fled south to the Lower Yangzi Delta. Continued warfare in the north and rule by various ethnic groups who were not the Han, who currently make up more than 90 per cent of all Chinese, pushed more people to seek safer and sunnier climes, and by reunification in 589, approximately 40 per cent of the registered population lived in the Yangzi valley.[3]

As the north descended ever further into chaos after the collapse of the Jin Dynasty, those who remained built fortresses, normally in locations that were easy to defend. Capitals were established in Gansu and Liaoning, as well as in the older Chinese heartlands on the central plains. Some of these new capitals were on the same sites as older ones, and others were built on what had been Han commanderies.[4] Worthy of note are those cities in the west such as Guzang or Dunhuang which also briefly became capitals. They testify to continuing Chinese presence in this area and to the link to the

[2] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 159.
[3] Mark Edward Lewis, *China between the Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 6 7.
[4] Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil, 200 600* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 18 27.



Map 2.1 Cities during the period between the fall of the Han and the rise of the Sui Dynasties

land trading routes connecting China to central Asia. Just as there had been no direct Chinese governance of the region now known as Xinjiang during the Han Dynasty, so there was none during the Wei and Western Jin. Instead, Chinese garrisons were stationed in Loulan and other cities. They were supposed to be self-sufficient, as soldiers tended crops in the unforgiving landscape outside the walls, but they were also supported by supplies of silk or coin from Dunhuang, which were used to buy horses and grain from the locals. At the same time, there was trade with the Sogdians from Samarkand in what is now Uzbekistan, who were later to supply Chinese armies during the Tang Dynasty.[5]

[5] Valerie Hansen, *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37, 42 3.

The Tuoba reunified the north, constructing their capitals at Pingcheng in 398, Luoyang in 493, and finally Ye in 534. It was common for emperors to establish and move capitals in imperial China. Four hundred and sixty thousand officials, craftsmen, and commoners from the Tuoba homeland in the north, as well as from Hebei and Korea, were forcibly relocated to Pingcheng. They were often allocated land around the city to keep it supplied with food, but famine claimed many lives throughout the first half of the fifth century. Even the conquest of fertile lands to the south in Hebei could not alleviate food shortages, since Pingcheng was too poorly served by transport routes to make this a long-term solution. As Pingcheng's population swelled, in part because peasants left farming in the hinterland to take up employment in commerce and industry in the city, food shortages became ever more acute. All these problems persuaded the emperor, Xiaowen, to move the capital south to Luoyang, which was better connected than Pingcheng and Chang'an, and better defended than Ye.

However, practical considerations were not the only reason for the choice of the new capital, as the historical connection to the Han Dynasty supported reforms leading to the Sinification of the Northern Wei. The new capital was built from scratch, probably with forced labour, much of which came from Pingcheng. At its height, Luoyang had as many as 600,000 people, during which time around 20 million people lived in the kingdom as a whole. They were able to keep the capital well supplied with grain, and large estates surrounded the city, where low taxes and the ready market for agricultural products combined to make farming profitable.

Although there were difficulties establishing a monetary economy, links to intercontinental overland trading routes remained strong, and merchants from central Asia settled in the city. Intercity trade was subdued because of continuous warfare, and before long this overtook Luoyang once more. The city's end was the result of rebellion by the Erzhu, an ethnic group who had lived as farmers in the central plains and now rose up against the dynasty. Gao Huan, who initially worked with the rebels, turned against them, and in 534, he issued a decree to abandon Luoyang. Within three days, 400,000 families, perhaps as many as 2 million people, left the city, travelling to Ye, where Gao founded the Eastern Wei.[6]

[6] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 38; W. F. J. Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang, Yang Hsüan chih and the Lost Capital (493 534)* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 18 23, 33 5, 39 49, 54 66, 101, 117 26.

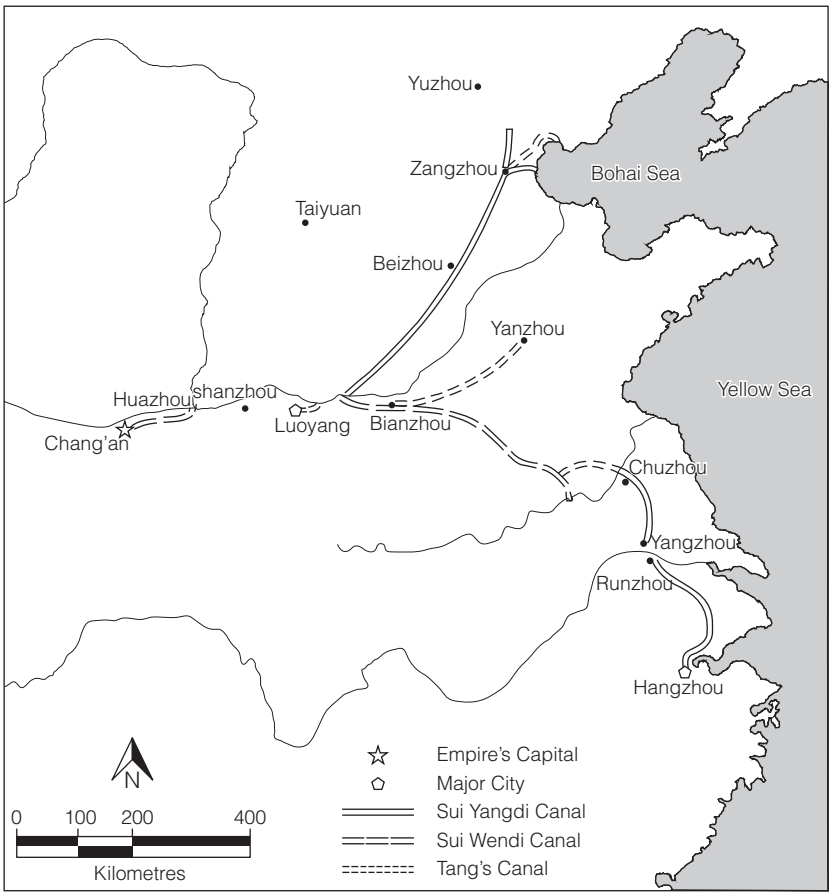
The story of the Northern Wei shows how in the north, in the midst of intermittent warfare, the urban system developed around capitals and their hinterlands, with subdued long-distance trade. However, to the south, it was a different story. The number of cities in the province of Yangzhou, which lay to the southeast of the Yangzi River, rose from nineteen in the Han Dynasty to thirty-six during the Three Kingdoms period and forty-six in the Eastern Jin. Aristocratic families, who moved south with the Jin court in 311, built vast estates on reclaimed land north of Lake Tai and in the Hangzhou Bay. Elsewhere, such as in Shaoxing, it was locals who dominated the economy.

As the population increased, agriculture became more commercialized, markets sprang up, and local industry and commerce flourished. The region was already well known for the production of ceramics, textiles, bronze mirrors, and these and a host of other products were traded in towns and cities. Intermittent although not entirely successful attempts were made to create a coin-based monetary system. The state benefitted from increased commercialization and trade. Cargoes of products such as wood, charcoal, and fish were subject to tariffs as they were shipped along the region's canals, and on arrival in the capital, Jiankang, they could be taxed by as much as 10 per cent. There was trade with Southeast Asia, India, and Sri Lanka via Guangzhou, where merchants bought coral, gold, incense, ivory, pearls, and silver, shipping them overland or along the coast to the bustling port of Mou close to Ningbo. So attractive was this trade that successive emperors launched attacks against the Linyi in modern Vietnam. The capital was overrun in 446, which set the stage for the expansion of southern China during the Sui and Tang Dynasties.[7]

At the heart of this urban system was Jiankang. At its height, during the Liang Dynasty in the first half of the sixth century, the city boasted between 1 million and 2 million people, making it the largest city in China and possibly in the world at the time. Jiankang was not only a political and commercial centre, but also a military city with a large garrison. It was protected by a series of fortifications to the north, the most important of which was Jinling near modern-day Zhenjiang, which had a brick wall that in places was more than 20 m high.

Further north, Guangling, present-day Yangzhou, lay at the junction of the Yangzi and Huai Rivers and flourished during periods of stability, but

[7] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 142, 159 65; Liu Shufen, 'Jiankang and the Commercial Empire of the Southern Dynasties: Change and Continuity in Medieval Chinese Economic History', in Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey, eds., *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200 600* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asia Monographs, 2001), 44 51.



Map 2.2 The Grand Canal

declined rapidly as trade fell off. Suzhou was well south of most of the fighting throughout this period, and during the Liang Dynasty, important officials made their homes here.[8] South along the coast, ports sprang up, often just inland at the mouths of rivers, which offered people some protection from the weather and marauding pirates. They included Ningbo, Wenzhou, Fuzhou, Quanzhou, Shantou, and Zhangzhou.

[8] Liu Shufen, 'Jiankang and the Commercial Empire of the Southern Dynasties', 38 9; Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 15 16; Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 34 7.

China United: From the Sui to the Tang Dynasties

Sui Wendi constructed his new capital at Daxingcheng, at Chang'an. This site had many advantages, not least the association with the former capital under the Western Han. Chang'an was the largest city in the world at the time, home to an estimated 1.6 million people in the Sui Dynasty, falling to 1 million people during the Tang, when Baghdad surpassed it in size. It was impossible to supply such a large city from its hinterland in the Yellow River valley, and so the Grand Canal was constructed. As shown in Map 2.2, it was the main conduit in a system of canals connecting Hangzhou in the south to Chang'an and Luoyang. It was built in stages and was the backbone of a commercial network on which Tang prosperity depended.

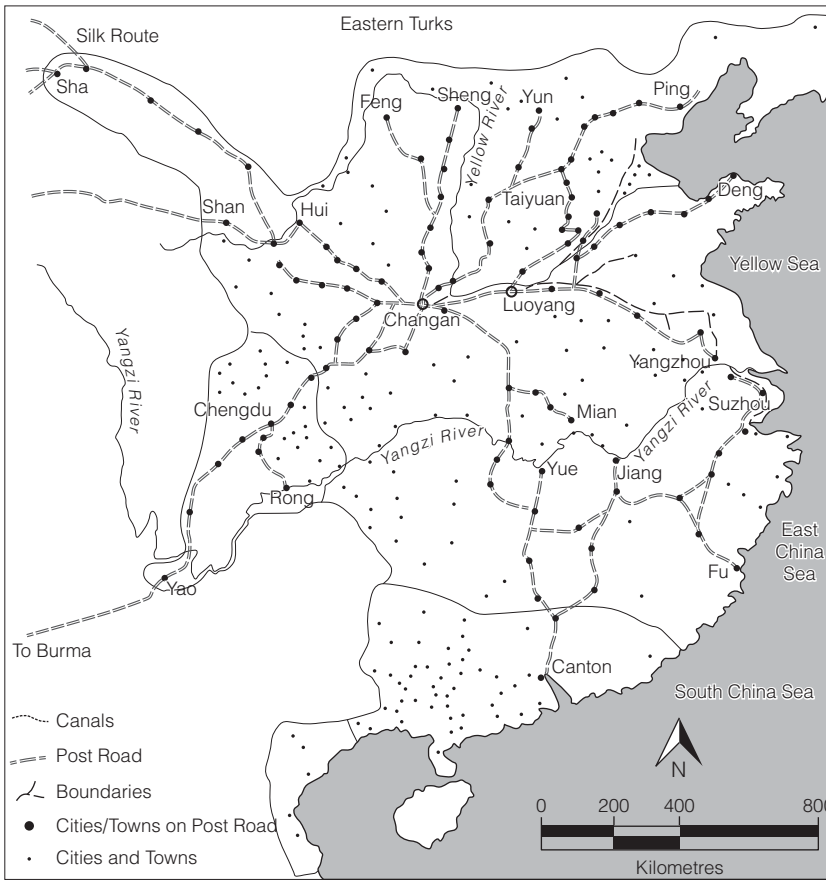
The canal system not only made possible the transport of goods around the empire, but caused the creation of new cities along its route, while ensuring that other cities such as Yangzhou reached new heights of prosperity. It was also a political statement of control, allowing swift movement of troops and facilitating continuing southern migration and settlement.[9]

This control extended across China. The empire was divided into prefectures, and before the An Lushan Rebellion, there were at least 331 prefectural seats, many of them at key transport nodes. Below this, there were more than 1,500 counties, and the county seat often formed the major commercial as well as political heart of the surrounding area. Whether they were county or prefectural cities, some grew to be quite large in size. The seven largest cities in Tang China were the capitals Chang'an and Luoyang followed by Chengdu with a population of around 500,000, and then Yangzhou with a population of 200,000. Guangzhou, Suzhou, and Hangzhou all had populations of more than 100,000, and another thirty cities had populations of more than 70,000, most of them along the Grand Canal.[10] As shown in Map 2.3, the Grand Canal was but one of many transport routes linking cities in Tang China.

Approximately 13,500 miles of roads were built of rammed earth and bowed in the centre to allow water to run off, and sometimes they were lined with trees. Two thirds of the roads ran north to the frontier garrisons, although what is now Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and the coastal cities were all connected to the road network. There are no estimates of the amount of intercity trade carried by road, but from the collection of tariffs

[9] Arthur F. Wright, 'The Sui Dynasty (581 61)', in Denis C. Twitchett, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 3: Sui and T'ang China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1979), 134 8.

[10] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats: The Development of Medieval Chinese Cityscapes* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1999), 36 9; He Yimin, *Zhongguo chengshi shi*, 255 7.



Map 2.3 The Tang Dynasty urban network

we know it must have been common. The postal system consisted of 1,297 way stations placed every ten miles, and 21,400 station masters, riders, and thousands of horses stood ready to transmit messages to the four corners of the empire. A letter or decree could reach the furthest prefecture in Sichuan or Guizhou in fourteen days from Chang'an. Punishments for late delivery ranged from eighty blows with a thick rod to two years of penal service.[11]

[11] Charles Benn, *China's Golden Age: Everyday Life in the Tang Dynasty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 182 3; Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 15 17.

Roads allowed the Tang empire to grow, which it did rapidly. Expansion to the northwest was the catalyst for the development of the Silk Road since the movement of goods along the overland trading routes connecting China to central Asia and beyond was caused in part by the Tang emperors' military spending. During the mid-seventh century, they poured resources into the area to support troops, many of whom were not Chinese but locals. Garrisons were concentrated in the cities of Khotan, Kucha, Kashgar, and Yanqi, but they were unable to support themselves. For example, by 742, 5,000 troops lived in Turfan, but the local tax covered less than 10 per cent of their expenses.

Money and goods from the rest of the empire fed short-distance trade in the area for essentials, and also supported long-distance trade with the Iranian empire of the Sogdians. This influence ended with the An Lushan Rebellion, and during the second half of the eighth century, first the Tibetans and then the Uighurs took over cities such as Turfan, which would not return to Chinese control until the Qing expansion to the West nearly 1,000 years later.[12]

The Silk Road wasn't the only route along which foreign goods and people made their way to the markets of Chinese cities. The shipping routes that had connected Jiankang to Southeast Asia and India via Guangzhou stretched all the way to Basra and other cities in Persia. This trade transformed Guangzhou into a bustling city of 200,000 people, the majority foreign. Its prosperity waned in the second half of the eighth century since it was raided by Arabs and Persians in 758, and it was the seat of a rebellion against the empire in 763. While the city survived, by the end of the Tang, its monopoly on foreign trade had been broken.[13]

Urban Planning and Governance

China Divided: The Northern and Southern Dynasties

As the Han Dynasty collapsed, Cao Cao made his base in the city of Ye. It was roughly square, and it had one main street extending from east to west, and three streets from the south gates to intersect with the palace city in the north, leaving the south for residential use and military garrisons. This T-shaped plan was to be repeated in other capitals including

[12] Hansen, *Silk Road*, 107 8, 111, 211.
[13] Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 11 12, 14 16.

Tang Chang'an and Ming-Qing Beijing. The palace towered over the city, rising into the sky on terraces up to 25 m high.

Equally impressive were the city's fortifications. There was a tower every 100 m along brick-faced walls, and the gates were protected by towers two storeys high. Luoyang, the Wei capital, also only had one palace, although there was a fortified area in the north of the city, which may also have been a secondary palace or pleasure quarters. It was linked to gate towers and pavilions by elevated paths that ran the length of the city. The Wei reconstructed the important ritual structures of imperial power, and during the Western Jin dynasty, the ancestral temple and altars of the soil and grain were shifted to the south. A separate palace for the crown prince was also constructed to the east of the main palace city, a feature that would live on in other Chinese capitals down the centuries. The city also boasted forty-two Buddhist establishments and thousands of monks.[14]

After the fall of the Western Jin, members of the aristocracy brought with them ideas of how capital cities should be planned as they migrated south, and Sima Rui used Luoyang as a template for his new capital, Jiankang. He set up altars to the soil and grain and an ancestral temple on either side of the road heading due south of the palace city. This thoroughfare continued beyond the south gate over the Qinhuai River by way of a pontoon bridge 125 m long. The middle sections of this bridge could be moved to allow river traffic to pass, or the bridge could be dismantled altogether during times of invasion.

Some of the boats that sailed on the Qinhuai River were 100 m in length, and built in the city, which had a thriving shipbuilding industry. In cities in the north, markets were limited to specific areas, but in Jiankang, stalls lined the Qinhuai River and traders touted for business in front of temples. Buddhism had arrived in Jiankang with the movement south of elite families, and seven monasteries were constructed between 343 and 372. By the beginning of the sixth century, as many as 700 temples stood in Jiankang and the surrounding suburbs, with between 20,000 and 40,000 monks residing in the city. By this time, the initial bamboo wall with its fifty-six gates had been faced with brick, and so Jiankang was therefore not only more open plan than northern cities, but more open to the countryside outside. Gardens built by members of the aristocracy, who wanted to bring something of the flavour of their rural estates into the city, further blurred the boundary between rural and urban landscapes.[15]

[14] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 5 6, 8 12, 98, 106 9; Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 20.

[15] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 17 19, 132 7; Liu Shufen, 'Jiankang and the Commercial Empire of the Southern Dynasties', 37 41.

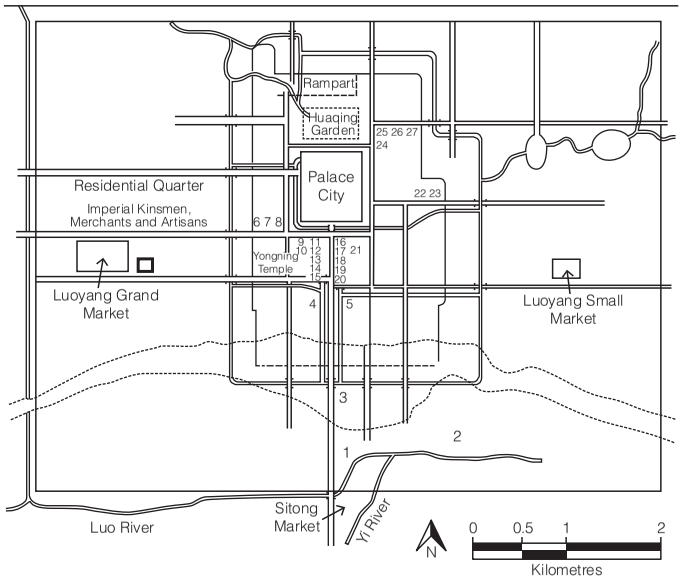
While Jiankang flourished in the south, in the north, new influences in the shape of nomadic tribes known as the Xiongnu from beyond China's northern borders altered urban form during the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms. Edward Schafer coined the term *Chinastan* to explain the hybrid mix of cultures, languages, and races that characterized north China during this period. Most capitals retained the single palace city, with ancestral temples and altars to the soil and grain testifying to continuing Chinese influence.

Of all the capitals of the Sixteen Kingdoms, Guzang in Gansu, the capital of the Fomer Liang, departed farthest from Chinese norms. It was divided into a central walled core and then four separately walled appendages at each of the four cardinal points, which may have been home to the emperor in different seasons of the year. This suggests Chinese influence, although a Buddhist source cannot be ruled out. Either way, this city appears unique in Chinese urban planning. Contrast this with Tongwan in Shaanxi, which was the capital of the Xia Dynasty for fourteen years in the early fifth century. The outer walls of the city had thirty-seven battlements – roughly one every 30 m – four towers at the corners of the walls, and four large gate towers. Inside was a palace city, ritual structures, and statues that would have been familiar to citizens of Han Dynasty Chang'an and Luoyang. However, some sources describe the city as filled with tents, horses, sheep, and oxen. For the Xiongnu rulers, Tongwan may have been a place where they could store their wealth as Dadu, the capital of the Yuan Dynasty, would be several centuries later.

Of all the capitals in the north, Northern Wei Luoyang, depicted in Figure 2.1, probably best illustrates how non-Han peoples combined Han customs with external influences, in this case Buddhism. In 398, building began on Pingcheng to transform it into an imperial capital. The palace city was completed in 420, and an ancestral temple and altars to the soil and grain were constructed. The city was divided into wards, which held between 60 and 500 households, while twelve gates pierced the outer walls, the same number as in the Han Dynasty capitals.

Edward Jenner suggests that Sinification may have been driven by Empress Dowager Feng, who wielded great power from 465 until her death in 490. She was a devout Buddhist, and by 476, Pingcheng had about 100 monasteries.[16] After the movement of the capital to Luoyang, Emperor Xiaowendi sent emissaries south to Jiankang to observe the palaces there, which had themselves been designed to emulate those of

[16] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 18 19, 23 7, 33 5; Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 26 7, 30.



Key to Figure 2.1

1 Ling Platform
2 Imperial College
3 Jingming Temple
4 Ministry of Military Education
5 Military Office
6 Taipu Temple
7 Cavalry Department
8 Combat Department
9 Yushi Platform
10 Yongning Temple
11 Department of Guards
12 Army Department
13 Baton
14 Military Department
15 Temple of God of Grain
16 Department of Guards
17 Situ Office
18 Imperial College
19 Zongzheng Temple
20 Imperial Ancestral Temple
21 Jingle Temple
22 Government Department
23 Storage Department
24 Agricultural Department
25 Department for Farmland
26 Agricultural Department
27 Irrigation Department

Figure 2.1 Northern Wei Luoyang

Western Jin Luoyang nearly two centuries before. Indeed, the walls of the former capital now made up the palace complex in the enlarged capital.

To the north, Hualin Park and the Mang Mountains limited urban growth, so Luoyang expanded south. Following the conventions laid down at Ye, a road ran straight from the palace city to the south gate, and an east-west road, some 40 m wide, ran the length of the city. There were probably 220 wards of varying sizes, with two markets and a granary. This strict segregation divided the populace. Most Han officials resided in the east, although some palaces stood to the south, where many of the monasteries were located. South of the Luo River was considered the most undesirable area, partly because most of the thousands of permanent foreign residents of the city lived there. There were also hostels for travellers, many of whom sold their wares at the Four Directions Market near the river. The west of the city housed some of the great palaces of the Wei princes and the Great Market.[17]

Northern Wei Luoyang was famous for its Buddhist monasteries, and 1,367 religious institutions were scattered throughout the city. The best known is Yongningsi. At its heart was 'a nine-storeyed pagoda built with a wooden frame that rose 900 feet high. Its golden pole rose another 100 feet so that its total height was 1000 feet. You could see it even at a distance of 100 *li* from the capital'. North of the pagoda was the Buddha hall. 'The monk's cells, the towers and their pavilions made up over 1,000 rooms . . . Junipers, cypresses, firs, and cedars spread over the eaves while bamboo clumps and fragrant herbs grew around the steps.'[18]

Yongningsi represents the culmination of several centuries of development of Buddhist architecture in China. In India, the stupa was originally an egg-shaped mound beneath which Buddhist relics were buried. Stupas in Xinjiang date from the Western Han Dynasty, and in cities such as Loulan, they rose high above monasteries. The form evolved, and miniature pagodas found in Buddhist caves may have represented those in Northern Wei Pingcheng, while remains of a four-sided pagoda have been excavated at a site just north of that city.

The Buddha hall that housed 1,000 monks in Yongningsi in Luoyang also had its origins in Indian *vihara*, which were enclosed courtyards containing multiple cells where the monks lived.[19] Buddhist halls were the focus of

[17] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 35 7; Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 106 13.
[18] Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 148 9.
[19] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 98 104, 122, 176 9; Fu Xinian, 'Three Kingdoms, Western and Eastern Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties', 85 6.

worship, but it was pagodas that touched the clouds high above the urban skyline, and for centuries they were the tallest buildings in Chinese cities.

In Luoyang, the influence of Buddhism was also present in gardens, many of which were in monasteries and mansions of the elite. The garden of the minister of agriculture was particularly lavish. It had a mountain that

> looked quite natural; there was range upon range of towering crags, while deep chasms and cavernous gullies fought each other. Tall forests of giant trees blotted out the sun and moon; mists drifted in the wind through hanging creepers and dangling vines. Rough stone paths would seem impassable and yet allow a way through; the beds of torrents would twist around and then run straight. A lover of mountains and wilds could wander there till he forgot to return.[20]

China United: From the Sui to the Tang Dynasty

Tang Dynasty Chang'an was just as much a hybrid of urban form as any of its forebears, and it is shown in Figure 2.2.

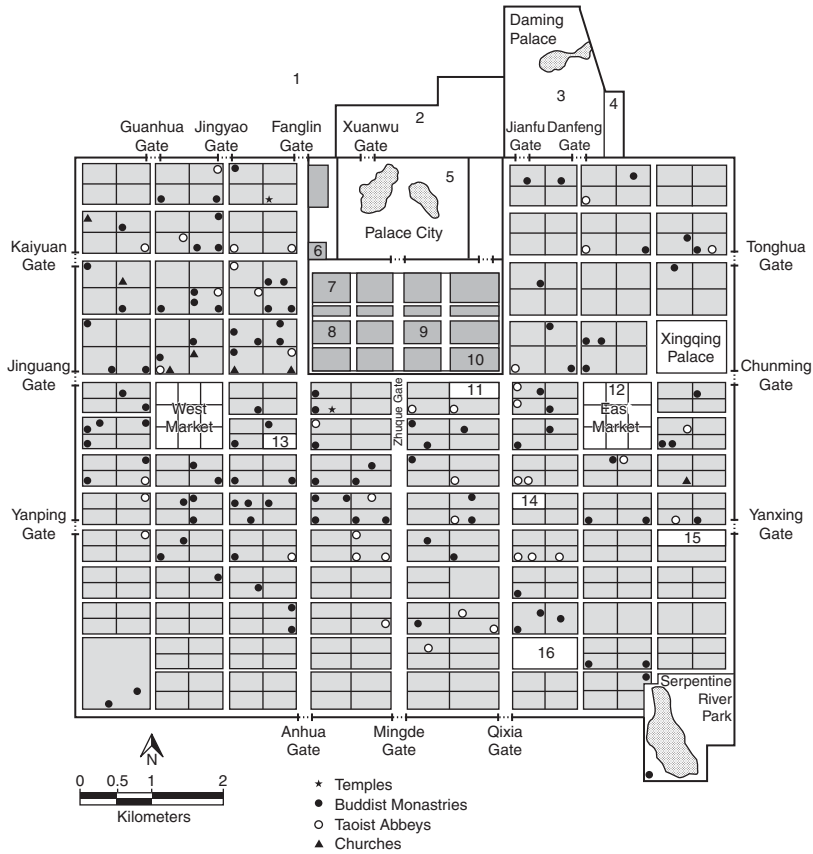
Sui Wendi's edict of 582 explaining why he wanted to build a new capital at Chang'an invoked historical precedent by referring to previous rulers who had moved their capital. The new city – initially called Daxingcheng – was built on a site 10 km southeast of the old Han capital. Inside the outer wall of pounded earth was the imperial city to the north, housing the main administrative offices of government, and then the palace city to the north of that. The division between the palace city and the imperial city was the first time in Chinese history that this had occurred, and it would continue to be a feature of capitals throughout the rest of the imperial era.

This layout reflected in part the dictates of the *Kaogongji*, with gates in the outer wall providing access to the major avenues of the city, which in the case of the main east-west thoroughfare was 220 m across and in the case of Vermilion Bird Road, which ran north to south, was 155 m wide. The altars of soil and grain were just south of the imperial palace to the west of Vermilion Bird Road, and the ancestral temple was directly opposite, with the Round Mound outside the southern outer gate.[21]

The city was divided into more than 100 wards, the largest of which were criss-crossed with streets, and consisted of up to sixteen subsections, with gates on two or more sides. There were two main markets in Chang'an in the east and west of the city. They were approximately one

[20] Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 189.

[21] Victor Xiong, *Sui Tang Chang'an: A Study in the Urban History of Late Medieval China* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 35 7, 43; Fu Xinian, 'The Sui, Tang and Five Dynasties', in Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil, 200 600* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 93 5, 98.



Key to Figure 2.2

1 Cherry orchard, pear grove, vineyard, football field, polo grounds

2 Ice pits for food refrigeration

3 Archery hall, bath hall, drum and bell towers, cockfighting arena

4 Football field

5 Archery hall, polo ground, football field, drum and bell towers

6 Seat of the eunuch agency

7 Imperial factories

8 Imperial stables and hay fields

9 Halls for civil and military examinations

10 Imperial ancestral temple

11 Capital schools, such as colleges for law, maths, and calligraphy

12 East market, ironmongers' lane

13 Office of Chang' an mayor

14 City archives

15 Southern part of ward given over to graves

16 Government garden

Figure 2.2 Tang Dynasty Chang'an

square kilometre in size, with wide central avenues for the large flow of traffic. Being located near wards with rich residents, the eastern market dealt in high-quality goods, while the western market was for items of daily use.

Within the markets, shops selling similar products were arranged in rows known as *hang*. There may have been as many as 220 different *hang* in the eastern market, with 6,000 shops and 1,000 warehouses and hostels. While there was likely cooperation between individual shop owners, trade associations were yet to emerge. Markets were managed by a market director who enforced standard weights and measures, oversaw quality control, certified transactions, prevented extortion, and maintained law and order. He also enforced opening times. The start of business was marked by 300 beats of the drum at noon and at sunset, 300 beats of bronze gongs announced the end of the trading day. Markets were not the only place in Chang'an where inhabitants did their shopping: there were stalls across the city. There were also hostels for visitors, restaurants, teahouses, and wine shops opened late into the night, and the pleasure quarters were in the east.

In Chang'an, the palace city was governed directly by the emperor's household, and the imperial city housed the many offices of central government. The capital prefecture covered the entire central plains area and comprised between eighteen and twenty-three counties. The prefectural office was located close to the western market, and the capital prefect oversaw law and order and city maintenance.

The city was also divided into two counties, the offices of which were located in the south, away from the imperial city. As in other counties across China, magistrates were the primary authority, and they managed a variety of urban functions, including law and order. However, certain key aspects of the city such as the market and policing remained under the control of the central government.[22] Chang'an was the largest and most important city in Tang China, but the secondary capital, Luoyang, also contained palace and imperial cities. It too was organized in a grid pattern, with 103 wards, and had three main markets, the busiest of which was the north market on the banks of the Luo River, which reportedly had space for 10,000 boats from across the country. Merchants, sailors, and visitors stayed in the many hotels in the vicinity, while to the south the aristocracy built large mansions and gardens.[23]

Capital cities conformed most closely to those historical aspects of Chinese urban planning and governance that survived the intervening

[22] Xiong, *Sui Tang Chang'an*, 108 28, 167 92, 195 201, 209 10.
[23] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 29 32.

period between the Han and the Sui Dynasties. However, hybrid forms emerged in other cities, many in frontier regions, and nowhere is this more in evidence than in Turfan, which had been under the control of Chinese dynasties from 60 BCE to 450 CE.

In 502, the Qu family rulers adopted a Chinese governance structure and gave the gates of their walled city Chinese names. In 640, when the Gaochang kingdom fell, it became another prefecture in the Tang empire. Gaochang City was walled, with the palace area to the north outside the inner wall and a Buddhist monastery with a market to the southwest, which the Tang authorities divided into groups of vendors selling similar products. They also divided the city into wards, a system the Uighur authorities continued to use after the Tang withdrew from the area.[24]

Moving south, as this description from the appendix to 'The Record of the Lands of Wu', shows, local geographical features had a major impact on urban form.

> The city wall measures 12 *li* [6.6 km] from north to south and 9 *li* [4.95 km] from east to west. Great canals run through the middle of the city, three horizontal and four vertical. The name of Suzhou is known in all the regions, and these lands are praised in every kingdom; it has seven counties [under its auspices] and eight gates, all of which are connected by roads and waterways. In the commandery seat, there are more than three hundred lanes; the two counties of Wu and Chang[zhou] consist of sixty ancient wards and have more than three hundred bridges.[25]

Canals were Suzhou's lifeblood, providing water and a means of transport for the city's residents, while the hundreds of bridges criss-crossing the waterways also helped give the city a distinctive urban layout. The wards were probably not the strict divisions that they were in the north, both because southern cities tended to be more open, and because Suzhou's large size and relatively small population meant it was difficult to control the movement of people within the walls. As in other cities, Buddhism left its permanent mark on the urban landscape – seventeen temples had been founded in the Liang Dynasty during the first two decades of the sixth century.[26]

Further south, Guangzhou flourished, and its population of 200,000 included many immigrants from Southeast Asia, India, and Persia. The city was triple walled and surrounded by thatched wooden houses that often burned down. As in Chang'an and other cities, the main market opened at noon and closed at sunset, but wares could also be traded in night markets throughout the city. Most foreigners lived in an area to the

[24] Hansen, *Silk Road*, 90 1, 105.
[25] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 88. [26] Ibid., 214 16, 236 8.

south of the river, and included Indian Buddhists who worshipped in their own temple and Shia Muslims who built their own mosque. They were ruled by a specially designated elder, and may have enjoyed some extraterritorial privileges. This mechanism, more familiar to us from its nineteenth-century incarnation, was a practice by which foreign immigrants were not governed by Chinese laws.[27]

Elsewhere, walled cities at the prefectural and county levels were governed by the local magistrate or prefect, who conducted business in his administrative office, known as a *yamen*. Among other things, the magistrate and his staff were responsible for the upkeep of roads, bridges, waterways, and other local infrastructure. Markets in larger cities were organized into *hang* in the same way as in the capital, and some markets were held outside the city walls.

As in the capital, markets were governed by a market director who with his assistants was expected to control commerce, assess the quality of goods, fix standard prices, manage foreign merchants, and maintain law and order. He was also expected to enforce curfew, since just as in Chang'an the markets opened at noon with 300 drumbeats, while 300 beats of the gong before sunset told vendors when to shut up shop.[28]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

China Divided: The Northern and Southern Dynasties

By the Han Dynasty, the capital city had come to represent the ideal of imperial power, and this was reflected in its layout, imperial rituals, and the poetry of those who wrote about it. This left a legacy that was to shape Chinese cities for the rest of the imperial period. However, different interpretations of the meaning and use of urban space began to emerge. The imperial family, officials, and even rich merchants moulded, inhabited, and wrote about urban space. These poems often continued to serve as a commentary on contemporary politics, but they also brought the cities alive, and so they tell us much about their similarities and differences.

Zuo Si's rhapsodies on the Three Kingdom capitals of Shu, Wu, and Northern Wei have been described as a proto-ethnography written for a newly cultivated urban elite. The three poems about Chengdu, Jianye, and Ye draw on local sources to describe the urban landscape, the lavish

[27] Schafer, *Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 15.
[28] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 36 9; Denis Twitchett, 'The T'ang Market System', *Asia Minor* Vol. 12, no. 2 (1966), 218 21, 226.

lifestyles of rich families, and the highways and byways of markets selling local products.[29]

> In Chengdu, the market is located in the lesser city, where:
> Carts and carriages clog the roads;
> The 'caps and sashes' crowd the streets.
> Massing hub to hub, lapping track after track,
> Scattering and sprawling, they push each other out of the way . . .
> Inside the market walls and gates
> Are the artisans' homes.
> In detached rooms of countless houses
> Weavers' shuttles clack harmoniously together.
> Shell brocade is elegantly fashioned,
> Its colours rinsed in the river's waves.
> Yellow Sheen lined up in tubes
> Is worth more than baskets of gold.[30]

The 'caps-and-sashes' refers to officials who here wander freely through the market, something they were later prevented from doing under the strict laws of the early Tang Dynasty. Artisans produced two important local products: shell-brocade, which had to be washed in the Yangzi River to create its distinctive pattern, although in Chengdu it was probably the nearby Min River that was used, and a fine cloth known as Yellow Sheen.[31]

The market in Chengdu was enclosed and so typical of Chinese cities. By contrast, the market in Jianye, described in the following extract, ran along the waterfront, while the storied boats, which could have as many as five decks, brought life out onto the water itself.

> They open the market and admit people from far and wide;
> Thronging crowds clog the gates like a river in flood.
> Sellers, sorting their goods, share the same plot;
> Here do city dweller and countrymen join, blended into one.
> Gentlemen and ladies hover about gawking at the merchandise;
> Merchants and pedlars huddle shoulder to shoulder.
> Garbed in ramie and kudzu cloth,
> Chaotically congested, they are massed and crowded together.
> Light chariots, under slack rain, pass through the market streets;
> Storied boats, sails unfurled, pass by the waterfront stalls.[32]

[29] Lewis, *China between the Empires*, 89 91.
[30] Zuo Taichong, 'Three Capitals Rhapsody', in David R. Knechtges (trans.), *Wenxuan, or Selections of Refined Literature Volume One: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 361.
[31] Ibid., 360. [32] Ibid., 402 3.

In Ye, we have a depiction of an enclosed market that is closest to that of the Han capitals. Interestingly the merchants are portrayed as scrupulously honest, perhaps in contrast to those seeking a fast buck in other cities.

> Elaborating on the Old Three Markets, merchants have started up shops;
> Tucked along the level thoroughfares, they radiate in all directions.
> Place walls and gates as 'collar and girdle'.
> They have alleviated fluctuations in supply and demand;
> At high noon, everyone converges on the marketplace . . .
> In the hundreds of shop rows carts strike hub to hub,
> And follow in a continuous line, ten thousand strong.
> Leaning on crossbars, lashing their steeds,
> These market patrons, sleeves gathered like tents, scurry and scatter.
> They assemble from the eight directions, coalesce into a solid mass;
> It is the most wondrous show of elegance and glitter!
> With contracts fairly concluded, sales are made;
> Spade and knife coins are exchanged in countless numbers.[33]

In addition to having distinct urban identities, these three cities are rivals. The Shu Capital Rhapsody states of Chengdu,

> What city in the world can surpass it?
> Even all the wealth of the central plain
> Cannot match the boundless riches of this capital.[34]

Meanwhile, the Wu Capital Rhapsody claims that,

> As for the comparison between Shu in the west and Wu in the east,
> The vast discrepancy in their respective sizes
> Is like the glow of a firefly in a thorn grove
> Compared with the Torth Dragon on the Thousand Mile Tree.[35]

However, both cities are nothing compared to Ye, as the two representatives from Chengdu and Jianye recognize at the end of this rhapsody.

> The master's speech had not yet ended,
> And the two guests from Wu and Shu looked at each other
> apprehensively;
> Dispirited, they lost all sense of where they were.
> They had shamefaced, embarrassed expressions;
> Their spirits turned downcast, their features haggard.[36]

Huaigu poetry was another form that reflects the rising consciousness of Chinese urban civilization. In this genre, the poet visits an ancient abandoned site that is now in ruins, laments its former glory, and finds in it

[33] Ibid., 453. [34] Ibid., 371. [35] Ibid., 427. [36] Ibid., 475.

a lesson for the present.[37] Of course, such sites did not have to be whole cities, but this was often the case, as in this early example about Luoyang written in the third century.

> The palaces and houses are all burned to the ground.
> The walls and enclosures have all fallen and crumbled;
> Thorns and briars rise and touch the sky . . .
> For a thousand leagues there is no smoke from houses.
> As I think on this place that was once my home,
> My breath catches, and I cannot speak.[38]

Cao Zhi's lament for Luoyang was perhaps premature, for this city was to rise again as the capital of the Northern Wei. It was certainly wealthy. In the Princes' Quarter, members of the aristocracy

> competed in building gardens and mansions, boasting to each other of their achievements. They erected splendid gateways, sumptuous houses whose doors connected one with the next, flying passageways to catch the breezes, and high buildings shrouded with mist. Tall towers and fragrant terraces were built in every home, and each garden had flowering copses and twisting pools.[39]

The aristocrats may have been influenced by the gardens of Jiankang when they built their mansions and, like the imperial family, they had the power to mould the urban landscape to their satisfaction. However, wealth in Luoyang was not confined to the aristocracy, much to aristocrats' displeasure, since even the slaves of rich craftsmen and merchants were said to wear expensive clothes. In the early sixth century, 'it was proposed to the throne that as artisans and merchants were usurping privileges to which they had no right, they should not be allowed to wear gold, silver or embroidered silk. Although such a ban was issued it remained a dead letter'.[40] With so many people from beyond the borders of the Northern Wei settled in the city, it is no surprise that exotic goods made their way to the tables of the wealthy. Yang describes a banquet given by Prince Shen, notorious for his wealth and corruption. On the table were wine vessels that included 'dozens of crystal cups, bowls of agate and glass, and red jade goblets. They were all exquisitely made in ways not known in the central lands as they all came from the West'.[41]

[37] David R. Knechtges, 'Ruin and Remembrance in Classical Chinese Literature: The "Fu on the Ruined City" by Bao Zhao', in Paul W. Kroll, ed., *Reading Medieval Chinese Poetry: Text, Context and Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 55.
[38] Quoted in ibid., 63 4. [39] Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 241 2. [40] Ibid., 240.
[41] Ibid., 243.

However, cosmopolitanism could also breed contempt.[42] At a banquet in 529, Counsellor Yang Duanshen and Palace Counsellor Wang Xuan were the only guests from the northern plains. Chen Qingchi, an imperial assistant from the south, got drunk and said, 'The Wei Dynasty is flourishing but it is still referred to as a barbarian one. The true succession should be south of the Yangtse.'

Yang Duanshen retorted, 'Much of your land is wet; it is cursed with malaria and crawling with insects. Frogs and toads share a single hole while men live in the same flocks with birds ... Floating on the Three Rivers or rowing on the Five Lakes you are untouched by the Rites and the Music and cannot be reformed by official statutes.'[43]

Some time later, Chen Qingchi is recorded as being in a more conciliatory mood, noting that while the north had been called a desolate region, 'On my recent visit to Loyang I found out that families of capped and gowned scholars live on the northern plains, where proper ceremony and protocol flourish. I cannot find words to describe the magnificent personages I saw. In the language of the old saying, the imperial capital was majestic, a model for the four quarters.'[44]

This exchange illustrates how important Han Dynasty rituals and cultural markers of civilization remained in capital cities and other major urban centres in the north. The same tone of cultural superiority can be seen in the description of foreigners who had made their homes in Luoyang.

> 100 countries and 1,000 cities all gladly attached themselves to us; foreign traders and merchants came hurrying through the passes every day ... The number of those who made their homes there because they enjoyed the atmosphere of China was beyond counting; there were over 10,000 families of those who had come over to our way of life ... As all the rare goods of the world were concentrated there another market, the Four Directions Market, was founded south of the Lo River.[45]

The wealthy residents of Luoyang also supported the spread of Buddhism, another foreign import. Yongningsi, discussed earlier in this chapter, was founded by the empress dowager, while other monasteries and convents in the city were established by members of the aristocracy, officials, and eunuchs. These monasteries not only altered the landscape of cities in China, but added to the spiritual and social life of those living in them. Of course they were to be found in the countryside as well, but that does not make the worship and festivals that took place in them any

[42] With the exception of names in quotations, I have changed the names here from the Wade Giles Romanization system to Pinyin.
[43] Ibid., 201. [44] Ibid., 203. [45] Ibid., 220.

less a part of urban culture, since they brought people who perhaps might not normally mix together into close proximity. There were regular Buddhist festivals throughout the year, such as the Lantern Festival, celebrated for three days and nights in the middle of the first lunar month of the year, during which cities were lit up at night.[46] At the Qingming monastery in Luoyang, the celebration of the Buddha's birthday was an important event.

> On the seventh day of the fourth month all the statues in the capital were brought to this monastery. According to the Department of Sacrifices of the Chancellery, they numbered over 1,000. On the eighth the statues were taken in through the Hsüan yang Gate to the front of the Chang ho Palace where the Emperor scat tered flowers on them. The gold and the flowers dazzled in the sun, and the jewelled canopies floated like clouds; there were forests of banners and a fog of incense, and the Buddhist music of India shook heaven and earth. All kinds of entertainers and trick riders performed shoulder to shoulder. Virtuous hosts of famous monks came, carrying their staves; there were crowds of the Buddhist faithful, holding flowers; horsemen and carriages were packed beside each other in an endless mass. When a monk from the West saw all this he would proclaim that this was indeed a land of the Buddha.[47]

Buddhist monasteries provided other opportunities for the people of Luoyang to mix together. Buddhist societies composed of hundreds or on occasions thousands of laymen were established to assist with statue building.[48] Monasteries could also provide freshwater from their wells and some, such as the Bao Guang Monastery, even had bathhouses.

> On fine mornings the gentlemen of the capital would ask for bath leave and invite their friends to make a trip to this temple with them. Their carriages would pack in crossboard to crossboard, and their feathered canopies made a continuous shade. Sometimes they amused themselves by drinking wine among the trees and streams, writing poems about the flowers, breaking off the lotus roots, and floating gourds.[49]

Finally, monasteries were not just places for religion, festivals, and socializing, but also supported manufacturing, especially water-powered mills for grinding grain into flour, a fairly recent innovation first recorded in an imperial park in Jiankang in the latter fifth century.[50]

Buddhism also provided opportunities for women. The first convents were established in Luoyang in the fourth century and quickly spread across China. Some women had lost their husbands and others were avoiding marriage or motherhood. Nuns had opportunities to travel and

[46] Kenneth Kuan Sheng Che'en, *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), 261, 263, 271, 276 81.
[47] Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 208. [48] Ibid., 282 3. [49] Ibid., 234.
[50] Che'en, *Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, 151 6; Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 283.

pursue an education, and emperors or aristocratic families often played host, receiving blessings in return.[51]

Northern Wei Luoyang was clearly a vibrant imperial capital, a mixture of northern and southern traditions of city planning and daily life. It was also multi-ethnic and religiously tolerant, housing people from across China and far beyond its borders. However, like Han Dynasty Luoyang, it fell, and that fall was lamented in a similar way. *Luoyang qielan ji* opens with these words which remind us that the presence of urban civilization is seen in the memory of its past glories as much as its contemporary brilliance.

> The city walls had collapsed, palaces and houses were in ruins; Buddhist and Daoist temples were in ashes; and shrines and pagodas were mere heaps of rubble. Walls were covered with artemisia, and streets were full of thorns. The beasts of the field had made their holes in the overgrown palace steps, and the mountain birds had nested in the courtyard trees. Wandering herdsmen loitered in the highways, and farmers had planted millet between the ceremonial towers before the palace.[52]

Few descriptions exist of daily life in southern cities. Jiankang like Jianye before it was an open commercial city, so the market along the river described in the Wu Capital Rhapsody may not have changed all that much over the passage of time. However, gardens were new urban spaces and, as illustrated in this anecdote, could be famous in themselves.

> When Wang Xianzhi was passing through Wu on his way from Guki, he heard that Gu Bijiang had a celebrated garden there. Although he had no previous acquaint ance with the owner, he went straight to his home. At that time Gu was entertain ing guests at a drinking banquet in the garden, but Wang wandered freely about, pointing out what he liked or disliked, acting as though there was no one else around.[53]

Southern cities could also be destroyed, and the Northern Wei army's destruction of Guangling, modern-day Yangzhou, provides us with possibly the best-known example of *huaigu* poetry. This is Bao Zhao's *Wucheng Fu* (*The Weed-Covered City*), probably written in 451. His poem, which laments the fall of the city at the end of the Han, is rich with urban imagery.[54] It opens with a short description of the location of the city as a transport node along a canal connecting the Yangzi and Huai Rivers, and emphasizes how its prosperity during the Han was built on copper and salt. This contrasts with the scene after the city's fall, as weeds grow amidst the ruins.

[51] Brett Hinsch, *Women in Imperial China* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 65 7.
[52] Jenner, *Memories of Luoyang*, 142.
[53] Quoted in Lewis, *China between the Empires*, 98 9.
[54] Knechtges, 'Ruin and Remembrance in Classical Chinese Literature', 73 9.

The surrounding moat had already been leveled,
The lofty turrets too have fallen.
Looking straight ahead for a thousand leagues and beyond,
One only sees rising yellow dust.
Focus one's thoughts, quietly listen:
The heart is pained and broken.[55]

China Reunited: From the Sui to the Tang Dynasties

The unification of China under the Sui and the Tang Dynasties brought prosperity and wealth once more to Chinese cities. Chang'an contained the same ritual structures that had come to define Chinese imperial power. Emperors continued to offer sacrifices at the ancestral temple and the altars of the soil and grain, but the Round Mound and altars to the cardinal directions increased in importance as the rituals performed there came to be seen as of more help to the dynasty.[56] These rituals remained largely separate from the day-to-day urban hustle and bustle of Chang'an. However, there were times when the people of the city got to see their emperor on display.

Emperors entertained at important ceremonies such as enthronements or military reviews, to celebrate a happy event such as the birth of a son, or when going hunting. Feasts took place in the imperial palaces and parks, but could also be held in the homes of members of the imperial family, officials, and monasteries in Chang'an and Luoyang. The guest list often included hundreds of officials who were entertained with a variety of circus acts and who could play polo, football, or board games.

When the emperor travelled, the court moved with him. The most frequent journey, which was from Chang'an to Luoyang and took up to twenty-five days, was often undertaken when famine threatened the capital. Between 637 and 735, the emperor and his retinue travelled the 285 miles between the two cities twenty-nine times. So frequent were the trips that it made sense for members of the imperial family and officials to keep houses and mansions in Luoyang, while people living along the route were granted tax remission to enable them to provide for the imperial cortege.[57]

The rich source base for Chang'an allows us to reconstruct an image of what an aristocrat's life in the city might have been like in the first half of the eighth century. He lived in a mansion in the northeast or east of the

[55] Quoted in ibid., 83. [56] Xiong, *Sui Tang Chang'an*, 161 4.
[57] Benn, *China's Golden Age*, 132 7, 143, 188.

city alongside high officials such as the daughter of Wu Zetian, a number of eunuchs, and An Lushan (before he turned rebel).[58]

His house would most likely have been built using the modular system with a timber frame of columns and brackets supporting the rafters upon which were laid tiles to make the roof. The walls were brick or wood, while the windows were made of oiled paper or silk and covered with intricate latticework to protect them from the wind. The walls were plastered and often painted with animals, landscape, or calligraphy. Houses were laid out in a series of courtyards, around which were rooms such as libraries, a treasury, and a bathhouse. Our aristocrat had a garden, which was probably full of tree peonies, since there was something of a craze for these flowers in this period and they could be very expensive.[59]

Our aristocrat enjoyed wealth from across the empire and beyond its borders, and with the Silk Road connecting China to the world, there was a real taste for the exotic. Indeed, some aristocrats abandoned their courtyard dwellings altogether, living in tents, eating only foreign food, and speaking Turkish. Women rode about the city streets in Turkish caps and dressed in men's clothes and boots. Within the house, incense burned in ornate braziers, scented candles lulled the weary to sleep, and men and women carried sachets of perfume in their clothes and bathed in scented water, while courtesans also used perfumes as aphrodisiacs. When sitting down to eat, our aristocratic family might tuck into golden peaches, which originated in Samarkand but were grown in Chang'an, as well as dates, bananas, and melons, the latter kept fresh in iceboxes. Grapes first appeared in the capital in 647, and vines in Gansu and Shanxi produced wine.[60]

The lavish lifestyles of the rich and famous are alluded to in Lu Chaolin's *Chang'an Kuyi*, which Stephen Owen argues is the best of the Capital Poems that, drawing on the rhapsodies of the Han and the *huaigu* poetry of the northern and southern dynasties, describe Chang'an in the first half of the sixth century.[61] The poem begins in the city's streets, with rich nobles visiting each other in the springtime.

> Chang'an's broad avenues link up with narrow lanes,
> The black and white horses, coaches of fragrant woods,
> Jade fit palanquins go left and right past the mansions of lords,
> Gold riding whips in a long train move toward barons' homes.
> Dragons bite jeweled canopies, catching the morning sun,

[58] Xiong, *Sui Tang Chang'an*, 218 19, 222 3.
[59] Fu Xinian, 'Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties', 127; Benn, *China's Golden Age*, 75 87; Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire*, 111.
[60] Schafer, *Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, 28 9, 117 22, 145, 155 63.
[61] Stephen Owen, *The Poetry of the Early T'ang* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 103 5, 108 11.

> The phoenix disgorges dangling fringe, draped with the evening's red clouds.
> A hundred yards of gossamer strands strain to enwrap the trees,
> While a single graceful flock of birds join their cries among flowers.
> Cries among flowers, playful butterflies, by the palace's thousand gates,
> The emerald trees, the silver terraces, thousands of different colors.
> Double decked passageways, intertwined windows make the union of lovers.[62]

This vibrant image soon turns sour.

> But those you gaze on before great buildings are those you do not know,
> And those you meet upon the paths, no acquaintances of yours.[63]

Urban alienation breeds loneliness and perhaps danger, which the constabulary and censorate do little to negate.

> In the office of the Censorate the crows cry by night,
> By the constabulary gate the sparrows go to roost.[64]

From here, movement through the city is furtive, a search for companionship among the courtesans and markets, until at the end of the poem, the hermit Yang Hsiung rejects the city in its entirety. Here we see two emotional responses to urban life that are experienced the world over. One is positive, embracing what the city has to offer; the other is negative and fearful and ultimately rejects urban life.

The Tang state certainly saw the city as a dangerous place, and it imposed restrictions on people's movements in an effort to maintain order. From 627, officials of rank five and above were not allowed in the markets, while elsewhere their movements were announced with drums. Chang'an and other Chinese cities were certainly noisy places. At 5 AM, drums were sounded at the Chengtian Gate, the southern main entrance to the palace city. They were echoed by 3,000 beats of drums at every main street, and so the day began. At dusk, after 400 beats, the Chengtian Gate was closed, and then after 600 more beats, all the city and ward gates were also closed.

Travel within wards was permitted during the curfew, but woe betide anyone caught by the city's militia outside after curfew without good reason. Punishment was twenty strokes with bamboo, and ninety strokes for anyone who tried to climb over the ward walls. It was also forbidden to climb the walls of the palace city, and a year in prison awaited anyone who even looked inside from above. It was hard to evade

[62] Quoted in ibid., 105. [63] Quoted in ibid., 105 6. [64] Quoted in ibid., 106.

capture, as the main city gates were guarded by 100 policemen, with 20 on smaller gates to wards. In the street, there were also punishments for speeding coachmen or riders.[65] This curfew and these other regulations were enforced to a greater or lesser extent in Tang cities across the empire.

Despite this segregation and the limits on movement, there were times and places where much or all of the city's population mixed together. The first was the market, and there were two in Chang'an. The western market formed the terminus of the Silk Road and housed a large number of foreign residents. Visitors could purchase a wide range of goods, eat a huge variety of foods, get drunk in one of the taverns, visit brothels, and watch executions.[66]

The city's population also came out into the streets and temples during festivals. During the Lantern Festival, the curfew was lifted and people travelled around the city. Perhaps even more spectacular were the grand carnivals, which had their origins in the great feasts of the Qin Dynasty. There were sixty-nine carnivals between 628 and 758, most of them on the occasion of state sacrifices to the gods, and they were held across the empire. For several days, the great avenues of Chang'an were chock-a-block with tents, entertainers, and food stalls. The highlight was a parade of floats, which could be five storeys high and on which dancers, singers and acrobats cavorted. These carnivals were opportunities for people to get out and see and experience the spaces of the city, but they ceased after the An Lushan Rebellion as the government no longer had the money for them.[67]

Doubtless beggars were fixtures at such festivals. The scholar-official Yuan Jie wrote an essay about his friendship with a beggar in 748 in Chang'an, in which he argued that the practice of asking for food was more noble than that of the rich debasing themselves for money. This homily on the importance of not judging someone based on appearances is an excellent way to end this chapter.

