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# CROSS-CURRENTS



## EAST ASIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE REVIEW

### ***State Capacity in City Planning: The Reconstruction of Nanjing, 1927–1937***

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#### **Abstract**

After reunifying China in 1927, the Nationalist government proposed a comprehensive planning proposal, the Capital Plan (*shoudu jihua*), to reconstruct the war-torn city of Nanjing into a modern capital, despite the fact that the infant republic was still threatened by internal strife and external aggression. This article discusses the complex politics involved in the reconstruction of Nanjing from 1927 to 1937, illustrating the way in which the Nationalist state tried to transform China's urban development. It focuses on why unified planning ideas could not be generated during the planning process, and why these ideas did not turn fully into practice during the implementation process. By studying the aborted effort in planning Nanjing, knowing in what particular dimensions the state excelled and in what other dimensions things went wrong, this article analyzes the unevenness of state capacity in Republican China.

#### **Introduction**

After reunifying China in 1927, the Nationalist government proposed a comprehensive planning proposal, the Capital Plan (*shoudu jihua*, or SDJH), to reconstruct the war-torn city of Nanjing into a modern capital, despite the fact that the infant republic was still threatened by internal strife and external aggression. But in the end, the plan failed, for the most part. In this article, I try to identify the reasons that the Nationalist leaders committed to planning a new city and investing money and effort in reconstructing Nanjing even during a time of war and struggle. I discuss the complex politics involved in the reconstruction of Nanjing from 1927 to 1937, illustrating how the Nationalist state became a transformative force behind China's urban development. I evaluate the capacity of Republican China with regard to city planning in the face of unfavorable social, economic, and political circumstances through a discussion of the various factors that led to the premature abortion of the Capital Plan. In particular, I explore why a

coherent set of plans could not be generated during the planning process, and why they could not be fully implemented.

Political scientists and economists often analyze a state's capacity in terms of its ability to raise revenue and to tax people. Charles Tilly, for instance, defines state capacity as "the extent to which interventions of state agents in existing non-state resources, activities, and interpersonal connections alter existing distributions of those resources, activities, and interpersonal connections as well as relations among those distributions" (Tilly 2007, 16). This conceptualization of state capacity as a battle of resources between the state and non-state actors has been challenged by scholars in recent years for two reasons. First, it is being acknowledged that competition for resources occurs not only between the state and its citizens, but also among different organs and agencies within the state structure (Abrams 1988; Hsing 2006). As such, the first objective of this article is to contest the monolithic notion of the state as a single unit of analysis. To highlight the pluralistic nature and complexity of the Nationalist state, this article discusses the politics and tension between various state agencies, factions, and actors during the reconstruction process of Nanjing.

Second, many scholars argue that state capacity has multiple dimensions. Richard Baum and Alexei Shevchenko, for instance, analyze the shifting contours and configurations of the postreform Chinese state with respect to five dimensions of state capacity: extractive, regulative, distributive, symbolic, and responsive (Baum and Shevchenko 1999, 352). Other scholars have suggested different schema, such as the capacity of the state to maintain social order (Yep and Fong 2009) and to achieve its policy goals in terms of actual outcomes (Cummings and Nørgaard 2004, 687–689). Knowing all these dimensions of state capacity, Linda Weiss reminds us that states are not uniformly capable across all policy areas: "There can be no such thing as state capacity in general, merely capacities in particular areas" (Weiss 1998, 4). She therefore argues that it is the unevenness of state capacity that is most significant for understanding state behavior in a certain area. The second objective of this article, then, is to evaluate the capacity of the Nationalist state in one particular area, city planning. It is an area that encompasses many important dimension of state capacity: the technological capacity to prepare a suitable urban plan, the symbolic capacity to invest the plan with meaning and ideology, the extractive capacity to raise funds for the plan, the regulative capacity to ensure compliance with the plan, the

responsive capacity to address and balance different needs and interests, and the implementational capacity to turn a planning scheme into real construction. By studying the setbacks of the Capital Plan, knowing in what particular dimensions the state excelled and in what other dimensions things went wrong, this article analyzes the unevenness of state capacity in Republican China.

A number of scholars have studied the state-led reconstruction of Nanjing during the Republican era. Their studies usually fall into three main categories. The first category focuses on the importation of Western concepts and theories to Republican China. Jeffrey Cody and other scholars explain the American influence on both architectural design and city planning in Republican China. Such influence was created by architects and planners, both Chinese and foreign, who advocated the adaptation of traditional Chinese architecture for modern uses, often expressed in the convergence of Chinese traditional architecture and the French-derived methods of the Beaux-Arts (Cody 2001; Cody, Steinhardt, and Atkin 2011; Fu 1993). Luo Ling, on the other hand, illustrates how Western concepts influenced the basic process of development and change in Republican Nanjing, not only in architecture and city planning but also in urban governance, infrastructure, and commercial development (1999). The second category is literature about nationalism and nation building. Charles D. Musgrove, for instance, examines the Nationalist state's effort in making Nanjing into a symbol of Chinese nationhood. By imposing ideological discourse to legitimize Nanjing as a new capital, using scientific methods to plan the city, and reinvesting meaning into urban spaces, the state created a "new cosmology" in Nanjing and a new idea of Chinese modernity (Musgrove 2000, 2002). One particularly important Nationalist project was the construction of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing. Lai Delin uses this project to illustrate the architects' quest for a monument appropriate for the new republic and discusses how this modern ritual building helped create the cult of Sun Yat-sen worship (2005 and 2011), while Henrietta Harrison uses the burial of Sun Yat-sen to analyze the role of political ceremony in the shaping of a new national identity and the production of modern citizens (2000). The last category focuses on the technocratic nature of the Nationalist leadership. In his dissertation, Wang Chun-hsiung discusses the institutionalization of city planning in modern China with a detailed study of the background, interests, and conflicts of the Nationalist bureaucrats and planners (2002). Given the strong technocratic background of the Nationalist

leadership, William Kirby argues that the statist ideology of Republican China was in fact “industrial modernity,” as evidenced by the state’s enthusiasm in engineering the capital Nanjing (2000). Overall, literature in these three categories helps us to understand the Nationalists’ vision of modernity, and the symbolism, monumentality, and developmentalism the Nationalist state sought to invest in the new national capital. Nevertheless, the reasons why many state-led reconstruction projects in Nanjing were aborted prematurely have received far less attention. By comparing the proposed Capital Plan with the actual outcomes, this article analyzes the uneven capacity of the Nationalist state in different dimensions of the planning and implementation process.

This article is divided into three sections. The first section explores the larger political reasons behind the reconstruction of Nanjing, showing why the Nationalist government was so enthusiastic about city planning even during times of struggle. I discuss the capacity of the Nationalist state in the planning and implementation processes respectively. In the second section, I analyze the concerns, interests, competency, and reactions of the Nationalist leaders and planners involved during the planning process. In the last section, I have selected three important projects under the Capital Plan—the central administrative zone, the residential zones, and the capital road networks—as case studies. I analyze how the unfavorable social, political, and economic conditions of the Republican era affected the ways that these three projects actually turned out.

## **Reconstructing Nanjing**

### *Reclaiming the Revolutionary Legacy of Nanjing*

Nanjing literally means “southern capital.” The name refers to the city’s glorious past as the imperial residence of the first Ming emperor. The city was protected by the Purple Mountain in the east, the Xuanwu Lake in the northeast, the Yangtze River in the northwest, and the Qinhuai River, which forms a natural moat in the south. The massive city wall, which still survives, was constructed in the fourteenth century. Shaped by the natural landscape, the city appears irregular, but the imperial city and the palace city of the Ming court were planned in a square shape in strict adherence to the imperial planning convention.

Shortly after the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, the Kuomintang (KMT, or the Nationalist Party) allied with the Communists in order to drive off the warlords in north China. In January 1927, the KMT inaugurated Wuhan as the capital of the Republic of China. At this point, the party was deeply divided into two factions. Chiang Kai-shek, the generalissimo of the KMT Revolutionary Army, did not have faith in the Communists and their Soviet advisers. After entering the Yangtze region in April, Chiang instructed a bloody massacre to purge the Communists in Shanghai, which angered the KMT faction at Wuhan. Without the consent of the Wuhan faction, he declared Nanjing the new national capital, claiming that the location was selected by the late Sun Yat-sen.

The political battles between the Wuhan and Nanjing factions lasted for months. In the end, the two factions agreed to establish a new unified Nationalist government in Nanjing.<sup>1</sup> In the summer of 1928, Chiang Kai-shek's power had risen to a new height. Under his direction, the Revolutionary Army finally captured Beijing and reunified China. The fall of Beijing stirred another round of debate on the capital location. Some Nationalist leaders and foreign ministers laughed off the idea of moving the capital from Beijing to Nanjing, citing the total absence of accommodations and the expense of building new ministerial quarters in Nanjing as a distinct handicap. They speculated that it would take twelve to eighteen months to design and construct the necessary government buildings, which would easily cause chaos in the infant republic (Impev 1928, 233). An unnamed high official of the Nationalist government summarized in an interview three reasons why Beijing should be picked ahead of Nanjing:

First, the matter of modern government buildings, hotels and residences, none of which are possessed by Nanking; second, the element of Chinese political influence in Manchuria and Mongolia, both of which territories are fighting ground between Japan, Russia and China. If the Capital is removed to Nanking it is likely to cause a weakening of Chinese political influence in those areas which might be disastrous from the future standpoint of the political unity of the country; and third, the fact that the Powers have their Legations in Peking. Despite the unequal treaty situation, it is vital that China should maintain the closest possible relations with the Powers because China will need the assistance of the foreigners for many years to come. By removing the Capital to Nanking, it is likely to cause friction and loss of contact with the Powers who may refuse to remove their official residences to the Yangtze Valley. (Cited in J. B. P. 1928, 174)

The “powers” in the above quotation refers to those foreign countries that had signed an unequal treaty, the Boxer Protocol, with the Qing court in 1901, including France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, Belgium, Spain, and the Netherlands. By depriving Beijing of its capital status, the Nationalist government hoped to automatically cancel out the hated provisions of the protocol that permitted foreign powers to establish garrisons in Beijing. Proponents of Nanjing also criticized that “there was something in the atmosphere of [Beijing] which militated against the development of Republican Government” (J. B. P. 1928, 174). Wu Tingfang, a Nationalist leader, referred to Beijing as a “foreign city, formerly Manchu... the Capital of the Foreign Powers as represented by the Diplomatic Body functioning in the ‘foreign’ Diplomatic Quarter” (J. B. P. 1928, 174).

A writer in 1928 stated: “It is not history, nor sentiment, nor practical expediency that is to determine where the capital shall be. It is politics. Politics shall be the deciding factor” (Tsok 1928). In other words, each political faction in China would struggle to have the capital proximate to its own sphere of influence. The same writer further commented on Chiang Kai-shek and the capital he installed:

And what about Chiang Kai-shek? His fate is very uncertain. He will last as long as his prestige lasts. He has a good number of political enemies who are only too anxious to undermine his prestige and see his downfall. It is, of course, to his advantage that [Nanjing] remains the centre of administration and that at least holds the purse. (Tsok 1928, 53)

This comment reflected a common doubt at that time: would Chiang Kai-shek and his Republican regime last long? On a national level, people challenged the capacity of the Nationalist government to rule China. Some foreign ministers in Beijing even proclaimed that it was extremely unlikely that any of the foreign powers would consider shifting their legations to Nanjing “until a sufficient time should have elapsed to prove that the Republican regime was at last stabilized and not likely to either be defeated by some warlord adventurers or suddenly decide to shift from Nanjing to Wuhan, Guangzhou, or elsewhere” (Impev 1928, 233). Among these foreign nations, Japan, which had tremendous influence in Manchuria, most opposed relocating the capital.<sup>2</sup> On a personal level, Chiang received severe criticism for his bloody

massacre of the Communists. His leadership position was recurrently challenged by political rivals both inside and outside the party.

