

***Chinese Modernity  
between Western Imperialism and Native Tradition:  
A Shanghai Case-Study***

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### **Declaração**

Declaro que o presente documento é um trabalho original da minha autoria e que cumpre todos os requisitos do Código de Conduta e Boas Práticas da Universidade de Lisboa.

*For my family and Clara,  
For their continuous support.*



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## Notes

- (i) The author understands the terms 'West' and 'East' are by themselves a by-product of the imperialist heritage the text criticizes. For the sake of brevity the term 'West' is used to refer to the Greco-European tradition as well as the entire imperial geopolitical superpowers, namely Europe, the United States, and in some cases, Japan.
- (ii) The transcription or Romanization of Chinese terms used is *pinyin* – e.g. '*Běijīng*' instead of '*Peking*' – exceptions to this are translations that do not use *pinyin* or names that are popularly referenced not in *pinyin* (e.g. *Nanking Road* instead of *Nanjing Road*).
- (iii) All translations were done by the author.
- (iv) All unreferenced illustrations were taken or produced by the author.
- (v) The bibliographic references use the Harvard referencing system.
- (vi) A glossary of Chinese terms used throughout the thesis is included for easy reference.

## Abstract

The present investigation attempts to analyse the development of modern architecture in Shanghai during the Republican Period (1912-1937) and its development through the interaction between modernity, Chinese tradition and Imperialism. The study attempts to analyse three fundamental aspects of the modern environment through three distinct case studies: the Metropolitan Consumer Culture in Nanking Road; the Modern Movement in Hongqiao Sanatorium; and Nationalist architecture in the Greater Shanghai Plan.

The study finds shared problems within all case studies born out of the uneven imperial relationship between China and the West. Western models were supplanted over Chinese traditions, ignoring any cultural differences by subscribing to a universal linear timetable, and Western problems and paradoxes were imported to China, namely, the importation of Cartesian dualism unto Chinese correlative space. Nanking Road's metropolitan alienation, Hongqiao's tabula rasa erasure of tradition, and Greater Shanghai's singular homogenous conception of a Chinese identity are all by-products of this Western thought diaspora.

A support for the concept of 'Multiple Modernities' as a sustainable solution towards overcoming Western global homogenization is defended in this study, finding in every case study the 'modernity of Chinese tradition' and attempting to find both similarities and differences that might offer possible alternatives towards the analysed topics. In this purview, the modular societal structure of China, which harmonizes Daoist acceptance of change and Confucian rigid hierarchy, and the Chinese embrace of oppositions, instead of a dialectical confrontation, are seen as a remarkable addition to offer new models for exploration to the modern struggle.

### Key-words:

Chinese Modernity  
Multiple Modernities  
Chinese Modern Architecture  
Shanghai



## Resumo

A presente investigação analisa o desenvolvimento da arquitetura moderna em Xangai durante o Período Republicano (1912-1937) através da interação entre "Modernidade", "Tradição Chinesa" e "Imperialismo". O estudo tenta analisar três aspectos fundamentais da modernidade através de três casos de estudo: a Cultura de Consumo Metropolitana em Nanking Road; o Movimento Moderno no Sanatório de Hongqiao; e Arquitetura Nacionalista no "Greater Shanghai Plan".

O estudo encontra problemas compartilhados em todos os casos de estudo que advêm da relação desigual imperialista entre a China e o Ocidente. Modelos Ocidentais suplantaram tradições chinesas, ignorando quaisquer diferenças e subscrevendo a uma noção de tempo linear e universal. Paradoxos e problemas Ocidentais foram importados para a China como a importação do dualismo cartesiano ao espaço correlativo chinês. A alienação metropolitana em Nanking Road, a tabula rasa da tradição Chinesa em Hongqiao e uma concepção homogênea de uma identidade Chinesa em "Greater Shanghai" são todos subprodutos dessa diáspora do pensamento ocidental.

Um suporte do conceito de 'Multiple Modernities' como uma solução sustentável para superar a homogenização global ocidental é defendida neste estudo, encontrando em cada estudo de caso a 'modernidade da tradição chinesa' e tentando encontrar semelhanças e diferenças que podem oferecer possíveis alternativas para os temas analisados. Neste âmbito, a estrutura modular da sociedade Chinesa, que harmoniza a aceitação Taoísta de "mudança" e a hierarquia rígida Confucionista, assim como a aceitação Chinesa de oposições, em vez de um confronto dialético, são vistos como um acréscimo notável como novos modelos de exploração para a luta moderna.