> In ancient times, if there was no gentleman in the village, then people made friends with mountains and clouds. If there was no gentleman in the neigh bourhood, then people made friends with pine trees and cypresses [symbols of integrity]. If there was no gentleman nearby, a man would make friends with wine and musical instruments. As one travels one would make friends with anyone who is a gentleman. My beggar friend is the only gentleman of

[65] Xiong, *Sui T'ang Chang'an*, 212 13; Benn, *China's Golden Age*, 48, 51.
[66] Heng Chye Chiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 19 23.
[67] Benn, *China's Golden Age*, 154 7.

the day. I am only anxious that I may not be qualified to have a friend like him.[68]

Conclusion

After the reunification of China under the Sui Dynasty, the economic heart of the urban system was in the Lower Yangzi Delta, while its political centre was in the northern capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang. The An Lushan Rebellion and the withdrawal of the Tang Dynasty from the northwest meant that this pattern of development would continue to shape China's late imperial urban civilization. Urban form in the imperial capitals continued to bear the imprint of the *Kaogongji*, but centuries of modification brought about by influences from outside China's borders were felt even in the capital, Chang'an.

Elsewhere, commercial cities of the Lower Yangzi Delta were spread out along rivers and canals, while the port city of Guangzhou was open to maritime trade. Descriptions of these cities now reflected on urban life for its own sake, and in the Tang Dynasty, urban culture was led by the capital, Chang'an, with its restrictive ward system dividing social classes. However, goods and fashions from many parts of the world made their way into people's homes, and people celebrated birthdays of Buddhist or Daoist gods in the streets, their foreign origins now doubtless forgotten by many who had claimed them as part of their Chinese urban civilization.

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3 The Tang-Song Transition and Its Effects on China's Imperial Urban Civilization (907–1402)

Introduction

After the An Lushan Rebellion, the Tang Dynasty withdrew from western China while facing increasing threats from the north and south. Meanwhile, power devolved to regional governors, who set themselves up first as warlords and then as emperors of what are known as the Five Dynasties, which ruled the north after the collapse of the Tang in 907. The south was ruled by competing kingdoms governed by local elites instead of the Tang aristocratic families. The Northern Song Dynasty came to power in 960, and from the start was under threat of foreign invasion. The Khitans, a nomadic tribe in the northeast, set up the Liao Dynasty, and by the end of the tenth century, it controlled all of Manchuria and an area extending south to Beijing.

Meanwhile, the Tanguts established the Xi Xia Kingdom in the northwest, from where they attacked the Northern Song. In the northwestern Liao territory, Jurchen tribes rebelled against Khitan rule, establishing the Jin Dynasty in 1114. Jin troops rode into Song territory, and in 1127 the capital, Kaifeng, fell and with it the Northern Song Dynasty. The Jin ruled in the north, and the remnant of the Song government moved to the city of Hangzhou, where they founded the Southern Song Dynasty, with the Huai River as the border between the two empires.

The Mongol advance shattered this uneasy peace. Ghinggis Khan's troops destroyed the Xi Xia in 1227 and the Jin in 1234. The Southern Song proved incapable of standing up to attacks from Khubilai Khan, and Hangzhou fell in 1276, allowing the Yuan Dynasty to control all of China. After several decades, a variety of factors including institutional weakness and poor harvests led to internal rebellions. Zhu Yuanzhang, a poor peasant from south China, was able to lead his forces to capture Nanjing in 1356, and he made it the capital of the Ming Dynasty in 1368.

By the middle of the Song Dynasty, Chinese urban civilization had undergone a dramatic transformation. The changes that occurred from

the ninth to the twelfth centuries are commonly known as the Tang-Song transition. Migration south that had begun after the collapse of the Han Dynasty opened vast areas for settlement. The Lower Yangzi Delta was now confirmed as the economic, social, and cultural heart of the country, a position it would hold for the rest of the imperial period.

During the Tang-Song transition, urbanization created regionally distinct hierarchical networks of large and small cities, market towns, and villages, which were closely connected in complex economic, social, and political relationships. They were linked together via the Grand Canal when the capital was in the north, and this and other trading routes within and beyond China meant that goods, people, and ideas flowed more easily between cities and between city and countryside than ever before. These emerging regional urban systems proved remarkably resilient in the face of the Mongol invasion from the north. This is particularly the case in Jiangnan, a Chinese name for the Lower Yangzi Delta, which was spared much of the destruction that ravaged other parts of China, allowing the changes set in motion during the Tang-Song transition to continue. These changes were finally curtailed by Zhu Yuanzhang's restrictive economic policies, and the region only really began to recover in the second half of the fifteenth century.

Within Chinese capitals, emperors, aristocrats, and officials continued to be enclosed within palace and imperial cities. While urban form still bore the legacy of more than 1,000 years of Chinese city planning, there was room for foreign influences. Beijing became the capital of China for the first time during dynasties established by nomadic tribes from the north, who mixed their own ideas of urban form with Chinese norms. Outside the imperial and palace cities, the ward system broke down, and many smaller cities and towns had no walls at all. Now commerce could be found along every narrow alleyway, and it also brought new forms of social organization and governance. Merchants not only linked cities in economic networks, but also began to organize different trades into guilds, and took their place alongside the state and religious institutions in governing urban life.

In capital cities, imperial families continued to assert their symbolic right to rule through participation in now well-established rituals, although foreign rulers brought their own cultural practices with them. Elsewhere, people from all social classes were more invested in the urban life of their city and distinct urban cultures emerged. This was particularly the case during the Southern Song Dynasty, when a local gentry class wrote urban histories and guides, bought and sold property, and invested in businesses or religious institutions. The temples of city gods in particular symbolized local urban culture, and they spread across China like

mushrooms in spring rain. Gentry also left numerous descriptions of urban life, and through their eyes, we have a window into the lives of the everyday urban working man and woman in levels of detail that do not exist for earlier eras.

Urban System

Macro-regions and the Urban System

It is widely accepted that during the Tang-Song transition, China became more commercialized and urbanized than ever before. Scholars in the West such as Robert Hartwell and G. William Skinner have focused on regional disparities in commercial and urban development. Meanwhile, beginning in the 1980s, Chinese scholars looked to cities in the Song for examples of urban management.[1] Population growth and migration of people from north to south drove the transformation of China during the Tang-Song transition and caused urbanization.

The population of Song China in 1080 is estimated to have been 83 million, roughly double that of 742, on the eve of the An Lushan Rebellion. This rose to 110 million in 1110, and makes Song China the most populous and densely populated country in the world at that time. The population fell to 75 million in 1292, but it rose to 87 million in 1351 before falling back to 67 million in 1381.[2] These statistics should be treated with a great deal of caution, but the overall trend is clear. There was a significant rise in population during the Tang-Song transition, after which China's population stagnated. The proportion of people living in different parts of China also changed. According to one estimate, the middle and lower Yangzi regions and the southeast contained 15 per cent in the Sui Dynasty, 26 per cent in the mid-Tang,

[1] Richard von Glahn, 'Imagining Pre modern China', in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song Yuan Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 45 6; Christian de Pee and Joseph Lam, 'Introduction', in Joseph Lam, Shuen fu Lin, Christian de Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127 1129* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), xvi.

[2] Joseph P. McDermott and Shiba Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China, 960 1279', in John W. Chaffee, ed., *Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 2: Sung China, 960 1279* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 327; Dieter Kuhn, *The Age of Confucian Rule: The Song Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 75; Paul Jakov Smith, 'Introduction: Problematizing the Song Yuan Ming Transition', in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song Yuan Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 9.

50 per cent in 1080, 54 per cent in 1200, 59 per cent in 1391, and 60 per cent in 1542.[3]

This flood of migration was caused by a variety of factors. Firstly, the An Lushan Rebellion left the northern provinces devastated, creating millions of refugees. More refugees swept south during the last decades of the Tang Dynasty, and although the political situation stabilized, the ecological situation did not. During the Little Ice Age in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries, the temperature dropped by 1.5 degrees Celsius, causing massive disruption to food supply.

For example, during the Great Famine of 1075, a drought dried up the Grand Canal and left the capital, Kaifeng, short of food. Desperate refugees died in their tens of thousands along the road to the south, where harvests were still poor, but not catastrophic. The Jurchen invasion devastated the north once more, creating perhaps as many as 5 million refugees. China during the Southern Song prospered, and there was some recovery in the north under the Jin Dynasty, especially around the central capital in what is now Beijing. The Mongolian invasion brought further southward migration, with one estimate of the population of north China at the end of the thirteenth century being one third of its total in 1207. Sichuan was particularly badly affected, and up to 2 million people may have fled the province for the Lower Yangzi Delta.[4]

Migration was one of the factors that contributed to the emergence of macro-regions. The term was coined by G. William Skinner, who argued that the Chinese urban system developed as nine large separate physiographic macro-regions, which are outlined in Map 3.1. The boundaries of each macro-region were natural features such as a mountain range, and within each region, 'there developed a reasonably discrete urban system, i.e., a cluster of cities within which inter-urban transactions were concentrated and whose rural-urban transactions were largely confined within the region.'[5]

Each macro-region was divided into cores, which were usually river-valley lowlands, and peripheries, which were often mountainous. One or two large-scale cities emerged in these core areas, which sat atop a hierarchy of villages, towns, and smaller cities. They all traded with each other, with trade between macro-regions, which was relatively expensive because of high

[3] Robert Hartwell, 'Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China, 750 1550', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 42, no. 2 (December 1982), 385.

[4] Kuhn, *Age of Confucian Rule*, 71 2; McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 339 41, 391, 430 2; Smith, 'Introduction', 10.

[5] G. William Skinner, 'Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China', in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1977), 216.

Map 3.1 Macro regions of China

transport costs, funnelled through the dominant core city. Skinner's ideas have come under intense scrutiny, and given that most of his data are drawn from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, great care must be taken in applying them to the period covered in this chapter.[6]

[6] Skinner, 'Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China', 13 17, 216 18; See, for example, Carolyn Cartier, 'Origins and Evolution of a Geographical Idea: The Macroregion in China', *Modern China*, Vol. 28, no. 1 (January 2002), 79 142.

Despite this, the urban system was not uniform across China, and Skinner's regional analysis is extremely useful in conceptualizing how migration during the Tang-Song transition went hand in hand with economic, social, and political changes to produce some of the most heavily urbanized and prosperous parts of the pre-industrial world. The development of the urban system within a macro-region went through four stages:

1. Frontier settlement during which the population of core areas grew faster than the periphery.
2. Rapid development during which the number of people in peripheries grew faster than cores.
3. Decline when periphery populations dropped faster than cores.
4. Equilibrium when long-term structural factors had little impact on populations in individual counties.

This cycle began only when populations in individual macro-regions reached critical mass. The building of the Grand Canal meant the Lower Yangzi Delta had already urbanized by the late Tang Dynasty. The establishment of the Song capital in Kaifeng then led to the urbanization of north China, and its movement to Hangzhou was a catalyst for the development of the Upper and Middle Yangzi and Lingnan macro-regions. The settlement and growth of the regions in Lingnan were then completed during the Mongol invasion.[7]

Migration alone was not enough to create regional urban systems. After the An Lushan Rebellion, the Tang Dynasty relaxed control over the economy. Similar policies were pursued by the rulers of the Southern Kingdoms, the Song, and finally the Yuan Dynasties, and although the government held monopolies over products such as salt, iron, and liquor, private economic activity prospered. These policies were reversed during the early Ming Dynasty, when the government confiscated large land-holdings in an attempt to gain a tighter hold on the economy. Alongside favourable government policy, the expansion and improvement of rice farming in the south increased yields, feeding the growing population and providing taxes for the state. Trade in cash crops such as tea, sugar, and silk, and the development of coal and iron mining in the north also acted as catalysts to economic growth. It became fashionable to drink tea in cities across the empire, and this encouraged the cultivation of the uplands of Fujian, which were then being settled by refugees from the north. In the already developed Lower Yangzi Delta, after the movement of the capital to Hangzhou, silk production in the countryside was linked

[7] Hartwell, 'Demographic, Political, and Social Transformations of China', 374 5, 389 94.

by chains of merchants to the city, while ceramics from Jingdezhen were increasingly found across China and beyond.[8]

Increased trade contributed to urbanization. Along major river and road arteries, periodic markets grew into towns or sometimes even small cities in their own right. Inns acted as warehouses, allowing merchants to store goods safely while they did a circuit of neighbouring towns and villages. Markets also developed around temple fairs, and, for example, fifteen different towns across Sichuan held silkworm fairs.[9] Most market towns had customs stations to collect taxes, and 2,000 tax stations operated across the empire in 1077. Indeed, many market towns took more in tax receipts than did county seats, an indication of how economic and political urban networks were not necessarily intertwined. They were concentrated around the capitals, Kaifeng and then Hangzhou. Richard von Glahn lists forty such towns dotted along the southernmost section of the Grand Canal from Suzhou to Hangzhou and further north along the south bank of the Yangzi River.[10]

The Grand Canal remained the major artery of long-distance trade, linking the northern capitals – Chang'an, Kaifeng, and then Beijing – to the south. Kaifeng accounted for 7 per cent of imperial commercial tax receipts, three times that of Hangzhou, the next largest city. The nine cities bringing in the most tax after Kaifeng and Hangzhou were mostly located along the Grand Canal or the Yangzi River, and the eighteen cities after that were along the coast. Luxury goods shipped to Kaifeng included books, which became increasingly widespread after the invention of moveable type printing in the eleventh century, tea from Fujian, paper from Suzhou, and silk from the Lower Yangzi Delta, Shandong, and Sichuan.[11]

Maritime trade was also important. As the Tang Empire declined, Quanzhou in Fujian replaced Guangzhou as the principal port of call for ships from Korea, Japan, and the South Seas, and the volume of trade through the city finally eclipsed that in Guangzhou in the twelfth century. Ships arrived from such places as the Cambodian, Malayan, and Vietnamese coasts, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Brunei, India, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Egypt, Korea, Japan, Baghdad, and Basra. Cargoes included aromatics, ivory, and later cotton from Southeast Asia and

[8] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 220 31, 242 8, 268 9, 293 4.
[9] Twitchett, 'The T'ang Market System', 234 43.
[10] McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 379 80, 384; Richard von Glahn, 'Towns and Temples: Urban Growth and Decline in the Yangzi Delta, 1100 1400', in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song Yuan Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 184.
[11] McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 368, 370 1, 382 3.

timber and gold from Japan. Silk and ceramics were the main exports, and Quanzhou developed its own pottery industry, with local artisans copying the styles of Jingdezhen.[12] As a Song-era Suzhou gazetteer noted: 'Great ships come and go. To the north they voyage as far as the capital, to the south they travel as far as the shores of the Pacific Ocean, and thus a vast amount of clothing and hats, along with a myriad of foods and other products, are all brought together here in this one region of the Yangzi delta.'[13]

This trade continued in the Yuan Dynasty. For example, during the early fourteenth century, the distinctive blue-and-white porcelain of Jingdezhen evolved from a mixing of Persian and Chinese pottery production. It was exported across East Asia and beyond, becoming perhaps the world's first global brand.[14]

Technical innovations increased flows of trade along China's waterways, since the invention of the double lock allowed larger ships to use the Grand Canal. In the twelfth century, an official, Lu You, travelled from the east coast to Sichuan via the Grand Canal and the Yangzi River. He often complained that the waterways were congested, and it once took the whole day to travel through three locks. When passing through the gorges in Sichuan, the boats had to be pulled by men on paths high above the water using 1,000-foot tow ropes made of bamboo.[15]

The increase in waterborne trade stimulated shipbuilding. The vast majority of the fifty-one boat-building sites identified in the Song were in the Lower Yangzi Delta, and there were thirty-five different types of boat for river and sea. They were powered by sail and oar, and paddle-wheel boats were used as tugs in harbours.[16] Some people even lived on boats.

> As we tacked along the Great River we came across a wooden raft of one hundred feet or more in breadth and over five hundred feet long. There were thirty or forty households on it, with a full complement of wives and children, chickens and dogs, pestles and mortars. It was criss crossed with paths and alleys, and even had a shrine to a deity.[17]

Water was not the only way in which people moved around inland China. The Yuan Dynasty capital was the hub of a postal system that could move

[12] Hugh R. Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks: Southern Fujian Province from the Third to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 34 5, 64 7, 127 35; Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 248, 271 2.
[13] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 119.
[14] Shane McCausland, *The Mongol Century: Visual Cultures of Yuan China, 1271 1368* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 209, 215, 219.
[15] You Lu (Philip Watson, trans.), *Grand Canal, Great River: The Travel Diary of a Twelfth Century Chinese Poet* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2007) 26, 161.
[16] McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 400 2.
[17] You Lu, *Grand Canal, Great River*, 123.

official messages 100 miles a day along roads using relays of horses. Some intercity roads may have been paved during the Song Dynasty, and all local officials were responsible for keeping the roads in their jurisdiction in good condition. They repaired bridges and road surfaces, and sometimes planted trees to provide shade for hot and weary travellers. Many were merchants travelling long distances, who used paper money and had access to credit through a variety of local brokers and middlemen, who also managed land transactions, handled goods, notarized contracts, and paid tax.[18]

The Urban Population and Some of China's Major Cities

This complex interplay of migration, the development of the commercial agricultural economy, long-distance and short-distance trade, and state support both active and passive led to the rapid growth of China's imperial urban system. With better records in the Song Dynasty, we can begin to derive some estimates for the total urban population. This differed across the empire. Forty-eight per cent of the Hangzhou prefecture's residents may have been urban in the Southern Song, while in neighbouring Dantu County, which was a garrison town, the figure may have been as high as 37 per cent. These are exceptions, though. The urban population during the Southern Song is estimated to have been between 10 and 12 per cent, which is slightly above that of early modern Europe, which had an urbanization rate of 9.6 per cent in 1500.[19]

Regardless, in Tang Dynasty Chang'an and in Song and Yuan Dynasty Kaifeng and Hangzhou, China boasted some of the world's largest cities of the time. Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, only Cairo and cities in Turkmenistan were anything like as large. Kaifeng, near the junction of the Yellow River and the Bian Canal, became a sprawling metropolis of 1 million people in the Northern Song. As with former capitals, the city grew in part because it was the political heart of the empire, and it was the residence of more than 10,000 officials and countless other people connected to the imperial bureaucracy.

During the Southern Song, it was the new capital, Hangzhou, that now had its day in the sun, and at its height, it may have numbered 1.5 million people. Outside of these two capitals, China's largest cities were along the

[18] McCausland, *The Mongol Century*, 25; McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 402 5.

[19] Li Bozhong, 'Was There a "Fourteenth Century Turning Point"? Population, Land, Technology, and Farm Management', in Paul Jakov Smith and Richard von Glahn, eds., *The Song Yuan Ming Transition in Chinese History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 144; Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 250 1.

Grand Canal and the coast, and the city that benefitted more than any other from the constant flow of goods was Yangzhou. During the Sui and early Tang Dynasties, it was still a small fortified town atop a ridge protected by high ramparts and a moat. Its population grew rapidly from less than 100,000 to nearly half a million by the eve of the An Lushan Rebellion, and the city continued to expand thereafter.

Another city that benefitted from this trade was Suzhou, and its population probably fluctuated around the half a million mark. Just inland, the population of Jiankang during the Southern Song, at least half of which was composed of soldiers, stood at between 300,000 and 400,000. Further south, the number of people in Quanzhou grew from 75,000 to more than 200,000 households between 980 and 1080, and rose to 255,000 households in the first half of the thirteenth century. It and other port cities continued to flourish into the Yuan Dynasty as the Mongols eschewed the Grand Canal in favour of sea transport for the grain that made its way from the Lower Yangzi Delta to the capital, Dadu, contemporary Beijing.[20]

Yuan Dynasty Dadu was just the latest in a series of capitals built by nomadic tribes who established dynasties somewhat akin to the Chinese model. The Liao had no real tradition of city building, and saw the construction of cities as a way of consolidating their hold over their territories. There were five capitals in the Liao Empire as well as six prefectural and 156 sub-prefectural cities, many of which had originally been Chinese settlements.

Shangjing, just north of the Liao River in Inner Mongolia, was the supreme capital. After the invasion of the Song in 1004, the central capital, which is today's Ningcheng in southeastern Inner Mongolia, was built. Dongjing, the eastern capital in what is now Liaoyang in Liaoning Province, was a defensive bulwark against Korea to the east. The southern capital, Nanjing, was on the site of what is now Beijing, and the western capital close to Datong formed an important defensive node against the Xia in Gansu, just as the southern capital did against the Song.

The Jin inherited this system of multiple capitals, but set up their own in Kaifeng, Beijing, and Luoyang. Although the Mongols were also a nomadic people, they recognized the importance of cities as power bases. The first capital, located in Mongolia, was Khara-Khorum, which functioned as a commercial and political centre as well as a military encampment. In 1256, a new city, Shangdu, was built further

[20] McDermott and Yoshinobu, 'Economic Change in China', 380 3; Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 25 6; Clark, *Community, Trade, and Networks*, 75 6, 78.

south in Inner Mongolia, but although it retained its capital city status, when Khubilai Khan moved his capital to Dadu in 1267, little new building occurred there.[21]

Urban Form and Governance

The Opening Up of Chinese Cities

Chinese cities opened up during the Tang-Song transition as the government lost the ability to enforce strict laws governing urban space. Edicts issued in the late eighth and early ninth centuries prohibiting people from building on lanes and alleyways in Chang'an had no effect; they built doors opening from their houses onto the street and erected stalls of all kinds, many of them trading into the early hours in contravention of curfew.[22]

Kaifeng was similarly open plan, although it retained the urban morphology now common to Chinese capital cities. After its takeover by the Song, the old walls of the Tang Dynasty city became the inner city, within which was the palace city containing the outer quarters, complete with the extravagant Daqing Court, which could accommodate thousands of people and was where the emperor held audiences. The imperial family lived hidden away in the inner quarters to the north, and the palace city also contained government offices, libraries, a garden, and a scholars' academy. The roads were not strictly arranged along the axial line, but covered walkways, pavilions, and halls provide evidence of architectural continuity with previous dynasties.

The outer wall of Kaifeng was approximately 7 km long by 7 km wide, and, as was now standard in Chinese capitals, the main thoroughfares ran north-south and east-west.[23] These were lined with official residences, government offices, Buddhist, Daoist, and Zoroastrian religious institutions, restaurants of all types, and entertainment precincts. A third important street led east, while a fourth skirted the east wall of the palace city as it went north, and these two streets were lined with shops of all types. There may have been as many as 150 imperial and private gardens in Kaifeng. Genyue in the northeast boasted its own mountain, while scattered through the garden were verandas, lodges, towers, platforms,

[21] Sechin Jagghid, 'The Khitans and Their Cities', *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 25 (1981), 73 80; Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 138 9, 148 53.
[22] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 70 1.
[23] E. A. Kracke Jr, 'Sung Kai feng: Pragmatic Metropolis and Formalistic Capital', in John Winthrop Haeger, ed., *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 55 6; Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 139 40, 146 8.

and simple huts. Jinming Lake outside the city walls was a water park where annual dragon boat races took place.[24]

Hangzhou was smaller than Kaifeng and more densely populated. The city, sandwiched between the famous artificially created West Lake and the Qiantang River to the east, was roughly rectangular in shape. During the Southern Song, in an exception to the norm in Chinese capitals, the palace city was to the south, with the Imperial Way terminating at the north gate. The arrangement of the complexes in the palace city mirrored that in Kaifeng, and there were thirty palatial halls, seven multistorey structures, and one observatory. The names of the palace complexes in the outer court were also the same as those in Kaifeng, and there was a garden and an academy of scholars. Outside the palace city, a river ran parallel to the Imperial Way, with bridges providing regular crossing points. The walls were 10 m high and 3 m thick, faced with brick, and probably whitewashed.[25]

Outside the palace cities in Kaifeng and Hangzhou, the ward system disintegrated. A lively market in land sales made it impossible for the government to dictate land usage, and in the suburbs of Kaifeng, even owners of farmland were able to sell at a profit as the city expanded. Urban tenants were vulnerable to exploitation, and a decree from 1107 noted that landlords were doubling the rents on the pretext of having made a few building repairs. If anything, Hangzhou was even more overcrowded, and houses were now several storeys high. There were three classes of rent: high, medium, and low, with remission for special circumstances such as floods or fires. Since many of the buildings were constructed of wood and bamboo, this made the city particularly vulnerable to fire. Watchtowers and guard stations every few hundred metres were permanently manned, and if smoke was spotted, flags during the day or lanterns at night provided an approximate location of the fire so that soldiers assigned as firemen could deal with it quickly.

The most serious fire in Hangzhou broke out in 1208 just to the north of the imperial palace and raged for four days. More than 58,000 buildings were destroyed, fifty-nine people died, and the government provided lodging for more than 5,000 refugees in monasteries, where they were given food, clothing, and money. Canny merchants built their warehouses on small islands in the northeast of the city to protect their stock.[26]

[24] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 151 7.
[25] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 140 2, 148 9; Jacques Garnet (H. M. Wright, trans.), *Daily Life in China on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion 1250 1276* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1962), 24 7.
[26] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 101 2; Garnet, *Daily Life in China*, 31 7.

The open-plan city transformed the urban landscape of the Song Dynasty capitals. No longer were people segregated, trapped in their wards, forbidden from going out at night, and confined to meeting in public in markets or temples. In Kaifeng, the Bian Canal running through the eastern part of the outer city linked up with the Grand Canal and the breadbasket of the Lower Yangzi Delta. Goods from large ships were offloaded onto smaller boats outside the city walls, which then delivered them directly to markets and shops. Unlike in Tang Dynasty cities, there were no designated markets, but traders in similar products tended to congregate in certain parts of the city. The meat market was along Zhou Bridge, which crossed the Bian Canal. The horse market was located beneath a tavern on Horse Guild Street, and other parts of the city were known for cloth, urns, gold, and jewellery, among other products.

There was plenty to drink in Kaifeng. The city had seventy-two first-class wine shops which distilled their own liquor and served the best foods to the rich and famous. Baifanlou was the largest, said to comprise five three-storey buildings connected with bridges and balconies and adorned with pearl curtains. Many wine shops provided singing girls, and some of the less salubrious doubled as brothels. There were also thousands of taverns, tea shops, noodle shops, and stew kitchens, many little more than a thatched roof with no walls in the suburbs.[27] Popular entertainment and brothels were not just to be found in wine shops. In his famous work on Kaifeng, Yuan Menglao wrote about the entertainment precincts.

> Going eastward [on the Street of Family Ban's Tower] there is the Calabash Mutton Stew Shop of the Xu family, and just south of the street is the neighboring pleasure quarter of the Sang family. And close to the north is the Central Pleasure Quarter and next to it the Inner Pleasure Quarter. In these pleasure quarters are more than fifty theatres, big and small ... Here one can stay all day and never become aware when evening falls.[28]

In Hangzhou, as was common for cities in the Lower Yangzi Delta, markets were concentrated along the river. 'In every ward and lane, at bridges, gates, and remote places, everywhere are shops and stalls selling the essentials of life. The reason is that people cannot be without firewood, soy sauce, vinegar and tea, and even need luxury items.'[29]

The Liao, Jin, and Yuan capitals had some similarities with those of the Song Dynasty. The first Liao capital, Shangjing, was divided between Khitans who lived in tents among the buildings in the north of the city, and the Han Chinese who lived in the south. The southern capital, Nanjing, would have been more familiar to the Chinese, since it had an

[27] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 156–62.
[28] Quoted in Kuhn, *Age of Confucian Rule*, 203–4. [29] Quoted in ibid., 209.

imperial city enclosing a palace city. Zhongjing, the central capital, probably followed Kaifeng most closely, with some of the names of the gates and avenues being the same as their Song counterpart, while the city was dotted with Buddhist pagodas.

Jin cities preserved the dual arrangement of their Liao forebears, hardly a surprise given that many were built on their foundations. In Jin Zhongdu, the palace complexes followed those of Kaifeng in their arrangement. Maps from the fourteenth century show clearly that the Jurchens lived in tents amidst Chinese-style imperial architecture.

Construction of the Yuan capital, Dadu, began in 1267, and took twenty years. Dadu was triple walled. To the west of the palace city within the imperial city was Taiye Lake, part of the water supply the Jin had constructed, and this pushed the inner city towards the south of the outer city. This was a departure from the tradition of Tang and Song capitals, where, with the exception of Hangzhou, the palace city was to the north. Apart from this, the design of the capital followed Chinese traditions. The Imperial Way extended southwards from the palace city to the south gate of the outer wall, the ancestral temple was in the east, and the altars of soil and grain were to the west.

Dadu was organized into wards, with an east market for the wealthy and the west and south markets selling everyday goods. Religious institutions were to be found throughout Dadu, and as in other Chinese cities gardens were common. In the dry climate of north China, doubtless this was a reason why water consumption was so high, and even the extension of the Grand Canal to Dadu was insufficient for the capital's needs. In following the traditions of Chinese capital city building, Khubilai and his descendants used urban planning to assert their legitimacy over China just as other foreign rulers had since the Han Dynasty. However, as with the Liao and Jin, Mongolian princes lived in tents behind the city walls, thus preserving something of their own nomadic heritage.[30]

The state continued to play an important role in governing Chinese cities, which remained part of the imperial administrative system. During the Northern Song, there were roughly 300 prefectures and approximately 1,500 counties, falling to 200 prefectures and 900 counties during the Southern Song. Meanwhile, the circuit, encompassing several prefectures, was devised as a check on the power of the commanders of military garrisons.

During the Yuan, there were 570 prefectures and 1,125 counties. A new administrative division, the province, was also introduced. Based

[30] Steinhardt, *Chinese Imperial City Planning*, 123 33, 154 60; Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 150, 164, 200, 204 6.

on Jin precedents, it eventually evolved into the provinces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, which form the basis of the provinces of today.[31] Urban governance was the responsibility of the magistrate, and he certainly had a lot on his plate.

> He held overall responsibility for governing the people, promoting and taxing agriculture and sericulture, settling and resolving penal and judicial matters, and when there were acts of imperial grace or commands and prohibitions, he was to make those known throughout his jurisdiction. He was responsible for handling in person all matters of population registration, levying taxes and labour service, monies and tax grains, distribution of relief, receipts and disbursements, and seasonally to manage the regular registration of households and supervise the collection of summer and autumn grain taxes. When in times of floods or droughts there were reports of damage and suffering he was to allocate and distribute relief supplies; when because of floods or droughts the people fled or became homeless, he was required to reassemble and comfort them, assuring that they would not lose their means of livelihood.[32]

Now, it is clear that the county magistrate and his staff had responsibility for rural as well as urban affairs, but this lack of a specific municipal government does not mean that there were not specific governmental actions that could be taken to manage the spaces within the walls. Moreover, governance in larger cities evolved to manage the urban area. In both Kaifeng and Hangzhou, the word for ward, *fang*, was still found on street names, and served for public order and fire protection.

However, urban expansion meant that a larger administrative area, the borough or *xiang*, was imposed on the wards, and these now extended to suburbs outside the city walls. Initially, there were 2 boroughs in Kaifeng, but as the population grew, their number increased to first 8 and then 19. They were made up of 130 wards, with 9 outside the city walls.

Outside of official governance, other institutions were beginning to take responsibility for various aspects of urban management. Same-trade guilds of artisans in a particular industry worked with local officials to recruit labourers for public works, coordinate delivery of taxes by merchants, and contribute to urban security. As yet they did not have their own headquarters, and meetings probably took place in temples, particularly since many of them also had their own patron saint.[33]

[31] Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900 1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 354 5, 485.
[32] Ibid., 355, 358.
[33] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 105; Christine Moll Murata, 'Chinese Guilds from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries: An Overview', *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 53 (2008), Supplement, 217 18.

Begging by this period was also organized along guild lines. An early description of the head of a beggars' guild in Hangzhou during the Southern Song Dynasty comes from the pen of Ming Dynasty writer Feng Menglong, who collected folk tales.

> He was called the 'trump major', and looked after all the beggars. Whenever they managed to beg something, the trump major would demand a fee for the day. Then when it was raining or snow lay on the ground, and there was nowhere to go and beg, the trump major would boil up a drop of thin gruel and feed the whole beggar band. Their tattered robes and jackets were also in his care. The result was that the whole crowd of the beggars were careful to obey him, and with bated breath like a lot of slaves, and none of them dared offend him.[34]

Like other professions, beggars had patron saints, which included Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming Dynasty, who had fled from his home village of Fengyang in Anhui at sixteen and after three years begging in neighbouring counties joined the rebellion against the Mongols. He rose up through the ranks, and at the age of forty declared himself emperor. Ironically, Fengyang became famous for begging, partly because of regular flooding of the Yellow River. A contributory factor may have been Zhu's decision to settle 140,000 people and more than 70,000 soldiers in the village as a prelude to making it a new central capital. The huge cost of the project meant that work soon stopped, but many of the migrants disguised themselves as beggars to return to their gravesites for tomb-sweeping day each spring.[35]

Cities of the Lower Yangzi Delta

At the other end of the Grand Canal from the northern capitals, Suzhou began to emerge as the commercial heart of the empire. The *Pingjiang tu*, a to-scale urban plan dating from 1229, shows the city in unprecedented detail. At its heart was a walled enclosure housing government buildings, which were regularly rebuilt. For example, in 1083, Lord Zhang, the prefect, used 2 million cash in surplus revenue to 'repair these buildings, which were then given a second story, with two towers opposite each other. Both of the towers had eight supporting pillars made of the finest-quality wood, and the bricks and mortars were similarly good'.[36] Later, in 1137, Emperor Gaozong ordered palaces built there soon after the city was destroyed by the Jurchen cavalry, but it reverted to the prefectural government office under the Yuan Dynasty. By the Northern Song, the city's canal system had matured, and of about 100 bridges mentioned in

[34] Quoted in Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 102. [35] Lu Hanchao *Street Criers*, 54 9.
[36] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 125.

a gazetteer in 1016, the vast majority also appear on the *Pingjiang tu*.[37] Lord Zhang did not just repair the *yamen* in 1083, but he also paid attention to urban infrastructure.

> The New Bridge is located outside the Coiled Gate. If you left the commandery [seat] and headed south, then after passing through a couple of townships, you would arrive at Mu Canal, which communicates with the Grand Canal; you would have had to take a boat in order to cross. [This bridge] stands at the juncture of two streams, and so [the waters here] are both wide and deep, which is why from ancient times no one could build a bridge here. Now the Honorable Zhang, Prefect and Gentleman for Court Discussion, has taken office, and the Shi family requested permission to put up money to build the bridge, so the Honorable [Zhang] made a plan and kept up instructions, as a result of which work began on time and was finished ahead of schedule, and then the [new bridge] spanned these broad waters, divided into three separate bridges; this made travel much easier.[38]

Suzhou remained an important religious city. There were seven Daoist temples and several shrines in the Song Dynasty, and Buddhism flourished.

> At the end of the Tang Dynasty, bandits rose up, and inside the gates of Wu many temples were pillaged and burned. When the Qian family took control of Wu, they worshipped [the Buddha] very devoutly. Thus, they restored old [Buddhist foundations] and designed new ones, building one hundred structures . . . Inside and outside [Wu] Commandery magnificent temples and pagodas stand within sight of each other, and thus their influence has permeated local customs, and [Buddhism in this region] has not declined even after all this time.[39]

As in other cities, officials purchased land for their houses and gardens, and what divisions there had been in the city faded away. Indeed, during the Southern Song, *fang* no longer meant ward, but honorific gateway, and the internal geography of the city was now defined by its canals, streets, and temples.[40] One example will suffice to illustrate how Suzhou as with many other Chinese cities was adorned with greenery. Having been dismissed from office, Su Shunqin returned to the city.

> One day when he was passing the commandery academy, to the east he noticed a splendid garden, with lofty hills and wide spreading waters that united to become a canal threading through lush flowers and dense clumps of bamboo. Moving on a couple of hundred paces, he came across some abandoned ground . . . [Su Shunqin] bought this land and built a house there, which he named Blue Wave Pavilion, with bamboos behind it and water in front, and on the other side of the water the bamboo forests seemed to go on forever. [Su

[37] Xu Yinong, *Chinese City in Space and Time*, 131.
[38] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 135.
[39] Ibid., 141.
[40] Xu Yinong, *Chinese City in Space and Time*, 133 5.

Shunqin] once said . . . at home he had a garden full of rare flowers and magnifi cent rocks, with a curved pool and a high tower, where there were many fish and birds, and so he would not notice the passing of time.[41]

Further north up the Grand Canal, urban sprawl extended far beyond the city walls in Yangzhou. Within the city, merchants broke down walls within and between wards to set up their stalls. Buddhist temples and a bustling market lined the side of the road eastwards from the city gate. A market also ran north-south through the city along the canal. It was spanned by bridges heavy with traffic, so at the beginning of the ninth century, a new canal was dug around the outskirts of the city to ease congestion.[42] After dark, Yangzhou came alive with light, as the poet Du Mu recorded.

Yangzhou is a place of beauty. Whenever the double city approaches dusk, above the entertainment halls are usually crimson gauze lamps, in tens of thousands, brightly arranged in the sky. The nine li and 30 bu (paces) street, in which thronged pearls and jade, looked like a fairy land in the distance.[43]

Elsewhere in China, there was ever more variation in urban form and governance. The walls of Quanzhou were irregular in shape, as were those of Wuxi, Jingzhou, and many other cities. Jinjiang, modern Guilin, was a military stronghold, with a rectangular centre built in the Tang Dynasty. However, the city was reinforced several times in the thirteenth century. It was divided into six parts, with an outer wall that followed the local geography, as rivers to the east and south made natural moats.[44]

Other cities started their life as fortifications but grew to be much more. Qinglong on the Wusong River, just inland from Shanghai, was a military garrison in the Tang Dynasty and developed into a major port in the Northern Song. Some indication of the town's size and prosperity can be gauged by its seven pagodas and thirteen Buddhist monasteries, while it was said that so many merchants settled there, it was known as the 'Little Hangzhou'. At the end of the twelfth century, sedimentation of the Wusong River prevented large vessels from entering the port, and Qinglong was eclipsed by Shanghai.

Many towns in the region were located along the Grand Canal. Pingwang, for instance, had shops, warehouses, and wharves lining both sides of the canal. Wuqing to the south of Lake Tai was another town that began life as a Tang military garrison, and expanded when gentry families from the north settled there, building villas and gardens. The town was

[41] Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 181.
[42] Heng Chye Kiang, *Cities of Aristocrats and Bureaucrats*, 73 82. [43] Quoted in ibid., 81.
[44] Ibid., 186 9.

a key node in the sericulture industry, with raw silk passing through its markets before being shipped to the weaving towns of Linghu and Nanxun.

Wucheng, the prefectural capital, had a population of fewer than 100,000 in the early Song, rising to more than 200,000 in the early Ming Dynasty. Inside the city wall, built in 621, were three markets and specialist shopping areas for lumber, bamboo, straw, firewood, flowers, fish, and lacquer manufacturing, as well as docks for trading boats and amusement centres.[45] Across China then, small cities and towns – some walled, others not – emerged. Some started life as military garrisons, others as temple fairs or around shrines, and still others as ports or as cities with histories as far back as the Han or Zhou Dynasties.

By the Song Dynasty, Chinese architectural style was well developed, and this knowledge was codified in the *Yingzao fashi* (*Building Standards*). Building codes had existed before in China, and there was a building law in the Tang Dynasty. However, the origin of the *Yingzao fashi* is derived from knowledge passed down through generations of artisans. In the first half of the eighth century, nearly 35,000 craftsmen registered with the state under the Agency of Palace Buildings, and they were required to serve the state.

As urbanization proceeded apace, officials in the cash-strapped government grew concerned about waste in public construction, while standardizing building codes offered the state the opportunity to express its power spatially across the empire. Compiled at the end of the eleventh century by Li Jie, who was made Superintendent for State Buildings in the Ministry of Works in 1092 before being promoted to Director of Palace Buildings in 1103, the *Yingzao fashi* was composed of thirty-four chapters. Li drew on information from historical documents, his own observations, and the rich oral tradition of building passed down through the palace craftsmen. The book was divided into five parts, which among other things covered different building techniques and formulae, standards for building design, working practices such as costs for a day's work, material quotas to be used for specific jobs, and illustrations of all sorts of carpentry and joinery. These showed in unprecedented detail the modular system of architecture that had come to define Chinese cities.[46]

[45] Glahn, 'Towns and Temples', 179 86; Yoshinobu Shiba, 'Urbanization and the Development of Markets in the Lower Yangtze Valley', in John Winthrop Haeger, ed., *Crisis and Prosperity in Sung China* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975), 33 5.

[46] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 187 8; Guo Qinghua, '*Yingzao Fashi*: Twelfth Century Chinese Building Manual', in *Architectural History*, Vol. 41 (1988), 1 13.

Urban Life

Life in China's Capitals

The capital cities of China remained places where imperial power was inscribed into the urban fabric. Christian de Pee notes of Kaifeng,

> The architecture of the Eastern Capital afforded a ritual grammar of avenues, walls, and gates that by the addition of the appropriate persons and implements could produce specific, articulate statements about power and virtue. The resi dents of the Eastern Capital could take part in the choreography of imperial space as well, when they watched imperial processions, or entered the imperial parks during certain restricted seasons, or when they were admitted to the walls of the imperial palace to admire a newly finished building.[47]

Kaifeng hosted imperial processions to temples and altars throughout the year. The largest procession of up to 20,000 people was known as the Grand Carriage, and was used for the triennial suburban sacrifices and sacrifices at Daoist temples in the city. Pictorial records provided instructions for procession organizers, and the rehearsals were urban spectacles in their own right. In *Dreams of the Splendour of the Eastern Capital*, Meng Yuanlao describes how two months before the Grand Carriage, elephants made their way from the south gate of the palace to the south gate of the city along the Imperial Way.

> On each elephant is a man in a cross tailed scarf cap and purple robe, straddling its neck, holding in one hand a short handled bronze mattock with a pointed blade. As soon as an elephant disobeys, he strikes it. When the elephants reach the front of Virtue Revealed Tower, the group circles a few times and then forms ranks. The [elephants] then are made to face north and bow . . . On the Imperial Way passersby gather gaily together, and onlookers are as dense as threads in a cloth. People sell or give as gambling prizes small elephants made out of clay, wood, or plaster, or paper pictures of them.[48]

In the procession itself, these elephants were followed by officials in carriages, soldiers bearing flags, and floats decorated with pictures of swans and phoenixes accompanied by musicians. A row of imperial horses came next, followed by archers and flags of the sun and moon. The Grand Carriage was protected by ranks of armoured horsemen and the emperor rode in either a jade carriage or a sedan chair, surrounded by

[47] Christian de Pee, 'Purchase on Power: Imperial Space and Commercial Space in Song Dynasty Kaifeng, 960 1127', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 53, no. 1/2, Empires and Emporia: The Orient in World Historical Space and Time (2010), 159.

[48] Quoted in Patricia Ebrey, 'Taking Out the Grand Carriage: Imperial Spectacle and the Visual Culture of Northern Song Kaifeng', *Asia Minor*, Vol. 12, no. 1 (1999), 38.

high officials. Carriage decorations, clothes, and flags all had specific meanings, and none of the thousands lining the Imperial Way were in any doubt that they were seeing a display of imperial power. However, much of what was on display was also part and parcel of everyday life in the city. The designs of the flags changed over time, often incorporating images from local temples. Animals and objects such as bows and arrows could be seen in daily life, and the clothing marking out officials of different rank was well known.[49]

Away from the processions of the Imperial Avenue, there were plenty of private pleasures to seduce Kaifeng's residents. The poet Ouyang Xiu remembered his nights on the town.

> Magnanimous and at peace, turning night into day,
> We encountered the divine beauties of the Music Bureau,
> Those immortal wanderers from grottoes out on the sea.
> Trailing perfume, trembling halcyon jade,
> Perfect for holding hands and singing as they walked
> Along streets like brocade, the pathways of heaven.
> The moon grew pale, the coolness more slight
> As it gradually shifted toward dawn
> And the sound of the clepsydra turned still.
> I was young then,
> My wild heart yet unabated
> No going home unless drunk.[50]

In Hangzhou too, music and dancing was part of urban life, and the elite enjoyed themselves immensely as courtesan houses flourished, and there were no longer limits on the number of concubines a man could have. Dancers were seemingly everywhere; at seasonal festivals, private parties, associations of scholar officials, and in wine shops. Banquet writings, witty anecdotes often spoken aloud at the meal, capture this social world. When they were not drinking or visiting courtesans, literati formed all manner of societies in the capital which managed temples or engaged in philanthropic activity. One of the most famous was the Rivers and Lakes School of Poetry, active for eighty years from the mid to late Southern Song. Its members roamed from city to city, writing poems read throughout the empire.[51]

[49] Ibid., 33 5, 38, 44 55, 58 9.

[50] Stephen H. West, 'The Pains of Pleasure: The Lanterns of Kaifeng', in Joseph Lam, Shuen fu Lin, Christian de Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127 1129* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 132.

[51] Beverly Bossler, 'Floating Sleeves, Willow Waists, and Dreams of Spring', in Joseph Lam, Shuen fu Lin, Christian de Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the*

The seemingly endless parties of the rich and famous during the Tang and Song Dynasties trivialize the lives of the elites of China during this period. In fact, changes to this social strata were behind the emergence of distinct urban identities across the empire. In the Tang Dynasty, Chang'an drew all towards it, largely because exams were held annually in the capital, producing only about thirty *jinshi* graduates (the highest degree in the imperial examination system) per year, many of whom were drawn from existing aristocratic families. The vast majority of officials in Tang China never sat an exam at all, and so those with a degree only ever made up a small percentage of the total number of officials.

By contrast, during the Song Dynasty, exams were held in prefectural centres and in the capital only once every three years, and so the number taking the prefectural degree, which qualified them to be teachers, administrators of temples or granaries, and sub-official local administrators, went from 100,000 candidates in the middle of the twelfth century to more than 400,000 a century later. However, strict quotas meant that no more than 5 per cent ever passed, so by the end of the Northern Song, only about 15,000 people held the prefectural degree. Of these a lucky few would pass the exam in the capital and become *jinshi* degree holders, the path to high office. The total number of *jinshi* doubled from about 5,000 to 10,000 over the course of the Northern and Southern Song.

Meanwhile, the number of officials grew to 50,000 by the end of the Southern Song, and so *jinshi* degree holders were always in a minority. The remaining official positions were mostly allocated by a system called appointment by promotion. High-level officials could nominate sons, grandsons, and nephews for official service, allowing them to bypass the punishing exam regime. In spite of this, the growth of the exam system in the Song meant that only 19 per cent of officials came from large aristocratic families, whereas in the Tang, 69 per cent did so.

It was not only the act of studying and passing the examination that marked one out as a member of the gentry, but also the practice of studying for and taking it. Estimates of the number of people in this new elite range from 5–6 per cent of the total male population to 25–30 per cent, with the upper figure premised on the idea that having one person participating in the exam system made that household part of this elite social strata. Given that the Southern Song population was some

City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127 1129 (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 5, 13, 17 19; Zhang Hongsheng, 'Consciousness of Adversity and the Spirit of Innovation', in Joseph Lam, Shuen fu Lin, Christian de Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127 1129* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 87 8.

65 million, this gives between 3 and 6 million people, a not insignificant number.

Scholars engage in debate concerning the extent of the growth of localism during the Song. However, they agree that the lives of office holders in the Tang Dynasty centred around the capital, whereas by the Southern Song, elites displayed their status through participation in local activities. The pursuit of high office through examinations and activity on a local level are not mutually exclusive, of course. Song gentry aspired to service at court, but while attempting to attain this, and during periods in which they were not employed as officials, or after retirement, they often remained active in their birthplace.[52] It is worth emphasizing that the pursuit of elite status through participation in the exams was not incompatible with material wealth. Indeed, given the cost of education, it was often families who had made their wealth in business or trade who set their sons on the path to becoming an official.

We can explore how these elites navigated urban space during the Tang-Song transition by looking at the lives of examination candidates in late Tang Chang'an and considering religious activity in Jiangnan in the Song. Linda Rui Feng has written about how examination candidates in Chang'an negotiated the city. As yet, there were no capital journals or tourist guides, maps, paintings, or records of guilds and other urban organizations to help them and us. Instead miscellaneous bits of prose histories serve as anecdotal insights into a rapidly changing city.

Late Tang Chang'an was a place in which the state maintained tight control over urban space, but for some, life was less circumscribed than others. This was especially true of examination candidates who, not being officials, were able to move freely through the city, and were young, rich, and, like the protagonist, Zheng, in the *Tale of Li Wa*, at times naïve.

The story concerns a young man, Zheng, newly arrived in the city who falls in love with a courtesan, Li Wa. After two years, Zheng's fortune is exhausted, Li Wa deserts him, and he falls into sickness and poverty from which he recovers by becoming a dirge singer in a funeral parlour, eventually earning fame throughout Chang'an. However, his father discovers his plight and beats him half to death, and he is rescued from beggary by Li Wa. Li Wa supports him as he finally passes the examination, after which he is reunited with his family. Zheng's movement through the city

[52] Linda Rui Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation: Chang'an and Narratives of Experience in Tang Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 44; Robert Hymes, 'Sung Society and Social Change', in John W. Chaffee, ed., *Cambridge History of China, Volume 5, Part 2: Sung China, 960 1279* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 621, 624 31; Kuhn, *Age of Confucian Rule*, 122 5.

displays his naiveté, both spatially and socially.[53] His first encounter with Li Wa takes him from the safety of wide avenues, soaring pagodas, and official mansions to the backstreets, where all manner of temptations await.

> Once, on his way home from a visit to the East Market, he entered the east gate of P'ing k'ang ward, meaning to call on a friend in the south west part. When he came to Jingling Harness Lane, he saw a residence with a modestly proportioned entrance courtyard, but with buildings that were deep and impressive . . . Standing there, supported by a maid with hair in double coils, was a woman whose bewitching looks were exquisite beyond any compare.[54]

Our next quote depicts a street scene from a singing competition between two funeral parlours. Note how the security system of the wards works to inform the police.

> Men and women flocked together in a huge assembly, with numbers reaching tens of thousands. Upon which the ward officers notified the police service, which reported the matter to the Metropolitan Prefect. People from all parts went rushing to the scene. 'There were no dwellers in the lanes.' The display began at dawn, and by noon the equipment ceremonial carriages and processional insignia had all been presented in turn. In each class the west side firm was the loser, and the master looked abashed . . . Up came a youth in a black cap, flanked by five or six attendants, and holding a funeral banner. It was our young scholar. He put forth his clothing in order and, most deliberate in bearing, stretched out his throat and delivered a phrase of song, looking as though he could not win. Then he sang the verse 'Dew on the shallots' . . . Before the tune was finished his listeners were already sobbing and sniffing as they hid their tears.[55]

It is at this public display that Zheng is reunited with both his family and Li Wa, and her words on finding him a beggar illustrate the call of the capital for the elite:

> This is a son of a good family. Once he drove tall carriages, bore trappings of gold. When he came to our house it was all squandered within a year. Together, mother and daughter, we set up a scheme of deceit, abandoned him and drove him out. This was scarcely human conduct. We led him to fail his ambition and lose his due place in the family and society.[56]

Upon finding his place in society once more, Zheng returns to those parts of the capital, the bookshops and exam halls, where the elites are supposed to reside. His dalliance elsewhere was but a detour on the path to officialdom.

[53] Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation*, 13 18, 51, 73 4, 76 80.
[54] Glen Dudbridge, *The Tale of Li Wa: Study and Critical Edition of a Chinese Story from the Ninth Century* (Oxford: Ithaca Press, 1983), 110 11.
[55] Ibid., 145 53. [56] Ibid., 163.

Local Elites and Southern Cities

Contrast this experience in Chang'an with that of the elites of the Southern Song, who spent their time promoting local gods, organizing militias, setting up charitable or community granaries, building temples, bridges, schools, and dams, and repairing irrigation.[57] Indeed, in many towns and cities, religious activities were the catalyst for urban development and the symbol of an urban identity. More than 150 city god cults have been identified in the Tang and Song, the majority in prefectural cities in the Lower Yangzi Delta and along the south coast. The gods could be people of note living in ancient China, but were often local men who had esteemed themselves in some way, as was the case with the magistrate of Lishui, a city south of Nanjing, where the *yamen* became the city god temple after his death in 826.

For centuries, Chinese people had worshipped the god of the soil, and during the Han Dynasty, this practice was systematized and imposed on the new spatial ordering of the Chinese empire. As urban identities became clearer during the Southern Song Dynasty, the distinction between the city god and other gods worshipped in local temples, the *tudimiao*, emerged. The city god had his place in the hierarchy of gods that made up the Chinese pantheon, and so gods that were subordinate to him were required to pay tribute. With the rise of the city god temples, *chenghuangmiao*, villagers sent images of their local god to visit him during festivals. It was not just temples to city gods that were a catalyst and symbol of urban growth. Lay Buddhist societies such as the White Lotus flourished during the Southern Song. In Jinze, the original home of the movement, local gentry established the Yihaosi monastery at the end of the thirteenth century, and the town soon became famous for its temples, bridges, and markets.[58]

Local elites also expressed their urban identity through the writing of gazetteers, surveys written for the state by local scholars. They had forerunners in official records and illustrated guides, but developed to include information on famous local figures, ancient monuments, and local history. This reflected the fact that they were now written by local gentry not only for the state, but also for the literate population in the city or region in which they were compiled. They were often updated, and with the invention of moveable type printing they were distributed more widely. They reflected a local and, in many cases, an urban manifestation

[57] Hymes, 'Sung Society and Social Change', 656.

[58] David Johnson, 'The City God Cults of T'ang and Sung China', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 45, no. 2 (December 1985), 398 409, 418 22, 424; Glahn, 'Towns and Temples', 190 3, 196 202.

of the tendency in the Song to look to history for moral guidance, and they sought to promote the city or region they described.[59] They were not just of use to members of the local population. In his diary, Lu You regularly refers to gazetteers of the places he stayed in on his journey up the Yangzi River when citing major historical events, important figures, or places of interest.

Gazetteers were not the only new style of writing about the city that emerged in the Song. In the Tang Dynasty, poets focused on buildings and gardens, and only in writing about festivals or other public events did they wander the streets and marketplaces. By the Southern Song, however, the city was seen as a natural organism, since its scale and complexity defied attempts to impose neat ordered hierarchies upon it.[60] Consider this description of Tang Chang'an in the morning rush hour.

> The middle of the road resembles a current of water,
> As though the bugles on the walls have burst the dikes ...
> Court carriages roll like thunder from the four directions,
> Mounted torches shine like stars strung on a single wire.[61]

These lines lack the detail of Song Kaifeng during the same period.

> Clamor and shouting on the thoroughfare as a myriad carriages flow past,
> My scrawny horses tread the moonlight in the misery of the fifth watch.
> In competition for the road by the city gate I cannot enter,
> Only now do I regret that in front of my carriage I lack an escort.[62]

Natural phenomena could also provide insights into other aspects of the urban landscape, such as flows of money and goods. Consider this description of Hangzhou during the Southern Song, where the city is presented as a chaotic scenic site.

