

# Changchun: unfinished capital planning of Manzhouguo, 1932–42

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**ABSTRACT:** The rise and decline of Changchun is examined focusing on its urban character in terms of symbolic identity and built form. Based on an analysis of physical characteristics of the urban fabric and architectural forms of the state buildings, the study explores and identifies the ideological underpinnings of city planning and the methodological sources of architectural design to understand how the city was shaped and why.

Manzhouguo (old spelling, Manchukuo) was a puppet state created by the Japanese Guandong (or Kwantung, meaning North-east China) Army in Manchuria, North-east China, from 1932 to 1945. Changchun (lit. 'long spring') was designed as the capital (renamed Hsinking, lit. 'new capital'). In 1932, the last of the Manchu Emperors of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Puyi (1906–67) who had been deposed in Beijing in 1911, was made 'Chief Executive' of the new state. Changchun was planned and built soon after the establishment of Manzhouguo. It stopped with the fall of the Japanese Empire in 1945.

First a comprehensive consideration of the historical context is necessary. In 1905, Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War on Manchurian soil in the power struggle over North-east China and the Korean peninsula. Manchuria, with an area of 1 million square kilometres, is a fertile plain and rich in natural resources, particularly coal, copper and iron. In 1906, following its victory, Japan rebuilt the former Russian rail network (officially the Chinese Eastern Railway) into the South Manchurian Railway (SMR), which was considered to be the key to the Japanese imperial plan. The SMR, partly state-owned, obtained all kinds of extra-territorial privileges from China including the administration and juridical rights to the leased territory and land adjoining the railway tracks, the operation of mines, agriculture and industry. In the same year, troops were deployed to guard the leased territory. In 1919, it was restructured

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into the Guandong Army, which had been an important part of the regular Japanese army in Guandong. The SMR modelled itself on the East India Company of British India.<sup>1</sup> With its president appointed by and responsible to the Japanese Prime Minister and 50 per cent of its capital shared by the government, the SMR was in effect an agency of colonial administration and represented a variant of railway imperialism. After annexing Taiwan in 1895 and Korea in 1910, Japan invaded Manchuria in 1931. The regional administration, which had initially been placed in the hands of the SMR, was then taken over by the Guandong Army headed by a General appointed by the Japanese Emperor. The Guandong Army as a political as well as a military force represented Japanese imperial authority and provided the foundations for Japanese rule in Manchuria.

It is important to consider the economic aspects of Japan's wartime expansion, both internal and overseas. In the 1920s, the uneven development of the internal economy generated considerable population pressure. To relieve the problem, the Japanese government decided to increase food imports from Taiwan and Korea. The rice from the colonies provided enough food to meet the demand. It, however, depressed the domestic agricultural sector and contributed to the recession that emerged in the late 1920s. At the same time, Japan lacked basic industrial resources. By the 1930s the textile industry, the leading sector at the turn of the century, levelled off. Instead, heavy industry had become most visible and grown dramatically, creating enormous demand for resources and raw materials not found at home. The changing industrial structure and rising productivity created increasing dependence on the outside world not only for raw materials but also for markets. Japan was almost totally dependent on imports of such crucial resources, and export markets for its products. An obvious solution to these problems was the acquisition of new overseas territory for settlement and sales opportunities. The seizure of Manchuria was justified in part on these grounds. During the 1930s, the Japanese military and government launched plans to promote emigration of 1 million Japanese to the Manchurian hinterland to settle their families and to rear a new generation of 'continental Japanese' in twenty years.<sup>2</sup>

Manchuria was to be established as a point of entry for the further invasion of China. From the sixteenth century, Japan had such ambitions toward mainland East Asia. In 1592, for example, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) invaded Korea and his goal was to extend his regime to China. The invasions ended upon his death in 1598. In the late nineteenth century, Japan understood the importance of military power when Europeans, Russians and Americans took concessions in China. This irritated the Japanese and taught them a lesson. The entrenched aristocratic warrior

<sup>1</sup> Fei Chengkang, *History of Foreign Concessions in China* (Zhongguo Zujieshi) (Shanghai, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki Takashi, *Japanese Imperialism in Manzhouguo: 1900–45* (Nihon teikoku shugi to Manshu), 2 vols. (Tokyo, 1992), vol. II, 288–305.

traditions of the military had been a dominant force in Japan and the First World War had provided an opportunity to open up Japanese imperialist interests. When the military demonstrated their plan for armed expansion to solve the crisis, the government followed suit. Fascism emerged and resulted in a decline of measured planning. The importance of Manchuria to Japan's economic security led Japan to commit the nation to a perilous programme of overseas expansion. The occupation and exploration of Manchuria seemed to be an opportunity to revitalize the Japanese economy and nation.<sup>3</sup>

Upon occupying Manchuria, the Guandong Army established Manzhouguo in 1932. Puyi was smuggled into the north-east by Japanese troops. He became the puppet Executive of State. This was the period when many foreign powers competed for further concessions in China. Japanese ambition was challenged by Western powers, so the Guandong Army was only able to set itself up as a new political authority in the region by splitting Manchuria from China proper and ruling through the puppet government of Manzhouguo. The Guandong Army was made responsible for the external security and domestic peacekeeping of Manzhouguo and all 'the services' were funded from Manzhouguo's revenues.<sup>4</sup> In 1934, after repeated requests by Puyi, he was acknowledged as Emperor rather than Chief Executive, and enthroned by the Japanese as the Emperor of Manzhouguo. However, at the same time, a Western-style constitution was installed by the Japanese to put an end to Puyi's power. The reason for this was to foster stronger support from monarchists in China on the one hand, and on the other hand to apply 'the Meiji constitutional system' to Manzhouguo. But Chinese and Japanese imperial systems were very different. In China, the Emperor was the supreme commander; in Japan the Emperor was a sacred idol. Inevitably, the Japanese faced a dilemma: they had to maintain the newly enthroned Emperor and the newly established constitution. What we find here was an inner contradiction in Japanese political ideology, which resulted in the cessation of planning and construction in Changchun. There were many ritual and practical difficulties. The real power of the government was in the hands of the Japanese, who controlled all governmental departments; the new state was a fictional construct designed to mask the reality of Japanese control. In terms of the quality and degree of control exercised by Japan over territorial affairs, Manzhouguo was effectively a colony. Four major agencies conducted various aspects of Japanese policy in Manchuria. They were the Guandong Army, the SMR, the Ministry of Colonial Affairs and the Ministry of Overseas Affairs, with the actual supreme ruler of state being the General of the Guandong Army. The army understood that

