

Cities of East Asia

JACK F. WILLIAMS AND KAM WING CHAN

KEY URBAN FACTS

Total Population	1.51 billion
Percent Urban Population	
China	37%
Remainder	71%
Total Urban Population	
China	479 million
Remainder	172 million
Most Urbanized Country	South Korea (83%)
Least Urbanized Country	China (37%)
Annual Urban Growth Rate	
China	3.5%
Remainder	1.2%
Number of Megacities	4
Number of Cities of More Than 1 Million	
China*	90 (incl. Hong Kong)
Remainder	23
Three Largest Cities	Tokyo, Shanghai, Osaka
World Cities	Tokyo, Hong Kong
Global Cities	Tokyo

*China has a remarkably large number of cities of more than one million because villages (mostly farm population) are included in city districts in the suburban areas. Thus, the population sizes of many cities based on city districts are likely to be larger than their true “urban” populations.

KEY CHAPTER THEMES

1. East Asia consists of two distinct parts—China and the remainder—in terms of urban development history.
2. China is one of the original centers of urban development in history and has some of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world.

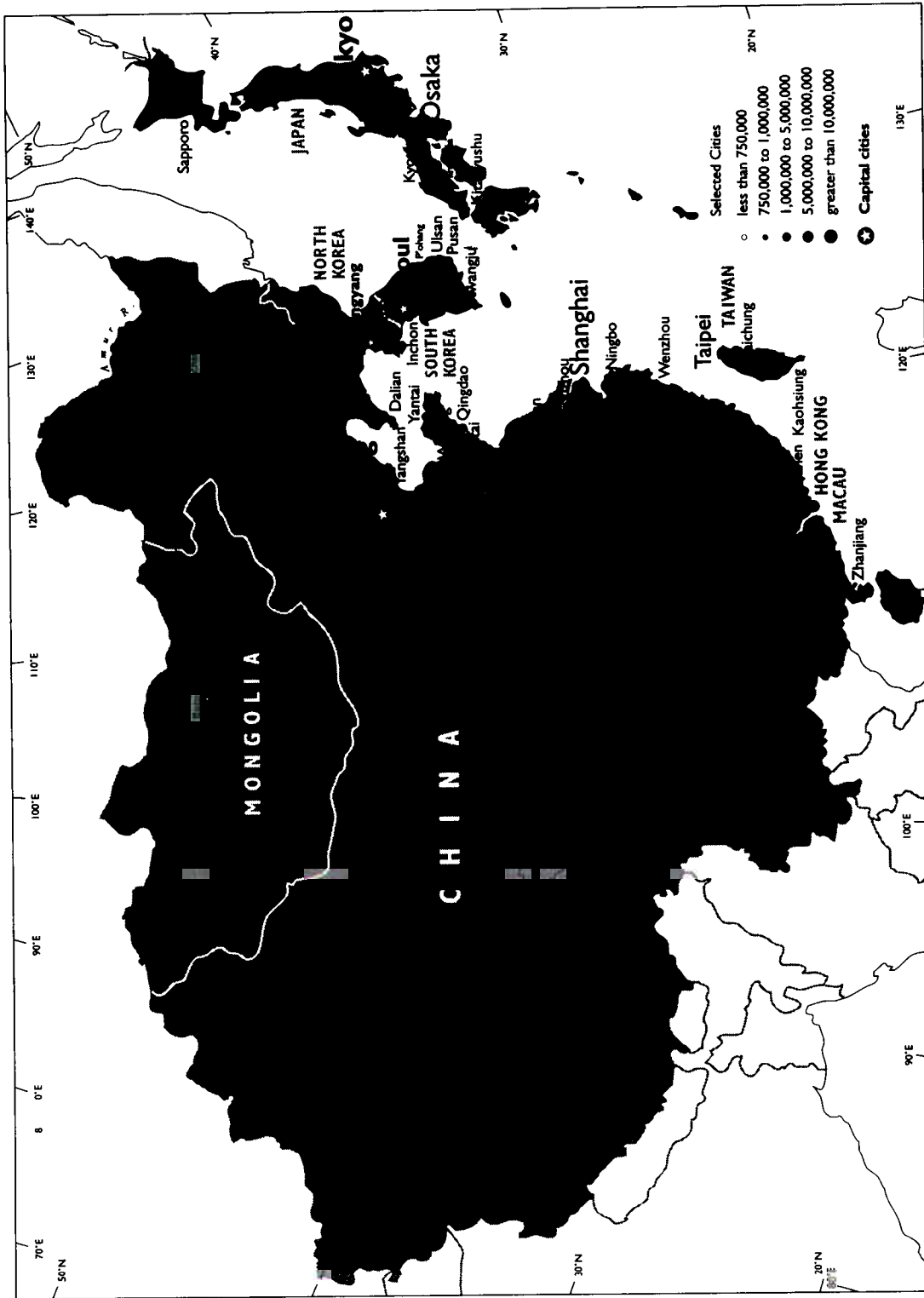


Figure 11.1 Major Cities of East Asia. Source: Data from United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects, 2001 Revision (New York: United Nations Population Division, 2002)*, www.unpopulation.org.

3. China influenced early urban development in the other states in the region, but urban centers developed outside of China primarily under different circumstances and in different forms.
4. Colonialism had a less important role in urban development in East Asia compared with other parts of Asia and the colonial realms; nonetheless, many large Chinese cities were treaty ports under colonialism, while Hong Kong and Macau were entirely creations of colonialism.
5. Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Taiwan are already highly industrialized and urbanized and deeply involved in the global economy.
6. China has been following in the footsteps of the rest of the region since the late 1970s and now is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world.
7. China is unique in being still primarily rural in its population distribution, yet having the largest urban population and the greatest number of million-plus cities of any country in the world.
8. East Asia has a large number of the first- and second-order world cities, led by Tokyo, which ranks with London and New York as the only three truly “global” cities, evidence of this region’s economic power.
9. North Korea is the lone holdout in East Asia in clinging to a rigid, Stalinist socialist system in its cities and economic development, in contrast with China and Mongolia.
10. Although the cities of East Asia have experienced the usual panoply of urban problems, a number of the region’s cities, especially outside of China, are regularly ranked as among the most livable in Asia.

East Asia exudes power and success. Nowhere is this more evident than in its great cities, such as Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Hong Kong, and Taipei (fig. 11.1). Emerging in the past half century to rival the old power centers of the world—North America and Europe—East Asia’s cities have been the command centers for the prodigious economic advances of much of this region. These are also among the largest cities in the world. Yet, compared with the often-struggling agglomerations found in poorer realms of the world, East Asia’s cities have been more successful in coping with rapid growth and large size. The region is sharply split between China, which is rapidly urbanizing but still only about 37% urban, and the rest of the region, which is already 72% urban. This dichotomy is reflected in the character of the cities and the processes, past and present, that have shaped them.

THE EVOLUTION OF CITIES

The Traditional or Preindustrial City

East Asia, especially China, is one of the original centers of urbanism in world history. Many cities here can trace their origins directly back two millennia or more. One can see interesting parallels with the earliest cities in other culture realms, with their focus on ceremonial and administrative centers planned in highly formal style to symbolize the beliefs and traditions of the cultures involved.

Changan

In its idealized form, the traditional city reflected the ancient Chinese conception of the universe and the role of the emperor as intermediary between heaven and earth. This idealized conception was most apparent in the

national capitals, but many elements of this conception could be seen in lesser cities at lower administrative levels. The Tang capital of Changan (present-day Xi'an) was one of the best early expressions of the classic Chinese capital city. Founded more than 3,000 years ago, Changan was the capital of a number of dynasties and states around the valley of the Wei River (a branch of the Yellow River). But the city reached its true flowering during the brilliant Tang dynasty (A.D. 618–906).

As typified in Changan, the city was a physical expression of the cosmological beliefs of an agricultural people. Thus, the city was divided in a grid pattern, into four parts representing the four quadrants of the heavens. Each side of the square enclosed by the city wall could be identified with a daily position of the sun or with one of the four seasons. The royal palace represented the polar star, which dominates the universe, so the palace at the center dominated the city (and in a broader context, the nation as a whole) and separated markets from centers of religious observance. The main north-south street through the city represented the celestial meridian. The city wall and gates were oriented to the cardinal directions. South, toward the sun, was the most favorable direction; hence, the palace (or lesser administrative headquarters in lower-order cities) always faced south. Some cities did not even have north gates. In short, the city represented in highly formalized morphology the interrelationship between people and nature. Inevitably, the demands of modern urban development have necessitated, in the eyes of planners at least, the tearing down of most city walls, and thus the removal of a colorful legacy of the past. The sites of the old walls commonly become the routes of new, broad boulevards. One of the few cities whose original wall has been retained almost in its entirety is Xi'an, because of its historic role.

Beijing

Of all the historic, traditional cities, none is more famous than Beijing (Peking), the present national capital. Although a city had existed on the site for centuries, Beijing became significant when it was rebuilt in 1260 by Kublai Khan as his winter capital. It was this Beijing that Marco Polo saw. The city was destroyed with the fall of the Mongols and the establishment of the Ming dynasty in 1368. Nanjing served as national capital briefly after that, but in 1421 the capital was moved back to the rebuilt city (now named Beijing, or "Northern Capital," for the first time), where it has remained with few interruptions until today. The Ming capital was composed of four parts, the Imperial Palace (or Forbidden City), the imperial city, the inner city, and the outer city, like a series of nested boxes. It is the former Forbidden City that can still be partially seen within the walls of what is today called the Palace Museum.

The Chinese City as Model: Japan and Korea

Changan was the national capital at a time when Japan was a newly emerging civilization adopting and adapting many features of China, including city planning. As a result, the Japanese capital cities of the period were modeled after Changan. Indeed, the city as a distinct form first appeared in Japan at this time, beginning with the completion of Keijokyo (now called Nara) in 710. Although Nara today is a rather small prefectural capital, it once represented the grandeur of the Nara period (710–784). Keiankyo (modern-day Kyoto) was to survive as the best example of early Japanese city planning. Serving as national capital from 794 to 1868, when the capital was formally shifted to Edo (now Tokyo), Kyoto still exhibits

the original rectangular form, grid pattern, and other features copied from Changan. However, modern urban/industrial growth has greatly increased the size of the city and covered or obscured much of the original form. Moreover, the Chinese city morphology, with its rigid symmetry and formalized symbolism, was essentially alien to the Japanese culture to begin with. Even the shortage of level land in Japan tended to work against the full realization of the Chinese concept of the city.

Korea also experienced the importation of Chinese city-planning concepts. The Chinese city model was most evident in the national capital of Seoul, which became the premier city of Korea in 1394. The city has never really lost its dominance since. Early maps of Seoul reveal the imprint of Chinese city forms. Those forms were not completely achieved, however, in part because of the rugged landscape around Seoul, which was located in a confining basin just north of the lower Han River. Succeeding centuries of development and rebuilding, especially in the 20th century during the Japanese occupation (1910–1945) and after the Korean War (1950–1953), obliterated most of the original form and architecture of the historic city. A modern commercial/industrial city, one of the largest in the world, has arisen on the ashes of the old city (reinforcing the popular, other name for Seoul, the “Phoenix City,” after the mythological bird that symbolizes immortality). A few relics of the past, such as some of the palaces and a few of the main gates, stand today as a result of restoration efforts.

Colonial Cities

The colonial impact on East Asia was relatively less intrusive than what occurred in Southeast and South Asia, but was notable nonetheless.

First Footholds: The Portuguese and the Dutch

The Portuguese and the Dutch were the first European colonists to arrive in East Asia. Seeking trade and the opportunity to spread Christianity, the Portuguese made some penetration of southern Japan via the port of Nagasaki in the latter 16th century. Their greatest influence was actually indirect, through the introduction of firearms and military technology into Japan. This led to the development of stronger private armies among the *daimyo* (feudal rulers) of Japan, which in turn led to the building of large castles in the center of each *daimyo*'s domain. These castles, modeled after fortresses in medieval Europe, were commonly located on strategic high points, surrounded by the *daimyo*'s retainers and the commercial town. These centers eventually served as the nuclei for many of the cities of modern Japan.

Macau

The Portuguese also tried to penetrate China. Reaching Guangzhou (Canton) in 1517, they attempted to establish themselves there for trade, but were forced by the Chinese authorities to accept the small peninsula of Macau, near the mouth of the Pearl River, south of Guangzhou. Chinese authorities walled off the peninsula and rent was paid for the territory until the Portuguese declared it independent from China in 1849. With only 10 sq mi (26 sq km) of land (land reclamation in recent years has added a little to the total), Macau remained the only Portuguese toehold in East Asia, especially after the eclipse of their operations in southern Japan in the 17th century. Macau was most important as a trading center and a haven for refugees. The establishment of Hong Kong in the 19th century on the opposite side of the Pearl River estuary signaled the beginning of Macau's slow decline, from



Figure 11.2 Macau's international airport, opened in the late 1990s, stretches on reclaimed land between the two islands of Coloane and Taipa. In the distance, on the peninsula, is the main urban area of Macau. Collectively, these three pieces of land form the Macau Special Administrative Region of China. (Photo courtesy Macau government)

which it has never fully recovered. In the post-1950 period, Macau survived largely on tourism (as a sort of seedy reminder of what Hong Kong looked like before being Manhattanized) and gambling (as a downscale Asian version of Las Vegas, gangsters and all). In the 1990s, Macau attempted some modest industrialization, as it integrated with the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone just across the border and sought to become a regional air hub by constructing an international airport (still greatly underutilized) on reclaimed land (fig. 11.2). Since reversion to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1999, Macau has faced a somewhat uncertain economic future within the South China economic zone.

The Dutch impact in East Asia was much less important. Primarily concerned with Southeast Asia and the Dutch East Indies

(present-day Indonesia), the Dutch penetrated East Asia primarily for the brief period in which they controlled the island of Formosa (Taiwan), during 1624–1662, which first brought the island to the world's attention. During that time, the Dutch began to develop modern agriculture and established the site of the city of Tainan, the original capital and oldest city on the island.

The Treaty Ports of China

It was the other Western colonial powers, arriving in the 18th and 19th centuries, that had the greatest impact on the growth of cities and urbanization in China. Most important were the British and Americans, but the French, Germans, Belgians, Russians, and others were also involved, as were the Japanese, who joined the action toward the close of the 19th century.

