

CHINA * TODAY
An Interval of Events Between
1997 2009

My first introduction to the sheer power of Chinese Master planning occurred in Hong Kong during June and July of 1997. England's 99 year lease of Hong Kong from China expired at the stroke of midnight on June 30th. At that moment China's president, Jiang Zemin began an address before an audience of 3000 invited guests. He announced the establishment of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of China for a period of 50 years.

As President Zemin spoke, a significant number of well-equipped Chinese soldiers fanned, out sealing the mainland border to Hong Kong, while others quietly secured pressure points in the city to control civil order, if and as required.

My wife and I, as observers during this time-frame, vividly experienced the countdown of the final two weeks of Hong Kong's accustomed freedom under British rule, so adroitly administered by governor Chris Patten. Notable expressions of tension amongst the people were widely featured in the press and on television. Of particular interest and fear in the hearts and minds of some families related to the status of their very young children. Some uncertainties did turn into grim realizations. On the morning of July 1st, Chinese soldiers rounded up quite a number of these young children, claiming they were born on the mainland, not in Hong Kong.

This real life drama at the center of a turning point in history gave us an awakening introduction to Chinese authority and strategy... 99 and 50 year back to back Master Plans, for the same territory, carefully fashioned, all embracing.!

We have returned to Hong Kong several times to enjoy its sheer beauty, unparalleled sophistication, lively cultural temperament and, more importantly, to comprehend the strength and range of its incredibly successful entrepreneurial ventures. The city sports a superlative collection of modern architecture, topped off by Io Ming Pei's Bank of China, of which his father was the president in the 1940's.

In 221 BC, the great Emperor Qin gave forth with a saying, "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools contend." What an optimistic point of view ! With Emperor Qin's command still in focus today, at 2005, we Americans are interacting with the Chinese people amongst the surges of multiple leaps forward, in all areas of our

interests in their affairs. What can we learn from them and they from us? Many nations are competing and collaborating with China with increasing intensity. Top down command from Beijing, countered by the surge of opportunities and human ingenuity of over 1.3 billion citizens, reveals a synergy of events developing faster than we can imagine.

There is something intrinsic about the Chinese ... 90 percent of the population are members of the Han family. By observation and conversations with young men and women, I recognize a strong a sense of their self-confidence and dignity. As articulate, hard working, English speaking, optimistic individuals, they “are” living and working together as members of a large family. They know they are the beneficiaries, of several great periods of enlightenment. Of all of the ancient civilizations, China is the only one to survive.

Emerging from the historic caldron of many dynasties, famines, floods, wars, and political upheavals. Today’s civilization has developed traction once again. Since Chairman Mao Tsetung’s single-handed leadership at Shanghai in 1945, the Chinese, now fully engaged, are bringing to fruition numerous Master Plans.

Let us examine one of them.

In 1997, Beijing established China’s 4th Autonomous Municipality, named ChongQing. It is located in a mountainous region of central China, literally carved out the province of Sichuan, some 50,000 square miles in area, roughly the size of Illinois, with a population of 32 million. Its geographic configuration includes wide bands of mountainous land flanking both banks of the Yangtze River. It extends from the new Three Gorges Dam upriver for over 350 miles to metropolitan ChongQing.

The construction of the Dam will be completed in 2009, enabling it’s 26 generators to produce some 24,000 mega watts of electricity to serve the surrounding region ...an amount of energy equivalent to Commonwealth Edison’s capacity to serve customers in metropolitan Chicago and within all of the area up to the Wisconsin Border. The Dam’s generating capacity, by far the largest in the world, will be increased by additional equipment, added after 2009.

The level of the river at the dam will rise to the designed height of 600 feet by 2009. 1.3 million people have been relocated from nearly a hundred cities, towns, villages and farms to be inundated by rise of the river against the Dam. Essentially, the river is slowly being transformed into a deep, extremely narrow 350 mile lake...the length of the course of our Mackinac boat race.

The nature of the relocation of the people falls into several categories. Many young men and women took this as an opportunity to escape to large cities. aging mothers, fathers and grand parents, accustomed to generations of family life in their ancient places of residence, were reluctant to move into unfamiliar environments. Many farmers, some quite angry, were sent to distant provinces to start their agricultural careers all over again. The great majority of the people were relocated in the new towns and cities built at higher elevations above the river. They are now living in hundreds of six story walk-up apartment complexes, complete with electricity, bathrooms, kitchens, telephones, television and computers, providing significantly improved lifestyles.