<sup>3</sup> Guandong Army Headquarters, 'Man-mo mondai zango shori yoko', *Katakura Diary*, 27 Jan. 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Puyi, *The First Half of My Life: The Autobiography of Aison Gioro Pu Yi*, trans. W.J. Jenner (London, 1987).

the value of Manzhouguo was its prosperity, and this was secured by managing its economy under the fiction of a contractual agreement with the SMR, i.e. Japan.<sup>5</sup>

### Site selection

There were two important metropolises in North-east China: Shenyang and Harbin, each accommodating half a million inhabitants. Located equidistant from Shenyang and Harbin, Changchun had been a small walled riverside town with a total population of about 130,000 in 1931.<sup>6</sup> The SMR settlement located north-west of the existing town had been established in 1907 and the railway station was the northern most terminus of the SMR line. This terminus was next to the southern most terminus (Kuanchengzi) on the Russian rail network before the Russo-Japanese war.<sup>7</sup>

Why did the Japanese not choose Shenyang or Harbin as the capital? The reason was that Harbin was a 'Russian city' planned by the Russians and representing an earlier colonialist intervention, while Shenyang was the seventeenth-century capital of old Manchuria with a dignified palace, double city walls and two royal tombs.<sup>8</sup> The site of Changchun was 'untouched', a flat land with three small hills and a river as natural landscape elements, where the Japanese could freely conceive their project without being overshadowed by traditional Chinese urban culture, or being confronted with earlier large-scale interventions by Russian planners. At the same time, they were free from land ownership and ethnic problems. With their new self-confidence, the Japanese decided upon Changchun as the site for the new capital to realize their ambitions to establish a new centre of power.

### Planning character

From the viewpoint of decision-making, it is apparent that the Guandong Army dominated the Changchun planning. Professor Sano Toshikata, a very prominent architect of the time in Japan, was appointed to advise

<sup>5</sup> Ramon H. Myers, 'Creating a modern enclave economy: the economic integration of Japan, Manchuria and North China, 1932–1945', in Peter Duus (ed.), *The Japanese Wartime Empire, 1931–1945* (Princeton, 1996), 136–70.

<sup>6</sup> Gazetteer of *Changchun County* (Changchun Xianzhi), vol. III: *Population and Households* (Changchun, 1931).

<sup>7</sup> Planned by Kato Yonokichi, a graduate of the Tokyo University in 1894, who was Chief of SMR's Civil Engineering Office. The plan was finished under the supervision of Goto Shinpei (1857–1929), President (1906–09) of the SMR. Goto has been regarded as a father figure of city planning in modern Japan.

<sup>8</sup> Qinghua Guo, 'Shenyang: the Manchurian ideal capital city and imperial palace, 1625–43', *Urban History*, 3 (2000), 344–59.

the Guandong Army in the principles of planning and architecture.<sup>9</sup> Guided by the planning policy formulated by the Guandong Army, two metropolitan schemes were drawn up in 1932, one by the Capital Construction Bureau (CCB) and the other by the SMR. Both were masterminded by Japanese planners educated in Japan under the European system. They demonstrated their capabilities in planning in the Beaux-Arts mode; thus the two schemes exhibited some common themes.<sup>10</sup> The compromised master plan was published in 1933.<sup>11</sup>

The design was characterized by a geometrical manner and a monumental perspective. The most important and decisive element of the urban structure was the new railway station connected by major roads to the previously existing station. The river on the east side separated industry from the city centre. The old town, incorporated into the new city, conveyed its own indigenous language of street layout characterized by a major street leading towards the curvilinear river, and several streets perpendicular to the major one (Figure 1).

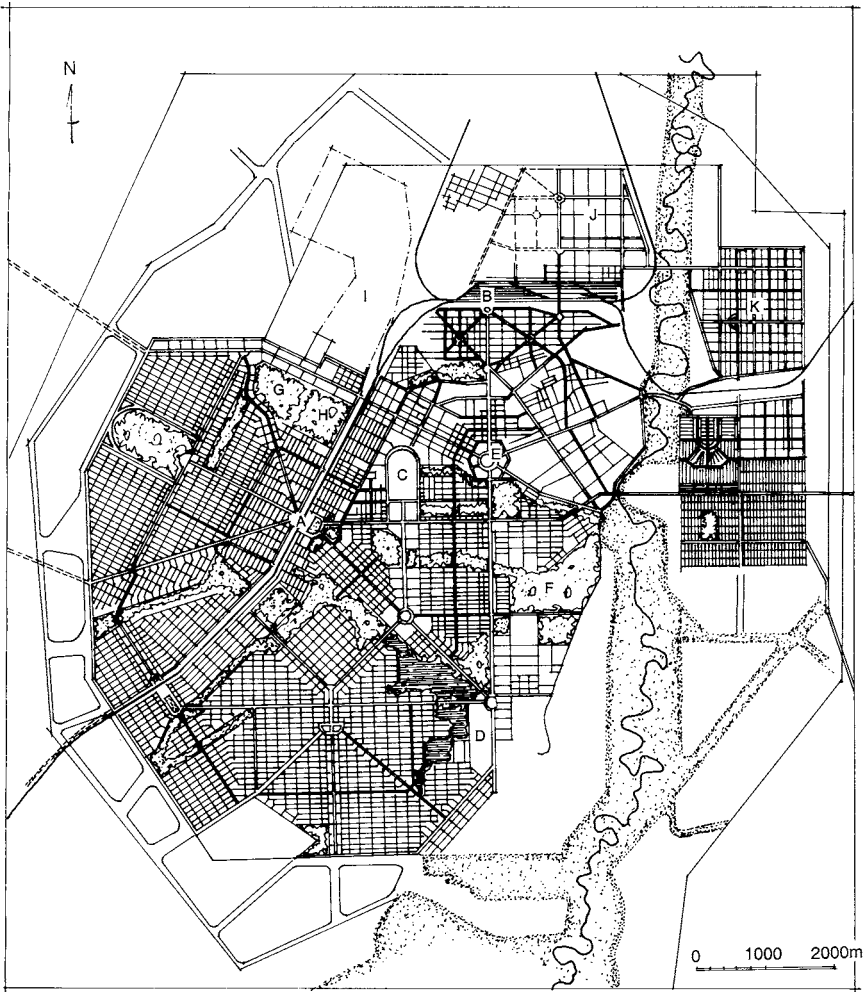
Changchun was planned to extend over an area of 100 square kilometres (including the 21 square kilometers of the old town, the SMR zone and Kuanchengzi) and to contain a population of 300,000. The plan was to be realised in two stages over the following eight years. The first stage (1932–37) was the construction of all planned areas; the second stage (1938–41) included further developments incorporating educational institutions and sport centres, as well as planting and landscaping for the whole city.