### *City Construction as a Political Statement*

Although the Nationalist government was determined to install the capital at Nanjing, the poor cityscape of Nanjing did not match its historical glory and new capital status. The city was penetrated by dark and narrow roads and filled with dilapidated houses and shanties. People squatted randomly on streets, bridges, and in other public spaces. A journalist of a popular magazine in Shanghai urged the Nationalist government to “improve the aesthetic quality” of Nanjing in order to “compete with famous cities in other parts of the world, such as Paris, London, Washington, etc.,” so that China, after a long period of humiliation by foreign powers, could regain its prestige internationally (Z. Chen 1928, 36).

It was common for Nationalist leaders and the Chinese media to compare Nanjing with other modern cities in the world. They desperately wanted Nanjing to overtake these cities. Among all these foreign precedents, Turkey was the most relevant to China. Both nations came out of the ashes of imperial empire and went through a protracted war of independence. After founding a new republic in 1923, Turkish leaders rapidly set into motion a number of societal reforms to build a modernized and westernized nation-state. To create a strong political statement, they decided to build the new capital in a small town, Ankara, from the ground up to become a major city and cultural center. The planning of Ankara was regularly reported by the Chinese media, who demanded that China simulate Turkey and forge from the ruins of an imperial empire a thoroughly modern nation-state. Reconstructing Nanjing thus became an urgent task for China. *Shirong*, literally “the city’s appearance,” was a phrase commonly mentioned by Chinese leaders. They were concerned about the appearance of the capital, arguing that an aesthetic capital would help China gain prestige. They also believed that the task of creating a beautiful, rational capital could be achieved through modern city planning.

Modern city planning was imported to China around the mid-nineteenth century. European nations imposed urban plans, usually featuring a grid plan for easy land management and land sale, to concessions and treaty ports, such as Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Tianjin. Large-scale urban planning, however, began in China only after 1896. The Qing court granted



construction concessions, first to Russia and later to Japan, allowing them to construct and operate railways and developing land around the railway stations in Manchuria.<sup>3</sup> After that, Russia and Japan imposed grandiose plans to turn Manchurian cities, such as Dalian, Harbin, and Changchun, into modern railway cities. The planning of these railway cities showed strong influence from Beaux-Arts planning, which was popular during the “City Beautiful” movement that spanned from the 1890s to the 1900s in the United States. The Beaux-Arts plan was characterized by a grid road system, diagonal boulevards, circular plazas, clear land-use patterns, and monumental architecture. The practice of zoning was also introduced to cities like Dalian and Changchun. This practice was foreign to the Chinese, who planned their cities according to cosmology, social hierarchy, and ceremonial order.

Compared to these foreign efforts, the Chinese had fallen behind in the area of modern city planning until Sun Yat-sen, who, during the 1910s and 1920s, fervently advocated a national policy of urban reconstruction to spearhead China’s development. Sun Yat-sen actively published his ideas of developing modern ports, planning a garden city with attractive parks, remodeling Chinese housing, and so forth. Guangzhou, the southern city where his power was based, became the testing ground to experiment with new urban interventions. From 1921 to 1925, his son, Sun Ke, a graduate of the University of California and Columbia University, became the mayor of Guangzhou. An advocate of municipal reform, modern development, and urban planning, Sun Ke initiated a series of urban improvement projects, including the demolition of the city wall, the building of new roads, the widening of streets, the construction of a sewage system, and the introduction of public utilities. He forged a partnership with Henry Murphy, an American architect who had been designing university campuses and banks in Changsha, Nanjing, Shanghai, and Beijing since 1914. In some of his projects in China, notably the Ginling Girls’ College in Nanjing and Yenching University in Beijing, Murphy advocated adapting traditional Chinese architectural styles to modern use, insisting on preserving essential features of Chinese architecture, such as the curving upturned roof clad in colored clay tile and the orderly arrangement of buildings. Despite featuring Chinese exteriors, Murphy’s buildings were all constructed in enduring concrete and punctuated with big glazed windows.



Image 1: The Ginling Girls' College in Nanjing, designed by Henry Murphy.  
Source: Photo taken by the author.

Like Henry Murphy, many architects in China attempted to invent a new building style that was both “Chinese” and “modern.” “Sinicized” modern buildings could be seen in big cities like Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Nanjing starting in the 1920s. The most notable effort of this new architectural reinterpretation directly involving the Nationalist government was the construction of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum on the Purple Mountain of Nanjing after an architectural competition. The competition jury complimented the winning design by Lu Yanzhi, a returned architecture graduate from Cornell University and former assistant to Henry Murphy, as a modern design that “shows respect to traditional spatial order and ritual practices.” Another important factor behind the selection, however, was the financial difficulty of the Nationalist government. As one of the judges pointed out, the construction cost of the winning design was the lowest among all those short-listed.<sup>4</sup>

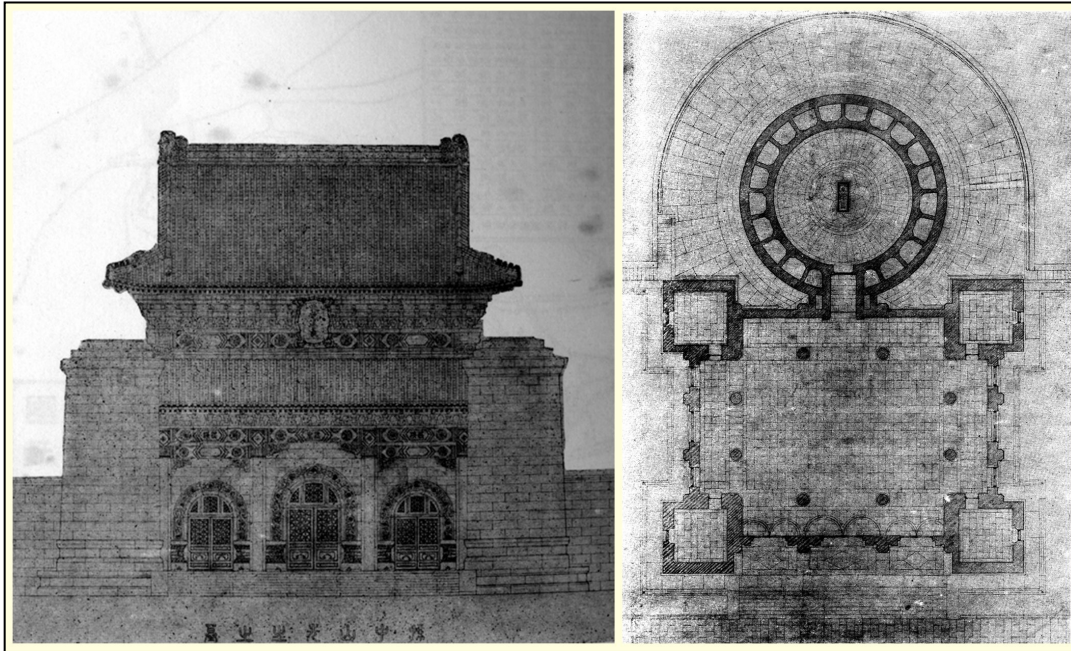


Image 2: The Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, designed by Lu Yanzhi.  
Source: Zongli fengan zhuankan bianzuan weiyuanhui 1929, 34–35.

## Planning Nanjing: State Capacity in Making the Plan

### *Who Gets to Plan?*

As soon as Nanjing was made the national capital in 1927, a question emerged: who was going to plan the new capital? The question was raised not because of a lack of competent planners in China, but because there were too many people who were interested in planning the new capital. Believing that this was none but the municipal government's job, in January 1928 Mayor He Minhun announced the Grand Capital Plan (*shoudu da jihua*) to reconstruct Nanjing into "a scientific (*kexue hua*), artistic (*yishu hua*), and garden-like (*tianyuan hua*) new city," turning the city into "the only metropolis in the East" and "a model city in the world" (He 1928). Nevertheless, the plan was abandoned when Liu Jiwen, who had been educated in Japan and the United Kingdom, replaced He Minhun as mayor of Nanjing in July 1928.

Liu Jiwen was very keen on improving the municipal administration and city appearance of Nanjing. During his mayoral tenure, he also served as a member of the Reconstruction Commission (*jianshe weiyuanhui*), a central government organ in charge of planning and

construction. In August 1928, when the building of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum was under way, Liu Jiwen successfully convinced the Reconstruction Commission to build a grand boulevard for the parade of Sun Yat-sen's casket.<sup>5</sup> Zhongshan Avenue, named after Sun Yat-sen, was constructed to resemble one of Georges Haussmann's Parisian boulevards. The avenue connected the Xiaguan pier at the Yangtze River all the way through the city center to the mausoleum on the Purple Mountain. It measured twelve kilometers long and forty meters wide and was lined with tall trees on both sides.

Year	Urban Plan	Proposed By
191	New Reconstruction Plan ( <i>Xin jianshe jihua</i> )	Sun Yat-sen
192	North City Area Development Plan ( <i>Beichengqu fazhan jihua</i> )	Nanjing Xiaguan District Commerce and Port Authority ( <i>Nanjing duban xiaguan shangbujū</i> )
192	City Administration Plan ( <i>Shizheng jihua</i> )	Nanjing City Administration Preparatory Office ( <i>Nanjing shizheng choubeichu</i> )
192	Grand Capital Plan ( <i>Shoudu da jihua</i> )	Nanjing Urban Design Committee ( <i>Nanjing chengshi sheji weiyuanhui</i> )
192	Capital Plan ( <i>Shoudu jihua</i> )	Office of Technical Experts for Capital Design ( <i>Guodai sheji jishu junyuan banshichu</i> ), under the National Capital Reconstruction Commission ( <i>Shoudu jianshe weiyuanhui</i> )
193	Revision to the Capital Plan ( <i>Shoudu jihua</i> )	National Capital Reconstruction Commission ( <i>Shoudu jianshe weiyuanhui</i> )
194	Urban Planning Outline ( <i>Dushi jihua dagang</i> )	Nanjing Urban Planning Committee ( <i>Nanjing dushi jihua weiyuanhui</i> )

Table 1: Planning schemes proposed to Nanjing from 1919 to 1949.

Source: Based on Nanjingshi difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 2008, 111–119.

Following the construction of Zhongshan Avenue, a power battle broke out among three camps over who was to plan the capital. The first camp was the Nanjing municipal government under Mayor Liu Jiwen, who announced in October 1928 a zoning plan (*fenqu jihua*) to divide Nanjing into various functional zones, including a central administrative zone at the historical Ming Palace area to accommodate the central party headquarters, the central government, and the Executive Yuan.<sup>6</sup> The second camp was the Reconstruction Commission (*jianshe weiyuanhui*), which suggested creating a subcommittee for the reconstruction of Nanjing. The third camp was Sun Ke, who argued that an independent committee should be founded specially for the planning of the capital. In December 1928, after a series of meetings, the Nationalist

government authorized Sun Ke and Lin Yimin, a Harvard-trained engineer and the former head of the Public Works Bureau of Guangzhou, to set up a short-term independent committee called the Office of Technical Experts for Capital Design (*guodu sheji jishu junyuan banshichu*; hereafter, the Expert Office). The Expert Office would operate for a temporary period of six months until a long-term committee was set up by the Nationalist government (Wang 2002, 137–143). Sun Ke immediately recruited to the Expert Office four American consultants with whom he had worked in Guangzhou—Henry Murphy, Ernest Goodrich, Colonel Irving Moller, and Theodore McCrosky—“to avoid mistakes and to offer guidance” (*SDJH* 1929, preface).