To better interconnect all of the new cities, construction of highways continues for hundreds of miles throughout the mountains, all along the river. New utility lines, state-of-the-art long-span bridges and mountain tunnels have been constructed connecting formerly isolated rural pockets of mountain people. Existing small mountain-plateau airports have extended their runways and built surprisingly modern terminals complete bus route service and parking lots. Truly beautiful scenic parks and attractive tourist resorts in the mountains and along navigable streams are now popular attractions for natives and tourists.

The gifted Chinese photographer, Zheng Yunfenz, recently published a book of his exquisite photographs taken during a period of six years, recording forever the pristine grandeur of the mountains, their wide range of seasonal foliage, the ever swirling reflective textures and colors of the sunlit moonlit river, and, the final evidence of the means of human energy, powering navigation up-river. The title of the book "The Perpetual Three Gorges " implies an intellectual act of love and finality...a truly elegant farewell salute to one of nature's superlative creations on our planet. See book

At five of the large old cities, some 150 miles or more upriver of the Dam, significant concrete embankment structures have been built to prevent flooding of large areas. New high rise apartment and office buildings, modern research laboratories and schools will accommodate the stimulation of the economy for the steadily increasing population.

One can be assured that none of the above just happened. The mayor and 4 vice-mayors of ChongQing, appointed by President Zemin, direct and monitor the progress of the Master plans in transition. The underlying fact that the government owns all of the land in China absolutely facilitates its control of the framework of this Master Plan. Further, and importantly for us, to learn as an example, the entire process was planned within the application of a new Chinese social science concept, entitled, Mountain Urbanology. The principles of this concept originated within the faculty at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Mountain Urbanology is a feature of the curriculum in the graduate school of Architecture and Planning at the University of ChongQing. Dean Zhao Wanmin, courteously gave me a short course in its principles. His profusely illustrated 285 page Phd. thesis, written while a graduate student at Tsinghau , contributed to the development of its functional applications as government policy, applied in the field.

Now, a directly related sidebar statement...The widespread extent of the relocation and rehabilitation turmoil we are struggling to comprehend and recover from, all along our devastated Gulf coast, presents a parallel case in point regarding our own national planning initiatives. Namely, federal and state government officials must convene a panel of experts to formulate the principles and guidelines for a new national social science, named Coastal Urbanology.

Returning to ChongQing:

A deep-water container port, under construction 8 miles downstream from the heart of the city, will service international ocean freighters, sailing upstream 1300 miles from the East China Sea. This facility will handle the export of ChongQing's General Motor, Ford and Volkswagen cars, buses and trucks, all sent downriver to the densely populated provinces flanking it's lower reaches. After 2009, only Chinese companies will design, engineer, assemble and sell cars, trucks and buses in China and throughout the world. This ownership

transition concept applies to the current much larger joint venture automobile plants downriver at Nanjing, Shanghai and elsewhere.

I will tell you a couple of stories about ChongQing.

In 1998, my wife and I sailed up-river from Wuhan for an inspection of the construction of the Dam, continuing onward, marveling at the majestic grandeur of the Gorges. Upon arrival at ChongQing, we were quickly transferred to a bus for a 60 minute tour of the city. After a hasty inspection of the anthropological Museum's substantial collection of dusty dinosaur bones we were driven away to Chendu, the capital of the province of Sichuan.

A rather explicit indication...ChongQing was not a preferred destination for foreign tourists.

However, during my 21 day residence in October 2003, quartered at the 5* Marriot Hotel, I enjoyed every moment, even though I never once saw the sun, moon nor stars. Heavy clouds blanket the city from October until May. Early morning hours are dim, if not dark, due to its geographic position in a single-time-zone nation.

It is a city teeming with young corporate business men and women, employees working six day weeks at steel mills, mines, automobile and airplane manufacturing plants, on farms and as crews on commercial riverboats.

In 1997, Hutchinson Whampoo, British investors out of Hong Kong, built ChongQing's premier business center. It includes the 5 *Harbor Plaza Hotel, a six story upscale shopping Mall, complete with a palatial top floor ice skating rink sporting a handsome arched mirrored ceiling, plus the 25 story Metropolitan Tower Office building, headquarters of numerous "Fortune 500" corporations. This popular complex thrives with of activity, around the clock.

