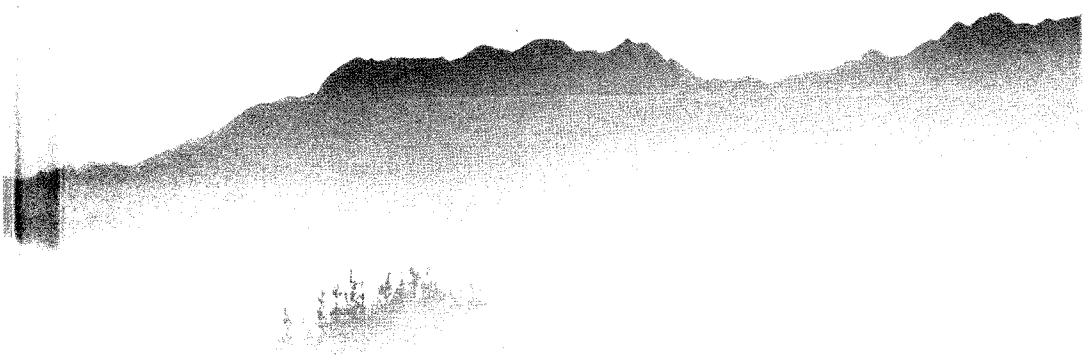
CONFUCIANISM, CHINESE HISTORY AND SOCIETY



Edited by **Wong Sin Kiong**

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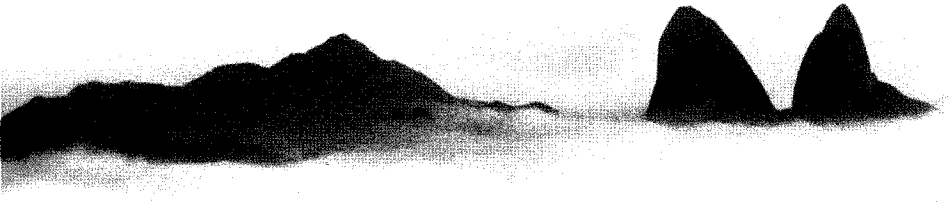
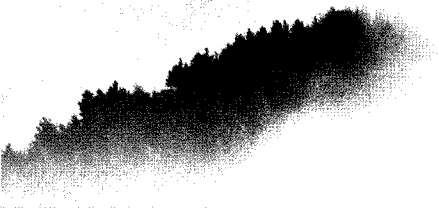
CONFUCIANISM, CHINESE HISTORY AND SOCIETY

Confucianism, Chinese History and Society is a collection of essays authored by world renowned scholars on Chinese studies, including Professor Ho Peng Yoke (Needham Research Institute), Professor Leo Ou-fan Lee (Harvard University), Professor Philip Y.S. Leung (Chinese University of Hong Kong), Professor Liu Ts'un-Yan (Australian National University), Professor Tu Wei-Ming (Harvard University), Professor Wang Gungwu (National University of Singapore) and Professor Yue Daiyun (Peking University). The volume covers many important themes and topics in Chinese Studies, including the Confucian perspective on human rights, Nationalism and Confucianism, Confucianism and the development of Science in China, crisis and innovation in contemporary Chinese cultures, plurality of cultures in the context of globalization, and comparative study of the city cultures in modern China. These essays were originally delivered at the Professor Wu Teh Yao Memorial Lectures. Wu Teh Yao (1917-1994) was an educator, political scientist, specialist in Confucianism and original drafter of the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights.





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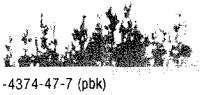

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Wong

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CONTENTS

10

THE WALLS AND WATERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CITY CULTURES IN MODERN CHINA — BEIJING, SHANGHAI, AND HONG KONG*

PHILIP Y.S. LEUNG

Chinese University of Hong Kong

10.1. Introduction

This chapter is a preliminary attempt to analyze and compare the cultural characteristics of three Chinese cities in modern history: Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The development and evolution of city culture in these three cities depend very much on the interaction of two environments: the natural and the artificial. The latter refers to a human-built environment which includes architectural forms, city planning, and the transportation–communication system, while the former refers to physical landscape, geographical location, vegetation, and natural resources. The first half of this chapter will examine and analyze the cultural significance of the human-built environment as represented by the city-walls of each city. In the past 200 years, as this chapter attempts to show, the walls built outside or inside the three Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong had great

* This chapter is a reproduction of the Wu Teh Yao memorial lecture given by the author in 2004.

impact on the changing lifestyles and the evolution of political and commercial cultures in these cities. The second half of this chapter will focus on the natural environment especially the waters surrounding the cities — rivers, bays, and harbors, assessing the impact of the "changing waters" on the development of city culture.

10.2. The Walls and City Culture

The city wall was a prominent feature in old Chinese cities. To the Chinese, the walls had both practical values as well as symbolic meanings. The lifestyle and livelihood of the Chinese people in the city were in many ways molded and affected by the design, structure, and functionality of these walls. More important, the evolution and change of city culture was intricately connected to the history of these walls — their design and construction in the early period, their subsequent renovation and reconstruction, and eventually their demolition in the 20th century. From the history of the walls, we could see how the cultural characteristics of the city changed, and how the competition among local elite and the clash of civilizations affected the political and economic development of the city. During the last two centuries when Chinese cities became rapidly industrialized, modernized, and commercialized, the walls' functional values were debated and challenged, and finally the walls were torn down and demolished.

The controversies centering around the preservation and demolition of the walls reflected the cultural tensions between tradition and modernity, and between a land-based political orientation and a open-mindedness toward maritime trade. In the end, the walls in the three cities fell victims to modernization, industrialization, urban renewal, and rapid economic expansion. For comparative purpose and for better understanding of the relationship between walls and cultural development, we shall include the city-walls of Beijing in this part of the chapter, but only concentrate on Shanghai and Hong Kong when we examine the element of water.

10.3. Beijing — The Walls Stood Tall

Beijing was a city of prominent and visible walls. Walls of different heights and sizes, and walls of stone and walls of mud were aplenty: the walls of the

Forbidden City or Palace City, the walls of the Imperial City, the walls of the Inner City, the walls of the Outer City, and walls around the sacred temples, and walls surrounding noble houses and imperial gardens, and of course, sections of the Great Wall in the outskirts of the city. The walls were constructed in the pre-modern period and they were meant to protect the imperial palaces and the royal families; they were built around the old capital to guard the capital from outside attacks by rebels and invaders. They were erected around the sacred grounds of the Temple of Heaven and other holy places to prevent ordinary intruders. In other words, one of the primary and most important reasons for the construction of the walls in Beijing was for the protection and defense of the city and the noble people and sacred altars therein.

The old city-walls were built more than 2000 years ago in the ancient city of Jizhou (薊州) and Yanjing (燕京). Subsequently more walls were built when a new dynasty appeared and when new rulers came in. Over the last 600 years, Beijing has been the national capital of China, and because of that, more buildings, palaces, pagodas and towers, and walls were built in and around the city.

Beijing was, and still is, a city of prominent walls.