The planning reflected the Japanese vision of an ideal city and their new role in East Asia. The New Order and the Great East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere were announced in 1938 and 1940. Japan was psychologically ready for a leadership of imagination, willing to 'replace the Anglo-American power in the region for the sake of regional unity and prosperity'. A utopian vision of economic opportunity led Japan into not only an era of military expansionism, but also the realm of ceremonial fantasy. Changchun was planned as a great capital in East Asia. The Japanese designed and built no capital city after Kyoto (794–1868) except Changchun. Tokyo was not a planned city, but was rebuilt under the Tokyo City Improvement Ordinance (*Tokyo Shiku Kaisei Jorei*) and focused on market-oriented guidelines. Changchun was the outcome of the Japanese

<sup>9</sup> Sano Toshikata (1880–1956) studied at the Tokyo University (1900–03), and was the source of city planning ideas. He had a specialist in earthquake-proof design.

<sup>10</sup> Nishizawa Yasuhiko, *Japanese Architects Who Went Overseas: Architectural Activities in North-east China in the First Half of the 20th Century* (Umi o watatta nihonjin kenchikuka: 20 seiki zenhan no chugoku tohoku chiho ni okeru kenchiku katsudo) (Tokyo, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Sano Toshikata (1) 'The capital planing of Manzhouguo', *Urban Problems* (Toshi Mondai), 2, 17 (1933); (2) 'The completion of the first-stage capital construction', *Urban Problems*, 5, 26, (1938), 17–25. Capital Construction Bureau, *Capital Hsinking*, (Hsinking, 1933), 23–32. Hsinking Metropolitan Office, *New Capital City* (Hsinking, 1942), 1–4.



- A Planned new railway station
- B Old railway station
- C Palace
- D Shrine
- E Datong Circus
- F Sport
- G Horse racetrack
- H Golf course
- I Airport
- J Light industry suburb
- K Heavy industry suburb

**Figure 1:** Changchun plan (1937)

desire for a capital of modern Japan, and it reflected the Japanese ideals of modernity. Insights into this planning can be obtained by examining its themes and symbols.

**Beaux-Arts–Chinese combination**

Monumentality was realized through the adaptation of Beaux-Arts planning principles in a new cultural setting. Changchun was ambitious in scope; it was an experiment in regional planning based on imported concepts. Here, the term 'Beaux-Arts planning' seems incorrect, because city planning was not taught at the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* in Paris and the Japanese planners specified no particular models except existing European-American examples. Nevertheless, the early nineteenth-century plan of Paris provided a famous example, which created a durable archetype of urban culture. Monumental classical buildings with centralized geometrical plans characterize many important projects, such as the world exhibition Chicago 1893, the university campus Berkeley 1899, the plans for Washington 1902 and New Delhi 1913. Changchun displayed aspects of a successful Beaux-Arts city: the siting of grand buildings, axial approaches, diagonal avenues, large-scale and enveloping greenery. The city planning began with the new station, which was the reference point and dominant centre of the city. A circular-radial system was adopted for the road network. Boulevards radiated out from the railway station and geometrically converged towards circular points of intersection. They were the highlights of the city plan as intersections of major traffic axes, monumental circuses and landscape elements. There were five major circuses in Changchun, and the largest were the new-station circus and Datong Circus. Both were hexagonal and their dimensions were impressive by any standard and each was marked by a group of principal buildings.

Why were the principles of Beaux-Arts planning so clearly fixed in the Japanese planner's mind? How was this modern planning carried out so forcefully in the Beaux-Arts spirit? The Beaux-Arts plan required a princely power and heavy capital investments. It exhibited the ascendancy of absolutism, centralized coercion and stringent control. Changchun was built with a preconceived goal. The transformation of the city into a dependency whose powers had been granted by military might. It was the Guandong Army, which efficiently turned the vision of an ideal city into a concrete reality.

A closer examination of the plan, however, reveals another picture. A Chinese north–south axis and grid plan was overlaid on the Beaux-Arts plan. Two geometric layouts were used in the Changchun planning: the radial avenue network and the grid road network superimposed. The Chinese grid system may be seen to be commanding the Beaux-Arts geometry in one place. But, it can also be seen to be complementary if the grid system is seen from another viewpoint. The Chinese plan symbolized a cosmic order that cannot be put neatly within the boundaries of time as represented by Chang'an (present, Xi'an), the capital of Sui–Tang dynasties (581–907), and Beijing, the capital of the Yuan–Ming–Qing dynasties (1271–1911). The combination of the two systems contributed to the function of

movement, offered possibilities for real-estate speculation and gave the city an edge: a ring road on the perimeter. Outside this road, a green belt (100 metres wide) separated the city and surrounding countryside. The ring road was incorporated to enable the Guandong Army to patrol the area against anti-Japanese resistance guerrillas. Dominance and enclosure were conjoined theoretically and practically. But Japanese practice was far in advance of Japanese theory.