There are also large and small stores, all carrying a wide range of goods. Along the river by Peaceful Ford Bridge, for example, are fabric stores, fan shops, shops selling lacquerware from Wenzhou, shops selling celadon and white porcelain, and so forth. Every other city is famous for one article ... but the capital is the

[59] For detailed histories of the gazetteer, see Milburn, *Urbanization in Early and Medieval China*, 1 7; James M. Hargett, 'Song Dynasty Gazetteers and Their Place in the History of Difangzhi Writing', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 56, no. 2 (December 1996), 405 42.

[60] Christian de Pee, 'Nature's Capital: The City as Garden in *The Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 1235)', in Joseph Lam, Shuen fu Lin, Christian de Pee, and Martin Powers, eds., *Senses of the City: Perceptions of Hangzhou and Southern Song China, 1127 1129* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017), 181 4.

[61] Ibid., 189. [62] Ibid., 190.

place where all goods come together, especially because its inhabitants are so numerous and traveling merchants come and go.[63]

The Song cityscape was also represented pictorially. Probably the most famous picture of a Chinese city is the *Qingming shanghe tu*, normally translated as 'Going up the River in the Qingming Festival'. This scroll is 5 m wide, and viewed from left to right depicts first pastoral scenes and urban suburbs and then takes the observer into the metropolis. It was painted by Zhang Zeduan, and it has been copied at least forty times.

Many scholars believe that the scroll depicts Kaifeng in the years before the fall of the Northern Song, but this is disputed. Valerie Hanson argues that the scroll instead depicts an idealized city because there are no recognizable Kaifeng landmarks, and even the famous Rainbow Bridge was not unique to the city. Many buildings are generic, the people seem happy, and there are few poor or women, who would have been everywhere during the festival. Indeed, the scroll may not even depict the Qingming festival, and instead of being painted before 1127, it may have been painted after the fall of the Northern Song and Qingming is a nostalgic allusion to a more prosperous past. This would make the title of the scroll 'Peace Reigns on the River'.[64]

For our purposes, it does not matter whether the scroll depicts Kaifeng. With some local variation we can expect that the scenes depicted in it would have been familiar to urban residents of Kaifeng, Hangzhou, Quanzhou, Suzhou, Yangzhou, or any other city of comparable size. Let us take a fictional walk along the scroll.[65] We begin in the countryside walking through a small village, huts of thatched and tiled roofs nestling in the trees. A group of travellers, one upon a sedan chair, wanders down from the mountains, and villagers are pictured hauling carts. We emerge from the village onto the banks of a river and are faced with a scene that Lu You must have often seen on his travels up the Yangzi. Several different kinds of boats haul all sorts of cargo, and along the banks of the river stand shops and inns. Moving further into the city, the scroll depicts the famous Rainbow Bridge crowded with stalls, some of them selling food to travellers, some of whom are riding mules or carrying goods suspended from poles. Humans and animals jostle against each other in the traffic along the road, and it is easy to see fortune tellers, wine shops, and silk shops. On the other side of the city gate is a large two-

[63] Ibid., 202.
[64] Valerie Hansen, 'The Mystery of the Qingming Scroll and Its Subject: The Case against Kaifeng', *Journal of Song Yuan Studies*, no. 26 (1996), 183 200.
[65] An easily accessible description of the full scroll is available here: https://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/painting/4ptgqmsh.htm.

storey wine shop with patrons enjoying a drink and a meal, and probably some form of entertainment, such as storytelling.

The scroll does not depict everything about urban life, and one group that is largely missing is women. Of course there were many women in Chinese society who were not courtesans and concubines, but we know most about these two groups. Courtesans were above all performing artists, able to at least dance, sing, and recite poetry. They entertained in private banquets, wine shops, and restaurants. Many courtesans were kept privately in elite households, and some men had entire troupes to entertain at banquets, although the line between courtesan and concubine was blurred. It is estimated that around a third of elite men had concubines at some point in their lives, and they had little security and often suffered from abuse. Brokers traded concubines from household to household, and in large cities there were even concubine markets.[66]

Courtesan culture helped to spread the practice of foot-binding. This involved tightly binding the feet of young girls after breaking their toes and curling them underneath the foot, and it was thought to make a dancer's stance more graceful. From there, it probably spread to elite wives, who faced competition from courtesans and concubines in the increasingly competitive world of commercial female exploitation. In these elite households, women probably remained behind closed doors, while men appeared in public, although whole families participated in festivals. However, lower down the social scale, women managed businesses outside the home such as teahouses, inns, beauty parlours, and shops selling textiles and shoes. Beyond this, women controlled their dowries, which were now larger than ever, and often included land, which they were also able to buy and sell. Indeed, it was often the wife who had the lion's share of property and other capital in the household and who managed it while the husband spent his time being an official, writing poetry, engaging in charitable activities, or any of the other things a Song literatus got up to.[67]

Conclusion

Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, sought to reverse many of the trends that had shaped cities since the height of the Tang Dynasty. These had caused the emergence of macro-regions, although as yet the complex urban network linking village to city was only to be found

[66] Bossler, 'Floating Sleeves, Willow Waists, and Dreams of Spring', 6 7, 9, 11, 19 20; Hinsch, *Women in Imperial China*, 124.

[67] Hymes, 'Sung Society and Social Change', 569 74, 584 7; Kuhn, *Age of Confucian Rule*, 195 6.

in the Lower Yangzi Delta. Within cities, the Tang-Song transition was the period during which the walls of wards were breached and urban life spilled out onto the street. Urban governance was not only the responsibility of state officials, as guilds had now emerged to regulate business, migrant communities, and begging. The people living in these new cities developed a sense of local urban identity. During the late Tang Dynasty, the capital, Chang'an, drew all towards it, but by the Southern Song Dynasty, a large proportion of the elite invested their resources in their home city, and some were celebrated as city gods. Life in cities was now under close scrutiny as prose, poetry, gazetteers, and paintings like *Qingming shanghe tu* revealed more of their streets and alleyways than at any time before.

Further Reading

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4 The Flowering of Chinese Imperial Urban Civilization (1402–1799)

Introduction

In 1421, the Yongle emperor moved the capital from Nanjing to Beijing, and initiated a series of reforms that, coming at the same time as China's integration into the early modern global economy, underpinned population growth, commercialization, and urbanization. The Ming Dynasty ended in chaos, but new foreign rulers in the shape of the Manchus from the northeast restored order and established the Qing Dynasty. Under Emperor Kangxi in the seventeenth century and Qianlong in the eighteenth century, China became prosperous once more. The Qing empire expanded into the northwest, taking over land that had not been part of China since the withdrawal of the Tang Dynasty after the An Lushan Rebellion. At the same time, Qing rulers were able to limit the early spread of Western imperialism. During this period, the Chinese imperial urban civilization achieved the heights of its development, and its achievements equalled that of any pre-industrial society anywhere in the world.

The trends of commercialization and urbanization that had characterized the Tang and Song Dynasties continued into the late imperial period. The urban system was now made up of loose regional economies with a few large cities supported by lots of market towns. The Grand Canal remained its backbone, and along its length cities relied on their economic links rather than on their political roles for their prosperity. Meanwhile, international maritime connections to the early modern global economy saw the growth of the Pearl River Delta, while parts of the Upper Yangzi River grew rich supplying rice to the hungry cities downriver. Goods, people, culture, and ideas continued to flow with increasing regularity between cities, and long-term migrant communities were formed. Cities were also built for defence. During the Ming Dynasty, coastal cities faced threats from pirates. Then as the Qing Dynasty expanded into the northwest, cities in the new province of Xinjiang developed around military garrisons.

The Ming Dynasty is often seen as the dynasty of walls, and this is true to a point. Certainly, large commercial and administrative cities were now walled, and cities that were primarily defensive in nature also had extensive fortifications. Walls in the capital, Beijing, divided the imperial families and their retinues from scholars, merchants, and other sojourners in the city. Suburbs outside city walls were now increasingly common, and towns and small cities springing up along trade routes often became walled administrative centres in their own right. All cities were now governed by a mixture of state and private interests, including the newly established merchant societies. Private wealthy individuals built large gardens, some of which were opened to the public. Finally, the proliferation of different religions across China meant that temples, pagodas, mosques, churches, and other religious institutions continued to grace the urban skyline.

The Ming and Qing Dynasties saw the flowering of late imperial urban culture. The cities of the Lower Yangzi Delta set the standards of style and taste, but the movement of gentry, merchants, and other urban residents brought this urban culture to the farthest corners of the empire. The number of books and readers grew rapidly, and so as prose, poetry, painting, and other art forms circulated more widely, they were part of the lives of more people than ever before. Contemporaries recognized that an urban culture had now developed, and some applauded how it now led the countryside, while others complained about the evils of the city. Travel guides were now common, and their contents differed depending on whether they were written for merchants or for gentry visiting friends. Their writers paid increasing attention to the lives of some of the different types of urban residents, and this brings parts of the city to life in ways not evident in previous eras.

Urban System

Macro-regions in Late Imperial China

Writing in the 1970s, Gilbert Rozman and G. William Skinner argued that Chinese cities were organized into two hierarchies. In Skinner's words, 'The first reflected the bureaucratic structure of "official" China – a world of yamens and ranked officials arrayed in a formal hierarchy of graded administrative posts. The second reflected the "natural" structure of Chinese society – a world of marketing and trading systems, informal politics, and nested subcultures determined by officials-out-of-office, nonofficial gentry, and important merchants.'[1]

[1] G. William Skinner, 'Cities and the Hierarchy of Local Systems', in G. William Skinner, ed., *The City in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1977), 275.

Critics of Rozman and Skinner have pointed out that the strict hierarchy of central places bears little relationship to the complicated trading networks within macro-regions, particularly in the Lower Yangzi Delta, and that long-distance trade was more important than previously thought. Indeed, Wu Chengming has argued that in the Ming Dynasty this flowed north-south, while during the Qing, it flowed east-west.[2] China's late imperial urban system is therefore perhaps best described as a loose series of nested hierarchies. Agricultural products, people, and ideas flowed along rivers and roads connecting villages and small towns, especially in the most densely settled areas around major cities. These cities were also almost always part of the political administrative system, and, depending on their location, important military garrisons or port cities linking to international trading networks. At the top of this series of hierarchies were the capital city, Beijing, at the northern end of the Grand Canal and the economic behemoth of Suzhou at its southern end.

It remains very difficult to say how many people lived in cities in late imperial China, in part because there is no accurate population data, since different censuses used different methods to count the number of people. Still, assuming a figure of around 85 million people in China for 1380, which accounts for under-reporting in census figures, the population was between 155 and 175 million by 1500, rising to between 268 and 353 million by the end of the Ming Dynasty. Chaos during the dynastic transition caused a decline to between 150 to 200 million in 1700, but it had risen to nearly 300 million by the official census of 1786. Population growth did not lead to a huge increase in the number of people living in large cities. The proportion of people living in cities remained stable at around 6 per cent, but the number of market towns doubled from around 10,000 during the Ming Dynasty to 20,000 by 1800.[3] The consensus is that urbanization in late imperial China continued the pattern during the Tang-Song transition of creating thousands of market towns and small cities, and this can be explained by economic change.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, people living in the richest parts of China typically owned several small plots of land scattered

[2] Cartier, 'Origins and Evolution of a Geographical Idea', 94 7, 112 21; William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 127 9, Weiping Wu and Piper Gaubatz, *The Chinese City* (London: Routledge, 2013), 42 4.

[3] Martin Heijdra, 'Socioeconomic Growth in the Ming Rural Economy', in Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 8, The Ming Dynasty 1363 1644, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 437 8; Ramon H. Myers and Yeh Chien Wang, 'Economic Developments, 1644 1800', in Willard J. Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 9, The Ch'ing Dynasty to 1800, Part 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 570, 579 82.

around the village. However, some merchants and gentry had much larger landholdings, which they rented out while they lived in towns and cities. As the population increased, those who scraped a living owning or renting small plots of land turned to cash crops and handicrafts to make ends meet. They sold their produce in markets in villages, towns, and cities, and this encouraged urban growth. Songjiang near Shanghai was the imperial centre of cotton production, and raw cotton from all parts of China fed the looms of thousands of rural households in this cottage industry.

A few miles to the south, families around Shaoxing specialized in brewing rice wine, and by the eighteenth century, business was so good that more than half of the rice fields were given over to produce for the industry. Silk was another major source of income for many families, and by 1800, more than 80,000 private silk workshops operated in Suzhou, with production far exceeding that from the imperial workshops. Land reclamation in Guangdong and Fujian encouraged the production of sugarcane, sweet potatoes, peanut oil, and other cash crops.

At the same time, the amount of silver coming into the Chinese economy rose from 50 tons per year in the late 1500s to at least 115 tons per year and perhaps much higher in the early seventeenth century. Japanese and Portuguese traders used silver to pay for porcelain, silk, sugar, tobacco, and other exports. During the Qing Dynasty, imperial expansion brought population growth to southern Gansu and Manchuria, which were relatively undeveloped areas. So too were Guizhou, Guangxi, and Yunnan in the south, where maize and sweet potato imported from South America grew well. Meanwhile, poor harvests and natural disasters in the mid-eighteenth century caused the movement of people to Sichuan, the population of which grew from 3 million in 1673 to more than 23 million by 1820.[4]

Villages and towns were filled with bustling markets, but goods also travelled across the empire. After the Grand Canal reopened in 1415, there were regularly more than 100,000 barges overflowing with produce from the south sailing up to Beijing, and this trade continued in the Qing Dynasty. Additionally, rice was shipped along the Yangzi River from Chongqing to Hankou, and then downstream to Suzhou and Hangzhou, from where it was transported to Beijing. An estimated 4 million tons of rice per year passed through the markets outside Suzhou, with Guangdong and Fujian importing sizeable amounts from Guangxi and Taiwan.

[4] Heijdra, 'Socioeconomic Growth in the Ming Rural Economy', 497 8, 507 10; Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 297 300, 322 9.

Many goods arrived or left China on the ocean waves. Zheng He's voyages in the early fifteenth century, which took him as far west as the Indian Ocean, were as much about establishing trade links as they were about projecting Ming imperial power. This meant that when the Portuguese arrived in China more than 100 years later, they took over trade from Chinese communities already living in Southeast Asia. The East Asian maritime economy formed around Quanzhou and Macau in China, and reached out to Europe via Batavia on the island of Java, up to Nagasaki in Japan, and via the Philippines to South America. Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch worked with local traders to bring silver into China and silk and porcelain into the homes of the European aristocracy.

Trade continued during the Qing Dynasty, and between 1719 and 1806, the volume of trade between Guangzhou and Europe increased at about 4 per cent per year. Silk, porcelains, and later tea left China through ports along the coast such as Amoy, which linked China to Taiwan, and Guangzhou, which provided access to Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. This renewed maritime activity once more brought China into contact with expanding Western imperialism, mostly in the form of the Dutch and British East India Companies. Foreigners sought access to China, and the Qing empire responded through the establishment of what is known as the Canton network.

In 1685, Emperor Kangxi set up a series of customs stations in Chinese ports. In Canton, which is a name often given to the city of Guangzhou, Chinese mercantile houses known as the *cohong* specialized in dealing with foreign merchants, and after foreign trade was limited to the city in 1757, they became wealthy and influential. Meanwhile, the expansion of the empire to the west brought increased trade with Inner Asia, as tea, silk, bullion, spices, and medicine were exchanged for cattle, jade, and horses. Much of this was dominated by merchants from Shanxi, who had started out providing salt to Ming Dynasty garrisons, and now established communities in the cities of Lanzhou and Xi'an.[5]

From Suzhou to Beijing: Cities along the Grand Canal

China's largest and most economically prosperous cities were along the Grand Canal, along which the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci travelled in the sixteenth century.

[5] Timothy Brook, *Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 111, 225 33; Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 331 3; Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 141 2; Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 187.

Along the route from Nankin to Pekin, one passes a great number of well known cities . . . Besides the cities there are along the river banks so many towns, villages and scattered houses that one might say the entire route is inhabited . . . Each year the southern provinces provide the King [emperor] with everything needed or wanted to live well in the unfertile Province of Pekin; fruit, fish, rice, silk cloth for garments, and six hundred other things, all of which must arrive on a fixed day, otherwise those who are paid to transport them are subject to a heavy fine . . . During the hot summer season, much of the food stuffs, which are perhaps a month or two in transportation, would spoil before reaching Pekin; so they are kept in ice, to preserve them.[6]

The greatest city of the Ming and Qing Dynasties was Suzhou, its population rising from around half a million to between 700,000 and 1 million by the early nineteenth century.[7] It was the heart of imperial commerce, a major manufacturing centre, and one of only a few cities that set the standard for urban culture. Truly, it was a city where the goods of all provinces converged.

Thus, by the end of the Ming, Suzhou depended on rice from Sichuan not merely to pay its taxes but to feed its population. Trees were felled in the interior, then shipped to Suzhou to build both buildings and boats. Local supplies of raw cotton were supplemented with imports from the North China plain imports which were spun into thread, woven into cloth, dyed and calendered, then re exported to other parts of the empire. By the early Qing, the area relied on imports of beancake from Manchuria to maintain the fertility of its fields.[8]

Hundreds of thousands of people were employed in the silk and cotton industries in and around Suzhou. The imperial textile factories which were revived in the Ming Dynasty expanded to occupy two sites in the north and south of the city under the Qing. The managers of the factories often bought silk from private producers, thereby supporting a vibrant cottage industry. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were also thirty paper mills, more than 100 candle factories, many metal and leather workshops, and shipyards.

Suzhou was also linked to surrounding cities, towns, and villages in complex networks of trade and migration. These included the large metropolises of Hangzhou and Nanjing, medium-sized cities serving as regional centres in their own right like Songjiang and Huzhou, small neighbouring cities such as Kunshan and Wuxi, and many small market

[6] Louis Gallagher, trans., *China in the 16th Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583 1610* (London: Random House, 1953), 306 7.
[7] Brook, *Troubled Empire*, 113; Michael Marmé, *Suzhou Where the Goods of All the Provinces Converge* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 252.
[8] Michael Marmé, 'From Suzhou to Shanghai: A Tale of Two Systems', *Journal of Chinese History*, Vol. 2 (2018), 81.

towns and villages. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, 140 businesses shipping rice were based in Wuxi. Cotton and silk brokers in the city connected farming households to national markets, and more than 100 workshops making bricks and tiles employed some 10,000 people.

Closer to the coast, Shanghai initially flourished in the Ming, but a combination of the movement of the capital to Beijing and pirate attacks affected cotton production in and around the small walled city. Its fortunes as a port soon revived, and soybean cake fertilizer arrived on ships from Shandong, and cotton was shipped down the coast to Guangzhou. In 1730, the main customs office was moved to Shanghai, and the city's future as a major trading entrepôt was assured.[9]

Just north of the Yangzi River along the Grand Canal was Yangzhou, a city that grew rich on the back of grain shipments and the salt monopoly. The city itself had twelve markets, and it was surrounded by market towns, many along the canals that connected to the salt flats to the northeast. To the north of Yangzhou, Jining in Shandong Province, was also shaped by the trade in grain along the Grand Canal. Migrants from the south settled in the suburbs, where they constructed teahouses, restaurants, boat rental agencies, cruise companies, theatres, hotels, laundries, and pawnshops among other businesses. All this produce ended up in Beijing, a city of well upwards of 600,000 people in the late Ming.[10]

Elsewhere, many of China's largest cities were along the south coast. Guangzhou's population was perhaps as large as 800,000 at the end of the eighteenth century, Fuzhou's numbered between 400,000 and 500,000 people, while Quanzhou, Wenzhou, and other smaller cities played their part in coastal and international trade.[11] In central China, Hankou was emerging as the commercial centre of the region. The city's population

[9] Paolo Santangelo (Adam Victor trans.), 'Urban Society in Late Imperial Suzhou', in Linda Cooke Johnson, ed., *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 87 90; Toby Lincoln, *Urbanizing China in War and Peace: The Case of Wuxi County* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 18; Linda Cooke Johnson, 'Shanghai: An Emerging Jiangnan Port, 1683 1840', in Linda Cooke Johnson, ed., *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 156 9.

[10] Antonia Finnane, *Speaking of Yangzhou: A Chinese City, 1550 1850* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 34 7; Sun Jinghao, 'A Jiangnan Identity in North China: The Making of Jining Urban Culture in the Late Imperial Period', *Late Imperial China*, Vol. 32, no. 2 (December 2011), 41 2; Susan Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life, 1400 1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 292 3.

[11] David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 234 5; Naquin and Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 170, 183.

grew from 200,000 to 1 million between 1650 and 1750, its economy thriving because of the shipment of rice, salt, copper, and tea along the Yangzi River. Commerce also drove development in neighbouring cities, such as Shashi, a little way up the river en route to Sichuan, and an important stop for grain. Further south, Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi, served as a commercial node for the agricultural production of the province, while nearby Jingdezhen was internationally renowned as a centre of porcelain production.[12]

In northwest China, cities were nodes in trade with Inner Asia and sites for large garrisons of soldiers. During the Qing Dynasty, Lanzhou became the centre of administration for the whole of Mongolia, Tibet, Qinghai, and Xinjiang. Further south, Xining was the centre of Ming and Qing attempts to pacify the western frontier. Under the Ming, it was also the site of one of the four tea-and-horse markets along China's borders. Urumuqi was built on a fort constructed by the Qing army after it defeated the Dzungurian Mongols in 1755. Within a few years, the outpost had a population of 50,000, and construction of the walled city began. Xi'an acted as a link back to the rest of China, and had a population of 300,000 in the mid-1840s.[13]

Moving south, the Upper Yangzi, which had begun to flourish in the late Ming, suffered from more devastation than any other region during the Ming-Qing transition, but like northwest China found itself at the centre of Qing expansion into the west. Both Chengdu and Chongqing had populations of between 100,000 and 300,000, with large numbers of sojourning merchants. Further south, mining of copper, silver, iron, and other minerals led to migration to Yunnan and Guizhou, with the population doubling from 5 million to 10 million between 1700 and 1800. Guiyang and Kunming had populations of 100,000 by 1750, and Dali may have had as many as 300,000 people living there.[14]

Transport and Trade on Road and Water

There were three main ways of getting around late imperial China: canal and river, road, and sea. Water remained the most popular form of transport, and there was a vast array of boats for every conceivable use. Single-masted flat-bottomed barges carried grain on the Grand Canal, while officials rode in elegantly decorated barges, and a myriad of smaller boats with mixtures of sails and oars plied their trade along narrower

[12] Brook, *Troubled Empire*, 114; Naquin and Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 164 5.
[13] Piper Rae Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation on the Chinese Frontiers* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 49 51, 59 60, 71.
[14] Naquin and Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 194 6, 198, 200.

waterways. Some of the largest boats had three masts and could carry 60,000 kilograms, and could be easily lashed together in small harbours to protect them from pirate attacks.

When not traveling by water, Chinese could go by land. The richest travelled in sedan chairs, but most used wheelbarrows or carts pulled by mules. Roads and bridges were built and maintained with a mixture of state and private funding. The best roads were constructed of large stones in the middle and compacted earth around the outside, but this method was expensive and usually reserved for sections of major roads running through cities. Other roads were generally made of gravel, and while stone bridges gradually replaced wood, at times a magistrate constructed a cheaper pontoon bridge in case trade did not pick up enough to justify the expense of a more permanent structure.[15]

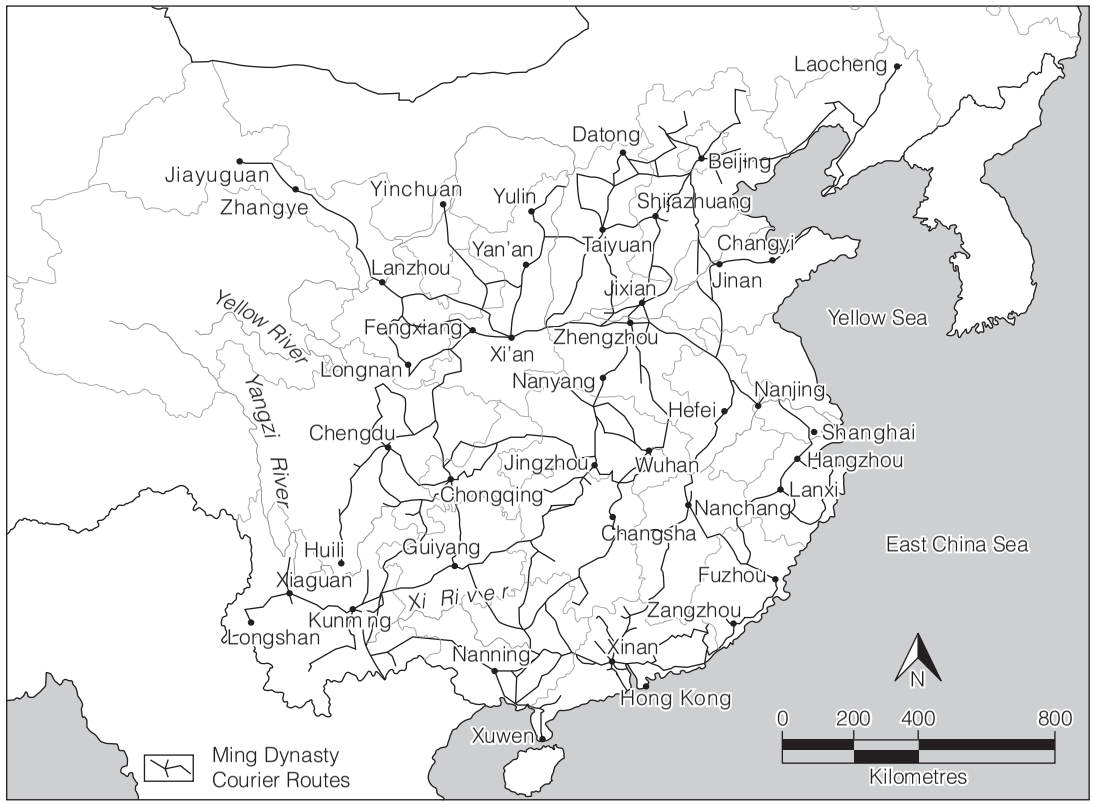
Officials, couriers on state business, merchants, and religious pilgrims, many of whom were women, all moved around China during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The courier service pictured in Map 4.1 was designed to move official correspondence, administrators, and foreigners throughout China. At the start of the Ming, there were nearly 2,000 courier stations every 35–40 km or so, although their number declined in the latter half of the dynasty.

It was the job of the magistrate to maintain a regular supply of labour and horses, entertain visitors, and ensure that roads and bridges were kept in good repair. Some courier stations were luxurious, as a diarist who was part of a Persian embassy to Beijing found in the early sixteenth century. He and his travelling companions were all 'given a couch, a suit of silken sleeping dress, together with a servant to attend to their needs', and to eat there was, 'in the measure that had already been fixed according to rank, mutton, geese, fowls, rice, flour, honey, beer, wine, garlics and onions preserved in vinegar and different kinds of vegetables which had been pickled in vinegar, in addition to other requisites that had been apportioned'.[16]

Official documents of an urgent nature travelled along the postal service which connected counties. Like the courier service, it was staffed by soldiers, who were expected to travel up to 170 km in twenty-four hours and faced twenty strokes with light bamboo if they were forty-five minutes late. The final element of the Ming state's communications network was

[15] Timothy Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 51 5; Timothy Brook, 'Communications and Commerce', in Denis C. Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, eds., *The Cambridge History of China: Volume 8, The Ming Dynasty 1363 1644, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 609 11.

[16] Quoted in Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 37.



Map 4.1 Ming Dynasty courier routes

the transport service that operated in major cities, designed to move men and materiel to build roads or dredge canals.[17]

As merchants travelled ever more frequently, a network of associations grew up to cater for them. *Huiguan* (groups of merchants from the same native place) and *gongsuo* (groups of merchants in the same trade) sprang up in cities across the empire. We know of twelve founded in the Ming, nine in Beijing, with the others in Foshan near Guangzhou, Hunan, and Suzhou. They grew in number, and by the eighteenth century, between ten and twenty new associations were appearing every year. Most were in Jiangsu, particularly in Suzhou, then in Hunan mostly in Changsha, with many also in Hankou. Beijing also had a large number of *huiguan* to cater for scholars taking the official exams. Most merchants came from Guangdong, Zhejiang, Shanxi, and Fujian. Route books, the first published in 1570, provided knowledge on the safest routes and included recommendations on local scenic sites and inns.[18]

Men travelled to trade, but women were also on the roads, often on religious pilgrimage, something that frequently invited the ire of their male counterparts. One late Ming novel summarizes what many men may have thought about women travelling, and in doing so the writer reveals how ridiculous their thoughts were.

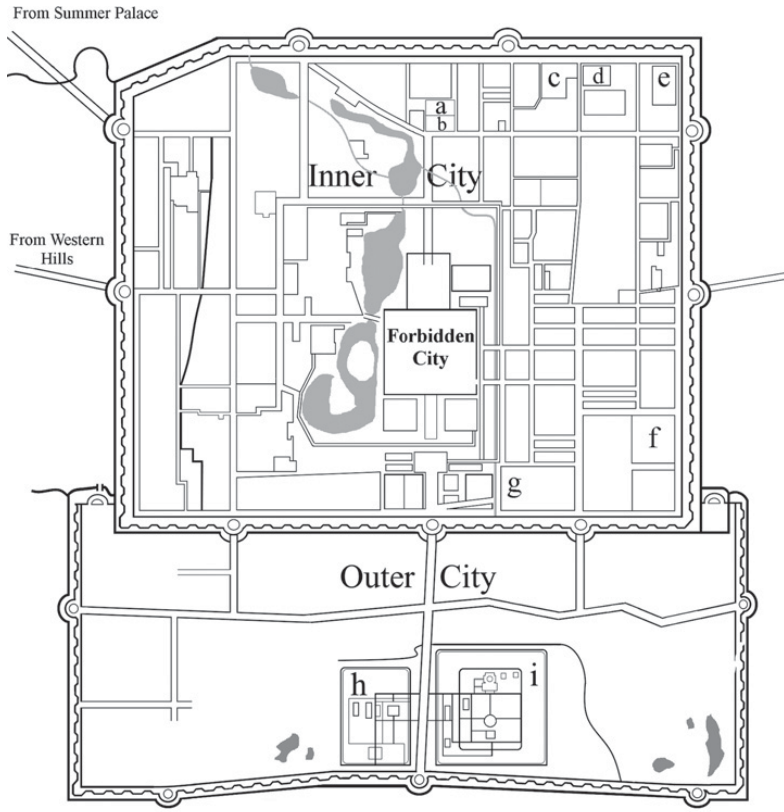
> Like a pack of wolves and dogs, the whole herd of women stampeded their donkeys, overtaking one another turn by turn. As they rode on donkey back, some of them had babies in their arms ... some fell off when their saddle slipped sideways, some squealed and shrieked when the animal ran off; some, before they had gone a mile or two, said their bowels were unsettled and wanted to get down and find a lonely spot to relieve themselves; some said they had their period and wanted to pull clothes out of their bed sack to go between their legs ... some dropped their perfume sachet and asked people to look for it on the ground; some had forgotten their toilet box and told people to go home and fetch it for them. All this stampeding about sent the dust rising up to heaven and the rank smell of bodies spreading far and wide.[19]

Urban Planning and Governance

Late Imperial Beijing

Any description of planning and governance in the Ming and Qing Dynasties must start with the capital, Beijing, pictured early in the

[17] Brook, 'Communications and Commerce', 582, 588 91, 593 6.
[18] Moll Murata, 'Chinese Guilds from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Centuries', 225 6; Brook, 'Communications and Commerce', 631 2.
[19] Quoted in Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 184.



Key to Figure 4.1

a Bell Tower
b Drum Tower
c Confucian Temple
d Lama Temple
e Temple God War
f Site of Old Examination Hall
g Foreign Legations
h Temple of Soil and Grain
i Temple of Heaven

Figure 4.1 Beijing

twentieth century (Figure 4.1). Ming Beijing was constructed along the cardinal points of the compass and had symmetrical gates and a strict grid pattern, with the emperor's residence in the palace city – more commonly known as the Forbidden City – in the centre. The imperial city surrounding it was reshaped and many buildings were retained. In 1553, as the city

expanded, the old Ming outer wall became the wall of the inner city, and the southern extension was the outer city. Beijing impressed Matteo Ricci when he visited in the late sixteenth century:

> It is closed in on the south by two high, thick walls, wide enough for twelve horses to run along the tops of them without interference. The walls are built mostly of brick. At the foundations they are sustained by stones of tremendous dimensions, and the interiors are filled with earth … On the north, the city is protected by a single wall. At night, these walls are guarded by a host of soldiers, as numerous as if a war were waging.[20]

Within the Forbidden City, the imperial family, attended by eunuchs, lived a secluded life in the northern buildings. In the south were three large halls where the emperor conducted religious ceremonies, received visiting dignitaries, and met officials. There were also storehouses, guard-rooms, and other facilities for the imperial staff. Much of the rest of the imperial city was given over to the imperial park, which was not accessible to the public and, following long-established practice, it also contained altars to the soil and grain and the ancestral temple.

The Temple to Heaven was further south in the suburbs. Further south still was a larger imperial park, where the emperor and his retinue went hunting, while to the north were the imperial tombs. All these places were managed and funded from the imperial household, and Ming nobility also shaped Beijing's urban space. The court elite had luxury houses along the lake in the southwest corner of the city, while the suburbs to the northwest outside the city walls became a popular site for country villas.[21]

Manchu leaders constructed their cities in the Chinese image, and in 1625, they even built a Forbidden City in their capital, Shenyang. It is therefore not surprising that Qing emperors used the Forbidden City in much the same way as their predecessors, although it was common to hear the sound of horses' hooves in the passageways. Buildings in the north remained the personal preserve of the imperial family, but the rest of the complex was more open than under the Ming. As in the Ming, the southern buildings were used for festivals such as the emperor's birthday, and they were attended by hundreds of people. The imperial park was opened up, and several temples were built amidst the gardens and pavilions.

[20] Gallagher, *China in the 16th Century*, 309.

[21] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 110, 113 14, 116, 128 36, 187 93; Pan Guxi, 'Yuan and Ming Dynasties', in Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil, 200 600* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 207 13.

The Qing emperors restored the southern park for hunting, but also built summer palaces to the northwest of the city. Qianlong constructed Yuanmingyuan (Villa of Perfect Brightness), a sprawling complex of lakes, pavilions, residences, and temples, with buildings in Western as well as Chinese architectural styles. As in the Ming period, the major government ministries were located immediately south of the palace. In the southwest corner of the inner city were the examination halls, where every three years thousands of scholars from across the country sat and often failed the metropolitan exams that were the path to high office.[22]

Although they rarely ventured beyond the walls of the Forbidden City, members of the imperial family had a huge influence on Beijing's construction and management. Ming emperors directly endowed forty-four temples, and empress dowagers, widows of dead emperors, also left their mark. For example, Madam Li became empress dowager in 1572, when her son the Wanli emperor succeeded to the throne. She oversaw the construction of thirteen temples and the restoration of twelve others, which were funded by eunuchs and other members of the royal family. Many were Buddhist temples in the suburbs, and their construction was often a spur to urban development.

The Manchus started off as outsiders in Beijing, but over time their lives became more rooted in the city. Around 100 of the emperor's relations made up the aristocratic elite, and below them were noble Manchu families. The richest built lavish villas in the inner city, with courtyards, side gardens, and high external walls. Chinese, initially banned from the inner city, gradually moved back in, and by 1800, thousands of shopkeepers lived and traded there. Buddhist and Daoist temples were founded or restored, their number increasing from 287 in 1644 to 385 in 1800. Eunuchs also played their part as patrons of temples, and during the Ming Dynasty, 293 temples owed a large part of their funding to their patronage. During the Qing Dynasty, eunuchs tended to work together to endow temples, which served as retirement homes for them.

After the Manchus took over Beijing, Han Chinese were forced out of the inner city into cramped quarters to the south, and the outer city grew quickly. The abode of merchants, shopkeepers, and labourers, it had only been walled in the 1550s, and comprised a few wide streets, workshops, and markets at every intersection. *Huiguan* lodges catered for new migrants, provided accommodation for merchants, and arranged transport back home for the bodies of the deceased. They also provided

[22] Sun Dazhang, 'The Qing Dynasty', in Nancy Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil, 200 600* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 268 9; Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 303 13, 354 9.

education and poverty relief, initially for members and those from the same city or province, but they also increasingly worked with urban authorities to help the wider population. Finally, as *huiguan* became more permanent fixtures in cities, often acquiring large landholdings, they helped build and maintain urban infrastructure.[23]

Governance in Beijing was a web of overlapping jurisdictions. The Household Agency staffed with Manchu nobles managed imperial workshops ensuring supplies reached Beijing from across the empire, controlled monopolies of salt and precious metals, received tribute from foreign lands, and ran factories producing textiles and porcelain. Outside the imperial city, the prefectural city of Beijing expanded to cover twenty-two counties.

However, the remit of the county officials did not extend to the area within the walls, which was divided into five districts, which were in turn subdivided into thirty-six wards. District and ward officials were responsible for building and maintaining urban infrastructure, fighting fires, and caring for the poor. Under the Qing, the five urban districts were retained, and superintendents of the police had responsibility for the outer city and the suburbs, leaving the inner city to the Manchus.

Beijing remained part of a prefecture that now comprised eighteen enlarged counties, with two covering the city itself. The military helped keep order. By the late eighteenth century, 10,000 soldiers were on the streets, manning sentry posts and guarding the gates of the outer city. A police force was set up in 1691 and 100 years later, 20,000 officers stood guard in sentry boxes and at all the gates of the city. In addition to preserving law and order, they also helped maintain urban infrastructure.[24]

Cities along the Grand Canal and down the Coast

Outside Beijing, urban form and governance continued to reflect state and private influences, and varied across the empire. The imperial administrative structure was inherited from the Song Dynasty, and as the population and the number of counties both increased, more than ever before the county became the primary locus of political power. Above counties and prefectures, the province grew out of a system of financial, judicial, and military commissioners whose remit extended over large areas.

During the Qing Dynasty, there were between seven and thirteen prefectures per province and five or six counties per prefecture, which

[23] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 149 68, 186, 289 95, 395 411.
[24] Ibid., 172 5, 178, 331 6, 359 62.

makes for some 2,000 counties across the empire. The magistrates were responsible for local defence, policing, public works, education, and civil litigation. They were assisted by clerks, secretaries, local gentry, village headmen, and others. Clerks formed a sub-county bureaucracy, and being poorly paid often found other ways to make money. At their worst they were corrupt, but at their best they were public spirited, with some setting up training programmes for assistants. Secretaries travelled with the magistrate and were intermediaries between him and the clerks. Finally, local gentry who had at a minimum attained the status of the *shengyuan* by passing the lowest of the three imperial exams were key people in local government. They were able to call on lineage networks, religious institutions such as temple societies, or informal networks of friends and colleagues to get things done.[25]

An interesting example of the interaction of formal and informal urban management came in 1777, when the Ministry of Punishment deemed that beggar heads should keep a list of beggars in their jurisdiction and record personal details including type of beard. For those driven onto the road by natural disasters, there were poorhouses. Even with the help of philanthropic donations, these poorhouses often struggled to cope with demand. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Pingquan, about fifty miles north of the Great Wall, was regularly inundated with refugees fleeing natural disaster. The poorhouse was founded in 1759, and, being well provided for with rents from imperial land, was renovated four times over the next few decades. It continued to provide food, shelter, and help with travel expenses right up until the Communists took over the city in 1948.[26]

There were provincial, prefectural, and county cities. Suzhou, the commercial heart of the empire at the other end of the Grand Canal from Beijing, was a prefectural city, while being divided between the counties of Changzhou in the east and Wu in the west. After it was made a provincial city in the late Ming, it was also the centre of surrounding prefectures. Urban management was divided between all these officials and their staff. The prefectural offices were roughly in the centre of the city, but officials and gentry tended to live in the southwest, which was more spacious and closer to gates leading out into the suburbs.

The walls of Suzhou were several metres high and the top was paved with brick, providing residents and visitors alike with a wonderful view over the ornate rooftops, temples, and gardens. The six gates were

[25] Hartwell, 'Demographic, Political and Social Transformations of China', 395–7; Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, 35–7, 49–53.
[26] Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 91–5.

particularly impressive. There were gate towers and barracks for soldiers, and large bells rang out marking the watches throughout the day and night. The city's main commercial district was in the northeast, where the crowded waterways leading to the Grand Canal were dredged once a decade or so. Grand two-storey shops sold all manner of goods from across the empire, while to the south high walls enclosed the gardens and courtyards of mansions of wealthy merchants and gentry. To the northwest, closest to the farms producing cotton and silk, small shops and family run textile workshops lined the narrow streets. During the Qing Dynasty, an entertainment district of restaurants, hotels, teahouses, and theatres also sprang up outside walls to the west of the city.

While the gardens of rich merchants and gentry were often closed to the public, there was public space in Suzhou around Buddhist and Daoist temples. The Daoist temple Xuanmiao Guan built during the mid-Tang Dynasty hosted all the important religious festivals, during which there were all manner of entertainments and stalls selling tasty food and drink. The guild of the textile profession also had its headquarters nearby, and workers in the city's household textile industry gathered outside the temple gates each morning waiting to be hired, or occasionally striking for better conditions. The temple was also an important site for philanthropic activities, with free medical care on offer for the city's poor. Finally, officials and local gentry often met there to discuss urban or regional affairs.[27]

Suzhou's population also assisted with keeping order, and here they worked with the military. In 1601, a riot of striking weavers provided the excuse for the city's military commander to organize nightly patrols according to the *baojia* system. Dating from the Song Dynasty, it spread across China during the Ming, but was not uniformly adopted. It organized ten families into a *bao* and ten *bao* into a *jia*, and particularly in counties along the south coast was used as a way for groups of people to watch for pirates and smugglers. In Suzhou, the nightly patrol and checkpoints at street gates were inconvenient for the city's residents. They prevented doctors and midwives from attending to their patients and made it difficult for people to return home from work after dark, or for peddlers to get into the city early in the morning to set up their stalls. Moreover, thieves knew all the back alleys to make a fast getaway.[28]

[27] Marmé, *Suzhou*, 34 5; Xu Yinong, *Chinese City in Space and Time*, 75 6, 102, 113 18, 138 9, 148 53, 158 62, 185 90, 208 11.

[28] Susuma Fuma, 'Late Ming Urban Reform and the Popular Uprising in Hangzhou', in Linda Cooke Johnson, ed., *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), 52 3.

Moving north along the Grand Canal was the important prefectural city of Yangzhou. It was divided between east and west by a canal running through its centre, with all government offices, the city god temple, and the prefectural school to the west. As the city expanded in the late Ming Dynasty, a new wall was built around the suburb in the east, and this became known as the New City, as opposed to the Old City to the west. The streets of the Old City were arranged according to the typical Chinese grid pattern, while those in the New City were haphazard, reflecting its organic growth.

Wandering from the Old City to the New, visitors walked through streets filled with courtesan houses running parallel with the city wall before reaching the commercial heart of Yangzhou. To the north was an artistic quarter where locals and visitors alike browsed the book market by day and made up the audiences of the theatres at night. Here too boats jostled for space along the waterways and markets lined the streets and spilled out of the city gates. As in Beijing, soldiers helped maintain order, but Huizhou merchants, part of the elite of the city, kept a close eye on urban affairs. They were particularly active philanthropists. The four charity granaries in Yangzhou established in the early eighteenth century were probably the largest in the empire to be built with private merchant capital. They also provided free coffins, medical care, and firefighting equipment. The merchants channelled their wealth into the city's gardens, which were planted with bamboo groves and grapes. Rocks from Lake Tai were arranged to simulate a grotto or a mountain, and pavilions provided pleasant places to gather in the summer heat.[29]

Shanghai was a bustling port on the edge of the Huangpu River. At its heart was the *yamen*, with the city god temple and the Yu Gardens next door. However, it as much as any other city in the Qing Dynasty was shaped by its guilds. One of the first was a *huiguan* established by Guangdong and Shandong merchants trading in soybean cake, which was formally recognized in 1715. Its premises were built on South Huiguan Street within the walled city along the docks, and its members built a temple to Tian Hou, the Chinese goddess of the sea, warehouses, and shipbuilding facilities. Other *huiguan* compounds built by merchants from Fujian, Guangdong, and other parts of China were in the suburbs outside the city walls, and often included temples, workshops, factories, and cemeteries. Meanwhile, merchants established *gongsuo* in sectors such as finance, construction, cotton, and bean trading, and even for those who sold hats from Beijing for officials. *Gongsuo* typically did not

[29] Finnane, *Yangzhou*, 172 99, 243 8; Sun Dazhang, *Qing Dynasty*, 298.

have large compounds or temples like *huiguan*, but set up offices near the city god temple.[30]

To Wall or not to Wall: Politics, Commerce, and Defence

The capital, prefectural, and many county cities were walled, partly in accordance with long-standing tradition, and partly through fear of pirate attack. During the Ming Dynasty, it was far more common for administrative cities to have a wall than in earlier eras, and in coastal cities, local elites willingly took part in wall building. An edict in 1573 highlights the reason for this.

> Walls and moats are intended to protect people and are especially critical in coastal and frontier areas. Although the court has issued numerous edicts, they have been ignored by authorities. As a result, all cities and settlements [without the protection of walls and moats] are easily seized when attacked by pirates/bandits. The Ministry of War now asks all superior commanders ... to inspect every city wall and moat in their jurisdiction, distinguish the ones that are defens ible and those that are not, and then propose budgets and possible sources for financing repair. Furthermore determine what to do with cities that are not walled.[31]

Not all cities paid heed, though, as Cao Zishou, the magistrate of Suzhou, recorded in 1559.

> From Xu Gate and Chang Gate sprawling westward are houses that become as closely lined up like the teeth of a comb as those within the city walls. Most residents in this area are sojourners. A few years ago when the pirates came advisors [to the local government] suggested building another wall outside the city [in the west suburbs]; it would be a partial one so that [its two ends] would be attached to the great city walls. But in the end it was not carried out at all.[32]

Elsewhere walls were needed. Most Ming forts and garrisons were along the northern and southwestern frontiers, around the capital, and along the Grand Canal, but there were also many forts along the coast to protect from pirates. At times the soldiers stationed in these forts turned to piracy themselves and the line between soldier, merchant, and pirate was perhaps only as thick as a bad financial year. These garrisons were a network of small communities linked to the wider regional urban system, and, as in the case of Tongshan in southeast China, temples developed to represent the identity of the town. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the military connection, the temple to Guandi, the god of war, was important to the town's identity, but so was the temple to the god of the wall. It served

[30] Johnson, 'Shanghai', 162 72. [31] Quoted in Fei Siyen, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 81.
[32] Quoted in Xu Yinong, *Chinese City in Space and Time*, 154 5.

the same function as city god temples in larger settlements and like in many other market towns, the god of the wall in Tongshan was simply imported from the neighbouring city.[33]

The construction of walls was expensive and not without controversy, since the burden of paying for the work fell on local officials and their communities. Opposition also came from those concerned about confiscation of their property and from merchants or shopkeepers worried about how new barriers in the city might affect their business. The debate on walls also shows the tensions as towns were upgraded to cities, becoming part of the administrative as well as the commercial urban system.

The case of Gaochun, a city of around 10,000 people near Nanjing, is instructive. In 1597, opposition to wall building spilled over into public protest. Local officials objected to the wall for two main reasons. It was expensive and given that many people lived in the mountains to the north, they would not be protected by a wall around the lake in the south. Although local interests won this protest and the wall was never built, the building of a nearby dam harmed the economic fortunes of the city and it went into decline over the latter decades of the Ming.[34]

Cities at China's frontiers were also built for defence, and the Ming spent enormous sums on the Great Wall, which was quickly completed after the Mongols bypassed the unfinished wall in 1550 and burned Beijing's northern suburbs. It was designed to be imposing, a projection of Chinese power and culture out into steppe and desert. There were garrisons around key strategic points, with double or even triple walls, and towers to plug the gaps. Some towers were little more than beacons to signal approaching danger, but the largest could house 10,000 men and contained armouries and storehouses.

The wall didn't work of course, and the Qing pursued a more successful policy of creating self-supporting garrisons comprising thousands of troops scattered across Manchuria. This set the tone for the settlement of Xinjiang after the territory was conquered in 1760, and garrisons of up to 23,000 men composed of Manchus, Chinese, and peoples from western China and Inner Asia looked out over the desert. Along with the military came exiled convicts, Han settlers, and Muslims from south Xinjiang. In Urumuqi, special granaries were set up for military use, merchants brought in military supplies, and markets sprang up. Tea, cotton, and silk from the interior were sent first

[33] Michael Szonyi, *The Art of Being Governed: Everyday Politics in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 87 8, 97, 117 21.
[34] Fei Siyen, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 77 102.

to Urumuqi, and then to the border towns, where they were exchanged for grain, horses, and sheep.[35]

Fengshui*: The Ming Dynasty Flowering of Chinese Geomancy*

During the Ming Dynasty, geomancy or *fengshui* (literally, wind, water) was everywhere. Its purpose, which had its origin in ancient Chinese folk beliefs, is to find a site that harmonizes the natural environment with the physical and psychological needs of human beings. The theories were already well developed by the Han Dynasty, and the geomantic compass, which helps with orientation, was developed during the Tang Dynasty. By the Ming, there were two distinct sects from Jiangxi and Fujian, and numerous textbooks. The principles of *fengshui* could be applied to the location of almost any man-made structure from individual tombs or houses to whole cities.

Ancestral temples were invariably built close to water sources, and individual houses were designed for maximum production of positive energy, or *qi*. The best site was for gates to face a natural source of *qi* such as a mountain or river. In Suzhou, the first record of the influence of *fengshui* on urban construction dates from the Southern Song Dynasty and concerns whether two blocked gates should be reopened. From then on, accounts of the perceived importance of *fengshui* on the city appear in gazetteers and other sources. However, instead of being recommendations for planning and construction, they are retrospective analyses of aspects of the built environment. One example is an explanation of Suzhou's location with reference to the nearby mountains, which it is argued, are part of one of the three mountain ranges conceived of as dragons that made up China.[36]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

Late Imperial Beijing

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the cities of the Lower Yangzi Delta were seen as the height of sophistication, although that did not stop the capital especially from developing a sense of itself as a distinctive urban space. The lives of the emperors, their wives, concubines, and

[35] Lovell, *Great Wall*, 214 29; Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 325 9, 338 9, 342 6, 397 402.

[36] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture in an Age of Turmoil*, 255 9.

eunuchs, and religious practices remained largely private, and few eyewitness accounts survive. In the late Ming Dynasty, the eunuch Liu Ruoyu described some truly lavish dinners. Roast goose, chicken, duck, fatty pork, crab, and all manners of vegetables and fruits were readily available.

Paintings also provide a glimpse into court life. In one, Xuande, the second Ming emperor to rule in Beijing, watches archery, kickball, and riding. In another painted in 1485, the Chenghua emperor is pictured enjoying New Year entertainments in the courtyards of the Forbidden City hung with lanterns and filled with jugglers and acrobats. Processions to the imperial tombs were some of the rare occasions when emperors went out into Beijing. Paintings show the emperor accompanied by an entourage of more than 1,000 people. Similarly, Ming Dynasty maps of Beijing portray the imperial city as larger than life, a reflection of its centrality to the empire, rather than a reference to its place within the urban fabric.

Ming guidebooks to the capital drew on historical precedents, including the capital rhapsodies, and the descriptions of the great Song cities of Kaifeng and Hangzhou. In these accounts, Beijing was no longer limited to the imperial domain, but included important sites beyond the city's walls. Many were temples in the Western Hills, which were the sites of regular excursions, particularly during the festival of the birthday of the Shakyamuni Buddha in the spring. This was the Beijing elite heading out for a picnic in the countryside, and couples and families were a common sight.

Moving into the city, three lakes north of the imperial city were also places where Beijingers could enjoy a banquet, set off fireworks, or ride sledges in the snow. The Confucius temple complex was the place for a quiet drink with friends, and temples in general were public spaces where visitors could discuss current affairs, exchange gossip, and share news. There too, watched over by images of all manner of deities, the empire's famous teachers came to Beijing to give lectures.

Guidebooks pointed out the best places for shopping. Periodic markets just inside the Forbidden City sold surplus produce from the palace, and the streets just to the south, where entertainers of all kinds wowed the crowds with their tricks, were a must-see for locals and visitors alike. Annual festivals were a chance to get out and about, and they were recorded in a widely shared calendar advertising the best the city had to offer. It urged people to eat rice cakes and set off fireworks at New Year, touted the spring as the perfect season for visiting suburban temples, and advised cricket fighting in the

sweltering summer heat, eating moon cakes in the autumn, and sledging in the winter.[37]

In Beijing, the weather conspired to make an already bustling and crowded city even more unpleasant, at least in the eyes of Matteo Ricci.

> Very few streets in Pekin are paved with brick or stone, and it is difficult to say which season of the year is more objectionable for walking. The mud in winter and the dust in summer are equally obnoxious and fatiguing. As it seldom rains in this province, the surface earth dissolves into a coating of dust, which even a slight wind raises, blowing it into houses, where it covers and soils nearly everything . . . Because of the dust and mud, there is scarcely any other city where it is so common to travel on horse or some other mount, and they are everywhere waiting for hire; at the crossroads, at the city gates, the palace bridges and the much frequented arches, and it costs very little to hire one for one day.[38]

Court paintings depict the Qing emperors and their families playing in the park with their pets and the children flying kites. Such paintings were not for public consumption, but court insiders published works that discussed the lives of the emperors in more detail. Gao Shiqi, writing in the late seventeenth century, described Kangxi's trips to such places as Shenyang and Ningxia, as well as the pavilions, halls, and temples in the Western Park. Emperors were more active in the city than their Ming predecessors. In 1713, Kangxi allowed residents of the city to participate in the procession to his suburban villa. Altars, streets, and shops along the route were lavishly decorated with banners, flags, and flowers, and Manchu princes, palace eunuchs, officials, merchants, and gentry were part of the procession. Not to be outdone, Qianlong held his own procession in 1790.

During the Qing, Beijing was described in more detail than ever before. The *Gazetteer of Eight Banners* comprised 250 volumes and included a detailed map of the inner city. More practical were the ever-increasing numbers of poems, guidebooks, and maps. Tan Qian spent nearly two years in Beijing from 1654 to 1656, where among other things, he visited Matteo Ricci's church, had his fortune told at the Guandi Temple, saw the new Lantern Festival market, visited the Ming tombs, and drank in the outer city wine shops. He also tried to get into the Altar to Heaven, got drunk in a villa that used to belong to Empress Dowager Li's family, and got lost on a three-day tour of the Western Hills.[39]

The outer city featured prominently in this literature. The area outside the front gate was now an entertainment quarter where Beijingers went to

[37] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 137 45, 250 8, 264 74.
[38] Gallagher, *China in the 16th Century*, 310.
[39] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 318 24, 345 51, 452 62.

dine, visit the theatre, and enjoy themselves with courtesans. The government also held executions every winter at the entrance to the vegetable market there, and large crowds watched as convicted criminals were beheaded or strangled. Here, hopeful exam candidates stayed for months or even years, living in *huiguan* or private inns, often in small rooms at a high cost.