10.3.1. *History of the walls*

For centuries Beijing had been a city with many walls. First, there were the walls of the old city of Jicheng (薊城), later changed to the city of Youzhou (幽州), and then to the city of Yanjing (燕京). The ancient city of Jicheng was established, according to Chinese legends, some 2400 years ago during the reign of Sage-king Shun (舜).[1] The walls were renovated by the state of Yan when the city was made capital of this small state in the north during the Warring States period. A new walled city was constructed in the south around 70 AD in the Eastern Han and it was named Youzhou in the period of the Three Kingdoms.[2] After that the city came to be known as Yanjing, and it was made capital by the Khitan Liao (遼) and by the Jurchen Jin (金) dynasties. The city walls of Yanjing formed the shape of a square, with 36 *li* (里) on each side. The height of the city wall was three *zhang* (丈) and the width at the base was about one-and-a-half *zhang*. The Khitan Liao added an inner wall for better protection and defense. The Jin also expanded and renovated sections of the wall (using mud bricks)

to make it the "Central Capital" (zhongdu, 中都) of the state. According to one source, the circumference of the city wall of the "Central Capital" was about 54 *li*.[3] The city was conquered by Mongols under Genghis Khan in the beginning of the 13th century, and later the Mongol (or Yuan, 元) ruler Kublai Khan adopted the city as the "central capital" in 1267 AD. In 1272, its name was officially changed to "Great Capital" (dadu, 大都), and from then onward to the end of the Qing (清) or Manchu dynasty, Beijing had remained the capital of China for about 600 years.[4] Most of the city-walls constructed by Kublai Khan were preserved into the Ming (明). This old walled-city was called the "Inner City" (neicheng, 內城) when a new wall was constructed during the Yongle (永樂) period (completed around 1421) of the Ming dynasty to include a vast piece of territory outside the main gate of the old walled city to form the "Outer City" (waicheng. 外城).

The walls of the "Outer City," constructed in the 14th century under the Ming, represented the outermost layer of city-walls of Beijing, the imperial capital. Sections of the walls were demolished in the mid-20th century but certain parts of the walls have been maintained in the present-day Beijing. Besides the walls of the "Outer City," there were more walls in Beijing: First, walls of the "Inner City" (neicheng) which were built in the Yuan dynasty when the Mongol ruler made the city the capital of their vast empire. Within the walls of "Outer City" and "Inner City" there were more walls: First, the walls of the "Imperial City" (huangcheng, 皇城) in which the government offices, imperial palaces and houses and courts of the nobilities were located; and in addition, the walls of the "Forbidden City" (zijingcheng, 紫禁城) or the "Palace City." These cities were all surrounded by walls that protected the palaces and people within, and prevented common people from intrusion. The walls of the Imperial City and the walls of the Forbidden City were decorated with elaborated gates, guard towers, and other architectural structures and sculptures for a variety of purposes including *feng shui* (風水) or geomancy. In fact, the design and construction of the entire capital was in line with astrological and *feng shui* alignments with the Palace City at the center.[5] Designed by Liu Bingzhong (劉秉忠), an expert architect familiar with the layout and characteristics of ancient Chinese capitals such as Changan (長安) and Luoyang (洛陽), the new capital of the Mongol empire embraced all essential elements of Chinese geomancy that justified its political significance and locational centrality. The construction work was

completed in 1283, a few years after Kublai Khan elevated the city from the status of "central capital" (zhongdu) to that of "great capital" (dadu) in 1272. It became a great city in the 13th and 14th centuries with about half a million population consisting of Mongols, Jurchens, Tibetans, Chinese, and dozens of racial groups from Central and Northern Asia. It was ransacked during the rebellion of the 1360s. After the fall of the Mongol dynasty, the Ming Emperor Yongle decided to rebuild the city as his "Northern Capital" (Beijing, 北京) although the official capital of the Ming was located in Nanjing (南京). The rebuilding of Beijing proved to be a major construction project that lasted more than 15 years. More palaces and temples were built within the city, and sections of the city-wall were renovated throughout the early Qing dynasty, but the layout and the main structures remained unchanged. In the early 20th century, advocates of modern city planning and city reconstruction called for the demolition of the old walls to pave way for new buildings and infrastructures. The new government of the People's Republic generally sided with these city reformers, and as a result, most of the city walls were torn down for road expansion and for new construction projects in the 1950s despite the objection of a few cultural scholars and professional architects such as Liang Sicheng (梁思成) and Hou Renzhi (侯仁之).[6] However, certain sections of the walls have been preserved, together with most of the imperial palaces and sacred temples.

10.3.2. *The walls and development of imperial Beijing*

The walls of Beijing, in more ways than one, shaped and defined the city. As mentioned earlier, the most common function of the walls was for protection. The city walls of Beijing protected the royal family, the government officials, and the people living in the imperial capital. Since these people were of great significance, the walls were high and sturdily built, usually with stones and hard bricks. The walls were thick, double-layered and surrounded with moats that helped in defense. If the invaders or rebels broke through the walls of the "Outer City" there were more walls to protect the "Inner City" and more walls to protect the "Imperial City" and the "Forbidden City" (see Figure 1). The concentricity of the walls of the imperial capital was not only for better protection of the royal family, but it also revealed the growing status and significance of the people from

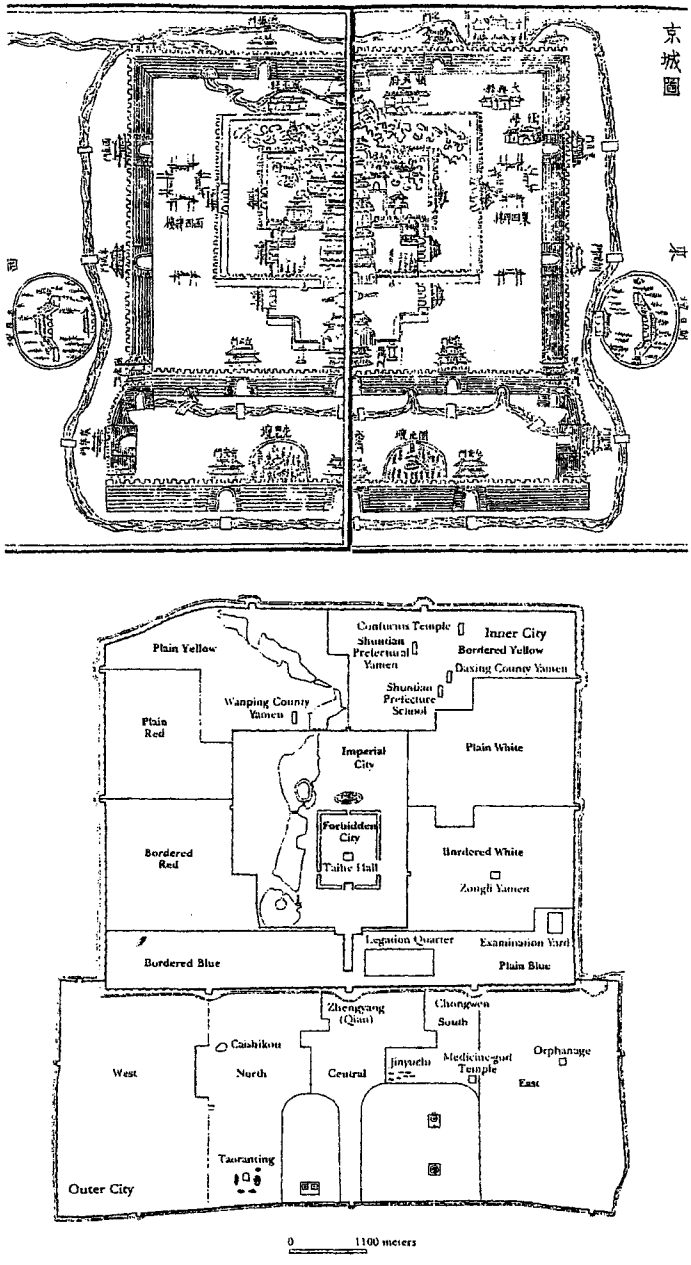

Figure 10.1 The Walled City of Beijing, circa 1684

Source: Adapted from Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000, pp. 356, 426.

