

# Shanghai as a Mega-City under the Influence of Globalization

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**The city and architecture of Shanghai are deeply influenced by intercultural context in the history, and today are undergoing a significant and rapid transformation. Some of the so-called progresses have caused profound problems. What the modernization, digitalization and globalization of a city for Shanghai really mean, what is the urbanization for 21st century and other questions have already attracted a vast attention.**

The forming of Shanghai city depends on four resources: the geo-graphical condition; the geo-political factor; the geo-economical factor, the living style and quality. Urban planning is, in fact, an anticipated pattern of a city's future state with its development objectives for construction of an optimized and sustainable human settlement not only for the urban environment but also for the social and economical environment. It is by no means an idealist blueprint for a city's "ultimate state", rather a basis and objective for guiding its rational and orderly development.

The most Chinese cities have a very long history but were not changed greatly during the developing course until the recent economical impact. Today, the physical structure of the Chinese society is undergoing an unprecedented rapid and extensive transformation. It has witnessed that the formation of a city is a continuing balance process between rationality and emotion, continuity and transformation., co-existence and conflict. In general, it is a balance between dif-

ferent ideological, political and institutional powers. In China, the balance is a complicated concept, perhaps it will never reach a real balance between different powers. In this course, the philosophy, the sense of value, religion, geography and others have played a very important role, which forms or loses the identity of Chinese cities.

For last 50 years, many radical changes happened in Shanghai, the city is gradually transformed from a self-sufficient economy to an open economy; from an industrial city to a post-industrial city, from low-rise with medium density to a high density and crowded city. For last 50 years, because of the rapid transformation from a semi-feudal and semi-colonized society to a modern one, the Shanghai city is suffering some serious problems. In one hand, a strong government control for the economical development is revealed. In other hand, market oriented economy is playing a more and more important role in daily life. The living style is undergoing a radical change. It has brought a conflict between planned and random development, and this situation will generate confusion in urban planning and construction. The city becomes a synonym of collage city, hybrid city, cyber city, puzzle city and so on.

The city is scrambling the farmland over the countryside. In 1950s, the urban area of Shanghai was 82 square kilometers, and by the end of 1980s, it was 257 square kilometers. It is estimated that the total volume of land approved for construction between

1991 to 1995 amounted to 46 493 hectares in Shanghai alone, exceeding the total volume in the past forty-one years, taking up 56.7% of the total urban area, which resulted in a great many commercial residences and office buildings being vacant and the "capital" value of land was reduced. The 1990s is a period of the most rapid development ever in the history of Shanghai. In 1990, the gross domestic product of Shanghai is 75.65 billion yuan, and the per capita GDP is 5,910 yuan, in 1999, it is 403.50 bn. yuan and the per capita GDP is 30,805 yuan. The industry structure has been also greatly changed to meet the requirements of a post-industrial city, in 1990 the primary industry is 4.3%, the secondary industry is 63.8% and the tertiary industry is 31.9%. But in 1999, the percentage is respectively 1.8%, 48% and 50.2%. All of those statistics shows a rapid increase of the national economy in Shanghai. Thus the city has invested quite a lot in the construction of infrastructure. In 1990, the total investment is 22.71 billion yuan, and the investment in urban infrastructure is 0.75 bn. yuan, in 1999 it is 185.67 bn. yuan and the investment in urban infrastructure is 15.65 bn. yuan. At the same time, the urban space has been improved. The coverage rate of urban green areas is 12.4% and the per capita public green areas is 1.02 sq.m. in 1990. The statistics in 1999 is respectively 20.3% and 3.62 sq.m.

A striking contrast in living quality from area to area happens in the same city. There is an uneven distribution of environmental resources, environmental quality, educational opportunities and infrastructure for different citizens. There is the coexistence of shanty area and best quality's residences in the same city. The big differences in human resources among Asian cities can be seen. For instance, the investment in public education is so different, the investment of pro capita in Tokyo and Osaka, it is 10.8 times as in Shanghai, Singapore is 8.7 times as in Shanghai, Hong Kong is 5 times. The number of university students in 100,000 citizens, in Tokyo, it is 4.5 times as in Shanghai, Taipei is 2.8 times, and Osaka 2 times. The technical personnel in every 100,000 citizens, it is 10 times in Tokyo and

Osaka as in Shanghai, Seoul is 4.6 times, Singapore 4 times. In these aspects, Shanghai is even quite advanced than most Chinese and Asian cities.