In the Changchun plan, two wide avenues led to two railway stations arranged north–south and east–west, and planned on as generous a scale as the Avenue des Champs Élysées in Paris. Each axis consists of a 10 metre footpath and a 12 metre carriageway on either side of a 16 metre green plantation, forming a grand avenue 60 metres in total width. The absence of buildings doubtless emphasized the railway stations and gave them prominence. The secondary avenues, like those leading to administrative and commercial centres, are 45 metres wide; the lesser streets are 26 metres and the rest 10 metres in width. The great avenues were planned for wheeled vehicles. The modernity of the city was demonstrated by the provision of a new sanitary system, telephone facilities, electrical lighting and asphalt pavements.<sup>12</sup>

The circuses were nodal and focal points of a powerful representative character. Along the north–south axis, Datong Circus (present, 'People's Circus') was the centre of Japanese administration. Key buildings were situated close to or around the circus. They were the headquarters of the Guandong Army, the Japanese Police, the broadcasting station, the Central Bank and Metropolitan Government buildings. The open space was designed for public assembly, and used for such events as the celebrations of the five-year and ten-year anniversaries of Manzhouguo in 1937 and 1942. Major retail buildings were built along the axis between the circus and the north station. As a result, 23 per cent of the total urban area was reserved for avenues and circuses, 15 per cent for parks and playgrounds and 32 per cent for residential buildings.<sup>13</sup>

A general character and a uniform height for buildings were established for each street. They had to conform to a given programme or design concept. This was the era when modern urban laws and building

<sup>12</sup> Changchun is regarded as an important part in Japan's modern period, but it has just begun to be examined in Chinese history. Research on this period of history is still scarce and remains short on depth of understanding since the wartime documentation was not accessible for 40 years. Fujimori Terunobu and Wan Tan (eds.), *A Comprehensive Study of East Asian Architecture and Urban Planning: 1840–1945* (Zenchosa Higashi Asia kindai no toshi to kenchiku) (Tokyo, 1996); Nishizawa Yasuhiko, *Illustrated History of Manchurian Cities* (Zusetu Manshuu toshi monogatari) (Tokyo, 1996); Koshizawa Akira, *Manzhouguo's Capital Planning* (Manshukoku no shuto keikaku) (Tokyo, 1988); Li Baihao, 'The historical research on the city planning in the Japanese occupied areas in China' (unpublished Tongji University Ph.D. thesis, 1997); Wu Xiaosong, 'The different stages and types of urban constructions in Northeast China in modern times' (unpublished Tongji University Ph.D. thesis, 1996).

<sup>13</sup> SMR, *Sixth Report on Progress in Manchuria* (Tokyo, 1939).



regulations were initiated: Capital Construction and Planning Law (1933), Manchurian Planning Regulations (1935) and Planning Law (1936). The Manchurian laws implied Japanese influence; the Japanese laws in turn implied European influence. In the planning of Changchun, the hierarchy of social classes was expressed. Green belts segregated areas: Chinese and Japanese were bounded separately to their residential blocks and relaxation places. In 1937, the first Five-Year Industry Plan was launched upon the completion of the first-stage city construction. Japanese imperial policy, long and short term, found expression in the formation of Manzhouguo. With waves of immigration from Japan, Korea and other parts of Manchuria, the urban population had increased dramatically in Changchun. By 1937, the population was 335,000 inhabitants including 20 per cent Japanese, and increased to 415,000 in 1939 and more than 500,000 in 1940. Housing shortage became a major problem and the city needed to expand.

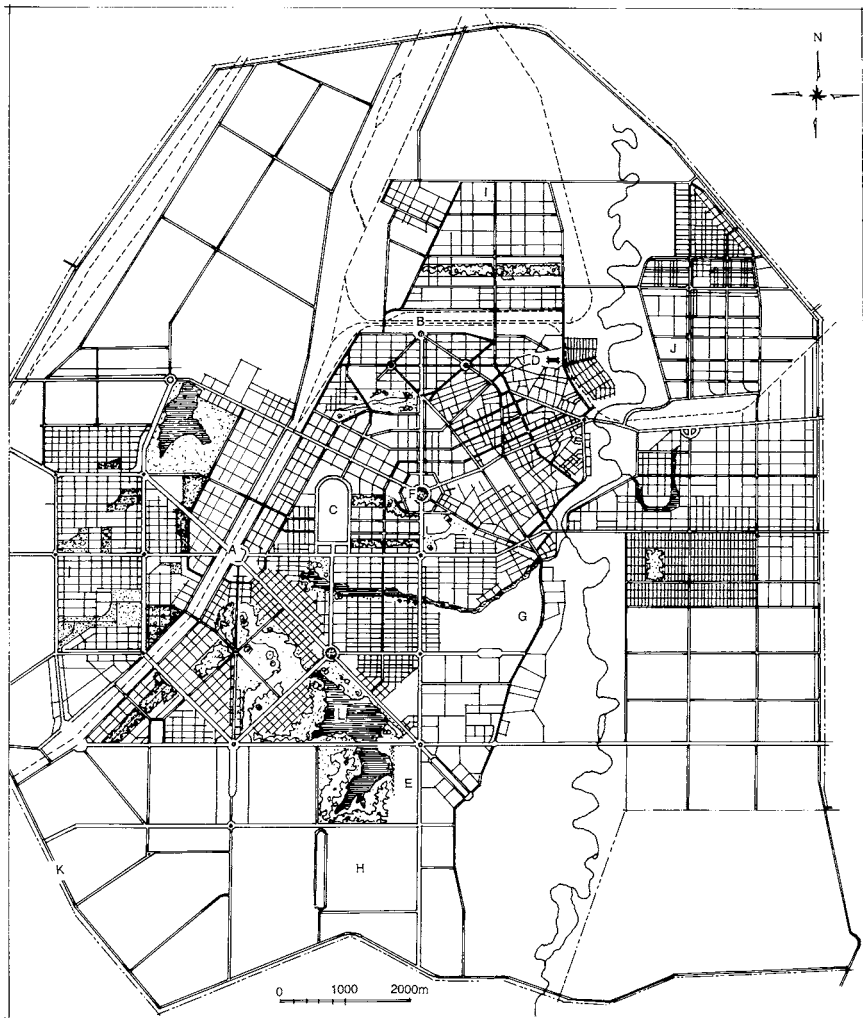
Following the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 and the outbreak of the Second World War, the city began to decline. However, a new plan was proclaimed together with the Manchurian Town and Country Planning Act in 1942, and a population target of 1 million distributed over an area of 160 square kilometres was projected to be housed on a framework of 1 square kilometre for 1,200 families on average.<sup>14</sup> Comparing the 1937 plan with the 1942 plan, the latter was in fact a shrunken and in its western part largely altered layout compared to that of the former (Figure 2).