outer to inner, and from periphery to the center. The walls of Beijing, in other words, not only protected the people within from outside attacks, it also divided the people living within. The walls of each city were also lines of demarcation preventing people from free intermingling. The Manchu or Qing dynasty basically maintained the design and structure of the city with only minor changes, primarily adding more palaces and building structures throughout the first 100 years. However, one important policy of segregation was initiated by the early Manchu government using the walls of the "Inner City" (hence also known as Tartar City) as boundaries. The Han Chinese were not permitted to reside in areas within the "Inner City," including that of the Imperial City and Forbidden City. They had to move out of the walls of the "Inner City" into a newly developed area within the walls of the "Outer City" (waicheng, 外城).[7] In other words, the walls of the "Inner City" served the purpose of segregation in addition to that of protection.

As each city-wall had its gates and guard towers, it was not easy for the people of Beijing to move around the city without documentation because the gates and walls prevented free movement of the passengers in and out the cities. The walls stood tall and were usually decorated with guard towers and the gates were given names such as "Shen Wu Men, 神武門" (Martial Gate), "Tai He Men, 太和門" (Ultimate Peace Gate), "Tian An Men, 天安門" (Heavenly Peace Gate), and "Wu Men, 午門" (Noon Gate), and so on. The towers and the high walls were imposing and sometimes quite threatening. The gates with names written in huge characters at the top looking down at the passengers were constantly guarded by soldiers. On top of the wall there were watch-towers and archery stands. This instilled in the ordinary passengers both a sense of fear and awe. The restriction in movements and regular checking of documentation and identity reminded constantly the residents of Beijing their ethnic and class identities, giving rise to a general acceptance of hierarchy and a high level of status consciousness. Words such as "No entry" or "No trespassing" were written all over the walls, so to speak. There were so many boundaries for the privileged and excluded few, ordinary people in Beijing had to settle with a hierarchical structure and a submissive attitude. In such a place, ideas of equality and liberalism could find little or no breeding grounds.

However, on the other hand, the residents of Beijing were proud of their status as inhabitants of the center of the "Middle Kingdom" literally living under the feet of the "son of heaven." The walls of Beijing were not only a physical boundary that separates "inner" and "outer," but a cultural boundary that denotes center and periphery. The sense of centrality of the capital in the nation as well as in the universe gave rise to a widespread feeling of superiority and cultural vigor that was often prevalent among the Beijing city dwellers in the past especially among the scholar-officials. This cultural pride and sense of leadership remain quite apparent among the contemporary elite of Beijing despite the demolition of most of the old city-walls.

10.4. Shanghai — The Walls were Crumbling

Shanghai was not a capital or a mega-city five centuries ago when Beijing had already established its prominence. Shanghai was a commercial town and trading center before its walls were erected in the Ming dynasty. The city walls were built primarily for defense against the frequent raids and harassment of the pirates who came from the sea. The walls, however, were built with mud bricks and not as sturdy and permanent as the Beijing walls. In addition, the walls were relatively low and the enclosed area was limited to what was known as the "Chinese City" or "Southern City" (nanshi, 南市) in the 19th century. The walled city of Shanghai, therefore, constituted only a small section of the new city of Shanghai in the modern period beginning with the opening of the city to foreign trade in 1843. The walled-city was only one of the tri-cities in Shanghai, together with the twin cities, namely the International Settlements and the French Concession (see Figure 2). The erection and demolition of the walls of the "Chinese City" in Shanghai tells a fascinating story of cultural adjustment and power struggle among the local elite.

10.4.1. *History of the walls*

Shanghai's city-walls were built in the 17th century in the Ming dynasty. Before that Shanghai was a small market-town located in an open plain adjacent to the Huangpu River. Its increasing significance as a regional

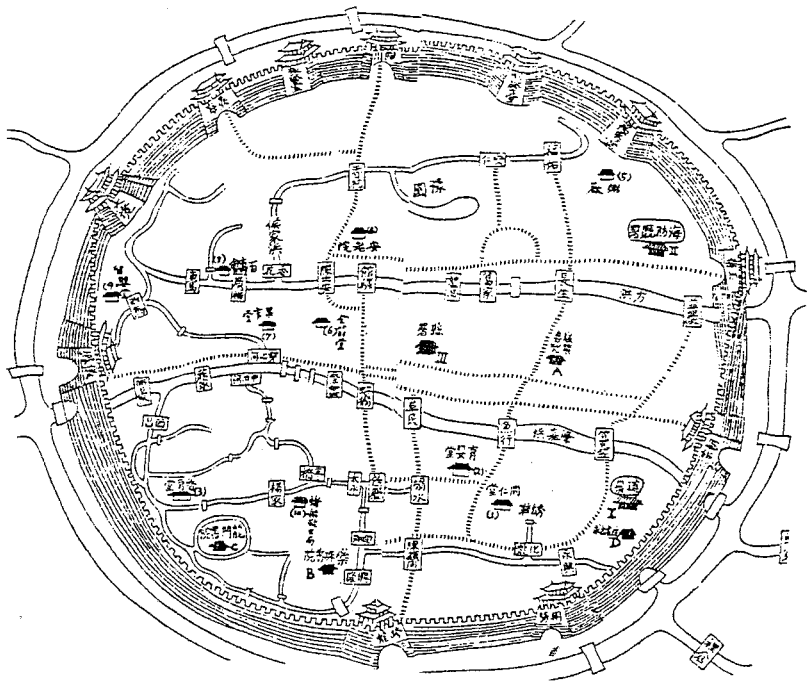

Figure 10.2 The Walled City of Shanghai, circa 1872
Source: Leung Yuen Sang, *The Shanghai Taotai: Linkage Man in a Changing Society, 1843-90*. Singapore: University of Singapore Press, 1990, p. 140.

trade center made it the choice of the Yuan government as the seat of a district *yamen* (衙門) (xian, 縣) in 1292. A Yuan map shows a sprawling town, without walls, as Linda Cooke Johnson, a specialist of early Shanghai history, notes, "but having important county offices, a Yuan naval garrison and the headquarters for the grain tribute."[8] The city walls were not built until the Jiajing (嘉靖) period of the Ming dynasty. During the mid-15th century, the Lower Yangzi was repeatedly invaded by Japanese pirates and the threat led to a communal decision to build a wall for better defense of the city.