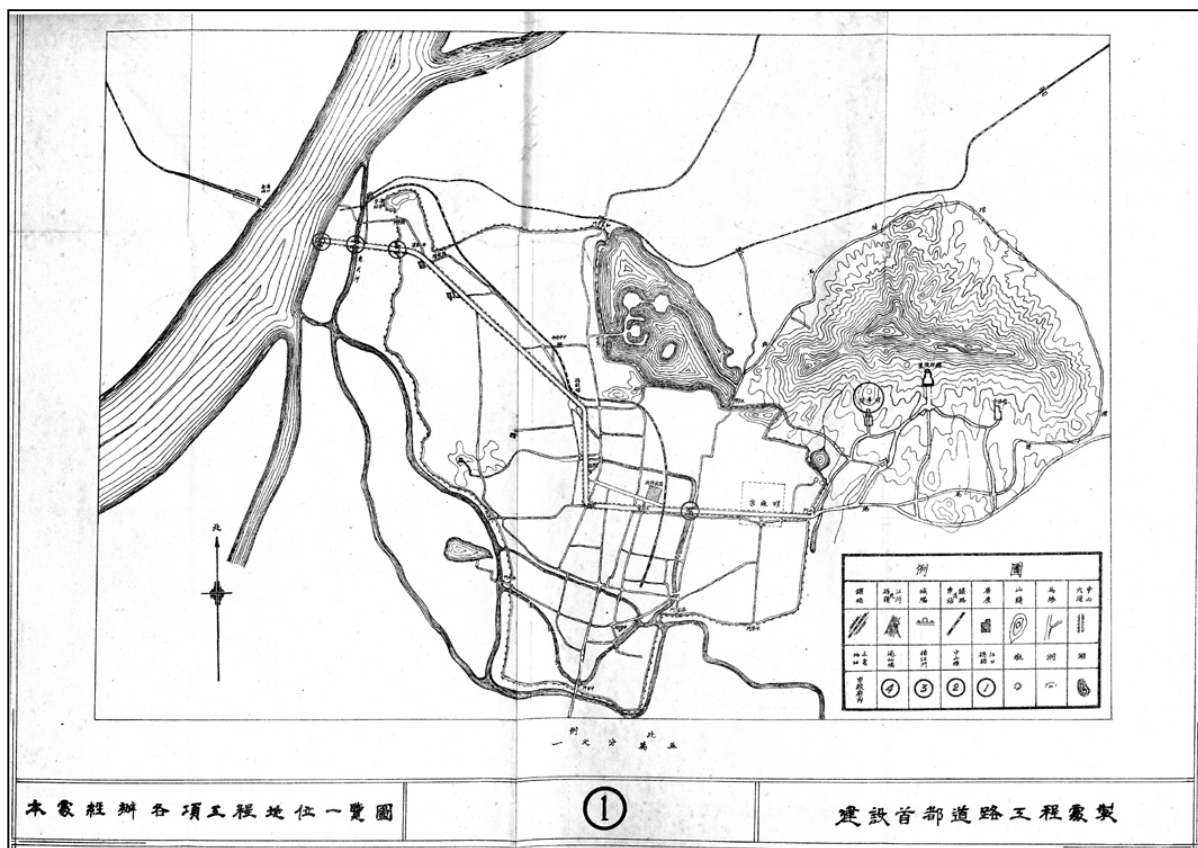


Image 3: The route of Zhongshan Avenue.  
Source: *Jianshe shoudu daolu gongcheng chu*, 1930.

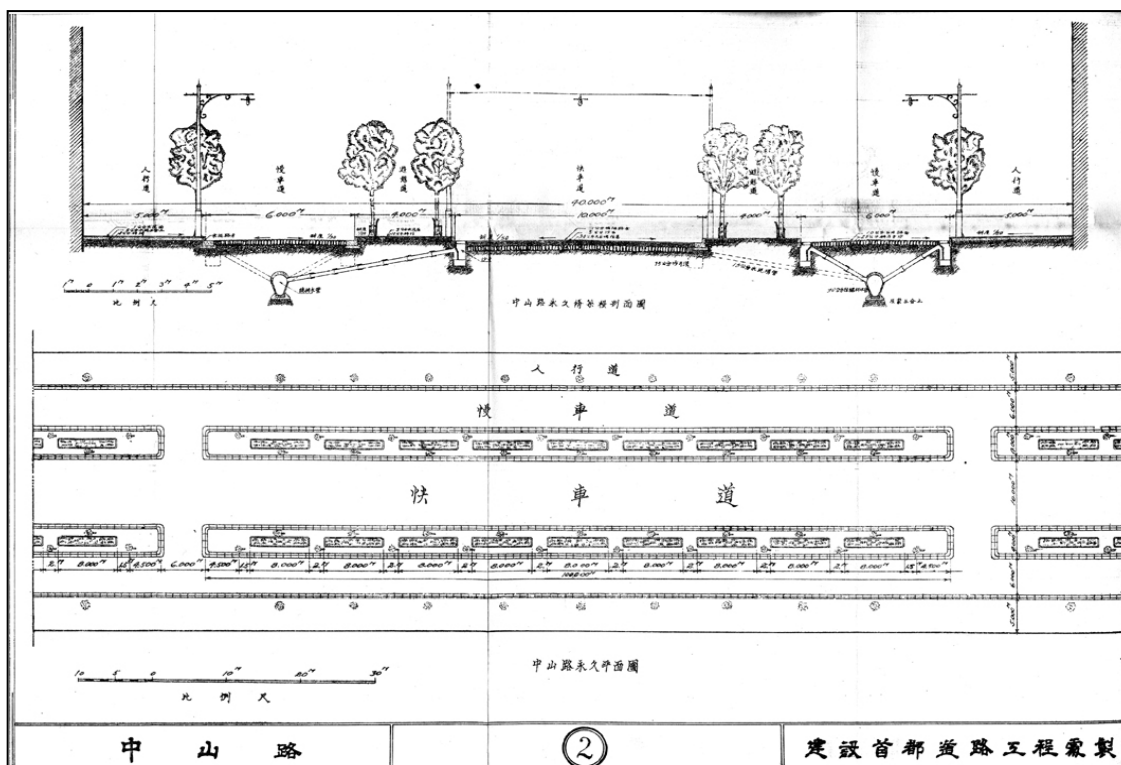


Image 4: Section of Zhongshan Avenue.  
Source: Jianshe shoudu daolu gongcheng chu, 1930.

When the agreed six-month period ended, the Nationalist government founded the National Capital Reconstruction Commission (*shoudu jianshe weiyuanhui*; hereafter, the Reconstruction Commission) on June 22, 1929, to replace the Expert Office.<sup>7</sup> Sun Ke, however, pleaded for a deferment to dismiss the Expert Office and agreed to subordinate it to the Reconstruction Commission (Wang 2002, 202–206).

### *Drawing the Plan*

By the end of December 1929, the Expert Office submitted a comprehensive planning proposal, the Capital Plan (*shoudu jihua*), to the Reconstruction Commission. Lin Yimin, director of the Expert Office, claimed: “It will promote urban design to all cities in China. The influence will be massive!” (Lin 1929a). The Capital Plan anticipated a population increase from 497,500 in 1928 to over two million in a hundred years’ time. It covered a range of projects,

which can be organized into four categories: zoning, transportation, infrastructure and public utilities, and laws and regulations for enforcement.

According to Lin Yimin, an urban plan is the use of “scientific methods” to plan and construct all things in the city (Lin 1929b, 3). Although Lin never clearly explained the meaning of “scientific methods,” a possible interpretation is the use of zoning as a basis of development control. Zoning helps to restructure a chaotic urban environment into segregated areas based on function, creating new rationality to understand the modern city.

In the Capital Plan, the Expert Office proposed a zoning plan and a corresponding zoning regulation to restrict land use, density, size of land plot, permissible building area, building height, and site coverage. The walled city was mainly reserved for residential zones, commercial zones, and the municipal administration zone. Outside the city wall, two industrial zones were planned on both sides of the Yangtze River, whereas the central administrative zone was located at the foot of the Purple Mountain. Furthermore, green parks occupied 14.4 percent of the city area, a ratio similar to that of Washington, D.C. and far outnumbering that of London and New York.

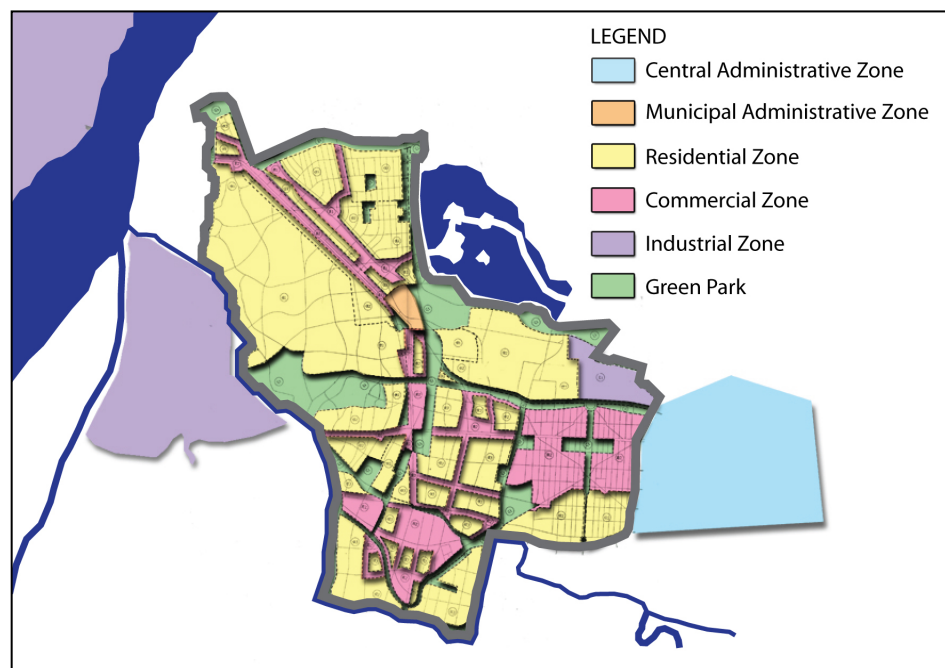


Image 5: The zoning of Nanjing.

Source: Redrawn based on *SDJH* 1929, figure 56.

As Nanjing was the seat for both the Nationalist and the municipal governments, the Expert Office suggested locating them at separate sites. The municipal administration zone was planned at two locations (one for government offices and the other for cultural and recreational facilities) at the heart of Nanjing for easy accessibility. By contrast, the central administrative zone was planned outside the city wall boundary, at the foot of the Purple Mountain in close proximity to two national monuments, the historical tomb of the first Ming emperor and the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum. Citing Canberra in Australia, Ankara in Turkey, and New Delhi in India as precedents, Lin Yimin argued that it would offer greater flexibility to plan the central administrative zone on the outskirts of Nanjing, where adequate land could be acquired for the 77,580-acre zone—bigger than the National Mall in Washington, D.C.—to accommodate an anticipated staff population of 100,000 (Lin 1929a).

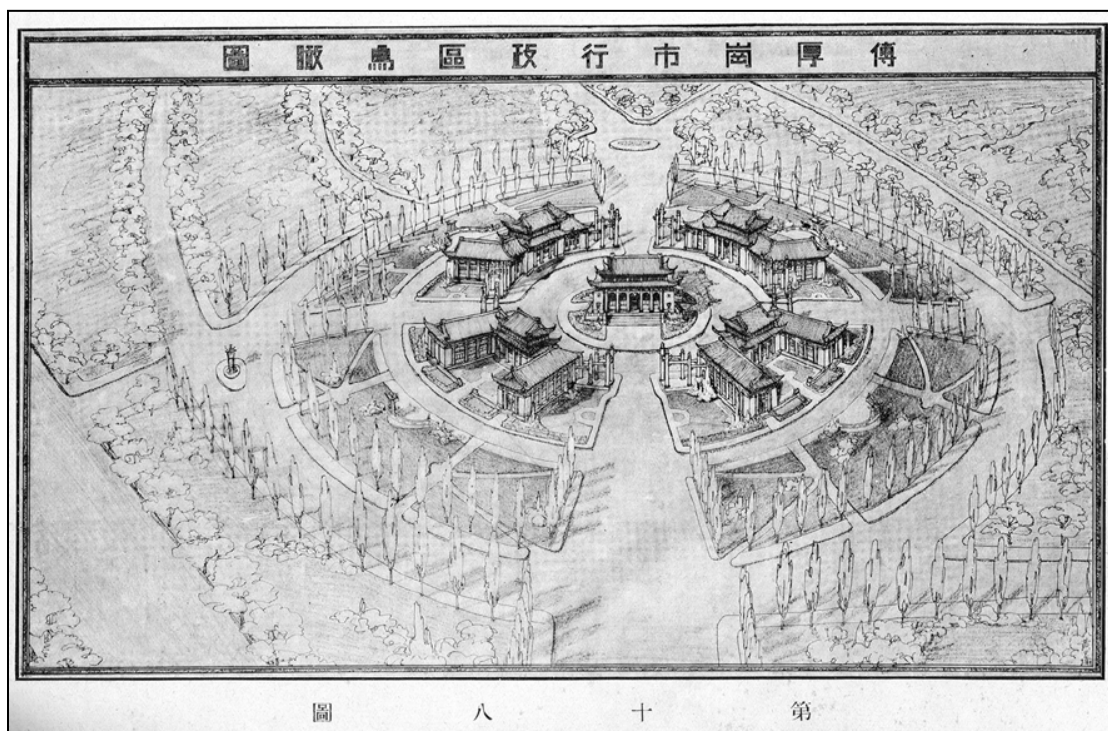


Image 6: Proposed government offices in the municipal administrative zone.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 18.