The disruption of war was just one setback. The intrinsically mechanical order of the city plan had made no allowances for growth, changes, adaptations or creative renewals. The city was forced to enlarge on the urban land beyond its perimeter. Here, as in other such planning schemes, the typical Beaux-Arts plan failed: there were no concerns for neighbourhoods as integral units, no regard for expanding housing projects and insufficient conception for business as an intrinsic part of the urban order. In the same way, the city centre was conceived without any further control over the townscape that enveloped it – and that openly jeopardized its aesthetic pretensions. There was a further weakness: the wide avenues were receptive to vehicular traffic but caused trouble to pedestrians, especially in the circuses. The grand concept itself only was dominant, changing function and everyday amenity were totally ignored.

### **Imperial palace**

Where there is an Emperor, there is a palace. The palace had been a highly controversial issue between the Guandong Army and Puyi, and it was

<sup>14</sup> Hideshima Kan, 'The planning system of residential districts in Manchuria', *Housing* (Jutaku) (Jun. 1943), 174–82.



- A Planned new railway station
- B Old railway station
- C Uncompleted palace
- D Emperor's actual residence
- E Shrine
- F Datong Circus
- G Sport
- H University
- I Light industry suburb
- J Heavy industry suburb
- K Ring road
- L South-lake park

**Figure 2:** Changchun plan (1942)

never resolved. During the 16-year reign in Changchun, Puyi lived in a residence converted from the Provincial Salt Monopoly Bureau on the edge of the urban area between the SMR zone and the old town (Figure 2, D). In 1938, a building of Chinese–Western style was erected to mitigate the

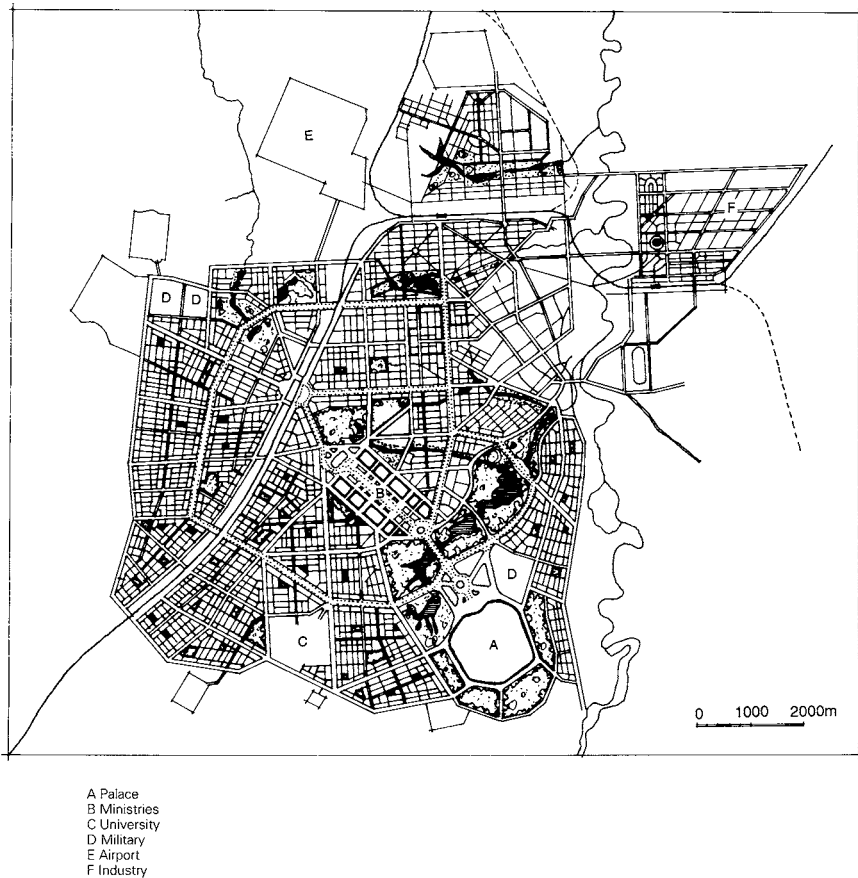
problem, and a Japanese Shinto shrine was built next to the building in the actual-residence compound where Puyi held audiences, banquets and worshipped the Japanese Sun Goddess.<sup>15</sup> In the same year, the foundation stone of the palace was at last laid in the city (Figure 2, C). But construction progressed very slowly and stopped in 1943 before the Japanese Empire collapsed. An incomplete building of two storeys was left on the site and Puyi was an Emperor without a palace.