On the streets, a city-wide beehive of small Yellow cabs, made in Shanghai, swarm about. ...drivers charge 45 cents for long rides, but refuse tips, which, I think, they see as charity, if so, very interesting. All over the city thousands of men, with "4 foot carrying poles" stand by, looking for jobs hauling heavy loads of goods, often walking for long distances on the streets...a viable form of self-help, private enterprise. The congested automobile, bus and truck traffic on the mountainside streets is intense, chaotic. There are few intersections with traffic lights.

Air pollution from trucks and busses is often really offensive, especially in the long tunnels underneath this mountain city.

The recently occupied “gated estate”, named Beverly Hills, also an investment by Hutchinson Whampoo, contains 273 spacious three story “American style” single family homes with garages, sold at prices ranging from \$600,000 to \$1,800,000, exclusive of the land. One additional comment... The new 8 level department store downtown, sells high quality ‘American Style’ furniture and furnishings, including grand pianos, andirons, beautiful silk garments and 88 varieties of tea.

An international Architectural design competition for mixed-use housing and offices, on a 1200 acre site...for a “new town” named Fortune City proceeded as follows. An foreign jury of five, chaired by a French architect, spent four days evaluating 15 submissions. On Saturday, in the ballroom of my hotel, the two finalists, an American firm, HOK and the Australian firm, AXIS, made their presentations in the presence of about 300 attendees, including the Mayor, many local dignitaries and the press. The chairman of the jury declared AXIS to be the winner.

The mid-rise apartment towers and office buildings, designed as adroit bent and twisted twenty story buildings all danced about, so to speak, in a clever upright manner upon the beautifully landscaped site model. Actually, a startling, yet appealing architectural design.

One of the four vice-mayors of ChongQing, Mr. Huang Qi Fan, in charge of implementing the project, spoke approvingly, He extended and amazingly articulate sense of enthusiasm during his forceful speech supporting this example of urban planning, helping to define the nature and quality of the future development of ChongQing.

This entire event was conducted in English.

Mr. Fan, serving as a vice-mayor of Shanghai, was in charge of the Master Planning for the development of Pudong, the vast urban addition to Shanghai, including the new airport. Wherever assigned by Beijing, he implements principles of national policy.

The people of ChongQing have been guided to use their innate human abilities, combined with native and foreign investment capital, to make their own private enterprise flourish, creating many wealthy citizens.

Let us move on to Beijing. The seven square mile Olympic village under construction at the northern perimeter of the city will later become a public activity center for sports, competitions, conventions and leisure. Additionally, new stadiums and gymnasiums are under construction in the major competitive cities of Qingdao, Shanghai, Tianjin, Shenyang and Qinhuangdao.

Strangely enough, as a calculated exercise of civic showmanship, the city sidestepped the option to build China's candidate for the tallest building in the world. Taiwan has already done that with this year's occupancy of Taipei's 101 story tower. No matter, the next "tallest" building is under construction in Dubai.

Instead, through the process of several international architectural competitions, truly imaginative designs emerged for major sports buildings. To top it all off, the structurally intriguing 70 story China Central Television Company building, now under construction, is surely intended, I think, to be the "landmark" star of Beijing's urban showcase.

When China was elected in 2001 to host the 2008 Games, Beijing made an historic urban rehabilitation decision. Namely, to relocate the Shougang Iron and Steel Company manufacturing plant. This 86 year old facility, located 12 miles west of the city center, employs 120,000 workers at dozens of plants spread out over its sprawling domain covering 10 square miles. Northwestern winds carrying dense smoke and grit from the plants regularly engulf Beijing. The Company, long identified as being the capital's worst polluter, will be relocated.

Liang Congjie, an environmental pioneer in China, fought bravely to establish "Friends of the Earth", the country's first environmental organization. He had long before sought in vain to have the factory moved. The Games triggered the decision.

During the intervening four years since, China's steel manufacturing infrastructure, in consort with the government, has worked out a plan to reorganize the industry to better serve their interrelated contributions to the economy of the nation. New technological manufacturing processes will severely reduce or even almost eliminate air pollution.

Several cities vied to become the site for the relocated facility. On February 18th of this year, Beijing's National Development and Reform

Commission approved the plans for Shougang's relocation 130 miles away on the small island of Caofeidian, in the Bohai Sea. Blessed with a rare natural deep-water port, capable for handling large cargo ships, it lies 12 miles offshore, connected to the mainland by a new highway. Additionally, on the edge of the mainland, the presence of established coal mines and nearby port facilities augur well for the strategy undergirding this move.