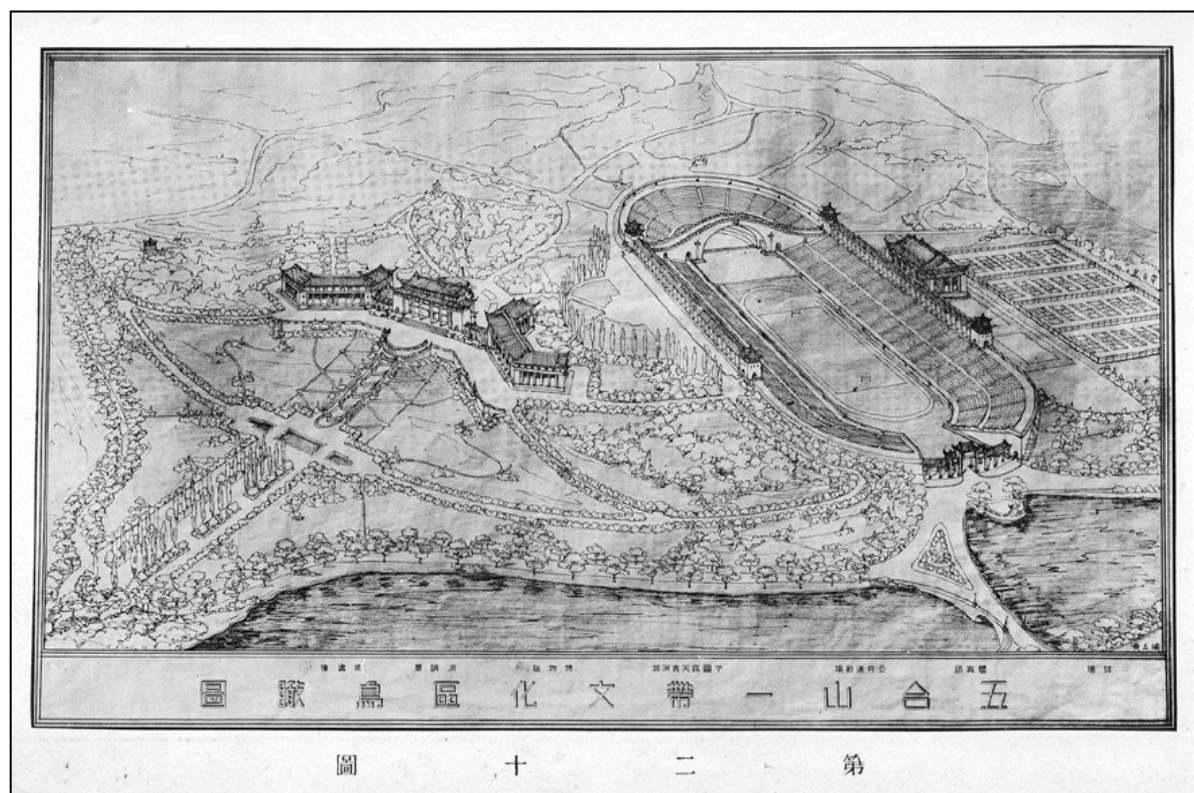


Image 7: Proposed cultural and recreational facilities in the municipal administrative zone.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 20.

The American consultant Henry Murphy had designed a plan for the central administrative zone in June 1929, but it was not adopted by the Expert Office (Cody 2001, 186–187). A month later, the Expert Office organized an international planning competition for the central administrative zone and invited Henry Murphy, the German planner Heinrich Schubart, and five other local and foreign experts to be judges.<sup>8</sup> The competition requirement explicitly asked for a Chinese design, which, to judges like Henry Murphy, was the key selection criterion. The competition received nine submissions from four Chinese teams. Nevertheless, according to the judges' opinions, none of the submissions deserved the top and second prizes. In the end, they only awarded two third prizes and two fourth prizes.

One of the third-prize awards was reported in the Capital Plan, although there was no indication that the Expert Office was planning to adopt that plan. Designed by Huang Yuyu and Zhu Shenkang, the plan was strikingly similar to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It

adopted a symmetrical plan, featuring an underlying grid of boulevards and open malls intersecting to create a central plaza. The east-south mall divided the site into a northern party section and a southern government section. According to the designers, the central party headquarters was the most important building in the central administrative zone. Locating on an elevated slope overlooking the entire site, the central party headquarters symbolized the head of the nation. At the two ends of the east-south mall, the two second-most important buildings were planned: the Nationalist government and the chairman's residence. Other ministry buildings were arranged in an orderly manner in the government section of the zone. Nevertheless, Henry Murphy especially disapproved of the absence of accent buildings at the intersections of the diagonal boulevards. Overall, most of the judges criticized that the design ran far over the 6 million yuan budget set by the Expert Office.<sup>9</sup> Although the planning of the central administrative zone was not confirmed in the Capital Plan, the Expert Office demanded that all government buildings subscribe to Chinese style, so that “the nation’s valuable architectural tradition could be continued” (*SDJH* 1929, 33).

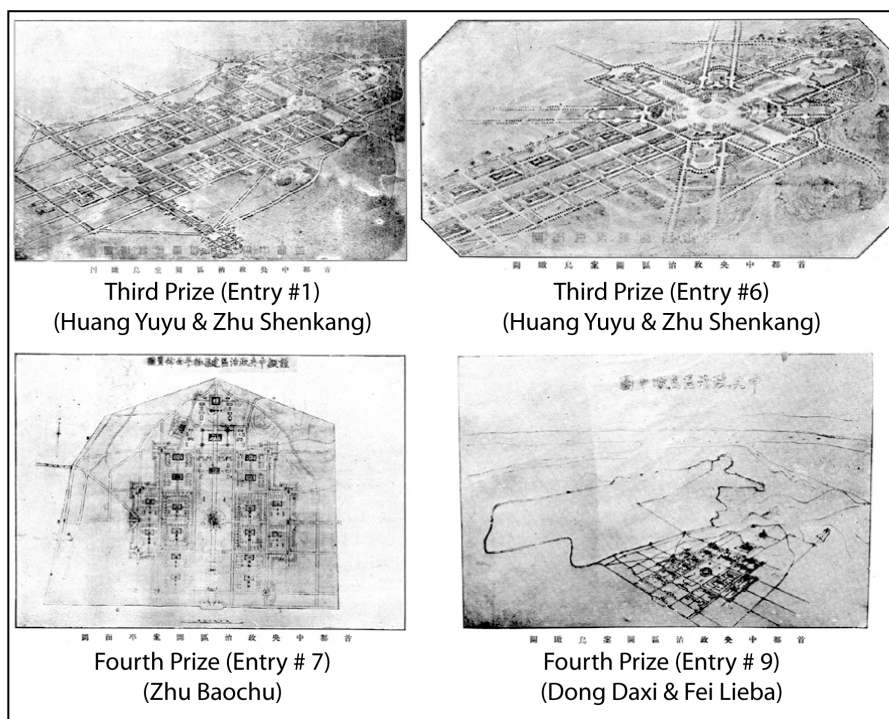


Image 8: The third and fourth prizes of the Central Administrative Zone Planning Competition. Source: *SDJS* 1929 (2), no page number.

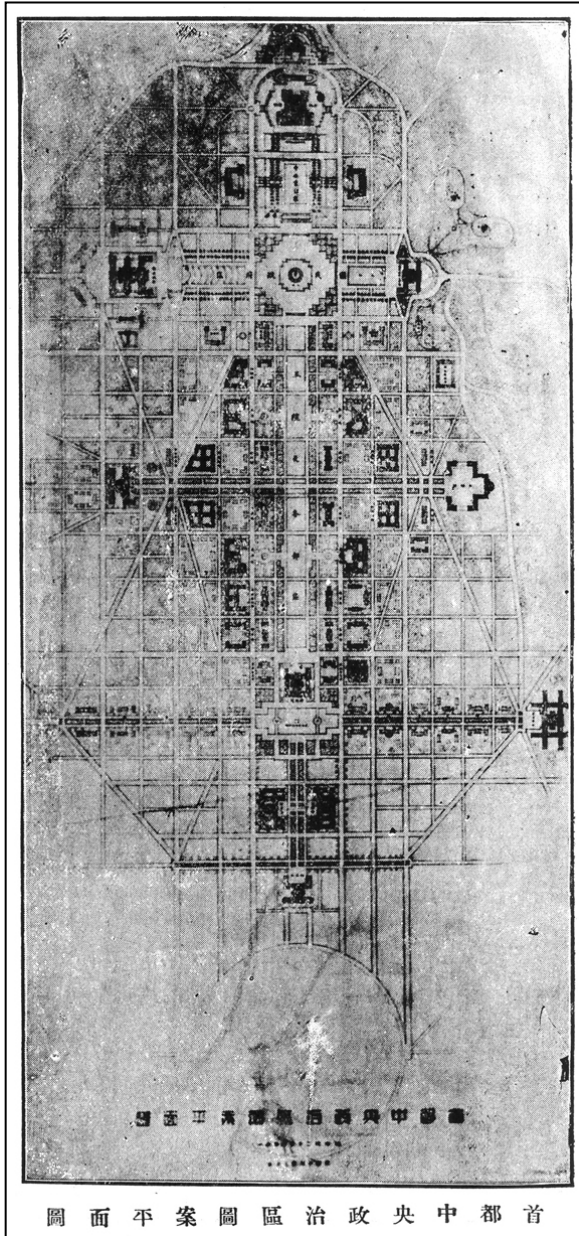


Image 9: The third-prize design by Huang Yuyu and Zhu Shengkang.  
Source: *SDJS* 1929, no page number.

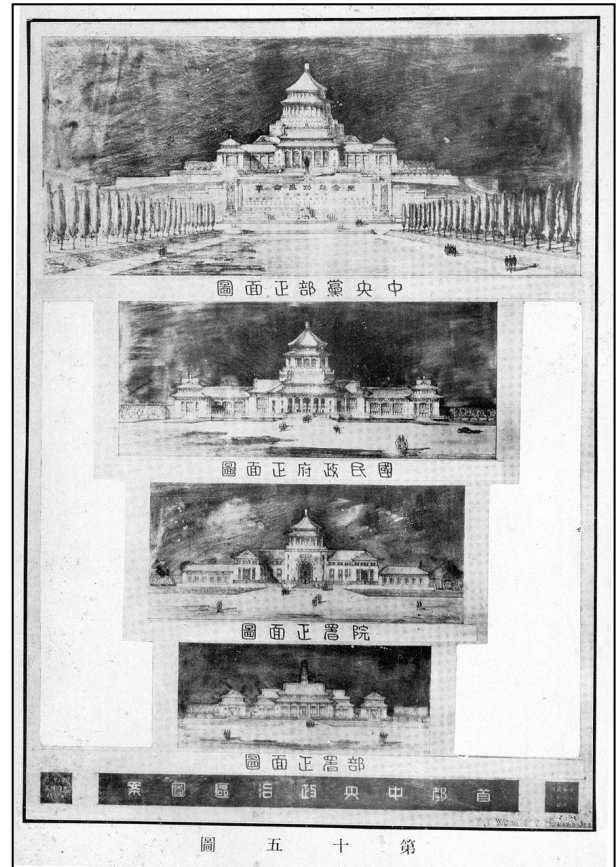


Image 10: Proposed Chinese design for government buildings in Nanjing.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 15.