The city wall had a circumference of nine *li* with a height of two *zhang* and four Chinese feet. There were seven gates and three of which were connected to the waters of River Huangpu (黃浦) running by the city. In 1598, another five feet of bricks were added to the height of the old wall for better defense purpose, and one more gate was constructed for water traffic.[9]

Within the walled "Chinese City," there were all the government offices or *yamen*, from the *Taotai*'s (dao-shu, 道署) to that of the magistrate's (xian-ya, 縣衙). The walls were interpolated with watch-towers and the gates were also regularly guarded by soldiers. The city wall of Shanghai, like any other walled-city in China, was supposedly built for protection to provide security for government offices and their occupants from local rebels or from foreign invaders. However, in the city of Shanghai, the walls performed a reverse function in the 1850s when a rebel group called Xiao Dao Hui (小刀會) (Small Sword Society) took over the walled-city and drove the Qing officials outside, taking refuge in the foreign settlements. With the assistance of foreigners, the Qing government eventually recaptured the walled-city and re-established peace and order in Shanghai. During the fighting several sections of the city-wall were destroyed by modern firepower and explosives, and due to these new gaps and holes, more gates were installed between the walled-city and the settlements. As a result, there were better transportation, communication, and more freedom in people's movements between the walled city and other two "cities" in Shanghai. Further economic development of the settlements attracted more Chinese immigrants into the International Settlements and the French Concession from the "Chinese City" as well as from other parts of China. Even though the Qing officials maintained that the "Chinese City" was the political administrative headquarters and power center in Shanghai, more and more Chinese established their business and social respectability outside the walled-city in the post-Taiping era. An increasing number of Chinese officials also preferred to work and live inside the settlements especially after retirement. For example, Shao Youlian (邵友濂) and Nie Jigui (聶楫槼), both served as Shanghai's highest-ranked official for the Qing government as Circuit Intendant of Su-Song-Tai (Su-Song-Tai Dao, 蘇松太道 or Shanghai Daotai, 上海道台) as it was generally known, stayed on and lived in Shanghai after their retirement from office. Many of the ex-officials in Shanghai turned business adventurers or industrialists in the twin settlements. These well-connected elite saw the diminishing role of the walls that separated their old power hub and their new business ventures and social activities. Many of them joined with the new local elite who were commercial leaders, calling for demolition of the walls, hence

the so-called "Demolish City Movement" (*chai-cheng (qiang) yundong* 拆城 (牆) 運動) at the turn of the century.[10]

The walls were officially torn down in January 1912, after the collapse of the Qing dynasty. The *Taotai yamen* and the eastern and southern sections of the wall were the first to be demolished. The principal reason cited by the local advocates was: "For the convenience of transportation."[11] The western and northern sections were also torn down and the moats were filled and transformed into new roads or "roads for horse-carriages, *ma-lu*, 馬路") which when completed in 1914 became the first-generation of the circular road around the city with the names of Fahua Minguo Road (法華民國路) and Zhonghua Road (中華路).

10.4.2. *The walls and development of modern Shanghai*

The story of the walled-city of Shanghai and the decline of its significance in the modern period represents a clash of two cultures, East and West, and a transition from traditional political culture to new politics dominated by elite from new economic and cultural backgrounds. Within the walls of the old city, traditional power structure with the *yamen* as center remained strong until the Taiping era. After mid-19th century, however, new sources of wealth and power came not from within the walls, but from out — from the open seas, i.e., foreign trade and westernized ideas and programs. Even the Chinese government moved outside the walled-city when it decided to participate in modernization and open new economic and industrial ventures such as the China Merchant Steamship Company, the Telegraph Bureau, and the Kiangnan Arsenal. Even the Shanghai Taotai, the official ruler of Shanghai, had established a branch office, the *Yang-wu Ju* (洋務局) in the settlements for dealing with foreigners and related matters such as modernization projects.[12] These reform-minded officials and modernization advocates needed to function in an open space within which transportation–communication was more convenient, and supply-demand market forces were readily at work. The walls of the Chinese City thus became a controlled space not conducive for new political experiments, new educational programs, and new business ventures. The walled city represented not only the bastion of traditional bureaucratic power but also was a place where traditional education (the *shu-yuan*, 書院) and local gentry concentrated. To a

certain extent, the wall-city with its Suzhou landscaped gardens like Yu Yuan (豫園) and Chenghuan Temple (城隍廟) was also an area of cultural preservation. The cityscape within the walled city and that of the foreign settlements were strikingly different. Traditional Chinese housing and architecture were the norm within the walled city. The means of transportation were also traditional: the single-wheeled carts, the ox-drawn carriages, the human-carried sedans, etc. The streets and alleys were narrow and muddy. Whereas the streets and roads in the settlements were relatively wider and well-paved, with high buildings along the two sides, usually in European style. Some streets near the Bund (wai-tan, 外灘) such as Nanking Road (Nan-jing lu, 南京路) were decorated with well-crafted stony structures: cathedrals, churches, club houses, and banks. There were horse-drawn carriages, ricksaws or *Jinricksha*, and in the early 20th century, trams and imported motor cars. The striking difference left deep impression on the minds of the visitors from the Chinese City and from other parts of China. Many felt that "they were in a foreign country."[13] During the late 19th century, more and more local elite in Shanghai, including those who lived within the walled city, were interested in the new culture, new fashions, and new lifestyles in the neighboring areas beyond the walls. The drive to be an integral part of the new economy and new culture of the larger city of Shanghai as defined by the characteristics of the settlements was the principal force to break through the walls and to tear them down. In fact, once the walls were demolished, the area within the "Chinese City" adjacent to the foreign settlements, for example, the East Gate (Dong Men, 東門) district, transformed itself rapidly into a busy area with paved roads with horse-drawn carriages, and lined with electric lightposts, westernized shops, and buildings.[14] The Shanghai people of the new century had chosen an open environment without walls for modernization and development. Thus the walls that were seen previously as inhibiting traffic and communication between the walled city and the foreign settlements were now considered obstacles of modernization. A few reformers of the 1890s suggested that the demolition of the walls would be beneficial to both societies, inside and outside. The suggestion was considered by authorities to be too radical in the late 19th century, but the "demolition" movement picked up momentum in the early 20th century and was finally translated into action in 1912. Without the walls, came better economic and cultural integration between the old city and the settlements. But to some Chinese who clung to

tradition and the radicals who called for "total westernization," the boundary remained there even though the walls were invisible.

10.5. Hong Kong — The Walls Went Underground

For centuries Hong Kong had no palaces, no great architectural structures and no walls. It was a small fishing town before the Opium War and there was no official *yamen* in the area. After its cessation from China to the British in 1842, it became a British colony and port of free trade, and from this modest beginning, it developed rapidly over the course of 100 years from a fishing town into a metropolis and commercial city of international fame in the mid-20th century. On the surface, Hong Kong was, and is, a city without any walls. But there was a walled city in Hong Kong, in Kowloon rather, a small walled area known as the "Kowloon Walled City" (Jiu long zhaicheng, 九龍寨城) (see Figure 3). The walls were built a century ago and the walled area stood as a symbol of preservation and contradiction in the course of modernization and colonization. Much of the activities within the walled city had been conducted underground literally as well as figuratively before the walls were demolished. The area was finally cleared up and designed for resettlement by the government in the 1980s.

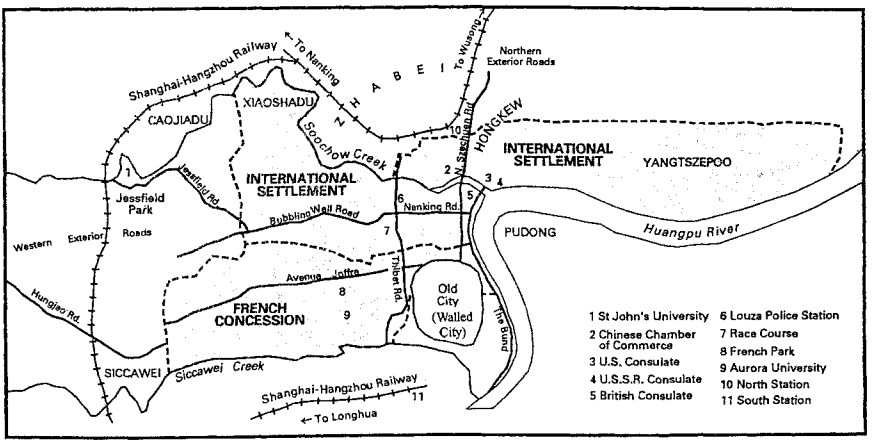

Figure 10.3 City Map of Shanghai, circa 1900

Source: Nicholos R. Clifford, Spoilt Children of Empire: Westerners in Shanghai and the Chinese Revolution of the 1920s. Middlebury College Press, 1991, pp. xviii.