It all began officially with the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, which ceded to Britain the island of Hong Kong and the right to reside in five ports—Guangzhou, Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai. Further refinements of this treaty in succeeding years gave to the other foreign powers the same rights as the British (the “Open Door” policy). A second set of wars and treaties, in 1856–1860, led to the opening of further ports. By 1911, approximately ninety cities of China—along the entire coast, up the Chang Jiang (Yangtze) valley, in North China, and in Manchuria—with a third of a million foreign residents, were opened as treaty ports or open ports (fig. 11.3).

The treaty ports introduced a dynamic new order into traditional Chinese society. The Westerners established themselves in the ports to make money, but they also had the right of extraterritoriality, which guaranteed them coverage by Western legal procedures. Gradually, taxation, police forces, and other features of municipal government were developed by the Western countries controlling the treaty ports. China’s sovereignty thus was largely supplanted in cities in the concession areas, leased in perpetuity by the foreigners for modest rents paid to the Chinese government.

Shanghai

Shanghai (literally, “On the Sea”) had existed as a small settlement for two millennia. By the 18th century, the city was a medium-sized county seat with a population of about 200,000 and built in traditional city style, with a wall. Deposition of silt by the Chang Jiang over the centuries, however, had made Shanghai no longer a port directly fronting the sea. The town was now located about 15 mi (24 km) up the Huangpu River, a minor tributary of the Chang Jiang.

Western control of Shanghai began with the British concession in 1846 and expanded over the years to cover most of the city. In 1863, the British and American areas were joined to form the Shanghai International Settlement, which by the heyday of the 1920s contained some 60,000 foreigners, the largest concentration in China. The Shanghai Municipal Council dealt with all the problems of the large city—roads, jetties, drainage, sanitation, police, recreation, and the rest. Hence, Shanghai, as well as the other treaty ports, served as magnets for wealthy Chinese entrepreneurs and for millions of impoverished peasants seeking a haven in a deteriorating China. The wealthy Chinese invested in manufacturing and other aspects of the commercial economy; the peasants provided abundant cheap labor. By the end of its first century under Western control, just before World War II, Shanghai handled half of China’s foreign trade and had half the country’s mechanized factories. The city’s population of four million made it one of the largest cities in the world; it was more than twice the size of its nearest rivals, Beijing and Tianjin. Shanghai even gave its name to a new word in the English language—to be “shanghaied” (i.e., kidnapped to serve on the ships plying the trade routes between the Western world and China).

The Westerners simply profited from a natural locational advantage near the mouth of the Chang Jiang delta for handling the trade of the largest and most populous river basin in China. During the 20th century, Shanghai’s manufacturing was able to compete successfully with that of other centers emerging in China, despite the absence of local supplies of raw materials, because of the ease and cheapness of water transport. This was achieved also in spite of a relatively poor site—an area of

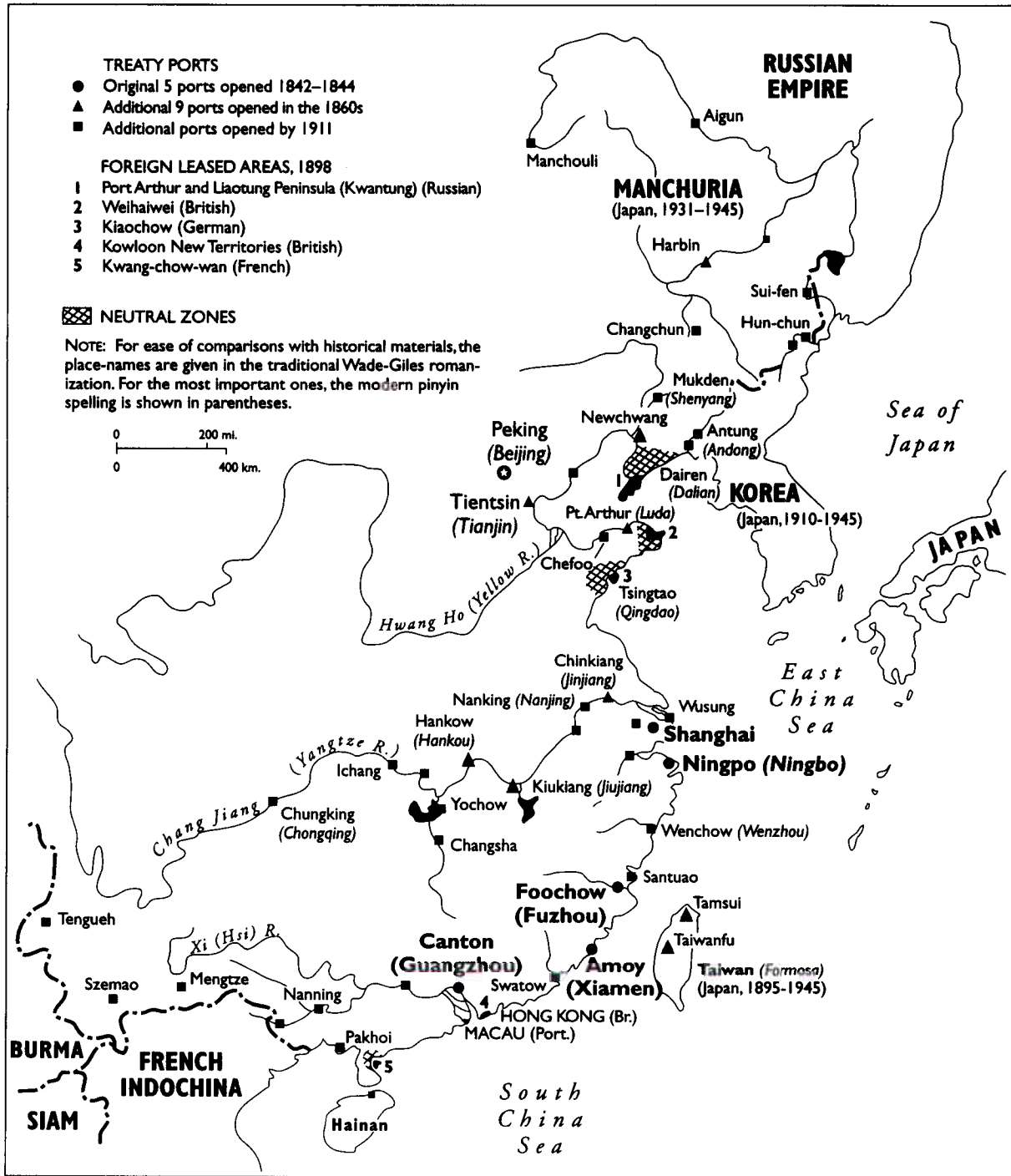


Figure 11.3 Foreign Penetration of China in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries. Source: adapted from J. Fairbank et al., *East Asia: Tradition and Transformation* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973), 577.

deep silt deposits, high water table, poor natural drainage, insufficient water supply, poor foundations for modern buildings of any great height, and a harbor on a narrow river that required regular dredging for oceangoing ships.

The Japanese Impact

There was a colonial impact on other Chinese cities, too, of course. Particularly significant was the Japanese impact. In Manchuria (northeastern China), which the Japanese took over in the

1930s, many of the major cities were modernized and developed along the Western lines that the Japanese had adopted in development of their own cities after 1868. The Japanese also introduced the beginnings of the industrial base that was to make Manchuria the most important industrial region in China. Industry was concentrated in a string of major cities, particularly Harbin, Changchun, and Shenyang, connected by the railway network that the Japanese built. As with Shanghai, in these cities there arose a new Western-type commercial/industrial city alongside the traditional Chinese city, which was eventually engulfed and left behind as a remnant of the past.

The Japanese also greatly influenced the urban landscape of their two other colonies in East Asia. During their rule of Taiwan (1895–1945) and Korea (1910–1945), the Japanese introduced essentially the same Western-style urban planning practices, filtered through Japanese eyes, that they later brought to Manchuria's cities. Taipei was made the colonial capital of Taiwan and transformed from an obscure Chinese provincial capital into a relatively modern city of about 250,000. The city wall was razed, roads and infrastructure were improved, and many colonial government buildings were constructed. The most prominent was the former governor's palace, with its tall, red-brick tower, which still stands in the heart of old Taipei, now used as the presidential office and executive branch headquarters for Taiwan's democratic government. Like Taipei, Seoul was transformed to serve the needs of the Japanese colonial rule of the Korean peninsula. In Seoul's case, however, this meant deliberately tearing down traditional palaces and other structures to be replaced by Japanese colonial buildings as part of a brutal effort to stamp out Korean resistance to Japanese rule.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong (literally, "Fragrant Harbor") differed from other treaty ports in that there was little pretense of Chinese sovereignty here (though the PRC government insisted after 1949 that Hong Kong was part of China). Hong Kong was ceded to Britain at the same time Shanghai was opened up in the 1840s. Hong Kong became second only to Shanghai as the most important entrepôt on the China coast during the following century of colonialism.

The reason for the importance of Hong Kong was not difficult to find. In 1842, the city began with acquisition of Hong Kong Island, a sparsely populated rocky island some 70 mi (113 km) downstream from Guangzhou. The Kowloon (literally, "Seven Dragons") peninsula across the harbor was obtained in a separate treaty in 1858. Then, in 1898, the New Territories—an expanse of islands and land on the large peninsula north of Kowloon—were leased from China for 99 years (hence, reversion to China took place in 1997), creating a total area of about 400 sq mi (1,040 sq km) for the colony. The site factor that so strongly favored its growth was one of the world's great natural harbors, between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Indeed, the advantages of the harbor outweighed the site disadvantages—limited level land for urban expansion, inadequate water supply, and insufficient land nearby to feed the population. The city's location at the mouth of southern China's major drainage basin gave Hong Kong a large hinterland, which greatly expanded when the north-south railway from Beijing was pushed through to Guangzhou in the 1920s. Thus, for about a century, Shanghai and Hong Kong largely dominated the foreign trade of China.

Japan: The Asian Exception

Following the classic capitals of Nara and Kyoto around the 8th century, other cities followed in Japan, principally the centers of feudal clans. Most of these were transitory, but a sizeable number survived into the modern era. One of the best-preserved historic towns today is Kanazawa, on the Sea of Japan in the Hokuriku region. The city was left behind by Japan's modernization after 1868 and escaped the devastation of World War II, since it had no industrial or military importance. Historic preservation since the 1960s has kept much of the lovely 19th-century architecture and character of the old city, a rare exception to the urban development patterns found throughout most of Asia.

Japan is referred to as the "Asian exception" because it had only a minor colonial experience. Indeed, Japan was itself a colonial power in Asia. Hence, the urban history of Japan involved an evolution almost directly from the premodern, or traditional, city to the modern commercial/industrial city. Japan did have treaty ports and extraterritoriality imposed on it by the Treaty of 1858 with the United States, which led to foreigners residing in Japan as they did in China. This colonial phase was short-lived, however. Japan was able to change its system and reestablish its territorial integrity by emulating rather than resisting the West. Extraterritoriality came formally to an end in 1899, as Japan emerged an equal partner among the Western imperial powers. The relatively benign impact of the Western colonial presence in Japan can still be seen in a few places, nonetheless, such as the former colonial residential area in Kobe.

Gradual political unification during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) led to the establishment of a permanent network of cities

in Japan. The castle town served as the chief catalyst for urban growth. One of the most important of these new castle towns to emerge at this time was Osaka. In 1583, a grand castle was built that served as the nucleus for the city to come. Various policies stimulated the growth of Osaka and other cities, including prohibitions on foreign trade after the mid-1630s, the destruction of minor feudal castles, and prohibitions on the building of more than one castle to a province. These policies had the effect of consolidating settlements and encouraging civilians to migrate to the more important castle communities.

The new castle towns, such as Osaka, were ideally located (fig. 11.4). Because of their economic and administrative functions, they generally were located on level land near important landscape features that gave the castle towns an advantage for future urban growth. Thus, Osaka emerged as the principal business, financial, and manufacturing center in Tokugawa Japan. The cities of that period were tied together by a network of highways that stimulated trade and city growth. The most famous of these early roads was the Tokaido Highway, running from Osaka eastward through Nagoya (which emerged as another major commercial and textile manufacturing center) to the most important city of this period and after, Edo (Tokyo).

Among the major cities of Asia, Tokyo was a relative latecomer. It was founded in the 15th century, when a minor feudal lord built a rudimentary castle on a bluff near the sea, about where the Imperial Palace stands today. The site was a good one, however, for a major city—it had a natural port, hills that could easily be fortified, and plenty of room on the Kanto Plain behind for expansion. Tokyo really got its start, though, a century later, when Ieyasu, the Tokugawa ruler at that time, decided to make Edo



Figure 11.4 The beautifully restored castle of Hikone, in Shiga Prefecture, central Honshu, is a classic example of an old castle town from Japan's feudal past. (Photo by Jack Williams)

his capital. Much of Tokyo still bears the imprint of the grand design that Ieyasu and his descendants laid out for Edo. They planned the Imperial enclosure, a vast area of palaces, parks, and moats in the very heart of the city. Much of the land on which central Tokyo stands today was reclaimed from the bay, a method of urban expansion that was to typify Japanese city building from then on, reflecting the shortage of level land and the need for good port facilities. By the early 17th century, Edo already had a population of 150,000 surrounding the most magnificent castle in Japan. By the 18th century, the population was well over one million, making Edo one of the largest cities in the world (fig. 11.5).