The suburbs were now ever more part of Beijing. In the summer palaces to the northwest, the elite of the city relaxed, while elsewhere vegetables, wheat, and sorghum were grown for the kitchens and coal was mined for the stoves. People from the suburbs were also Beijing's servants, cooks, and waiters. They peddled local specialities such as candied crab apples, and came early in the morning to collect nightsoil to be used as fertilizer on the fields.[40] They also featured in Beijing's annual festivals. Pan Rongbi, the writer of an annual calendar, assumes that his readers have a shared urban culture, one that saw them 'walking through crowded markets, kite flying, sledding, kickball, quail fights, drunkenness, firecrackers, music, crickets', and being able to enjoy local delicacies such as 'flower plums, fragrant peonies, sweet melons, luscious grapes, elegant chrysanthemums, and potent wines'.[41]

Writing an Imperial Urban Culture

Beijing was in some ways a city apart, but its inhabitants shared tastes with those elsewhere. To be sure, this urban culture was also enjoyed by gentry living in the countryside, but what they thought of as stylish came from the city, and an understanding of what it meant to be cultured moved from one city to another, partly through the printed word. The largest publishing houses were in Jianyang County in the hills of Fujian close to the bamboo forests that provided the raw material for paper, and later in cities such as Suzhou.

The reprinting of books published by the state, such as the *Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty*, helped to establish a list of books considered must-haves in every scholar's library, the largest of which could have 40,000 volumes. Books were even more widespread during the Qing Dynasty, and novels such as *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *The Water Margin*, and *Journey to the West* were famous across China. Libraries also held collections of national and local gazetteers, poetry and prose, and newspapers, which mostly summarized official news.[42]

[40] Ibid., 410 47. [41] Ibid., 447. [42] Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 129 32, 169 70.

Writing was not just a male pursuit, and by the late Ming Dynasty, groups of women in every major city exchanged poems, letters, and calligraphy. Among elite society, it was now more common for women, whose feet were bound, to be confined to the home, and so these exchanges were a way to socialize in literary salons. Poetry focused on the domestic sphere, and women were described playing board games, reading, painting, performing music, and undertaking religious activities. This was an idealized picture, but it is a far cry from the bordellos and courtesan houses.[43]

All this publishing brought new ways of writing about urban space, and the gazetteer really came into its own. Perhaps as many as 3,000 gazetteers were compiled in the Ming of which 1,000 remain, while as many as 7,000 were produced in the Qing Dynasty. The maps that normally accompanied them placed the city and its *yamen* at the centre of the county, prefecture, or province, and so presented cities as part of the official administrative hierarchy. Moreover, city walls were drawn as square even when they were not so, perhaps part of the reason that the perception of an unchanging Chinese urban form based on the *Kaogongji* has persisted for so long.[44]

However, gazetteers were but one way of presenting the city. Just as in Beijing, tourist writings brought other cities to life. A Nanjing guidebook published in 1624 describes forty scenic sites around the city, and while it reflected the influence of gazetteer writing, it also incorporated a new late Ming pride in local and urban culture. This focused on scenic or important cultural sites that gentry who travelled around the empire were expected to visit, and educated them in how to interpret what they were looking at. Urban tourism thus became a mark of social status, and gentry often visited each other in the major metropolises of the Lower Yangzi Delta, along the Grand Canal, and in Beijing, with a few even venturing further afield in search of exotic adventures. Indeed, so popular did this become that touring communities developed, with trips documented in poems and paintings.[45]

A popular tourist destination was Hangzhou, the former Southern Song capital with its beautiful West Lake and ancient monasteries. Writing after the fall of the Ming Dynasty, Zhang Dai remembered how in the spring the Buddhist monasteries on the shores of West Lake held a fair for pilgrims, during which the women of the city and surrounding towns and villages went out to burn incense, pray, and sleep in the

[43] Hinsch, *Women in Imperial China*, 157 9.
[44] Pierre Étienne Will, 'Chinese Local Gazetteers: An Historical and Practical Introduction', *Notes de Recherche du Centre Chine*, no. 3 (1992), 7 9.
[45] Fei Siyen, *Negotiating Urban Space*, 124 30, 150 2, 156 67, 172 9.

residential quarters, while pilgrims and tourists alike flocked to the city's markets. Elsewhere in the city were the villas of the rich gentry, who enjoyed visits to Dragon Hill, just south of the city wall overlooking the lake.

The Lantern Festival was particularly popular, and families settled themselves on mats beneath lanterns they had made. At night, so many people made their way to the small temple on the top of Dragon Hill that it was impossible to do anything but be borne along with the crowd. Zhang Dai recalls the mounds of rubbish after the festival was over, and the ladies' slippers hung in the trees to titillate everyone that illicit sexual encounters had taken place during the night.

In the Qing Dynasty, the place to visit was Yangzhou, which was packed with visitors throughout the year. Flower festivals were common, and the gardens in the merchant houses along the lake were famous attractions. Visitors sailed out to them along the city's canals in painted boats that passed teahouses, taverns, and restaurants along the way, some of which opened twenty-four hours in high season.[46]

Suzhou Sets the Trends

Fashionable young men and women living in the cities up and down the Grand Canal in late imperial China looked to Suzhou for the latest trends.

> People from all over favor Suzhou clothing, and so Suzhou artisans work even harder at making it. People from all over value Suzhou artifacts, and so Suzhou artisans work even harder at making them. This drives the extravagance of Suzhou style to even greater extravagance, so how is it possible to lead those who follow Suzhou fashion back to sensible economy?[47]

In the case of You Tiansheng from Huizhou, clothes proved his undoing. One evening while on a boat, Tiansheng, 'in preparing to disembark to visit a relative in the vicinity, opened his trunk and took out a striking robe. Li Ya saw that the trunk was filled with exquisite outfits, and the sight of this gave him a notion'.[48] Li Ya, who was the captain of the boat and in serious debt, had murder on his mind. He drugged Tiansheng, threw him overboard, and stole his clothes. Li Ya got his comeuppance, though. Tiansheng's servant drank less than his master, and the river water revived him, so he was able to report the ship captain to the authorities.[49]

[46] Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 233 6; Finnane, *Yangzhou*, 204 9.
[47] Quoted in Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 221.
[48] Zhang Yingyu (Christopher Rea and Bruce Rusk trans.), *The Book of Swindles: Selections from a Late Ming Collection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 56.
[49] Ibid., 56 8.

In the Qing Dynasty, Suzhou and Yangzhou styles could be found on the streets of cities up and down the Grand Canal and beyond. In Yangzhou itself, concubines, prostitutes, and perhaps even wives sought to outdo each other in their dress. Silks and satins in different colours came and went in style with the seasons, and elaborate hair coiffeurs with names such as 'pair of flying swallows' and 'flower basket' were popular.[50]

Expensive clothes could be worn by anyone, but only the very richest could afford the most exclusive items such as antiques and paintings. Ownership and more importantly connoisseurship marked one out as particularly cultured. In 1603, the diarist Li Rihua, who lived in Jiaxing halfway between Hangzhou and Shanghai, was visited sixteen times by dealers trying to sell him something. For those who needed to understand the cultural value of what they were looking at, books described what to buy, how to use or display it, and what to appreciate about it. They were the style magazines of the day. The market was flooded with fakes, and some scholars who were well trained in calligraphy and painting made a fair packet churning them out. To counter this, it became common for artisans to put their mark on their products, and these became brand names known across the major cities of the empire, and known to us through lists of famous manufacturers. So the discerning went to Qiang Huayu in Suzhou for speckled bamboo furniture, Wu Mingguan of Huizhou for ceramics, Lu Zigang for jade carvings, and so on. However, the brand names became associated with the products even after the original artisans had died, and this diluted their exclusivity.[51]

Urban Dangers: Merchants and Beggars

As merchants became wealthy, they sought to acquire the cultural sophistication of the gentry, and many among the gentry argued that there was nothing wrong with the pursuit of profit. Published in 1635, *Bringing Merchants to Their Senses* offered advice on how to balance the books. Merchants should be diligent and attend to the smallest details. They should avoid extravagance and not waste money on gambling or sex, and finally they should keep careful accounts.[52]

This was good advice for all merchants, whether rich or poor, as it was easy to be parted from one's cash, or even one's life, as the story of You Tiansheng illustrates. This appeared in *The Book of Swindles*, written in

[50] Finnane, *Yangzhou*, 222 3. [51] Brook, *Confusions of Pleasure*, 222 8.
[52] Ibid., 210 16.

the Wanli period by Zhang Yingyu, who wrote his stories as warnings for unwary merchants.

One describes how sedan chair bearers had a monopoly on an overland route in Fujian, and during busy times such as the examination season, they would suddenly stop halfway along the road and demand more money. A wily clerk who had been fleeced many times took two broom handles and wrapped them in tissue paper, so they looked like bolts of silk. He hired two porters to carry him, and saying he had to go and mail a letter, ran off and made his way home. The porters opened the package containing the broom handle and found this poem:

> You porters are a tricky lot
> but now you've fallen for my plot;
> unless I'd handled both you dolts I would have lost
> my silk two bolts![53]

Another tale begins with a boat arriving in Fuzhou as porters swarm forward to meet it. The experienced merchant waits until the cargo is unloaded and all accounted for before calling porters he knows. However, strangers to the city often hire the first porter they see, and their packages are never seen again. After this happened to one unlucky merchant called Tian, he went to see the local constable, and the two hatched a plan. Tian made up a fake bundle of luggage, and travelling a little way upriver, arrived at the port once more, where a porter promptly stole the bundle. However, the constable was lying in wait, and he caught the porter, telling him he would let him off without punishment if he found the original thief, and a few days later, Tian had his goods returned to him. In his commentary, Zhang Yingyu concluded, 'This is the same as the old adage, "A thief catches a thief as a needle pricks a thorn." This story offers a warning to those who hire porters and a method for those who would catch thieves.'[54]

The city in late imperial China was full of traps for the unwary, and perhaps the most wily among its inhabitants were beggars, who collected their tax from shopkeepers. However, beggars were part of urban life in other ways. Every new year's eve it was commonly believed that a new Kitchen God, whose effigy hung next to stoves in households across the country, would be assigned to each household, and so the old one had to be sent back to heaven. Beggars dressed up as the Kitchen God and danced through residential neighbourhoods, symbolizing the return of the god to heaven, and picking up handsome donations in the process. They also delivered images of the God of Wealth a few days later, and

[53] Zhang Yingyu, *Book of Swindles*, 30. [54] Ibid., 87.

earned yet more tips from people hoping for a prosperous year ahead. There were variants on this theme in different cities across China throughout the late imperial period and into the twentieth century. Let us finish this chapter with one of their songs.[55]

> The God of Wealth is walking in your door.
> Congratulations! You will make a great fortune.
> A noble son will be born in your lucky house.
> Fortune and luck come together.
> Give quickly, to make a fortune quickly
> you will have good business year round.
> Give one *sheng*, you purchase Nanjing;
> Give one *dou*, you purchase Hankou,
> Give one *hu*, you purchase land and build a house;
> Give one *dan*, you purchase a 'merry go round'.
> Give quick! Give quick!
> You purchase mules and horses.[56]

Conclusion

The late Ming Dynasty saw a return to policies that fostered economic growth and urbanization. Macro-regions became highly complex regional urban systems supporting the emergence of huge commercial metropolises, themselves connected to the early modern global economy via shipping routes from Canton. Cities of all sizes remained multifunctional as every commercial node in the imperial urban system was also a political one in the imperial bureaucracy. The capital, Beijing, reflected long-established traditions of Chinese urban planning with its walled enclaves governed by the imperial family, while the south city, home to tradespeople, workers, and visitors, was managed by both local officials and guilds. Private interests played a larger role in vibrant commercial cities such as Hankou and Suzhou, and the state was perhaps more important in some of the smaller cities that were part of the empire's defence against pirates from the sea or nomadic tribes from the north. By now, maps, gazetteers, guidebooks, novels, and paintings were just some of the ways in which Chinese reflected on their late imperial urban civilization. Suzhou set the trends for style and sophistication, and gentry, merchants, and other travellers carried knowledge of urban culture from city to city.

[55] Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 134 9.
[56] Quoted in Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 139. *Sheng*, *dou*, *hu*, and *dan* were units of measure for grain. Their equivalent values are roughly: 1 *sheng* = 1 litre, 1 *dou* = 1 decalitre, 1 *hu* = 10 (or 5) decalitres, 1 *dan* = 1 hectolitre.

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5 The Seeds of Urban Modernity (1800–1895)

Introduction

At first, foreign imperialism had a small foothold in Guangzhou on the southeast coast. After the two Opium Wars, the first from 1839 to 1842 with the British and the second from 1856 to 1860 with the British and French, not to mention the first Sino-Japanese War in 1894–5, it had expanded across the empire. Foreign powers not only had control of small parts of China in treaty ports, but they also had the freedom to proselytize religion across the country, and the British ran the imperial maritime customs which collected taxes on sea and river.

Before the first shot was fired in these conflicts, the Qing Dynasty was already weakened by an economic depression caused by a number of factors, including population growth and stagnant taxation. The empire was also beset by rebellions that devastated wide swathes of the country. The largest, the Taiping Rebellion lasting from 1850 to 1864, left perhaps as many as 72 million people dead and cities such as Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Suzhou in ruins.[1] Although the last decades of the century saw the imperial government recover and reform, power was beginning to slip away from the centre, and by century's end, it was clear that the Chinese 2,000-year-old imperial system was in danger of falling apart.

During the nineteenth century, the seeds were sown for the emergence of China's modern urban society. For many years, there has been a tendency in China to see the Treaty of Nanjing, signed in 1842 after defeat in the first Opium War, as the beginning of a century of national humiliation. Although it is important to remember that Western and then Japanese imperialism was imposed on China, at times violently, this interpretation is too simplistic. In the same way that global interactions, such as the Mongol or Manchu invasions, had shaped Chinese cities in

[1] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 374.

the centuries before the arrival of British gunboats, the impact of Western imperialism was profound and complex. The opening of treaty ports reshaped the urban system. The Grand Canal was replaced as the main link between north and south by new coastal shipping connections, and these reached far into the interior as the Yangzi River became navigable for steamships. Cities along the coast such as Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Tianjin grew rapidly in size, and remained connected to long-established trading networks reaching out into the countryside. After the ravages of the Taiping Rebellion, people in towns and villages in the hinterlands of these rapidly growing cities were able to benefit from their links to global markets. At the same time, millions of Chinese migrated to treaty ports seeking work in new industries beginning to emerge.

Extraterritoriality meant that Britain, France, the USA, Japan, and other foreign powers controlled parts of treaty port cities, and this allowed foreign communities to establish governing structures that sought to manage the city as an independent entity. Municipal councils had responsibility for security, taxation, and rental payments on land, as well as public services such as water, gas, electricity, and transport systems. As yet, Chinese living in foreign areas of cities had little official input into municipal government, although in many cases they made up the bulk of their populations. These governmental innovations crossed over into other cities in China only at the very end of the nineteenth century, when new urban forms also began to appear. Changes were often the work of reformist entrepreneurial elites, although the Qing government also provided support in some cities. Across the country, new gates were built in city walls, roads were widened, and gas, electricity, and other municipal services were beginning to appear. At the same time, businessmen, merchants, and other groups of urban inhabitants asserted themselves through new institutions like chambers of commerce or through old ones like guilds.

In the nineteenth century, Chinese and foreign communities found opportunities to intermingle, cooperating and competing as cities were governed, business deals done, and partnerships formed. Time was also spent hanging out in bars, parks, and the street. However, while such cosmopolitan connections were slowly becoming more common, for the most part, the social and cultural lives of the foreign and Chinese communities in treaty ports were separate. Moreover, these encounters took place within the context of Western imperialism. Foreigners resident in China almost always saw China as the lesser power and Chinese as the lesser people politically, socially, culturally, and, for many, racially. Even on those occasions when a foreigner expressed admiration for Chinese society and culture he or, occasionally, she did so perhaps unaware of the

ingrained prejudice against the Orient emerging in the West.[2] Despite this, imperialism brought with it ideas, products, and technologies that Chinese adopted, adapted, and then incorporated into their everyday lives.

Urban System

Western Imperialism and the Urban System

Scholars have come up with a range of terms to describe the foreign imperial presence in China. These include 'semi-colonialism', which draws attention to the violent way in which foreigners imposed control over various aspects of Chinese life, 'transnational colonialism', which focuses on how multiple nationalities including Chinese participated in urban life, and 'hypercolonialism', which in the case of Tianjin especially draws attention to the number of imperial powers in the city.[3] In fact, foreigners gained control over portions of Chinese cities through a wide array of different arrangements. The colonies of Hong Kong and Macau were ceded to Britain and Portugal, respectively, in perpetuity. In treaty ports, of which there were fifty by 1900, the consul had jurisdiction over foreign citizens, and Chinese law and Chinese taxes on movement of goods did not apply. The areas that foreigners controlled were known as concessions, and their territorial boundaries were normally clearly marked. In Shanghai and some other cities, the foreign concessions, with the exception of the French, were merged to create the International Settlement.

Outside treaty ports and colonies, there were ports of call along rivers, especially the Yangzi River, which catered to steamer traffic, which was only allowed to dock there. Finally, there were resort towns such as Beidaihe or Moganshan. These arrangements were imposed on China, but it is also worth remembering that the practice of granting foreign powers the right to trade in certain cities had a long history.[4]

The treaty port system developed over time, as illustrated in Map 5.1. After the opening of the port to foreign trade, a consul or customs official took up residence. Land was leased from the Chinese along the water and

[2] The idea of Orientalism is now well established. For a concise introduction, see Simon Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 2014), 156 81.

[3] Ruth Rogaski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 10 18; Isabella Jackson, *Shaping Modern Shanghai: Colonialism in China's Global City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 8 10.

[4] Robert Nield, *China's Foreign Places: The Foreign Presence in China in the Treaty Port Era, 1840 1943* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), 8 9.

Map 5.1 The evolving treaty port system in China

a Bund constructed, with gardens normally reserved for foreigners. Established trading firms such as Butterfield & Swire and Jardine & Matheson built warehouses and offices, and rich foreign merchants constructed mansions in the colonial architectural style. Clubs were established, a racecourse marked out, and social engagements planned. In the larger ports, volunteers were recruited for the militia and newspapers were printed.

Foreigners – many of whom were British in the nineteenth century – entered a world that was not China, but neither was it a home away from

home.[5] Many of these settlements were tiny, and often their foreign populations had little impact on the city and the surrounding region. However, the growth of cities such as Hong Kong and Shanghai affected the economy of the entire empire. Trade, agriculture, and industry around Shanghai in particular was reoriented towards that city. Significant trade also flowed through Guangzhou and Tianjin, while inland Hankou, already an important regional centre, became the commercial hub of central China. In each case, the impact of the opening of these ports on regional economies differed depending on what was produced and how it was moved between cities and out into the world. There were also changes over time, as cities and economic sectors rose and declined. To summarize, in the nineteenth century, China's coastal cities and their hinterlands became more economically prosperous and urbanized at the expense of cities in the interior.

Evidence for this is provided by looking at the proportion of people living in cities. Skinner records the number of people living in cities as a proportion of the total estimated population of each macro-region for 1843 to 1893. The increases are as follows:

Lower Yangzi 7.4 per cent to 10.6 per cent
Lingnan 7 per cent to 8.7 per cent
Southeast coast 5.8 per cent to 6.4 per cent
Northwest China 4.9 per cent to 5.4 per cent
Middle Yangzi 4.5 per cent to 5.2 per cent
North China 4.2 per cent to 4.8 per cent
Upper Yangzi 4.1 per cent to 4.7 per cent
Yun-kwei 4 per cent to 4.5 per cent.

From this we can see that the greatest gains in urbanization were along the coast in an arc moving southwards from Shanghai to Hong Kong.[6] This is evidence for a small but measurable impact of Western imperialism on urbanization, but this did not supplant long-established Chinese systems of trade and exchange.[7]

The Rise of Coastal Cities

Of course, China had long been part of the East Asian trading network. In 1754, the Qing government lifted its ban on living abroad, and as

[5] Robert Bickers, 'Shanghailanders and Others: British Communities in China, 1843 1957', in Robert Bickers, ed., *Settlers and Expatriots: Britons Overseas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 272 3.
[6] Skinner, 'Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China', 228 9.
[7] Susan Mann, 'Urbanization and Historical Change in China', *Modern China*, Vol. 10, no. 1 (January 1984), 85 6.

emigration to Southeast Asia took off, Chinese merchants, mostly from Fujian and Guangdong, spread out across the region. They imported products such as rice and pepper into China, and established sugar refineries and sawmills among other industries in countries such as Malaya and Siam. This put them in the perfect position to take advantage of the treaty port trade, and exports boomed. Silk exports rose from 2,000 piculs per year in 1844 to more than 100,000 in the 1890s, while tea exports grew rapidly after 1850, reaching a peak of 280 million pounds in the 1880s, before competition from India reduced demand. Taken together, tea and silk made up 90 per cent of all of China's exports in the 1870s, while opium was the dominant import until 1890.[8]

Guangzhou was the initial point of contact for much of this new trade, the city reprising its long-established role as a maritime link between China and the outside world. The superintendent of customs, the *hoppo*, was appointed to oversee trade, and Chinese merchants, the *cohongs*, managed the day-to-day transactions. Foreigners lived in an area known as the Thirteen Factories, lavish residences with Western classical facades outside the old city along the river. There were British, Austrians, Danish, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Swedish communities. The number of ships arriving each year rose steadily from around 20 in the 1760s to 300 by the 1840s.

By the early nineteenth century, thousands of foreigners spent time in Guangzhou, but they remained a small community in a city of more than 1 million Chinese.[9] The opening of treaty ports and in particular the British development of the colony in Hong Kong ended Guangzhou's monopoly on foreign trade. Up until 1843, the city had a virtual monopoly on tea exports, but by 1860, the bulk of tea passed through Hong Kong before being shipped elsewhere in China. The new colony grew quickly. The British military took space for their barracks, merchants opened businesses along the waterfront and built houses on what is now known as the peak, and the Chinese population reached 72,000 in 1855. As the opium trade gradually declined, former importers such as Jardine's turned to new businesses like textiles and sugar refining. Swires, one of their competitors, had the world's largest sugar refinery by the early twentieth century. International trade supported the shipbuilding industry and the Chinese coastal junk trade, which ballooned from 80,000 tons in 1847 to 1.35 million over the next twenty years. By 1891, 40 per cent of

[8] Glahn, *Economic History of China*, 390–3.
[9] Peter Perdue, *The Rise & Fall of the Canton Trade System – III: Canton & Hong Kong*. (2009). https://visualizingcultures.mit.edu/rise_fall_canton_03/cw_essay01.html.

all China's exports and 50 per cent of its imports passed through the colony.[10]

The most important treaty port in China was Shanghai. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was a bustling city through which cotton, paper, and silk passed on their way to the coast. Trade grew steadily, and by the time Shanghai opened as a treaty port in 1842, the volume of trade may have been equal to that of London. The number of *huiguan* and *gongsuo* increased from twelve during the Qianlong period to twenty-one by 1830. Merchants from Ningbo and Shaoxing set up the Siming *gongsuo* in 1796 and traded in opium and tobacco. Other *huiguan* represented migrants from Guangzhou, Fujian, and Zhejiang. The growth in trade sparked a boom in finance, and the number of *qianzhuang*, money changers who acted as bankers, increased from 88 in 1796 to 120 in 1858.[11]

Shanghai's links to other parts of China were the foundations upon which the city emerged as one of the most important commercial hubs in Asia, but that would not have happened without its global connections. The opening of the Suez Canal reduced the journey time to London from four months to one. At the same time, long-distance telegraph cables were extended to Shanghai, which transformed trade, as the rapid transmission of news and market information meant companies no longer needed to retain large amounts of money in China to make purchases or large quantities of tea, silks, and other goods in European ports. The opening of the Yangzi River to steamers in 1861 stimulated internal trade, and within a few years, 70 per cent of steamer traffic was between different treaty ports, with the remainder carrying people and produce to Liverpool, London, and other cities around the world.[12]

The value of foreign trade passing through Shanghai doubled between 1861 and 1894, and by 1911, it had doubled again. Over the same period, the city's overall share of China's foreign trade actually fell from more than 60 per cent to 45 per cent, a testament to the rise of other treaty ports. Part of the reason for this growth in inter-treaty port trade was the decline of the Grand Canal. Over time, silt built up along the Yellow River, which made it prone to flooding. Yangzhou, for so long an important commercial city, suffered. Over the first half of the nineteenth century, salt merchants relocated to Hankou, and the city and surrounding

[10] Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 121 4, 128 30; Michael Tsin, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China: Canton 1900 1927* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 22 3.

[11] Johnson, 'Shanghai', 162 8, 173 80.

[12] Anne Reinhardt, *Navigating Semi colonialism: Shipping, Sovereignty, and Nation Building in China, 1860 1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 71 89.

countryside were ravaged by Taiping rebels three times in the 1850s. Meanwhile, given the increasing difficulty of transporting grain north via the Grand Canal, the Qing authorities were forced to act. In the 1840s, ocean-going junks were hired to ship grain, but by the 1860s, competition with steamships put many out of business. In response, in 1872, the government approved a proposal to set up the China Merchants Steam Navigation Company, and with the security of a monopoly on the transport of grain for the state, the company grew quickly. In 1877, it became the largest steamship company in China, dwarfing its British rivals.[13]

The city of Shanghai grew rapidly during the nineteenth century. The International Settlement was created in 1863 from a merger of the American and British parts of the city, while the French concession developed separately. Chinese were not officially allowed to rent land in foreign areas of the city, but the population far outnumbered foreign residents. The impetus for this influx was the Taiping Rebellion, which brought as many as 1 million refugees into all parts of Shanghai. As the city continued to grow, a new area north of Suzhou Creek known as Zhabei became the place where many migrants made their home, often in ramshackle accommodations. The population of the International Settlement reached 170,000 in 1905, and the number of people in Zhabei grew from around 300,000 in 1850 to around 600,000 in 1910. Finally, the population of the French concession grew from around 55,000 in 1865 to more than 100,000 in 1910.

In 1894, Shanghai was home to more than 100 industrial enterprises. The first were naval repair yards, some established by foreigners, although the Jiangnan Arsenal that Li Hongzhang set up in 1865 also constructed and repaired military vessels. There were sixteen silk factories in Shanghai in 1894, many of them partly funded with foreign capital, while the first cotton mill was constructed in 1880.[14] The city's development encouraged migration from other areas of China, and this is reflected in a boom in the number of *huiguan* in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Migrants to Shanghai from the same place invariably worked in the same industry, and this led to a hierarchy of native place that continues to shape the city today. In the Jiangnan Arsenal, carpenters were from

[13] Antonia Finnane, 'The Origins of Prejudice: The Malintegration of Subei in Late Imperial China', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 35, no. 2 (April 1993), 218 24; Reinhardt, *Navigating Semi colonialism*, 73 4, 77 81.

[14] Christian Henriot, *Scythe and the City: A Social History of Death in Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016), 14; Marie Claire Begere (Janet Lloyd trans.), *Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 58 62.

Guangzhou, machinists from Ningbo, and blacksmiths from Wuxi. Jewellery was dominated by associations of migrants from Nanjing and Suzhou, the silk industry by workers from Hangzhou and Suzhou, and ironworking by people from Wuxi. The worst jobs in Shanghai and indeed in other cities in the Lower Yangzi Delta were left to refugees from northern Jiangsu, known as Subei. The men found work on docks, pulling rickshaws, as peddlers, collecting nightsoil, and as beggars, while the women worked the worst jobs in factories or sometimes as maids. Their employment was often arranged by criminal gangs, who linked the city to towns and villages across the region.[15]

The growth of Shanghai not only increased the size of its hinterland to encompass all of China, but also tied cities and towns in the Lower Yangzi Delta ever more closely to itself. In the early nineteenth century, Suzhou was still the city through which all the goods of the empire flowed, and its trade may have been four or five times as much as that passing through Shanghai. Suzhou and the surrounding metropolitan districts had a population of nearly 3 million people before the Taiping Rebellion, which devastated the city, leaving much of its suburbs burned to the ground. The Qing government poured money into the reconstruction of Nanjing, the base of the Taiping rebels, leaving the merchant guilds of Suzhou to rebuild their city, something that made sense only if there was confidence that business would revive. Between 1865 and 1875, a total of twenty-three *gongsuo* and *huiguan* were rebuilt in Suzhou and sixteen new associations were established. Indeed, so profitable were Suzhou businesses that many silk brokers, stationers, money shops, carpentry shops, and others were able to set up branches in Shanghai.[16]

Meanwhile, agricultural production was slowly being linked to global markets, and nowhere is this more evident than in the silk industry. If anything, population loss during the Taiping Rebellion was more severe in Wuxi than in Suzhou. In the countryside, this led to more arable land standing idle, providing space to grow mulberry leaves and cultivate silkworms. In the mid-nineteenth century, a disease wiped out silkworms in France, and this increased demand for Chinese silk. Exports rose substantially and by 1900, more than twenty silk filatures operated in Shanghai. Cocoon brokers in Wuxi linked producers in the countryside to

[15] Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853 1937* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 32 4, 50 4; Elizabeth Perry, *Shanghai on Strike: The Politics of Chinese Labor* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 35 6; Emily Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity: Subei People in Shanghai, 1850 1980* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 37 40, 62.

[16] Marmé, 'From Suzhou to Shanghai', 84, 88 92.

the new filature industry in Shanghai, and their number rose steadily into the twentieth century. This created a silk industry continuum that linked agricultural production to global markets via Shanghai.[17]

Probably the most important treaty port in north China was Tianjin. Located at a junction of two forks of the Grand Canal, it was already an important transhipment point for rice and other goods, and was connected by sea to Shanghai, Fujian, and Guangdong. Its main industry was salt, and it was home to the government-run salt administration. After Tianjin became a treaty port in 1860, its population grew from 60,000 to 1.7 million by 1947. The foreign population, while only ever a minority, swelled from 100 in 1867 to 11,000 in 1921. Although the first cotton business opened in the city in 1860, up until 1910 cotton exports made up less than 1 per cent of the national total.

Meanwhile, production in the Kaiping Coal Mines to the northeast of the city boomed, especially after the completion of the railway line in 1888, and surpluses were exported to Japan. By now, work on the river allowed ocean-going ships direct access to the city, and at the beginning of the 1880s, 900 ships a year visited the port bringing grain from Jiangsu and a wide variety of imported goods from other treaty ports.[18]

Inland Cities

The treaty port of Hankou grew more rapidly than Hanyang or Wuchang, the two other cities that made up this tri-city settlement along the Yangzi River in central China. At the start of the nineteenth century, Hankou was already a large city with a population of several hundred thousand. The number of people probably grew to more than 1 million on the eve of the Taiping Rebellion, and may have recovered to more than 2 million by the 1880s. Much of the reason for the city's prominence was its importance as a centre of trade for rice shipped downstream along the Yangzi River. Products among the hundreds traded in the city's markets included grain, salt, tea, medicinal herbs, hides and furs, and cotton.

Hankou was designated a treaty port in 1860, but the Taiping Rebellion delayed the city's growth. By 1862, only forty foreigners lived there and just one steamer service went every fortnight to Shanghai. The

[17] Lynda Bell, *One Industry, Two Chinas: Silk Filatures and Peasant Family Production in Wuxi County, 1865 1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 40 54.

[18] Gail Hershatter, *The Workers of Tianjin, 1900 1949* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1986), 16; Kwan Man Bun, 'Mapping the Hinterland', in Gail Hershatter, Emily Honig, Jonathan N. Lipman, and Randall Stross, eds., *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 187 8; Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 239 42.

amount of tea, the main export, doubled between 1866 and 1886, much of it shipped to Shanghai by Chinese merchants. Other popular goods such as hides, hemp, iron ore, and coal were already significant in the regional economy before the opening of the treaty port. Changing British tastes meant that Indian tea replaced Chinese, but Russian demand for Brick or Tablet Tea, which was able to survive the arduous journey west, meant that in 1873, the first steam-powered Brick Tea plant was constructed, and by the end of the century, a further three had been built. Tea was shipped up the Han River, where it was loaded onto camels, but in 1891, it was sent by steamer to Vladivostok via Shanghai and Tianjin, where it would eventually be transported to Russia via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

As Hankou grew, migrants were attracted to the city, and many refugees also fled famine, flooding, and rebellion. Newcomers often found work on the docks. One estimate put the total number of boat crews in Hankou over one year at 165,000 people, which meant that approximately 10,000 people may have been staying on boats around the docks at any one time. There may also have been as many as 30,000 merchants staying on boats and in inns, temples, and warehouses during the trading season. Finally, tens of thousands of merchants settled in Hankou for years or even decades, hardly a surprise in a city in which at least 50 per cent of the population came from elsewhere in China.

As in Shanghai and other migrant cities, people from the same place tended to work in similar fields. Central China was the source of most of Hankou's labourers, Huizhou merchants continued to dominate the salt and tea trades as they had done since the Ming Dynasty, merchants from Shanxi and Shaanxi controlled trade to the north, and merchants from Guangdong brought products from the south. Finally, migrants from Ningbo and Shaoxing established themselves as bankers and then came to dominate trade in cotton and silk with the cities of the Lower Yangzi Delta.[19]

Not all cities in China were treaty ports, and the most important of these was Beijing, which remained the political centre of the empire even as other cities grew to economic prominence. In 1851, a survey of Manchu households in the inner city gave a figure of around 380,000 people. To this should be added around 300,000 people in the outer city at the end of the nineteenth century, giving a total population of around three quarters of a million.[20]

[19] Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 97 111; William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Commerce and Society in a Chinese City, 1769 1889* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 19 21, 40, 55 7, 80 3, 215 33.

[20] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 395, 411.

Beijing certainly wasn't China's largest city, but it continued to draw people to it, not least the thousands of examination candidates who competed for high office, who were housed in *huiguan*, the number of which continued to grow from 174 in 1788 to 385 in 1907. Around 15 per cent were formed especially to cater for merchants, but even those that primarily housed scholars were unlikely to turn away someone from their native place who had arrived in the capital for trade. The city was also a magnet for refugees, many of whom remained in the capital for years.[21]

Steamships and the Urban System

The nineteenth century saw one major technological innovation in transport that improved urban connectivity and supported the orientation of the urban system towards the coast. The steamship network was initially composed of foreign ships connecting the treaty ports, which began to carry freight for Chinese merchants in addition to goods entering and leaving China's shores. In 1861, the Yangzi River was opened to foreign ships, and within two years, 70 per cent of all trade coming through Shanghai was for other treaty ports rather than for export.

In 1867, the government stipulated that Chinese-owned steamships should operate only from treaty ports and ports of call, and they quickly replaced other types of shipping between these cities. Chinese ships of other types benefitted from being able to connect cities and towns that were not part of the treaty port system. The regulations also drove the British to open new ports along the Yangzi River, with the aim of opening up western China to trade, and after years of trying, Chongqing was finally opened in 1890, although technological challenges meant that regular services did not begin until the twentieth century. The last years of the Qing Dynasty also saw the lifting of regulations limiting steamships to treaty ports, linking even more cities together.[22]

Increased interconnectivity promoted trade and urbanization, and this was reflected in an increase in the number of *huiguan* across the country. Outside of Beijing, merchants established more than 2,000 *huiguan* in more than 300 cities around China. Sichuan had more than 500, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, and Jiangxi had up to 200, and Anhui, Shanxi, and Zhejiang had a fair few. The large number in Sichuan is explained not

[21] Richard Belsky, *Localities at the Center: Native Place, Space, and Power in Late Imperial Beijing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 46, 51, 58 62; Lillian Li, Alison Dray Novey, and Haili Kong, *Beijing: From Imperial Capital to Olympic City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 102, 104.

[22] Reinhardt, *Navigating Semi colonialism*, 24, 32 5, 45 56.

by merchants moving from one city to another, but by rural migrants moving to cities within the province.[23]

The postal system also underwent changes that made it more efficient. By the end of the nineteenth century, China had six different postal systems. The imperial relay service, a version of the courier service that had existed for centuries, was for official mail only. The Office for the Transmission of Government Correspondence sent and received mail to Chinese envoys overseas. Most Chinese used one of the many private letter firms, many of which also sent cheques and money since they were associated with Chinese banks. Foreign private postal agencies connected treaty ports with cities elsewhere in the world. In China, municipal councils set up postal services, allowing for letters and parcels to be sent between treaty ports. Finally, there was the postal service of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, a foreign-run bureaucratic organization that collected customs duties at treaty ports, which formed the basis of the Chinese national postal service in the twentieth century.[24]

Urban Form and Governance

Treaty Port Governance

Most treaty ports in China were along rivers, and the Bunds built on reclaimed land along their banks became particular types of urban spaces. Originating in India, the term 'Bund' was first used in China to describe buildings in Guangzhou. The elongated nature of Bunds reflects both their physical proximity to rivers and the institutional manifestation of colonial power in urban space, which being limited, rarely extended back away from the river. Gunboats anchored offshore were a stark reminder to the Chinese that foreign powers were willing to use force if necessary to advance their interests. Commerce was king, be it factories and warehouses, banks and customs houses, or hotels for travellers and tourists. Residents and visitors alike required recreation, and gardens, social clubs, and racecourses appeared in many cities. Many Bunds boasted large residences for merchants grown rich off the back of international trade, some of it in illicit substances such as opium. Finally, some also sported barracks as foreign troops were stationed on what was now foreign soil in China.[25]

[23] Belsky, *Localities at the Center*, 35 40.
[24] Tsai Weipin, 'Breaking the Ice: The Establishment of Overland Winter Postal Routes in Late Qing China', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 47, no. 6 (November 2013), 1756 7.
[25] Jeremy Taylor, 'The Bund: Littoral Space of Empire in Treaty Ports of East Asia', *Social History*, Vol. 27, no. 2 (May 2002), 125 42.

The various concessions, settlements, and colonies in China were governed in slightly different ways, but one thing they had in common was the idea of a government committed to constructing and managing urban space. As with so much else in China, Shanghai set the pace. The English settlement just to the north of the old walled city was approximately one square mile in size. The United States established a concession to the north of this in 1848, and the French established one to the south the following year. With the exception of the French concession, the other settlements were merged into the International Settlement (IS) in 1863, and this grew until by 1899 it was more than forty times its original area. The Shanghai Municipal Council (SMC), which managed the IS, was set up in 1854 and had the power to tax and police residents. Council members were elected by rate payers, and this meant that despite the consular presence, the council answered to those living in Shanghai and, as with other concessions in cities across China, it was never a simple extension of imperial power.

Most SMC councillors were British merchants, and they were joined by Americans and Germans, whom the Japanese replaced after World War I. They were assisted in their work by a secretariat of several hundred officials. Most were Chinese, but they were confined to the lower ranks because of beliefs, common at the time, that they were not as hard working as the British or Americans. Not until the 1930s were Chinese appointed to the highest positions in the council.

Consuls working with Chinese officials retained control over the courts, but the SMC managed all other aspects of the IS. In response to the Taiping threat, the British and Americans came together to organize both the police and the Shanghai Volunteers Corps to defend the city, and there were eventually recruits from twenty-seven nations among its members. The Shanghai Municipal Police was led by British, but staffed by Chinese and Sikhs, who first appeared on the streets of the IS in 1884. It was a busy force, as in 1900 there were more than 70,000 offences.[26]

New buildings in the IS and the French concession transformed Shanghai's cityscape. Companies such as Jardine and Matheson quickly acquired plots of land in the British settlement along the river, and rich merchants built mansions in an Anglo-Indian style. This invariably consisted of a one-storey house surrounded by a small garden, with a veranda at the front facing the river, while servants' quarters and outhouses were out the back. As the settlement expanded, municipal improvements were made. A drainage system was installed in 1862, running water twenty years later, and electricity in the 1890s. Rickshaws first appeared in 1873,

[26] Jackson, *Shaping Modern Shanghai*, 2 6, 106, 113 16, 118, 122 4.

and horse-drawn carriages in the nineteenth century were replaced with trams and then cars after 1900.[27]

One guidebook written in 1904 recommended a walking tour starting at the Garden Bridge that crossed over where the Huangpu River met Suzhou Creek. The writer then recommended heading south. 'We are now on the Bund proper. There is an asphalted path by the river, a stretch of beautiful grass, a footpath, and then the busy thoroughfare, on which carriages, Chinese wheelbarrows, jinrickshaws, passengers of all races, and bamboo coolies, present a picturesque and lively picture.'[28]

Arguably the most impressive building at that time was the new customs house, which was completed in 1893. 'It is in the Tudor style of architecture, of red brick with facings of green Ningbo stone, and has high pitched roofs covered with red French tiles . . . In the centre of the main building, a clock tower, supplied with a four-faced clock, by Pott of Leeds, striking the Westminster chimes, rises to a height of 110 feet, and divides the structure into two wings.'[29]

Here embodied in one building is the essence of the Bund and in many ways semi-colonialism in China. The customs house oversaw trade, its architecture and clock tower respectively symbolizing Shanghai's global connections and urban modernity. The French concession developed somewhat differently from the IS, since although a municipal council was established in 1862, the consul remained in control. Its urban landscape reflected a more egalitarian relationship with its Chinese residents, as trees planted along major thoroughfares created a pleasant atmosphere and water was available to all via public fountains.[30]

Outside the IS and the French concession, other parts of Shanghai also underwent a dramatic transformation. From the 1870s onwards, *lilong* (alleyway) houses were built for Shanghai's growing population. While there were different iterations over the years and some developments were more elaborate than others, the basic style remained a mix of Western working-class and Chinese courtyard housing. For those who could not afford such housing, straw shacks, many of them in the north of the city, had to do, although large shanty towns were yet to emerge.[31]

One foreign observer noted: 'These people are from north of the Yangtsze, which is a poor region. Their huts are made of anything

[27] Begere, *Shanghai*, 34 5, 92 3.
[28] C. E. Derwent, *Shanghai: A Handbook for Travellers and Residents to the Chief Objects of Interest in and around the Foreign Settlements and Native City* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1911), 5.
[29] Ibid., 8 9. [30] Begere, *Shanghai*, 118 20.
[31] Lu Hanchao, *Beyond the Neon Lights: Everyday Shanghai in the Early Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 112 13.

handy – mud, reeds, brickbats, old planks, coats, sacking, and enamelled iron advertisements of somebody's invaluable soap.'[32] While the Chinese city was under the jurisdiction of a Chinese official, guilds were more active than ever before. They assisted with raising militia to help with the defence against the uprisings by the Small Sword Society and the Taiping rebels in the 1850s and 1860s, settling disputes among and between sojourning communities, and policing major religious festivals. *Huiguan* involvement in governance even extended into the IS, as Chinese provided funds for the fire service and the police. Relations between Chinese and foreigners were not always harmonious. For example, a riot in 1874 over French plans to build a road through burial plots of people from Ningbo succeeded in overturning the plans, and similar plans in 1898 led to a boycott of French goods.[33]

Further north in Tianjin, by the beginning of the twentieth century, nine concessions had been established extending southeast from the old city along both sides of the Hai River. As in other treaty ports, foreign residents were a minority, but Tianjin became a real polyglot city, where multiple forms of imperialism were evident, even if their physical manifestation was only over a few streets. Speaking in 1914, William McLeish, a secretary of the Tianjin Municipal Council, described the city in the 1880s. The Bund had not changed much in the intervening period, but Victoria Road was quite different.

> It had infinitely less traffic, no side paths, poor drains, only three stores ... Victoria Park was unenclosed and more or less of a waste bin, sanctified now and then by a game of cricket ... Dignified bank buildings, teeming cravansaries, noble clubs and fine 'hong' premises were wholly absent ... The French Concession was far in the wake of its British sister, and was just about beginning to feel the pulsation of a new life ... The present Rue de Paris was a Chinese market where settlers sold and squeezed *ad lib*.[34]

From these apparently inauspicious beginnings the concessions grew rapidly. A branch of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank opened along Victoria Road, as did the headquarters of major newspapers, and hotels such as the Astor House, which in 1886 was transformed into a grand three-storey building. Away from the Bund, Victoria Park sported a handsome bandstand and there was a racecourse and country club. The French concession remained largely residential until the early twentieth century. The American concession was leased out to several companies before being taken over by the British in 1902, and other

[32] Derwent, *Shanghai*, 44.
[33] Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*, 126 37, 150 2, 158 69.
[34] *Memories of Tientsin by an Old Hand* (Tientsin: Tientsin Press, 1914), 1 2.

nationalities did not gain concessions until after 1895. In the Chinese city, change was slow, but it expanded well beyond its walls, and mounds of salt lined the banks of the Hai River, testament to the importance of the commodity to Tianjin's economy.[35]

Chinese Cities in the Nineteenth Century

Moving inland once more, Hankou at the beginning of the nineteenth century was a city of four streets running parallel to the river intersected by forty lanes and divided into four wards. The streets closest to the confluence of the Yangzi and Han Rivers became the commercial heart of the city, since it was here that the bulk of interregional trade was concentrated. It was also here that the largest number of sojourners lived, as merchants of all kinds made their fortunes. The wealthiest lived in walled compounds and the poorest in shacks on the edges of the city, some of them raised high on piles along the river. 'In these wretched dwellings live hundreds of families . . . When the water rises, twenty-five, thirty, or more feet above its ordinary level, many of these piles are swept away, down come the houses, bringing their occupants with them, who are carried away by the current.'[36]

Urban management in Hankou was a combination of state and private interests. The state directly financed government offices and at times directed the local community to repair buildings. However, increasingly in the nineteenth century, local elites, *huiguan*, and *gongsuo* played their part in managing the city. This was particularly the case with urban infrastructure, and many of the city's fifty bridges were built with funds from salt merchants. *Huiguan* were often responsible for real estate development. In 1880, the Jiangxi *huiguan* bought and remodelled all the shops along the street running south from its headquarters.

The city's community was also responsible for firefighting, and sometimes large parts of the city burned to the ground. The fire of 1849 started in Wuchang and crossed the river, destroying more than 500 boats before burning much of Hankou itself. In response, the government sometimes tore down buildings or tried to regulate storage of flammable materials. There were also fire lanes, open areas designed to act as firebreaks. Despite the dangers, the city had no unified force to fight the fires. In 1875, there were forty fire brigades and after the alarm was raised, there was often a confused stampede as firefighters from different parts of the

[35] Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 245 9; Hershatter, *Workers of Tianjin*, 13 15.
[36] Quoted in William T. Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796 1895* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 78.

city rushed to the scene. The government also had little control over other municipal services. Water came direct from the river, and as in other cities removal of excrement was the responsibility of professional nightsoil carriers.[37]

The same patchwork of limited state and increased private provision was also evident with poor relief. In Hankou, the state managed several granaries, a poorhouse, and an orphanage, but benevolent halls and guilds took over the work of public welfare. Benevolent halls had antecedents in the Ming, and they appeared in Hankou and other cities with increasing frequency from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hankou had thirty-five benevolent halls in 1895, the vast majority founded after the Taiping Rebellion. The first was set up in 1823 by the city's salt merchants, and among other things it supported was lifeboat services. Over the course of the next two decades, more than 4,000 people were rescued, although given that 7,000 corpses were recovered from the river, many were not so lucky. Hot on the heels of this, salt merchants established two halls for burial services, and they handled thousands of corpses per year before bureaucratic mismanagement led to their decline in the 1840s.

Guilds were also increasingly responsible for defence. Garrisons of imperial troops were stationed at Wuchang and Hanyang, and in 1868, the military took over policing the city, although disorderly soldiers often posed just as much of a risk to urban residents as the criminals themselves. Within the city, the *baojia* system was supposed to keep order. From the start, it proved difficult to register Hankou's transient population, and those residing in the harbour proved a particular headache. Despite this, the *baojia* headmen often took their jobs seriously and patrolled their neighbourhood, investigated crimes, guarded criminals, and acted for the government in its anti-opium campaigns. The local knowledge of headmen was important, as they notarized property transactions or confirmed the identity of people in legal proceedings. Finally, headmen were also involved in the provision of poor relief. The headman therefore was an agent of the state, but could also act for private interests, and there were regular reports in Chinese newspapers of corruption in cities across the country.

Despite this, the experience of the Taiping Rebellion made Hankou's wealthy merchants distrustful of the ability of local officials to keep the peace. Militia units had first been formed in Hankou in response to the White Lotus Rebellion in 1796, and for a while during the Taiping Rebellion they governed the city. The most impressive feat of local

[37] Ibid., 71 86, 136 41, 158 70.

defence was building the city wall in 1862, since like many large towns in late imperial China, Hankou had developed as a commercial centre, and so it did not have one. A renewed threat from Taiping rebels was all the impetus urban residents needed, while the small foreign population was also supportive. The wall was of red sandstone and was more than two miles in length, with eight gates and fifteen gun emplacements. Construction was entrusted to the specially created Defence Works Bureau, and although there was some government oversight, local merchants made up the bulk of personnel. A survey ensured that the wall did not disturb gravesites, residents whose homes were destroyed were offered money or new houses, and the work took two years to complete. The wall proved its worth very quickly, as Nian rebels passed by the city.[38]

In the capital, Beijing, change was slower than in the treaty ports. The Forbidden City remained almost entirely hidden from public view, but the lake area of the Western Park was open to carnivals and fetes. Many of the suburban villas built by the Qing emperors were looted in 1860 by British and French troops, and the summer palace of Yuanmingyuan was totally destroyed. Empress Dowager Cixi restored a portion of the imperial parks, which is today known as the Summer Palace, and it was opened to the public at the end of the nineteenth century, by which time the old hunting grounds had been converted to farmland.

Huiguan played less of a role in urban management in Beijing than in other cities, but continued to link the capital to scholars and officials across the country. For example, Weng Tonghe, who among his other positions, was grand councillor and tutor to the emperor, in the 1880s and 1890s often met with officials and visitors from Changshu, his home city. The lodges were known to the police who administered the outer city, and as they had been for centuries, newly arrived scholars were often easy prey for criminals. They had to adhere to the rules of the lodge where they were staying, which often forbade excessive drinking or gambling. The *huiguan* also employed watchmen, usually poorer migrants from the lodge's native place, to take care of the premises and to deal with minor infringements such as unwanted tenants.[39]

It was not only merchants' and migrants' guilds that managed urban space in China. Beggar guilds were now well established and often extorted money from shopkeepers by threatening to disrupt their business. The practice was observed in cities such as Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Ningbo, Hangzhou, and Hankou, as illustrated in this account.

[38] Ibid., 94 118, 127 9, 284 306.
[39] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 310 11, 314, 316 17; Belsky, *Localities at the Center*, 174 92, 197 200.

[The headmen] divide the streets of the city among beggars, who then go in little companies to make as much as possible out of the district allotted to them. They go about with sticks and gongs; entering shops, they make so much noise that the buyers and sellers can hardly hear one another speak: this makes the shopkeeper so anxious to get rid of them that he gives them cash, and then they go away at once. Some of these shopkeepers make an agreement with the headman of the district, by which they pay him a certain sum every year on condition that the beggars under his control shall not come to beg of them. He takes the money, dividing part of it among the beggars, and, of course keeping a good share for himself. He then gives the shopkeeper a strip of red paper to paste up by his door . . . After this, if any of the professional beggars come to that shop they are shown this strip of paper and told to go away, which they usually do at once.[40]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

Treaty Port Life

Foreign residents in the treaty ports created a world apart from the Chinese who surrounded them, although interactions became increasingly common over the course of time. The first place where a Western colonial community developed, and very much one that set the tone for the rest of China, was Guangzhou. The traders lived upstairs in the Thirteen Factories, but they lived well, particularly those working for the East India Company. They spent much of their leisure time on the water, sometimes holding regattas, but found time for prayer in the chapel or reading in the library that held 4,000 books. Their social lives were also separate from the locals, but they mixed with compradors who managed trade, the servants who ministered to their daily needs, and Chinese living on sampans in the river, who provided everything from a haircut to prostitutes. By 1800, pidgin English was widely spoken. This mix of Portuguese, English, and Malay among other languages served as the lingua franca of the treaty port world, and lists of words appeared in guidebooks.[41] Commonly heard phrases and their meanings included:

No b'long ploper (That won't do).
Man man (Wait a bit).
That b'long bad pidgin (That is a bad job).
Catchee tea chop chop (I want some tea at once).
So fashion my wanchee (This is what I want).[42]

[40] Quoted in Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 128.
[41] Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832 1914* (London: Penguin, 2021), 33 7.
[42] Derwent, *Shanghai*, ii v.

Shanghai was home to the largest foreign community in China, which grew from 1,666 in 1870, when men far outnumbered women, to 3,295 adults and 1,389 children in 1895, with a more balanced gender ratio. Most women came as wives and nurses, and some came as prostitutes. Many families were missionaries. The number in the China Inland Mission stood at 1,300 in 1889 with 400 couples. Families lived in some of the new villas in the IS and had an array of servants. These included the wet nurse and nanny to take care of the children, and it was so common for them to return to Europe that shipping companies had special rates for their passage. Women were the mistresses of the domestic sphere, and this sometimes led to the exploitation of Chinese servants, but others, finding themselves lonely far from home, found solace in their companionship. Many foreigners who came to Shanghai seeking their fortune found it, but others did not. They lost money, businesses, and often their lives. They were policemen, bar or store owners, shop assistants, and seamen, and many had no fixed occupation at all. They died of cholera, dysentery, typhoid, tuberculosis, opium overdoses, alcoholism, and more rarely by their own hand.[43]

For most, Shanghai offered a rich social life, and a description of some of its quirks can be found in a lecture published in 1875. When not working, foreign residents of the city might read one of the 8,000 volumes in the library, and some perusing its shelves were doubtless members of the Royal Asiatic Society, a branch of which had been opened in the city and which still exists today. They could enjoy a game of billiards in the Shanghai Club, which opened in 1864, and afterwards could read the newspapers or eat dinner. For those wanting a little exercise, there was a bowling alley, a Fives and a Racquet Court, cricket, shooting, athletics, and of course horse racing. For rainy evenings, plays were performed, and until the establishment of the Lyceum Theatre in 1866, the dramatics must be considered extremely amateur.[44]

Tianjin too had its social life, and it was not without some nostalgia that William McLeish recorded some of the exploits of the foreign community. The annual pantomime was a highlight. 'We laid ourselves out to cater for the children at Xmas and the Pantomime was the *master-piece* of the year: we gave them a fine Christmas Tree at the same time, with presents for every child in the room.'[45] Like Shanghai, though, the northern treaty port had its fair share of lost souls. Paddy Walsh had gone native, 'and when in his worst phases lived on Chinese food . . . He

[43] Bickers, *Scramble for China*, 311 16.
[44] H. Lang, *Shanghai Considered Socially* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Press, 1875), 42, 45 6, 48 52.
[45] *Memories of Tientsin*, 6 7.

had but one failing, but that accounted for everything . . . When he could not get good drink he reverted to the Chinese liquor and the poison of Taku Road grog-shops, and was then sometimes a bit "nasty"'.[46]

In the vast majority of cities, direct contact with Western imperialism was limited, and where it was a regular feature of everyday life, it evoked fear, misunderstanding, curiosity, and even humour. The *Dianshizhai Pictorial* provides a window into Chinese understanding of the changing urban world in treaty ports. From 1884 until 1898, more than 4,500 sketches in forty-four volumes were published by the same company who produced *Shenbao*, Shanghai's main Chinese-language newspaper. Many drawings depicted scenes from daily life, and were deliberately chosen to present things that were new and exciting. Others sought to explain political events, and invariably took a Chinese point of view. Thousands of copies of each issue were printed, and they could be bought in more than twenty cities. One copy could easily pass through many hands, so the *Dianshizhai Pictorial* introduced Chinese to the seeds of urban modernity, even if they were yet to germinate in the smaller cities of the interior.[47]

By the end of the nineteenth century, a new urban entrepreneurial class had amassed significant wealth, and as in previous eras, literati grumbled about the nouveau riche. Writer and translator Wang Tao, who was a regular contributor to the pictorial, moaned that the only thing residents of Shanghai were ashamed of was their clothes. 'It was not shameful if their family was dishonest; it was not shameful if their behaviour was improper; it was not shameful if they were illiterate or not eloquent . . . Right and wrong are inverted, black and white are confused.'[48] The pictorial also took a humorous swipe at those Chinese who adopted foreign ways, such as wearing a suit, smoking cigarettes, or carrying an umbrella whatever the weather.[49] Wang Tao was similarly disparaging about the city's festivals, and made this comment about a Daoist procession.