On top of the zoning plan, a new road map was developed with the completed Zhongshan Avenue as its basic skeleton. Two new roads were added as the southern and western extensions of Zhongshan Avenue. They formed the main axes of Nanjing and intersected at the junction Xinjiekou (literally, “the new road junction”), where a plaza was created. Only the most prestigious enterprises, such as banks, cinemas, and department stores, could occupy the precious land at Xinjiekou. The new road system also connected all the functional zones in Nanjing. A grid plan was imposed to divide the commercial and residential zones into regular city blocks for easy land development. The existing city wall would be transformed into a ring road encircling the city.

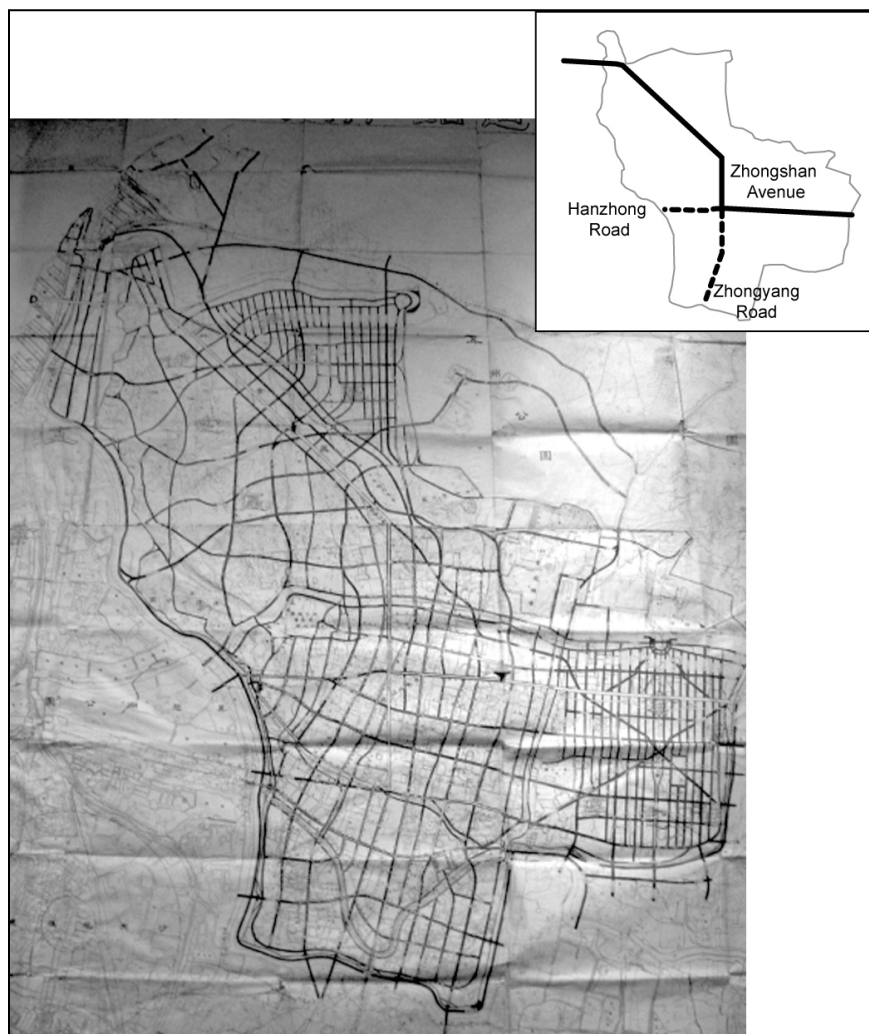


Image 11: The capital road network map.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 21.

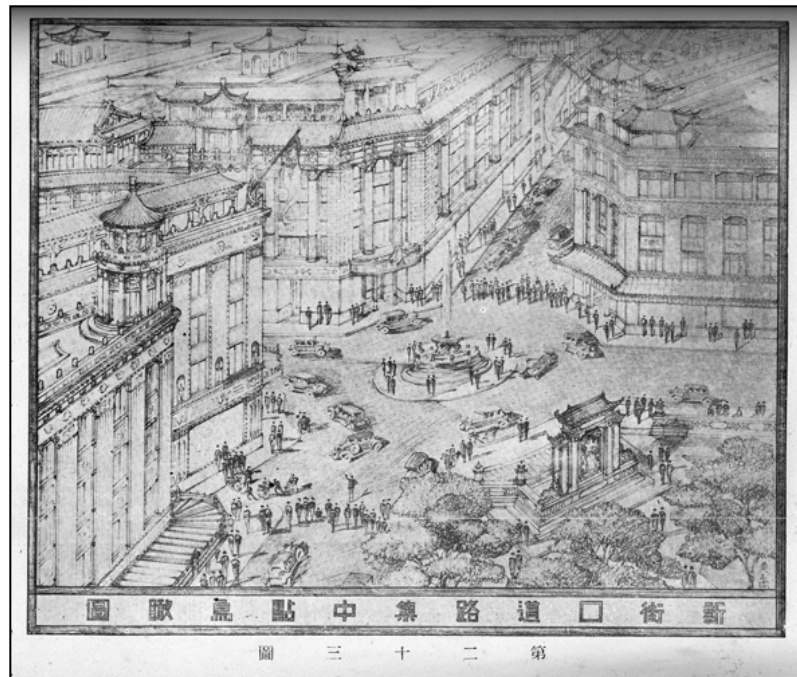


Image 12: The proposed plaza at Xinjiekou.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 23.



Image 13: The existing city wall would be transformed into a new ring road.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 25.

The Capital Plan laid great emphasis on infrastructure development, reflecting the strong engineering background of the Expert Office. The old piers at the Yangtze River would be developed into a modern port, and the capital would have two train terminals and four airports. In addition, the Capital Plan devoted lengthy sections to public utilities, covering topics such as electricity, streetlights, drinking water, drainage, and sewage (*SDJH* 1929, 63–64).

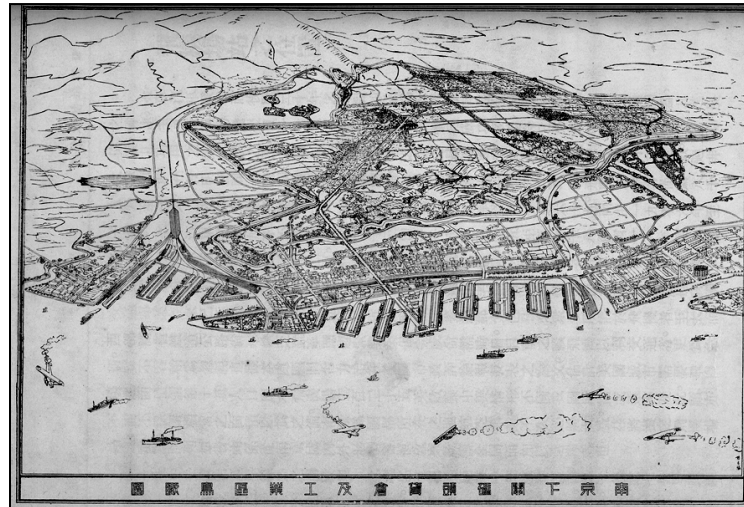


Image 14: Image showing the future of Nanjing.  
Source: *SDJH* 1929, figure 44.

### **Building Nanjing: State Capacity in Implementing the Plan**

After submitting the Capital Plan in December 1929, the Expert Office was officially dismissed and the job to reconstruct Nanjing was passed over to the Reconstruction Commission. Chiang Kai-shek was the chairman of the standing committee, while Liu Jiwen became the general secretary. Sun Ke remained a member of the standing committee and the head of the Construction Office (*gongchengzu*), the executive arm of the Reconstruction Commission. The new leadership recruited a new consultant, Heinrich Schubart from Germany.<sup>10</sup> The change of planning power meant that some of the planning decisions made by the Expert Office were now subject to review by the Reconstruction Commission. In this section, I look at how three

important projects under the Capital Plan actually turned out after the dismissal of the Expert Office.

### *Discord among the Nationalist Planners*

The location of the central administrative zone was a subject of recurrent debate inside and outside the Nationalist government. Many people, including Lu Yanzhi, the architect of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, disapproved of the Expert Office's decision to locate the zone on the outskirts of Nanjing. Under his own name, Lu (1929) proposed a plan to construct the central administrative zone in the historical Ming Palace area. Curiously, *Capital Construction (shoudu jianshe)*, an official publication of the Reconstruction Commission, opted to publish Lu's proposal in its October 1929 issue, even though by then the Expert Office had already confirmed the location of the zone at the Purple Mountain.

In mid-January 1930, two weeks after the dismissal of the Expert Office, members of the Reconstruction Commission voted to move the central administrative zone to the Ming Palace area, which was originally zoned for commercial use under the Capital Plan.<sup>11</sup> This stirred a new round of planning exercises. During a meeting of the Reconstruction Commission in mid-April 1930, both Sun Ke and the German consultant Heinrich Schubart tabled new plans for discussion.<sup>12</sup> The Reconstruction Commission opted for Schubart's design, which featured a baroque plan with curvilinear pathways, oval plazas, and Western palace-like buildings, and instructed the Construction Office to further develop the plan. Nevertheless, the Construction Office, headed by, of all people, Sun Ke, overturned Schubart's plan, arguing that it contradicted Chinese tradition. The Construction Office instead proposed another plan in October 1930, and unsurprisingly received strong protest from Heinrich Schubart (Wang 2002, 256–261).

From 1931 to 1932, the works of the Reconstruction Commission were seriously disturbed by a series of military conflicts between China and Japan. In the face of Japanese invasion, in January 1932, the Nationalist government temporarily abandoned Nanjing and moved to Loyang. The work of the Reconstruction Commission was halted accordingly. It was not until after the Nationalist government returned to Nanjing in December 1932 that the Reconstruction Commission resumed its function. In view of the tight financial situation of the Nationalist government and the high running cost of the Reconstruction Commission, in the

spring of 1933, a state official petitioned to the Nationalist government to dismiss the Reconstruction Commission and invest the saved money on building public schools. As a result,

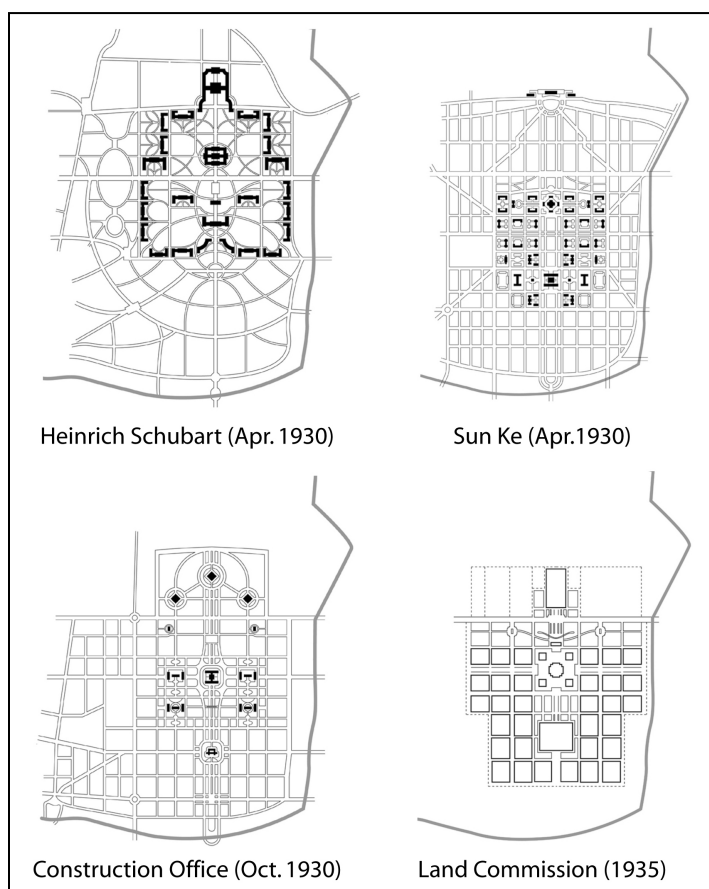


Image 15: Comparison of various designs of the central administrative zone.  
Source: Drawn by the author.