10.5.1. *History of the walls*

When the British took over Hong Kong island in 1843, the Chinese government ordered the construction of a wall on the Kowloon peninsula for the military defense of the coast. The wall, completed in 1847, consisted of four gates and six watch-towers, was well installed with iron cannons along the parapet.[15] Before the construction of the wall, on the same site stood an old fort built in the 17th century for the defense of the coast from pirate raids. Since 1843, the fort and subsequently the walled city had been placed under the administrative responsibilities of the Assistant Magistrate of the Xinan (新安) County.[16] How large was the walled city? According to the report of a Hong Kong historian, "it formed a rough parallelogram measuring 700 feet by 400 feet, enclosing an area of 6.5 acres. It (the wall) was built of granite ashlar facing, 15 feet in width at the top, and averaged 13 feet in height. There were six watch towers and four gateways, with doors of wood lined with iron sheeting."[17] After the Beijing Convention, the British acquired more territories from China, but the Chinese government kept the Kowloon Walled City (jiu long zhaicheng, 九龍寨城), which was barricaded by walls and hence the name, under Chinese control and military garrison. At a later date, the wall was extended up the hill, rising to about 150 feet above the plain where the walled city was located.[18] A controversy developed in 1898 when the British further acquired the New Territories north of Kowloon from China in a lease of 99 years. The original agreement stated that "It is .... agreed that within the city of Kowloon the Chinese officials now stationed there shall continue to exercise jurisdiction except so far as may be inconsistent with the military requirements for the defense of Hong Kong."[19] The cause was vague and soon it led to argument between the British and the Chinese officials concerning the power of jurisdiction within those walls. The British in Hong Kong, in December 1899, stated in an Order in Council, that "the exercise of jurisdiction by the Chinese officials in the City of Kowloon having been found to be inconsistent with the military requirements for the defense of Hong Kong, it is expedient that ... the Chinese officials within the City of Kowloon should cease to exercise jurisdiction therein, and that the said City of Kowloon should become part and parcel of her Majesty's Colony of Hong Kong."[20]

However, the Chinese government never recognized this unilateral act and continued to claim sovereignty over the walled city area. The walls had remained there for the decades and the British never followed up with their claim of jurisdiction in the next half century or so. Thus the walled city area had become a land of lawlessness and a city of darkness run by the Triads. Without maintenance, the walls became dilapidated and sections were demolished in the early 20th century. But they were still clearly visible as shown in the old photos of the 1920s and 1930s. It was the Japanese air raids and the bombardment that finally brought down most, if not all, of the old city walls. And after the war, the area became a city of squatters and refugees who flooded Hong Kong from the Chinese mainland trying to escape the civil war. The walls were gone, but the area remained a controversial territory where British colonial rule found it difficult, if not impossible, to establish its authority. The police and ordinary citizens of Hong Kong were reluctant to go into the area. The thugs and gangs ruled the city and in order to avoid outright embarrassment to the police they operated their criminal activities literally in an underground city of alleys and tunnels infested with insects, rats, and diseases.

10.5.2. *The walls and development of colonial Hong Kong*

The impact of the Kowloon walled city in the development of city culture of Hong Kong, by any standard, has been insignificant. The original purpose for constructing those walls in the mid-1840s was for coastal defense of the peninsula and surveillance of the British on the Hong Kong Island. The expansion of British colonial in the second half of the 20th century into the Kowloon peninsula and the New Territories through the 1860 Treaty and 1898 Lease, respectively, had rendered the original purpose of the wall impracticable and useless. The walls, in the post-1860 period and especially in the 20th century, had more symbolic meanings than practical functions in the British colony of Hong Kong. In the first place, the walled area had no official *yamen* and therefore was not directly under Qing governmental control. Second, the enclosed area was small and isolated. There were only a few hundred residents within the walled city and many of them had to venture out into the neighborhood areas of Kowloon

or the New Territories which were under British rule. But the fact that the Chinese government never recognized the British claim of jurisdiction over the area meant that this walled area was officially under Chinese imperial sovereignty as a lot of patriotic Chinese would like to argue. So, the walled-city has long been considered an islet of China in a British colonial environment. Since the Hong Kong government was reluctant to occupy the area, and the Qing government and also the subsequent governments in China never sent in troops or dispatched officials into the area to reclaim its sovereignty, the walled city had been left pretty much on its own, leaving the power of control in the hands of drug lords and Triad gangs. After the walls were destroyed, the area remained a lawless slum-city crowded with poor squatters, refugees from the mainland, drug addicts and prostitutes, and thugs and gangsters. Ordinary citizens of Hong Kong for a long time had kept themselves away from this area. A visitor to the old walled city before its demolition in the 1960s commented, "(its) a dismal and forbidding place which lies just west of Kai Tak Airport in Kowloon. For generations it had been the hidout of robbers and murderers. ... (it) was not part of the crown colony, but an eight-acre patch of stateless ground. ... Britain and China wrangled inconclusively over it while the dingy little enclave-within-an-enclave went its own way, harbouring killers and thugs who fled into its narrow alleys to escape the police of both countries. Until 1960 it was worth your life to venture into those alleys."

In other words, the Kowloon walled-city of Hong Kong neither protected the Chinese elite nor the common people. It was not a place for princes, priests, and the police, or a place regulated by laws and rituals. In post-war Hong Kong, it had become a symbol of the contrary — lawlessness, protection for criminals and thugs, and cancerous to community development. The walled city's negative image and all the symbolic meanings associated with it had lasted for many years in the mind of the Hong Kong public until the 1970s and 1980s when the Hong Kong government made decisive steps to clear up the city and find resettlement for its residents. After that the walls were gone, but one may assume in many parts of modern Hong Kong the old city walls are still there, only these walls which create boundaries and signify power and hierarchy have become invisible in the society.