> After the six ranks of scholars and officials came the tax collector, wearing a gauze hat on his head and a red robe carrying a wine pot; he pretended to sprinkle wine along the road and acted like a muddle headed professional . . . This particular act had not been witnessed in earlier processions. Raucous laughter, furious cursing they completely exhausted all the possibilities, even to the smallest detail . . . Some people say that since purchasing an official title became possible, the quality of officials has degenerated. They are like fish drawn from the water, dragging their

[46] Ibid., 8.
[47] Ye Xiaoqing, *The Dianshizhai Pictorial: Shanghai Urban Life 1884 1898* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Center for Chinese Studies, 2003), 4 11.
[48] Quoted in ibid., 161 2. [49] Ibid., 130 1.

tails. The funds they spend on prostitutes are also used to acquire the privileges of office.[50]

As the number of *huiguan* in Shanghai grew, temples and shrines sprang up across the city, and so different immigrant communities found it easier to worship deities they were familiar with back home. However, one deity that almost everyone in Shanghai worshipped was the God of Wealth, whose birthday fell on the fourth day of the lunar new year. Even foreigners could be accommodated – in 1895, a drunken Westerner suddenly sat down in a Chinese restaurant in the IS and ate the food laid out for the God of Wealth. Rather than get upset at this disrespectful behaviour, the restaurant owner simply treated the unwanted guest as if he was the God of Wealth. In response to a complaint that this was a false god, a bystander replied, 'How are we to know that a real spirit was not mysteriously present in his enjoyment of our food? This restaurant might really make a lot of money!'[51]

Shanghai provided plenty of opportunities for people to be swindled out of their money. One scam was to pose as a possible tenant and steal whatever was lying around while viewing the room. There was a ready market in fake goods, and some women also entered into fake marriages to steal a man's property.[52] Given such rapid developments, it is no wonder that relations between the sexes began to change. As women found work in Shanghai, they began to appear in public. The *Dianshizhai Pictorial* reported on women visiting opium dens and was broadly in favour of an end to foot-binding.[53] Extramarital affairs were frowned upon, however. An editorial in *Shenbao* in 1879 noted: 'Men and women can take lovers. They decide the matter over a cup of tea. Then they rent a room and fly to and fro in pairs, like wild mandarin ducks.'[54]

Although Chinese and foreigners normally lived separate lives, they began to mix in the IS. Writing of the 'celestial boulevard' of Fuzhou Road, J. D. Clark, a writer for one of Shanghai's newspapers, took a predictably Orientalist tone. Foreign-styled restaurants run by Chinese who had learned their trade in one of the hotels or foreign mansions were increasingly popular. The English could find 'roast beef and plum-pudding', the French 'excellently curried hind legs of frog', and the Germans 'bratwurst and sauerkraut'.[55] A perhaps less salubrious site of regular cultural interaction were the music halls, where it was claimed the singers were all courtesans. Another dive was the Louen-Yuen Billiard

[50] Quoted in ibid., 198. [51] Quoted in ibid., 209. [52] Ibid., 166 74. [53] Ibid., 153 6.
[54] Quoted in ibid., 157.
[55] J. D. Clark, *Sketches in and around Shanghai etc.* (Shanghai: Shanghai Mercury, 1894), 55.

Saloon, which made its money principally from selling opium. Tea was also available, and there was billiards, at which Chinese excelled, and ten-pin bowling, at which they apparently did not.[56] Division between the communities was still common, as evidenced by this description of the Shanghai racecourse from the *Dianshizhai Pictorial*.

> On the corners stand pavilions, which the Westerners mount to observe [the race]. People on all sides applaud the winner. The onlookers [i.e., Chinese], who surround the place like a wall, are indifferent to who wins and who loses, but their joy is even greater than that of the participants.[57]

In a city in which often very different cultures were mixing for the first time, it is not surprising that there were misunderstandings, and nothing illustrates this better than the silver jubilee celebration of fifty years of the IS in 1893.[58] The *North China Daily Herald*, the main English-language newspaper in the city, lauded the celebrations as a triumph of cosmopolitanism, even though no Chinese were on the organizing committee. The festivities included a banquet, a fifty-gun salute from ships anchored in the Huangpu River, and a procession at which Chinese guilds were invited to participate. The newspaper reported: 'Unfortunately, there was some misunderstanding, and though fragments of the procession were seen from time to time ... the expected Parade of Guilds was a failure. How this happened is not clearly understood, but it appears to have been due to some inter-provincial jealousy.'[59] Chinese newspaper accounts celebrated the importance of trade to Shanghai, but it was the guilds, not the foreign presence, that contributed most to the city's commercial success. The Chinese saw the parade as akin to a religious festival, and even linked it to the birthday of Empress Dowager Cixi, which had taken place the day before. In this way, the communities living in Shanghai were laying a claim to a shared history, while also emphasizing their own interpretation of it to their own audiences.

Daily Life away from the Treaty Ports

Far from the coast were cities in which foreigners rarely or never set foot. For the urban elite of China, who were all still male, passing exams remained an important path to wealth and status. Liu Dapeng came from a small town in Shanxi Province, and in 1881, having passed the

[56] Ibid., 56 63. [57] Quoted in Ye Xiaoqing, *Dianshizhai Pictorial*, 65.
[58] The following discussion is drawn from Bryna Goodman, 'Improvisations on a Semicolonial Theme, or, How to Read a Celebration of Transnational Urban Community', *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 59, no. 4 (2009), 889 926.
[59] Quoted in ibid., 901.

imperial county examinations, he entered an academy in the provincial capital, Taiyuan. There he found the sons of wealthy families enjoying sumptuous food and seemingly more interested in pleasing their tutors with their essay writing style than in paying attention to the moral lessons that formed the content of the essays.

It took Liu six attempts to pass the provincial exam, and in 1895, he went to Beijing to take the national exam. He visited Tianjin on the train, and he could see that urban life was more convenient than ever, but he did not approve of the new innovations in the treaty port. Moreover, he realized while rummaging through Beijing's bookshops that he was not going to be able to keep up with the new learning now required to pass the exams.[60] Liu's dislike of cities was not new or uncommon, but many other Chinese had a more positive outlook. This was certainly true in Suzhou, which attracted a fair number of retired officials and wealthy landlords, who preferred its hustle and bustle to the small towns and villages where they rented out their land to tenants. Among the amusements were local storytelling and different regional operas.[61]

In cities across China, religious institutions continued to be important places where people of all walks of life mingled. In Beijing, *huiguan* were now more closely involved in the religious, cultural, and social life of the city, but few guilds acquired large landholdings. This meant that religious activities sometimes took place in existing temples. The outer city had twenty-four temples used by a single native place lodge, and the inner city had four. Some guilds were founded in temples but then acquired enough wealth to build their own lodge, and others simply took over or repaired temples and used them for their own purposes.

Although *huiguan* were important to people who had travelled to Beijing, they played less of a role in urban life there than in other cities. Beijing had a long-established religious culture that took precedence over anything that came from elsewhere. The birthdays of thirteen important gods were celebrated, mostly in the first half of the year, and the major Chinese festivals were commercial as well as religious events. By 1900, there was a market somewhere in the city almost every day of the year. As with shopping, so it was with entertainment. *Hutongs* were narrow lanes that make up much of old Beijing residential areas. In Dashalar, to the south of Qianmen Gate, people wandered along these narrow streets, shopping for bargains, catching a bite at a roadside stall, and seeing shows in the evening. Beijing Opera had now developed its own distinctive style,

[60] Henrietta Harrison, *Man Awakened from Dreams: One Man's Life in a North China Village 1857 1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 32 5, 46 9.
[61] Marmé, 'From Suzhou to Shanghai', 98 9.

and titles such as *Precious Mirror*, written in the 1830s, were set in the city.[62]

It is no surprise that guilds played an important role in the religious life of Hankou, and they established temples or shrines to deities. Not only did such institutions hold their own celebrations, but they also contributed to the celebration of larger public festivals. For example, in 1876, merchants from Hunan contributed a sixty-foot dragon-shaped lantern to Hankou's Lantern Festival celebrations. Guilds also used festivals to announce their presence in the city.

In 1889, the Tea Guild invited Chinese and foreign notables to a drama performance to celebrate the completion of their guildhall. Guilds also helped their members out with their business activities. They provided accommodation, introduced them to potential business partners and customers, helped manage recruitment processes, and often stepped in to prevent wild price fluctuations.[63]

As yet guilds existed almost exclusively for men. Fewer jobs in the city were open to women, but one niche they came to fill was as an *amah* in a foreign household, where, like other servants, they were subject to the prejudices of their employers, whose primary concerns were hygiene in the kitchen and the theft of the family silver. Such prejudices are evident in J. D. Clark's opinions, but his observations provide a glimpse into women's working life in nineteenth-century Shanghai.

> They are tabooed from the precincts of the kitchen, and thus evade those innu merable mortifications connected therewith; in fact, their knowledge in culinary science appears to be confined to the task of dissolving condensed milk for the use of their little cherubs ... Chinese amahs have apparently inherited from their western sisters the characteristic trait of garrulity. Just watch them in the Public Garden, when the conversazione is in full swing! And there it becomes most forcibly obvious what important factors they must fancy themselves. We all know the abiding nuisance these blue cotton gowned mentors in charge of a heap of squealing and romping 'cherubs' are; with what majesty they sweep the Garden grounds, their eyes refulging with self consciousness of their magni tude, not unlike that of the lion moving over the boundless deserts of Lybia.[64]

Conclusion

The expansion of foreign imperialism into China in the nineteenth century helped sow the seeds of Chinese urban modernity, but imperialism alone did not create it. The urban system was oriented towards the coast

[62] Naquin, *Peking Temples and City Life*, 610 21, 623 38.
[63] Rowe, *Hankou: Commerce and Society*, 289 91, 294 9.
[64] Clark, *Sketches in and around Shanghai*, 94 5.

as treaty ports linked global markets to long-established Chinese trading networks and replaced the Grand Canal as the major link between north and south China. Treaty ports were home to most new innovations in urban form and governance, and they were governed by municipal councils over which Chinese had almost no control. Change was slower in those cities without foreign concessions, but some of the innovations in urban form and infrastructure began to appear across the empire.

Meanwhile, guilds of all types continued to proliferate and as in Hankou took an ever more active part in urban governance. Despite the mixing of cultures from around the world, foreign imperialists invariably held racially prejudiced views towards Chinese. Although China was not a home away from home for these communities, they had their clubs, their horse racing, and their amateur dramatics. Meanwhile, Chinese were beginning to adapt their urban culture to this new globally connected world with developments such as pidgin English. However, as the silver jubilee celebration of Shanghai's International Settlement shows, the legacies of Chinese imperial urban civilization continued to shape city life.

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6 Urban Modernity in Republican China (1895–1949)

Introduction

The decades of the first half of the twentieth century were some of the most tumultuous China had ever experienced. In 1911, the Qing Dynasty fell, ending more than 2,000 years of imperial rule. Yuan Shikai, a military and government official who became president of the new Republic of China, was unable to hold it together, and after his death in 1916, competing warlord factions controlled the country.

In 1927, Chiang Kaishek was able to establish the Nationalist government, with its capital in Nanjing. The Nationalist Party, also known as the Guomindang, which dominated the government, had been formed in 1919 out of the Tongmenghui (Revolutionary Alliance), which Sun Yatsen founded in 1905 with the aim of overthrowing the Qing Dynasty. On taking power in 1927, Chiang Kaishek was faced with the internal threat of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), established in 1921, and the external threat of Japanese imperialism.

The outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 brought the Communists and Nationalists together in an uneasy alliance. The Nationalists retreated first to Wuhan, and then when that fell to the Japanese, to Chongqing, which became the capital of China for the remainder for the war. By 1945, when Japan surrendered after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many Chinese cities were devastated. Soon after this, a civil war broke out between the Communists and the Nationalists. After initial success, the forces of Chiang Kaishek lost, and on 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People's Republic of China.

The first half of the twentieth century saw an increase in the pace of urbanization, particularly in the most prosperous and developed areas along the coast. The Treaty of Shimonoseki that ended the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895 allowed foreign firms to establish factories in China, and this was the catalyst for industrialization in many cities,

which in turn created new jobs that attracted people from the countryside. Most factories were in large coastal cities, especially Shanghai, and in Manchuria, but they belched their smoke high into the urban sky elsewhere in the country.

The Japanese invasion of 1937 caused the Nationalist government and millions of people to move west into the interior, and cities such as Chongqing and Kunming grew substantially. The first half of the twentieth century also saw cities become more closely connected than ever before through rail, telegraph, telephone, and air travel. The hierarchy of central places and loose regional economies of the late imperial era was now replaced by an urban system reconfigured along railway lines and new roads.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Chinese cities acquired commercial and industrial districts, new administrative zones, parks, and residential areas. Meanwhile, new building technology, architectural styles, and infrastructure transformed urban skylines. Many treaty ports were now large global metropolises and bore the imprint of international trends in urban planning. They continued to be governed through municipal councils, although Chinese who had formerly been excluded now took their place on executive boards.

Experiments in municipal governance came together in a suite of new laws passed after the Nationalist government came to power in 1927 that sought to impose order and standardization across the country. Neither was this trend derailed by the Japanese invasion and occupation, during which some cities had more than half of their buildings damaged. This created a blank slate on which Chinese planners were able to construct grand plans for futuristic cities which, just as before the war, drew on the latest international planning trends. The chaos caused by the war and the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists prevented most from seeing the light of day, but some urban reconstruction took place in the late 1940s.

The first half of the twentieth century saw the spread of urban modernity across China. No longer were the exotic delights of European, American, or Japanese culture confined to coastal treaty ports. Although money obviously bought access to experiences and products available across the world, this urban culture was not confined to the rich. As the decades rolled by, teachers, doctors, and engineers were able to afford their piece of the urban dream. The shop girl in a department store, the clerk in a bank, or the skilled factory worker were also part of the urban mêlée. Even unskilled casual labourers and rickshaw drivers were able to access their piece of urban modernity.

Of course, although all these people had access to the same shared urban space, they encountered it through the lens of their own experience. Moreover, Shanghai very much led the way in new modes of living, artistic and literary styles, and new types of entertainments, particularly those that originated from abroad. However, people in other cities were not far behind in adopting and adapting this new urban culture, and so added their own flavour to urban modernity as it spread across the country.

Urban System

Industrialization and Railways Reconfigure the Urban System

Estimates of China's urban population in 1893 are between 5.3 per cent and 6.6 per cent. Moving into the first half of the twentieth century, urbanization rates varied wildly by region. John Lossing Buck estimated a rate of more than 20 per cent, but his surveys were concentrated in the most urbanized counties in the Lower Yangzi Delta. The 1953 census estimated an urbanization rate of 13 per cent, but this may reflect post-1949 changes, and does not account for the impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War or the civil war that followed. Although it is not possible to come up with a definitive figure for China's urban population, it was higher than ever before.[1]

The increase in the rate of urbanization in China, like that elsewhere around the world, was driven by industrialization, and there were more factories in Shanghai and Manchuria than anywhere else. In 1933, Shanghai produced nearly 40 per cent of China's total manufacturing output, with the rest of Jiangsu producing nearly 9 per cent and Manchuria just over 14 per cent.

Most of these new factories were in textiles, food processing, and tobacco, with heavy industry concentrated in Manchuria. Much of this industrial base was lost during the Japanese invasion, but 418 factories and 42,000 skilled workers followed the Nationalist government to Chongqing. Even in 1943, at the height of the war effort, total industrial production of the unoccupied southwest was only 12 per cent of China's pre-war production. Much of this growth was down to government investment and control. In 1938, the National Resources Commission ran 63 industries, and by 1944, it had control of 103, employing 12,000 staff members and 160,000 workers. The expansion of state ownership of industry continued after the war as the National Resources Commission

[1] Skinner, 'Regional Urbanization in Nineteenth Century China', 225 7.

gained control of industries formerly occupied by the Japanese. In 1947, it had a staff of 33,000 and managed 230,000 workers, accounting for well over 60 per cent of China's industrial output.[2]

As industrialization was creating larger cities, the railways were reconfiguring their connections. The expansion of the network is shown in Map 6.1. In 1895, there were 410 km of track rising steadily to 20,746 km in 1936. The war with Japan meant that growth slowed significantly, and in 1949, there were 21,800 km of track.[3] Major lines ran north-south from Beijing to Guangzhou and were concentrated in Manchuria and the Lower Yangzi Delta. They reduced the cost of freight, allowing goods to reach new markets, while the slashing of journey times reduced risk associated with long-distance trade. The journey time between Beijing and Hankou was cut from sixty days to just two, and that between Beijing and Guangzhou from ninety days to three.[4]

Railways were the most important, but far from the only new inter-urban links. In 1927, there were 29,000 km of motor roads, increasing to 111,000 km a decade later, although the war caused a drop to 81,000 km in 1949. Historians have overlooked the development of air traffic in the first half of the twentieth century, but passenger flights linked nearly forty cities by the mid-1930s, although there was a sharp decline during the war. The telegraph was the most important communications system, and by the 1930s, the country had more than 100,000 km of lines and 1,000 telegraph stations. The telephone system was modest in comparison, although there were local networks in more than twenty-five cities, with the majority of subscribers being shops and other businesses.[5] A national modern industrial urban system now existed in China. Not everywhere benefitted of course, and the fortunes of a town or small city often hinged on whether it had a railway station, whether it was along a major road, whether a member of the local community had the money to invest in a new factory, and of course the vicissitudes of war.

Shanghai and the Lower Yangzi Delta

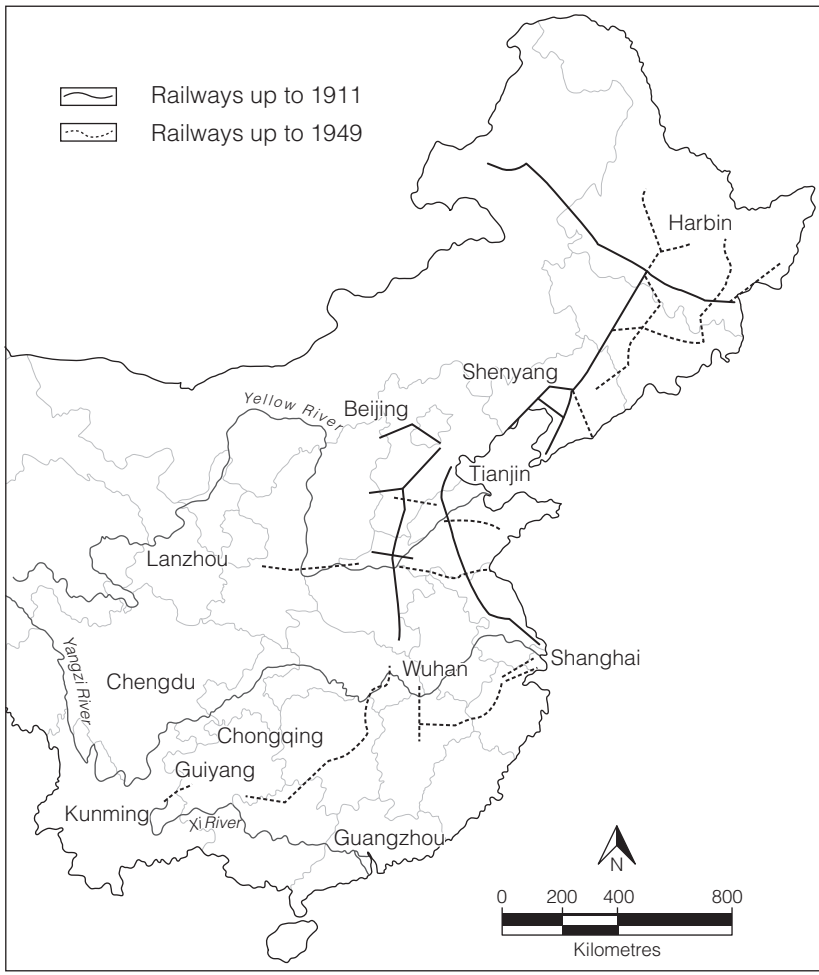
Shanghai grew into a true global metropolis. The volume of trade passing through the city doubled between 1917 and 1926, during which it made

[2] Thomas Rawski, *Economic Growth in Pre war China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 74, 80, 83, 85; William C. Kirby, 'The Chinese War Economy', in James C. Hsiung and Steven I. Levine, eds., *China's Bitter Victory: The War with Japan 1937 1949* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 190 3, 204 5.

[3] Rawski, *Economic Growth in Pre war China*, 209.

[4] Elisabeth Köll, *Railroads and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 90 5.

[5] Rawski, *Economic Growth in Pre war China*, 213 17.



Map 6.1 The Chinese railway network

up 40–50 per cent of China's total trade. The main industry was textiles, with the number of spindles owned by Chinese increasing from 147,000 to half a million between 1913 and 1921. The flour industry made the fortunes of the Rong brothers, the richest men in China, who established the Maoxin and Fuxin Flour Mills, as well as the Shenxin Cotton Mill, which also had branches in Hankou and Wuxi.

Silk, tobacco, and a wide variety of light industries flourished, as did the financial sector. There were stock exchanges and branches of

international banks, but many local companies borrowed money from Chinese banks, using their stock as security. This made them vulnerable to economic shocks, and during the Great Depression, many went bankrupt. Hot on the heels of this came the Japanese invasion, when approximately half of the city's industrial equipment was destroyed. However, those parts of the city under foreign control remained free of Japanese occupation until the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific War in 1941, and the economy recovered to close to pre-war levels.

Then, in 1941, the United States imposed a commercial blockade on imports and exports in the Pacific, and serious shortages of coal, rice, and other goods soon followed, industrial production plummeted, and inflation rose. For a brief period after the end of the war, Shanghai's industry boomed once more, but by 1948, hyperinflation had gripped the city, and although price controls were introduced, the Nationalists were in retreat, and all was set for the Communist takeover.[6]

Industrialization attracted people to Shanghai, with the population of Zhabei rising to 1.3 million in 1937, although it fell back during the Japanese occupation. Refugees flooded into the foreign-controlled areas of the city, and in 1942, even after many of them had gone home, more than 1.5 million people lived in the International Settlement (IS) and 850,000 resided in the French concession. After the war, the city's population resumed its upward trajectory, reaching 5.5 million in 1949.[7]

Migrants remained divided by occupation and native place. The richest and best-educated came from the cities and towns of the Lower Yangzi Delta. They were doctors or lawyers, and the *xiaoshimin* (petty urbanites), who might be shop girls, clerks, or skilled factory workers. By contrast, unskilled women workers in textile mills, dockyard workers, rickshaw drivers, nightsoil and garbage collectors, and many of the city's 20,000 or so beggars were from Subei. This geographical divide even extended as far as the sex industry, since courtesans were from Suzhou, while the so-called pheasants, the name given to the lowest class of prostitutes, who roamed the streets were often kidnapped from the villages of Subei.[8]

Hiring practices help to explain migrant patterns. Many of the major rickshaw business owners were from Subei, where there were few native place associations to ease a new migrant into a secure job. Compare this with Wuxi, south of the Yangzi, where of the 5,163 members of the Wuxi Native Place Society in Shanghai whose occupations are known, 741 worked in ironworking, followed by 344 in the restaurant business, with publishing and hotels also popular destinations. Smaller sister societies in

[6] Begere, *Shanghai*, 147 53, 166 7, 292 3, 314, 328 30.
[7] Henriot, *Scythe and the City*, 14 15. [8] Honig, *Creating Chinese Ethnicity*, 58 76.

Nanjing and Suzhou created a regional migrant network for anyone from Wuxi looking for jobs. Even in factories, the hiring system contributed to this division of labour, since Number Ones who ran the workshops invariably employed people from their home town.[9]

Continuing a trend set down in the late nineteenth century, where Shanghai went, the economy of the Lower Yangzi Delta followed. Suzhou reinvented itself as a tourist city for the modern age, a new commercial road leading out to the railway station sporting teahouses, restaurants, wine shops, brothels, and hotels. Nantong, north of the Yangzi River, became a centre of cotton production, and by 1909, thirty-five cities and towns were connected to the wider region by steamer services, a road system, and postal, telegraph, and eventually telephone links.[10]

Wuxi benefitted the most, becoming the largest industrial city outside treaty ports. Silk producers out in the countryside now sent their wares to Wuxi filatures as well as those in Shanghai, and there were thirty-nine of them on the eve of the Great Depression. A survey of Wuxi in 1929 listed 138 enterprises, including flour and cotton mills, rice brokers, knitting, machinists, and dying factories. The population rose from around 100,000 in 1907 to 170,000 in 1929, with between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of workers, the majority of whom were women in cotton and silk factories, migrating from surrounding towns and villages.

Urbanization extended beyond the city limits. Yanjiaqiao, a remote town in the northeast of Wuxi County, was transformed by Tang Baoqian, a local industrialist who invested in a brick-making factory, and by 1935, the town boasted more than 200 shops. Wuxi was bombed continuously from August 1937, and when the Japanese army occupied it on 25 November, they set fire to an almost deserted city destroying half of the cotton and silk factories. However, by the summer of 1938, silk production had restarted, and the industry employed 20,000 workers the following year. Its production was largely controlled by the Japanese, who exported the silk until the US blockade in 1941, after which the urban economy declined. There was a brief post-war recovery, with the Shenxin Number Three Cotton Factory beginning production again in 1946.[11]

[9] Lincoln, *Urbanizing China*, 109 11; Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*, 56 7, 138 9.

[10] Peter Carroll, *Between Heaven and Modernity: Reconstructing Suzhou, 1895 1937* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 45 65; Qin Shao, *Culturing Modernity: The Nantong Model, 1890 1930* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 17, 30 1.

[11] Lincoln, *Urbanizing China*, 19 25, 26, 28 32, 38 44, 130 45, 180 1.

Tianjin and Beijing

Like Shanghai, Tianjin grew rapidly, becoming China's second largest city when its population reached 1.7 million in 1947. Railway connections made Tianjin a hub for trade, and the city handled about one sixth the level of imports of Shanghai and one third the level of exports. This trade continued after the Japanese invasion, but after 1941, it proved impossible to send goods outside the Japanese empire. There was a brief revival after 1945 before it fell off as the economy collapsed during the civil war. Exports were agricultural products like cotton, and imports were iron, steel, petroleum, and machinery. Foreign powers controlled finance and most of the light industry, and the Japanese eventually owned more than two thirds of the city's textile factories. Industrialization brought workers to the city, and in 1947, they comprised 13 per cent of the urban population. Native place was still important in determining where one worked, but many unskilled workers were refugees, and so the labour contract system did not dominate industry like in Shanghai.[12]

As Tianjin prospered, Beijing stagnated. After 1912, it no longer served as the political centre of the empire, and the city lost its capital status in 1927 to Nanjing. Beiping, as it was now called, was neither an industrial centre nor a node in the new transport networks criss-crossing the country. Its population continued to grow, from 725,000 people in 1912 to 1.5 million in 1948. Although the city boasted some highly educated people in its universities, a large proportion were poor or destitute, often refugees from famine and war. In 1930, the largest employer was the printing industry with 5,000 workers, and many people also worked making rugs or luxury items for export such as cloisonné, lacquerware, Chinese lanterns, and toys. By now, Beijing imported almost all the items needed for daily life, many from abroad, and more than 600 shops sold foreign goods. As with many other cities in China, a variety of financial services were provided by pawnshops, old-style Chinese banks, and increasingly new commercial ventures.[13]

Further south, Hong Kong remained primarily a trading centre, and industrial development only really took off with the outbreak of World War I, with the emergence of the shipping and sugar industries. The population of the colony grew to more than half a million. In 1911, the railway to Canton was completed, and Kai Tak Airport opened in 1925. By the 1930s, nearly 20 per cent of workers in the city were employed in

[12] Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 106 10; Hershatter, *Workers of Tianjin*, 26 38, 42 51.

[13] Li, Dray Novey, and Kong, *Beijing*, 149 51; Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 105 6, 111 35.

manufacturing, just behind those in fishing and commerce. By 1939, two years before Japanese occupation, the colony had 857 factories which, unlike treaty ports, were not returned to China in 1943.[14]

The Northeast and the Interior

Urbanization was dramatic in Manchuria, largely down to the actions of the South Manchurian Railway Company (SMR), which the Japanese formed in 1906 to take over the portion of the Russian railway network ceded to China after the Russo-Japanese War. It ran the railway from Dalian on the coast to Changchun, where it joined the Russian-owned Chinese Eastern Railway that ran to Harbin and on to Vladivostok. The older major trading routes from Shenyang to Jilin and from Tianjin to Qiqihar in Inner Mongolia were replaced with this new north-south axis. The urban population of the region exploded. An SMR survey in 1935 put the number of people in Shenyang at more than half a million, in Harbin at nearly 460,000, in Changchun at more than 300,000, and in Jilin and Yingkou at nearly 130,000.[15]

Largest of all the cities in Manchuria was Dalian, which grew from a small trading outpost in the late 1890s to a city of 1 million people in 1945, with many migrants coming from Shandong. Soy products were brought from across Manchuria via rail and shipped to Japan and countries as far away as Europe. The Japanese dominated large-scale industry, but Dalian also had some 4,000 Chinese businesses. After the occupation of Manchuria in 1931, the city's economy was oriented to wartime production, and by 1943, there were more than 1,800 factories, many in the new industrial zone to the northeast of the city. At the end of the war, the USSR seized Dalian, and the city's economy collapsed. The port went from handling 10 million tons of goods per year to just a few hundred thousand, the population plummeted, and Chinese and Japanese alike were reduced to begging on the streets.[16]

Moving inland, the completion of the Beijing-Wuhan railway in 1905 and the opening of foreign factories in the enlarged settlements spurred industrial development. By the 1920s, Wuhan had more than 13,000 factories

[14] Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 128 33.

[15] Y. Tak Matsusaka, 'Japan's South Manchurian Railway Company in Northeast China', in Bruce Ellman and Stephen Kopotkin, eds., *Manchurian Railways and the Opening of China: An International History* (London: Routledge, 2010), 37 9, 39 44; Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 23 4.

[16] Christian Hess, 'From Colonial Port to Socialist Metropolis: War, Imperialism, and the Making of New Dalian', *Urban History*, Vol. 38, no. 3 (December 2011), 373, 376 80, 385.

and commercial establishments, including six cotton mills employing 20,000 workers. During the 1930s, the urban economy of the city stagnated because of the Great Depression, rural deprivation caused by flooding, and political infighting in the ruling government that stymied investment in the city's growth. The population fluctuated wildly. The number of people shot up from 1 million to 1.5 million in a few months in 1938, and there was a brief industrial boom before the Japanese overran the city.[17]

Elsewhere, Xuzhou and Zhengzhou became significant rail hubs, Shijiazhuang attracted textile companies because of its proximity to cotton supplies, and Bengbu in Anhui became a major hub for agricultural trade. There were losers too, such as Zhenjiang on the banks of the Yangzi, and Tongzhou and Yangzhou further north, all of which had already suffered from the decline of the Grand Canal.[18]

The war brought development to China's western regions. Chongqing's population shot up from 473,904 in 1937 to more than 1 million by the end of the war.[19] A new road to Lanzhou was completed in 1935, but many goods went first by camel to the railway at Baotou. Then, between 1937 and 1942, the number of factories in the city increased from ten to forty-two, by which time the urban population stood at 150,000, three times as many as before the war. Further west, Urumuqi had a population of 50,000 at the beginning of the twentieth century with a lively trade in skins and furs and an ethnic mix of Uighur, Han, Manchu, and a few Mongol inhabitants. Kunming was already linked to Southeast Asia by rail to Hanoi, and the French had a presence in the city. Then, during the war, refugees arrived to work in new factories or to join the teaching staff at the Southwest Associated University of Kunming.[20]

Urban Form and Governance

Transformation of Urban Form and Governance in Treaty Ports

Parts of Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tianjin, and other cities now resembled London, New York, or Tokyo far more than historical Kaifeng or

[17] Stephen Mackinnon, *Wuhan, 1938* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 9 17, 50 3.

[18] Rawski, *Economic Growth in Pre war China*, 182 8, 208 12; Köll, *Railroads and the Transformation of China*, 120 5.

[19] Rana Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937 1945: The Struggle for Survival* (London, Allen Lane, 2013), 173.

[20] David Strand, '"A High Place Is No Better Than a Low Place": The City in the Making of Modern China', in Yeh Wen Hsin, ed., *Becoming Chinese: Passages to Modernity and Beyond* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 99 103; Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall*, 52 3, 75, 83.

Suzhou. Branches of Hong Kong's Sincere and Wing On department stores opened along Shanghai's Nanjing Road in 1917 and 1918 financed by groups of Chinese investors from Guangdong, some of whom had made their money in Australia. Multi-storeyed, designed in the Beaux-Arts style then becoming popular in China, they installed the first elevators and escalators in the city, arranged internal spaces to display foreign brands under glass counters, and added restaurants, bars, and rooftop gardens. In so doing, they promoted the emergence of mass consumer culture as smaller shops rushed to emulate them. Models wearing the latest fashions now gazed out from billboards and the pages of magazines, and the city even developed its own distinctive art deco style that graced building facades, draped itself across villa interiors, and was part of what became known as Shanghai style, confident, international, and modern.[21]

Away from Nanjing Road, much of the city was also built with Chinese money. By the 1940s, when 70 per cent of the city's housing was constructed in *lilong* (alleyway), the city had more than 3,000 Chinese property developers with landholdings of 1,000 square metres of property. Within the alleys, most houses were of the *shikumen* (stone portal) type, which was two or three storeys high with a courtyard. Tenants often divided and sublet rooms, and as many as ten families might live in one house, and this meant that conditions were often unhealthy, especially during periods in which the city was overrun with refugees. Further away from the bright lights of Nanjing Road, as many as 300,000 people lived in slums, making up about around 10 per cent of the city's population. The very poorest might spend years on the banks of Suzhou Creek living in the decaying boats they had travelled in to Shanghai. A step up were straw shacks, commonly a single room made of bamboo, many located in Zhabei and Hongkou, their populations swelled by refugees during times of war.[22]

In Shanghai in particular, a new urban elite emerged, 'composed of local gentry, government officials, compradors, bankers, merchants, industrialists, gangsters, intellectuals, artists, professionals, and partisan cadres, to name a few of its constituent groups'.[23] These people existed in multiple worlds, those of local and national politics, finance and industry,

[21] Wellington K. K. Chan, 'Selling Goods and Promoting a New Commercial Culture: The Four Premier Department Stores on Nanjing Road, 1917 1937', in Sherman Cochran, ed., *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900 1945* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999), 19 37; Yeh Wen hsin, *Shanghai Splendor: Economic Sentiments and the Making of Modern China 1843 1949* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 56 63.

[22] Lu Hanchao, *Beyond the Neon Lights*, 116 27, 138 67.

[23] Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, 'Middlemen, Social Networks, and State Building in Republican Shanghai', in Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, eds., *Shanghai at the Crossroads*

culture, education, entertainment, philanthropy and disaster relief, and for some a darker world of crime.

No one illustrates the role of this new elite in urban governance better than Du Yuesheng, who became the leader of Shanghai's largest criminal gang, the Green Gang, which had its origins in eighteenth-century smuggling networks along the Grand Canal. By the 1920s, gang members were in control of the lucrative opium trade. They used their profits to buy respectability, renovating the City God Temple, and distributing aid to refugees during the Yangzi River floods in 1931 and the brief Sino-Japanese conflict in Shanghai the following year.

Meanwhile gang leader Du Yuesheng endeared himself to Chiang Kaishek by helping him to purge Communists from Shanghai in 1927. He set up his own banks, became head of the Shanghai Chamber of Commerce, and founded the Pudong Native Place Association. In 1932, Du formed an elite club, the Perseverance Society, with membership restricted to politicians, government and military officials, industrialists, and financiers. By 1937, it had 567 members and held regular banquets where elite politicians and businessmen mixed with stars of stage and screen. During the war with Japan, with Du away from Shanghai, he established branches of the society in unoccupied China, and after his return to the city, membership rose to 1,500 before its dissolution by the Communists. The war years also saw Du's increasing involvement in disaster relief, since he was a member of the Shanghai Federation of Charities Disaster Relief Committee, which controlled ninety-eight refugee shelters.[24]

Shanghai in the first half of the twentieth century worked as a city because of its overlapping formal and informal structures of governance, and the same was true for the city's poorest inhabitants. In 1933, two sociologists investigating Shanghai's beggar population were lucky enough to interview Zhao, one of the eight beggar heads in the city, who told them all about the profession. Beggars were divided by native place, and there were five different groups for beggars from Fengyang, the birthplace of the beggar Zhu Yuanzhang who later became the Ming emperor Huiyang, in Henan, Shandong, Jiangbei, and locals from

of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State Building in Republican China (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 11.

[24] Brian Martin, 'Du Yuesheng, the French Concession, and Social Networks in Shanghai', in Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, eds., *Shanghai at the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State Building in Republican China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 65 83; Nara Dillon, 'The Politics of Philanthropy: Social Networks and Refugee Relief in Shanghai, 1932 1949', in Nara Dillon and Jean C. Oi, eds., *Shanghai at the Crossroads of Empires: Middlemen, Social Networks, and State Building in Republican China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 189 91, 202.

Shanghai. The city was divided among these gangs, and beggar heads arranged for the collection of taxes on shops in their district. As with other guilds, new beggars gave a joining fee to the beggar head, usually 360 sesame seed cakes, and were required to obey guild rules, which included giving up a portion of their earnings as social security. A list of rules and punishments from Laohekou, a small city in Hubei, may not have been enforced very often, but demonstrates that even the poorest in Chinese cities were subject to rules and regulations.[25]

> Rule 1 Violation: Stirring things up [that is, spreading malicious gossip leading to trouble among members]. Punishment: cutting off the tongue.
>
> Rule 2 Violation: Betraying a fellow beggar. Punishment: cutting off a finger.
>
> Rule 3 Violation: Telling the owner of a lost property the location of that property. Punishment: slicing off a heel.
>
> Rule 4 Violation: Stealing from a fellow member. Punishment: Cutting off a hand.
>
> Rule 5 Violation: Stealing from a friend or a neighbour. Punishment: Cutting off a toe.
>
> Rule 6 Violation: Falsely accusing a member of theft. Punishment: Gouging out an eye.
>
> Rule 7 Violation: Bullying a visiting beggar. Punishment: A cash fine.
>
> Rule 8 Violation: Sexually harassing or assaulting the wife or daughter of a fellow member. Punishment: Drowning.
>
> Rule 9 Violation: Sexually harassing or assaulting fellow women members. Punishment: Death.
>
> Rule 10 Violation: Stealing outside one's turf. Punishment: Death.

Other treaty ports underwent similar transformations. Much of the old city of Tianjin was destroyed during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. This was an anti-Christian and anti-foreign uprising that was eventually put down by an alliance of eight imperial nations after the Boxers besieged the Legation Quarter in Beijing, where foreign diplomats lived. In Tianjin, the city walls were torn down soon afterwards. Along Dajing Road, the city's main commercial street leading out to the railway station, Yuan Shikai sponsored investment in factories and oversaw the construction of schools, a library, a municipal park, and government buildings.

Meanwhile, Victoria Road became the Rue de France in the French concession and then Asahi Road through the Japanese quarter,

[25] Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 116 18, 120 5.

architectural styles changing every few hundred metres.[26] Further north in Dalian, the railway ran straight to the docks, delivering produce directly on to the steamships, but the centre of the city was the Great Plaza, the largest of several squares connected by wide tree-lined boulevards planned by the Russian V. V. Sakahrov and based on the design of Vladivostok. The Great Plaza was ringed with large commercial buildings, such as the Yamato Hotel, the city hall, two large banks, and the post office. Elsewhere in Manchuria, Russian influence was obvious, particularly in Harbin, where there were many Russian Orthodox churches. Down the coast in Qingdao, the railway line also went right up to the docks, and train and steamer times were synchronized to maximize efficiency. The Japanese, who took over the city from Germany in 1919 after that country's defeat in World War I, continued to develop the industrial area along the railway tracks, and invested in the buildings along the Bund, such as the Edgewater Mansions Hotel, which boasted balconies with sea views in each of its rooms.[27]

Transformation of Urban Form and Governance outside Treaty Ports

Modern cityscapes were no longer confined to treaty ports. Across China, local elites and government officials experimented with different ideas about how to plan, construct, and manage cities. The Qing government supported *shangbu* (commercial settlement), zones of autonomy where foreign companies were allowed to invest, but where Chinese retained control. The most successful was in Jinan in Shandong, and consisted of a grid pattern of streets laid outside the city walls. Electricity, telephone, and postal services were soon in operation, and foreign companies such as British American Tobacco, the Deutsch-Asiatische Bank, and the Mitsui Trading Company set up shop. The success of the settlement was undoubtedly partly down to the Jin-pu Railway. The station was completed in 1911. Right outside was the headquarters of the railway, a Jin-pu hotel and hospital, and a complex of repair workshops known as the Jinan Machine Works.[28]

Urban expansion supported hundreds of architects and urban planners, who brought with them the latest international ideas about how cities should be designed and constructed and about how urban

[26] Hershatter, *Workers of Tianjin*, 16 24.
[27] Hess, 'From Colonial Port to Socialist Metropolis', 376 7; Nield, *China's Foreign Places*, 119, 83 4, 254 8.
[28] David Buck, *Urban Change in China: Politics and Development in Tsinan, Shantung, 1890 1949* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 51 4; Köll, *Railroads and the Transformation of China*, 78 80, 117 18.

modernity would solve society's problems. Many, such as forty-four of the founding members of the Society of Chinese Architects studied abroad. They returned to teach on new architectural programmes established at universities in Nanjing, Shenyang, Suzhou, and then during the war in Chongqing.[29] There were fewer university courses in urban planning and administration, but there were several societies, which published journals such as *Shizheng Pinglun* (*Municipal Critique*). Ideas like the garden city or Le Corbusier's modernist designs were discussed on its pages. Many planners worked for the government, and the career of Dong Xiujia, one of the founders of the Chinese Association for the Study of Urban Administration, is somewhat representative. He was the director of the Public Works Bureau in Hankou, was then employed by the National Resources Commission, and completed his career working for the Jiangsu provincial government under the Wang Jingwei regime.[30]

The twentieth century saw local elites and the state plan, construct, and manage cities. New regulations in the last decade of the Qing Dynasty led to the creation of police forces, chambers of commerce, and local self-government assemblies. The first law on urban administration came in 1921, when a distinction was made between Special Cities under the control of the central government and Ordinary Cities under provincial control. This was enshrined in the City Organization Law of 1928, and survives in modified form to this day.[31]

An early innovator was the city of Canton, where Sun Fo, the son of Sun Yatsen, became the city's first mayor in 1921. A fan of German urban planning, he oversaw the destruction of the city walls and the creation of a new road system that integrated the new commercial development along the Bund with the old imperial heart of the city, which was revitalized in part by the construction of branches of national department stores. In Nantong, just north of the Yangzi River, cotton magnate Zhang Jian controlled the Nantong County Local Self-Government Association,

[29] Jeffrey W. Cody, 'Introduction', in Jeffrey W. Cody, Nancy S. Steinhardt, and Tony Atkin, eds., *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux Arts* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), xiii; Gu Daqing, 'An Outline of Beaux Arts Education in China Transplantation, Localization, and Entrenchment', in Jeffrey W. Cody, Nancy S. Steinhardt, and Tony Atkin, eds., *Chinese Architecture and the Beaux Arts* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 74 6.

[30] Kristin Stapleton, 'Warfare and Modern Urban Administration in Chinese Cities', in David Strand, Sherman Cochran, and Yeh Wen Hsin, eds., *Cities in Motion: Interior, Coast and Diaspora in Transnational China* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 2007), 57 62, 72; 赵可 Zhao Ke, 市政改革与城市发展*Shizheng gaige yu chengshi fazhan* [*Reform of Municipal Government and Urban Development*] (Beijing: Zhongguo dabaike quanshu chubanshe, 2004), 118 24.

[31] Stapleton, 'Warfare and Modern Urban Administration', 55 8; Lincoln, *Urbanizing China*, 73 6.

which oversaw the expansion of the city. It was now centred on five parks to the west of the walls, which featured a zoo, sports equipment, and a children's playground. New hotels and businesses sprang up, their designs copying new styles in Shanghai, while the Number One Dasheng Cotton Mill resembled factories in England with its brick-and-wooden workshops.[32]

In central China, the fates of Kaifeng and Zhengzhou were determined in part by their wartime experiences. In the late 1920s, reformist warlord Feng Yuxiang sought to impose his idea of urban reform on the two cities, and their mayors promoted physical education and cleanliness in their zeal to improve the behaviour of urban residents. Planning was never far from the minds of these reformers, and the 1928 Zhengzhou New City District Construction Plan envisaged a vast city of 250,000 people stretching beyond the newly built railway hub. It drew on ideas from the USA, Europe, and Japan, including ideas of the garden city by promising a rural flavour to the highly ordered streets. During the war, although aspects of the economy of Zhengzhou recovered and it did not suffer directly from flooding when Chiang Kaishek breached the dikes of the Yellow River in 1938, it was no longer the important rail hub it had been. Now a front-line city, it was all but abandoned by the Nationalists in favour of Luoyang.

Meanwhile in Kaifeng, which was occupied by the Japanese, infrastructure was in better shape, in part because for the first time since the early 1930s, the city had a municipal government of sorts which was able to restore street lighting and repair the walls. After the war, both cities recovered somewhat, and there was even a renewed attempt at planning in Zhengzhou, with ideas for industrial and agricultural zones published in the local newspaper.[33]

To the southwest, in Chengdu, gentry formed new institutions such as the chamber of commerce and associations for education or agriculture. A new police force packed many of the beggars off to workhouses, shut down the brothels, and tried to improve sanitation. After 1911, these institutions of self-government and what official government was left shared management of the city with the criminal network known as the Gowned Brothers. Like the Green Gang in Shanghai, it originated in the countryside, and by the 1930s, it had divided Chengdu into four zones. Local headmen were co-opted into the organization, as were merchants,

[32] Tsin, *Nation, Governance, and Modernity in China*, 52 65; Qin Shao, *Culturing Modernity*, 55 78.

[33] Mark Baker, 'City Limits on China's Central Plains: Zhengzhou, Kaifeng, and the Making of Spatial Inequality, 1900 1960' (PhD thesis: Yale University, 2017), 80 2, 111 13, 183 5, 199 206, 277 8.

who joined for self-protection. They formed an uneasy alliance with the warlord Yang Sen, who attempted to improve both the city's physical infrastructure and the moral character of its citizens through initiatives such as a road-widening programme, new parks, public toilets, vocational education, and public lectures.[34]

In 1927, the new Nationalist government, like so many imperial dynasties before it, announced its arrival by forming a new capital. The movement of the capital away from Beijing was not without controversy, and Guangzhou, Xi'an, Luoyang, and Wuhan were all contenders. However, Nanjing had historically been a capital city, was close to the new economic heartland of China, and, perhaps most importantly, it was believed that this was where Sun Yatsen had wanted the capital to be. Nanjing was to signify the modern urban nation Chiang Kaishek aspired to create.

In 1928, Nanjing was given special municipal status, a mayor was appointed with wide-ranging powers, and the Capital Construction Committee was created, headed by Chiang Kaishek himself. A master plan approved in 1929 was influenced by the City Beautiful movement that sought not just to create aesthetically pleasing cities, but also to improve urban citizens. In keeping with the latest planning trends, the city was to be zoned. The new administrative zone was to be located not at the centre of the old city, but just below Purple Mountain, where Sun's mausoleum was to be built, with the financial centre at Xinjiekou, the intersection of the city's two main roads. An industrial zone was also planned on the northern bank of the Yangzi River.

Like so many others across China, the plan was only partially implemented. Government administrative buildings were located in the centre of the city, close to Xinjiekou, and one after another new ministries went up. Many of these buildings had a Chinese-style roof known as a *dawuding* (big-hat roof) atop modern or Beaux Arts classical facades. This type of building, which became ubiquitous after 1949, preserved the Chinese architectural tradition, while also incorporating the latest in modern design.[35]

The transformation of Nanjing was cut short by the Japanese invasion in 1937, which forced the Nationalists to construct another capital city in Chongqing. Some modernization had taken place before the war, largely at the behest of local elites. The new government was hampered in its plans by lack of funds and air raids, while there was a belief that after the

[34] Kristin Stapleton, *Civilizing Chengdu: Chinese Urban Reform, 1895 1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 113 17, 125 38, 197 253.

[35] Charles Musgrove, *China's Contested Capital: Architecture, Ritual, and Response in Nanjing* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013), 24 124.

war it would return to Nanjing, and so did not wish to expend limited resources on Chongqing. However, by 1943, Chongqing had ten defined districts, which were connected with new bus lines and ferries across the rivers. Government buildings were constructed in the new city area outside the west gate, the new Bureau of Sanitation worked with police to improve hygiene, and roads continued to be widened, a task made easier by the destruction of houses during air raids.

Bombing also forced the government to construct special infrastructure which included anti-aircraft guns, searchlights, and air raid shelters. A plan for a vast subterranean network of tunnels under the old city had to be scaled down due to lack of funds. However, by 1944, there were several thousand shelters capable of holding nearly half a million people. Some were privately run and came with comfortable furniture and bathrooms, but many were little more than shallow trenches covered with wooden boards.[36] In Manchuria, the Japanese renamed Changchun Xinjing (New Capital), and set about planning a new city of 1 million people that drew on the examples of New Delhi, Canberra, and Nanjing. Unity Plaza and Unity Boulevard were constructed on SMR land, and government buildings with steel-reinforced concrete had roofs designed like medieval Tokugawa castles.[37]

Urban Protest

China's modern age brought with it a new politics which played itself out in the street and the workplace. The May Fourth Movement of 1919 was the most important popular nationalist protest in China in the first half of the twentieth century, and spread from city to city through new technologies of communication. At first the protests centred around Beijing University, established in 1898 and run by Cai Yuanpei, who had served as the minister of education in the early days of the Republic. His appointment of men like Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao, who would go on to be founding members of the CCP, to the staff of the university, and commitment to free speech allowed staff and students to found journals such

[36] Lee McIsaac, 'The City As Nation: Creating a Chinese Capital in Chongqing', in Joseph Esherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 175, 181 8; Edna Tow, 'The Great Bombing of Chongqing and the Anti Japanese War, 1937 1945', in Mark Peattie, Edward Drea, and Hans van de Ven, eds., *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino Japanese War of 1937 1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 266, 268 73.

[37] David Buck, 'Railway City and National Capital: Two Faces of the Modern Changchun', in Joseph Esherick, ed., *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900 1950* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 79 89.

as *New Youth*, probably the foremost intellectual publication of the age. Some articles published in these journals discussed social changes in China, such as the position of women in society, while others dealt with international affairs.

The protests were sparked by the news from Paris that Japan would be given the former German treaty port of Qingdao as a reward for its participation in World War I rather than China. On May Fourth, 3,000 students from thirteen universities demonstrated in Tiananmen Square. In the afternoon, they marched first to the Legation Quarter and, finding it impossible to see representatives of any of the foreign powers, turned north until they reached the house of the minister of communication, who had negotiated unpopular loans with the Japanese. While he fled out a back window, a militant group of students burned his house. Thirty-two were arrested, only to be released two days later after students across Beijing refused to attend class. Within a few days, student organizations and unions organized protests in other cities across the country, and there were boycotts of Japanese goods.

In Shanghai, 20,000 students marched through the city, while thousands lined the streets to watch. Meanwhile, in Beijing, students had been out on the streets making speeches to the locals, and this prompted the government to begin a new round of arrests. By 4 June, more than 1,000 students were being detained, many of them in makeshift prisons on campus. This led to support from other sections of society, particularly in Shanghai, where 60,000 workers went on strike. Faced with further protests, the government backed down. Many in the cabinet resigned, and on 28 June, the news came from Paris that the Chinese delegation had refused to sign the Versailles Peace Treaty.[38]

The May Fourth Movement ushered in nearly a decade of protest in Chinese cities, much of it in the workplace, and some of it orchestrated by the CCP, founded in 1921 in Shanghai. The high point of the CCP's influence was during the May Thirtieth Movement, which broke out after British police shot ten Chinese demonstrators who were angry at the upcoming trial of Chinese students who had been protesting the killing of a Chinese worker in Japanese mills. The CCP was able to quickly unite more than 100 Shanghai unions under the banner of the Shanghai General Labour Union, and more than 200,000 workers across the city were soon on strike. The strike ended in late August after the protestors won a guarantee of better conditions for workers in Japanese factories. In

[38] Rana Mitter, *Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle with the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 43 8, 53; Chow Tse Yang, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 99 170.

addition to highlighting the strength of the CCP, it also brought to the fore the role of the city's gangsters among Chinese workers, who in 1927, helped Chiang Kaishek to expel the CCP from the city.[39]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

Shanghai: Cradle of Modernity

Any discussion of China's modern urban culture in the twentieth century must begin with Shanghai. In the words of David Strand, 'There is truth in the image of an urban China paced and shaped by messages, goods, models, and technologies from Shanghai. Bits and pieces of Shanghai . . . turned up all over, and travellers from Shanghai saw the imprint of their city in surprising places.'[40] The lives of the richest people in Shanghai are described in the novel *Midnight* by Mao Dun. Much of the action takes place in Wu Sunfu's residence, a large mansion with some land attached, in the French concession. The ground floor consists of two drawing rooms, a dining room, a library, a billiards room, and a veranda. The family has fifteen servants and hosts regular visitors who chat around the pond or while playing cards on the roof garden. Outside the family home, hotels and restaurants feature prominently. The young people in the novel tend to congregate in Jessfield Park in the suburbs of the city near St John's University.[41]

Not all entrepreneurs were as rich as Wu Sunfu, but Shanghai was full of people making a comfortable living in a whole new range of professions. A 1935 census of the IS provides an indication of what jobs were available in the city, and while many of these people were doubtless only just making ends meet, they also make up what might best be termed the city's middle class. It listed 351 advertising agents, 401 employment agents, and 3,439 salespeople. In the industrial sector were 32 surveyors, 29 statisticians, 918 engineers, 36 pilots, and 886 railway staff. Many of the less affluent among these groups made up the petty urbanites, who lived cheek by jowl in the alleyways of Shanghai and who were the subject of many stories published in newspapers and literary magazines. One listed the following occupants in a single alleyway house; a policeman, his wife and two teenage daughters, a married couple who both taught in a nearby elementary school, a couple of dancing girls, a poor cobbler and his wife, an older woman who was an opium addict, the second landlord

[39] Perry, *Shanghai on Strike*, 81 4.
[40] Strand, '"A High Place Is No Better Than a Low Place,"' 104.
[41] Christian Henriot, *Fiction and the City: A Visual and Spatial Reading of Three Shanghai Novels* (July 2008). www.virtualshanghai.net/Texts/Articles?ID=55

from Suzhou who sublet the other rooms and spent most of his days at the opera, a proofreader for a local newspaper, four waiters in a Western-style restaurant, and an author.[42]

Among all the professions listed were people who were partial to a night on the town. Clubs in Shanghai were modern cosmopolitan places, where cigarettes, cocktails, dancing, dinner jackets, and jazz formed the backdrop to new takes on long-practised behaviours such as chasing courtesans. In the 1930s, the IS had thirty bars and clubs, with many more in other parts of the city. Men bought a book of tickets at the door on entry, and handed them to dancing girls at the end of each dance. The girls also drank with customers, many earning a commission on each bottle of champagne or whisky sold. There was a hierarchy of dance halls. The most lavish club was the Paramount Ballroom opposite the Jingan Temple, financed with Shanghai money and constructed in an art deco style.