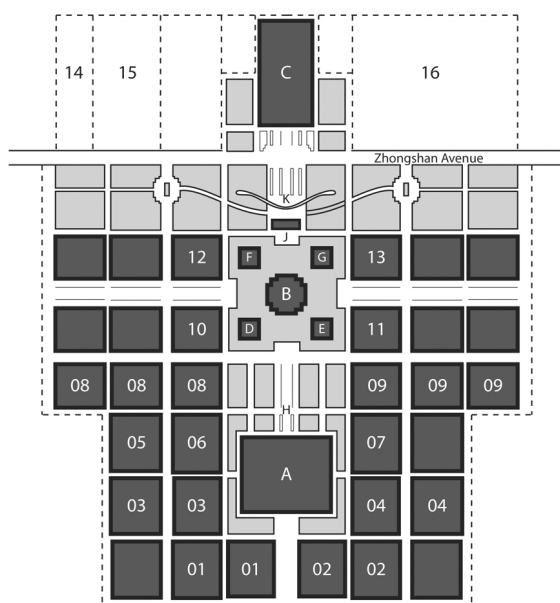
the Reconstruction Commission was officially dismissed by the end of April.<sup>13</sup> Since the planning of the central administrative zone remained undecided, many ministries and central government agencies began building their offices randomly all over Nanjing. Zhongshan Avenue became a popular location for these government buildings.

Up until then, the Nationalist government had never officially purchased land in the Ming Palace area, although it had imposed a ban in 1930 forbidding local residents from selling their land or constructing new structures. Seeing the growing discontent of local residents, in January



1935, the Executive Yuan authorized Kong Xiangxi to set up a land planning commission for the central administrative zone (*Zhongyang zhengzhiqu tudi guihua weiyuanhui*; hereafter, the Land Commission) to take charge of land requisition.<sup>14</sup> The Land Commission developed a land allocation plan to demarcate the boundary for land taking and to assign the requisitioned land to various government agencies and organizations.<sup>15</sup>

The land allocation plan proposed by the Land Commission was much simpler than those plans proposed before by the Expert Office or the Reconstruction Committee. However, the plan respected traditional Chinese city planning and carefully preserved the historical ruins of the Ming Palace. Traditionally, to access the palace, one needed to go through a central pathway and pass through layers of high walls, gates, and buildings in a ceremonial manner. Although the land allocation plan did not seek to rebuild these walls, it followed the traditional spatial order. Unlike the previous plans, which usually featured spectacular open malls, the land allocation plan consisted of a central pathway linking three major buildings: the Executive Yuan, the central government, and central party headquarters.



Legend:

- A: Executive Yuan
- B: Central Government
- C: Central Party Headquarters
- D: Legislative Yuan
- E: Control Yuan
- F: Judicial Yuan
- G: Examination Yuan
- H: Stone Bridge of Ming Imperial City
- J: Gate of Ming Palace City
- K: Stone Bridge of Ming Palace City
- 01: Ministry of Railways
- 02: Ministry of Communications
- 03: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 04: Ministry of Internal Affairs
- 05: Ministry of Navy
- 06: Ministry of Education
- 07: Ministry of Entrepreneur
- 08: Ministry of Defense
- 09: Ministry of Finance
- 10: Ministry of General Staff Headquarters
- 11: Ministry of Audit
- 12: Ministry of Legislature and Executives
- 13: Ministry of Civil Service
- 14: Central Hospital
- 15: Lizhishe
- 16: National Congress

Image 16: The land allocation plan.  
Source: Drawn by the author.

From south to north, the site was divided into three sections by historical stone bridges and palace moats. Both the south and the middle section were reserved for ministries and agencies of the central government. They were separated from the party section in the north by Zhongshan Avenue. The southernmost section was the site for the Executive Yuan. The historical stone bridges behind the Executive Yuan were preserved and served as an entry to the middle zone, where the central government was planned. Surrounding the four corners of the central government were the four Yuans—Examination Yuan, Control Yuan, Judicial Yuan, and Legislative Yuan. The area to the east of the central pathway was assigned for government ministries and central agencies that had the character of *wen*, the Chinese expression of literacy and culture. This included the Ministries of Communications, Internal Affairs, Entrepreneur, Finance, Audit, Civil Service, and so on. The west of the central pathway was reserved for those government ministries and central agencies that had the character of *wu*, the Chinese expression of martial and force. This included the Ministries of Railways, Foreign Affairs, Education, Navy, Defense, General Staff Headquarters, Legislature and Executives, and Justice, among others.

The historical city gate and stone bridge of the Ming Palace city marked the entry to the northernmost party section. The central party headquarters, standing at the former location of the Ming Palace, became the most important structure in the area. Its prestigious location symbolized that the party was the head of China. The area next to the headquarters was reserved for the future construction of the National Congress.

Since mid-1935, the Land Commission had begun purchasing land for the construction of the central administrative zone, but the effort was thwarted by the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War in July 1937. From November 1937 to May 1946, the Nationalist government had retreated to the wartime capital, Chongqing. Since then, no construction work had been started on the central administrative zone.

#### *Contradiction between the Ideal Plan and the Social Problems*

The capital status and vigorous urban development in Nanjing had attracted a huge number of people who sought new opportunities and developments. The year after Nanjing became the capital, the population increased from 360,500 to 497,526, as much as a 38 percent increase (J. Chen 1937, 29). Between 1930 and 1935, Nanjing recorded the greatest population growth in the country. By 1935, the population reached one million, with over 86 percent of the

population living inside the walled city.<sup>16</sup> The sudden population increase created a huge housing demand in Nanjing. The construction of new accommodations could hardly keep up with the fast pace of population growth. From 1931 to 1936, the average number of new households in Nanjing per year was 11,737, but the average number of residential units completed per year was only 3,237 (Y. Chen 1977, 47841–47844). It became more and more difficult, and more and more expensive, to acquire accommodations in Nanjing.

Those who could not afford the high rent in Nanjing resorted to living in shanties. Most shantytowns in Nanjing were built in the southwest, which was historically the busiest part of the city; in the northwest, where docks and factories were concentrated; and along railway lines and major roads. The number of shanty families grew at a fast pace once Nanjing acquired its capital status. In 1928, shanty families represented almost 20 percent of the city's total household number (J. Chen 1937, 28). By September 1936, 61,273 families (259,282 people), a quarter of the city's population, were living in shanties. Among them, over 181,000 lived inside the city wall.<sup>17</sup> To many Nationalist leaders, the shanties were the eyesores of Nanjing; they did not match the image of the new capital the leaders were seeking to create. State publications often stated that shantytowns in Nanjing were “disgustingly dirty, uninhabitable, and were the sources of disease and moral depravity” (Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, 2).

The Capital Plan intended to provide a framework to regulate the housing development of Nanjing. Three grades of residential zones were planned for detached houses, low-density multifamily houses, and medium-density multifamily houses, respectively. Nevertheless, the Nanjing municipal government only managed to develop a small portion of Residential Zone One, which it later renamed the New Residential Area (*xin zhuzhaiqu*). In the end, the project was carried out at a slow pace and only a small portion of the area, approximately 400 *mu* (266,667 square meters), was developed. This area was supplied with modern utilities like electricity, underground drainage and sewage, and streetlights. Public facilities, including a management office, markets, small parks, a playground, clinic, school, and police office, were planned at the junctions of main roads. All the land plots were opened for public purchasing. Only Western-style luxury houses were permitted to be constructed in the area. These houses were usually two to three stories high, constructed in brick and concrete, and equipped with

bathrooms, kitchens, fireplaces, and chimneys. Most of them had balconies, terraces, and balustrades decorated with Western architectural ornaments.

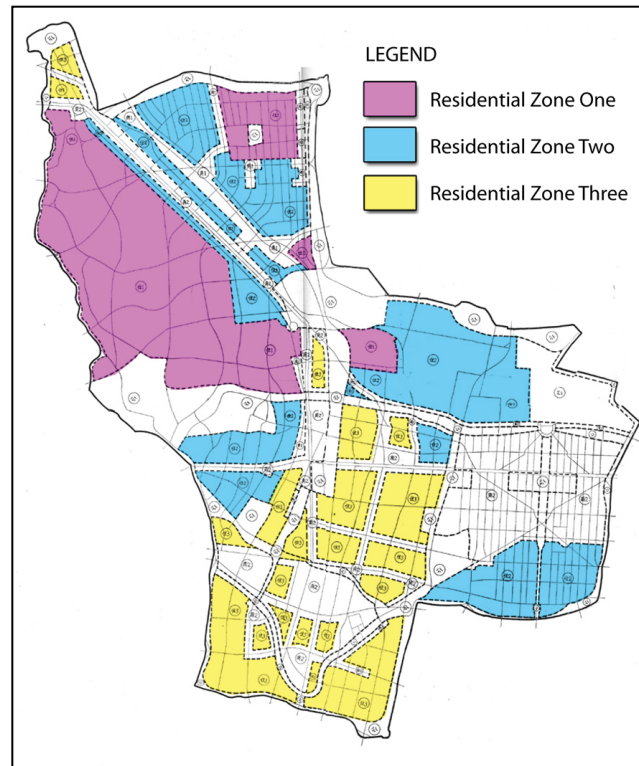


Image 17: The three grades of residential zoning under the Capital Plan.  
Source: Redrawn based on *SDJH* 1929, figure 56.



Image 18: Plan of the New Residential Zone.  
Source: *Nanjing tebieshi zhengfu mishuchu* 1935, 29.



Image 19: Luxury houses constructed in the New Residential Zone.  
Source: Nanjing shizhengfu mishuchu 1933, no page number.

The New Residential Area was planned for the upper class. A researcher at the time commented that it could only “suit the needs of a small number of families” and “exerted very little effect in relieving the housing problem of the common people” (Y. Chen 1977, 47984). To solve the housing shortage in Nanjing, the municipal government and its Public Works Bureau developed two types of public housing for the lower class: the Commoners’ Residential Areas (*pingmin zhuzhaiqu*) and the Shanty Residential Areas (*penghu zhuzhaiqu*). The former was constructed for the common people, in particular those residents evicted for the construction of public works. Although the government claimed that the commoners’ housing was constructed to “relieve the economic distress of the working class,” it also stressed the importance of the common people in keeping up appearance of the capital (Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, 1). Therefore, the Public Works Bureau imposed regular plans on these housing areas. Uniform single-story houses, which were subdivided into multiple residential units, were selected by the bureau for cost reasons. These *paiwu* (literally “row houses”), which were named because of their linear form, were aligned in an orderly manner. They were built with a timber structure, pitched roof,

and brick wall enclosure. Communal facilities, such as public lavatories, schools, and drainage systems, were also planned in the areas (Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, 6–8). Unfortunately, most of these Commoners' Residential Areas were located outside the city wall. As it turned out, not many people were willing to move into these remote settlements, which were far away from where jobs were available.<sup>18</sup>

Name	No. of Units	Rent per Unit ( <i>yuan</i> )	Total Construction Cost ( <i>yuan</i> )	Average Construction Cost per Unit
Commoners' Housing Outside Zhonghua Gate	8	Unknown	830.00	103.75
Commoners' Housing Outside Heping Gate	60	1.8	11,202.35	186.71
Lakers' Housing Outside Heping Gate*	100	1.0	11,614.90	116.15
Commoners' Housing inside Wuding Gate	200	1.5	Unknown	Unknown
Urban Residents' Housing inside Guanghua Gate	100	4.2	Unknown	Unknown
Commoners' Housing at Zhimaying	223	2.6	43,892.95	196.83
Commoners' Housing at Qilijie	200	2.5	39,755.80	198.78
Total	891			
* For the relocation of the lakers who lived around the Xuanmu Lake.				