Between 1932 and 1937, the most important problem was the location of the palace. This exposed the conflicts between the Guandong Army and Puyi in relation to the intrinsic purpose of the city. The Japanese regarded Changchun as the capital of a new colony to which Japan had given birth. For Puyi, although he understood that he was merely a puppet head of state, Changchun was the capital of his homeland. There was no real agreement on the city's concept and form. For the Japanese, railway stations and financial and commercial buildings were of paramount importance. For Puyi, the component of central importance was the imperial palace, and the location and orientation of the palace could only be determined with reference to a cosmic order. Puyi was loyal to his former role as Emperor of China. He made it clear that the new palace should follow the Beijing model, which was designed according to principles of capital city planning laid down in the fifth century BC.<sup>16</sup> It should incorporate a grid plan with the grand palace located at the centre on the north–south axes. Governmental buildings should be symmetrically laid out south of the palace. The Ancestral Temple was to the east and the Altar of Land to the west. The capital's energy, unlike other cities, emanated from its palace and not from its trade centres or markets. Thus, the palace located in the most commanding situation in the urban composition should be the first building erected in the city. Centrality was not only a Beaux-Arts attribute, but also an ancient Chinese attribute. In Changchun, the problem was not simple. Who was to be at the centre and what was the locus? The conflict arose from the political contradiction between the introduced Western-style governmental institutions and the restored Chinese monarchy. The political paradox brought urban design to a deadlock and made the architectural arrangement very difficult to resolve.

What were the location and composition of the Manchurian palace to be? In the SMR proposal, the palace was picturesquely placed on a hill looking on to a park, but off the north–south axis and separated

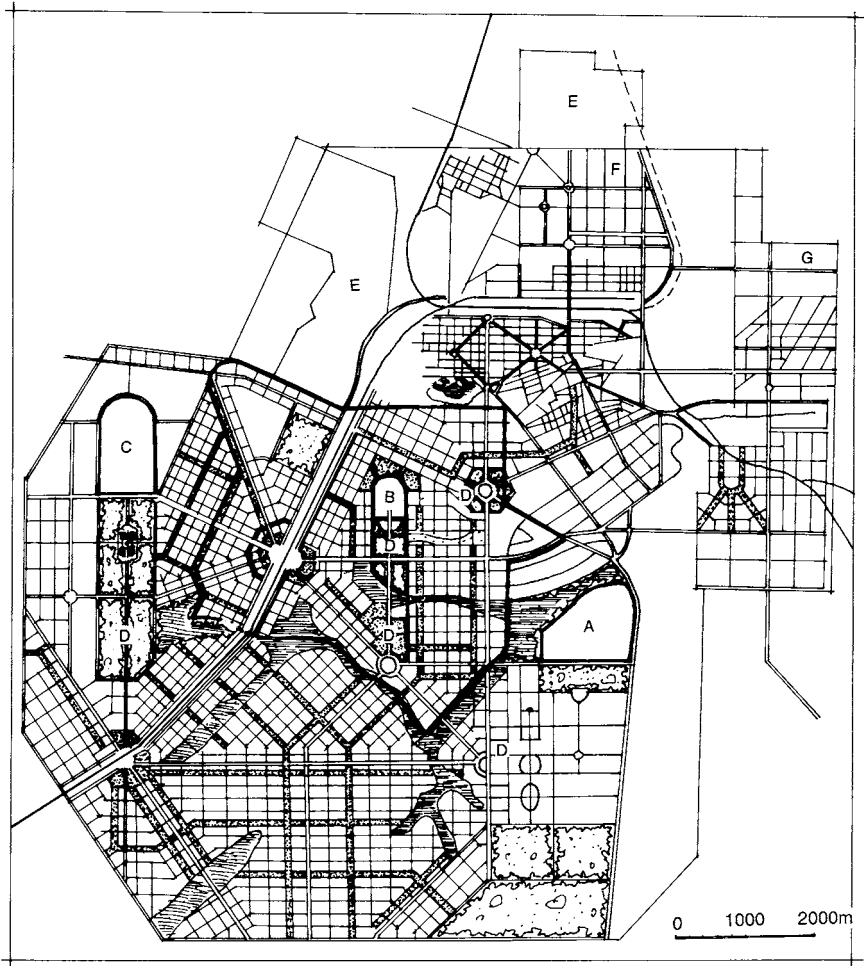
<sup>15</sup> The Puyi's residence has been opened to the public as a museum since 1950s, but the shrine is no longer existent.

<sup>16</sup> *Artificer's Record* (Kaogong Ji), a section of the book *Zhou Li* (Record of the Institutes of the Zhou dynasty), describes city planning principles, civil engineering regulations and artisans' duties. Originally, it was an official document of the Qi State of the Warring States period, incorporated in 140 BC.



**Figure 3:** Plan by South Manchurian Railway (1932)

from the government complex (Figure 3). In the CCB plan, the palace was off-centre, but north–south set on a hill (Figure 4), in which the orientation reflected the vision of Puyi. The two designs could not be resolved, so three more schemes were proposed and altered several times. The palace proposed by the SMR is not evident, but we know that buildings designed by the SMR were all European in style, and the palace may have been consistent with the earlier architecture. The desire of Puyi for the outward appearance of his palace was Chinese style. By 1937, the Design Office of Palace Buildings had submitted two schemes, both reflecting traditional Chinese buildings. The chief differences concerned the incorporation of a garden. Puyi chose a scheme with a garden (Figure 5). Laid out according to Chinese cosmology, the site was rectangular (51.2 hectares) with two north corners curved to symbolize heaven and the south corners to represent earth, expressing the Emperor’s



A Proposed palace site  
B Alternative palace site  
C Future palace site  
D Proposed government site  
E Military  
F Light industry  
G Heavy industry  
Area within thick lines represents the first stage of construction (1932-37)

**Figure 4:** Plan by Capital Construction Bureau (1932)

intermediary position between heaven and earth, and also symbolizing the centre of the cosmos where the Emperor, the Son of Heaven, dwelled. The Emperor's office and apartment building were set on the north-south axis. An open square was to the south, and a garden to the north designed with Japanese elements as well as western ornamental features.