Edo's growth was based initially on its role as a political center, tied to the other cities by an expanding network of roads. An early dichotomy was established between Osaka, as the business center, and Tokyo, as the cultural and political center, that lingers even today in

the rivalry between the two. With the restoration of Emperor Meiji in 1868, Japan's modern era began. The emperor's court was moved from Kyoto to Edo, which was renamed "Tokyo" ("Eastern Capital") to signify its additional role as national political capital. This transfer of political functions, plus the great industrialization and modernization program that was undertaken from the 1870s on, gave Tokyo a boost that started it on its astounding growth during the 20th century.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF EAST ASIAN CITIES

It is not easy to generalize about the internal structure of cities in East Asia. This is partly because of the basic division between socialist and nonsocialist urban systems that characterized the region for so long. It also is because

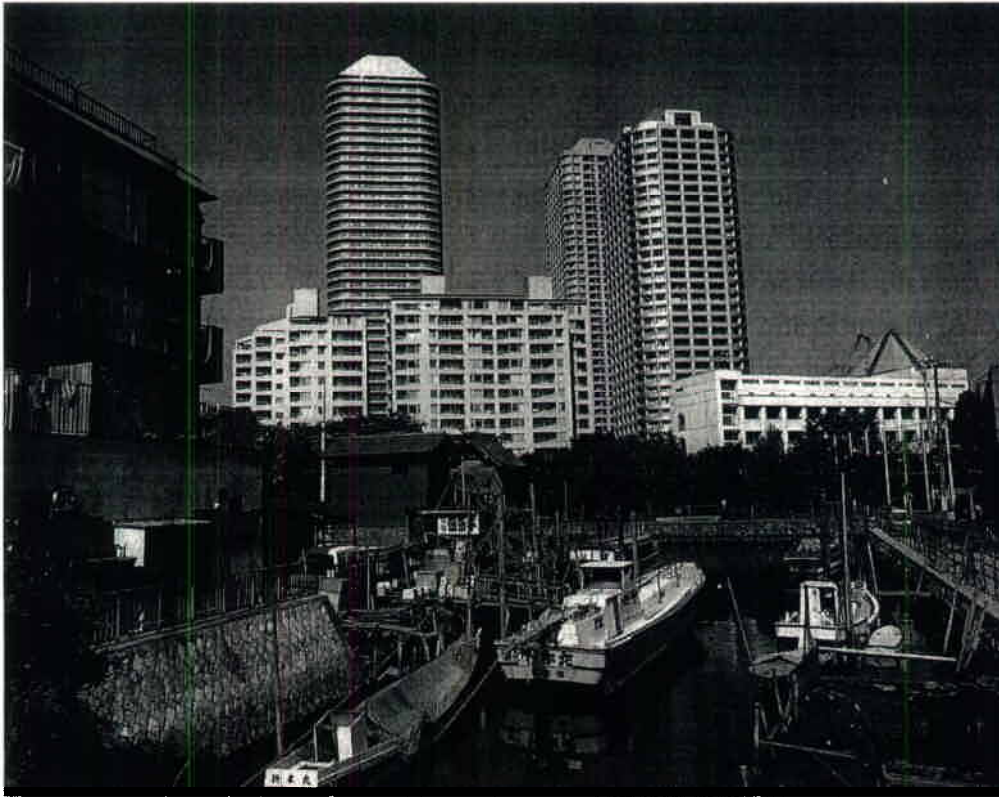


Figure 11.5 Waterfront development in Tokyo's Chuo Ward is an effort to preserve some remnants of premodern Tokyo. (Photo courtesy of Tokyo City Government)

of the imperfect fit of Western urban models to even the nonsocialist cities of the region. The socialist urban model is discussed elsewhere in this book, particularly the chapters on Europe (chapter 5) and Russia (chapter 6). The Chinese variant of the socialist urban model is briefly examined in this chapter.

In the rest of East Asia, and now increasingly also in reformist China, the forces that have produced and shaped cities are much the same as in the Western world, but with modifying local conditions peculiar to each country and society. These forces include: rapid industrialization focused in cities, leading to high rates of rural-urban migration, rates which have now largely tapered off in the more developed economies (Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), but that are escalating in China; private ownership of property and dominance of pri-

vate investment decisions affecting land use; varying degrees of government involvement in zoning and urban planning, some of it successful but a great deal of it ineffective; high standards of living and consumption, and increasing reliance on the private automobile for transportation, in spite of often very good public transport systems; and a relatively high degree of racial homogeneity but sometimes significant stratification into socioeconomic classes. These and other factors have had varying degrees of impact on the growth of cities, and on how space is used in cities, and hence on the types and severity of problems. Western urban models of the internal structure of cities, discussed elsewhere in this book, do not entirely fit the cities of East Asia. Nonetheless, elements of each model can be found, as noted in various places in this chapter.

REPRESENTATIVE CITIES

With the exception of (British) Hong Kong and (Portuguese) Macau, the colonial era in East Asia ended with the defeat of Japan in 1945. The emergence of communist governments in the late 1940s in China (PRC) and North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), joining the already communist government of Mongolia (Mongolian People's Republic, established in the 1920s), split the region into two distinctly different paths of urban (and national) development: the path of the socialist cities of China, North Korea, and Mongolia versus that of the nonsocialist (free-market) cities of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. This became the basic classification of cities of the region until the late 1970s at least. At that time, China entered the post-Mao or reform era, in which free-market forces increasingly began to drive the economy and determine the path of urban development. Only North Korea remained basically wedded to a rigid socialist path.

One can also classify the major cities of the region on the basis of function and size. From this perspective, several cities illustrate the distinctive types: megalopolises or superconurbations (Tokyo), recently decolonized cities (Hong Kong), primate cities (Seoul), regional centers (Taipei), and formerly socialist cities undergoing transformation (Beijing and Shanghai).

Tokyo and the Tokaido Megalopolis: Unipolar Concentration

Japan illustrates especially well the phenomenon of superconurbations or megalopolises. A distinctive feature of Japan's urban pattern is the concentration of its major cities into a relatively small portion of an already small coun-

try. In spite of more than a century of industrialization, Japan did not pass the 50% urban figure until after World War II. Between 1950 and 1970, the percentage of people living in cities with a population of 50,000 or more rose from 33% to 64%, while the total urban population reached 72%, a figure comparable to that of the United States in the same year. In other words, it took Japan only 25 years to go through a process that took many decades in the United States. Since 1970, the proportion of urban population has continued to increase, but more slowly, reaching 78% by the late 1990s (and projected to reach 85% by 2025). As the urban population grew dramatically, so did the number and size of cities. Small towns and villages (those with fewer than 10,000 people) declined sharply in numbers and population, while medium and large cities grew rapidly, all the natural outcome of Japan's phenomenal economic growth after the war.

Almost all of the major cities are found in the core region. (The one significant exception is Sapporo, the regional center of the northern island of Hokkaido.) This region consists of a narrow band that begins with the urban node of Fukuoka/Kitakyushu/Shimonoseki at the western end of the Great Inland Sea, which separates the major islands of Japan. The core then stretches eastward along both shores of the Great Inland Sea (of the islands of Honshu and Shikoku) to the Tokyo region. In between, especially along the southern coast of Honshu, are strings of industrial cities, such as Hiroshima, which grew to importance in the last century.

Within this core is an inner core, containing more than 44% of Japan's total population of 126 million, known as the Tokaido Megalopolis (named after the Tokugawa-era road through this area) and consisting of the three urban/industrial nodes of Keihin (Tokyo-

Yokohama), with more than 30 million people; Hanshin (Osaka-Kobe-Kyoto), with more than 16 million; and Chukyo (Nagoya), at nearly 9 million. Within this inner core, Tokyo dominates. There really are two distinct parts to Japan, in a classic core-periphery imbalance—the “developed” capital region centered on Tokyo and the “underdeveloped” regions (in a relative sense) elsewhere in Japan (fig. 11.6). Rapid growth from the late 1950s through the early 1970s saw a shift from rural areas to big cities in general. Since then, the migration and growth have been increasingly toward Tokyo at the expense of the rest of the country, including Tokyo’s long-standing rival, Osaka, a phenomenon dubbed *unipolar concentration*. Tokyo continues to expand, draining people and capital investment from the other regions, many of which are stagnating. The Osaka region (also known by the pre-modern name of Kansai) has not seen growth of new industries to replace the smokestack industries, such as steel and shipbuilding, while Osaka businesses continue to relocate to Tokyo. This combination encourages out-migration and depresses personal consumption. Nagoya has fared somewhat better than Osaka by managing to maintain employment and urban vitality in its central city. For people eager to be in the mainstream of modern Japan, living in or near Tokyo is essential.

Tokyo is truly a primate city; its dominance within Japan is awesome. Tokyo’s roughly one-quarter share of Japan’s total population is concentrated in barely 4% of the nation’s land area. As a result, population density in Tokyo is 16 times that of Japan as a whole. Whatever quantitative measures one wishes to use, Tokyo has a disproportionate share, whether it is of workers, factories, headquarters of major corporations and financial institutions, institutions for higher education,

industrial production, exports, or number of college students. As the national capital, Tokyo of course has all the key governmental functions concentrated here. As a result, all 47 prefectural governments have branch offices in Tokyo, in order to maintain effective liaison with the national government. One observer likened the situation to that of the Tokugawa era of the 18th century, when the provincial feudal lords were required to maintain a second household in what was then Edo, as a means of maintaining the power of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The obeisance to Tokyo remains to this day, albeit in a new form.

Tokyo City itself has increased in population only slightly, while the 23 wards of the central city have actually lost some population. By contrast, the three key prefectures surrounding Tokyo (Saitama, Chiba, Kanagawa) gained significantly, evidence of the suburban sprawl of the built-up area into satellite towns and cities. Because land became so scarce and expensive in Tokyo, virtually the entire perimeter of Tokyo Bay now consists of reclaimed land (fig. 11.7).

Western influences played some role in the prewar development of Tokyo. Unfortunately, the devastation of the 1923 earthquake and the urgent need for quick rebuilding precluded widespread adoption of Western urban planning ideas. The devastation from World War II bombing had the same effect. In spite of ambitious plans drawn up immediately after the war, few of those ideas were implemented. The result was a tendency for the city to grow haphazardly in a manner that resulted in congestion and a disorganized city layout. By and large, growth has been concentrated around key subcenters, such as Shinjuku (now the city government headquarters) and Shibuya, and along the key transport arteries (rail and ex-

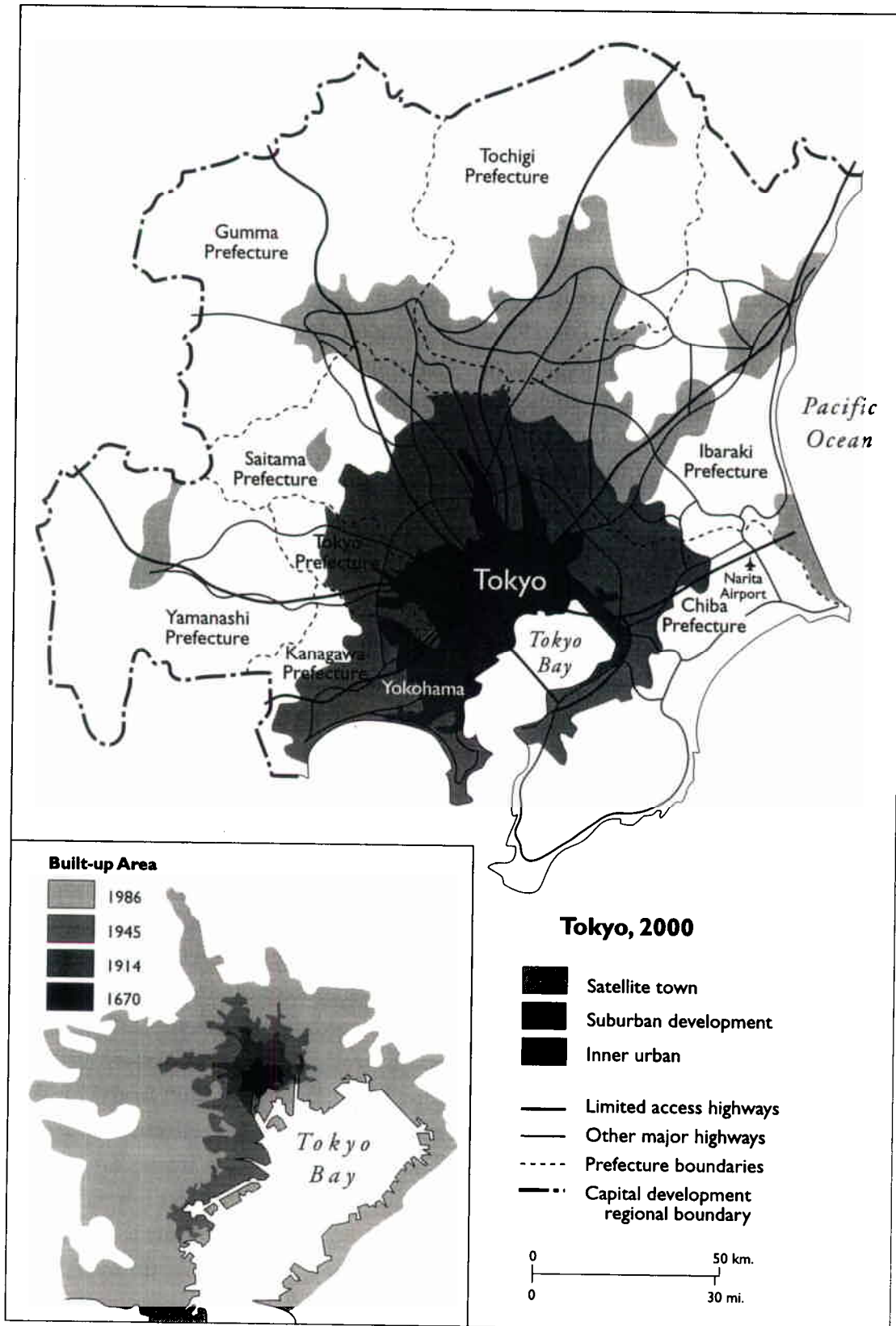


Figure 11.6 Tokyo Capital Development Region. Source: Tokyo Metropolitan Government