10.6. The Waters and Cultural Space

The "feng-shui" (wind and water) elements were extremely important in the building of Beijing. Its palaces, city-walls, towers, and streets were all aligned with geomancy. But the water element in "feng-shui" did not refer to the water levels of the bay or the location of the rivers and harbors in the Beijing context. In essence, Beijing was and still is, a continental city and "imperial" capital.[21] Unlike Shanghai and Hong Kong, it is not a port-city or built for commercial convenience. In that sense, the waterfronts and waterways played relatively insignificant role in the development of the city, especially in the area of business and commerce. The waters of Beijing in the history of the construction of the city, always presented as ingredients of a human-built environment in the forms of moats, canals, ponds, and lakes, serving to protect the city and to decorate the palaces and other architectural structures within the city rather than to provide transport or to facilitate commerce (Figure 4). In the case of

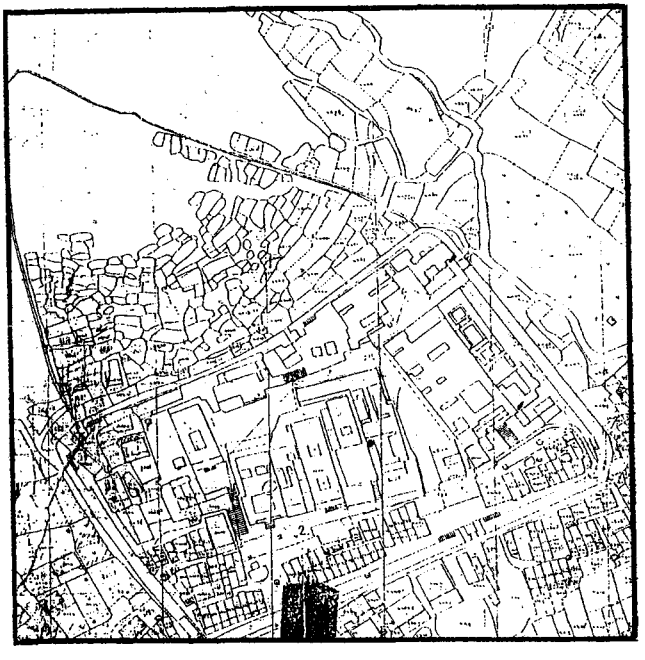

Figure 10.4 The Kowloon Walled City, 1900

Source: Lui, Adam Yuen-chung, *Forts and Pirates — A History of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong History Society, 1990, p. 101.

Shanghai and Hong Kong, however, the rivers, harbors, and bays have been important elements affecting the development of economic and community life. In the period before the opening of Shanghai to foreign trade, the riverways and the canals provided vitality and business to the local people — fishermen, boatmen, merchants, and peddlers on the two sides of the canal and the rivers, and canal irrigation was extremely important to cotton cultivation, the principal agric-economy of the entire Jiangnan or Lower Yangzi area. In Shanghai, the Suzhou River, the Wusong River, and the Huangpu River were main waterways upon which regional transport and daily local commute were depended. Because of the natural environment of well-connected waterways, Shanghai had become a regional trading center in the Lower Yangzi delta as early as the Song and Yuan dynasties. The Grand Canal, a human-built waterway, was also important to Shanghai's development as a center for collecting tribute grains and transportation of salt and other commodities to the north. Because of the regular nature of the tributary operations, the Canal had helped the economic growth and social development of the cities along the Canal between Shanghai and the imperial capital of Beijing, notably Tianjin, Jinan, and Yangzhou. A tribute grain mission usually comprised dozens of boats and hundreds of soldiers and labourers, and in certain sections of the Canal, hundreds and thousands of boat pullers. There were other boats and commodities allowed to travel by the Canal on which much of the business of the Canal cities depended. Since the transportation of tribute grain and salt was an important political assignment involving frequent correspondences and communications back and forth between the central government and provincial officials, the local officials and the gentry-elites in the region therefore looked upon the Grand Canal and its functions more in political than economic terms. But beginning from the mid-19th century, the transportation of tribute grains had found another route — through sea transportation (haiyun), first by Chinese junks and later by steamships, thus leading to the economic decline of the inland Canal cities with the exception of Tianjin which had access to the sea via the river leading to Taku Bay and the Bohai Gulf. At any rate, in Shanghai the waterways — rivers and canals — represented an integration of the natural and the human-built environments. Together they shaped the economic and political culture of the city for a long time. But in Hong Kong there was absence of a complicated network of riverways and canals,

and what was prominent were the deep water harbors and bays and the open sea, an important factor in commercial development in the steamship age. Let us first turn to Shanghai's waters.

10.6.1. *Shanghai — waterways and waterfronts*

Shanghai's economic progress since the Song-Yuan period, as aptly pointed out by Mark Elvin, had been closely connected with the intricate network of waterways that covered the city and its vicinity.[22] The waterways supplied irrigation water for a high-yield agriculture (cotton and silk) and served as the means of communication for a flourishing water-borne commerce (see Figure 5). He said, "Carts and even wheelbarrows hardly existed, and for any journey beyond an easy walk the universal form of transport was the boat."[23] Shanghai merchants who "went to other places in search of a sale" were called "water-borne traders" (shuike).[24]

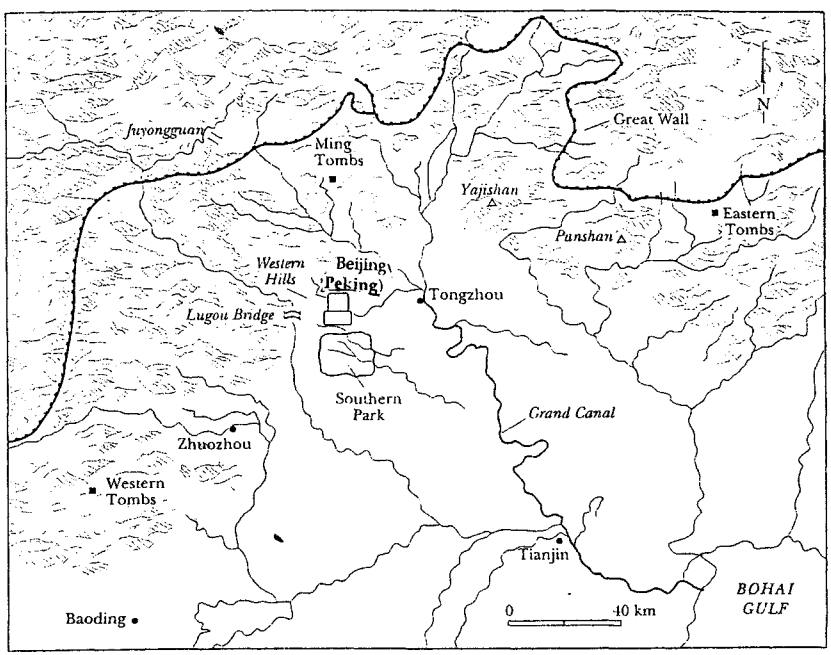

Figure 10.5 The Waterways of Beijing

Source: Susan Naguin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900*. Berkeley: University of Califomia Press, 2000, p. 12.

The Shanghai Rivers not only provided transport and business for the local residents, they also connected the city with other market-towns and cities in the larger Jiangnan area — cities in the south like Jiaxing, Songjiang, and Huzhou and Hangzhou in Zhejiang province; northern cities such as Nanjing, Changshu, Taicang, and Jiading; and cities in the west of Shanghai like Qingpu, Wujiang, Suzhou, and Wuxi. The mulberry and cotton farmers depended on irrigation water from the canals and rivers, the silk weaving industry and other local handicraft industries depended on the water transport; and other locals made their living on fishing, peddling on boats, and business related to leisure rides. At any rate, the waterways were a significant part of the local economy and city life in Shanghai (Figure 6).