Table 2: Completed Commoners' Residential Areas by June 1936.

Source: Y. Chen 1977, 47961.

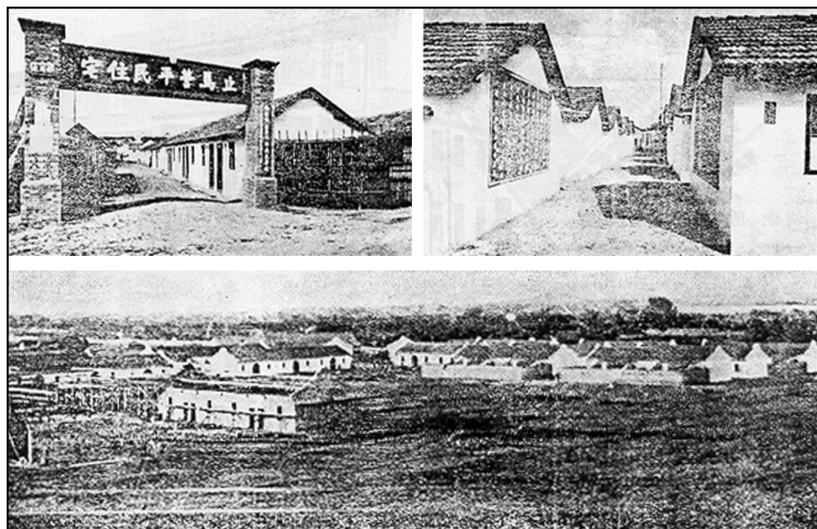


Image 20: The Commoners' Residential Areas in Nanjing.

Source: Nanjing tebieshi zhengfu mishuchu 1935, no page number.

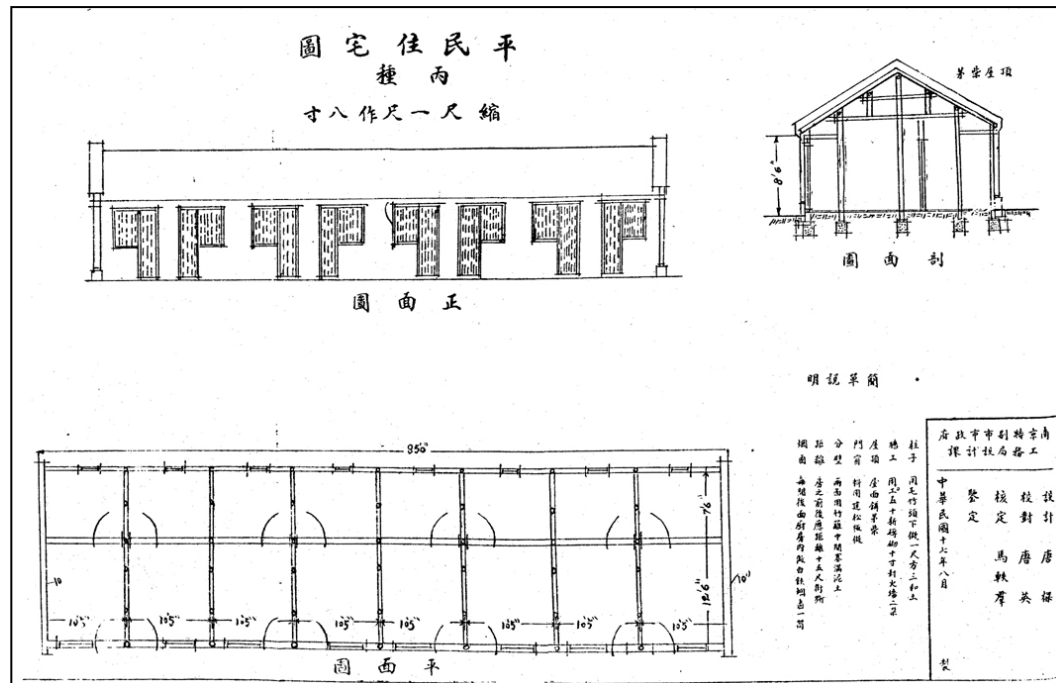


Image 21: Design of a row house in the Commoners' Residential Area.  
Source: Nanjing tebieshi zhengfu mishuchu 1928, 79.

The second type of lower-class housing was developed for shanty dwellers as instructed by the Nationalist government. The municipal government planned nine Shanty Residential Areas outside the city wall boundary of Nanjing. Nevertheless, the municipal government admitted that it did not have the financial capacity to build houses to accommodate the shanty population. As such, the municipal Public Works Bureau had only provided the Shanty Residential Areas with basic sanitation, public utilities, and communal facilities, such as a school, clinic, police station, fire station, and lavatory. The tenant families were given empty plots in the area and had to rebuild their shacks in accordance with an official design. The shacks were made of low-cost materials, like mud walls, bamboo wattle, mud floors, and straw-mat roofs. Basically, they were still shanty structures, but built in a uniform design and arranged in an orderly, unified manner. The tenant families did not need to pay any rent. However, when they moved from the area, they had to return the land to the government and sell the shack to the next tenant at a price determined by the government (Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, 3–4).

Name	Location	Area ( <i>mu</i> )	Relocated From
1. Sisuocun	Outside Jinchuan-xinshi Gate	1,070	Police District No. 6 & 7
2. Guojiagou	Outside Zhongyang Gate	200	Police District No. 6 & 7
3. Qiansanzhuang	Outside Zhongshan Gate	530	Police District No. 1
4. Shimexian	Outside Guanghua Gate	160	Police District No. 1
5. Qilijie	Outside Gonghe Gate	460	Police District No. 2
6. Dongyuemiao	Outside Zhonghua Gate	250	Police District No. 3 & 4
7. West of Bawangqiao	Outside Zhonghua Gate	290	Police District No. 3 & 4
8. North of Saichongqiao	Outside Shuixi Gate	330	Police District No. 5
9. South of Caochang Gate	Outside Hanzhong Gate	430	Police District No. 5
Total		3,520	

Table 3: Shanty Residential Areas in Nanjing.  
Source: Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, 33.

In the original plan, the nine projects would accommodate 3,520 families. By October 1935, however, only three areas were completed. In one of the areas, a visitor found that over one thousand shanty families had already moved in, but the Public Works Bureau had yet to build any public facilities like street lamps, water wells, and lavatories. He sighed: “The so-called new Shanty Residential Area is still a filthy unbearable place... roads are unfinished, places are dirty, waterways are blocked, sewage overflows everywhere, and bad smells fill the air...” (Y. Chen 1977, 47950). Despite the government’s efforts to build Shanty Residential Areas, according to a police survey, the number of shanty families had increased by 6,800 in just two years, from 1934 to 1936 (Y. Chen 1977, 47949).

The location of both the Commoner’s Residential Areas and the Shanty Residential Areas did not follow the zoning regulations of the Capital Plan. By relocating the lower-class housing areas outside the wall, the municipal government intended to reclaim land in the capital while hiding poverty at little expense. The consequence, however, was social and spatial segregation in Nanjing. Impoverished people were separated from the upper class and displaced from the city.





Image 22: Locations of existing shantytowns and proposed Shanty Residential Areas.  
 Source: Redrawn based on *Kaibi pengu zhuwuqu jihua gaiyao* and *Nanjing shizhengfu* 1935, no page number.

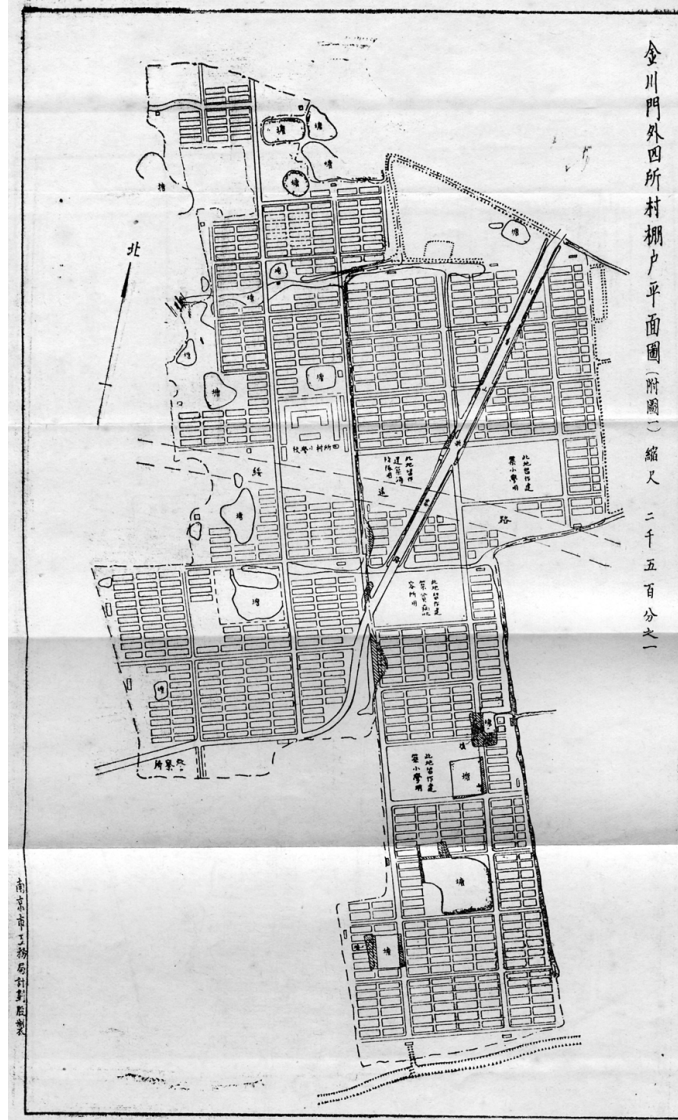


Image 23: Planning of one of the Shanty Residential Areas in Nanjing.  
Source: Nanjing shizhengfu 1935, no page number.

### *The Capital Road Network: The Antipathy of Local Residents*

The construction of new roads and the widening of streets were the most extensive public works that had been carried out in Nanjing. Most of the works involved land requisition, causing many families in Nanjing to lose their homes. For instance, the construction of the long Zhongshan Avenue, which cut across the busiest part of Nanjing and deviated significantly from

existing street patterns, necessitated the requisition of 65,000 square meters of land, the demolition of 95,000 square meters of houses, the relocation of 497 households, and the destruction of 90,000 square meters of farmland. Among the requisitioned properties, almost 80 percent were privately owned.<sup>19</sup>

When more and more road works got under way, resistance from residents against land requisition and forced eviction became frequent. The tension intensified when Mayor Liu Jiwen proposed in October 1928 to nationalize all land within 60 meters of the edges of Zhongshan Avenue (J. Liu 1928a). Liu Jiwen foresaw that land prices would hugely increase upon completion of the avenue and hence suggested nationalizing the land while the price was still low. This also allowed the municipal government to control the design of houses to be constructed on the two sides of Zhongshan Avenue (J. Liu 1928a). Although Mayor Liu's proposal was abandoned as a result of social pressure, the municipal government managed to promulgate a new regulation in January 1929 to govern the design of buildings abutting Zhongshan Avenue.<sup>20</sup> Such design control was later extended to cover buildings abutting all newly constructed roads.<sup>21</sup> Some real estate investors petitioned against the policy, but Mayor Liu Jiwen commented that the development of the capital was more important than their profits (J. Liu 1928b).