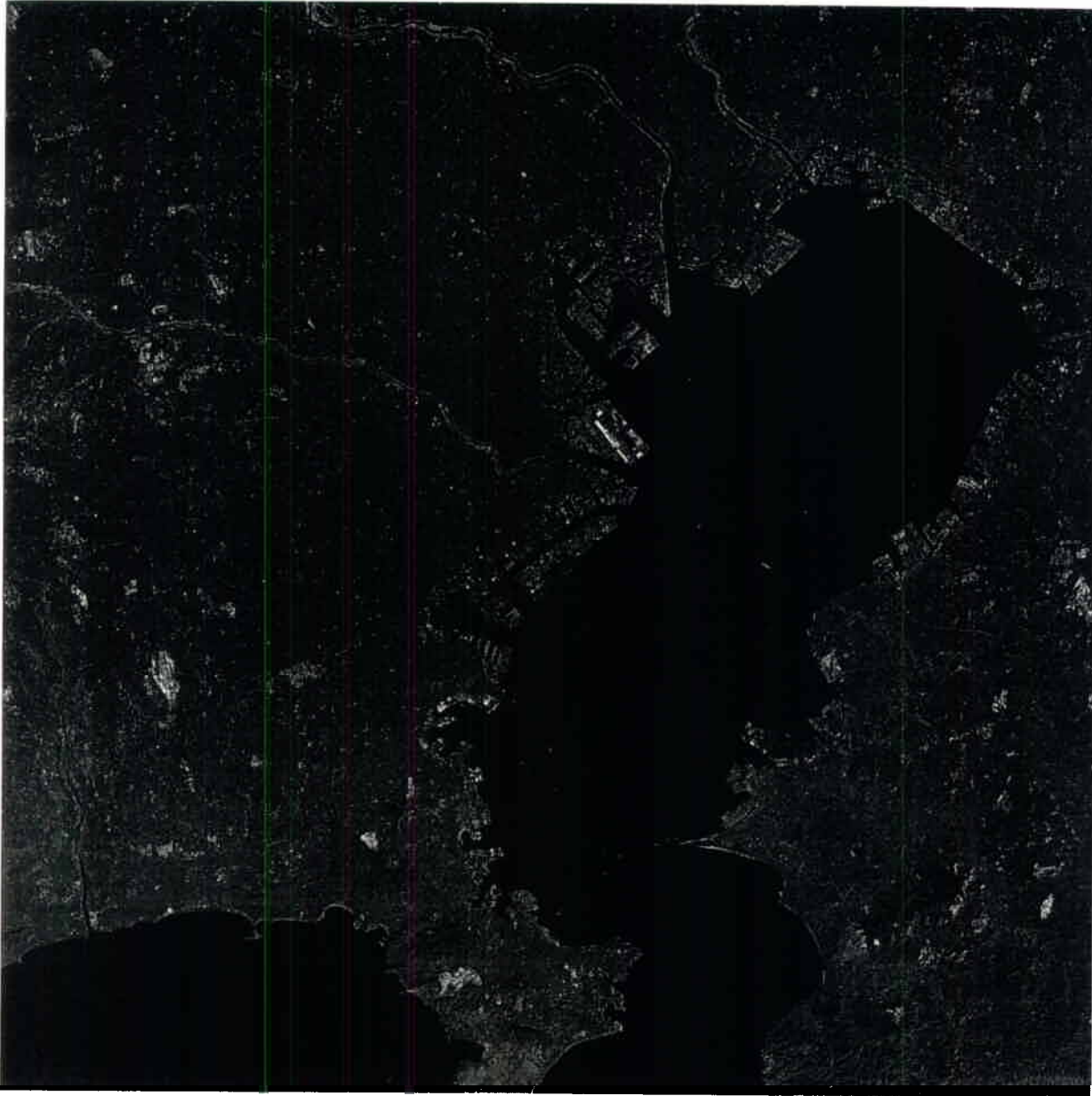


Figure 11.7 This Landsat image of the Tokyo Bay region dramatically illustrates the vast sprawl of Greater Tokyo, which completely surrounds Tokyo Bay along a largely human-made coastline. The new Tokyo Bay Aqua Line, a combination bridge/tunnel connecting Tokyo City in the northwest with Chiba Prefecture in the southeast, is faintly visible (the white streak in the middle is the entrance to the tunnel).

pressway) radiating outward from the old historic core of the Imperial Palace (Chiyoda District). Hence, the city has a distinct concentric ring pattern intermixed with elements of the multinucleic model. The city also has taken on elements of the American-style “doughnut” model, because of spiraling land costs in the

1980s and desertion by middle-class people seeking affordable housing in outer areas. They commute to the central city to work in the daytime, but return to the suburbs in the evening. Unlike in U.S. cities, however, there are no serious racial/socioeconomic class differences fueling this residential pattern (except relating

to the minority *burakumin*, or untouchables, and the Korean minority, who tend to live in their own ghettos).

Japan's "bubble" economy burst starting in the early 1990s, when both residential and commercial land prices peaked at 200–300% of what they had been in the early 1980s. Land prices have slid precipitously downward since then, returning to early 1980s levels or lower by 2001. The bottom of the real estate bust appeared to have been reached, at least for Tokyo.

Beijing: The Less Forbidden City

Beijing, the great "Northern Capital" for centuries, was a horizontal, compact city of magnificent architecture and artistic treasures of China's past grandeur when the New China began in 1949 (although, to be sure, the city had suffered greatly from general neglect during the hundred years of foreign intrusion, civil war, and internal strife since the 1840s). Centered on the former Forbidden City (Imperial Palace), Beijing was renowned for its sophisticated culture and refined society. The beautiful Beijing dialect became the national spoken language after the collapse of the dynasty in 1911. The city's only real function was as political and cultural center of a vast nation. There was hardly any industry and the population was not large.

The situation changed dramatically after 1949. For starters, for the half century after 1949, the city expanded from just 1.7 million people in 24 sq mi (62 sq km) to a vast metropolis of about 12 million in its 13 city districts (or about 14 million people in more than 6,500 sq mi, or 16,800 sq km, including rural counties under Beijing's administration). The population growth was due to the physical expansion of the urban area, natural population growth, and net migration. Espe-

cially since the early 1960s, the population has been strictly regulated. Indeed, because of its prime importance as the restored national capital (Nanjing was the national capital during the Republican era, from the late 1920s until 1949), migration to Beijing, like Moscow under the Soviets, was the most strictly controlled among all China's cities. Functionally, Beijing was also transformed into a *producing* city, as it became one of China's key industrial centers, while retaining its ongoing function as center of government, culture, and education. Other functions such as commerce and services were greatly curtailed. With a command-type economy geared to central planning and five-year plans—much like those of the then Soviet Union—Beijing became even more the power center of China, analogous to Moscow.

The changes inflicted on Beijing's landscape were enormous in the Maoist era (1949–1976), especially during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). Although objectives, policies, and urban plans for Beijing fluctuated during the Maoist era, the end result was the transformation of Beijing into a vast, gray city of arrow-straight, wide boulevards and huge government buildings, punctuated by seemingly endless rows of drab apartment blocks in the socialist style. The charming traditional courtyard houses in *hutong*, or narrow alleys, in the old city were gradually subdivided for multiple families, but often without the necessary updates and maintenance (fig. 11.8). A huge area in front of the Tiananmen ("Gate of Heavenly Peace") entrance to the Palace Museum was cleared of structures, greatly expanding the existing square. The largest open square of any city in the world, Tiananmen became the staging ground for vast spectacles, parades, and rallies organized by the government on national days



Figure 11.8 Millions of Chinese urban residents still live in old, dilapidated housing, as in these *hutong*, or alleys, of old Beijing. (Photo by Stanley Brunn)

or during mass political campaigns. Mao and other party leaders stood on top of the gate like a latter-day imperial court (this area is now open to tourists to gawk and take photos). Not surprisingly, after Mao died in 1976 his body was embalmed and put in a crystal display case inside a huge mausoleum on the south end of Tiananmen Square, exactly along the north-south axis running through the Palace Museum. The parallel with the display of Lenin's body in Red Square in Moscow is obvious, as is the attempt to link Mao with the imperial tradition of China and the role of Beijing as an expression of cosmological beliefs. Though the square was designed and used mostly by those in power, for their own purposes, it was also the staging ground of major protests organized by students, intellectuals, and workers, from the famous May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the failed Pro-Democracy Movement in 1989.

The greatest sacrilege, in the eyes of some critics, was the tearing down of Beijing's city

walls, sparing only the one around the former Forbidden City. The sites of the walls became ring roads designed ostensibly to ease traffic flow. Only a few crumbling city gates were kept as relics of another era. A subway system lies under the Erhuan Lu, or Second Ring Road. Removal of the walls totally shattered the original form of Beijing and forever altered its architectural character. Critics lamented that Beijing under Mao was a city primarily designed to express the government's power and control of China.

To be fair, the government was faced with enormous problems, especially in providing housing and meeting basic human needs. Historic preservation tends to take a backseat to more urgent human needs in almost every country. Moreover, the government did keep the Forbidden City (plus some other national treasures, such as the magnificent Temple of Heaven and the fascinating Summer Palace in northwestern Beijing) and work toward restoration of its former grandeur, transform-

ing the huge enclosure into the Palace Museum—a collection of former palaces, temples, and other structures, many housing collections of art from the imperial (“feudal”) past. The motive was largely political, but the net result was indeed historic preservation. The Palace Museum (Gu Gong) today is one of the top cultural treasures of the world, not just of China.

China’s large cities in the Maoist era were both production (manufacturing) centers, as well as administrative nodes of the economic planning system that focused on both national and regional/local self-reliance. The functions of business and commerce were weak. Most cities tried to build relatively comprehensive industrial structures, resulting in much less division of labor and exchanges among manufacturing centers. The periurban (rural) areas controlled by the municipalities served the role of providing food for the cities. Some satellite towns in the outskirts of large cities were developed to accommodate the spillover of industries. Without a land market, many self-contained work-unit neighborhoods dominated the landscape of large cities, resulting in less functionally differentiated urban spatial structures. Large cities expanded in concentric zones, as in the model generalized by Lo (fig. 11.9). Beijing was no exception to this pattern.

The new policies beginning in the late 1970s were meant to cover some the above weaknesses and transform Chinese cities through a series of marketization reforms. Those reforms have brought rising affluence, especially in the eastern coastal provinces and cities, reflected in the urban consumption boom of the 1980s and 1990s. In Beijing, this has translated into thousands of new stores and restaurants. Through large redevelopment projects, Beijing now has major commercial/financial districts, such as

Xidan, a busy shopping area with modern architecture and expensive shops, and Wangfujing, an old retail strip that went through a major facelift in 1999, when the street was fully pedestrianized.

Growing per capita income also fueled a housing boom in the 1990s. With a real estate market beginning to function, a greater demand for floor space has intensified use of urban land. Greater separation of workplace and housing has become increasingly feasible for a portion of the labor force. In the late 1980s, suburbanization on a large scale also began. Foreign investment now focuses not only on export processing but also on retail, insurance, finance, and producer services in the city, and this has increased the functional differentiation of city centers and suburbs, as well as other sites not centrally located but linked by highways.

To attract industry, Beijing’s government has established more than a dozen development zones, mostly in the urban fringe. Zhongguancun, set up in the Haidian District close to China’s top universities in the northwestern part of the city, is China’s “Silicon Valley,” where a large number of high-tech domestic and joint ventures are concentrated. On a larger scale, Beijing’s growth is increasingly linked to the southeast with Tianjin, an international port city with provincial-level status, and to the east with Tangshan, a major center of heavy industry and coal mining, to form one of China’s extended metropolitan areas. This process of outward expansion will intensify as China becomes even more integrated with the world, especially now that China has become a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Beijing, already home to many major multinational firms, will continue to be a major player in the globalization of the Chinese economy.

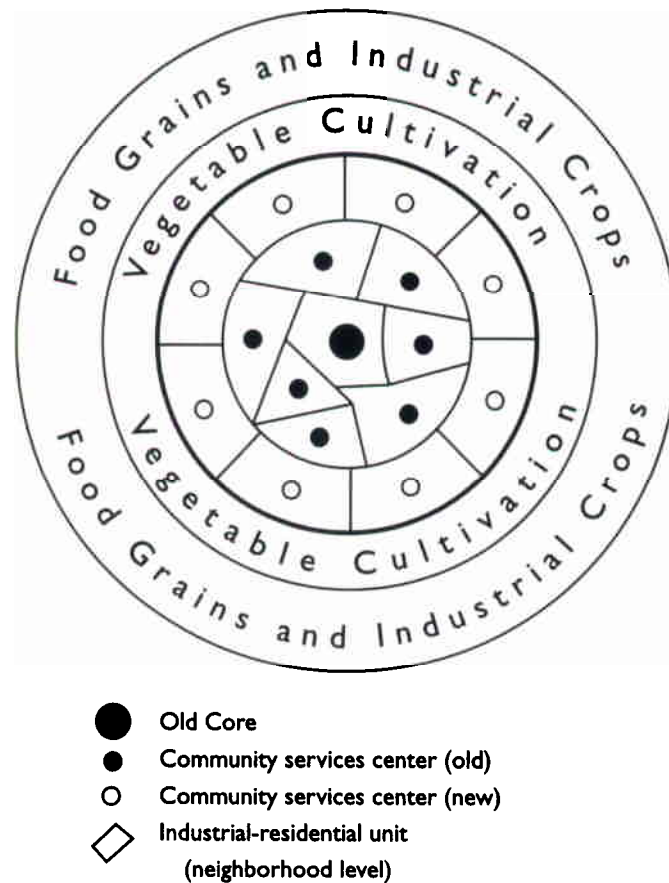


Figure 11.9 A Model of the Socialist City in Maoist China. Source: C. P. Lo, "Shaping Socialist Chinese Cities: A Model of Form and Land Use," in *China: Urbanization and National Development*, edited by Chi-keung Leung and Norton Ginsburg, Department of Geography Research Paper, no. 196 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1980), 154. Reprinted with permission.

The rise in personal income is also paralleled by a noticeable increase in income disparities and social differentiation. In the outskirts at the north of Beijing, expensive, detached, Western-style bungalow houses have begun to appear, catering to expatriates and the new rich. At the same time, with the relaxation in migration controls since the mid-1980s, Beijing now has a large migrant population of about three million. These mostly rural migrants fill many low-level jobs shunned by the locals. Migrants tend to be

poor and they often congregate based on their place of origin and provide mutual help to each other. Several migrant communities have sprung up in Beijing's outskirts, such as the "Zhejiang Village" (fig. 11.10) and "Xinjiang Village." Living conditions in these migrant villages provide a stark contrast with those of wealthier neighborhoods. In the inner city, laid-off workers from bankrupt state enterprises are gradually forming Beijing's new urban poor.

In the early 1980s, the government became



Figure 11.10 Lunchtime in the “Zhejiang Village” on the outskirts of Beijing, a community made up largely of recent migrants from Zhejiang Province in south China. (Photo by Kam Wing Chan)

serious about planning for the aesthetics of Beijing’s future, bringing air and water pollution under control, and giving the city a more human feel. The Asian Games, held in 1990, provided the stimulus for much beautification effort and for improvements in urban infrastructure, such as several major expressways extending across the city and connecting the central city with the airport. Another round of even larger-scale construction is now under way as Beijing prepares to host the Olympic Summer Games in 2008. Many residents hope this will transform Beijing into a truly world-class city.

Shanghai: Head of the Dragon?

Shanghai is considered by many to be China’s most interesting and vibrant city. This is because of its unique colonial heritage and because in many ways it is the New York of

China—the center of change and new frontiers in social and economic behavior. Shanghai still is the largest and one of the most Westernized cities in China (along with perhaps Guangzhou) and has one of the highest standards of living.

Of all China’s cities, Shanghai offers about the best example of the Chinese socialist city, because of its special role within socialist China in both urban planning and the economic development of the nation. Shanghai city itself is part of the Shanghai municipal region, comprising 17 city districts and three rural counties covering a huge area of more than 2,400 sq mi (6,300 sq km) with a combined total population of more than 16.7 million. The city itself, within the 17 city districts, is more than 14.7 million in population (fig. 11.11).