The most important change in the 19th century Shanghai, however, took place on the waterfront, and not the river network. The rapid development along one section of the Huangpu River near the Wusong River that leads to the coast and open sea, the Bund (*wai-tan*

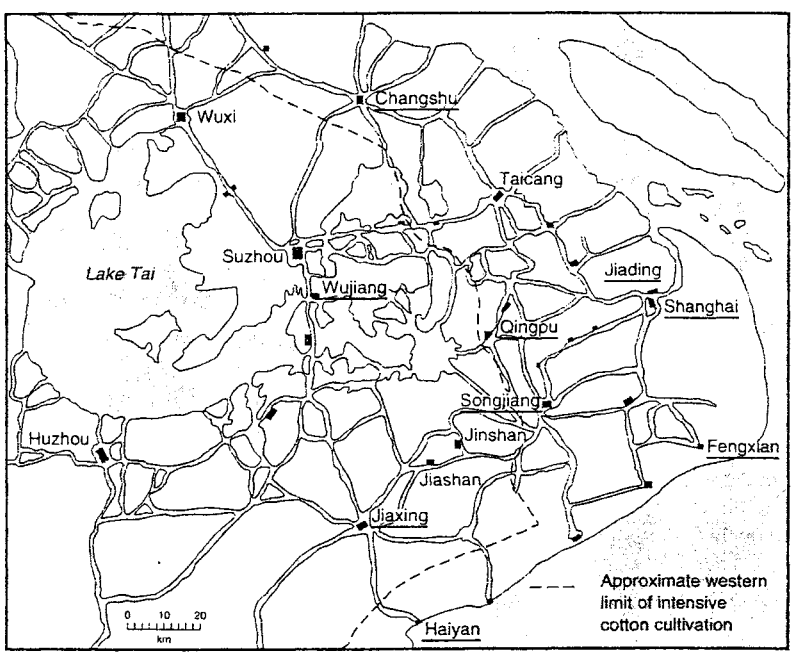

Figure 10.6 The Waterways around Shanghai, circa 1600

Source: Mark Elvin, *Another History: Essays on China from a European Perspective*. Broadway, Australia: Wild Peony, 1996, p. 108

in Chinese) as this waterfront was called by Westerners is the most remarkable story of modern Shanghai. This section of the Huangpu waterfront was transformed by the arrival of the new ships from the West, the steamships. Long before the advent of the steamship age, Chinese junks had been prying through the Wusong and Huangpu in different sizes and shapes, linking the city to inner Chinese cities along the Yangzi and to other coastal cities of China. In other words, the sea route was not new. But the oceanic ships were unlike the traditional Chinese junks. Many of them were huge and heavy (more than 1000 to 2000 tons), they were driven by steam engines, and they were fast and sturdy. But most importantly, they came from distant countries such as Britain and the United States and carried new cargoes and commodities such as machinery, textile, glass, and other industrial goods. The "Bund" and its adjacent "foreign settlement" soon became a new Western city standing along the old Chinese walled-city on the south. Along the

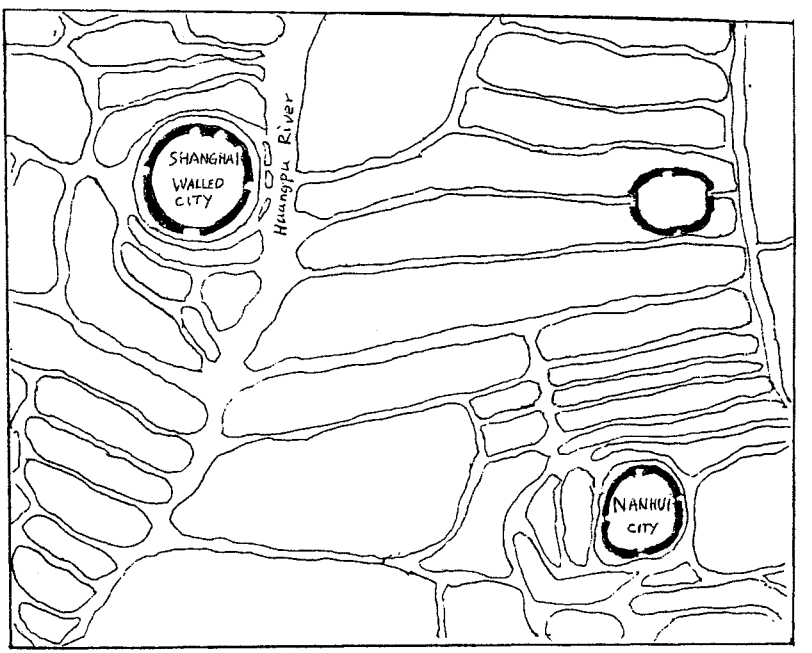

Figure 10.7 Shanghai Waterways, circa 1600

Source: Mark Elvin, *Another History: Essays on China from a European Perspective.* Broadway, Australia: Wild Peony, 1996, p. 103

waterfront, Western banks, go-downs, cathedrals, and other buildings were constructed, with wharves, piers, and "jetties" stretching out into the Huangpu River from the bank of the river. The new settlement and its new constructions signaled a new age of sea transport and an increased commercial relations with the Western world. The new business brought on by the steamship age and the rapid growth of import–export trade are familiar stories well documented in Kwang-ching Liu's *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China. 1862–1874*, Linda Cooke Johnson's *Shanghai From Market Town to Treaty Port, 1074–1858*, and other books on Shanghai. It is suffice to say, the waterfront of Shanghai, the Bund, was a symbol of this new commercial development and increased maritime trade.

The activities on the Bund, however, were not confined to commerce and business. The waters, to the amazement of many Chinese, meant much more than navigation and transport. The Huangpu River represented a changing culture. Water sports of all kinds such as rowing, yachting, swimming, and skiing became part of social life in this section of Shanghai, although most participants were foreigners before the turn of the century. For example, the Shanghai Rowing Club was established in 1864 by foreigners living in the International Settlement. The Club had its own club house, harbor and boat shelter, occupying over 1000 square meters of land near the mouth of the Suchou River where it joined the Huangpu River. The Club had its swimming pool, game room, and bar, a symbol of Western culture in the eyes of the local Chinese.[25] The first rowing contest was held in 1863, and the annual contest had become a regular event celebrated by both Westerners and Chinese alike.[26] In 1865, a rowing contest was held near the Suzhou Creek with teams from the British 67th Regiment, and Hong Kong merchant houses such as Tung-foo and E-ho. Eventually the Tung-foo team became the winner of the contest.[27] In the rowing contest held next year, it was the American team who won the "Holland Cup," but the British won it back in the following year (Da Guan). It was reported that the 1906 event had attracted more than tens of thousands of spectators and alarmed the Municipal Council because of the over-crowdedness and traffic congestion it caused.