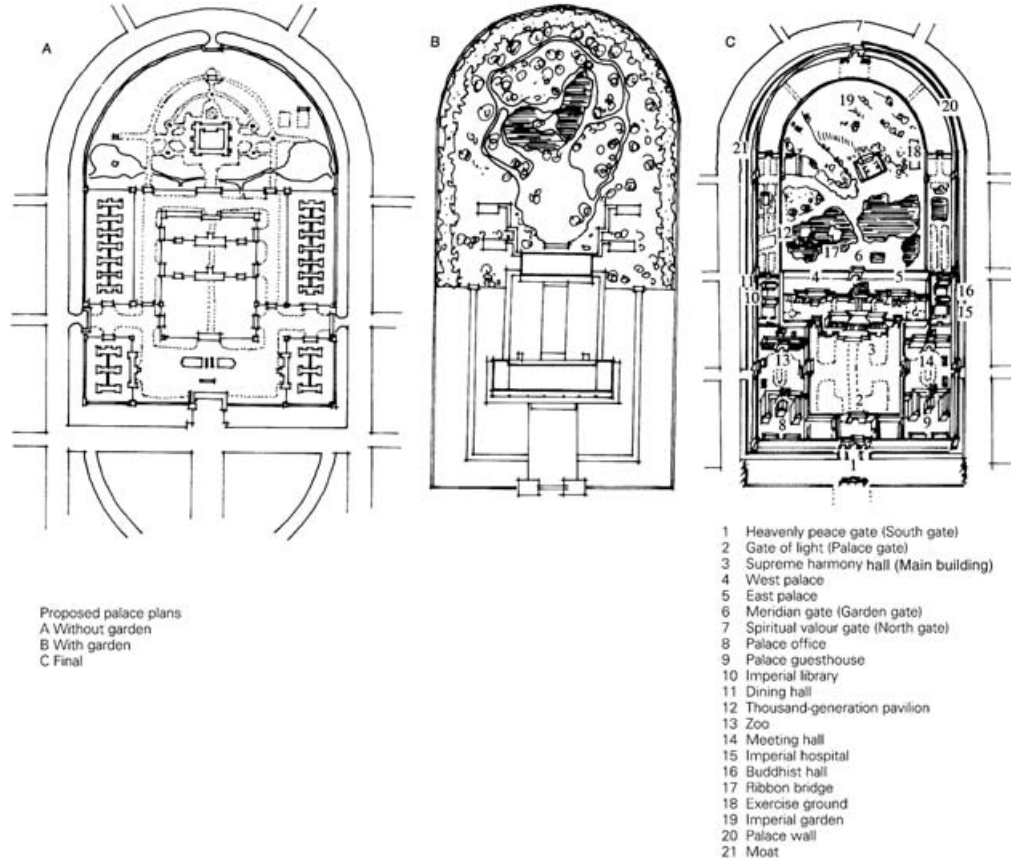


Figure 5: Palace plan (1938)

In 1950, a university was erected on the incomplete palace site. A building accommodating the geology department was completed on the ruins of the palace building in 1953. The university campus reveals aspects of the original vision for the palace: the geometric layout followed the original urban planning, and the geology building was close to the original design. Apart from the scheme of the palace design, architectural activities in Changchun were concentrated on government building. It was not an age of palace architecture.

### State architecture

Spectacular planning by itself cannot generate a city of radiance. *Beaux-Arts* principles were also applied in architectural design on a great scale. The architectural approach was linked to the urban design principles, and in turn to the Japanese ideological conceptions.

Japanese colonialism was not culturally motivated. There was no particular Japanese planning dynamic and architectural symbolism to export. The buildings in Changchun reflecting the Japanese colonizers' identity were the Shinto shrine (1932), Stele to Loyal Souls (1935), Spiritual Valour Hall (1936) and Temple of Japanese Soldiers (1940).<sup>17</sup> All face east, i.e. the main gates are towards Japan.

What were the forms to be used in Manchurian state architecture? The Japanese understood that they must utilize the ideals and techniques learned from the West as a vital force to open up China. The source of their inspiration was not found at home in Japan. They were conscious that no matter what Western forms of architecture were to be imported into China, classicism would be acceptable. 'For the first time in history, a non-white race has undertaken to carry the white man's burden.'<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the Japanese were aware that anything that had no roots would fail in China. In order to produce a formally satisfactory solution for the Manchurian government buildings, the Japanese architects incorporated Chinese elements into the Western legacy. Both the Chinese and the Western elements were not part of the Japanese repertoire, and the outcome was hybrid. The Japanese were extraordinarily adaptive, and their flair in applying what they had learned from others to new ways or to a higher level of refinement is well known. From the fifth century, a significant influx of Chinese culture had occurred. Japan stepped suddenly on to the stage of written history, and participated fully in Chinese-styled development. From the Meiji Restoration (1868), they applied themselves to the development and completion of imported ideas and technologies from Europe and America including architectural, educational and railway systems.

<sup>17</sup> Committee of Gazetteer of Changchun (ed.), *General Records of Changchun City: Cultural Relics* (Changchun Zhi) (Changchun, 1995).

<sup>18</sup> Francis Clifford Jones, *Manchuria since 1931* (London, 1949).

State architecture, which dominated the streets of Changchun, could be classified into two types: Japanese administrative buildings and Manchurian administrative buildings. Representatives were the Headquarters of Guandong Army (1934) derived from Japanese castles and the State Council (1936), respectively. There were neither Ancestral Temple nor Altar of Land – the headquarters of Guandong Army and the new railway station were planned instead in their positions. The Manchurian government buildings included a series of eight ministries located between the two nuclei. Both planning and architecture carry built-in symbolic meaning that has a didactic political message, especially national capital and state architecture.

In Changchun, the architectural tactic was to relate the Chinese to the Western by superimposing Chinese tiled roofs as iconographic ornaments on Western buildings. Form was paramount and structure became dissociated. The two modes ran parallel through all government architecture except the Foreign and Education Ministries. They were carefully conceived to express political meaning. The Chinese roof and Western building produced a total image of Manchurian architecture combined with stylistic variants of the period. The architectural unity of the state buildings was further emphasized by materials, colours and ornamental elements.