In terms of meeting the criteria of a true “producing” city in the socialist model, Shanghai comes the closest of just about any Chinese

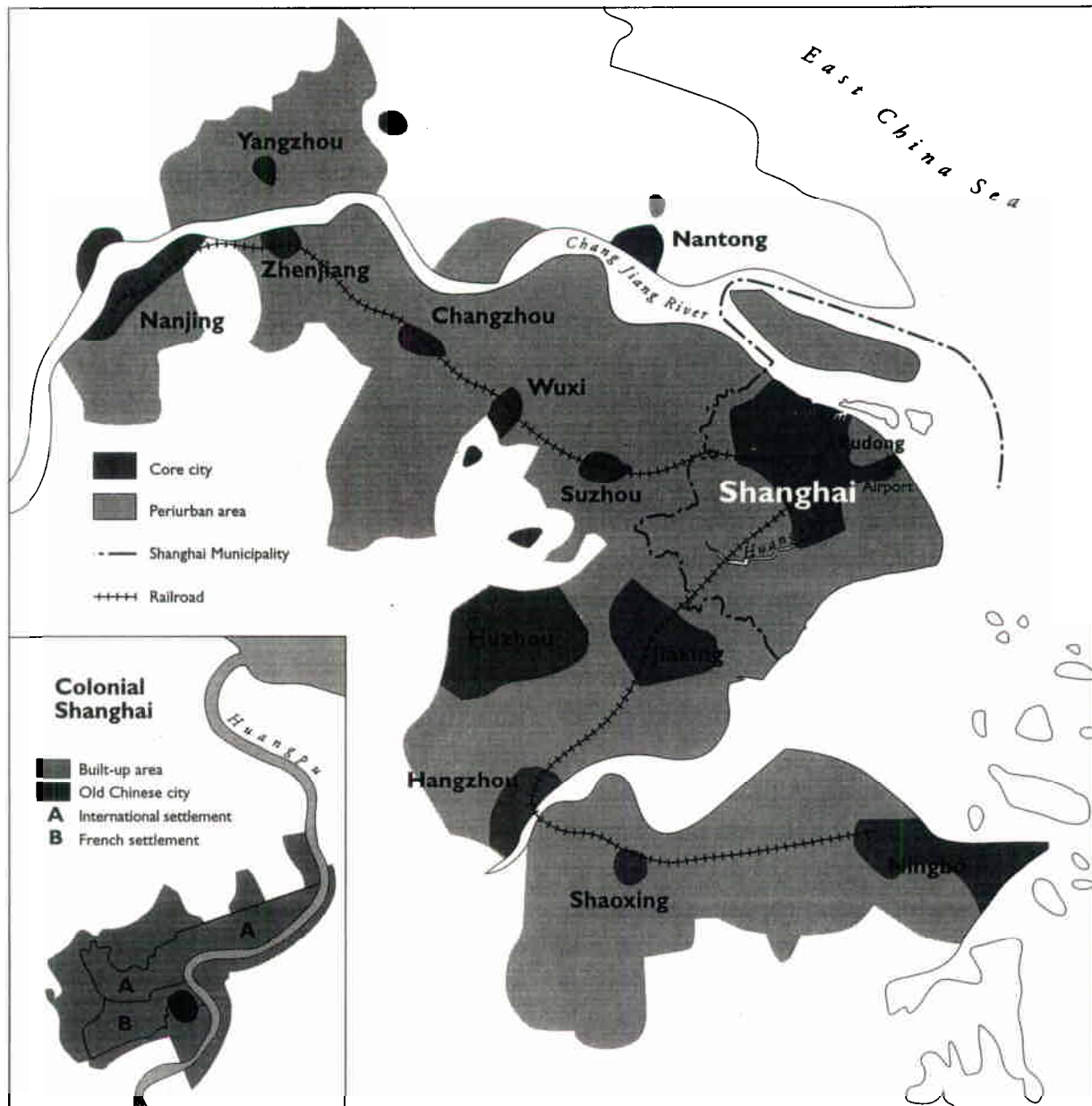


Figure 11.11 The Shanghai Extended Metropolitan Region. *Source:* Adapted from Gu Chaolin, Yu Taofang, and Kam Wing Chan, "Extended Metropolitan Regions: New Feature of Chinese Metropolitan Development in the Age of Globalization," *Planner* 18, no. 2 (2000): 16–20.

city today. Prior to the reform era, revenues for the Chinese government relied heavily on taxes on state-owned enterprises (SOEs); Shanghai, being the prime center of SOEs, bore a heavy burden. It is estimated that Shanghai alone contributed about one-sixth of government revenues between 1949 and 1978. This "extraction" by the central government, however, was

partly balanced by the advantages Shanghai enjoyed. Typically, industrial producers such as Shanghai were heavily favored by the central government and protected over agricultural producers. Not only was competition limited for industry, prices of manufactured goods were often set high in Shanghai's favor. In the period between 1953 and 1978, economic

growth of Shanghai averaged about 9% per year, clearly higher than the national average. In 1978, the city accounted for 8% of China's GDP, 12% of its industrial output, and 18% of its exports.

As with many cities in the Maoist era (with the exception of Beijing), little was reinvested in Shanghai in terms of new construction and upgrading of facilities. The downtown area, particularly around the Bund, or riverfront, district, where the major Western-controlled activities had been concentrated, had the look of a 1930s Hollywood movie set, with aging, poorly maintained, Western-style buildings that once housed banks and offices, hotels, and other commercial functions. In 1933, the Park Hotel was built on Nanjing Road, a major commercial artery of Shanghai. That hotel remained the tallest building in the city for 49 years, until 1982, when high rises began to be constructed once again. Although fascinating to an outside visitor, the city was falling apart. It was the relative neglect of many cities, including Shanghai, that contributed to the impression that the Maoist government was "antiurban," although the reality was far more complicated.

With the reopening of China in the late 1970s, under the "New Open Door" policy, foreigners again began to return to China, particularly the coastal zone in Guangdong in the south. Although Shanghai was designated as one of the 14 "open cities" (for foreign investment) in 1984, Guangdong was really the initial region chosen to be developed in cooperation with foreign (including Hong Kong) capital. In the 1980s, Shanghai thus lagged behind Guangdong in attracting foreign capital and in its rate of economic growth, averaging about 7% a year, much less than Guangdong's spectacular double-digit growth. Shanghai's share of the nation's exports declined sharply,

to only 7% in 1990 (compared to 20% for Guangdong). Shanghai's share of the nation's GDP also slipped, to only 4%. The turning point for the city came in 1990 in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen events, as the government struggled to regain foreign investors' confidence. In an effort to restart the momentum of the economy, China decided in April 1990 to rejuvenate Shanghai and its hinterland by developing Pudong ("East of the Pu," i.e., the Huangpu River, which bisects Shanghai), a zone on the east side of the old city core (fig. 11.12).

The new development plan established a package of preferential policies, very similar to those in China's five export-oriented special economic zones (SEZs), to woo foreign capital. These policies included lower profit taxes, lease rights on land, retention of revenues, and others. The Pudong plan gave emphasis to high-tech industries and financial services rather than simply export processing. Pudong was supposed to be the answer to choking congestion in the old city center and to be the catalyst for the renaissance of Shanghai as a whole. Foreign investors have been encouraged to get in on the ground floor of what is touted as one of China's most ambitious undertakings of the 1990s and the new century. Among the foreign investors, Taiwanese businesses have shown the most intensive interest in Pudong. Shanghai is now home to some 3,000 Taiwanese companies, while an estimated 100,000–200,000 Taiwanese business people regularly stay in the Shanghai region. A "Little Taipei" is developing in the Zhangjiang High-Tech Park in Pudong.

With the full backing of the central government, Shanghai improved its infrastructure and through the 1990s greatly strengthened its role as China's prime economic and financial center (figs. 11.13 and 11.14). The Shanghai



Figure 11.12 In the space of just ten years, Shanghai's new CBD has arisen across the river in Pudong, centered on the futuristic TV observation tower around which modern high-rise buildings have sprung up. Pudong and Shanghai are to be the "Head of the Dragon" in development of the Chang Jiang valley and the rest of China. (Photo by Jack Williams)

Stock Exchange was set up in December 1990. Throughout the decade, Shanghai's annual economic growth rate stayed above 10%. Today, more than half of the world's Fortune 500 corporations have set up offices or plants in Shanghai. One survey in the late 1990s showed that Shanghai had outdistanced Beijing as the most popular city in China in which to make a career.

Today Shanghai's development is part of a larger, dynamic Chang Jiang delta urban region composed of some 13 closely linked cities and surrounding counties. This region, stretching from Hangzhou and Ningbo in the southeast to Suzhou and Nanjing in the northwest, contains about 70 million people. It also includes other major industrial cities, such as Wuxi, Suzhou, and Changzhou, and newer county-level cities, such as Kunshan, Jianguyin, Zhangjiagang, and Xiaoshan (see fig. 11.11).

Shanghai has definitely reacquired some of its prerevolutionary glamour. Shops and architecture in some sections of the city have a cosmopolitan feel and there is a sizable expatriate community in the urban area once again.

However, there are some who doubt whether Shanghai will truly become the "head of the dragon"—an economic powerhouse that will somehow stimulate development of the whole Chang Jiang valley (the "body" of the dragon)—as the Chinese government hopes. Critics have pointed to problems, such as inadequate port facilities, unwise location of the new international airport, excess supply of real estate in Pudong, serious traffic congestion, air and water pollution, and the lack of bottom-up development based on rural enterprises in the counties. Perhaps most important of all, Shanghai still lacks the "software" required to make good use of its hardware,



Figs. 11.13, 11.14 (facing page) These two photos dramatically illustrate the transformation of Shanghai since the end of the Maoist era. In the mid-1970s, Nanjing Road, a key commercial artery of old Shanghai's International Settlement, slumbered in socialist stagnation. By the end of the 1990s, much of Nanjing Road had been turned into a glittering, throbbing pedestrian mall devoted to high mass consumption and the free-market economy. (Photos by Jack Williams)

that is, a well-enforced legal system and protection of intellectual property rights. China's dragon has yet to roar.

Hong Kong: Rendezvous with Destiny

At the stroke of midnight on June 30, 1997, Hong Kong was officially handed over to China and became the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). This was an extraordinary historic event, with Governor Chris Patten, Prince Charles, China's President Jiang Zemin, and other dignitaries presiding, marking the end of the colonial era in Asia and the rise of China's power. Hong Kong was one of the last two colonial enclaves left in all of Asia by the late 20th century. The other colony, Macau, likewise was returned to China by Por-

tugal in December 1999. Hence, as China entered the new century, its intense, humiliating experience with foreign colonialism finally came to a definite end after almost 160 years.

The 1997 event was a result of a joint agreement signed by China and Britain in 1984, which committed China to guarantee Hong Kong 50 years of complete autonomy in its internal affairs and capitalist system. China would have control only over Hong Kong's defense and foreign relations. Since 1997, Hong Kong has been under the model of "one country, two systems." The latter refers to the socialist system in the PRC and the capitalist system in Hong Kong. In the years before the hand-over, the biggest question that stirred up concern was what would happen to Hong Kong after 1997. In one of the gloomiest predictions,



Fortune magazine in 1996 pronounced the city dead. Indeed, in the decade preceding the transition, these concerns had triggered an exodus of about half a million Hong Kongers, mostly wealthy professionals, most of whom ended up in Canada (especially Vancouver and Toronto), Australia, and the United States. But other observers believed that the inherent assets of Hong Kong, which had fueled its extraordinary rise over the previous 40 years to a position as a powerful mini-industrial state, would see Hong Kong through the stresses of political transfer to the PRC. So far, the optimists seem generally vindicated.

Back in 1949, when Shanghai and the rest of

China fell to the communists, few thought that Hong Kong could long survive under British rule. The UN embargo on China during the Korean War effectively cut off most of Hong Kong's trade, which at that time was mainly movement of goods into and out of China. The population soared from half a million in 1946 to more than two million by 1950, as refugees flooded the colony. Huge squatter settlements were everywhere and the economy was in a shambles. The British, in collaboration with Chinese entrepreneurs—including many wealthy industrialists who had fled Shanghai and other parts of China, such as the father of the HKSAR's current chief executive, Tung

Chee Hwa—began to turn Hong Kong's economy around. They did it by recognizing the need to industrialize and develop products, "made in Hong Kong," for export. Hong Kong could no longer survive as just a trade center for China's goods. It was a spectacularly successful transformation. Adopting a *laissez-faire* (probusiness) policy, including generous tax policies, the authorities in Hong Kong encouraged foreign investment, which poured in from Japan, the United States, Europe, and the overseas Chinese. There was ample cheap, hardworking labor. Site limitations were overcome by massive landfill projects to provide new land for factories and urban expansion, while freshwater and much of the city's food supply were purchased from Guangdong Province across the border.

The strategy worked because China wanted it to work. One of the paradoxes of Hong Kong was that the government of China continued to permit this arch symbol of unrepentant Western capitalism and colonialism to exist and thrive on what was rightly Chinese territory. The Chinese did this partly because Hong Kong made lots of money for them, too—several billion dollars a year in foreign exchange earned from the PRC's exports to Hong Kong and from investments in banking and commerce. Wisely, China did not try to take over Hong Kong, because the PRC saw practical advantage for a struggling socialist China in keeping the door open a crack to the outside world (and also in not being responsible for solving Hong Kong's then staggering problems). During this era, one of the most striking sights could be seen in Statue Square on Queens Road Central in downtown Hong Kong, where lined up side by side were the Bank of China, the Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation, and the Chartered Bank of Great Britain. The latter two represented the

local financial strongholds of Great Britain and private capital, while the Bank of China represented the command center for the PRC's interests in Hong Kong. Banker's Row became even more impressive a sight when, in the 1980s, the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank opened on the same site a new structure, the most expensive ever built in Hong Kong up to then. The new building was an instant architectural controversy because of its postmodern design, by Norman Foster. This avant-garde building was soon overshadowed, however, by the new Bank of China building, opened in 1991. Designed by I. M. Pei, the renowned Chinese-American architect, the building is regarded as one of the most architecturally outstanding buildings in the world today, and a not very subtle reminder of who after all is the ultimate authority in Hong Kong.

Those two buildings symbolized not only the political duality and economic dynamism that have characterized Hong Kong throughout most of its history, but also the cosmopolitan and sophisticated "world city" that Hong Kong had become by the 1980s. One of the top tourist meccas in the world, Hong Kong is, by any standards, a stunning sight whether one is arriving for the first time or the hundredth (fig. 11.15). The skyline is spectacular, especially at night, with its glittering, ultramodern high-rise buildings packed side by side along the shoreline. There is so much money to be made in Hong Kong that every inch of space is extremely valuable and must be used to maximum advantage. The authorities have used remarkable ingenuity in designing the road system and other urban features, especially on crowded Hong Kong Island, where the strip city snakes along the north shore. Kowloon, on the mainland side, has relatively more land, but even there the intricacy of the urban design is impressive.