Opponents of forced eviction often employed the rhetoric of the late Sun Yat-sen to lodge their complaints. One petitioner, for example, pointed out that the government did not have adequate financial capacity to develop the capital, and that the requisitioned land would therefore end up in the hands of the capitalists. This, he argued, contradicted Sun Yat-sen's teaching to protect people's livelihood.<sup>22</sup> Chiang Kai-shek's military rival, Feng Yuxiang, argued that the excessive spending on the reconstruction of Nanjing did not follow the humble spirit of Sun Yat-sen: "The key to reconstruction was people's livelihood." Feng highlighted Sun Yat-sen's teachings and urged the government to abandon the ambitious capital reconstruction and focus on works that could "ease the pain and bitterness of the people."<sup>23</sup> In a meeting with affected residents, Feng instigated them to oppose forced land requisition, stating that "this is the Republic of China... a democratic country. Without our consent, who can tear down our homes?" (Feng 1975, 17).

The frequent disputes with local residents prompted the Republican government and the Nanjing municipal government to formulate in the summer of 1928 the *Land Requisition Law* and the *Nanjing Special Municipal Government Regulations on Land Requisition*. These new laws empowered the Nationalist state to requisition private land for the development of public works without the consent of the landowners. By “public works,” it meant works related to the construction of public buildings, traffic and communications, ports, public health facilities, improvements to villages and towns, hydroengineering, education and charity, state-owned enterprises, defense and military, and any other facilities for public use. From 1928 to June 1932, there were a total of 141 cases of land requisition along Zhongshan Avenue for the development of various kinds of public works. The record shows that the construction of public buildings and the development of traffic and communications were the major reasons behind the requisition; they equaled 39 and 30.5 percent of the total cases respectively. In other cases, however, the requisitions were hard to justify. The Expert Office, for instance, criticized the random requisition of private land by some ministries and government agencies for the construction of employee dormitories, which the Expert Office claimed should not be considered public works. Some of these agencies had also failed to compensate the affected landowners. Sun Ke had repeatedly pleaded the Nationalist government to seriously look into these cases.<sup>24</sup>

Type of Public Works	No. of Cases	%
Public Building	55	39.0
Traffic and Communications	43	30.5
Ports	0	0.0
Public Health Facilities	4	2.8
Improvement to Villages and Towns	9	6.4
Hydro-Engineering	1	0.7
Education and Charity	9	6.4
State-Owned Enterprises	0	0.0
Defense and National Security	14	9.9
Other Facilities for Public Use	6	4.3
Total	141	100.0

Table 4: Purposes of land requisition along Zhongshan Avenue from 1928 to June 1932.  
Source: X. Liu 1977, 49615.

The extensive reconstruction of Nanjing also imposed a heavy financial burden on the government. Nationalist leaders believed that capital reconstruction was a national matter that required support from every province, city, and citizen. Therefore, in the summer of 1929, the municipal government issued a bond valued at 50 million yuan to raise funds for public works. 30 million yuan of the bond was opened for public purchasing, while the remaining 20 million yuan was allocated among twenty-five provinces in China, which were classified into six grades based on their annual incomes.<sup>25</sup> In return, new roads in Nanjing were named after these provinces.

Nationalist leaders also believed that Nanjing residents should share the financial burden of public works. Speaking at the first meeting of the Reconstruction Commission, Kong Xiangxi claimed that because landowners would benefit from the completion of road works, they “should also share some obligations” (X. Liu 1977, 94683). Citing New York and Chicago as examples, Kong Xiangxi suggested imposing a construction levy (*tanfei*) on them. (X. Liu 1977, 49683) Since August 1930, the municipal government had adopted the Nanjing Road Construction Cost Sharing Temporary Regulation (Nanjing Shi zhulu tanfei zanhang guize) to both the construction of new roads and the widening of streets. The policy was later expanded to other public works as well.<sup>26</sup> Because of the levy, the financial burden of public works was transferred from the government to the people. In some cases, the levy one had to pay might be more than the compensation one received. Many landowners, therefore, petitioned to the state against the high levy, which had prevented them from developing their properties. One petitioner commented that no one wanted to buy land in Nanjing and paid the high levy.<sup>27</sup> This defeated the state’s original intention to beautify Nanjing and to promote urban development.

## Conclusion

Despite unfavorable social, economic, and political circumstances, leaders of the Nationalist state vowed to reconstruct Nanjing into a modern capital that was more prosperous than London, Paris, or New York. By moving the capital from Beijing to Nanjing, they wanted to free China from the shadow of the Manchus, foreign powers, and northern warlords. They also believed that a new and modern capital could be a source of political legitimacy, showing that the Nationalist state had the capacity to reconstruct the war-torn capital Nanjing and, by

extension, China. They often compared Nanjing to its foreign counterparts, never hiding their ambition to enter China into a worldwide competition to construct metropolitan cities of international standard.

The reconstruction of Nanjing, however, faced several setbacks. In evaluating the state capacity of Republican China, we must bear in mind that the modern state consists, politically, of a group of political actors, factions, and communities with diverse backgrounds and interests, and, administratively, of a complex hierarchy of governmental structures. As such, one important measure of a state's capacity is whether it has the ability to achieve its goals despite the presence of political differences and administrative constraints. In this sense, the state's capacity with regard to city planning concerns its ability to generate unified planning ideas during the planning process, and its ability to turn those ideas into practice during the implementation process.

The Nanjing planning process came hand in hand with a power battle between various camps within the Nationalist government about who should plan the capital. The job was first given to Sun Ke, who subsequently pulled together a committed, competent, and experienced team of planners and engineers. Their commitment was shown by their great effort in developing the Capital Plan, the most comprehensive planning proposal ever made for a Chinese city. Their competence was demonstrated by their broad coverage of topics in the Capital Plan, evident understanding of the most updated concepts and theories in planning and engineering, and knowledge to develop associated planning laws and regulations. This team had a clear vision for the future of Nanjing. The Nationalist planners had the technological capacity to generate an urban plan that was up to international standards, as well as the symbolic capacity to invest the plan with a new nationalism and modernity.

While these planning ideals were lofty, reality diverged from these ideals after the dismissal of the Expert Office. Some planning decisions made in the Capital Plan were overturned when the planning power was shifted to the Reconstruction Commission. The discord between different camps of planners rendered the Reconstruction Commission incapable of reaching consensus over the location and planning of the central administrative zone, significantly delaying the reconstruction of the capital. The power battle also undermined the authority of the planners. As it turned out, the Reconstruction Commission did not have the regulative capacity to ensure that other state agencies would comply with the Capital Plan. Many

ministries and government agencies simply constructed their buildings randomly all over Nanjing.

After the dismissal of the Expert Office, the actual reconstruction of Nanjing relied mainly on the municipal government and its Public Works Bureau. Although the municipal government shared similar ideas with the Expert Office in building an orderly, aesthetic, and sanitary Nanjing, it also had other pragmatic concerns. The real challenge for the municipal government was not the technical side of the reconstruction, but Nanjing's many social problems, most notably the presence of a huge population that was living in poverty. The implementation of the residential zones under the Capital Plan—or rather the lack of it—reflected the priorities of the municipal government. With limited resources, the municipal government opted to invest in upper-class residential areas and relocate the poorer classes outside of the walled city at little expense.

The lack of financial capacity made the reconstruction of Nanjing difficult. The ambitious road works rendered many local residents homeless. Their antipathy deepened as the government imposed construction levies on them in order to finance the road works. This policy showed the lack of responsive capacity to cater for the needs, concerns, and sentiments of the people. This reflected the great conflict between the state's wish for a grandiose capital and the common people's concerns for their livelihoods—a deep split between the dream from above and the reality from the ground.

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### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup> In the first half of 1928, the Wuhan faction suffered from internal fragmentation and decided to part with the Communists. At the same time, Chiang Kai-shek's troops were defeated by the warlord army when he attempted to push the Northern Expedition toward Beijing. After the defeat, a new coalition was formed within the Nanjing faction, and Chiang Kai-shek was forced out of power. The Wuhan and Nanjing factions agreed to establish a new, unified Nationalist government at Nanjing. Nevertheless, without the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, the Nationalist government was virtually impotent to resume the Northern Expedition. Therefore, in the summer of 1928, Chiang Kai-shek returned to Nanjing more powerful than before. See Eastman 1991.

<sup>2</sup> See Anonymous 1928a and 1928b.

<sup>3</sup> At first, the Russians built the Chinese Eastern Railway to connect Harbin with Vladivostok. After Russia lost its control over Manchuria to Japan in 1905, most of the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway was transferred to Japan and became the South Manchurian Railway.

<sup>4</sup> See Nanjingshi dangangan and Zhongshan lingyuan guanli chu 1986, 160–162.

<sup>5</sup> The Capital Road Works Department was first established in August 1928 by the Reconstruction Commission (*jianshe weiyuanhui*), but in March 1930 it was put under the management of the National Capital Reconstruction Planning Committee (*Shoudu jianshe weiyuanhui*). See *Jianshe shoudu daolu gongcheng chu* 1930, 3 and 6–7.

<sup>6</sup> *NJTSGB* 1928 (Oct 31), no. 22.

<sup>7</sup> *GZGB* 1929 (July 25), no. 225.

<sup>8</sup> The original jury included Henry Murphy, Heinrich Schubart, C. Moller, Chen Hefu, Lin Yimin, Mao Yisheng, and Chen Maojie. Later, Mao Yisheng and Chen Maojie needed to leave Nanjing and were unable to work for the jury. See *SDJS* 1929 (1) (Oct.), *jihua* 1–25.

<sup>9</sup> See *SDJS* 1929 (1) (Oct.), *jihua* 1–25.

<sup>10</sup> See Anonymous 1930.

<sup>11</sup> See J. Luo 1982, 308–312.

<sup>12</sup> See Anonymous 1930.

<sup>13</sup> *GZGB* 1933 (Apr. 3), no. 137.

<sup>14</sup> See J. Luo 1982, 313–316.

<sup>15</sup> See J. Luo 1982, 324–327.

<sup>16</sup> Based on the survey of the Municipal Police Department in March 1935, cited in *Nanjingshi difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui* 1994a, 236.

<sup>17</sup> From a police report cited in Y. Chen 1977, 47898.

<sup>18</sup> *SSZ* 1929 (30), *zhuanzai* 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Nanjingshi difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui* 1994b, 36, and *Nanjing tebieshi zhengfu mishuchu* 1928, 59–62.

<sup>20</sup> See Anonymous 1929a.

<sup>21</sup> See Anonymous 1929b.

<sup>22</sup> See *Nanjingshi wei gaishan shirong ji jianzhu jiguan deng zhengshou tudi*.

<sup>23</sup> See Anonymous 1928c.

<sup>24</sup> See *Nanjingshi wei gaishan shirong ji jianzhu jiguan deng zhengshou tudi* and *Guodu sheji jishu zhuanuan banshichu gonghan*.

<sup>25</sup> See Anonymous 1929c, 1929d, and *Nanjingshi gonglu guanlichu* 1990, 123–124.

<sup>26</sup> See *Xiuzheng chengshi gailiangqu tebie zhengfei tongze, benshi zhulu tanfei zhanhang guize, ji weiyuanhui zuzhi guize caoan*.

<sup>27</sup> See *Hanzhong Lu, Dongpailou, Dixiang, Jiankang Lu Tanfei*.

### Abbreviations

*GZGB* Guomin zhengfu gongbao [Gazette of the Nationalist government]

*NJTSGB* Nanjing tebieshi shizheng gongbao [Administration report of the Nanjing special municipal city]



- SDJH*      *Shoudu jihua* [Capital plan]. 1929. Nanjing: Guodu sheji jishu juanyuan banshichu.
- SDJS*      *Shoudu jianshe* [Capital construction]. 1928–1930. Nanjing: Guomin zhengfu shoudu jianshe weiyuanhui mishuchu.
- SSZ*        *Shoudu shizheng zhoukan* [Capital administration weekly]. 1928–1929. Nanjing: Nanjing tiebieshi shizhengfu.
- XZYGH*     *Xingzhengyuan gonghan* [Official letter from the Executive Yuan]

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