10.6.2. *Hong Kong — centrality of the victoria harbour*

Shanghai in the 19th century was going through a transitional process from a river port to an international seaport. In the process the waterways — the Huangpu River, the Suzhou River, the Songjiang River, and other rivers and canals that made up the local waterway network still retained much of their traditional outlook and economic functions. The rapid transformation occurred only in certain sections of the Huangpu, notably the Bund, which showed clearly the impact of foreign trade and maritime culture. But Shanghai was still primarily a riverport just like Canton although in the late 19th century and the early years of the 20th century, the seaport characteristics had gradually become more prominent in Shanghai. On the other hand, Canton never became an international city in the modern century. Once the only port in China designated for foreign trade, the city never welcomed foreigners and Western culture with the openness of Shanghai. With the exception of the Hong merchants and the compradors who made great profits out of external trade, most officials and commoners in Canton were not particularly enthusiastic about foreign intruders and their culture. In fact, most people were hostile toward Westerners, and this attitude was reflected in a series of anti-foreign riots such as the San-yuan-li incident and the city-entry dispute.[28] British Hong Kong, as a new city by the sea after the Opium War, did not have the traditional baggage of riverine culture as did Shanghai and Canton. The local rivers had almost no bearing on the economic and cultural development of the city. From the beginning of its cession to the British in 1842, the development of the island city had been based primarily on maritime trade. The most significant factor affecting trade development, in the age of the steamship, was a deep-water harbor and good port facilities. Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour, in this regard, was ideal for anchorage of heavy-tonnaged ships. Moreover, the British colonial government with its free trade policy also contributed to the rapid growth of the city of Victoria (now the area of Central and Sheung Wan). Based on their experience in India and British Southeast Asia, especially in Penang and Singapore, the British knew very well the importance of foreign trade and the function of the port. Along the bund in the City of Victoria, office buildings of various agency houses and banks, warehouses, and go-downs were constructed, and on the waters

of the Victoria Harbour were ships and boats of various types, steamships, lighters, cargo boats, Chinese junks, etc., all for trading purposes. Unlike the ports of Canton and Shanghai where interaction of the sea and the river was regularly present, mounting to what we could describe as the meeting of two economies/cultures (riverine and oceanic) or the "fusion of two horizons" to borrow Gadamar's phrase, Hong Kong's city development in the 19th century clearly shows a preponderance of maritime commercial culture, the characteristics of an entrepot port. In other words, it is no exaggeration to say that the dominant "waters" in Hong Kong was the sea or the ocean.

In the early history of Hong Kong, the open sea or ocean had been commonly equated with pirate activities such as Zhang Baozai's. Some places in Hong Kong like Stanley were associated with fisheries and not foreign trade. The Victoria Harbour, however, had projected a new and different image of a busy commercial mart frequented by steamers from all nations, the British P & O liners, the Russells & Co. ships from New York, the iron-clad ships of Butterfield & Swire, and later the China Merchant Steam Navigation Co., ships (zhaoshang ju). In the early 20th century, Hong Kong had become one of the busiest international trading ports. In 1907, the vessels entered and cleared in Hong Kong amounted to 507,634 with a total tonnage of 36,028,310. These ships for foreign trade were listed as follows[29]:

	Number of vessels	Tonnage
British ocean-going ships	3,756	7,216,169
Foreign ocean-going ships	4,621	7,720,875
British river steamers	6,828	4,630,364
Foreign river steamers	1,310	743,992
Steamship under 60 tons	1,581	70,021
Junks	29,564	2,651,470
Total foreign trade	47,660	23,032,891

According to Tsai's calculation, "during the year 1907 everyday an average of 1,390 large and small vessels of 98,707 tons entered and cleared the Hong Kong port, discounting large number of lighters, cargo boats,

passenger boats, water boats, and fishing crafts of all kinds. This record exceeded that of any port in the world at the time."[30]

In addition to international trade, the steamship also represented technological change and modernization which in the Chinese eye was also associated with Western culture. The steamship was produced and maintained by a shipyard which in the West was a symbol of advanced technology and modern enterprise, like the dockyards of Liverpool in mid-19th century Britain. In post-Taiping China during the period of self-strengthening from the 1860s to the 1890s, the Jiangnan Shipyard (jiangnan zaoquan ju) in Shanghai and the Mamei Dockyard in Fuzhou were also looked upon as symbols of modernity and advanced technology. The steamship and modern dockyard were twins in modern port-cities such as Hong Kong. Then around the docks were other related industries like machine shops, appliances and tools stores, engine repairing shops, and eateries and lodging places for the large number of coolies involved in loading/unloading and carrying of cargoes to or from the steamers. A two-tier seaside community consisting of house merchants and Chinese compradors on the top and a class of shipping-related laborers and coolies at the bottom emerged with the development and expansion of the wharves, the offices and warehouses on the bund and the improvement of port facilities at the harbor. But everything was directly or indirectly related to shipping and the sea. Thus we may say the Victoria Harbour and its waters held a central role in the development of the city of Hong Kong.

Notes

1. Osvald Siren (1924). *The Walls and Gates of Peking*. London: John Lane Ltd, translated into Chinese by Xu Yongquan (許永全) (1985). Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, p. 13.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–14.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
4. Jeffrey F. Meyer (1976). *Peking as a Sacred City*. Taipei: Chinese Association for Folklore, pp. 28–29.
5. Chen Xuelin (Chan Hok Lam) (陳學霖) (1996). *Liu Bowen yu Nazha cheng* 劉伯溫與哪吒城. Taipei: Dong Da Tushu Gongsi p. 38.
6. For a brief account of the demolition of the old city-wall in Beijing, see Hou Renzhi's 1988 essay in *Liu Bingsen lishu Ming Beijing cheng chengqiang yiji weixiu ji* (劉炳森隸書明北京城城牆遺蹟維修記). Beijing: Zijincheng chubenshe, 1996, appendix.

7. Chen Xuelin (陳學霖). *Liu Bowen yu Nazha chen*, p. 48.
8. Linda Cooke Johnson (1993). *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China.* Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 155.
9. Zheng Zu'an (鄭祖安) (1999). *Bainian Shanghai cheng* (百年上海城). Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, p. 5.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 6–8.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
12. See Yao Gonghe (姚公鶴) (1967). *Hushang xianhua* (滬上閒話). Taipei. Rpt.
13. Chen Qi Yuan (陳其元) (1873). *Yongxianzhai biji* (庸閒齋筆記). Shanghai: Shenbaoguan (申報館), preface, juan 卷 7, 4b.
14. Tang Zhenchang (唐振常) (ed.) (1999), *Shanghai: Road to Prosperity.* Shanghai, 1842–1949 Hong Kong: Commercial Press.
15. Jackie Pullinger (1989). *Crack in the Wall: The Life and Death of Kowloon Walled City.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 18–19.
16. See Elizabeth Sinn (1987). "Kowloon walled city: Its origin and early history". In *Journal of the Hong Kong British Royal Society*, 27, pp. 30–31.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
18. For a description of the wall up the hill, see Walter Schofield's note "Defence Wall at Pass Between Kowloon City and Kowloon Tsai," in *Journal of the Hong Kong British Royal Society*, 9 (1969), 155–156. For a recent study of the history of the walled-city, see Gao Tianqiang (2001). "Ershi shiji qian jiulongcheng diqu shilue" (A brief history of the Kowloon Walled-city before the twentieth century). In *Jiulongcheng* (Kowloon City), Zhao Yule and Zhong Baoxian (eds.), 45–94. Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian.
19. Jackie Pullinger. *Crack in the Wall*, p. 13.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Susan Naquin's (2000) new book *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* from the UC Press, stresses this point, p. 12.
22. Mark Elvin (1997). *Another History: Essays on China from a European Perspective.* Washington, D.C.: Empress Publishing, p. 101.
23. *Ibid.*, 102.
24. *Ibid.*, 109–110.
25. Xiong Yuezhi (熊月之) *et al.* (eds.) (1997) *Lao Shanghai Mingren Mingshi Mingwu Daguan* (老上海名人名事名物大观). Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin chubanshe, p. 376
26. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
27. *The Chinese and Japanese Repository*, XII, May, 91 (1865).
28. Frederic Wakeman (1997). *Strangers at the Gate: Social Disorder in South China, 1839–1861.* California: University of California Press.
29. Tsai Jung-fang (1995). *Hong Kong in Chinese History: Community and Social Unrest in the British Colony, 1842–1913.* New York: Columbia University Press, p. 34.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 35.