The government and the Company are devising several alternative flexible procedures to facilitate the relocation of the 120,000 employees. It is expected some who have worked for Shougang all of their lives will retire, opening up new jobs locally. Workers and their families will live in newly constructed staff residences and dorms on the island. Shougang Steel plans to begin production in 2010. Financial giants from Hong Kong and foreign countries are co-operating to provide additional long term financing for this undertaking, tentatively estimated to cost more than five billion dollars.

Among many rail projects currently being built, the most difficult one is a 700 mile stretch with 30 stations, between Qinghai and Lhasa. The altitude of the line ranges from ten to fourteen thousand feet above sea level. The track bed construction bears mostly upon frozen earth, and passing through several mountain tunnels are being built using newly developed sophisticated engineering and construction detailing, never before attempted.

Some 20,000 workers have been involved in this multi-year, high altitude, environmentally sensitive enterprise. During the winter, surface construction ceases and tunneling proceeds. The railroad passes over the headwaters of the Yangtze, more than 3900 miles from its mouth.

When completed in 2008, the rail trip between Beijing and Lhasa will take 48 hours. A consortium of Chinese firms, led by the Canadian company, Bombardier, will supply the freight cars and a number of luxury sleeping carriages which are pressurized much like airplane cabins. These railway cars are being built in eastern China at Shandong.

The trains have new state of the art equipment to withstand the varying intensely severe technological challenges of high altitudes, namely; low temperatures, low oxygen and sand storms.

In the coming years, the mass migration of additional Han Chinese into Tibet will increase exponentially, as it has following the introduction of railroads into Inner Mongolia and Manchuria.

The entire status of Tibet's current religious political, social, economic and cultural activities are constantly undergoing significant coordinated changes within the guiding planning strategy and power of Beijing's political and economic persuasions.

Now, taking on a broader perspective, my earlier experiences working in Japan, Singapore and Taiwan, combined with recent visits in China, makes one increasingly aware of the fallacy of the old-fashioned concept of a euro-centric world consisting of the United States Canada Latin America, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

What strikes home are the jolting intellectual and tactile intensities of people living in Australia and New Zealand, India, Siberia, Mongolia Singapore Hong Kong and Taiwan, Japan, the two Koreas plus Indonesia and the Philippines. One has a gut feeling of the strong alliance of intertwined economic, social and cultural bonds among this clutch of nations, with over 3.5 billion people. Expectations predict an increase of another billion within the next two generations.

Somewhat in this context, a commentary about Singapore is in order. This nation started from scratch out of the jungles, 70 years ago. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew, the government emphasized the teaching of reading, writing, arithmetic and city planning, at all levels of education, starting in grammar school. He promoted the internationalization of his country, although wisely restricting immigration. He led his people to build over two dozen residential cities, all interconnected internally by a sophisticated public mass transit system. He guided the development of a successful business community supported by a booming shipping industry, all accomplished in an era of peaceful national civility...A study model for the master planning of nation building.

Go to China. After landing at the international airport in Pudong, ride the mag-lev line into Shanghai's metropolis of 9 million people, 700,000 of which are Taiwanese. For visions of storied old Cathay, book rooms at the Peace Hotel, located on the Bund, right at Nanjing Road. During breakfast, on the 8th floor, watch the flow of morning freighter traffic on the Huangpu River... and catch the rising sunlight glinting upon the golden skin of the ninety story Jin Mao pagoda, across the river in Pudong, designed by Chicago architect, Adrian Smith.

The new art museum in Peoples Park offers a lavish display of great works by Chinese masters. Don't miss it! Dine in the sophisticated two block neighborhood named Xintiandi meaning "new/earth/sky" all of which was the French Concession in the old days. Relax as you stroll about enjoying the sparkling nightscape transformation of Shanghai's architectural showcase. ! By all means, take a one day tour-cruise, up river 60 miles, to inspect the famous gardens at Suzhou.

Early in the morning, fly west over the Yangtze River valley, to spend three days in ChongQing. Walk about and see the city and the people. Take a short riverboat cruise to observe the life of the city from that vantage point.

Plan well in advance, indeed, for a visit to Beijing in 2008. Experiencing the cultural treasures of the host city, coupled with the synergy of competitive athletic ardor vying for the glory of golden medals... will combine to make your presence truly memorable. Perhaps, importantly, through your encounters, a closer recognition of how we together can share the blossoming of a hundred flowers ...as our hundred schools contend.

Bon Voyage !

**Stanley Nance Allan
President**

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