Figure 11.15 This view of Hong Kong, taken from Kowloon across the harbor, dramatically conveys the modernity and wealth of modern Hong Kong. The Central Plaza building towers over the wave-like profile of the Convention Center, where the handover to China took place in 1997. (Photo by Kam Wing Chan)

Less eye-catching to the average tourist, but themselves impressive accomplishments, are Hong Kong's public housing and new-town programs. The two were begun simultaneously as measures to cope with the large influx of migrants from China in the early 1950s. The programs gradually expanded into some of the world's largest, quite an anomaly for a *laissez-faire* economy. Today, about half of Hong Kong's population of seven million lives in public, largely rental, housing. Indeed, public housing, because of much lower rents, has been a major mechanism for decentralizing the population outside of the main urban area (fig. 11.16). Reclamation has been a main strategy for creating new land for the city. Many of the large new towns, such as Shatin (about 600,000) and Tuen Mun (500,000), were built almost totally from scratch. Public housing was crucial in maintaining the social

and political stability of the city, especially from the 1950s through the 1970s, when the city faced enormous pressure from the rapidly growing, largely low-income population.

Until the late 1980s, the economy that had fueled the creation of this machine—where making money, as much and as fast as possible, is the *raison d'être* for most people—was heavily based on consumer goods manufacturing and exports, especially textiles, electronics, and toys. The top markets remain the United States, Europe, and Japan. With China's opening in the late 1970s, Hong Kong quickly took advantage of the cheap land and labor in the Pearl River Delta and since then has steadily *offshored* (moved its manufacturing capacity) to the delta (while *company headquarters remain* in Hong Kong). Currently, some 100,000 Hong Kong-invested enterprises operate in the delta region and employ a total of 5–6 million

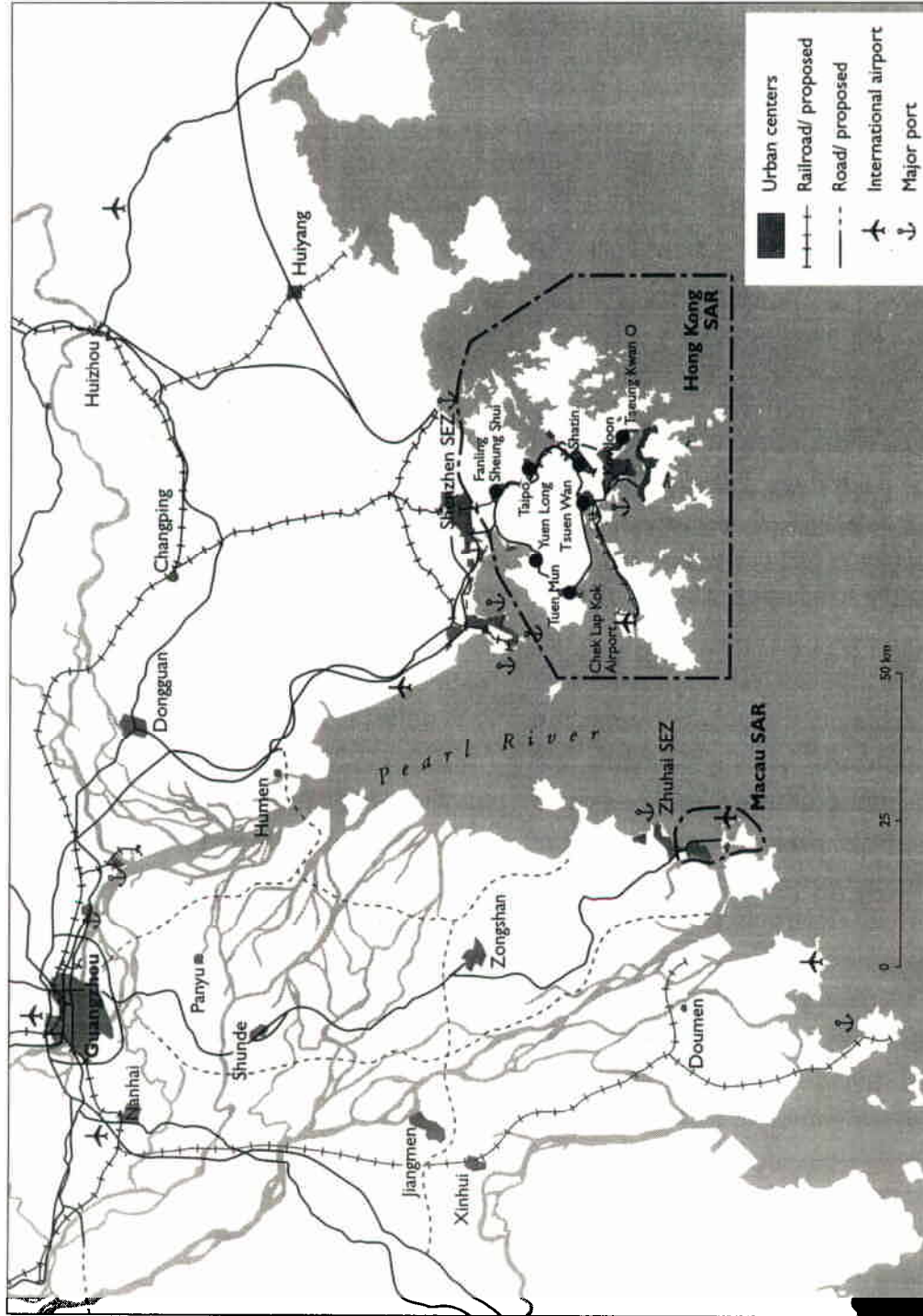


Figure 11.16 The Hong Kong Extended Metropolitan Region. Source: Adapted from various sources.

workers. In many ways, the delta and Hong Kong are now a highly integrated region, one that has become one of the major global export centers, with Hong Kong serving as the “shop front” and the delta as the factory (see fig. 11.16).

The rise of this region in world trade has reinvigorated Hong Kong’s role as an entrepôt. Hong Kong is the banking and investment center for the China trade, as well as regional headquarters for many international corporations. In the rapid opening of China in the past two decades, Hong Kong has played an extremely crucial role as the intermediary between China and the world, such as in serving as middleman for Taiwan’s huge economic dealings with the PRC. Tourism remains vital as well, with people coming for different purposes—Japanese and Taiwanese tourists, to take advantage of what seems like one giant shopping mall dedicated to extravagantly high mass consumption, or the more curious American tourists, to get a taste of the “Orient.” Many tourists are now from the PRC, for whom Hong Kong is their first taste of the Western capitalist world.

In a period of less than two generations, Hong Kong has evolved into a global center boasting a per capita income on a par with Europe and the United States. In the past 15 years, Hong Kong has advanced further into the postindustrial phase, into information services, as one of the key world centers of international trade and services, along with Tokyo, Singapore, New York, and a few others. Now, at the beginning of the 21st century, the biggest worry Hong Kongers have does not seem to be the issue of China’s political intervention after handover. Instead, a series of mishaps in the city after the handover have cast doubt on the touted managerial capacity of the government. Hong Kong is still in the economic doldrums that started with the

Asian financial crisis of 1997–1998 and continued into the aftermath of September 11. Faced with greater economic competition (including from other Chinese cities, especially Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen), many people are seriously questioning if the previous formula for success will continue to work for Hong Kong in the new millennium. In the past two decades, Hong Kong has successfully used its special connection with China to its own advantage. Will this continue to work, now that the world economy is more globalized and China has joined the WTO? What is Hong Kong’s market niche under these new circumstances? Whatever happens, there is no doubt that Hong Kong’s future is closely tied to that of China.

Taipei: A Regional Center in Search of a Region

Although regional centers are found throughout East Asia, a particularly good example is the city of Taipei, which has been emerging from its provincial cocoon in recent years and acquiring some of the aura of a world-class city, following in the footsteps of Hong Kong. There is some ambiguity about how to classify Taipei, because since 1950 it has been the “temporary” capital of the Republic of China (ROC) government-in-exile and, as such, has experienced phenomenal growth beyond what it might have undergone if it had remained solely the provincial capital of an island province of China. For certain, if the communists had succeeded in capturing Taiwan in 1950, as they had hoped to, Taipei would be a vastly different place today, probably something akin to present-day Xiamen (Amoy) across the Taiwan Strait. Instead, Taipei skyrocketed from the modest colonial capital city of a quarter million in 1945 to the present metropolis of more than six million in



Figure 11.17 The Taipei Metropolitan Region completely fills the Taipei Basin and spills out toward the northwest, northeast, and southwest, as shown in this Landsat image.

a metropolitan region that completely fills the Taipei basin and spills northeast to the port of Keelung, northwest to the coastal town of Tanshui (now a high-rise suburb), and southward toward Taoyuan and the CCK International Airport (fig. 11.17). Functionally, the city shifted gears from being a colonial administrative and commercial center to becoming the control center for one of the most dynamic economies in the postwar world.

When the ROC government retreated to Taiwan in 1950, the provincial capital was shifted to a new town built expressly for this purpose in central Taiwan, not far from Taichung. Taipei was theoretically concerned with “national” affairs and hence had all the national government offices re-created there (transplanted with administrators and legisla-

tors from Nanjing). The provincial capital dealt with agriculture and similar island (local) affairs. This artificial dichotomy, designed to preserve the fiction that the ROC government was the legal government of all of China, held until the early 1990s, when the government finally publicly admitted it had no jurisdiction over the mainland. The impact on Taipei over the decades was great, however, resulting in a large bureaucracy and the construction of national capital-level buildings in the city. This was possibly because huge tracts of land formerly occupied by the Japanese were taken over by the government after 1945 and the single-party authoritarian political system under the Kuomintang (KMT) allowed the government to develop the city in whatever way it desired, largely free of open public opposition.

This even included renaming many streets in Taipei after well-known mainland cities and places. After President Chiang Kai-shek died in 1975, as another example, a huge piece of military land in central Taipei was transformed into a gigantic memorial to Chiang, one of the largest structures in Taiwan. Two huge concert halls, also built in the classic palace architectural style, were added to the immense grounds of the memorial in the 1980s to signify the coming of age of Taipei as a world-class city and center of sophisticated culture.

Taipei has come to assume many primate-city functions, although statistically only twice the size of Kaohsiung, the main heavy industrial center in the South. Besides being the “national” capital, Taipei is overwhelmingly the center of international trade and investment and includes a large expatriate community. Culture, entertainment, and tourism are all focused on Taipei. Japanese business people and tourists especially like Taipei because of the colonial heritage; Taipei’s culture has a distinctly Japanese flavor to it. The Taipei metro region also is one of the key industrial areas of the island; most of the manufacturing is now concentrated in a number of satellite cities, to the west and south, such as Sanchung, Panchiao, and Yungho. The old port of Keelung, once the key link with Japan, serves as the port outlet for the Taipei Northern Industrial Region. As with Seoul, most of the city’s huge population increase over five decades was the result of in-migration from the densely populated countryside, a migration that in recent years has been primarily toward the suburban satellite cities. By 1999, the Northern Industrial Region had a total population of 9.5 million (out of Taiwan’s nearly 23 million people), of which Taipei Municipality accounted for 2.6 million and the surrounding satellite cities accounted for 3.9 million, or 6.5 million total for the urban agglomeration.

The city has been growing toward the margins. Eastern Taipei (“New Taipei”), focused symbolically around the World Trade Center and along Tunhua Road, has seen especially astounding growth, with hundreds of high-rise luxury apartment buildings and office towers springing up. Large-scale suburbanization has also taken place, as affluent yuppies have moved to the northern suburbs, to high-class residential neighborhoods in Tienmu and Neihu, or southward toward Hsintien. High housing costs and overcrowded central-city conditions have encouraged this out-migration.

In some respects, Taipei looks like Seoul on a smaller scale, with modern buildings, broad, tree-lined boulevards, and a high standard of living. Substantial cleanup and improvements came with the 1990s as the political system was democratized, the environment became an important concern, and urban development became an open topic for public input. An expanding subway system is helping to ease the transportation crush, composed of hordes of motorcycles and increasing numbers of private automobiles. As with cities around the world, parking is a monumental problem for all drivers.

Seoul: The “Phoenix” of Primate Cities

Seoul exhibits urban primacy in an especially acute form. It is home to 10 million people, more than 25% of South Korea’s total population of 27 million, putting it in the ranks of the world’s megacities (making it one of four such in East Asia). More than 40% of the country’s population lives within the greater Seoul metropolitan region. In 1950, Seoul had barely more than one million people, just slightly more than second-ranked Pusan, the main port on the southeast coast. By

2000, Pusan had just under four million people.

As the national capital, Seoul has a large tertiary sector devoted to the national government and the large military forces that South Korea must maintain. In addition, there is a large expatriate community, composed mostly of U.S. military forces and civilians (mostly business people and diplomatic personnel). Seoul is the political, cultural, educational, and economic heart of modern South Korea, the nerve center for the powerful state that South Korea has become. Although Seoul does not rank with Tokyo or New York as a true world city, it is nonetheless moving in that direction and certainly has become much more cosmopolitan in the past ten years, with the democratization and globalization of South Korea, as with Taipei and Taiwan.

The rise of Seoul to become one of the largest cities in the world is surprising, if only from a locational viewpoint. The city's site, midway along the west coast plain of the Korean peninsula, where most of the people are located, was originally a logical place for the national capital of a unified Korea. However, since the division of the peninsula in the late 1940s and the bitter stalemate between North and South Korea since 1953, Seoul's location just 20 mi (32 km) from the demilitarized zone (DMZ) makes the city highly vulnerable. Suggestions for moving the capital functions to a more southerly and defensible site have regularly met with indifference or outright opposition. This is partly because most Koreans believe that national reunification is inevitable. When that happens, Seoul would then resume its historic role as national capital, revered by all Koreans for what the city symbolizes.

The city was nearly leveled during the savage seesaw fighting in the Korean War, when

the North occupied the city twice. Growth since the 1960s has been primarily the result of massive rural-urban migration, encouraged by Korea's transformation into an urban/industrial society. The economic takeoff started in the 1960s, as the South embarked on an export-oriented industrialization strategy, much of it concentrated in the Seoul area. Urbanization thus accelerated and the South passed the 50% urban mark in 1977. Seoul has spilled over into other areas, as well as sprawling south of the Han River and completely filling the basin of the river, covering an area equal to the entire island of Singapore. The southerly expansion was made possible by increasing the number of bridges across the Han from the original two to more than 20 currently. Residential and commercial growth has been rapid.