There are a lot of critical urban problems, such as the traffic congestion, inadequate transport, water supply, low quality of services, poor quality of urban administration, large scale migration into the city from countryside, and other social problems of the poor and disadvantaged, homeless, schooling, and problems of social disorganization, and lack of employment and training opportunities for unemployed and low-skilled workers, etc.

Shanghai is the biggest metropolis of China, in 1998, its population amounts to 1306.58 million, with a territory of 6340.5 sq. km. Since last ten years, the industrial structure of Shanghai is undergoing a great change. The tertiary industry, finance, commerce, trade, communication, real estate and other service sectors are playing a more and more important role in the city's economy. Shanghai is being transformed from one of the biggest industrial centers into an open, multi-functional economic center. The opening policy and reform in the 1980s and further in 1990s brought Shanghai a brand-new start and provided much opportunity for the urban construction. The metropolis witnessed an overall change and transformation of the urban structure. According to statistics, the GDP in Shanghai is increased from 75645 million RMB of 1990 to 368820 million RMB of 1998, about 4.6% of the national GDP. In the corresponding period, the investment in the urban infrastructure is increased from 4.772 billion RMB to 517.04 billion RMB; the investment in housing construction increased from 2.626 billion RMB to 38.886 billion RMB. The number of high-rise buildings in Shanghai saw an increase of 956 in 1990 to 2437 in 1997, and by the end of 1998, there were already about 2743 high-rise buildings. Since last two decades, 2401 billion RMB was already invested in the construction of infrastructure, among which, 90% was invested in last ten years.

Today, Shanghai Municipality Government, on the basis of the original master plan of

Shanghai submitted to the State Council in 1984, has revised the master plan in accordance with the strategy objectives of the city's economic and social development. An ambitious plan is undertaking to build Shanghai into an international metropolis at the advent of 21st century. The slogan " a new look for the city in one year, the astonishing changes in three years " even becomes the guideline of the urban reconstruction and redevelopment. Shanghai is now facing a significant historic opportunity for it to reemerge as a world economic, financial and trade center, and no less a stern challenge to that effect. Such a formidable task as a target to fulfil can only be accomplished through a solid master plan and the unremitting efforts of the citizens and even of the people of the whole nation.

Since early 1990s, Shanghai has already set up a strategy for urban development, it is simply called " One Dragon's Head and Three Centers ", i.e. a functional aim for the opening and development of the Pudong New Area as a leading role, and to build up the city as an economic, financial and trade center in the world. In this way, Shanghai is to set in motion the efforts for a leap in the regional economy of the Yangtze Delta and its whole valley. All these thus urgently demand the city to raise scientificness, forward-looking vision and operability, update concepts, explore new ideas, choose new starting points, and reform and improve the content and methods in urban planning and planning administration. The urban planning of Shanghai has to achieve the following five strategic objectives, that is, objectives that are to assure the realization of the metropolitan development.

The first one is to improve the mechanism of urban planning under the condition of market oriented economy. The second one is to adjust the urban structure in order to make it more rational and to meet the transformation of the industrial structure. The third one is to utilize the humanistic advantages and optimize the urban space in Shanghai. The fourth one is to construct a rational infrastructure, both soft- and hardware infrastructure. The fifth one is to im-

prove the system of urban planning and planning administration.

Recently, a program is planned by the Urban Planning Bureau to preserve the whole central city as a historical center, at the same time, 398 buildings are included in a list for historical preservation, 11 historical areas are listed for the preservation of its fabric and urban features. There are altogether 234 complete historical neighborhoods, of which 22 historical blocks are formed, and 440 historical architectural groups, covering an area of 10 million m<sup>2</sup>. According to various property and requirements, 4 historical and cultural towns, 3 scenic and tourist zones, and 2 natural reserves are classified in the suburbs. A multi-level protective and development mechanism is thus established. In the course of large-scale construction and development under the circumstance of rapid renewal and regeneration of the old city, efforts have to be made for the preservation of the housing and residences with historical and cultural significance, and the preservation of the features of the historical area. Because of the profit driven system of the urban administration, the urban renewal has destroyed a lot of old housing. The traditional urban fabric is undergoing a rapid transformation, which has made Shanghai a city similar with other cities elsewhere in the world. The identity of the city is gradually losing. Since last 20 years, with the market economy and the commercialization of the professional architect, a lot of old buildings with qualified craftsmanship are being replaced by crudely constructed masses. Since middle of 1980s, a so-called pseudo-neo-classicism is popularly defused in the city. Contemporary Shanghai architecture is threatened by the copy of superficial Disneyland and cartoon style. It is to pander to the upstart's vulgar taste.