Du Yuesheng held regular parties there and probably attended the huge party in 1934 to crown Shanghai's 'dance empress'. He was in a relationship with the winner, Beiping Li Li, which doubtless did her chances in the competition no harm at all. She, like other famous dancers, found their lives discussed in tabloid newspapers, and some also found fame as film stars in Shanghai's rapidly growing film industry. Clubbing culture continued to thrive until 1941, and afterwards was taxed heavily by the Japanese. There was a brief revival after the war, and the last clubs closed their doors in 1954.[43]

There can have been few people who loved Shanghai's clubs more than Mu Shiying, who wrote about them in short stories that brought him a brief period of fame in the 1930s.[44] *Five in a Nightclub* is a story about five people from Shanghai who go to drown their sorrows.

The price of gold fell faster and faster and faster. In five more minutes Hu Junyi was chewing his lip nervously. When his lip shattered, a family fortune of 80,000 was swept away . . .

Zheng Ping sat by the lake on campus. Lovers strolled by before his eyes. He looked this way and that. He was waiting for his darling Nina Lin . . . When Nina Lin finally came, she was with a long legged fellow named Wang Minxin . . .

Youth A 'Isn't that Daisy Huang? She was the toast of the town five years ago!' Youth B 'Amen. She was quite a dish!' Youth C 'A pity we're too late! Isn't it

[42] Xu Xiaoqun, *Chinese Professionals and the Republican State: The Rise of Professional Associations in Shanghai, 1912 1937* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 37 8; Lu Hanchao, *Beyond the Neon Lights*, 169 70.

[43] James Farrer and Andrew David Field, *Shanghai Nightscapes: A Nocturnal Biography of a Global City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 16 32, 37 8, 42.

[44] Andrew David Field, *Mu Shiying, China's Lost Modernist: New Translations and an Appreciation* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), xvi xvii, xxiv xxv.

amazing what a few years do to a woman's looks?' A snake bit the woman's heart. She rushed across the street to look at her reflection in a shop window. One glimpse told her youth had flown from her body to lodge in that of another . . .

Ji Jie sat in his study. The bookcases around him were filled with different editions of *Hamlet*. Translations into Japanese, German, French, Russian, Spanish even one done into Turkish . . . His Hamlets opened their mouths and began to whisper: 'What are you? What am I? What is it that you are? What is it that I am?' . . .

In his five years at Town Hall Miao Zongdan had copied out documents, sat on sofas, drunk tea, read newspapers; he had arrived on time and left at the proper hour . . . In his five years at the Town Hall Miao Zongdan had never gotten a memo from the mayor. He cut open the envelope with the same care he lavished on penning his fair copies of office documents. What? It was a letter of dismissal.[45]

Here we have the bankrupt stockbroker, the lovelorn student, the faded socialite, the failed writer, and the insignificant clerk all drowning their sorrows in a club. What it might have looked like is best described in another of Mu's stories, *Shanghai Foxtrot*.

The azure dusk blankets the whole scene. A saxophone stretches out its neck, opens its great mouth, and blares at them, *Woo woo*. Inside on the smooth dance floor, floating skirts, floating robes, exquisite heels, heels, heels, heels, heels. Free flowing hair and men's faces, men's white collared shirts and women's smiling faces. Arms outstretched, kingfisher green earrings dragging on shoulders. A group of tightly arranged round tables, but with scattered chairs. Waiters in white stand in dark corners. Scent of alcohol, perfume, ham and eggs, smoke . . . someone sits alone in the corner holding a coffee to stimulate energy . . . Pushing open the glass door, this fragile fantasy world is broken. Running under the steps, a pair of rickshaws stop at the street. The car attendant stands. In the middle is a road lit up by houselights, competing with 'Rickshaw?' are Austins, Fords, Baker sports cars, Baker little nine, eight cylinder, six cylinder . . . the great red faced moon limps along above the broad field of the race track . . . An electric tram *dang dang* rides into a dangerous zone, covered with advertisement posters for great big sales and company trademarks. Bicycles are wedged against the side of the tram, looking pitiful. Sailors sit atop the rickshaw, blinking their drunken eyes. Seeing the rickshaw puller miss a step, they laugh loudly, '*Ha ha*.' Red traffic light, green traffic light, traffic light pole and Sikh traffic guard stand upright on the ground. Traffic lights flash and let forth a torrent of people and a flood of cars. These people look like a pack of mindless flies![46]

Mu Shiying's depiction of the inside of the club is dreamlike, a reflection of the intoxicating atmosphere. This contrasts with the harsh realities of urban life outside, as rickshaw drivers, tram operators, and policemen work the noisy night-time streets.

[45] Ibid., 37 41. [46] Ibid., 109, 112.

Many of the protagonists in Mu Shiying's stories are women. In giving them agency, it is important not to deny that many were exploited, and that for the dancers there was a psychological and physical strain on going out every night, possibly against their family's wishes or without their knowledge. However, the night was also a liminal space in which women found power of various kinds and were able to experiment with new behaviours. Perhaps the best example of this is the college student Rongzi, who is sexually liberated and possibly also sexually promiscuous, but who certainly has the measure of her admirer, another student named Alexey. The story is told from the perspective of Alexey, and so Rongzi is introduced rather disparagingly as

> a dangerous animal! She had a snake's body, a cat's head, a mixture of the gentle and the dangerous. Wearing a long red silk *qipao*, like she was standing on a light breeze, the corners of her *qipao* floating. One look at her feet and I could tell she was a dancer stepping around in red silk high heels that were as lovely as crabapple flowers.[47]

After several weeks of being infatuated with Rongzi, Alexey follows her out into the Shanghai night, where his anger at her dancing with other men elicits the following response from the young woman.

> That day you were unwilling to watch me dancing with that other man, right? ... But can you interfere in these affairs? Why do so in such a foolish way? If your words make sense to me of course I will listen to you, but if they don't, how can you make me obey you? Don't you know, the past few days you acted too foolishly, so I didn't pay attention to you. Today you seem to have calmed down ... Remember, I love you child. But you cannot interfere in my activities.[48]

When we move away from the dance halls, clubs, and bars, we find a very different world of entertainment on the street, in temple fairs, and in theatres. Entertainment was cheap and more of a mixture of cultures from across China, rather than those from abroad. Rickshaw drivers often gathered at the Rue Hennequin in the French concession, such a regular spot for street entertainers that it was known as the Great World of Subei, so called since many of the city's poorest residents came from there. Here one could find opera, storytelling, magic shows, circus acts, martial arts, and animal shows. Many of these types of entertainments were also available in large amusement centres which contained theatres, show-rooms, restaurants, a wide range of shops, teahouses, galleries, circuses, and cinemas. New World, built in 1914, and Great World, built in 1917

[47] Ibid., 4. [48] Ibid., 24 5.

were the largest, and in the 1930s, Great World was visited by up to 20,000 people a day.[49] Its six floors were described thus:

On the first floor were gambling tables, singsong girls, magicians, pick pockets, slot machines, fireworks, bird cages, fans, stick incense, acrobats, and ginger. One flight up were the restaurants, a dozen different groups of actors, crickets in cages, pimps, midwives, barbers, and earwax extractors. The third floor had jugglers, herb medicines, ice cream parlors, photographers, a new bevy of girls, their high collared gowns slit to reveal their hips, in case one had passed up the more modest ones below who merely flashed their thighs; and under the heading of novelty, several rows of exposed toilets, their impresarios instructing the amused patrons not to squat but to assume a position more in keeping with the imported plumb ing. The fourth floor was crowded with shooting galleries, fun tan tables, revolv ing wheels, massage benches, acupuncture and moxa cabinets, hot towel counters, dried fish and intestines, and dance platforms serviced by a horde of music makers competing with each other to see who could drown out the others. The fifth floor featured girls whose dresses were slit to the armpits, a stuffed whale, storytellers, balloons, peep shows, masks, a mirror maze, two love letter booths, wish scribes who guaranteed results, rubber goods, and a temple filled with ferocious gods and joss sticks. On the top floor and the roof of that house of multiple joys a jumble of tightrope walkers slithered back and forth, and there were seesaws, Chinese checkers, mahjongg, strings of firecrackers going off, lottery tickets, and marriage brokers.[50]

Beggars were regularly found outside the Shanghai's nightclubs, restaurants, and theatres, as in this account from 1917.

It is a great opportunity for the [midnight] beggar when a theatre empties after a show. On that occasion, as long as the beggars follow the courtesans' rickshaws most closely, they can get a considerable amount of income. In most cases, courtesans go to the show to look for a date and be in the limelight. When they are not lucky enough to meet a favorite young man, they are surrounded by dirty and smelly monsters who are always reluctant to leave. For the sake of the 'limelight' and for snaring a young man, these courtesans generously give one or two silver coins in order to get the beggars to leave as quickly as possible.[51]

Other beggars resorted to more devious tactics. Some squatted in crowded public toilets, only relinquishing their seat to the next in line in exchange for a few coins. Roughly a quarter of the beggars surveyed in Shanghai were handicapped, but this too was often an artifice. In Sichuan, beggars simulated broken limbs, burns, rotting sores, and other ailments using the meat of different animals, turmeric, rice powder, bean dregs, and other ingredients. In Shanghai, a little under half of beggars were women, and it seems they earned slightly more than their male counterparts. It was commonly

[49] Lu Hanchao, *Beyond Neon Lights*, 96 7; Meng Yue, *Shanghai: Edges of Empires* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 185 6.
[50] Quoted in Meng Yue, *Shanghai*, 190. [51] Lu Hanchao, *Street Criers*, 155.

believed that they inspired more sympathy, particularly if they had a child with them. Women beggars were also popular at funerals, especially in Guangzhou, where they were hired to sing dirges, sometimes for up to seven weeks, during which they earned more than an unskilled labourer, with room and board provided. They also played a role in street performances, and this description of a flower-drum opera from Shanghai reminds us how the bright lights of twentieth-century urban modernity have eclipsed but not erased centuries of urban civilization.[52]

> The man held a stalk of sorghum and the woman shook the little flower drum in her hand. She wore an open topped straw hat cocked at an angle. A few old red velvet flowers were untidily stuck along the edge of the hat. She had a hair knot that looked like a bundle of chicken feathers at the back. Her face was heavily powdered and her lips rouged. She was not pretty, and with such heavy makeup she looked like a living demon. Rhythmically shaking the drum, she started to sing. She was slow at the beginning but increasingly became spirited and, all of a sudden, she started to dance. Following her posturing, the man waved his sorghum stalk to punctuate her performance. This was pretty funny, it is fair to say.[53]

Urban Modernity across China

Urban modernity spread out across Chinese cities. In Wuxi, visitors to Great World were able to watch plays or opera, eat ice cream, and enjoy fireworks displays. Elsewhere in the city, textile mill workers went shopping on Beidajie, the city's main commercial thoroughfare, where green and red lanterns illuminated the night and music from radios burst out of the shops. After a quick bite to eat or some tea, they might take in a film, and many of the latest blockbusters were on show. For example, in 1931, *All Quiet on the Western Front* was showing in cinemas only one year after it had premiered in the United States.[54]

Far away from the eastern coast, urban life was perhaps less hectic, but not immune from change. Teahouses were everywhere in Chengdu, and patrons often watched street acts and folk performances while sipping their tea. Other teahouses acted more as theatres and catered to audiences of several hundred people, and in the 1920s, some began to show movies. Since it was dark, the audience was mostly male, and boys wandered the seats with 'moving toilets', bamboo tubes that allowed patrons to pee so they didn't have to get up and miss any of the film. Women were not permitted in teahouses until the early twentieth century, and at first they

[52] Ibid., 155–7, 166–77. [53] Ibid., 170–1.
[54] Lincoln, *Urbanizing China in War and Peace*, 28–9.

were segregated, largely because they attracted so much unwanted male attention. Despite this, teahouses became a place for brokering marriages, one-night stands, and prostitution. During the war, more women visited teahouses, partly because refugees from the east were more used to socializing in public.[55]

Beijing is often presented as the antithesis to Shanghai, traditional and preserving some sort of ancient Chinese culture. The city certainly wasn't as cosmopolitan as its southern neighbour, but it was developing its own distinct modern identity. This was noted by social scientists, particularly Sidney Gamble, one of the pioneers of the survey as a way of exploring Chinese urban life. Gamble collected data on 283 families, many of them among the poorest in Beijing. Most of the men were clerks and accountants, rickshaw drivers and peddlers, while the women were nurses and teachers, or earned just a little money sewing. Weddings and funerals were the largest expense for most families, and many of the poorest were forced to borrow money to fund these important life events. The richest families were likely to own the property they lived in, with some subletting a room for extra income. They ate well, supplementing their basic diet of grains and vegetables with meat and fish, often a treat during festivals such as the lunar new year and the mid-autumn festival, when they also spent money on incense and other religious paraphernalia. Obviously, richer families could afford to spend more on non-subsistence items, and these included newspapers, books, writing supplies, and school tuition. Families travelled around and beyond Beijing, spending money on rickshaws, bicycles, tram and railway tickets, and sent messages by telegram and letters through the post. They were also concerned for their health, purchasing medicines and paying for glasses, soap, and mosquito incense. Some families were even able to keep servants and contributed to local services such as nightsoil collection and street lighting. Finally, just like people in Shanghai and other cities, they enjoyed themselves, spending money on wine, tobacco, toys, athletics, theatre tickets, photographs, presents, and gambling.[56]

It was not only sociologists who recorded the minutiae of the daily lives of Beijing's residents. With no imperial family to dwell on, writers turned their attention to *hutongs* and courtyards, and a distinct literary style known as *jingpai* emerged. In contrast to *haipai* (Shanghai style), it has been criticized as traditional, and while writers sought solace in the familiar ways of the city, they also brought it to life. They wrote about

[55] Di Wang, *The Teahouse: Small Business, Everyday Culture and Public Politics 1900 1950* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 137 44, 151 9, 188 96.

[56] Sidney Gamble, *How Chinese Families Live in Beiping* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1933), 164 98, 285 312.

Beijing's parks and museums, the Ming tombs, and the Great Wall. No author exemplifies this trend more than Lao She, who reached the peak of his career in the 1930s. His most famous character is the unlucky rickshaw driver in *Camel Xiangzi*. Xiangzi, the hero of the novel, comes to Beijing when he is eighteen, and saves enough money to buy a rickshaw. A series of mishaps lead to him losing his savings three times, his wife dies giving birth, and the woman he loves is sold into a brothel. He ends the story bedraggled, his once proud head now staring at the ground as he drives along in search of cigarette butts.[57] *Xiangzi*, which is translated as Happy Boy throughout the book, is often employed as a rickshaw driver for various families, through which we get a sense of daily life in Beijing.

> The first day he went to work Happy Boy missed fainting only by a little. Very early in the morning the principal wife went to the market to buy provisions. When he had hauled her back, he took the young masters and their little sisters to their various schools . . . When he had got all the children delivered to their schools, he would have to take Mr. Yang to his government office, whence he'd hurry back to haul No. 2 wife to the Market of Eastern Peace or to see relatives or friends. By the time he got back he would have to go after the little scholars to bring them home to eat lunch.[58]

So busy was Xiangzi that he barely found time to run out to grab a couple of fried cakes for his own lunch, and in the afternoon, he had to clean the courtyard and help take care of the baby until it was time to pick the older kids up from school.

> One by one he brought the children back to the house. The courtyard was more noisy than a market place. With three women cursing at the top of their lungs and a mob of children wailing, it was more confused than Theatre Street at night when all the plays were over . . . Fortunately Happy Boy still had to go get Mr. Yang, so he could run out again right away. The cries of people and the whinnying of horses on the street seemed easier to bear than the commotion inside the house.[59]

Even at the end of the day, Xiangzi found it hard to rest since his room was so small.

> It was the room next to the front gate, and had been divided into two by a panel in the middle. Chang Ma slept on one side and he slept on the other. There was no light except that which by good fortune came in through the little two foot window from the street lamp outside. The room was damp and foul, with a layer of dust as thick as a copper penny on the floor. A board lay across trestles next to the wall, and there was nothing else. Feeling the board, Happy Boy

[57] Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 267 80, 285 8.
[58] Lau Shaw (Evan King trans.), *Rickshaw Boy* (New York: Reynal & Hitchcock, 1945), 61 2.
[59] Ibid., 64 5.

discovered that if he put his head down he would have to lie with his feet popped up on the wall; and if he put his feet down he'd have to sleep in a half sitting posture. He wouldn't be able to sleep curved like a bent bow, so after thinking a long time he finally arranged the board crosswise of the room. That way, with his feet in one corner of the room and his head in the other, he could put his head down, though his feet hung out over the end of the board.[60]

Conclusion

Industrialization and the emergence of Chinese governments committed to developing cities were the underlying factors that led to the emergence of Chinese urban modernity. Macro-regions were replaced by an urban system reconfigured along railway lines and roads. At first this was oriented towards the coastal metropolises, and with the movement of the capital to Nanjing in 1927, the Lower Yangzi Delta became the political as well as the economic heart of the nation. Then Japanese imperialism caused the urbanization of Manchuria and southwest China, where the Nationalist government retreated during the war. Modern urban skylines were constructed and then destroyed during the first half of the twentieth century, as new infrastructure and architectural styles appeared first in coastal cities then elsewhere in China. Urban planners and architects worked with government officials and drew on international ideas to create master plans that were visions of China's modern urban future. Shanghai was the most cosmopolitan, international, and outward-looking city in China. Rich or poor, its inhabitants participated in a rich urban culture, a mixture of all that China and the world had to offer. Urban life elsewhere was a similar mixture of Chinese and international influences, and was now captured in art, literature, film, photography, and social surveys.

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[60] Ibid., 66.

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7 The Maoist Period (1949–1976)

Introduction

In 1949, China had still not recovered from the long war with Japan, and the civil war that followed caused further disruption. The Communist Party worked with factory owners, some Nationalist government officials, and others to solve some of the problems caused by years of fighting. Political campaigns in 1951 and 1952 attacked some of these groups, and the party hastened the process of turning China into a socialist country. The Great Leap Forward (GLF) in 1958 was in part Mao's attempt to break away from the Soviet model of development and to mobilize Chinese people to industrialize as quickly as possible. It resulted in food shortages in cities and famine in the countryside.

After a brief period in the early 1960s, during which the political policy relaxed somewhat, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution designed to remove opponents within the party and bourgeois elements in society. The result was a power struggle at the top of the party and chaos throughout society as Red Guards turned against intellectuals, government officials, and party cadres. The army stepped in to take control of many government organizations, and by Mao's death in 1976, order had been restored.

The overriding aim of the new Communist government was to create socialist production cities to replace the former capitalist consumption cities. To do this, the state poured money into industrial development and new factories were built across the country. Much of this investment happened in cities far from the coast, which were now linked to the urban system by the rapidly expanding rail and road networks. This policy led to a rebalancing of the urban system after more than a century during which coastal regions had urbanized faster than anywhere else in China. This continued during the 1960s and 1970s, when the party pursued its Third

Front strategy, a policy of developing industries in the interior of China in case of an attack from the USA or the USSR. Rapid industrial development caused rural-to-urban migration, and concerned that there would not be enough grain to feed the rising urban population, the government introduced policies to keep people in the countryside. These were partially successful, and throughout the Maoist period, one of the characteristics of the urban system was the relatively small number of really large cities.

The state tightly controlled the planning, construction, and management of urban space. It did this under the guidance of the Soviet Union, and the *danwei* (work unit), which combined urban form and governance, was based on models from the USSR. Industrial enterprises and government institutions controlled development on their land and built houses, schools, and other facilities, leaving municipal authorities to provide basic urban infrastructure. Chinese Communist Party cadres had great power in *danwei*, and elsewhere in the city, residents' committees gave the party power to monitor people's daily lives. Urban space was now highly politicized, and this allowed the government to mobilize the people during political campaigns.

The CCP sought to transform society by eliminating rich factory owners and other members of the bourgeoisie and improving life for workers. However, a new elite of party cadres emerged, while some people were able to maintain their standards of living, at least for a while. Meanwhile, divisions emerged between those who worked for large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and had access to urban amenities through their *danwei*, and those who worked in smaller factories or workshops. As the CCP tightened its grip on Chinese cities in the late 1950s, people's class status became important in their daily lives. Those from bourgeois backgrounds were targeted in political campaigns, and many suffered humiliating struggle sessions during which they were publicly criticized by baying crowds. During the Cultural Revolution that broke out in 1966, cities descended into chaos, with Red Guards accusing people seemingly at random of counter-revolutionary activity. Although the party restored order, many aspects of daily life such as education ceased for several years, and people lived in fear of political attack.

Urban System

Industrialization Creates New Cities

Scholars often argue that in line with other socialist countries, China during the Maoist period remained under-urbanized, with the proportion

of people living in cities remaining below 20 per cent.[1] Like Weber's criticism of Chinese cities in the early modern period, using the term 'under-urbanization' suggests a standard path to urban development against which China is being perhaps unfavourably compared. It is better to understand the historical trajectory of urban change during the Maoist period on its own terms. In addition to being the result of government policy, after 1949, urbanization took place within the context of wartime recovery and was built on the foundation of developments in the first half of the twentieth century.

Trying to work out the number of people living in Chinese cities remains fraught with difficulty. Just as during the Nationalist period before 1949, there were three levels of cities. Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin were directly under the control of the central government, and there were provincial and county-level cities. In 1949, the total number of cities in China increased from 58 to 136. In 1955, the state council mandated that settlements with a population of more than 100,000 could become cities, and their number increased to 208 in 1961 before falling back to 169 in 1964, when a change in the classification of an urban citizen from everyone living within the municipality to only those engaged in non-agricultural work caused a fall in their number. The number of cities rose steadily in the 1970s, standing at 191 in 1978.[2]

Table 7.1 provides data on the number of people living in cities. During the first two years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the majority of migrants to cities were refugees from areas still devastated by war. Then, as industrialization gathered pace, cities attracted workers, many of whom were recruited by SOEs, although some also came to cities under their own steam. In response, the government expelled vagrants, prostitutes, and others it considered undesirable from cities, and began to introduce *hukou* (household registration) to control movement. Industrialization during the GLF brought an estimated 15 million into cities in 1959, with the number of female workers in SOEs increasing from 3.3 million to 8.1 million. One of the consequences of this was that grain production in the countryside was inadequate to meet the needs of the rising urban population, not to mention those living in villages. This was the root cause of the famine that killed at least 20 million in the countryside, and in response, the

[1] Laurence J. C. Ma, 'Urban Transformation in China, 1949 2000: A Review and Research Agenda', *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 34, no. 9 (2002), 1550 1.

[2] 曹洪涛 Cao Hongtao and 储传亨Chu Chuanheng, eds., 当代中国的城市建设 *Dangdai Zhongguo de chengshi jianshe* [*Construction of Cities in Contemporary China*] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1990), 33 4; Kam Wing Chan, *Cities with Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post 1949 China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 23 30; Gaubatz and Wu, *Chinese City*, 72 8.

Table 7.1 *Urban population (based on urban administrative areas)*

Year	Total Population (Mill.)	Urban Population (Mill.)	Growth %	Rate % of Nation
1949	541.67	57.65		10.6
1950	551.96	61.69	7.0	11.2
1951	563.00	66.32	7.5	11.8
1952	574.82	71.63	8.0	12.5
1953	587.96	78.26	9.3	13.3
1954	602.66	82.49	5.4	13.7
1955	614.65	82.85	0.4	13.5
1956	628.28	91.85	10.9	14.6
1957	646.53	99.49	8.3	15.4
1958	659.94	107.21	7.8	16.2
1959	672.07	123.71	15.4	18.2
1960	662.07	130.73	5.7	19.7
1961	658.59	127.07	−2.8	19.3
1962	652.95	116.59	−8.2	17.3
1963	691.72	116.46	−0.1	16.8
1964	704.99	129.50	11.2	18.4
1965	725.38	130.45	0.7	18.0
1966	745.42	133.13	2.1	17.9
1967	763.68	135.48	1.8	17.7
1968	785.34	138.38	2.1	17.6
1969	906.71	141.17	2.0	17.5
1970	829.92	144.24	2.2	17.4
1971	852.29	147.11	2.0	17.3
1972	871.77	149.35	1.5	17.1
1973	892.11	153.45	2.7	17.2
1974	908.59	155.95	1.6	17.2
1975	924.20	160.30	2.8	17.3
1976	937.17	163.41	1.9	17.4

Source: Kam Wing Chan, *Cities with Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post 1949 China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 24 5

government fully implemented the *hukou* in 1958. A full change of status from agricultural to non-agricultural sectors was seldom granted, while the link between place of residence and distribution of grain rations also hindered movement. Another result of GLF policies was deurbanization, as party leaders called for a reduction in the urban population, and around 20 million people were sent back to the countryside between 1961 and 1963. After the initial chaos of the Cultural Revolution, the party sent millions of urban youth, party cadres, and intellectuals to the countryside

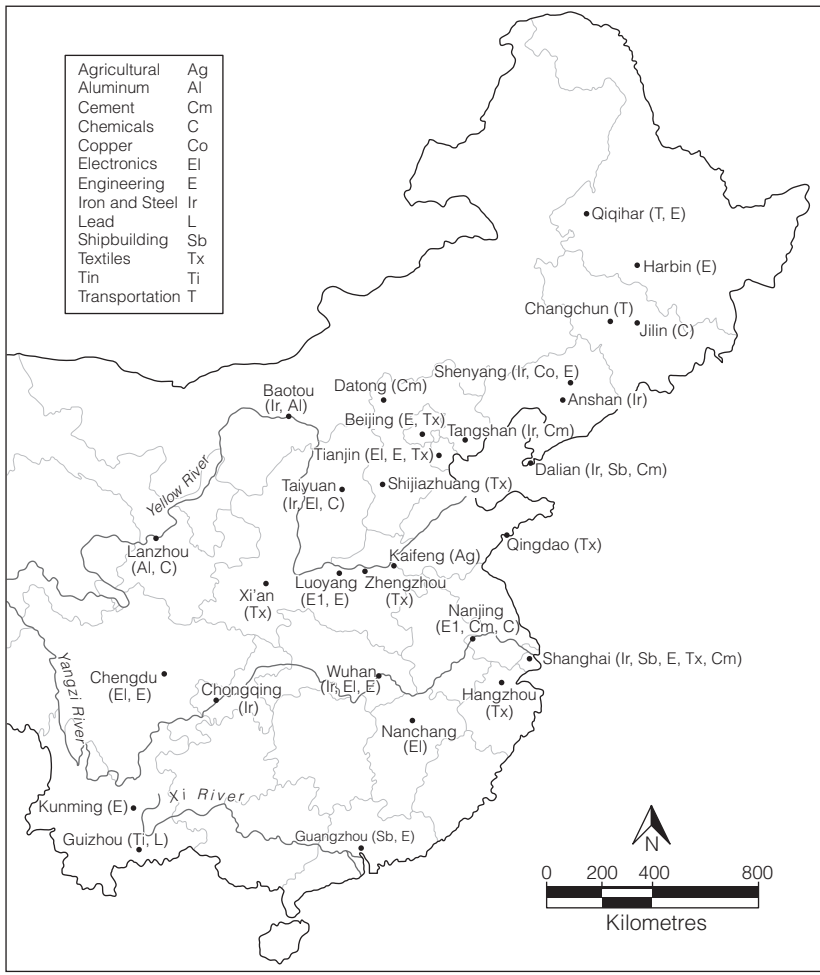
to learn from the peasants. It is estimated that about 30 million people left the cities in the 1970s.[3]

In 1949, approximately two-thirds of the urban population was concentrated along China's east coast, but by 1980, only about half resided there.[4] The CCP classified cities into four types. There were eight heavy industrial cities: Beijing, Baotou, Xi'an, Datong, Qiqihar, Daye, Lanzhou, and Chengdu. Then there were fourteen cities that could be rebuilt through industrialization, such as Anshan, Fushun, Harbin, Shenyang, and Urumuqi. The third class consisted of old cities where some industrialization was possible, which included Tianjin, Dalian, Changchun, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Chongqing. Other cities were not subject to any special policy of industrialization.[5] Party officials worked with Soviet advisors on 156 large industrial projects, 80 per cent of them in cities away from coastal areas. A further 694 industrial enterprises were approved west of the Beijing-Guangzhou railway. As is evident from Map 7.1, some cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Taiyuan, Tianjin, and Wuhan, had a broad industrial base. Elsewhere, one industry could dominate a city, such as steel in Anshan and coal in Datong.[6]

Just as during the first half of the twentieth century, railway construction went hand in hand with urbanization, and by the end of the first Five Year Plan (FYP) in 1957, the length of the network had increased by 2,400 miles. Construction was not without its problems. Regulations were torn up during the GLF, the number of accidents increased, and ambitious projects such as tunnels, bridges, and new stations were abandoned. The situation improved for a short time in the early 1960s, but the chaos of the Cultural Revolution saw hundreds of thousands of Red Guards travelling for free at a time when management of stations was in disarray as different factions fought for control.[7]

Railways were not the only means of connecting cities. The total length of roads grew from 127,000 miles in 1952 to 876,000 in 1979, with provincial capitals often the focal points. Before 1949, there were few roads suitable for motorized transport in Qinghai, but by 1983, there were more than 15,000 km of roads, and Xining, the provincial capital, was connected to Lanzhou, Urumuqi, Chengdu, and Lhasa. The total length of roads in Xinjiang increased from 3,000 in 1949 to 22,000 in 1983,

[3] Chan, *Cities with Invisible Walls*, 37 41, 76 8. [4] Wu and Gaubatz, *Chinese City*, 79.
[5] Cao and Chu, *Dangdai Zhongguo de chengshi jianshe*, 37.
[6] He Yimin and Zhou Mingchang, 'The 156 Projects and New China's Industrial and Urban Development', in Zhang Xingxing, *Selected Essays on the History of Contemporary China* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 61 3, 67 8.
[7] Köll, *Railroads and the Transformation of China*, 234, 238 9, 241, 257 9, 260 3, 267 9, 273.



Map 7.1 Cities and their dominant industries in the Maoist era

while Kunming was also linked to Xishuangbanna on the border of Laos and Burma, and with Tibet via Sichuan.[8]

[8] Rawski, *Economic Growth in Pre war China*, 214; Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall*, 94 6, 98 101.

Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Cities in the Interior

Although many new cities were in west China, the political centre returned to Beijing, which also became a manufacturing centre as industrial output rose by thirteen times between 1949 and 1957. New coal fields were opened up to the west of the city, and there was a massive expansion of the steelworks, electronics, and chemical industries. The loser in this was the tertiary sector, as economic activity moved away from the consumption industries, while industrial growth harmed the urban environment. Drinking water was often polluted with industrial waste, and air pollution from coal burning and car use increased, as did other pollutants such as solid waste and noise.

All this growth meant a huge increase in the number of jobs, and in 1957, more than 1.2 million people worked in the city, up from less than half a million in 1949, a figure that grew to 3.1 million by 1980. There were large swings in employment with 700,000 added to the workforce during the GLF, many of whom were returned to the countryside soon afterwards. Beijing's population growth reflected political events, averaging just over 2 per cent a year between 1949 and 1990, slightly higher than Tianjin and Shanghai. From 4.14 million in 1949, the population grew by 3.18 million between 1949 and 1960, with natural growth and migration both high.

The following decade, the population grew by only 391,000 people, with the city losing people through migration in the first half of the 1960s, but gaining overall because of the increasing birth rate. There were more young men under the age of thirty, most of whom had at least a middle school education, although there were also a large number of unskilled workers.[9]

The pattern of industrialization and population movement in Tianjin is similar to that of Beijing. Although there were net gains to the city's population every year between 1951 and 1954, and then again from 1956 to 1960, the authorities were able to keep some control on the numbers. They faced a constant battle. Floods in 1957 quickly brought more than 200,000 refugees into the city. Although officials toured Tianjin's three railway stations to send people back to the countryside, as fast as one train left another arrived loaded with yet more refugees. Between 1951 and 1957, 780,000 people came to Tianjin to move in with family members or to search for work, and urban enterprises recruited an additional 409,000 workers from villages.

[9] Victor Sit, *Beijing: The Nature and Planning of a Chinese Capital City* (Chichester: Wiley, 1995), 115 17, 124, 145 51, 178 88.

Family ties allowed people to bypass the increasingly strict controls on labour movement, while large industrial enterprises such as the Daming Steel Mill recruited directly from the city's guesthouses. During the GLF, many migrants were given temporary urban residency, with 102,000 added in 1957, 232,000 in 1958, and 168,000 in 1959. They often worked in small workshops, rather than in Tianjin's large SOEs, and they were expelled from the city in the early 1960s, with more than 300,000 people also leaving during the Cultural Revolution.[10]

Further south, in 1949, Shanghai produced a fifth of the country's industrial output, and although this fell in 1977, the city was still producing 14 per cent of the total. Textiles, which made up more than 60 per cent of the city's industry in 1949, fell to less than 25 per cent in the 1960s, while the overall share of heavy industry rose from just over 13 per cent in 1949 to well over 50 per cent in 1976. Industrial growth was particularly rapid up until the GLF, and during the first FYP, profits and taxes from Shanghai acquired by the central government may have paid for more than 60 per cent of total industrial investment in the rest of China. At the same time, between 1950 and 1957, more than 250,000 workers were assigned jobs elsewhere in the country. Shanghai's population growth also followed national trends, with an increase from 5 million in 1949 to 7.2 million in 1957, while during the late 1960s and 1970s, the population fell to just over 6 million.[11]

Inland, Zhengzhou was declared a centre of industrial production, while Kaifeng was not, perhaps because its pre-war economy was considered feudal by PRC standards. The population of Zhengzhou increased by three times under the first FYP to 434,000, with unskilled labourers moving to the city from across Henan and skilled workers coming from Shanghai, Wuxi, and, in some cases, Manchuria. Part of the reason for the city's growth was the movement of the provincial capital from Kaifeng to Zhengzhou in 1954, which involved the relocation of some 40,000 officials and their families. The impact of this on Kaifeng was profound, as around 70,000 people left the city. Although it was designated a medium-sized industrial production city with a population of between 200,000 and 500,000, it was one of the slowest growing cities in this category.[12]

[10] Jeremy Brown, *City versus Countryside in Mao's China: Negotiating the Divide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 30 1, 37, 47 51, 55 8, 106.

[11] Christopher Howe, 'Industrialization under Conditions of Long Run Population Stability: Shanghai's Achievement and Prospect', in Christopher Howe, ed., *Shanghai: Revolution and Development in an Asian Metropolis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 157 82.

[12] Baker, 'City Limits on China's Central Plains', 311 15, 331 4, 338.

Third Front Urbanization

The Third Front was launched in 1964. The first stage concentrated on the southwestern provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou and the second focused on Hubei, Henan, Shaanxi, and northwest China. Investment in these regions was designed to create a viable fall-back position in a war against either the USA, which was then upping its involvement in Vietnam or the USSR, with whom relations had deteriorated. Third Front industrialization took up between a third and half of all national investment between 1965 and 1975. Although many projects were not completed and construction was sometimes poor, 1,800 large and medium-sized industrial enterprises were built. Many were located in the countryside, but they often relied on or supported existing urban industry.

For example, the Panzhihua iron and steel complex was constructed north of Kunming and relied on machinery factories near Chengdu for parts, so 1,000 miles of railway line was built to connect the two cities. Third Front industrialization also brought in much-needed expertise to the interior. Workers and managers from Changchun helped with the No. 2 Automobile Plant in Hubei, which in 1975, was producing large off-road-capable lorries. Probably the largest impact of Third Front industrialization was in the transport industry. More than 8,000 miles of railway were built, including ten inter-provincial lines, allowing transport of natural resources from the west to feed industries on the east coast.[13]

The expansion of the rail system during the 1960s also connected China's border cities more closely to the rest of the nation. As one of the eight cities targeted for development in the first FYP, Lanzhou saw its built area expanded from roughly 2 km square in 1949 to 1,100 km square. Population growth was gradual, many of the new arrivals Han migrants from the east. A similar phenomenon occurred in Urumuqi, where the Muslim population accounted for around 30 per cent of the total by 1980. In Hohhot, much of the development took place between the two old cities, where factories replaced the remaining city walls torn down in the 1950s. Likewise, in Kunming, the non-Han share of the population remained at just above 10 per cent, with many of them living in the outskirts of the city.[14]

[13] Barry Naughton, 'The Third Front: Defence Industrialization in the Chinese Interior', *China Quarterly*, no. 115 (September 1988): 351 86; Corvell Meyskens, 'Third Front Railroads and Industrial Modernity in Late Maoist China', *Twentieth Century China*, Vol. 40, no. 3 (October 2015): 241 8.

[14] Gaubatz, *Beyond the Great Wall*, 54, 69 70, 75 6, 83 4.

Urban Planning and Governance

Soviet-Inspired Urban Planning

Urban planning in China was subordinate to economic planning. Municipal governments had no control over land allocated to SOEs, military, educational, and other *danwei*, which You-Tien Hsing calls socialist land masters. Instead, municipal governments controlled urban planning, infrastructure, services, and some housing. This division created tension between government departments, led to poor implementation of urban plans, and created a cellular urban form in Chinese cities.

Old pre-revolutionary city centres often retained their commercial or administrative functions, normally with a new or enlarged central square acting as a monumental space to stage public spectacles. Surrounding these core areas were universities, government institutions, and cleaner factories, with larger heavy industry located in the suburbs or in satellite cities. Socialist land masters constructed *xiaoqu* (micro-district), an urban form copied from the Soviet Union. Common characteristics, some pictured in Figure 7.1, and outlined in the diagram in Figure 7.2 included walls, gates, and guardhouses, although most *xiaoqu* could be entered fairly easily. The largest *xiaoqu* had all the facilities one might expect to find in a small city, including hospitals, schools, sports stadiums, banks, and movie theatres, but even the smallest ones had restaurants, food markets, kindergartens, and bathhouses. Most residences were several storeys high and included dormitories for single workers, who were expected to eat and wash in communal kitchens and bathhouses. Apartments for families often came with kitchens and bathrooms, but because space was limited, several families often had to share.[15]

Planning *xiaoqu* was not without its problems. In 1953, work teams consisting of government officials and Soviet advisors were sent to cities to scout out the best locations for the 156 industrial projects that were the focus of state investment. In 1953, Zhao Shixiu, who worked in the State Planning Commission, went to Jilin with the Soviet advisors to choose the sites for three chemical factories. They were accompanied by representatives from the industrial, railways, transport, and health departments. In a hotel room, after a brief argument, they decided to

[15] You Tien Hsing, *The Great Urban Transformation: Politics of Land and Property in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 35; Duanfang Lu, *Remaking Chinese Urban Form: Modernity, Scarcity and Space, 1949 2000* (London: Routledge, 2006), 49 67, 92 3.

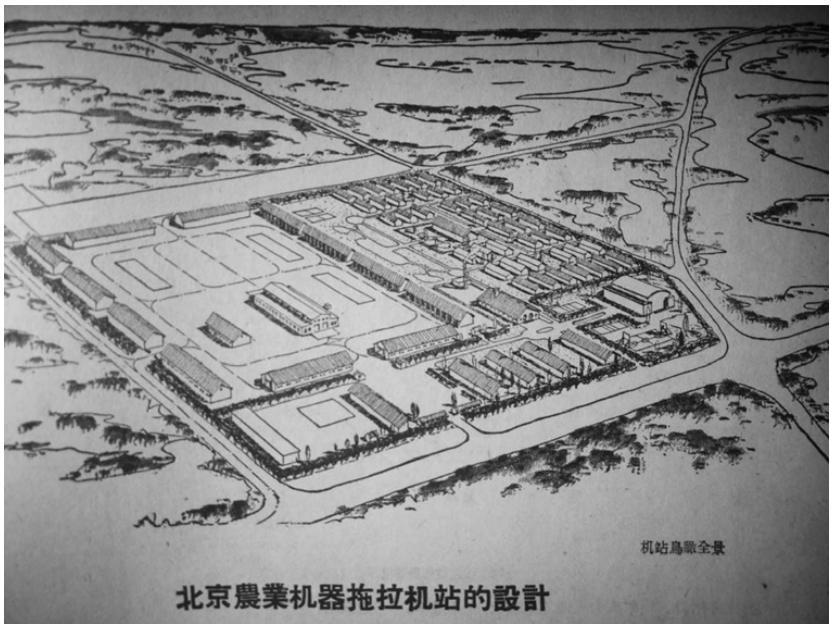
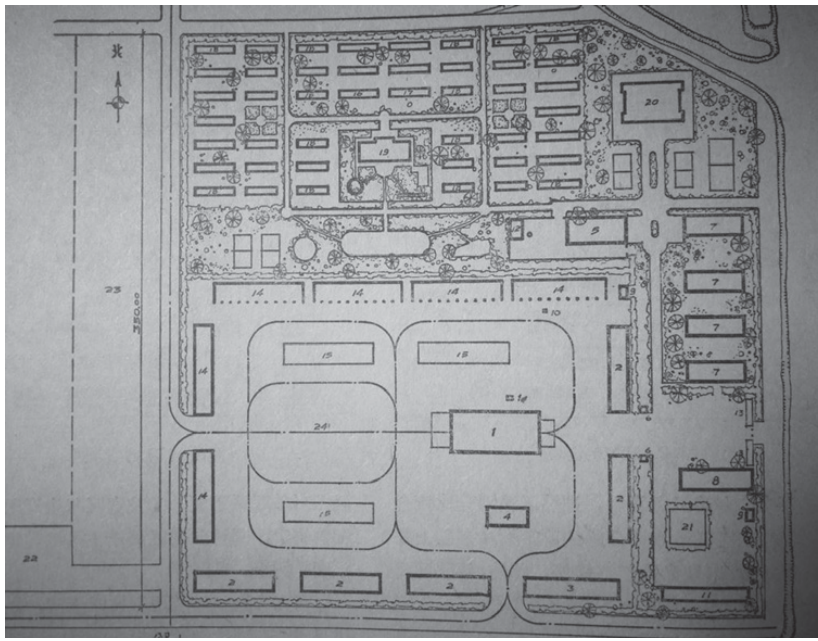


Figure 7.1 Beijing nongye jiqi tuolaji zhan de sheji (Beijing agricultural machinery tractor factory design), bird's eye view
Source: 建筑学报 *Jianzhu xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], Vol. 8 (1957), 47.

follow Soviet advice to place housing at least 800 m away from the factory for health reasons.[16]

In Anshan, urban plans produced in 1953 and 1956 with the help of Soviet advisors sought to zone the city, with industrial and residential districts separated to maintain the health of workers. However, in 1959, the municipal government was forced to acknowledge what had been common practice for years, and formally allowed work units to manage their own land. From the perspective of municipal officials, the most problematic *danwei* was the Anshan Steelworks (Angang), which was managed by the Ministry of Metallurgy in Beijing. Tension peaked in 1956 and 1957 when Angang chose northeastern Anshan as the site for

[16] 中国城市规划学会 Zhongguo chengshi guihua xuehui [Chinese Urban Planning Society], eds., 五十年回眸 新中国的城市规划 *Wushi nian huimou xin Zhongguo de chengshi guihua* [*Looking Back over Twenty Years Urban Planning in New China*] (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1999), 17.



Key to Figure 7.2

1 Repair factory
2 Tractor park
3 Combine harvester park
4 Material store
5 Canteen
6 Police station
7 Dormitory
8 Office
9 Toilet
10 Electricity station
11 Car park
12 Boiler room
13 Bicycle park
14 Agricultural tool store
15 Roof above agricultural tool store
16 Co-op
17 Bath and hairdressers
18 Housing
19 Nursery
20 Leisure centre
21 Weather station
22 Petrol store
23 Maintenance square
24 Reservoir

Figure 7.2 Beijing nongye jiqi tuolaji zhan de sheji (Beijing agricultural machinery tractor factory design), Figure 13
Source: 建筑学报 *Jianzhu xuebao* [*Architectural Journal*], Vol. 8 (1957), 52.

two new factories, which was fiercely opposed by municipal officials, who argued that pollution would affect neighbouring residents. The debate centred around whether steel making or protecting people's health was better for building socialism, and industrial production won the day. An

official history of the city published in 1992 did acknowledge, however, that the decision to build the factories within the city limits had been detrimental to the health of people living nearby.[17]

Outside *xiaoqu*, municipal governments produced urban master plans under the guidance of Soviet advisors, and by the end of 1959, master plans had been drawn up for 180 cities, with more detailed plans for 1,400 towns and 2,000 suburban neighbourhoods.[18] Beijing exemplifies what the CCP was trying to achieve in creating socialist cities. Peng Zhen, a leading party organizer in northeast China, was appointed to head up the Beijing municipal government, but most of the major decisions were taken by top party leaders.

The Capital City Planning Commission was composed of government officials, Soviet advisors, and Chinese experts such as architect Liang Sicheng and urban planner Chen Zhanxiang. Chen had studied in England with Patrick Abercrombie, who drew up the 1944 Greater London plan that enshrined the idea of a green belt around the city. The resulting Liang-Chen proposal drew on wartime Japanese plans for Beijing and recommended that the administrative centre of government should be built in the western suburbs, and that the historical fabric of Beijing should be preserved, with the city wall becoming a public park. Soviet advisors disagreed, while Mao saw the city wall as a vestige of feudalism, and so it was torn down. By 1965, when some of the last sections of the inner wall went during the construction of the subway system, only a few gates remained.

The most dramatic transformation of the centre of Beijing occurred during the GLF. To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, ten grand projects were completed in record time. These included the Great Hall of the People, the Museum of Chinese History and the Revolution, and the Beijing Railway Station. As was now the norm, their designs incorporated modernism, classical elements from the Beaux-Arts school of architecture, and big-hat roofs to proclaim their Chinese-ness. At the same time, Tiananmen Square was expanded to its current size, a project which took 1 million workers ten months to complete. Mao wanted the square to be the largest such space in the world, and even now crowds of up to half a million people gather to watch the military

[17] Koji Hirata, 'Steel Metropolis: Industrial Manchuria and the Making of Chinese Socialism, 1916 1964' (PhD Thesis: Stanford University, 2018), 244 7, 249 53.
[18] Yichun Xie and Frank J. Costa, 'Urban Planning in Socialist China: Theory and Practice', in *Cities*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (May 1993), 103.

parades that celebrate the founding of the PRC on 1 October every year.

Elsewhere in Beijing, temples and *huiguan* lodges were taken over by government departments, and the Haidian district to the northwest became the science and technology area, with Beijing and Qinghua Universities both located there.[19]

Variation in Urban Form across China

Being the capital of China, Beijing was the physical manifestation of CCP power. Elsewhere, cities were sometimes planned very differently. In 1960, the Urban Design Institute published its annual *Urban Planning Yearly Work Report*. Over the year, forty plans for large and medium-sized cities, nine plans for scenic cities and sites of commemoration, five regional plans, and plans for rural communes had all been submitted.[20] The work report discussed detailed plans of Guiyang, Fuzhou, Kunming, Qingdao, and Suzhou. In all cities, planning emphasized the importance of supporting industrial development, improving transport systems, provision of clean water, treatment of sewage, and other public utilities. Recommendations focused on moving heavy-polluting industries to suburbs or satellite towns, building or improving the conditions of housing districts, and increasing the amount of green space. However, plans also reflected geographical, historical, and other local conditions.

The report on Suzhou is the most detailed in the whole work report, perhaps reflecting the city's ability to attract planners from local universities, particularly Tongji University in Shanghai, which along with Qinghua University in Beijing was home to the country's most important urban planning school. Suzhou was not suitable for the development of heavy industry, because historically it had been a centre of weaving and silk production and contained many old monuments and parks.

The report argued that the city should focus on developing its scenic areas, and since its older industries were relatively non-polluting, supporting them would not harm the urban environment or the health of its population. Indeed, just as Suzhou had become a tourist destination for Shanghai's rich before 1949, it should now be preserved as a place that workers should visit for a holiday. Planners recommended many houses for demolition, although some straw shacks along the river should be kept

[19] Li, Dray Novey, and Kong, *Beijing*, 173 86.

[20] 城市设计院*Chengshi Shejiyuan* [Urban Design Department], eds., 城市规划工作年报 *Chengshi guihua gongzuo nianbao* [*Urban Planning Yearly Work Report*] (1959), 前言 *Qianyan* (Preface).

temporarily while new homes were built. Interestingly, planners did not recommend simply demolishing all the old housing, since this was part of Suzhou's historical character. Instead, where suitable they advised removing walls and tiles to improve air flow and allow more light into the homes. Moving into the public areas of the city, a detailed plan for Renmin Road (People's Road), which ran from north to south, was produced. The section of the road leading up to North Temple Pagoda shown in Figure 7.3 had already been widened and straightened, and it was to be split into sections for cars, bicycles, and other slower vehicles, with trees planted on the roadside.[21]

Elsewhere, Kunming's reputation as the 'Spring City' was reflected in its urban plan. Daguan Road ran along a river linking Lake Dian with the city centre and Daguanlou Park. With the expected increase in visitors to the city, it was necessary to widen the road, remove factories, improve and enlarge buildings, and create parks every few hundred metres. In the long term, cultural and artistic halls, a department store, and a quay for tourists on the river were planned. Kunming was not the only city to plan for an increase in visitors. In Guiyang, Zhonghua Road was the main commercial thoroughfare, lined with shops selling products that reflected the multi-ethnic character of the city. Theatres, a department store, hotels, and a hospital had been constructed since 1949, but further improvements were required since the street was congested. It should be widened, and eight markets should be built across the city to provide people with their daily necessities and to reduce the congestion in the centre.[22]

The 1960s saw the promotion of the northeastern oil city of Daqing as a new model of urban development, different from that in the USSR. The souring of relations between the two countries in the late 1950s, in part because of the new Soviet leader Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin, meant that micro-districts were no longer quite as fashionable as they had been in China. Oil was discovered in Daqing in 1959, and with the famine caused by the GLF in full swing, there was no shortage of workers. During the day, they drilled for oil, and at night, they constructed their own temporary housing, which, following local traditions, used mud and hay as building materials around timber supports. Within less than six months, enough housing had been constructed for more than 40,000 workers.

This became the basis for a dispersed settlement of villages built next to oil extraction facilities or oil. Roads linked the settlements, which became focused on three small towns where there were hospitals, schools, and

[21] Ibid., 95 112. [22] Ibid., 53 4, 74 5.

shops. In 1966, a series of articles praised Daqing as a model for Chinese socialist construction since it was economical, combined agricultural and industrial production, and created a largely self-sustaining community. The Daqing model influenced planned urban development under the third FYP, and Third Front cities such as Panzhihua in south Sichuan adapted housing models from Daqing to local conditions.[23]

Evolution of Maoist Urban Governance

When the CCP took over Chinese cities, although there had been some reconstruction before 1949, many of them were in a terrible state. Large parts remained in ruins, and residents and refugees eked out a precarious existence in damaged homes or straw shacks. There was often no running water, wells and drains were blocked, and roads were riddled with potholes. Few factories were working to their full capacity as shortage of raw materials, problems with electricity supply, and poor transport connections stood in the way of production.

Even after cities had been taken over, forces hostile to the CCP, whether Guomindang soldiers, local bandits, or criminal gangs remained. Many cities had been poorly managed for years, and newly arrived Communist cadres lacked experience and there were far too few of them. In this situation, the CCP turned to the army, and Military Affairs Control Commissions were set up in cities as they fell to the Communists in the civil war. They had instructions to keep employing factory managers and Nationalist government personnel to repair urban infrastructure and prevent migration from the countryside. Meanwhile, the army worked with the police to round up counter-revolutionaries, cadres were recruited, and if necessary trained in urban management, and the work of taking over factories began.[24]

In Xuzhou, which had been destroyed by the Japanese in 1938 and then during the civil war ten years later, the Military Affairs Control Commission met in early December 1948. According to reports, more than 5,000 demobilized enemy soldiers, 1,000 prisoners of war, and 1,000 soldiers were still actively resisting the new government. Faced with this situation, martial law was quickly imposed, and policemen

[23] Hou Li, *Building for Oil: Daqing and the Formation of the Chinese Socialist State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2018), 51 3, 112 13, 123 5, 130 3.

[24] 李格 Li Ge, '新中国成立前后的城市军事管制 Xin Zhongguo chengli qianhou de cheng shi junshi guanzhi [Urban Military Control around the Founding of New China]', 当代中国史研究 *Dangdai Zhongguo shi yanjiu* [*Contemporary China History Studies*], no. 5 (2010), 11 19.

were recruited to patrol the city. Xuzhou was awash with refugees, and local cadres were concerned that some might be enemy combatants.[25]

From these inauspicious beginnings, the city recovered. Writing in mid-1950, the mayor noted that although some had starved to death, 40,000 people had found work, and many of them had received grain in exchange. Seventy thousand refugees had been returned home, leaving just 10,000 in the city. In the previous few months, there had been more than 1,000 arrests for crimes including theft and drug dealing. Twelve light machine guns, two tommy guns, and forty rifles and pistols had been confiscated, along with thousands of bullets and six boxes of hand grenades.[26] Even allowing for the fact that the new mayor may have been exaggerating his achievements for propaganda purposes, it is clear that in Xuzhou, things improved quickly.

Elsewhere the CCP faced a different situation. In Shanghai as in many other cities, Communist agents had infiltrated the police force and key industries, and it was the police who were key to successful urban take-over. Renamed the Public Security Bureau (PSB) in June 1949, they were given the task of maintaining social order, and they began to register people according to household. Although residents' committees were not established until 1954, by December 1951, nearly 25,000 people had joined lane residents' committees, many of them voluntarily. They joined in political movements, such as the campaign to repress counter-revolutionaries, during which material was collected on 40,000 individuals, many of whom were detained. Meanwhile, the PSB removed many beggars and prostitutes from the streets and took steps to reduce violent crime by providing work for refugees flooding into the city.[27]

Down the coast in Hangzhou, the Communists took the city with little bloodshed in May 1949. By now, the CCP was well aware of the importance of discipline among soldiers and cadres after looting in northwest China. A combination of good order among People's Liberation Army

[25] 冯克玉 Feng Keyu, '傅秋涛与徐州市军管会的工作 Fu Qiutao yu Xuzhou shi junguanhui de gongzuo [Fu Qiutao and the Work of Xuzhou City Military Control Commission], in 中国人民政治协商会议江苏省徐州市委员会文史委员会 Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xie shang huiyi Jiangsu sheng Xuzhou shi weiyuanhui wenshi weiyuanhui [China People's Political Consultative Committee Jiangsu Province Xuzhou Committee Historical and Cultural Materials Committee, eds., 徐州文史资料第十九辑 *Xuzhou wenshi ziliao di shijiu ji* [*Xuzhou Historical and Cultural Materials*], Vol. 19 (1999), 50 1.

[26] '张光中市长作市政工作及今后任务报告 Zhang Guangzhong shizhang zuo shizheng gongzuo ji jinhou renwu baogao [Report of the Urban Administration Work That Mayor Zhang Guangzhong Has Done and Current and Future Responsibilities]', 徐州市政 *Xuzhou shizheng* (September 1950), 1 7.

[27] Frederic Wakeman Jr, '"Cleanup": The New Order in Shanghai', in Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 21 58.

(PLA) soldiers, rapid restoration of urban services, and propaganda won hearts and minds. The Military Affairs Control Commission set up sixteen new departments to manage urban infrastructure, housing, and the economy, and to maintain security. Nationalist government employees, intellectuals, and ordinary workers in the government were subject to a period of political study to ascertain their loyalty to the new regime, and some were kept on. Although Hangzhou was in better shape than Xuzhou, more than 18,000 refugees were in the city, and thousands of workers roamed the streets, some eating rubbish as the city's silk looms stood idle. The Wufeng Silk Factory had sixty-four looms and was one of the largest in the city. Cai Jingxian of the PLA was sent in to get the factory up and running again, and by the end of 1949, with government orders from newly formed SOEs coming in, it was making a profit.[28]

As civilian government replaced military management, the CCP turned to tried and tested systems of governance developed in the countryside. Grassroots organizations extended the bureaucracy down to the lowest levels of urban society, and political campaigns helped ensure their loyalty to the regime. There were three types of campaigns: those directed at enemies of the state, those designed to change behaviour such as campaigns directed against crime, prostitution, or drugs, and campaigns that mobilized specific groups to perform tasks such as cleaning the city, saving resources, or increasing production.