Seoul has its own grandness and beauty, in certain places, such as in the layout of new districts or restored monuments of the past. But parts of the city are still terribly congested and shabby, especially some residential areas built on steep hillsides as a result of spontaneous rather than planned urbanization. Seoul could be said to have come of age when it hosted the Olympic Summer Games in 1988, which gave authorities the rationale to spend billions of dollars to beautify the city and upgrade its infrastructure. In addition to a huge Olympics complex (used also for the Asia Games and other events since), an extensive subway system was completed (fig. 11.18). The downtown CBD is a typical conglomeration of high-rise luxury hotels and office buildings, interspersed with relics of Korea's past. Newer high-class residential/commercial districts, such as Kangnam south of the Han River, now contribute to a multinuclei pattern of development. Just south of the downtown and the prominent Mt. Namsan (whose observation tower still affords the

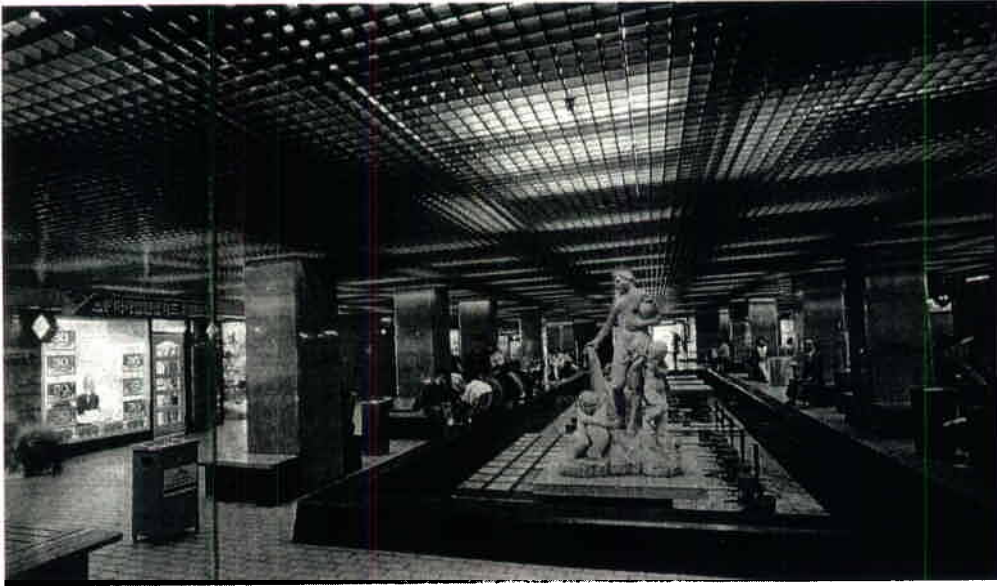


Figure 11.18 Seoul constructed an impressive subway system for the Olympic Summer Games in 1988. Each station is different in its architecture and artistic decoration. This is the handsome Kangnam station. (Photo courtesy Seoul city government)

best overall view of Seoul) is Itaewon District, long the center for U.S. military personnel, a honky-tonk reminder of an era of the past and of the uneasy fit of American pop culture with Korean values.

URBAN PROBLEMS AND THEIR SOLUTIONS

The relatively clear-cut dichotomy between the socialist path of China, North Korea, and Mongolia and the nonsocialist path of the rest of East Asia that characterized the region through the 1970s is no longer really valid. China has been largely abandoning socialism in many aspects of its economy since the late 1970s. North Korea occasionally hints that it might be tempted to do so also, but then slips back into its Stalinist suspicion of the outside world (box 11.1). Mongolia, like Russia, abandoned not only a socialist system but also single-party rule forthwith, and is now strug-

gling to join the world, too (box 11.2). The colonial era is now completely over in the region. As a result of all these changes, urban problems and solutions take on new guises and, except for North Korea, are becoming increasingly similar across the region.

The Chinese Way

To appreciate what China has attempted and accomplished in the reform era, one needs to briefly review urban development policies before then.

The Maoist Era (1949–1976): Antiurban?

By nationalizing the economy, taking control of all the means of production, and adopting a planned, or command, type of economy, China's government after 1949 thought it had the solution to the country's immense problems. Events proved them wrong. The overwhelming emphasis on industrial growth; suppression of personal consumption (the

Box 11.1 Pyongyang: Reclusive City of Chosun

The government of North Korea (which likes to use the old name for Korea, “Chosun”) rules this austere nation of some 22 million from the capital city of Pyongyang. At 3.5 million, Pyongyang is three times larger, in classic primate fashion, than the next two largest cities, Nampo and Hamhung. This is hardly a surprise, given the rigid, centrally planned, Stalinist system that hangs on, long after the Soviet Union, Maoist China, and communist Mongolia saw the light. Leveled to the ground during the Korean War (1950–1953), Pyongyang was totally rebuilt in the true Stalinist, socialist city model of the past, with broad boulevards (although they are still little utilized) and massive government buildings. Few foreigners get to personally visit this city and nation; few have kind words to say after they leave. There is a small expatriate community, composed of diplomatic personnel and those associated with international food relief efforts. In spite of the widely publicized food shortages (even famine conditions), the declining per capita incomes and life spans, and the escape of thousands of North Koreans into China, visitors remark that the authorities are adept at keeping Pyongyang and other visitor sites clear of tell-tale evidence. Hence, the city is starkly revealed for what it is: a superficially modern showcase for socialist dogma, but not a real city for life, creativity, and resident happiness. Drab apartment blocks have few amenities, the shops are bleak and empty of goods, security forces are visible everywhere.

“nonproductive” side of cities); the guaranteeing of the welfare of urban dwellers through the *iron rice bowl* welfare system, to the relative neglect of rural areas; strict controls over internal migration within the country through the *hukou* (household registration) system (box 11.3); strict monitoring of peoples’ lives in the cities through neighborhood committees (box 11.4)—these and other policies produced an artificial, unworkable urban and national system that was clearly failing by the mid-1970s, when Mao died. The system had to change.

The Reform Era (1978—): Opening China

Starting in the late 1970s, China’s leaders began radical reversals of policy across the board, abandoning or severely diluting many of the key policies of the Maoist era, including those in urban development. One major ex-

ception was in the Communist Party’s retaining a rigid, one-party, authoritarian political system that was increasingly at odds with the many reforms that were instituted.

The major policy change was in the *kaifang* (“opening”) policy, or what might be dubbed the “New Open Door” policy (a voluntary opening, in marked contrast to the forced “Open Door” policy of the colonial era in the 19th century). China was thrown open to foreigners for investment, trade, tourism, technical assistance, and other contacts. The policy of self-reliance was set aside. Rapid growth in links with the outside world had a profound impact, but especially on cities and urban development in the coastal zone, which was earmarked for preferential treatment. The establishment of export-processing zones with concessionary tax policies to attract foreign investment included the desig-

Box 11.2 Mongolia

With a huge land area equal to more than 40% of China, but a miniscule population of just 2.6 million, Mongolia ranks simultaneously as one of the largest yet smallest of nations in the world. Easily ignored, in spite of its territorial size, in the early 1990s Mongolia threw off the communist system imposed on it in the 1920s (as the second communist nation in the world, after the USSR) and the subservient status imposed by the Soviets. Today, a democratic Mongolia is struggling to modernize, with a still powerful Communist Party competing. With 57% of Mongolia's population urbanized, the days of nomadic herders are diminishing, as urban life gains popularity. The capital city of Ulan Bator (Ulaanbataar) has only about three quarters of a million people, but that is 30% of the national total and the population of the city is projected to be just less than a million by 2015. Ulan Bator still displays the drab grayness of the socialist era, as new structures start to go up. There is little industry and the economy depends largely on tourism and processing of animal products. The second largest city is Darkhan, with about 70,000. Urban primacy yet again in even more stark an imbalance! It is much easier to visit Mongolia today, and visitors report an open, urbanizing, but poor society eager to modernize and join the world. Still, this nation and its cities are likely to always play a marginal role in the affairs of East Asia and the world.

nation of four special economic zones (SEZs) (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Xiamen, and Shantou) in Guangdong and Fujian in 1979 and of 14 "coastal open cities" in 1984. At the end of the 1980s, Hainan Island became both a new province and the fifth SEZ, while Shanghai's Pudong district joined the category of "open" zones. By the mid-1990s, practically the entire coastal region was one large open zone. One of the most notable consequences was the creation of the new city of Shenzhen, just across the border from Hong Kong. A small village at the border-crossing point became, within a decade, a city of more than one million, with one of the highest standards of living in China and very much the look of a younger Hong Kong. Coupled with the Shenzhen SEZ, this delta area has become increasingly wealthy, Westernized, and sophisticated.

The negative side of this policy was to increase regional imbalances, so that the in-

creased standard of living in favored coastal areas left more backward parts of interior China further behind (fig. 11.19). This was the result of a deliberate policy by the Chinese government, which abandoned any pretense of "egalitarianism" with Deng Xiaoping's famous dictum, "To get rich is glorious!" In addition, the government has relaxed controls in many areas. With decollectivization and the return to private smallholdings (under the Household Responsibility System), agriculture showed significant increases in labor productivity, with greatly improved living standards in the countryside. At the same time, though, many rural workers became unneeded, putting pressure on the government to relax restrictions on internal migration. Out of this has emerged the "floating population" of migrant workers, at least 100 million strong, who provide plentiful low-cost labor and help make Chinese industry competitive in international markets. The

Box 11.3 Cities with Invisible Walls: The *Hukou* System in China

The development strategy pursued by China during the Maoist era (1949–1976) was based on strictly controlling rural-urban migration. The principal means for doing this was the *hukou* (household registration) system, set up in 1958. Under this system, all citizens were classified as either urban or rural residents. Urban residents had state-guaranteed food grains, jobs, housing, and access to an array of subsidized welfare and social services (known as the *iron rice bowl*). Rural residents had very few of these benefits and had to rely on themselves or their collectives. These obvious disparities generated strong incentives for rural residents to migrate to urban areas. For the great majority of the rural population, however, the option of migrating to the cities was not open to them. The government used strong administrative measures to stem migration to the cities. By law, anyone seeking to move to a place different from where his or her household was registered had to get approval from the *hukou* authorities, typically the public security bureau. But approval was rarely granted. In essence, the *hukou* system functioned as an internal passport system very similar to the *propiska* system used in the former Soviet Union and the *ho khau* system in Vietnam. While old city walls in China had largely been demolished by the late 1960s, the power of this newly erected migration barrier is likened to “invisible” city walls.

The reform era that began in the late 1970s has put much pressure on the *hukou* system. Development of a market-oriented economy and relaxation (but not abandonment) of migratory controls have resulted in at least 100 million people (the so-called *floating population*, or migrant workers) staying outside their place of formal *hukou* registration. These workers, when in the cities, are not considered urban “residents” and are not eligible for many urban social services or education programs. This unequal treatment of the migrant population has drawn much attention and controversy inside and outside China.

Source: Kam Wing Chang, *Cities with Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post-1949 China* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994).

migrants fill many jobs shunned by urban laborers. But they also create enormous headaches for urban governments, because of their numbers and the lack of governmental control over them. Increased crime rates, increased congestion in already overburdened transportation systems, difficulties in enforcing family planning laws—these are among the problems that have surfaced.

There has also been an exponential growth in the number of people living in towns (dis-

tinguished from cities) over the past 20 years because of the government’s relaxation of controls over entry into the economy by non-state-owned enterprises. This has led to a burgeoning of rural enterprises (Township-Village Enterprises, or TVEs) and of small-scale entrepreneurs going into business for themselves. These activities have absorbed a huge amount of the surplus labor in the countryside. Rural people can now more easily gain permission to transfer to a town, as long as

Box 11.4 China's Urban Neighborhood Committees

One unique institution in Chinese cities, one that has survived from the Maoist era, albeit with modifications, is the neighborhood residents' committee. First established in 1954, these committees now number some 100,000 and are found in every urban center. The size varies but the average population per committee is 3,000 to 4,000. The duties include publicizing state law and policy; safeguarding residents' interests; urging citizens to honor their obligations; administering a variety of public affairs concerning social welfare; mediating civil disputes; helping maintain social order and security; helping the government do work in the interest of the residents; and reporting to the government the opinions, needs, and recommendations of the citizens. In short, the committees are part social welfare agencies and part neighborhood watch agents and watchdogs for the government. Retired women usually run the committees. During the period when the one-child policy was heavily emphasized (in the first half of the 1980s), committee workers (nicknamed the "granny police") often had to snoop into intimate aspects of individuals' lives. In the 1990s, many of these committees, especially those in the inner cities, served mostly to provide services for laid-off workers and their families and manage migrant residents. Nonetheless, the neighborhood residents' committee remains one of the more durable features of the old socialist city system, adapted to the needs of a rapidly changing China.

they have a job and a place to live, although gaining permanent residency status in cities remains impossible for the average peasant. The government thus continues to try to contain the growth of large cities, but the pressure at the gates is immense.

The new focus on markets and private enterprise in cities, alongside the state-owned economy, has created a demand for advertising and the need to spruce up storefronts and display windows. Urban life appears more and more similar to that of the rest of the region. Urban life has unquestionably improved for most residents, as it now offers a much greater variety and quality of goods and services, as well as an end to the stifling conformity and drabness of the Maoist years. Unfortunately, one of the costs has been that inflation has exceeded increases in incomes, making life more difficult for some, especially those on relatively

fixed incomes, such as retirees and state-owned enterprise (SOE) workers. Unemployment is likely to worsen in the face of continued population growth and difficulties in creating jobs fast enough to absorb the surplus population.

Other Paths in East Asia

As with big cities around the world, the industrial cities of East Asia are experiencing profound problems of overcrowding, pollution, traffic congestion, crime, and shortages of affordable housing and other urban services. Yet most people in the cities of East Asia are relatively well off. This has been a region of extraordinary economic growth and advancement in recent decades, so that residents of these cities have standards of living among the highest in the world. They dress smartly, are well fed, and have considerable disposable income. Western-



Figure 11.19 China has embarked on urban development throughout its realm, including here in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. Center of international controversy, Lhasa is being transformed into a Chinese city. (Photo by Stanley Brunn)

ization (more properly now, globalization) is very evident in its impact in terms of popular culture and lifestyles. Retail stores of all types provide every conceivable consumer good for the affluent residents. At night, the cities glitter with eye-popping displays of neon, nowhere more dazzling than in Japan. Significantly, surveys of the quality of life in Asian cities, such as that done annually by Hong Kong's *Asiaweek* magazine, regularly put Japan's cities and Hong Kong in the top ranks, while others, such as Seoul and Taipei, have steadily moved nearer the top. China's cities, understandably, still rank further down, but are making steady progress.