The tiled roof is a distinct Chinese product with great symbolic value. In the 1920s till 1930s, architects in China made a number of attempts to combine the traditional Chinese roof with reinforced concrete building – all important state buildings were made in the Chinese style by the Chinese government.<sup>19</sup> It seems that the Manzhouguo government buildings are architecturally similar to the Chinese government buildings, but they were ideologically very different. What the Chinese produced was a nationalist reaction; and the Japanese, imperial colonisation. However, the planning and design attitudes of the Japanese to the colonies and occupied territories were different.<sup>20</sup> The government-general buildings of Korea (Seoul, 1926, demolished in 1995) and of Taiwan (Taipei, 1919) were all non-traditional architectural expressions. Japanese administrators were known for disregarding local history and buildings' locales. Modernization and development meant wholesale Westernization. This was a common fact at that time in many Chinese cities occupied by Western powers, and any engagement with tradition was automatically avoided.

It is instructive to compare the Manchurian State Council Building in Changchun and the Japanese National Diet Building in Tokyo. They reveal close stylistic links. Built entirely of masonry, both buildings

<sup>19</sup> Fu Chaoqing, *Chinese Neo-classic Architecture: 20th Century State Architecture* (Zhongguo Gudian Shiyang Xinjianzhu) (Taipei, 1993); Yang Bingkun (ed.), *Chinese City and Architecture 1840–1949* (Zhongguo Jindai Chengshi yu Jianzhu) (Beijing, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> Ishida Yorifusa, 'War, military affairs and urban planning', in *Proceedings of the Eighth International Planning History Conference* (Sydney, 1998), 393–8.



were designed under the direction of Sano Toshikata, and completed in the same year, in 1936. In both cases, plans and elevations are symmetrical and each has a central tower, projecting two-storey porticoes with classical columns. The building in Tokyo was constructed from the first prize-winning entry of a national competition launched in 1918. The Manchurian building was designed from the model of the Japanese Diet Building but with a better sense of style adopted. Designed by Ishi Tatzuro (?–1943), the Manchurian building consists of three blocks: two extend from east to west, one is at right angles connecting the other two. Built of local stone, brick and tiles, much of the façade has a simple appearance while the central portion is bolder in treatment. This central tower is enhanced by different ornamental elements of various origins on its elevations. There is a Roman Doric colonnade, a Chinese *pailou* and four freestanding columns in the Doric mode standing out against the façade one above the other. It is crowned with a tiled double pyramidal roof with a Chinese profile. The building is set back from the avenue and facing an open space, with an entrance flanked by two ‘towers’ that refer to gate-towers (*que*) of Han China (206 BC–AD 220).

The Japanese National Diet Building is influenced by the Mausoleum of Halicarnassos of ancient Turkey, and government buildings (1950s) in Tokyo are all of international inspiration. The Japanese architects considered the international style to be modern. Modernity was regarded as antithetical to tradition.

### Conclusion

It has been possible to reconstruct a brief picture of the development of the city of Changchun, in which a dual purpose is explored: capital city of Manzhouguo and model capital of the Japanese Empire. The former was by name and the latter was real. This would explain why the planning and architecture were sensitive to symbolism. Symbolically and practically Changchun reflected the age in which it was constructed.

One issue that remains to be discussed is the attitudes and standpoints of the Japanese architects. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Japanese architects were in a dilemma between the East and the West. The winning design of the National Diet Building (or Parliament House) in Tokyo is a good example. Two different images were proposed: one with Chinese roofs and the other Western.<sup>21</sup> Seventeen years separated the design competition and the completion of the building. During this period, the transition from traditionalism through neo-classicism to modernism was realised in Japan. The Japanese deliberately chose to embrace

<sup>21</sup> Fujimori Terunobu, *Japanese Architecture in Modern Times* (Nihon no kindai kenchiku), vol. II (Tokyo, 2001), 22–3.

Westernization and modernization. Although several public buildings were made to revive historical traditions between the 1920s and 1930s, the mainstream was of a quite different variety characterized by Western style. Japanese revival architecture, though fine in decorative inventiveness, showed scant appreciation of the genesis of traditional architecture. Changchun was the only place where Japanese planners and architects attempted to revive the glories of East Asia on a large scale. However, it was subject to acid criticism from modernists during the 1930s.<sup>22</sup> Traditionalism was synonymous with imperialism. Since the 1920s, Japanese architecture has been strongly aligned with Western architectural movements. Upon the ongoing question of domestic and modern, the Japanese response was to modernize their domestic by focusing on 'Westernization of daily life'. From the Meiji period (1868–1912), a series of policies to establish the foundation of a modern centralized state were implemented under the slogan 'A Rich Country and a Strong Military'. Western ways satisfied the pragmatic and emotional needs of economic development. Japan thoroughly committed itself to the material aspects of Western progressive culture.

Both Chinese and Japanese architects were challenged by Western science and technology, and both began to be educated under the Western system. Different from the Japanese, the Chinese responses can be grouped into introductory and negative ones. Chinese architects absorbed Western culture while at the same time they developed a sense of confrontation with the West. The Chinese attempt was to modernize their domestic architecture side by side with the Western architecture. In their view China had to draw the strength necessary for her salvation from an effort to restore Chinese ideas – 'Chinese knowledge for foundation, Western knowledge for practice'. This is the mentality of a nation of mainstream culture. A comparative study between the Chinese and Japanese attitudes towards modernism would require a separate study. What becomes evident, however, is that hybrid planning and eclectic architecture reflected a cultural dilemma, and the unfinished palace was the result of the political paradox. The Western styles and techniques adapted to Chinese environment gave the city of Changchun an ambivalent identity. Antithesis is its basic character.

<sup>22</sup> 'Forum on continental architecture' *Modern Architecture* (Gendai kenchiku), 8 (1940).