The Campaign to Supress Counterrevolution targeted members of the Nationalist Party, criminal gangs, secret societies, and religious cults. Suspects were denounced by large crowds at mass rallies, and trials were broadcast over loudspeaker or the radio. In total, 1.2 million were arrested and more than 700,000 executed, and as was the case throughout the Maoist era, many innocent people went to labour camps or lost their lives. The party also worked to extend control over urban organizations. Independent unions were replaced by the All China Federation of Trade Unions.

In 1951, staff members in universities were subject to thought reform aimed at purging them of foreign, particularly US influence, understandable given that China was then fighting the United States in the Korean War. A key part of the transformation of Chinese cities was the takeover of private industry. After 1949, the share of industrial output in the private sector shrank as firms increasingly depended on state contracts. However, the Three and Five Antis Campaigns launched in 1952 spelled the death knell for the sector. They targeted abuses of power by urban cadres, tax

[28] James Z. Gao, *The Communist Takeover of Hangzhou: The Transformation of City and Cadre 1949 1954* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 70 91.

evasion, bribery, cheating on government contracts, and stealing state assets. Work teams investigated the accounts and business practices of private firms and interrogated owners. Huge fines or claims for unpaid tax forced business owners to voluntarily hand over their businesses to the state.[29]

In Hangzhou, the Three Antis Campaign began on 12 December 1951. The highest-ranking cadre arrested was Feng Mengdong, the head of the Department of Administration. A poor peasant, Feng had joined the party in his teens and fought the Japanese during the war. On arrival in Hangzhou, he had risen through the ranks, but was also drawn to the delights of urban life, particularly local opera. This was to prove his undoing as he was accused of using money to fund an opera troupe.

The Five Antis Campaign was launched in Hangzhou on 2 February 1952. The city had 16,561 industrial and commercial firms, and it was estimated that more than 3,000 small shopkeepers and peddlers had not yet registered. Work teams were formed to audit the accounts of major private enterprises, and 50,000 letters were received denouncing colleagues and employers. Then, following guidelines from Beijing, the city government divided businesses in Hangzhou into law-abiding, semi-law-abiding, and law-breaking businesses depending on how much income was illegally obtained. Together the first and second categories accounted for more than 95 per cent of all businesses in the city, and this meant that most businessmen had to return illegal income to the state.[30]

The Chinese Communist Party state apparatus developed as a series of committees reaching from the central government in Beijing right down to the factory floor and the street. Almost all the major positions of power, including city mayors, heads of large SOEs, university professors, teachers, and other cultural institutions were filled by party members. Although there were frequent disagreements and cadres interpreted and implemented policy differently, the CCP was able to govern cities effectively. Urban districts were subdivided multiple times down to residents' committees composed of several hundred households and residents' small groups composed of fewer still. Members of larger committees were paid by the CCP, and those on smaller committees were volunteers. They were responsible for keeping order, putting up propaganda posters, running campaigns, and innumerable other party and government activities. The Ministry of Public Security was the hidden side of this system.

[29] Andrew Walder, *China under Mao: A Revolution Derailed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 62, 65 81.
[30] Gao, *Communist Takeover of Hangzhou*, 159 61, 164 72.

For example, in the 1950s, one third of all those working in universities worked for the Ministry of Public Security, and the national railway system employed 10,000 operatives.[31]

Much of the CCP's control of the urban population occurred within *danwei*, and by 1957, more than 90 per cent of people living in cities belonged to a work unit. During the first months of the new government, enterprises were given the dual role of providing social welfare for their workers and mobilizing them to participate in political campaigns and to achieve ever greater feats of production. As the CCP launched its flagship industrial projects during the first FYP, investment was allocated for worker housing, schools, restaurants, and other facilities. The development of the Unified Purchasing System after 1953 forced peasants to sell grain at set prices, but in guaranteeing the supply of grain to the cities the CCP made it so that workers could only access it through their *danwei*.

Danwei worked with the PSB to build up a personnel file on everyone in their employment. This contained political as well as biographical information, which formed the basis of political monitoring or harassment during campaigns, and dictated many aspects of life, such as who someone could marry or whether their children could go to university. *Danwei* were therefore vital to effective CCP governance of urban areas, and cadres within them had great power. It was important for workers to cultivate good relationships with them since this could ensure access to better housing, food, travel permits, and other luxuries. On the other hand, cadres were also agents of the state, as many workers found out when they were subject to struggle sessions during political campaigns.[32]

As one of the largest industrial enterprises in China, Anshan Steel Works was the site of many such campaigns. During the Three and Five Antis Campaigns, all workers in Angang were instructed to confess their personal history since childhood and report anonymously on their colleagues' corrupt behaviour. Outside of campaigns, there were regular political study sessions on subjects like the working class and the CCP, and workers listened to the lectures of party cadres in factory canteens, slogans urging them to work harder and love Mao hanging from the walls. Angang employees were entitled to good medical care, recreational facilities, and access to consumer goods, and CCP cadres had other perks such as access to Japanese doctors and better nursery facilities for their children.

[31] Walder, *China under Mao*, 101 5.
[32] David Bray, *Social Space and Governance in Urban China: The Danwei System from Origins to Reform* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 95 100, 110 21.

For all that Angang mobilized, monitored, and took care of its employees, the *danwei* was not without its moments of protest. During the Hundred Flowers Campaign in 1956, during which people were encouraged to criticize policy making, engineers commented on cadre privileges. In letters to the local newspaper, engineer Fei complained that cadres had a higher chance of getting promoted than those who were not in the party, engineer Hu criticized Angang for relying on Soviet technology, and engineer Ding highlighted the inefficiencies of the planned economy. For many, such criticisms were to come back to haunt them in the Anti-Rightist Campaign the following year aimed at intellectuals alleged to have anti-revolutionary sympathies.[33]

During the Cultural Revolution, political status became the primary factor that determined whether an individual was subject to struggle sessions. However, the situation in most cities was so fluid and chaotic that it was hard to work out who to be allegiant to. In the summer of 1966, university and high school students in Beijing formed Red Guard groups and began to attack teachers and other members of the so-called bourgeois elite. They targeted the Four Olds – old customs, old culture, old habits, and old ideas – before turning their attention to CCP cadres. Different groups of Red Guards, all claiming to be more loyal to the revolution than other groups, roamed the streets, often attacking each other.

In January 1967, an alliance of students and workers seized power from the Shanghai municipal government. Revolutionary committees composed of soldiers, rebel mass organizations, and some revolutionary cadres seized power in the provinces of Guizhou, Heilongjiang, Shandong, and Shanxi. Faced with chaos, it was up to the PLA to take over many of the functions of government. By the summer of 1969, the party organization had been revived at all levels and Red Guard groups had been disbanded. The army remained in tight control of government organizations, and regular purges took place of people suspected of counter-revolutionary activity.

The death of Lin Biao in 1971, after what may have been an attempted coup against Mao, saw the withdrawal of the army from factories, government departments, and university campuses. However, as the party struggled to re-establish the bureaucracy, a black market and underground economy flourished to provide the goods and services that were unavailable elsewhere. Meanwhile, at the top of the party, a factional struggle for power was underway between the left under Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and old cadres such as Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai, who

[33] Koji Hirata, *Steel Metropolis*, 295, 297 300, 209 313, 330 44.

wanted to rein in the Cultural Revolution. It finally ended with the death of Mao himself in September 1976, the arrest soon after of the leftist faction, and the accession of Mao's chosen successor, Hua Guofen, although he was replaced soon after with Deng Xiaoping.[34]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

Urban Life inside and outside the Danwei

During the Maoist era, political stance as well as wealth, occupation, or gender was just as important in determining an individual's urban experience. Chinese Communist Party cadres were the new Chinese elite, and the roughly 4.5 million people who had joined the party before 1949 had the status of revolutionary cadre. By 1965, the CCP comprised nearly 20 million people recruited from all walks of life. Nearly 20 per cent of SOE employees, more than 60 per cent of government officials, and more than 30 per cent of workers in hospitals and universities were party members. All party members were ranked, and as people rose through the ranks, they had access to a more comfortable standard of living which included private cars, domestic travel, larger apartments, better food, a wider range of consumer goods, and, for some, access to internal government reports and foreign books and movies.[35]

In Anshan, Communist cadres lived in nice apartments in the leafy residential area of Taiding, which the Japanese had built for managers of the steelworks. Angang appropriated state funds to build new apartments there, and each came equipped with an office and a living room, as well as rooms for children and servants. The complex had a swimming pool, dance hall, movie theatre, kindergarten, and department store, where wives of the cadres shopped when they were not playing mah-jong or watching films.[36]

The provision of social welfare through the *danwei* redefined social divisions in urban society, and it is often referred to as the iron rice bowl. 'Its greatest strength was that it provided a comprehensive array of benefits; retirement pensions, health insurance, disability benefits, and paid maternity leave were among the most important. The greatest weakness of the new program was its limited coverage, since only permanent employees of large factories and other big employers were eligible for the program.'[37]

[34] Felix Wemhauer, *A Social History of Maoist China: Conflict and Change, 1949 1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 198 205, 234 41.
[35] Walder, *China under Mao*, 100 3, 117 19, 279 80.
[36] Koji Hirata, *Steel Metropolis*, 262 3.
[37] Nara Dillon, *Radical Inequalities: China's Revolutionary Welfare State in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2015), 2.

The number of people employed in SOEs rose from 8 million to 24 million from 1952 to 1957, and the number employed in collectively owned enterprises, who tended to have fewer benefits, rose from 230,000 to 6.5 million over the same period. The number of women in the urban workforce also increased dramatically, especially during the GLF, growing from 3.2 million in 1957 to 8.4 million in 1959. During this period, the state experimented with urban communes, where the majority of workers were also women.

However, the communes' failure and the reduction in the urban workforce in the early 1960s hit women particularly badly. More than 1 million women working in urban communes lost their jobs and the number of women working in SOEs fell from a peak of 10 million in 1960 to 6.5 million in 1963. During this period, the number of people working in SOEs fell from 59 million to 43 million, and this meant that when the economy picked up again, there was a shortage of labour, something the government solved by allowing an increase in temporary workers, the number of which reached around 3 million on the eve of the Cultural Revolution.[38]

For millions of people in cities, their urban life was their *danwei*. Workers were assigned jobs on leaving school or university, and the vast majority stayed in one *danwei* for their whole career. Zhuang Xiaoping is the pseudonym of Zhang Dapeng, whose autobiography of life growing up in Maoist China was first published in 2002. Like millions of other university students, he awaited his work assignment with trepidation, and he was right to be worried.

> Xiaoping was assigned to Lanzhou, in distant Gansu Province. That factory was one he and his classmates had gone to for practical work experience. He never forgot the time when that factory held a general meeting. While the factory manager was giving a speech, the party committee secretary, a military man with his tunic draped over his shoulders, paced up and down on the stage with such arrogance. He also remembered the big crack in the dormitory wall, through which he could look out over the surrounding countryside. The hardest of all for him to forget were those sallow faces and skinny bodies, those listless eyes, the coarse skin, those benumbed spirits of the torpid and utterly impoverished workers.[39]

Xiaoping refused his work assignment, choosing instead to live on the money his parents sent him from Hong Kong. He was eventually assigned work in an aluminium factory in Shanghai but, unlike other workers, he

[38] Wemhauer, *A Social History of Maoist China*, 24 5, 92 3, 132 4, 170 1.
[39] Zhang Da Peng (George A. Fowler trans.), *Life under Mao Zedong's Rule* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 200.

did not eat from the iron rice bowl. Benefits varied across the country but included housing, healthcare, and children's education. *Danwei* also provided food in a communal dining hall, shared bathing facilities, and entertainment in the form of films, plays, and sports. When consumer goods such as bicycles or watches were available, these might be distributed to favoured employees, and workers often gave presents at Chinese New Year or National Day or the mid-autumn festival to those in the *danwei* in charge of distribution of housing or other goods.[40]

Most *danwei* fell short of the ideal in one way or another. Housing for Angang workers was hastily constructed in the face of mass migration from the countryside. Most lived in crowded conditions with families sharing apartments, and it was not uncommon for six or seven people to sleep in the same bed. Of the 35,400 people living in dormitories owned by Angang, 12,800 shared a single-family apartment with another family, and many petty disputes occurred over use of water, electricity, and cooking equipment.[41] There were also differences in quality of life between city and industry and by gender. In Shanghai, silk weavers, who were invariably men, enjoyed some of the best benefits the country could offer, while their female counterparts in silk filatures in Wuxi endured harsh conditions and discrimination.

When looking at nursery provision in the early 1950s, the difference between the two cities is stark. By October 1952, Shanghai had 147 nurseries with places for more than 10,000 children, which provided opportunities for more women to work. By contrast, Wuxi had only twenty-five nurseries in the city, although seventeen of these were in silk filatures, where there were also facilities for breastfeeding. The situation in Wuxi was the norm for Chinese cities, and this meant that there was never adequate childcare for the majority of the thousands of women workers across the country. Some certainly found it easier to juggle the demands of family and work than women before 1949, but even those in well-resourced *danwei* faced problems as they looked to make independent lives away from the home.[42]

In a society where wages were kept low and where there was not much to buy in the shops anyway, it became important to cultivate relationships. As Xiaoping notes: 'Everyone made use of what little power he or she had in exchange for some other requirement. There was also the type of person who emerged in response to the times who knew people who

[40] Walder, *China under Mao*, 91–7. [41] Koji Hirata, *Steel Metropolis*, 279–80.
[42] Robert Cliver, 'Second Class Workers: Gender, Industry, and Locality in Workers' Welfare Provision in Revolutionary China', in Toby Lincoln and Xu Tao, eds., *The Habitable City in China: Urban History in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), 115–16, 128–30.

sold meat in the food markets, bowls in the porcelain shops, cloth in fabric shops, and who drove trucks in the factories.'[43] Xiaoping remembers how one day a worker named Zhu came to the electricians' section of the aluminium factory where he was working, complaining that his lightbulb had blown out, and Xiaoping gave him a whole box to take home. A few days later, Zhu returned.

'These are pine nut paste sesame cakes from Mudu Town, near Suzhou. My daughter works in a food shop where normally this goes for four yuan. Since it's a clearance item now, a five ounce grain coupon is going for two yuan! I've bought you a box. Do you want 'em?' Mudu Town's pine nut paste sesame cakes were famous sweets, and something Xiaoping loved to eat. These were essentially unobtainable 'outside'. ... After Master Zhu had left, it suddenly occurred to Xiaoping that the fellow had come to 'repay his debt'. Hadn't he given him four new lightbulbs that day?[44]

Party officials and SOE workers were not the only privileged people in Maoist cities. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly people who had fared well under the old regime were able to retain some of their wealth and influence, at least until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. During the early 1950s, factory owners were allowed to keep operating, and while they were attacked during the Five-Anti Campaign, their assets were not confiscated as their businesses were nationalized. Instead, the state paid them 5 per cent of the value of their businesses for ten years, and many stayed on as employees. More than 800,000 people received these payments nationwide. Shanghai had 250,000 private business people in 1956, who together received 10 per cent of all fixed interest paid out to business owners nationally. Although the number declined, in 1964, the city still had more than 80,000 people receiving payments, with a few amounting to more than 1,000 yuan a month, well over ten times the average pay. Until the Cultural Revolution broke out, many of these people kept their villas, cars, servants, and trips to the city's restaurants and tea shops.[45] They were even able to hold dance parties. Zhuang Xiaoping was invited to attend one of these at the house of his old school friend Liu Hexiang, who is described as a 'princeling' because of his family's wealth.

A crystal chandelier hanging from the ceiling was all alight, as were wall lamps that illuminated each of the beautiful paintings mounted on the walls ... There were quite a few female guests as well. They had all arrived wearing overcoats, which

[43] Zhang, *Life under Mao Zedong's Rule*, 463. [44] Ibid., 464 5.
[45] Lu Hanchao, 'Bourgeois Comfort under a Proletarian Dictatorship: Home Life of Chinese Capitalists before the Cultural Revolution', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (Fall 2018), 75, 78 84.

they took off upon entering the house. Underneath, most of them wore evening gowns, and some of these were even in the low cut and bare shoulder style. They were heavily made up and wore the latest fashion in the sharp toed high heeling shoes ... Now all the furniture had been moved away, and chairs were placed along the walls, and between each of them were little tea tables, on which were chocolates, cakes, and other kinds of snacks ... A melody with a graceful rhythm was being played and already there were three or four couples dancing smartly and elegantly. Xiaoping almost couldn't believe his own eyes or ears. This was a surreal world, not socialist Shanghai.[46]

It couldn't last of course, something Xiaoping knew in his heart, since he attended no more dance parties. Indeed Liu Hexiang and the other princelings found themselves under attack during the Cultural Revolution, when their houses were raided.

While urban life for some was relatively comfortable, millions still lived in real poverty. In Shanghai, the boss of the aluminium factory where Xiaoping worked was the third generation of his family to live in a house in one of the city's shanty towns, and he preferred that over a *danwei*-provided house since he could claim ownership. One day, Xiaoping went round for dinner.

They crossed an egg gravel road and entered a small muddy alley in a spiderweb like network of the shanty town area. In some places they had to squeeze sideways to get through ... After about ten minutes, they reached Factory Head Wang's home ... Upon entering, Xiaoping saw in the corner of the room a horse bucket that was probably already filled to the brim with human waste and would stay there waiting to be dumped the next morning ... The total area of this structure didn't exceed sixty five feet and was divided into an inner and outer room. In the outer room was a square table that almost butted right up against the door. It was probably where the entire family ate. On two sides were several round fold up stools. At the doorway was a coal briquette stove. The inner room mostly held a bed and was the master bedroom. And at the height of a standing person were two little garrets made of wooden slats. A wooden ladder rested against the wall, probably intended for going up and coming down from the garrets. Xiaoping guessed that upstairs was where the daughter, son, and the factory head's old mother slept.[47]

Many houses in Beijing were similarly small and dark. Bei Dao, who worked as a concrete mixer and blacksmith before becoming a famous poet, returned to the city after thirteen years away in 2001, and was shocked by the change.

When I was a child, nights in Beijing were dark, pitch dark, a darkness a hun dredfold darker than today. So, for instance, Zheng Fanglong lived next door to my family in a two room residence with only three fluorescent lights ... Back then

[46] Zhang, *Life under Mao Zedong's Rule*, 228 9. [47] Ibid., 409 10.

streetlamps in Beijing were scarce; many hutong alleys and lanes didn't have a single one, and even if there were some lamps each one was separated by thirty to fifty meters of darkness and only illuminated the small area immediately below it . . . As streetlamps were scarce, one needed to provide another light source to bike at night. Toward the end of the fifties there were still bicyclists who used paper lanterns . . . Most used a kind of square flashlight that was strapped to the handlebars. The next grade up was a dynamo powered light that generated electricity at the spinning hub. If the bicycle's speed was uneven, the light flickered on and off, a visible part of Beijing's nightscape.[48]

Political Campaigns in Cities

The highly politicized nature of Maoist society meant that no one from the highest-ranking member of the CCP to the poorest worker or peasant was immune from having to write a self-criticism, suffer at a struggle session, or in some cases disappear into one of China's labour camps. Urban citizens were assigned class categories. 'Red' included revolutionary or proletarian households, then there were the 'ordinary' people, and finally 'black' groups such as reactionaries or former members of the bourgeoisie. Such categories were often ambiguous, since family fortunes could change suddenly and drastically in the turbulent years before 1949.

Categories were also inherited through the male line, which meant that if someone's father had fought with the Nationalists, this cast aspersions on their political status, even if their mother had an unblemished record. Political categories were taken into consideration in promotion, but in the education system, despite attempts to support people with a 'red' class background, the meritocratic testing system favoured children whose parents had the economic and cultural capital to educate them. Given that most party members were recruited through the Communist Youth League, this meant that it was far more common than might be expected, at least until the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, for professionals such as doctors, lawyers, urban planners, and teachers not to be party members, although this did not mean that political allegiance and behaviour was not important.[49]

For those in the 'black' category, life was often tense. In the 1970s, what has become known as scar literature began to examine the impact of the Maoist era on China's people. Although writers stopped short of blaming the Communist system in China and focused on the actions

[48] Bei Dao, 'City Gate Opened Up', in Huang Yunte, ed., *The Big Red Book of Modern Chinese Literature: Writings from the Mainland in the Long Twentieth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2016), 348 50.

[49] Walder, *China under Mao*, 109 20.

of individuals or groups deemed to have taken the wrong path, much that was previously hidden came to light. Writers have described life in China's labour camps, told stories of Red Guards killing each other, and in parts of Guangxi even resorting to cannibalism as an expression of the ultimate triumph over one's class enemy.[50] This literature, particularly when it explores the Cultural Revolution, looks at life in cities, but like that life itself, it is wrapped up in the new political categories of China, and so, unlike the work of Lao She, Mao Dun, or Mu Shiying, should not be classified as urban literature. Zhang Depeng's autobiography is also not a work of urban literature, but Zhang grew up in cities in China and suffered from a bad class label, and so his story is representative of millions of other people across the country.

Xiaoping's political problems began at a study session at university at which students were asked to describe their experiences of the campaign to produce steel during the Great Leap Forward.

> He mentioned the two tiny crucible furnaces at his high school, the crucibles that couldn't smelt iron and had only smelted lump after lump of it. He felt that the iron they smelted was definitely not up to the quality standard . . . It seemed that they had experienced some problems and he recounted that in order to make iron, Young Wang's trees, which were hundreds of years old, had been cut down, which seemed a pity . . . Xiaoping felt a sudden fright shoot through him and was so afraid that he abruptly stopped mid sentence in his flowing speech.[51]

Although Xiaoping concluded his recollection by praising the effort of steel making, the damage was done. Some days later, at another meeting he revised his assessment of the GLF.

> Previously I felt that the quality of the iron we smelted in high school may not have been high, but I didn't realize that under difficult circumstances, our schoolmates and teachers, not having any technology or materials, and by relying on revolu tionary fervour, built iron smelting furnaces and smelted iron. This by itself was an amazing achievement.[52]

A few days later, Chen, the secretary of the CCP branch in the university, had a private word with Xiaoping about his father, who had been a businessman and had taken his wife and other children to Hong Kong in the early years of the new regime. Xiaoping's family background was coming back to haunt him, and at the next political meeting, he was called to the front of the class where he was forced to listen to his classmates' criticisms in a political struggle session. These sessions continued for

[50] Perry Link, 'Introduction', in Chen Ruoxi (Nancy Ing and Howard Goldblatt trans.), *The Execution of Mayor Yin and Other Stories from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), xi xxi.
[51] Zhang, *Life under Mao Zedong's Rule*, 54. [52] Ibid., 63 4.

more than a month, and throughout Xiaoping refused to condemn his family. Towards the end, the issue of his grandfather was raised.

> Your family is reactionary through and through. Your grandfather had eight hundred mu of land and was a big landlord and bully who oppressed the village. What were your motives for hiding this from the organization? . . . 'My grandfather has been dead a long time now,' Xiaoping said calmly. 'When he died my dad was only eight years old. I don't know how much property Grandfather had during his lifetime. I heard that not long after he died, our relatives squabbled over it and snatched pieces away. I have no knowledge of events that occurred in the coun tryside several decades ago.'[53]

Xiaoping was lucky in that he was not labelled a reactionary student like some of his classmates. His seven-page self-criticism satisfied the local CCP branch, but his family background dogged him for many years afterwards.

Fortunately, he did not suffer unduly in the Cultural Revolution. Xiaoping's uncle was not so lucky. When walking through the factory with his colleagues,

> they saw a plaster statue of Chairman Mao in the usual pose of his right hand extended forward. However, the right hand of this statue had broken off and fallen somewhere. It must have been one of their own offices that had sent the damaged statue to the warehouse. When his uncle saw the statue, he just automatically said, 'What are we going to do with this thing?' The moment these words left his mouth, he knew he had made a mistake. How could the precious statue of the Great Leader be referred to as 'this thing'?[54]

From this moment on, Xiaoping's uncle was the object of struggle sessions, during which he was criticized for his bourgeois background and beaten by his colleagues. He was referred to the local hospital, but people from his work unit took him back to face further interrogation, and after another day or two, unable to bear the torment, he committed suicide.[55]

Stories like those of Zhuang Xiaoping and his uncle played themselves out in cities across China. They came to a head during the Cultural Revolution, in which even the simplest behaviour could have political meaning, and the urban spaces of streets, shopfronts, and people's homes formed the blank canvas for political messages to be displayed.

> Now it was reported that in Beijing, the Red Guards had changed the names of all the city's thoroughfares. For example, crowded Diplomatic Personnel Lane was renamed Anti Imperialist Road and Anti Revisionist Road where the Soviet Union's embassy was located. The Shanghai Red Guards also covered over the names on many street signs with red paper. They then brushed in wildly slanting

[53] Ibid., 82. Eight hundred *mu* was approximately 133 acres during this period in China.
[54] Ibid., 290. [55] Ibid., 299 314.

characters words like 'Anti Imperialism', 'Anti Revisionism', and 'Liberation', and, as far they were concerned, these were the new street names.[56]

People also altered their appearance to reflect revolutionary values, something that probably affected women more than men, as Ma Xiaodong recalled years later. 'When the revolutionizing movement began, I had my hair cut short – short hair looked more revolutionary. Every time my mother cut my hair I would insist "shorter, still shorter!"'[57] Girls in Ma's school swapped their feminine-sounding names for more revolutionary masculine ones such as Weidong (defending Mao Zedong), and Dongbing (soldier of Mao). It wasn't just women's appearance and names that were under scrutiny, but their behaviour as well, as Ma remembered a woman who took a beating from the Red Guards for allegedly having a string of affairs. Looking back, Ye Weili recalled that she felt ashamed as she approached the age of eighteen, which she felt was usually associated with sexual maturity for women, something that in the puritanical revolutionary atmosphere was frowned upon.[58]

Like everyone else walking the streets of cities in China, Ma Xiaodong, Ye Weili, and Zhang Xiaoping wore Mao badges, which not only reflected loyalty to China's leader, but could also point to an individual's political affiliations. Around 5 billion badges were produced, the majority during the height of the Cultural Revolution, when people with bad class labels were not allowed to own one. The lucky ones believed that ownership of the latest or largest badge reflected their particular devotion to Mao and brought them closer to him. For all who wore them, Mao badges reconfigured their bodies and clothes within this new political landscape, allowing them to hopefully escape the excesses of the Cultural Revolution, and were therefore a tool of political survival as well as a means of gaining political capital. Indeed, in some cases, when it came to choosing a Mao badge or food, some people chose a Mao badge.[59]

In China now, Mao badges like the one shown in Figure 7.3 are now commonly collected or exhibited in museums like the XJTLU University Red Culture Museum in Suzhou.

[56] Ibid., 326.
[57] Ye Weili with Ma Xiaodong, *Growing up in the People's Republic: Conversations between Two Daughters of China's Revolution* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 62.
[58] Ibid., 76, 83, 94.
[59] Emily Williams, 'Long Live Chairman Mao (Badges): Buttons As Revolutionary Objects', *Static*, Vol. 9 (2013).

Figure 7.3 Chairman Mao inspects areas north and south of the Yangzi River
Source: https://padlet.com/XJTLU_CS/RedCulture/wish/370732851

Conclusion

After 1949, state investment was the primary driver of Chinese urbanization, and this was targeted at heavy industry in cities away from the Chinese coast. The expansion of the railway network supported this reorientation of the urban system, and population flows to cities were managed in an attempt to prevent overcrowding. The Chinese government also controlled the construction and management of cities. Large institutions such as SOEs were given urban land on which they built micro-districts containing factories, houses, and other services. Here, *danwei* controlled many aspects of the lives of millions of Chinese and became key nodes in urban governance. Not all cities were heavy industrial centres, as local characteristics continued to influence urban form and function. Suzhou was historical, Kunming scenic, and the new city of Daqing a dispersed settlement among the oil wells. Chinese Communist Party cadres had access to the best urban life could offer, and many worked in SOEs, which were able to provide an iron rice bowl of social welfare from cradle to grave. Politics inserted itself into every aspect of daily life, especially during the Cultural Revolution, when for women, having long hair could be considered a sign of sexual flirtatiousness, and Mao badges were de rigour for all.

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8 The Reform Era and the Present

Introduction

The reform period in China that began in 1978 ushered in a pace and scale of urbanization unprecedented in human history. After taking power, Deng Xiaoping set in motion policies to depoliticize many areas of society, privatize the economy, and open China up to the outside world. These changes caused tensions in both Chinese society and the CCP, and the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989 reflected the failure of liberal politicians to reform the political system.

Despite this, under Jiang Zemin, who replaced Deng Xiaoping in 1993, reform continued. The entry of China into the World Trade Organization in 2001 led even more foreign firms to seek new markets in the country, and culture and information from across the planet shaped Chinese people's outlook more than ever before. The new millennium has seen the emergence of China onto the global stage. The Beijing Olympics in 2008 marked China's coming out party, and technological achievements such as successfully launching astronauts into space symbolize its ambitions as a global power. Now, under Xi Jinping, China seeks to influence the development of countries around the world through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative. Meanwhile, at home, the relative period of liberalism and openness has been replaced with one of suspicion of foreign influence, increased politicization of society with the aid of high-tech surveillance methods, and political repression. Amidst these changes, China has emerged as the largest urban society the world has ever seen.

During the 1980s, economic reform focused on the countryside and continuing restrictions on migration kept the pace of urbanization in check. In special economic zones (SEZs), foreign investment funded factories that provided low-cost products for global markets. They spurred the rapid growth of coastal cities in the 1990s and reoriented

the urban system once more towards the east. Urban populations grew rapidly, fuelled by migrant labourers from west China attracted by higher incomes than they could make from farming.

In the twenty-first century, the large global cities of Guangzhou and Shenzhen in the south, Shanghai in the east, and Beijing and Tianjin in the north have emerged not just as megalopolises in their own right, but as the centres of megacity regions. These are agglomerations of cities criss-crossed with transport networks, open to the global economy, and connected to the rest of China by high-speed rail and air. They are now emerging in other parts of the country as hundreds of millions of people continue to make their lives in cities.

Urban planning and governance remain closely intertwined, as municipal officials seeking ever higher levels of economic growth have presided over urban expansion. Many cities now have central business districts (CBDs), vast new administrative areas for official buildings, and endless rows of high-rises in gated communities. At their best, Chinese cities are innovative, hosting the work of internationally renowned architects, incorporating ideas of eco-cities or liveable cities, and allowing people to navigate seamlessly through them with a variety of physical and digital technologies. At their worst, Chinese cities are poorly planned urban sprawl, and empty 'Ghost Cities.' The natural environment has been ruined, historical buildings have been knocked down, and communities destroyed. This expansion and transformation of the urban form has been facilitated by the devolution of government to lower levels of administration. The state has withdrawn from the direct micromanagement of life at the neighbourhood level and been replaced by overlapping informal community organizations, especially in gated communities. However, the recent emergence of surveillance technologies has given the government more control.

The gradual privatization of many parts of the Chinese economy provided people with new ways to create wealth and opportunities for social mobility. For some, the *danwei* has remained an important source of housing and social services. However, contraction of the state sector has also caused unemployment among workers previously all but guaranteed a job for life. The new millennium has brought the rise of the super-rich who fly from city to city on private jets from where they look down upon a world they rarely directly interact with. A new entrepreneurial and professional middle class now seeks to define itself according to global fashions and tastes, and in doing so is enjoying a new sense of urban sophistication, one based on property and vehicle ownership, education, consumption of international brands, and foreign travel. However,

millions of migrant workers live a precarious urban existence, often far away from their families in the countryside. For every rags-to-riches story of a migrant worker made good, thousands toil in poorly paid jobs with few benefits to build China's skyscrapers or make the world's clothes, toys, and electronics.

Urban System

The Rise of Megacity Regions

Urbanization in the reform era is closely connected to privatization of the Chinese economy. During the first stage, the introduction of the household responsibility system in 1979 returned farming to the control of individual families and allowed them to sell excess produce on the open market. This increased agricultural productivity, leading to surplus labour in the countryside. At the same time, the government permitted the establishment of township and village enterprises (TVEs), small companies that produced low-cost, labour-intensive goods such as clothing. It also relaxed the rules governing migration, allowing people to move temporarily to towns and cities to work. The number of people counted as among the floating population increased from 6.58 million in 1982 to 21.35 million in 1990, and their share of total employment rose from 22.9 per cent in 1978 to 45 per cent in 1990. These trends caused industrialization in small towns, particularly in the Lower Yangzi and Pearl River Deltas.

Meanwhile, in 1979, the government designated Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen as the first SEZs. Then in 1984, fourteen coastal cities were opened up to foreign investment, and the following year the Yangzi River, Pearl River, and Southern Fujian Deltas were made open economic zones.

The second stage of urbanization in China really gathered momentum after Deng Xiaoping's visit to Shenzhen during his Southern Tour in 1992. Foreign investment grew from 2 per cent of GDP before 1992 to average around 4 per cent between 1992 and 2009. More than two thirds of this money was invested in manufacturing, often in clothing, toys, electronics, and other similar industries, which benefitted from the flow of cheap migrant labour to China's coastal cities. More than 60 per cent of investment was from East Asia, particularly overseas Chinese in Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Singapore who took advantage of personal links to the mainland.

By the early 1990s, many of Taiwan's shoe manufacturers and Hong Kong's toy companies and electronics producers had moved their

factories to China. The new millennium saw the emergence of a high-tech sector, with most of Taiwan's notebook computer production moving to the country. Foreign investment went hand in hand with an expansion of the private sector in China, as by 2002, approximately 70 per cent of SOEs had been privatized. Municipal officials seized on the opportunity to grab wealth for their cities and established 'industrial parks', 'economic development zones', and 'high-tech zones'.

By 2005, 4,154 of these developments had been constructed, at least in part. Meanwhile, control of the *hukou* system devolved to local governments, which allowed migrants to convert their residential status provided a family member already had an urban *hukou*, or where the migrant was able to bring wealth into the city. As a result, the number of migrants in China nearly quadrupled from 1990 to 2000, rising to approximately 80 million.

The third stage in urbanization, which takes us up to the present day, was driven by the development of the service sector. Its contribution to GDP rose from a little under 33 per cent in 1995 to more than 45 per cent in 2013, by which time it employed nearly 40 per cent of Chinese. Foreign investment continued to increase, with US$10 billion pouring into Shanghai in 2008 alone, between $7 billion and $9 billion into Beijing, where many headquarters of multinational companies are based, and more than $2 billion into cities such as Chengdu, Chongqing, Shenzhen, and Tianjin. Migrants continued to flood into cities as the merger between agricultural and non-agricultural *hukou* that had been trialled in some provinces from 2005 rolled out across the nation in 2014. In large cities, urban *hukou* is still reserved for the wealthy or those with a good education, although it is easier to get one in smaller cities. The flow of people from the countryside to the city continues to provide the labour that both the manufacturing and service industries require, with the migrant population rising to a peak of 253 million in 2014.[1]

The actual size of the urban population remains unclear. Some urban districts are tracts of farmland, so while people living there may be counted as urbanites, they are actually farmers. Moreover, migrant labourers are not counted in official statistics on the urban population, even though they may have lived in the city for many years. Nevertheless, according to census records and surveys, the urban population grew from

[1] Anthony Go Yeh, Fiona F. Yang, and Jiejing Wang, 'Economic Transition and Urban Transformation of China: The Interplay of the State and the Market', *Urban Studies*, Vol. 52, no. 15 (November 2015), 2380 9; Wu and Gaubatz, *Chinese City*, 113 20; Kam Wing Chan, 'China's *Hukou* System at 60: Continuity and Reform', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 65 6, 73 4.

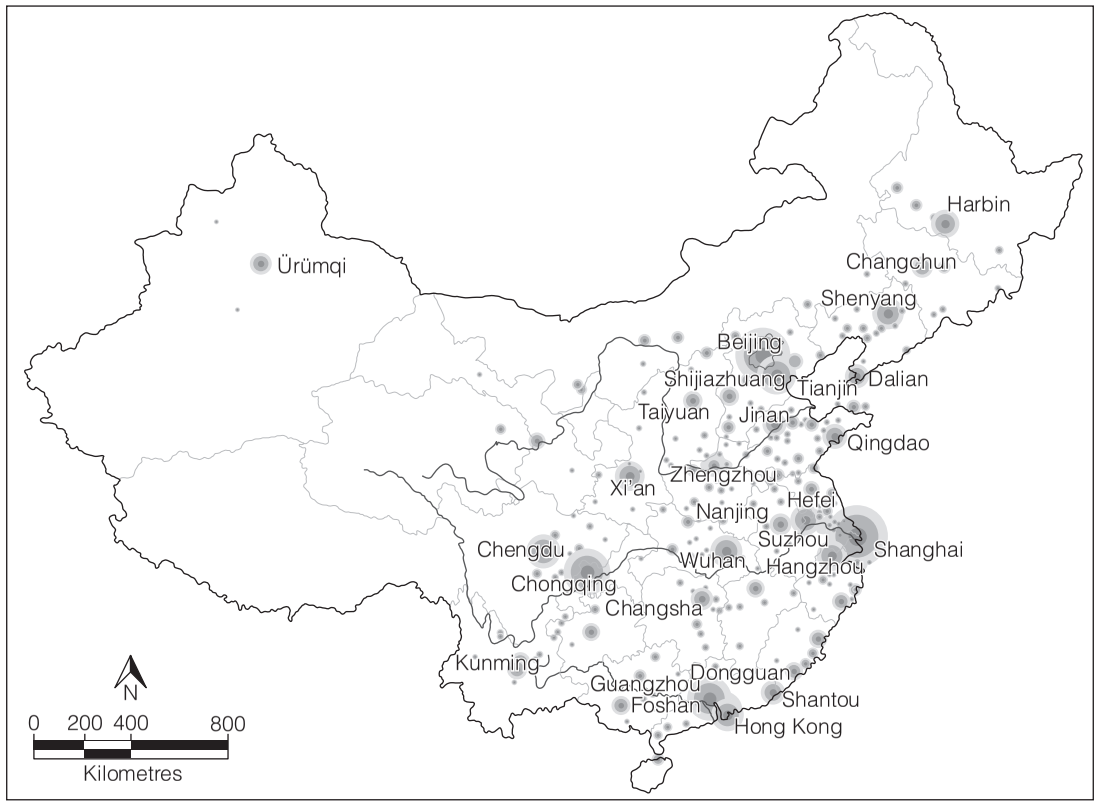
just under 200 million in 1980 to 300 million a decade later, when it made up 20 per cent of the total population.

By the year 2000, the urban population was more than 350 million, around 30 per cent of the total. Since then, the pace of urbanization has increased, and the urban population reached 771 million in 2015, when it stood at 50 per cent of the total population, officially making China the world's largest urban society.[2] There are also problems with counting the number of cities in China. In 1986, the definition of what constituted a city was changed from having a population of 100,000 to 60,000 if it had a gross national product (GNP) of 200 million RMB or was a significant local centre. Counties with populations of more than 100,000 and a GNP of more than 300 million RMB could also be reclassified as cities, so some of the growth in the number of cities has been as a result of simple reclassification. The total number has grown from 193 in 1978 to 657 in 2009.[3] The number of county-level cities grew rapidly from 92 in 1978 to 427 in 1995, before falling to 374 in 2005. The number of prefectural-level cities has grown steadily from 98 in 1978 to 283 in 2005, while the number of provincial-level cities has increased from 3 to 4.[4]

Megacity regions, also known as urban agglomerations, now comprise the core of the Chinese urban system. By the year 2000, the inland provinces' share of GDP had fallen to around 40 per cent of the total, so the government launched policies designed to support investment away from the coast and poured money into roads, railways, and airports. At the same time, the focus on national planning shifted from attempting to restrict the growth of large cities to promoting their coordinated development. The largest megacity regions are polycentric developments centred around the Pearl River Delta, the Lower Yangzi Delta, and the Beijing-Tianjin corridor. Elsewhere, growth has been more concentrated, and urban agglomerations are emerging around Chongqing and Chengdu, Changsha, Shenyang, Wuhan, Xi'an, and Zhengzhou.[5]

Map 8.1 shows the location of these large city regions and how they form the core of the Chinese urban system. Table 8.1 shows how individual cities have grown over this period, and it also forecasts population growth to 2035. These figures should be viewed with caution, but it is

[2] Xu Zhang, 'Transformation of Chinese Cities and City Regions in the Era of Globalization', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 142.
[3] Wu and Gaubatz, *Chinese City*, 73 4.
[4] Loren Brandt and Thomas Rawski, *China's Great Economic Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 779, 781.
[5] Xu Zhang, 'Transformation of Chinese Cities', 141, 145 50.



Map 8.1 China's urban system today

Table 8.1 *Populations of China's largest cities*

City	Population 1990 (mill.)	Population 2015 (mill.)	Projected Population 2035 (mill.)
Beijing	6.8	18.4	25.4
Shanghai	8.6	23.5	34.3
Chongqing	4.0	13.4	20.5
Tianjin	4.6	12.5	16.4
Guangzhou	3.2	11.7	16.7
Shenzhen	0.9	11.3	15.2
Chengdu	3.0	8.4	11.2
Wuhan	3.4	7.9	10.0
Nanjing	2.9	7.4	11.5
Hong Kong	5.8	7.2	8.1
Dongguan	0.6	7.3	8.6
Foshan	1.0	7.0	8.7
Hangzhou	1.7	6.7	9.7
Shenyang	3.8	6.5	9.0
Harbin	2.5	5.7	7.9
Qingdao	2.2	5.0	7.0
Dalian	2.0	4.8	7.2
Jinan	2.0	4.6	6.8
Zhengzhou	1.1	4.4	7.0
Shantou	0.7	4.0	5.3
Kunming	1.1	3.9	5.6

Source: Population data are drawn from the UN World Urban Prospectus 2018. https://population.un.org/wup/

clear that assuming current trends continue, Chinese urbanization shows little signs of slowing down in the immediate future.

Spatial Pattern of Megacity Regions

Nowhere better illustrates the pattern of rural industrialization and export-led growth than Dongguan. Early investment from family members in Hong Kong and Macau was replaced with money from East Asia and beyond, which supported a large electronics industry. The population grew from 1 million people in 1978 to 1.56 million in 2002, but this official figure was dwarfed by the migrant population of 4.36 million. Initially, most people lived in villages and towns now connected by more than 1,000 km of new roads.

However, faced with competition from other cities, municipal officials began to concentrate industry and housing closer to the urban core and

constructed the Songshan Lake Industrial Park of Science and Technology to nurture high-tech industries. A similar pattern of urbanization characterized the Lower Yangzi Delta, where more than 50 per cent of industrial output in 1997 was generated by factories in small cities and towns. In Kunshan, between 1988 and 1998, the share of GDP from industry rose from 45.4 per cent to 53 per cent. Although by the end of the century, roughly a third of the population was classified as urban, most lived in nineteen small towns outside the city. They worked in TVEs, which made up 70 per cent of Kunshan's industrial base, many concentrated in the special economic and technological development zone near Yushan Town. The new millennium saw a concentration of economic activity and growth in the urban core, even as the expanding city swallowed up neighbouring towns and villages. Foreign investment, particularly from Taiwan, increased, and in 2006, around 40,000 Taiwanese lived in Kunshan, making up some of the 70 per cent of the urban population who now lived in the city's core.

Urbanization in the northeast was initially concentrated in three development zones in Dalian, Shenyang, and Yingkou. However, the privatization of SOEs hit this region hard, with a quarter of its 34 million workers made redundant. In response, Dalian successfully morphed into a financial and services centre. By contrast, Shenyang and other cities have declined, and are now known as China's rust belt.[6]

Far away from the east coast is Chongqing, a large administrative area twice the size of Switzerland which became a new provincial-level city in 1997. More than 1 million people were relocated as a result of the Three Gorges Dam Project, and they filled many of the new apartment blocks constructed on land converted from agricultural use for this purpose. The city also benefitted from billions of RMB from the central government, and this supported the creation of new industries such as automobile and motorcycle manufacturing. Now, as many as one third of the world's laptops are produced in Chongqing.[7]

Not all urbanization has happened in massive city regions, their CBDs gleaming in the night-time glow of extravagant light displays. Zouping in north Shandong is one of hundreds of cities that are home to fewer than 1 million people. The population with an urban *hukou* grew from 11,271

[6] Terry G. McGee, George C. S. Lin, Andrew M. Marton, Mark Yaolin Wang, and Jiaping Wu, *China's Urban Space: Development under Market Socialism* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 103, 110 12, 115 16, 142 62, 166 80.

[7] Miguel Hidalgo Martinez and Carolyn Cartier, 'City As Province in China: The Territorial Urbanization of Chongqing', *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, Vol. 58, no. 2 (2017), 201 18; World Bank, *Chongqing 2035: Spatial and Economic Transformation for a Global City*. Washington, DC: World Bank, 2019, 1 2. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/31386. License: CC BY 3.0 IGO.

in 1982 to 50,000 in the year 2000. During this period, the county government acquired the power to manage the land of fourteen surrounding villages. Some turned over the land to the city for cash, others set up TVEs, and others developed the land themselves. Infrastructure investment supported local industry, tax revenue grew, and there was some foreign investment.

The city's economy is now dominated by the Weiqiao Group founded by local businessman Zhang Shiping, who invested the profits from a cotton ginning and seed oil factory into production of cotton yarn and clothing. By the late 1990s, he was exporting to Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, and the United States, and the company was employing 13,000 people, many of them farmers from neighbouring villages. It was at this point that a new development zone provided land on which Zhang could cheaply and quickly build more textiles factories, an aluminium refining plant, and worker facilities. By 2004, the company had become the largest producer of cloth in the world, and in 2006, it employed 137,000 workers, many of them migrants from Hebei, Gansu, Sichuan, and Shaanxi. The Weiqiao Group was now a global company, its shares listed on the Hong Kong stock exchange, and Zhang was worth US$3 billion, making him the twenty-fifth richest man in China, according to the Forbes list.[8]

Zouping proves how entrepreneurs, industrialists, and municipal officials have helped to build highly complex urban economies. Now Chinese cities with their integrated supply chains, universities and research centres, and governments committed to economic growth stand at the forefront of the evolving digital age. Nowhere exemplifies this more than Shenzhen, dubbed China's Silicon Valley. As one venture capitalist with experience in investing in artificial intelligence notes:

> Today, the greatest advantage of manufacturing in China isn't cheap labour . . . Instead it's the unparalleled flexibility of the supply chains and the armies of skilled industrial engineers who can make prototypes of new devices and build them at scale . . . At the city's dizzying electronics market, they can choose from thousands of different variations of circuit boards, sensors, microphones, and miniature cameras. Once a prototype is assembled, the builders can go door to door at hundreds of factories to find someone capable of producing their product in small batches or at large sale.[9]

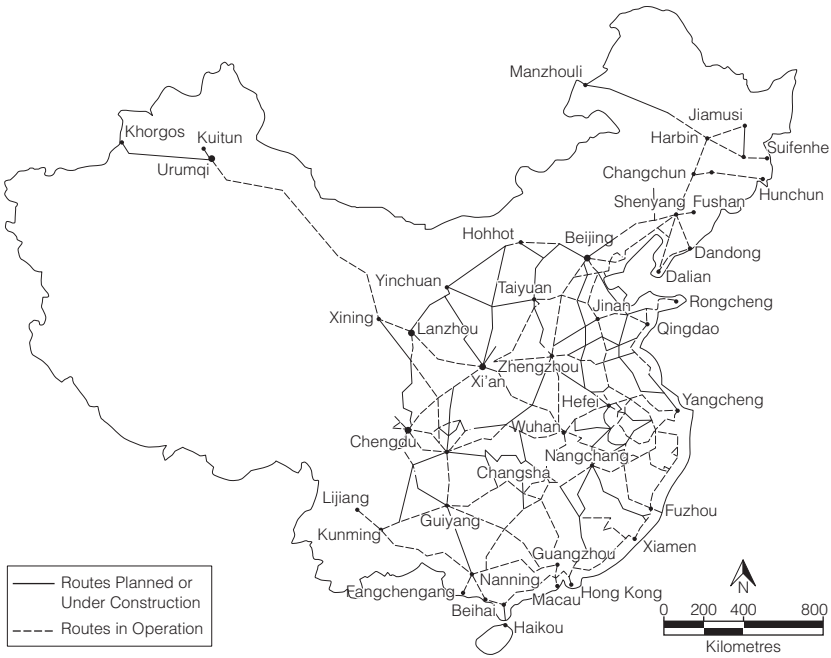
[8] Andrew Kipnis, *From Village to City: Social Transformation in a Chinese County Seat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), 1, 34 8, 67 75, 82 9.

[9] Lee Kai fu, *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 126.

Connecting Cities: High-Speed Rail and Air

Entrepreneurs in Shenzhen may never need to leave the city, but many of the migrant workers producing the electronic components take the train home for the lunar new year. Those who can afford it now travel on high-speed trains, and the extent of this network is shown in Map 8.2.

The total length of China's high-speed rail system is now more than 20,000 km, and the fastest trains between Shanghai and Beijing motor along at 350 km per hour, cutting the journey time to just four hours. Elsewhere, journey times are now so short that a regular commute from Suzhou to Shanghai now makes sense for many people. They rush from cavernous station to cavernous station, some on the outskirts of cities that await the high-rise blocks that will be built around them, and others at the centre of new CBDs, such as the Hongqiao transport hub in Shanghai. Airports are also now a major driver of interconnectivity within and



Map 8.2 The Chinese high speed rail network

beyond China. There are now more than 200 across the country, and there are plans to construct more than 200 more by 2035.[10]

Urban Form and Governance

Government Plans for an Urban Society

The National Urban System Plan (2005–20) is an indication of the sort of urban society the Chinese government wants to create. It envisaged megacity regions along the coast and around Chongqing connected to smaller urban agglomerations. Within these, development was permitted only in certain areas, normally for environmental reasons. For example, in the Pearl River and Lower Yangzi Deltas, green belts were planned, with urban development allowed along corridors between existing cities or urban agglomerations. In 2014, China's New Urbanization Plan continued on this path with a focus on developing agglomerations of different sizes, making it easier for those with a rural *hukou* to gain urban residency, ensuring that urbanization remains sustainable and reducing urban-rural disparities. By 2017, some 80 million migrant workers had been able to convert their rural *hukou*, many of them in smaller inland cities, which have also benefitted from the moving of older industries from the coast, where high-tech and service economies have been encouraged.[11] These policies mean that some of the imbalances of the early Reform Period are beginning to be addressed, but underlying issues in the political economy of urban development cause unplanned development.

How Money Leads Urban Growth

In China, the government bureaucracy remains divided between territorial units of the provincial, municipal, and county governments and top-down centrally controlled institutions such as party and military units, utility providers, universities, hospitals, and SOEs. As noted in the previous chapter, these socialist land masters have control over large plots of urban land. However, municipal and district governments have acquired the power to sell the land-use rights of the land under their jurisdiction,

[10] Liu Chang, 'How Faster Trains Draw China's Cities Ever Closer', *Sixth Tone* (21 September 2017). www.sixthtone.com/news/1000893/how faster trains draw chinas cities ever closer; 'China to Build 216 New Airports by 2035'. www.airport technology.com/news/china new airports 2035/.

[11] Fulong Wu, *Planning for Growth Urban and Regional Planning in China* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 122 35; Yin wah Chu, 'China's New Urbanization Plan: Progress and structural constraints', *Cities*, Vol. 103 (August 2020), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102736.

effectively leasing it out to developers, usually for seventy-five years. Meanwhile, socialist land masters were able to accumulate large parcels of land by purchasing these rights from other organizations and to generate revenue from leasing out the land-usage rights.

To counter the growing power of the socialist land masters, a revised Land Management Law in 1998 stipulated that all land parcels must first be transferred to the municipal government before the land-use rights could be leased to developers, and this gave municipal officials unprecedented power to manage urban growth. They adopted Western, and particularly US planning ideas, interpreting them as a way of allocating land in the most cost-effective manner. Land that generates the highest rent, such as real estate, commercial property, and retail should be in the urban core, and land generating lower rent, such as loss-making industrial enterprises or education, and public utilities, such as hospitals, should be in the periphery.

The sale of land-use rights has provided a revenue stream for municipal governments, some of which derive as much as 70 per cent of their income from land. Their ability to acquire land was made much easier in 2001 when the central government made open auctions of land-use rights mandatory in an attempt to eliminate the shadowy unofficial world of land transfers. Lower-level governments were also banned from approving the transfer of land from agricultural to non-agricultural use that had driven rural industrialization. Now approval for all transfer of use-rights and urban plans rests with municipal and district governments.[12]

The explosion of revenue generation through land transfer has occurred in part because one of the most important criteria for promotion of local officials is GDP growth, which means it is in their personal interests to collect revenue from land. Seemingly endless urban development has spawned a whole host of other supplementary industries, such as urban planners, architects, and real estate brokers, and of course the building industry employs millions of migrant workers. The final piece of the puzzle in understanding contemporary Chinese urbanization is the real estate market, in which hundreds of millions are now invested. The proportion of households owning their own home was estimated at as high as 85.7 per cent in urban areas in 2013. House prices have risen rapidly, with the most expensive properties located in areas close to good schools, parks, or transport links, and this has led to property speculation, with rich families often owning several apartments that they rent out. China has seven of the most expensive cities in the world for property prices, but unlike London or Vancouver, restrictions on foreign buyers

[12] Hsing, *Great Urban Transformation*, 33 52; Wu, *Planning for Growth*, 79 80.

means demand is home grown. However, housing remains out of the reach of many young people without parental help, and many urbanites either have to make do with subsidized affordable housing or social housing, which is often on the edge of the city, and is smaller and built to a lower standard.[13]

Most housing in China is sold off plan, so once ground breaks on a new development, a frenzy of selling begins. Press conferences, billboards, TV, and internet advertising are all important. At one press conference in a five-star hotel for a high-end Kunming development, potential buyers were treated to presentations from the architect, a government official testifying to the environmental benefits of the project, and a retired history professor who enchanted the audience with tales of the neighbourhood from yesteryear. Sales staff, almost always young women working on commission, meet up to ten potential buyers a day. Then there are the armies of migrant labourers who work for small contractors, headed by a labour broker. They live in poorly constructed temporary shacks, normally without air conditioning or heating, and are often paid late or not at all. The better off might work for companies that do interior decoration since most houses are sold as just an empty concrete shell, and in Kunming, as many as 50,000 migrants from Sichuan engaged in this work in the early 2000s. At the end of all this are the buyers, who are not just buying a house, but an urban lifestyle. Across China, housing blocks of nondescript design with flamboyant names like 'Garden Villas' or 'Greenwich' make up the urban skyline, and this appeals to buyers' notions of global cosmopolitan modernity.[14]

A consequence of endless construction has been the destruction of historical neighbourhoods, as the case of Lincoln Lane reveals. This is a short street of twenty-five three-storey houses in Hongkou in the north of Shanghai, which in 2002, the residents discovered was to be turned into two twenty-eight-storey commercial buildings. Citing a newly issued Shanghai municipal law on historical preservation, residents sent letters to the Hongkou district government and the Shanghai municipal government requesting that their street be preserved. The district government ignored their petition, so the residents stepped up their campaign, writing letters to government agencies, raising the profile of the case in the local

[13] Pu Hao, 'China's Urban Housing: Past and Present', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 88 93; David S. G. Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 115.