The Xin Tian Di plan offers a new approach for the urban renewal, to create a compact and workable district center, which is located between Shanghai's ancient walled city and its dynamic downtown. The idea of the project is intended to bridge the old and the new. It is a development that will ultimately accommodate 1.6 million square

meters of retail, housing, office, and hotels. SOM's main goals were to create a sense of place and to sensitively integrate the new development into the city's existing fabric. The district's various uses are brought together around a central open space that features a 3.7-hectare manmade lake. As one of the approaches for the renewal of the old Lilong housing, it has the methodological value, but it can not be the ideal model for the renewal of historical residential areas in Shanghai. The layout has arbitrarily changed the urban fabric and cut down the context. The artificial lake was dug up from a land of an old residential district. Just a very small part of the housing is preserved and the original function has been transformed to a commercial area. The surrounding old housings will be soon replaced by high-rise and luxury buildings. The Xin Tian Di Project has generated a discussion on the general worry about the rapid destroy of the old urban fabric in Shanghai.

The historical land marks quickly disappeared and sunken into the ocean of super high-rise buildings. Every client would like to have his building become a landmark. Under the system of two level administration of urban planning, the municipal government could control only 10% of the new projects, and the other 90% are mainly under the control of district government and even the investors.

From the point of view for urban development, the water space should be made good use of. Historically, Huangpu River and Suzhou Creek brought much vitality to the city and constituted Shanghai's characteristics. The future development of Shanghai still has to consider the waterfront of Huangpu River, Suzhou Creek and the whole water network in Shanghai. A transformation work for the waterfront of Suzhou Creek is now put into operation within 17 kilometers long water channel. In 2000 - 2001, Shanghai is systematically working on the planning of the public open space for Huangpu River, and the Shanghai Urban Planning Administrative Bureau has organized an international conceptual urban design for an area of 20 km long and 22.6

km<sup>2</sup>. In 2001, the urban design for the waterfront of the Suzhou Creek of a length of 13 km and with an area of 4.54 km<sup>2</sup> has been organized too. Since 1999, Shanghai has made a great effort to purify its water and put the waterfront in order. New Bund, such as Southern Bund and Northern Bund along with the historical Bund are under planning.

The updated master plan has given a very significant position to the construction of cyber harbor, air harbor and deepwater harbor. In next 10 years, Shanghai will pay more attention to the construction of highway to connect with other satellite cities, in order to promote the urbanization. Shanghai takes the public transportation as the priority, especial the mass rapid railway system, which has 3 levels: inter-city railway, urban metro system and light railway system. According to the master plan, 17 metro lines have been planned, which are 4 regional metro lines, 8 urban metro lines and 5 urban light rail lines have been planned. The total length will be 780 km in the whole metropolitan area and 488 km in the Central City. Today 3 lines has been put into running, the total length is 65 km.

The large-scale construction has given a lesson to all the municipality government to pay more attention to the advanced planning. 2001 could be called the year of urban planning to Shanghai. The New Master Plan of Shanghai (2000-2020) after 8 years hard work has been finally approved by the State Council of China, and the Ten-Five Plan of Shanghai (2001-2005) has been worked out. Today, Shanghai is becoming an international laboratory for experimental architecture and advanced urban planning concepts. The contribution of construction is truly significant. No other city in the world has planned and built so much within a period of 20 years.

In 2001, three satellite cities and 6 suburb towns of Shanghai have invited architects and urban planners from U.S., U.K. Germany, Italy, France, Australia, Sweden, Spain, Holland, Japan and China to present their conceptual plans. All of those plans have dealt with a vast land area. The scale

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of expansion and development is really incredible. The Master Plan of Songjiang City, Lu-Chao-Gang New City, Jin-Shan City and master plans of 6 towns, An-Ting Town, Pu-Jiang Town, Feng-Cheng Town, Luo-Dian Town, Gao-Qiao Town, Zhu-Jia-Jiao Town have been worked out or being still working on. Some plans have revealed talent ideas, some have picked the ideas in the history and adopted the contemporary situation, such as Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, Arturo Soria's Ciudad Lineal, and Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin and others. Some have presented the concept of an utopian or ideal city. In the world, no one city could have so many new urban planning concepts in such a short period, no one city could have held so many international architectural design and urban design competitions which could be done within 200 or even more years in the whole Europe. For the preparation of the World Exposition of 2010, which is under application process, a former steel plant will be selected as the site, the Huangpu Riverfront under the urban structure and function transformations will be an ideal site for the World Exposition.

For the future development, Shanghai's architects and urban planner have already realized the critical situation of urban space, and put more attention to it. The key point of the urban space is to create an identity of Shanghai.