Expensive land is a major constraint to the development of these cities. Increasingly, thus, the major cities are following in the footsteps of most other large cities with high-rise syndrome. There is even a growing competition among the cities of the region to see which can build the tallest skyscraper, as if having the tallest building somehow conveys status and

superiority. Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul, and other cities are involved in this one-upmanship (fig. 11.20). Even Japan's cities, long characterized by relatively low skylines (because of earthquake hazards), have succumbed to the trend toward high-rise construction, such as in the cluster of 50-plus-story buildings centered around the new city government complex in Tokyo's Shinjuku district. Japanese cities (and, increasingly, other cities in the region) also make effective use of underground space, with enormous, complex underground malls interconnected by subway systems.

Movement outward from the central city is the only other alternative to going upward or downward. Skyrocketing land values, suburbanization, and rapid population increases have been experienced around the big cities. New communities have sprung up, including bedroom towns somewhat in the American fashion, where young couples, for less money, can obtain better housing with cleaner air and



Figure 11.20 Seoul competes with other Asian cities to have one of the tallest skyscrapers. (Photo courtesy Seoul city government)

less noise, even though doing so often means long commutes to work. Fortunately, most of the large cities have developed relatively good public-transport systems. Nonetheless, the automobile culture is spreading rapidly, with the private automobile purchased as much for status as for convenience in getting around. The automobile culture first took hold in Japan in the 1960s, but other countries have followed suit and even China is now firmly on the private automobile bandwagon.

Closing the Gap: Decentralization in Japan

The Japanese have been struggling for several decades to decentralize their urban system and reduce the relative dominance of Tokyo, by and large without success. The task really has two dimensions: improving living conditions in Tokyo and physically decentralizing the urban system. Within Tokyo, the solution to overcrowding and the (still) high cost of land lies in finding new land, such as through continued landfill projects to expand the shoreline and make greater use of Tokyo Bay,

as well as moving further outward toward less-developed areas in the Tokyo region. Many such projects were planned or underway during the 1990s, but the continuing stagnation in the economy caused cancellation or delays in these, as with the Tokyo Teleport Town and the 1996 World City Expo. One project that was completed in 1997 was the Tokyo Bay Aqua Line, an expressway across the middle of Tokyo Bay connecting Tokyo with Chiba Prefecture and designed to enhance development along the eastern and southern shore. The hope is that Chiba Prefecture, occupying the whole peninsula opposite Tokyo City, will be the new high-growth area for the Tokyo region, anchored around three new core cities—a high-tech Kazusa Akademia Park, Makuhari New City, and Narita Airport (fig. 11.21).

An alternative supported by many is to decentralize. How to decentralize is a tough question over which there is anything but consensus. Over the decades, Japan has had a succession of National Development Plans, all of

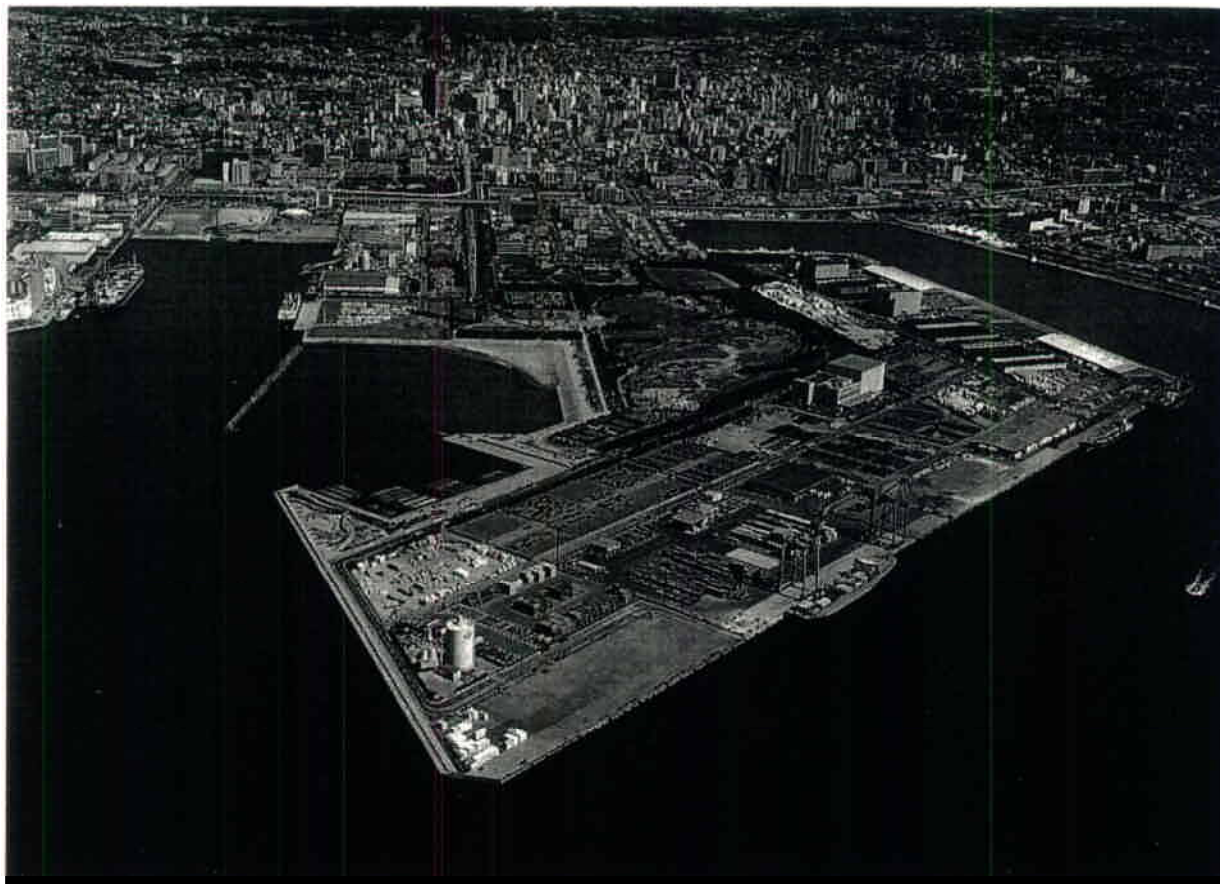


Figure 11.21 Chiba Port already handles the largest volume of freight among Japan's port cities and also illustrates the widespread practice of creating artificial land for urban expansion in Japan's post-World War II growth. (Photo courtesy Chiba government)

which have addressed in some way the need for more balanced regional development. Proposals for relocating the national capital out of Tokyo have gone nowhere. Various kinds of subcenter ideas have been tried; however, none have been substantially successful in reducing the drawing power of Tokyo. Neither has the decline of regions such as the Kansai been stopped, in spite of efforts such as the opening of the new Kansai International Airport on an artificial island off the coast of Osaka in 1990, in an effort to give Tokyo's Narita some competition.

Nonetheless, the dream persists. If Japan had not suffered such economic stagnation for the past ten years, the prospects for real change

would be better today. Now, fearing that Tokyo might be supplanted as Asia's premier business center by some other city, especially Hong Kong or Singapore, the government has already stepped up its efforts to revitalize the capital under a new program called Urban Renaissance. In sum, the inability of Japan—with its enormous wealth and relatively homogeneous society—to solve this regional imbalance problem does not suggest a high probability of success for solving the same problem in many other countries.

Seoul: The Problems of Primacy

Somewhat like its larger cousin, Tokyo, Seoul suffers from the typical problems of urban

primacy. There is crushing traffic congestion, made worse by a growing middle class determined to have the status symbol of private cars in a society where status means everything. There is smothering air pollution caused by too many motor vehicles, by the burning of charcoal and coal (a minority of homes receive piped gas), by the presence of thousands of factories, and by a basin topography that traps pollutants beneath temperature inversions, as occurs in Los Angeles or Mexico City. There is a severe shortage of affordable housing; with land so scarce and expensive, the small Korean homes cluster together like bees on the steep, rocky hillsides. Elsewhere, especially south of the Han, huge apartment complexes march to the horizon in a monotonous precision of layout. Property values soared in the 1980s as redevelopment contributed to large-scale real estate speculation, a problem common in East Asia. The property bubble burst in the early 1990s with a gradual decline in prices, spurred further by the Asian fiscal crisis of 1997–1998. The crisis hit South Korea the hardest and actually contributed to a decrease in Seoul's total population from its peak of 12 million in 1999 to the present 10 million. The economy is slowly recovering, but property prices are still high in Seoul.

Seoul would probably be even larger and more congested than it is today if the government had not adopted a policy of promoting urban/industrial growth elsewhere in the country. In spite of the attraction of Seoul to would-be migrants, considerable urban growth has occurred in secondary and tertiary cities in the urban system, including Pusan, Ulsan, Taejon (Daejon), and Kwangju (Gwangju). The government has also attempted to decentralize the Seoul metropolitan region by constructing new towns, such as

Guri, Banweol, and Sungnam. These have had limited impact, however.

Taipei: Toward Balanced Regional Development

Taipei has made dramatic progress in recent years in solving some of its urban problems. Completion of the Mass Rapid Transit system and stepped-up enforcement of traffic rules have brought order to what was once one of the worst cities in Asia for traffic chaos. Pollution has been drastically cut through various programs. While housing is still expensive, it is becoming relatively more affordable. Overall, the city is cleaner and decidedly a better place in which to live or raise a family. Although many people have moved to the suburbs, a large residential population still lives within the central city, so that the "doughnut" phenomenon really does not fit Taipei. The multi-nucleic model is perhaps more applicable.

In part to solve the problems of overcrowded Taipei, the national government embarked on island-wide regional planning in the early 1970s. The end result was a development plan that divided the island into four planning regions, each focused around a key city. The Northern Region, centered on Taipei, has about 40% of the island's total population. Through a variety of policies, including rural industrialization, massive investment in infrastructure (especially transportation, including Taiwan's own version of the "bullet" train, between Taipei and Kaohsiung), and programs to enhance the quality of life and economic base of other cities and towns, Taiwan has managed to slow the growth of Taipei and diffuse some of the urbanization. The dominance of Taipei is not as severe as that of Tokyo or Seoul. Government policy is aimed at lowering the relative proportion of population and economic activity in the Northern

Region and spreading it more evenly among the other three regions. The Central Region (around Taichung) has seen the most rapid growth in recent years.

PROSPECTS

Urban dwellers in many poorer cities around the world must look at the prosperous cities of East Asia and wonder what the residents are complaining about, given their high standards of living and relative comfort. To citizens of the region, however, and especially to urban planners, the overall problem of most cities of East Asia is how far short the cities still fall in what they could be. Note the following remarks of leading Japanese observers on their country: "Japan's foremost urban centers lack anything resembling the character and depth of their European counterparts. Instead, they seem to be forever under construction." "There is huge potential demand for urban redevelopment." "Japanese city planning shows little vision regarding a living environment." One could probably elicit similar statements from observers in the other countries of the region.

So where do these countries and cities go from here? East Asia is unquestionably going to be a region of continuing high economic growth, with strong continued urbanization, especially in China. There are vast amounts of capital in the region for urban development. Marshalling that capital to maximize the quality of urban life is the challenge facing all of these states. East Asia is in the forefront of the information technology and transportation revolutions, which are rapidly diminishing the importance of distance. Transnational urban linkages within the region and between the region and the rest of the world, especially Southeast Asia and North America, are going

to become stronger. The cities of East Asia are destined to play leading roles in world affairs in the 21st century, belonging as they do to one of the three power centers of the global economy.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Chan, Kam Wing. *Cities with Invisible Walls: Reinterpreting Urbanization in Post-1949 China*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994. A study of the complex changes in China's urban development experience.
- Esherick, Joseph W., ed. *Remaking the Chinese City: Modernity and National Identity, 1900–1950*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000. A collection of papers about various Chinese cities that underwent great change in the half century leading up to the establishment of the PRC.
- Gaubatz, Piper Rae. *Beyond the Great Wall: Urban Form and Transformation on the Chinese Frontiers*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996. A geographer examines five cities (Kunming, Lanzhou, Xining, Hohhot, and Urumqi) on China's inland frontiers, from ancient times to the present.
- Karan, P. P., and Kristin Stapleton, eds. *The Japanese City*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997. A collection of ten papers about various aspects of Japanese cities, including a good overview chapter by Paul Karan. Nicely illustrated.
- Knapp, Ronald G. *China's Walled Cities*. New Paltz: State University of New York, 2000. The history and importance of walls in such cities as Changan (Xi'an), Beijing, and Nanjing.
- Kornhauser, David. *Urban Japan: Its Foundation and Growth*. New York: Longman, 1976. Still one of the best overviews of the geographic and historical aspects of Japan's urban experience, from earliest times to the pre-World War II era.
- Seidensticker, Edward. *Low City, High City: Tokyo from Edo to the Earthquake*. New York: Knopf,

1983. A classic account by a leading scholar of Japan about how the Shogun's ancient capital became a great modern city in the period 1867–1923.
- Sit, Victor F. S. *Beijing: The Nature and Planning of a Chinese Capital City*. New York: Wiley, 1995. A detailed analysis of China's cultural and political capital.
- Speare, Alden, Jr., Paul K. C. Liu, and Ching-Tung Tsay. *Urbanization and Development: The Rural-Urban Transition in Taiwan*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1988. A collection of writings from over the years by three leading authorities on urban development in Taiwan.
- Tang, Wenfang, and William L. Parish. *Chinese Urban Life under Reform*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. A sociological look at the profound changes taking place in China's cities and urban society.
- Yatsko, Pamela. *New Shanghai: The Rocky Rebirth of China's Legendary City*. New York: Wiley, 2000. A journalist takes a critical look at Shanghai and its potential to be China's "head of the dragon."
- Yee, Albert H. *Whither Hong Kong: China's Shadow or Visionary Gleam?* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1999. A group of top-notch China watchers offer their perspectives on various facets of Hong Kong's past, present, and future.

Cities of the World

World Regional Urban Development

THIRD EDITION

EDITED BY
**STANLEY D. BRUNN, JACK F. WILLIAMS,
AND DONALD J. ZEIGLER**

CARTOGRAPHY BY
ELLEN R. WHITE

2003

ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, INC.
Lanham • Boulder • New York • Oxford