[14] Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise: Middle Class Living in a Chinese Metropolis* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010), 65 6, 68 77, 83 9; Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China*, 138.

media, taking advantage of new opportunities for public expression in weblogs, and turning to physical protest when demolition workers arrived on site. The campaign focused on not just the historical architecture, but also on the role the street had played in hosting CCP activists and underground publishing in the 1940s.

In September 2003, the residents contacted academics working at Tongji University who were collecting information on urban heritage in the city, and partly on their recommendation, Lincoln Lane was listed for preservation by the Shanghai municipal government. However, the Hongkou district government ignored this designation. By now the case had been covered by China Central Television, and it was perhaps this exposure that prompted the Shanghai municipal government to abandon the street.

In June 2004, the municipal planning bureau convened a panel to look into the case, with four of the experts coming from Tongji University. One, Ruan Yisan, had been particularly supportive of the preservation of the street in 2003, but now he changed his tune, dismissing the lane as of little historical value. This may have been prompted by the fact that his own company relied on government contracts. Either way, the Hongkou district government now had the green light to destroy Lincoln Lane, residents were either bought out or evicted, and by 2007, the office complex had been completed.[15]

From Central Business Districts to Ghost Cities: Innovations in Urban Form

Chinese scholars recognize that the rate of construction has outpaced the rate at which urban communities are emerging, and China is now littered with new CBDs, industrial areas, eco-cities, and seemingly endless mountain ranges of monotonous housing.[16] The transformation of the urban skyline has been most dramatic in CBDs, and in the new millennium, China has become a playground for international architects.

In 2009, the fifty top architecture firms globally, which were dominated by companies from America and Britain, had 516 offices in 198 locations. Of these, Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong ranked alongside London, Dubai, and New York as the cities with the highest number of branch offices. Smaller firms have also targeted China. For example OMA,

[15] Qin Shao, *Shanghai Gone: Domicide and Defiance in a Chinese City* (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013), 229 72.

[16] Christian Sorace and William Hurst, 'China's Phantom Urbanisation and the Pathology of Ghost Cities', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, Vol. 46, no. 2 (2016), 307 8.

founded by Rem Koolhass in Rotterdam, designed the CCTV building in Beijing. Chinese architecture has rushed to compete.

By the early 2000s, 250 class-A design institutes had been established, many employing thousands of architects. Prominent private practices include MADA s.p.a.m in Shanghai, MAD Design of Beijing, and Urbanus located in Beijing and Shenzhen.[17] Grand architectural edifices towering above new CBDs are statements about a city's brand. They have spread rapidly across the country as municipal officials attempt to grow their own financial service sectors in emulation of Beijing and Shanghai. By 2003, despite concerns over their cost to local governments, thirty-six CBDs were under construction. They are to be found in large, first-tier cities such as Chongqing, Dalian, Ningbo, Shenyang, and Xi'an, as well as in small cities such as Shaoxing and Taizhou. In Wuxi, the municipal government began building a new CBD in Nanchang District, just to the south of the old city, but later decided that Binhu District further out near Lake Tai would be a better location, with the result that both areas are now full of under-occupied skyscrapers. In 2014, vacancy rates in Beijing's Chaoyang and Shanghai's Lujiazui were relatively low at under 5 per cent, but elsewhere they are much higher. In Chengdu, for example, the vacancy rate was well over 40 per cent.[18]

Chaoyang, located just to the east of the Old City in Beijing where the Third Ring Road crosses Jianguomen Road, is home to Beijing's new CBD. The master plan drawn up in 1993 is a statement of urban cosmopolitanism.

> The core area of the CBD is designed to concentrate a large number of sky scrapers. It is to be occupied by buildings such as the CCTV, the World Trade Tower, the Silktie Center, and Jianwai SOHO . . . The design is to create a perfect urban image with outstanding symbolic buildings and to form a focal point in the mass of high rise towers.[19]

SOHO stands for 'Small Office, Home Office'. SOHO NewTown, completed in the late 1990s, was inspired by loft apartments in the West and was widely advertised as a stylish place to live. It was a stunning success, generating nearly half a billion RMB in sales. This was quickly followed by Jianwai SOHO, designed by Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto and featuring sixteen small streets connecting residential and office buildings, inspired by Beijing *hutongs*. This is ironic, since many *hutongs* were destroyed to build the new CBD, itself part of a massive project of

[17] Xuefei Ren, *Building Globalization: Transnational Architecture and Production in Urban China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 24 58.
[18] Wade Shepard, *Ghost Cities of China* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 82, 134 7.
[19] Quoted in Xuefei Ren, *Building Globalization*, 70.

urban regeneration in preparation for the Beijing Olympics in 2008. An estimated 1.5 million people were displaced as communities were split up, and forced evictions were common.[20]

Elsewhere in China, Zhengdong, literally meaning east of Zhengzhou, was designed by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa, and contains a large man-made central lake, an exhibition centre, a hotel 280 m high, and clusters of adjacent high-rises. It might look impressive, but the CBD has been criticized as inaccessible to pedestrians, while the lake drew water from the Yellow River, adding to the likelihood of water shortages. In 2013, international media declared the CBD a ghost city, empty of people, but Wade Shephard, a journalist who has written about these cities, visited it that year. A short walk away from the empty malls and apartment blocks that prospective investors were shown brought him to another mall busy with life, suggesting that Zhengdong wasn't so much a ghost city, rather one just waiting for people. The CBD contained 2.5 million residents and was home to fifteen regional banking headquarters and four universities with quarter of a million students.[21]

The case of Zhengdong illustrates how urban expansion occurs on land outside the city, which has simply been redesignated from rural to urban use. In the early Reform Era, such land was the location of *kaifaqu* (development zone) on which factories were built. In the new millennium, they have been replaced with *xincheng* (new city). *Xincheng* are carefully planned to attract investment, and since they are primarily residential, municipal governments have often offered an urban *hukou* to those who bought a home.[22]

At their best, *xincheng* are well connected to the wider metropolitan region and provide good housing and other services. Some incorporate university towns, collections of campuses with combined student populations in the tens of thousands. Some have emerged around redeveloped historical towns or villages, and others have been designed as eco-cities. One of the most successful is Hexi in Nanjing to the southwest of the city along the banks of the Yangzi River. Built between 2001 and 2004 around a CBD with office, retail, and residential space, with a hotel and cultural centre designed by Zaha Hadid, it was connected to the old city by roads and the subway line. It quickly attracted major property developers and land prices rose tenfold in one year. There was oversupply of housing and

[20] Xuefei Ren, *Building Globalization*, 71 9; Anne Marie Broudehoux, 'Re imagining Beijing: The Making and Selling of a Post Socialist Chinese Metropolis', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 120 2.
[21] Wu, *Planning for Growth*, 93 6; Wade, *Ghost Cities*, 52 5.
[22] Hsing, *Great Urban Transformation*, 94 5, 103, 108 9.

office space, while the government had to fund the reuse of the sports stadium built for the 2014 Youth Olympics. Despite these problems, the proximity of Hexi to the city means that it is gradually becoming incorporated into Nanjing.[23]

The most spectacular failure is probably Kangbashi in Ordos in Inner Mongolia. Huge coal and natural gas reserves were discovered in 2004, and by 2007, the city's GDP had surpassed that of Hong Kong. The Ordos city government needed somewhere to put this new-found wealth and decided to build a new administrative capital to connect to the old city district of Dongsheng and create a new urban corridor. The construction of government offices, a library, theatre, and museum, as well as miles of road, helped to spark a property boom, and between 2006 and 2009, the average price per square metre rose from 1,200 RMB to around 9,000 RMB. When the central government brought in measures to cool the housing market and the price of coal dropped, both people and property development companies began to default on their loans.[24] Wade Shepherd visited Kangbashi after the property bubble had burst.

> I entered the city and saw the infamous Kangbashi landmarks. I gazed upon the museum that looks like a giant golden jellybean, the elaborate opera house, the library built to look like a gigantic row of books, and the immense stone statues of Mongol warriors as well as the 50 foot tall bucking horses in Ghenghis Khan Square. It was all gargantuan; the entire place simply wasn't built to human scale … You don't walk in Kangbashi; it's a car city designed for people who want to drive from one place to another.

In search of people, Wade found a dining complex full of stalls, complete with a MacDonald's. There, he met Ye Qiu, who had moved from Guangzhou the previous year.

> 'It is very small; the people know each other,' Ye Qiu said of Kangbashi. 'In Guangzhou, lots of people are around but you don't feel anyone. It's a fast food city. It is very busy. Here it is very comfortable. There are no long lines, and the people are not strangers.' She paused for a moment, then added, 'I love the phrase "not so many people."'[25]

The jury is still out on whether Kangbashi will be a success. Returning in 2016, Wade noted more people around during the day, although many still returned home after work. Eighty to ninety per cent of apartments were sold, and the city's best high school had been relocated there. However, the huge scale of the urban space remained a problem, and as

[23] Hsing, *Great Urban Transformation*, 105–7; Wu, *Planning for Growth*, 155–6.
[24] Sorace and Hurst, *China's Phantom Urbanisation*, 311–15.
[25] Shepard, *Ghost Cities of China*, 67–73.

Wade remarked, perhaps this is the issue with China's ghost cities. They are not cities for pedestrians, but for cars, and so they feel empty.[26]

Eco-cities are a response to some of the environmental problems in China. By 2011, more than 259 cities across the country had begun to develop eco-cities or low-carbon cities, leading many to doubt their claims of sustainability. The central government responded by designating eight cities for funding to establish standards for development. The Tianjin eco-city has probably been the most successful, in part because it is based close to the Binhai New District, a well-developed urban area that incorporates its own CBD. Planned to have a population of 250,000 by 2020, mass transit links the various parts of the city together, and residences are designed around cells and micro-districts. Water recycling, renewable energy, high levels of building insulation, and other technologies ensure that carbon emissions remain low.[27]

Meixi Lake eco-city, just outside Changsha, may not prove such a success. In Wade Shepherd's words,

> The downtown area will be made up of a CBD, and will contain Changsha's first super tall structures. The city's layout will be set around the central lake, and a network of canals will complement the radial street pattern, allowing people to commute by boat, thus reducing the dependency on cars. The CBD will be a reduced traffic zone, and will contain trams and walkable streets. Some 180,000 residents are expected to live here, divided into 10,000 person sub units, aptly named 'villages' ... Beyond that, the city will benefit from large amounts of green space, grey and black water systems, urban agriculture, cutting edge entertainment centres, its own distributed energy plants, waste energy recovery systems, and as much strange sci fi architecture as can be packed in.

This all sounds very laudable, but even here amidst the high-tech sustainable future of urbanism in China, money underlay everything.

> I walked into a real estate showroom that had scale models of the neighbourhoods currently under construction. I watched as women with thousand dollar hand bags pointed at the plastic towers, selecting apartments that cost millions of renminbi like clothes in a shopping mall, as their chubby husbands with gold wristwatches nodded obediently. The parking lot outside was an array of BMW, Mercedes, Lexus cars and SUVs; off to the side was a bright red Ferrari. Ecocities are playgrounds for China's rich.[28]

[26] Wade Shepard, 'An Update on China's Largest Ghost City: What Ordos Kangbashi Is Like Today', *Forbes* (19 April 2016). www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/04/19/an update on chinas largest ghost city what ordos kangbashi is like today/#35f65ceb2327.

[27] Fulong Wu, *Planning for Growth*, 173 6. [28] Shepard, *Ghost Cities of China*, 127 8.

It remains to be seen whether Meixi Lake will be a sustainable community, or like so many other urban developments in China, simply a place for the rich to invest their money.

Not all places on the urban periphery are ghost cities. One phenomenon of urbanization in China is the *chengzhongcun* (village in the city). These are the result of farmers building rental properties for migrant workers in their villages and being able to retain control of their land as cities expand around them. Some villages have been swallowed up and redeveloped as municipal authorities successfully converted the land from rural to urban use. In others, particularly in the Pearl River Delta, villagers use connections to local government to develop the land themselves, and many have become rich off the process, constructing dense pockets of relatively low-rise buildings that lurk behind the skyscrapers and shopping malls. In 2005, Shenzhen had 241 *chengzhongcun*, many now in the urban core. In response, the municipal government has granted many residents urban *hukou*, and villagers retain ownership over the usage rights of the property they have constructed.[29]

Urban Governance in the Reform Era

The *danwei* has been replaced as a key node in the state's management of urban space with residents' committees and *shequ* (communities). Thousands of residents' committees in cities across the country manage groups of around 6,000 people, with millions of residents' small groups having responsibility for around 300. They are the lowest level of urban governance, and they disseminate information, organize public health and welfare programmes, and assist with household registration and local security. They also work with and for their communities by organizing voluntary and recreational activities, listen to complaints from local residents, and intervene in small-scale disputes. Residents' committees certainly act as part of the authoritarian state, and anyone dropping into the office for a chat is often asked for the latest gossip on their neighbours. However, they have little power to enforce rules without recourse to the PSB, and it is common for residents to flout the rules or refuse to provide information. For instance, in Beijing, dog licenses costing thousands of RMB have long been mandatory, but residents' committees lack the power to force people to purchase them.

Residents' committees also act as points of help. A sample of issues that Beijing committees have been asked to address include taxi drivers relieving themselves in the street, help with converting heating from coal to

[29] Xuefei Ren, *Urban China* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 121 7.

natural gas, and problems with smoke from a restaurant wafting into apartment windows. Finally, they often mediate in local disputes, particularly those between neighbours such as arguments over shared communal space or utility bills in housing compounds.[30]

Since the late 1990s, it has become more common for two or three residents' committees to be amalgamated into a *shequ*. They number up to 16,000 residents from diverse social backgrounds and include organizations such as companies and schools from the local area. Within the *shequ*, the neighbourhood delegate assembly elects the members of the residents' committees, who are often women, and the CCP retains control through having party secretaries elected or appointed. However, urban governance at this level is at least in part now the responsibility of people in the communities themselves. One example is the payment of social income support, introduced in 1993. Residents with an urban *hukou* whose income falls below a particular level must report to community offices, where their claims are processed. Meanwhile, in many housing complexes, residents have formed housing associations to represent their interests in conflicts with developers.[31]

Most issues that housing associations deal with concern small matters of building repair or problems with communal facilities, but on occasion they play a role in environmental protest. These have surged in recent years, particularly after residents in Xiamen forced the government to move a proposed paraxylene (PX) plant to a smaller city away from residential areas in 2007. Following this, anti-PX plant protests took place in cities such as Dalian, Ningbo, and Maoming and protests occurred against nuclear facilities in Jiangmen and Lianyungang, and against waste incinerators in Panyu and Wuxi.

Often these protests have been most successful when they involve middle-class urban communities, since people living there have connections to government officials, are able to access specialist knowledge to counter the environmental claims of business, or can attract media attention. The government takes a less favourable view towards citywide action. In 2016, there was a planned protest in Chengdu over the city's air pollution, but the authorities closed down Tianfu Square, preventing protestors from meeting, censored

[30] Benjamin Read, *Roots of the State: Neighbourhood Organization and Social Networks in Beijing and Taipei* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 54, 57, 63 8, 107 16, 217, 223 4.

[31] Thomas Heberer, '"Urban Neighbourhood Communities" (Shequ) As New Institutions of Urban Governance', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 360 72.

online communications, and took down masks that had been put on statues across the city.[32]

Protests are not uncommon in China. Perhaps anxious to avoid a repeat of Tiananmen Square in 1989, the government has recently turned to technology to help. One innovation is Sharp Eyes. It was initially trialled in some rural areas in 2015, and the following year was rolled out to forty-eight demonstration cities. It builds on skynet and safecities, programs launched early in the new millennium to provide twenty-four-hour CCTV coverage of urban districts, to issue disaster warnings, and to assist with urban security. Sharp Eyes connects these cameras in public spaces to those installed within residential communities, and there may be as many as 600 million across the country. However, it is hard to verify the use to which this new technology is being put. For example, at major intersections in many Chinese cities, it is now common to see videos of jaywalkers, who have been caught on camera, perhaps using facial recognition technology. One area where it is being used extensively is in Xinjiang, where the Chinese authorities have interned an estimated 1.5 million Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in response to a perceived terrorist threat. Outside the camps, Uighurs are subject to intense surveillance. In the city of Kashgar, checkpoints stand at every 100 m at which Uighurs have to swipe identity cards while police check their phones and install software that monitors behaviour. In 2016, Karamay in the north of Xinjiang was designated a Sharp Eyes demonstration city. A year later, all key industries, work units, traffic intersections, public areas, hospitals, and schools were monitored, as well as scenic areas and thousands of roads.[33]

Urban Culture and Daily Life

Cities As Playgrounds of the Rich

The restructuring of China's economy underlies changes in urban social structure. The TVEs established in the first years of the Reform Period in

[32] Thomas Johnson, 'Environmental Protests in Urban China', in Ray Yep, June Wang, and Thomas Jognson, eds., *Handbook on Urban Development in China* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2019), 329 30, 335 6, 338.

[33] Josh Rudolf, 'Sharper Eyes: Surveilling the Surveillers (Part 1)', *China Digital Times* (9 September 2019). https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2019/09/sharper eyes surveilling the surveillers part 1/; Samuel Wade, 'Terror Capitalism and a Virtual Cage in Xinjiang', *China Digital Times* (5 April 2019). https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2019/04/outside xinjiang camps terror capitalism and a virtual cage/; Josh Rudolph, 'Sharper Eyes: Shandong to Xinjiang (Part 3)', *China Digital Times* (13 September 2019). https://china digitaltimes.net/2019/09/sharper eyes shandong to xinjiang part 3/.

the countryside were followed in 1984 by *getihu* in cities, small firms hiring fewer than eight employees. Joint ventures with foreign companies also appeared, particularly in SEZs. Then in the mid-1990s, it became possible to transform TVEs or *getihu* into private companies, and people jumped at the chance. The year 1995 saw the beginning of the long process of restructuring SOEs.

The public sector remains vital to the economy, and in 2013, there were 110,000 SOEs responsible for around 25 per cent of GDP, with 117 large companies in key sectors such as transport and energy supply. However, those working for SOEs saw their iron rice bowl vanish. Workers were moved to limited-term instead of permanent contracts, losing access to housing, hospitals, schools, and entertainment, even as in many cases, their managers retained many of these benefits. Then, as the pace of privatizing loss-making SOEs increased, millions were laid off. By 2004, it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of workers in SOEs, amounting to 30 million people, lost their jobs. More than 20 million needed income support, up from 2 million prior to 1998, and many remained unemployed for years.[34]

These economic changes have created new opportunities for many people, while gender, education, and CCP membership also remain important factors influencing people's life chances. Looking simply at yearly income, anything above 140,000 RMB per year is considered upper class, between 90,000 and 140,000 middle class, and anything below this lower class, with the poorest earning as little as 6,000 RMB per year. However, this makes no distinction between city and countryside, and does not take into account the much higher cost of living in some cities than others.[35]

Understanding China's changing urban social structure is not just about objective markers such as occupation or wealth, but is also about subjective perceptions of one's own status in relation to those of family, friends, work colleagues, and society at large. This has changed over time, a point amply illustrated by the possessions that many feel a man is expected to own to be considered a suitable husband. The watches, bicycles, and sewing machines of the Maoist era were replaced in the 1980s by televisions, fridges, washing machines, and furniture. Now, houses and cars are considered must-have items.[36]

The Chinese elite are a mixture of CCP cadres, government officials, and rich business people. Indeed, in many cases, it is impossible to tell one from another, and there has long been a perception that many have

[34] Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China*, 74 5, 80 2, 128, 132 3. [35] Ibid., 54 9.
[36] Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise*, 164.

acquired wealth through corruption. Political and economic power certainly go together. Around half a million senior CCP cadres and some 40 million are employed at all levels of government. Some are also business people, but not all of China's rich are party members. Some made their money as managers of TVEs or *getihu* in the early Reform Era, and then benefitted from their privatization. Others worked for SOEs and made fortunes from the dual pricing system by which production above quota was sold at market rate. Finally, there are young entrepreneurs, many of them leading the new high-tech revolution in China's cities, where they head up companies involved in emerging industries, such as facial recognition, drones, Bitcoin mining, and electronic vehicles.

In 2019, the Hurun Rich List, which has been tracking the wealthy in China for twenty-one years, recorded 1,819 individuals with a net worth of more than 2 billion RMB. Most made their wealth in manufacturing, real estate, IT, investments, and pharmaceuticals. Beijing has the largest number of the wealthy with 286 followed by Shenzhen, Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Guangzhou. Beijing and Zhejiang Universities had the most alumni, but 45 per cent did not go to university at all.[37]

These individuals are not tied down to one city but, like the rest of the global wealthy, fly between them at will, and very likely own property and perhaps businesses around the world. Nevertheless, they are based in China, where they reside in luxury villas or apartments. In Kunming in 2007, a luxury apartment for a single family cost 2–3 million RMB, and prices in Beijing or Shanghai are now much higher. People who live in such communities may not interact with each other very much, partly out of a wish for privacy, and some may not trust their neighbours not to gossip or perhaps inform on possibly dubious business dealings.[38]

Outside the home, wealthy men in China socialize in restaurants, KTV bars, saunas, and massage parlours. In so doing, they are reasserting some of the gendered interactions somewhat erased during the Maoist period, a trend supported by the need to spend ever-increasing amounts of money to secure a government contract or attract a business partner. In the 1990s, a lavish banquet was sufficient, but now this is followed by a trip to a KTV club, a sauna, or a massage parlour, where businessmen are invariably introduced to potential mistresses or simply pay for sexual services.

The KTV clubs are the playgrounds of China's new rich. At the most exclusive, the host is greeted by the manager, presented with an elaborate

[37] Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China*, 65, 68 71; Hurun Research Institute, *LEXUS. Hurun China Rich List 2019*. www.hurun.net/EN/Article/Details?num=CE08472BB47D.
[38] Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise*, 109 11, 119 22.

plate of fruit as a mark of esteem, and then can choose his pick of hostess girls. The hostess girls play drinking games, sing and flirt with guests, and most are available for sex at the right price. The elite who move in this world spend their money on expensive global brands, buying Ferraris, Mulberry bags, Old Master paintings, or a Rolex watch. However, many newly rich in China still feel they need to understand sophistication and taste, and it is not uncommon to see them attend courses in French wine or Western table manners, or playing golf and enjoying foreign travel as they strive to live a globalized lifestyle. The editor of *First Class*, a magazine in Chengdu, lamented the fact that the newly rich of the city drive their Mercedes to small noodle restaurants and eat by the side of the road.[39]

While husbands gallivant in KTV clubs, wives are often confined to managing the household. A few help their husbands manage aspects of their business, and in their own social lives may sing and flirt with male hostesses in clubs, just like their husbands do. This leaves men free to pursue extramarital affairs. In the 1990s, it was common for businessmen from across East Asia to have so-called second wives in Guangdong. Now, wealthy Chinese take care of their mistresses by providing them with a monthly stipend, an apartment, and a car, and by showering them with gifts. In return, they have someone who cannot just accompany them on their nocturnal excursions, but can provide them with emotional support. Such relationships normally end when women reach the age of thirty or if they push too hard for marriage. Some young women now actively seek to become mistresses, and those who use their beauty in their work such as models or actresses see even wives as exploiting their sexuality as something to be exchanged for wealth in the new gendered marketplace.[40]

The New Urban Middle Class

As in many societies, the lifestyle of the rich sets the pace for the middle class, which is notoriously difficult to define. There have been at least eight serious attempts to assess its size and wealth this century, and they all recognize the importance of income and occupation, and some also seek to measure interviewees' self-perception of their class status. It is now widely acknowledged that the middle class includes entrepreneurs as well as professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. However it is

[39] John Osburg, *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality among China's New Rich* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 39, 47 51, 121, 126 7, 133 8.
[40] Ibid., 65 72, 143 5, 153 5.

measured, the middle class is an important component of Chinese urban society, with one estimate putting it at more than 70 per cent of people living in cities in 2020.[41]

Probably the most important marker of middle-class status is homeownership. Most middle-class families in China live in gated communities that have smaller apartments and fewer amenities than the luxurious flats or villas bought by the wealthy. In Kunming in 2007, these apartments cost between 200,000 and half a million RMB. While many people bought them on the private market, *danwei* were able to bulk buy, and so provide them more cheaply.[42] For many, it has been a long road to homeownership. One university professor in Kunming originally lived in a small apartment provided by his university.

> In the late 1980s, when the sale of housing to state employees started, we were given preferential prices to buy our apartments . . . The first payment I made was a little over ten thousand yuan in 1990, but I was given only 60 percent of the ownership while the university retained 40 percent . . . I did not feel I really owned it. Then, in the late 1990s we were asked to pay additional money. The total amount I paid was close to forty thousand yuan. We were promised the formal ownership certificate a long time ago, but it was only in the summer of 2005 that I finally got mine. It took a great deal of complaining, probing, and demands by the faculty and staff to reach this point.[43]

Since almost all homes are bought as concrete shells, homeownership comes with the joy of redecoration. In the 1990s, new magazines provided advice on practical aspects such as how to install a sink, but also purported to instruct their readers on how to live a cosy family life. In the new millennium, for some at least, their place has been taken by the Swedish retailer IKEA. In Shanghai, just as in any other IKEA around the world, shoppers take a tour through mock dining rooms, living rooms, and bedrooms, and it has proved enormously popular. Customers often simply go to the store to look at the products on offer without buying anything, some take a nap on the beds, and lonely pensioners even hang out in the café looking for love.[44]

Outside the home, the middle classes enjoy urban spaces in China as their whims and budgets allow. Just as during the Republican era, Shanghai's nightlife provides a window into this world, and it is a whirligig of music and dancing once more. In 1980, people began dancing in parks and other public spaces. The old relived the dances of

[41] Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China*, 92 109.
[42] Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise*, 113. [43] Ibid., 37.
[44] Deborah Davis, 'Urban Consumer Culture', *China Quarterly*, Vol. 183 (September 2005), 701 4; *Ikea Shanghai Frowns on Elderly Daters* (18 October 2016). www.bbc.co.uk/news/world asia china 37686968.

their youth, while the young showed off their new disco moves. After a brief government crackdown, the Shanghai Metropole Ballroom on Nanjing Road reopened in 1986, and within a year, the city had nearly 300 dance halls.

The next decade saw a number of new clubs. D.D.'s was opened in the late 1990s by a Hong Kong duo in partnership with a Shanghai local and two overseas Chinese, and was popular with Western migrants to the city, Chinese who had spent time abroad, and the emerging fashion-conscious Shanghai youth. With a 100 RMB entry fee, it was too expensive for students and prostitutes, who were increasingly common in bars and larger clubs in the city. It never really got going until 2 AM, when only the hardcore ravers were left on the dance floor. Packed closely together, they grooved to the sound of everything from Tokyo minimalist techno to Chicago House, with a spin of Gloria Gaynor's disco classic 'I will survive' to break up the mix. D.D.'s was soon eclipsed by other clubs, and they now pander to Shanghai's materialist elite. They employ girls, who are paid around 500 RMB a night to make the club look busy, and sometimes to flirt with male guests. Some also act as booking agents, phoning or more recently WeChatting regulars, who reserve tables for the night. In Linx on Huaihai Road, 90 per cent of the tables tend to be booked in advance, and guests show off to their friends by buying expensive bottles of champagne.[45] Outside these clubs, it is now easier than ever to find a place to sit down for a quiet beer or glass of wine, enjoy a pizza or a steak, or drink a bubble tea or a coffee.

Let us follow Nikki, known as Coco to her friends, as she weaves her way through Shanghai in the last days of the old millennium. She is the protagonist of *Shanghai Baby*, a semi-autobiographical novel by Wei Hui. Before we meet her, Coco had graduated from Fudan University and gained some notoriety as the author of a sexually frank collection of short stories. As the novel opens, she works in a café where she meets and falls in love with Tian Tian, who develops a drug habit, and she also has a passionate affair with Mark, a German businessman living in the city. The novel is therefore part coming-of-age story and part love story set against the backdrop of Shanghai, and it provides an intimate window into the lives of young, relatively well off, globally wise urbanites in China. Coco, like women the world over, and many men too of course, loves shopping.

> Huating Road is where young people go to catch up on the latest trends. Small it may be, but it embodies the innate ability of Shanghainese to exploit every inch of space . . . Whenever I'm feeling down, like other women my age, I go to Huating

[45] Farrer and Field, *Shanghai Nightscapes*, 49 50, 67 70, 83 7.

Road, stroll from one end to the other, and buy up a storm . . . On Huating Road, there were plenty of Chinese and foreign teenagers dressed as street kids. A team of Japanese boys on roller skates looked like mounted butterflies as they showed off their techniques, their dyed hair like feather dusters. A Shanghainese girl with black lips strolled next to her silver lipped companion, licking Fruit Treasure lollipops.[46]

As Coco moves between daytime and night-time, we meet the city's in-crowd, who ride the circuit of the city's bars, clubs, and restaurants. The circuit 'is composed of artists, real and phony, foreigners, vagabonds, greater and lesser performers, private entrepreneurs of industries that are currently fashionable, true and fake *linglei*, and Generation X types'.[47]

And of course, like Coco, many of these people are regulars at Shanghai's clubs.

YY's has two floors. The lower one, down a long staircase, houses the dance floor. The atmosphere in the room was joyous, full of alcohol, perfume, money, saliva, and hormones . . . They were playing house and hip hop, both totally cool, like a raging blind fire. The more you danced, the happier and more unfettered you felt, until you were vaporized out of existence and your right and left ear lobes were both quaking then you knew you'd reached the peak. There were plenty of fair haired foreigners, and lots of Chinese women, their tiny waistlines and silky black hair their selling points. They all had a sluttish, self promoting expression on their faces, but in fact a good many of them worked for multinational compan ies. Most were college graduates from good families; some had studied abroad and owned their own cars . . . I'd already forgotten where I was. The smell of marijuana (or cigar?) found a center in my right nostril. I figured I'd already attracted the eyes of plenty of men with my dancing like a princess in a Middle Eastern harem, and a bewitching Medusa too. Men are often desperate to mate with a bewitching female who will eat them alive like a black widow spider.[48]

Shanghai, as Coco notes later in the book, is a women's city. Here, in YY's, we have the quintessential picture of an intelligent, liberated, sophisticated Chinese woman, totally comfortable with her own sexuality, able to attract men with a shake of her body, or, if she wishes, to shake them off.

If *Shanghai Baby* were written today, it would include how the mobile Internet shapes the lives of its characters, who likely as not would be using WeChat. Launched in 2013 by the company Tencent, it has more than 1 billion users worldwide, the vast majority of whom use it as a payment system by scanning QR codes in shops or restaurants. However, it is much more than that, allowing people to post moments like Facebook, create groups like WhatsApp, and through mini programmes connect to a vast

[46] Wei Hui, *Shanghai Baby*, 89. [47] Ibid., 39. [48] Ibid., 72 3.

range of services provided by multiple applications on mobile phones in Europe and America.

A short film made in 2016 explains how WeChat has become an integral part of urban life in China. It starts with a young woman, let's call her Yang, who uses WeChat to hire a man to come and clean her dog. Yang shares a photo of the dog, and a friend at work, whom we shall call Song, orders the same service. The dog cleaner immediately gets on his scooter to head over to her house, receiving both payments instantly through WeChat. Yang and Song then arrange to have dinner at a new noodle restaurant that has great reviews. Song orders the food from her desk and both grab taxis. Meanwhile, the dog cleaner puts the money he has earned into a risky investment vehicle he's found on WeChat. Yang and Song arrive at the restaurant and the food is delivered to their table. It's not as good as they expect, and Song gives it a poor review, while Yang pays Song for her share of the meal.[49] All these exchanges happen within WeChat, which along with other apps allow people to navigate the vast spaces of twenty-first-century Chinese cities. They create and mediate a myriad of personal connections, some long-term friendships and relationships, and others short-term economic transactions, many of them with the urban poor.

The Urban Poor

The poorest in Chinese cities make up around 60 per cent of the urban working population. A huge proportion are migrants, the vast majority employed in factories, on building sites, in hotels, in domestic service, as security guards, as refuse collectors, or delivering parcels and takeaway food. They are the most marginal of all urban residents. In 2006, a survey found that 12.5 per cent had employment contracts, 10 per cent had medical insurance, and 15 per cent retirement benefits.[50] Although migrant workers are not included in official estimates of the urban population, and indeed are not really seen by many as being permanent residents in the city, without them Chinese cities would not have been constructed, and could not function.

Although China does not have slums, there is still plenty of substandard housing. Often poorer workers live in older city neighbourhoods that date from before the Communist Revolution. Others, especially those who

[49] Ang Li, 'Everything You Need to Know about WeChat', https://washington.org/welcomechina/angs chat/blog 1 wechat; Jonah M. Kessel and Paul Mozur, 'How China Is Changing Your Internet', *New York Times*, 9 August 2016. www.nytimes.com/video/technology/100000004574648/china internet wechat.html.

[50] Goodman, *Class in Contemporary China*, 122 4, 139 42.

were laid off from SOEs, linger in *danwei* housing, which they may have purchased in part or in whole when times were better. In Kunming, Jiangnan community housing had been built by a private company, and was home to families pushed out of the centre of the city, farmers who had been given apartments as compensation when their land was taken away, and SOE employees, many of whom were now redundant. There were many absentee landlords and people regularly stayed for only a short time, meaning that theft was a real worry for residents. This was not helped by the poor police presence and lack of effective security provided by the property management company. There were few walls and no security cameras, and this made for a lively community atmosphere, as the elderly hung out playing chess and smoking pipes and used the community centre.[51]

Of course many of the poorest in Chinese cities, especially migrant workers, cannot afford even the lowest standard of housing. The stories of just two migrants in two different cities in the first few years of the new millennium must stand in for the millions of similar tales doubtless told over the dinner table over the past four decades. Yang Qun, twenty-three years old, worked in a factory making model animals in Shenzhen. Earning 800 RMB per month, she was able to send much of it back to her family in Sichuan. She did not regret being unable to finish high school since she enjoyed the freedom in the city that her classmates, who were married with children, did not have. She lived in a small apartment with four other women in her room, and like Coco she loved clothes, even if her blouses cost far less than the international fashions available in the boutiques of downtown Shanghai.[52] When interviewed, she reflected briefly on the life of a migrant worker.

> Anyone who wants to, says Yang Qun, gets to know new people in no time at all. The newcomers don't have to be lonely for long. All the girls have gone through the same thing and understand the problems of a beginning migrant worker: homesickness, the pressure of work, and exhaustion. 'Only girls with guts come here,' says Yang Qun.[53]

One migrant with guts was Wang Chunming, who ran away from home at the age of fourteen. To get to Beijing took a thirty-minute walk, then forty-five minutes on a motorbike, one hour by minibus, more than four hours on a big bus, and then twenty-seven hours by train. He got lucky. Halfway through his trip, a fellow villager recognized him and on arrival in

[51] Xuefei Ren, *Urban China*, 157–60; Li Zhang, *In Search of Paradise*, 116–18.
[52] Jan Floris van Luyn (trans. Jeannette K. Rigold), *A Floating City of Peasants: The Great Migration in Contemporary China* (New York: New Press, 2008), 11–12.
[53] Ibid., 12.

Beijing helped him find his uncle, who worked sorting through rubbish. The rubbish certainly made an impression on Chunming, but not in a good way.

> 'I never thought that a city like Beijing could produce so much filth,' says Chunming. The television never mentioned that. He simply thought that the capital was an oasis of luxury and progress. But around the thriving center of power lay islands of rotting trash. And the people who rooted in it like pigs, even his fellow villagers, seemed not to be bothered by it all! . . . In this way Chunming became a full fledged member of the garbage colony. Day in and day out, forty of them would go through the contents of about one hundred large garbage trucks with a steel hook in their right hand and a basket around their left shoulder. Styrofoam, bottles, cans, glass, cardboard Chunming picked out everything that still had value and dexterously raked it into his basket . . . Just like the others, he used anything that had some worth to put together a household in his temporary cardboard accommodations. His bed was an old door, he plucked a table out of the trash for himself, and at the head of his bed stood a stereo system that he had cleverly put together from repaired parts that the former owners had discarded. And it worked![54]

Migrant workers have found an urban voice as well as a place for themselves in Chinese cities, and their poetry has become common in China. Early Reform Era poetry celebrated rags-to-riches stories, particularly of working women in cities such as Shenzhen. Probably the most famous migrant worker poet is Xu Lizhi, who committed suicide in 2014, having worked for several years in large electronics factories like the one belonging to Foxxcom, the Taiwanese company that makes Apple products. In 2017, *Iron Moon*, the first translated anthology of migrant worker poetry was published. The title poem ends this chapter by reminding us of the human cost of China's emergence as the world's largest urban society.

> I swallowed iron
> They called it screw
> I swallowed industrial wastewater and unemployment forms
> Bent over machines, our youth died young
> I swallowed labor, I swallowed poverty
> Swallowed pedestrian bridges, swallowed this rusted out life
> I can't swallow any more
> Everything I've swallowed roils up in my throat
> I spread across the country
> A poem of shame.[55]

[54] Ibid., 63 4.
[55] Megan Walsh, 'China's Migrant Worker Poetry', *Asia Pacific Journal*, Vol. 15, no. 4 (15 June 2017). https://apjjf.org/2017/12/Walsh.html.

Conclusion

Urbanization in the Reform Era has been driven by China's reopening to the global economy and the retreat of the Chinese state. Foreign investment drove economic growth, especially in cities along the coast, which attracted millions of migrants from the interior, and now more than half of all people in China live in cities, many of them part of vast megacity regions. Changes in urban form have similarly been driven by private interests. Municipal governments have constructed CBDs, development zones, and new cities, and property developers have put up malls and residential complexes, where millions of Chinese have bought property. As SOEs have sold off much of their land, the *danwei* no longer plays such an important role in urban governance, but residents' committees still monitor people's behaviour and provide the CCP with the ability to reach deep into the community to manage people's daily lives or respond to problems such as the coronavirus pandemic.

The new urban elite in China is a mixture of those with close links to the CCP, private entrepreneurs, and a smattering of the professional classes. They and the property-owning middle class have driven an explosion in Chinese consumption, and as in earlier eras, this has brought with it an influx of foreign products and culture. However, all this construction and consumption is supported by an underclass of hundreds of millions of migrant labourers, who through their blood, sweat, and tears have built China's modern urban society.

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Conclusion

This book is an introduction to Chinese urban history from its origins to the present. I have described how cities changed, and I have summarized some of the major debates about why they did so. I have also made several arguments about Chinese urban history myself. Here, I summarize these arguments and then note some of the areas of urban history that I have either not given enough space to or in some cases barely mentioned at all. Finally, I offer some comments on the present and future of Chinese urbanization, and its impact on the rest of the world.

I make three main arguments in this book. The first is that despite being the longest-existing and largest agricultural empire the world has ever seen, China has always had a vibrant urban civilization. This civilization is not unique in global history in that Chinese cities had multiple functions and were experienced by their inhabitants in multiple ways, just like cities in any other part of the world. The second is that at some point in the nineteenth century, China began the transformation from having an urban civilization within an agricultural empire to becoming the modern urban society that we see today. Finally, I argue that throughout their long history, Chinese cities have been shaped by both domestic and international forces. We can only truly write an urban history of China if it is part of the global history of how cities have changed over the centuries. Let us explore these arguments in more detail.

Chinese Imperial Urban Civilization

The Chinese imperial urban system expanded from its origins in central China to extend across the empire, linking cities through road, river, and sea. As time went on, the urban system developed into loose regional economies, with a few large cities sitting amidst networks of towns and villages. Ideas, goods, and people flowed between cities, especially along the Grand Canal that linked the prosperous Lower

Yangzi Delta with China's capitals in the north. The Chinese urban system was itself part of wider global webs of trade, such as the Silk Roads during the Han and Tang Dynasties and the early modern global shipping routes that connected port cities around the world after the sixteenth century. Cities fulfilled multiple functions for their residents, but they still had distinctive identities. In the capitals, politics and religion held sway, hardly surprising given their role as physical manifestations of the Chinese cosmological order. However, even in the most tightly controlled capital cities such as Tang Dynasty Chang'an, commerce and culture thrived. Elsewhere, Guangzhou, Suzhou, and Yangzhou were unashamedly commercial, and Dunhuang was both a religious and a military settlement. A city's functions are not fixed for all time. Kaifeng and Luoyang are no longer the capitals of vast empires, and both have now been surpassed by the railway hub of Zhengzhou as a regional economic centre.

Chinese urban form evolved throughout the imperial period. Walls symbolized the Chinese relationship to the cosmos and allowed emperors to project power across the empire and govern the urban population. Walls also divided cities, segregating people by class, nationality, and within the home by gender. These divisions into palace and imperial cities, into inner and outer cities, and into wards proved so influential that they were copied by rulers outside China, many of whom then became Chinese emperors themselves. Elsewhere, especially on China's borders, walls helped to defend cities and the empire as a whole. As China's imperial urban civilization evolved, within cities, walls came down to be replaced by urban sprawl, and markets and gardens came to be just as important in cities as palace compounds and wards. Just as Chinese cities were not dominated by one function, so they were not characterized by a single urban form. The local ecology of the Lower Yangzi Delta meant that Suzhou was a city filled with bridges criss-crossing the canals, while the ethnic mix of cities along China's borders ensured that mosques and not pagodas dominated the urban skyline in Kashgar and Urumuqi. Cities were always nodes in the Chinese bureaucracy, and magistrates in their official residences both projected imperial power and managed local affairs. However, magistrates never governed alone. Instead, they relied on a host of retired officials, merchants, intellectuals, and other elites. Even this does not capture the extent of urban governance since social organizations often emerged to provide what the state could not. Buddhist and Daoist temples supplemented official aid during times of famine, migrant associations helped people move from city to city, and criminal gangs managed begging, gambling, and prostitution.

Urban inhabitants recognized that their cities had distinctive cultures which set them apart both from the countryside and from other cities. We know this because they wrote about them, painted them, and visited them. These sources are not only part of imperial Chinese urban culture in themselves, but they also give glimpses into the daily lives of many different types of urban inhabitants. They describe the lavish lifestyles of emperors, rich aristocrats, and merchants who used their material wealth to shape urban space and purchase cultural sophistication. They take us into markets, streets, gardens, taverns, theatres, temples, brothels, and people's homes, and through them we learn about the rhythms of urban daily life. Of course not everyone living in the city experienced it in the same way, and the life of a rich aristocrat was perhaps further from the life of a poor beggar than the life of the beggar was from that of a rural peasant. However, imperial Chinese cities would not have been the same without their constituent groups, and no one group is any more or less important to the historian. There has not been one imperial urban culture then, but many, even if it is sometimes difficult for the historian to find sources that describe the lives of those who leave few sources of their own.

Chinese Modern Urban Society

I define an urban society very simply as one in which more than half of the population live in cities, a milestone China has reached only in the past few years.

Walking through China's cities today, it can be hard to see any vestiges of their long past, yet the legacies of Chinese urban civilization are everywhere, and they too are part of urban modernity as much as gleaming skyscrapers designed by world-famous architects. Indeed, the seeds of modernity were sown long ago. Some may have been planted during the Tang-Song transition, when some Chinese cities became highly commercial. Some may date back even further than that since modern cities are carefully planned and managed, attributes that we find in the *Kaogongji* and the ward system of Han Chang'an.

Modernity in China brought with it an increase in the pace of urbanization, even before it went into overdrive in the Reform Era. Megacity regions such as those in the Yangzi and Pearl River deltas have emerged in parts of China that since the Tang-Song transition have been the most commercialized and urbanized in the country. Elsewhere, the construction of large cities has been the result of deliberate policies of industrial development pursued by the CCP. The Chinese urban system is more interconnected than ever before, but as it has for centuries it remains

unbalanced between rich coastal cities and poorer ones in the interior to which millions of migrant workers return each lunar new year. There are other asymmetries. Throughout the imperial period, northern capitals such as Chang'an, Kaifeng, and Beijing could support their populations only with a constant supply of goods flowing up the Grand Canal. Now, the Grand Canal is just one of three routes that will bring water from central China to the thirsty urban populations of the arid north. Connections between cities in the form of railways, roads, and airports have also allowed the Chinese government to extend power over the borderlands, something that its imperial forebears did through the construction of walls and fortresses. The modern Chinese urban system is therefore more interconnected than ever before, but in allowing the movement of goods and people around the country it helps to create a modern nation state, just as China's imperial urban system helped to keep the empire together.

Modern Chinese cities are a riot of architectural styles, the art deco of 1920s Shanghai sitting incongruously next to the ornate Big Hat Roofs of the Maoist era, now dwarfed by the shimmering glass of twenty-first-century skyscrapers. Where the ravages of mid-twentieth-century wars had not already left the imperial cityscape of narrow streets, walled compounds, bustling markets, and temples in ruins, the work of architects and urban planners after 1949 has invariably led to much of its destruction. Even now, despite a recognition that historical buildings preserve distinctive urban identities, they fall when property developers come seeking profit. Modern cities are planned, normally with the aim of improving the lives of their inhabitants. Successive governments in China have used various mechanisms such as urban zoning, micro-districts, gardens, and more recently eco-cities in the service of this end. Urban plans have also formed part of an attempt by successive governments to increase the power of the state, and it was during the Maoist Period that the government acquired most power over urban life, particularly within work units. Today's patchwork of state and private interests that is responsible for Chinese cities has its imperial precedents. The *Kaogongji* and the architectural guidelines in the *yingzao fashi* find their modern manifestation in urban master plans. Now municipal governments, what remains of SOE *danwei*, and party cadres in residence committees play a far more active role in governing urban life than the imperial government ever could. Yet private property developers have huge amounts of power to shape people's lives just as guilds did in centuries past.

Urban culture and daily life are the aspects of the modern city that have changed both the least and the most. They have changed the least in that cities still stand apart from the countryside. This countryside has itself

been urbanized, especially in coastal areas, and towns and villages have been swallowed up by cities. Moreover, a city like Shanghai creates the cultural and lifestyle trends that spread across the country in the same way as Suzhou during the imperial period. Just as in imperial Suzhou, daily life in modern Shanghai is differentiated according to wealth, gender, ethnicity, age, and a whole host of other characteristics. At the same time, modern urban life has been transformed, something that this book explores in part through urban nightlife, mostly that of Shanghai. In the city's clubs, bars, cafés, and restaurants, urban residents consume coffee and cocktails, strut their funky stuff freely as all genders on the dance floor, and mix with a wide range of people from around the world. This briefest of glimpses into urban life is but the smallest pixel in a painting that now has more than 700 million subjects, all adding their own individual brushstrokes to the endlessly evolving cityscape.

Chinese Urban History As Global Urban History

Chinese urban history is part of global urban history in three ways. The world has flowed into China through the circulation of people, ideas, and products. The physical structure of Chinese cities and the lives of their residents have been directly influenced by foreign empires or more recently by Western imperialism and flows of international culture into the globalized world. Finally, Chinese cities themselves have helped to shape urbanization elsewhere, either because they are nodes in the emergence of the global urban society, or because they have been models copied in other countries.

Chinese cities have long been linked to global trading routes, whether through the Silk Roads of the Han and Tang Dynasties, the shipping routes stretching out into East Asia, the Indian Ocean, and then right around the world, or the rail and air links of the modern era. Products from the perhaps mythical golden peaches of Samarkand to the supercars or high-end bags of today have been eaten, worn, listened to, read, driven, and admired. Ideas such as Buddhism and Daoism during the imperial period and nationalism and Marxism in the twentieth century have shaped people's thinking, their built environment, and their daily lives. Finally, Chinese cities have always welcomed people from afar. Traders from central Asia in Tang Dynasty Chang'an, Mongols and Manchus in Beijing, and immigrants from Britain, Europe, and the USA in treaty-port Shanghai all made Chinese cities their home. After 1949, thousands of Soviet advisors left their mark, and now it is possible to find small communities of people from almost every country in the world in large Chinese cities.

The changing territorial boundaries of China and the ascension of foreign emperors have affected cities. This is especially true of those cities along China's borders, such as in Xinjiang or the northeast, which for long periods were not under Chinese imperial control, and where the ethnic and religious mix is often different from that found elsewhere. Foreign rulers left their mark on capital cities such as Luoyang during the Northern Wei or Beijing under Mongol and then Manchu rule. Western imperialism and then Soviet influence both brought with them new ideas on how cities should be planned, which together with new technologies of construction altered cities beyond recognition. Foreign dominance also brought new ways of urban living which, like the horses ridden through the palaces of Mongol and Manchu Beijing, were often most evident in capital cities. Not so the multiple strands of urban modernity, many of which have their origins elsewhere and have been adopted and adapted to fit contemporary Chinese urban realities.

Finally, Chinese cities have influenced the development of those elsewhere. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the spread of Buddhism and Daoism carried with it pagodas and monasteries to Korea and Japan. Indeed, two capital cities in Japan were modelled on Tang Dynasty Chang'an, complete with palaces, road systems, and wards.[1] More recently, the model of Chinese urbanization has emerged as one that other countries might wish to emulate. Chinese-funded infrastructure projects are now common in countries in Africa or Southeast Asia, and property developers seek to make money in the construction of new cities. However, it remains to be seen whether a distinctive Chinese model of urbanization can make space for itself on the global stage amidst the cacophony of global influences.

Omissions

The discipline of urban history is hard to pin down. Reducing it to what goes on inside a city downplays how cities are part of broader histories of nation, capital, empire, or the environment. Moreover, cities are so vibrant that it is almost impossible to find a part of human life that does not take place within them. Finally, history, which is nothing less than the study of the totality of the past, is itself seemingly endless. For these reasons, I have not captured all of the aspects of China's urban past or given them equal weight. Beyond this, writing history involves choices. As historians, we choose which primary sources to use, and the books and articles we read influence how we interpret these sources. There are also

[1] Fu Xinian, 'Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties', 131 3.

choices about which historical approaches and theories best serve our needs as we seek to understand what our sources tell us about the past and why it matters. There are also my limitations as a scholar. These include my linguistic abilities, which explain why in my discussions of earlier centuries I have chosen to rely on translations of those whose reading of the Chinese of the period is better than my own. Finally, there is the practical limit of time, time allotted to write the book in the first place, and then within that the time available to me given my other personal and professional commitments. My choices of what to include in this book have been shaped by all of these factors. I apologize if readers feel that I have missed something or not given as much weight to something as they feel that I should have. I encourage other scholars to fill in these gaps, and I suggest some here that either could have been given more weight in this book or could be fruitful sites for further research.

Gender, Family, and Disability

I have given some space to women's lives in Chinese cities, but I have failed to mention other genders and children. There can be no doubt that women's status has almost always been inferior to that of men, but that does not mean that they have always been without power. Moreover, Chinese women are not one homogeneous group, and analyses of their roles in urban society are complicated by class, race, region, religion, education, and a host of other factors. Historians now recognize that gender and sexual orientation are fluid. Moreover, as more people identify with a broader range of genders, this brings into question how we study their presence and behaviour in cities in the past. I have no simple answers to these questions, and will simply leave them to other scholars with more knowledge of the field. The same is true of children and people with disabilities, whose voices perhaps most often go unheard amid the urban hubbub. Their interactions with urban spaces and the impact of the city on their lives is no less important, as recent global studies of the effects of air pollution on child development are now showing.[2]

[2] A good place to start for those interested in women in Chinese history, at least in the modern era, is Gail Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007). For sexuality in general, see Howard Chiang, ed., *Sexuality in China: Histories of Power and Pleasure* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018). A recent article that looks at children, at least in the twentieth century, is Aaron Moore, 'Kunming Dreaming: Hope, Change, and War in the Autobiographies of Youth in China's Southwest', in Toby Lincoln and Xu Tao, eds., *The Habitable City in China: Urban History in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 43 70.

The Environment

Although historians have studied the importance of the environment in historical processes for a long time, urban environmental history is a comparatively recent field.[3] It includes the impact of cities on the surrounding environment as they expand, and the resources required to keep them functioning, which include the release of huge amounts of carbon into the atmosphere. Urban environmental history also describes the environment within cities, such as what happens to rivers as they flow through cities, or how animals have adapted to their new surroundings. Then there is the interaction between the city, the environment, and the people, so pollution of various types might fall into this category. Urban environmental history in China is currently rather underdeveloped, and I feel that this is a rich area of research, particularly given the pressing environmental concerns that face us now and in the decades to come.

Chinese Cities Now and in the Future

Modern Chinese society continues to evolve. Here at the start of the 2020s, I finish this book with a few words about current and future issues.

Surveillance

People living in Chinese cities are now subject to unprecedented levels of surveillance. This includes being caught on camera many times a day, sometimes by facial recognition technology. Movements in and between cities are tracked at multiple points, such as on public and private transport, into and out of buildings, and when people use online payment systems such as Alipay and Wechat. In some cities, such as those in Xinjiang, this level of surveillance is part of tracking whole ethnicities, but it is becoming more pervasive throughout China. It is impossible to predict how this surveillance technology will evolve in the coming years. It has the potential to improve safety, reduce corruption and environmental pollution, and create more liveable cities. Indeed, right now in the early months of 2020, this technology is being combined with China's social and political governance structures to effectively control the spread of the disease COVID-19. At the same time, as this surveillance technology becomes linked to the complex web of laws that many commentators

[3] Sebastian Haulmann, Martin Knoll, and Detlev Mares, eds., *Concepts of Urban Environmental History* (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 2020).

lump together as China's social credit system and perhaps the forthcoming digital RMB, it could provide the Chinese state with unprecedented power to intrude into people's lives, influence their behaviour, and quash dissent.

The Environment

The world is in the midst of an environmental crisis, and cities have rarely if ever lived in harmony with the natural environment. Nature has long been sacrificed for cities in China, whether it was the loss of huge forests in the imperial period or at the cost of clean air and water now. The current trajectory of rapid urbanization in China and elsewhere around the world is very unlikely to be compatible with having a planet that will be habitable for 9 billion or more human beings in the coming decades. It is not for China alone to solve the global environmental crisis, but if the Chinese cannot rein in the excesses of urbanization, then this task will be made much harder for all of us. Part of this excess is the lifestyle of consumption that rather sadly seems built into the concrete and marble of the shopping malls that in many parts of Chinese cities are some of the few pleasant public places outside gated communities, which are of course denied to so many.

Urban Life

Chinese urban life has become more stratified. Again, this is not a situation that is unique to China, as a look at house prices in any major city shows. However, the difference between the richest and poorest in China is stark. At present, while there are certainly many grumbles and protests, this inequality does not threaten social stability. Instead, it has created or exacerbated divisions in Chinese society. Rich often look down on poor, and Han often look down on other ethnicities in China. At the same time, people in Chinese cities are forming different communities all the time, and for some this offers opportunities and breaks down social barriers. Cities in China as elsewhere can be places where dreams are made and shattered. The size of Chinese cities and the level of connectivity through the digital as well as the physical world means that people must find new ways to create communities and interact with each other.

Chinese Cities and the Global Urban Society

Since scholars began studying cities as discrete entities in their own right, they have looked at cities in Europe and America and seen them as

a model for elsewhere in the world.[4] While many of the ideas that have driven urban planning and construction originated in the West, as did the technologies that made the global urban society possible, these cities are now being surpassed in size and complexity by those in other parts of the world. To truly understand modern global urban society, it is vital that scholars do not make moral judgements about what type of urban society might be better or worse. Rather, scholars should look at how urban societies have emerged and continue to change in their particular historical and geographical contexts. If we are to solve global problems such as environmental degradation, social and gender inequality, and poor physical and mental health, and if cities are to be places where humanity fulfils its potential, we must overcome our own tendency to judge other people's cities and search for useful models all over the world.

[4] Jennifer Robinson, *Ordinary Cities between Modernity and Development* (London: Routledge, 2005).

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