## Palavras-Chave

Modernidade Chinesa  
Múltiplas Modernidades  
Arquitetura Moderna Chinesa  
Shanghai

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## Glossary of Chinese Terms

<i>cái</i>	材	Module formed as part of the section of a <i>dǒugōng</i>
<i>chīwǒn</i>	鸱吻	Ceramic ornament placed at either end of the roof's ridges. Translates to 'owl's lips'
<i>Dào</i>	道	The 'Way' – the natural order of the universe
<i>Dào Dé Jīng</i>	道德经	'The Book of the Immanence of the Way' – founding book of the Daoist philosophy
<i>Dàojiào</i>	道教	'Teach the Way' - Daoism
<i>dǒugōng</i>	斗栱	The joint bracket-set that connect the roof to the columns of any Chinese building. It is the basic building module of Chinese architecture.
<i>fēn</i>	分	Essential module of both Chinese society and Chinese construction. In architecture it comprises 1/15 <sup>th</sup> of the <i>cái</i> measure
<i>guò</i>	过	'trespass' – to trespass one's bounds
<i>guó</i>	国	'country'
<i>guójiā</i>	国家	'nation-state' – translate to 'country family'
<i>Hán</i>	汉	<i>Hán</i> dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 C.E.)
<i>Huángpǔ River</i>	黄浦江	Major river passing along Shanghai to the East.
<i>jiā</i>	家	'family' – the fundamental module of Chinese society
<i>jiànguān</i>	匠人	'craftsman'
<i>jiànzhùshī</i>	建筑师	'architect'
<i>jǔzhé</i>	举折	'raise and lower' – Structural system of the Chinese timber-frame
<i>Kǒngzǐ</i>	孔子	Confucius (551-479 B.C.) founder of the school of Confucianism
<i>Lǎozǐ</i>	老子	(6 <sup>th</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> c. BC) Mythical Chinese philosopher, founder of Daoism
<i>lǐ</i>	礼	'rituals' – fundamental concept of Confucianism
<i>Lúnyǔ</i>	论语	'The Analects' (of Confucius). The founding book of Confucianism
<i>mótiān dàlóu</i>	摩天大楼	'the big building that reaches the sky' - skyscrapers
<i>rúxué</i>	儒学	'Confucian Learning' - Confucianism

sihéyuàn	四合院	Compound with houses around a square courtyard. Basic module of any traditional Chinese city.
Shànghǎi	上海	City in western China by the Pacific Ocean. Means 'Upper Lake'
Sūzhōu Creek	苏州河	Major tributary passing along Shanghai to the North. Connects with the city of Suzhou with the Grand Canal.
tǐ	体	'essence' – part of the <i>tǐ-yòng</i> concept
Tiānxià	天下	'Land Under Heaven'
Tiānzǐ	天子	'Son of Heaven – Chinese emperor
wūdǐng	屋顶	'simple hipped roof'
wúwéi	无为	'effortlessness' or 'actionless action' – to let go and go along with the <i>flow</i> . Fundamental concept of Daoism
Wǔ Xíng	五行	The five interrelated elements that make up the physical universe
xiēshāndǐng	歇山顶	'hip-gable roof'
xūwú	虚无	'nothingness'
Xīyànglóu	西洋楼	'Western Shaped Multi Storied Building' – The Western Baroque palaces in the Beijing Summer Palace
Yángzǐ Rver	扬子江	One of the two main rivers of China along with the Yellow River.
Yīn Yáng	阴阳	The two opposing and harmonious principles in nature
Yíngzào Fǎshì	营造法式	'Building Standards' – Song manual on construction written by Li Jie in 1103
Yuánmíng Yuán	圆明园	Beijing Imperial Summer Palace
yòng	用	'form' or 'function' – part of the <i>tǐ-yòng</i> concept
zhì	志	Module formed as part of the section of a <i>dǒugǒng</i>
Zhōngguó	中国	'Middle Country' - China
zìrán	自然	'spontaneity'

## Introduction

**Motivation** The present thesis arises out of a long fascination with Asian architecture and interest in travel and contact with other cultures as part of the essential formation of an architect.

Having had the opportunity to study in Shanghai for one year, I formed a personal fascination with Chinese culture and architectural landscape of the past one hundred years. The contrast between present day Shanghai and the rich and varied Chinese tradition, both in architectural and cultural dimensions, as well as the disturbing colonial presence and foreign gaze still felt within the city, provided the motivation to write this thesis.

Several interesting courses on the Republican period (1927-1937) of the city confirmed the importance of studying that period as a bridge to understand the present condition of the country and its ancient traditions. As such the present thesis has as a goal to further understand certain contradictions and contrasts seen in contemporary Chinese cities as well as a way to better understand the rich Chinese tradition's place in contemporary practice.

**Problem / Theme** Chinese modernization was motivated by a Western imperialistic threat. Due to this uneven relationship between China and the West, the *modern* was conflated with the *Western* and its own tradition relegated to the *primitive*. Such a position accepts the perspective that modernity begins and ends with its Western origin and tends towards processes of global homogenization, eradicating native culture and exhausting different perspectives that might source and differentiate the universal condition that is *modernity*.

**Aims** Within this purview this thesis proposes to explore the Chinese architectural encounter with Modernity with the following objectives:

- To show the problems inherent to a homogenous singular conceptualization of modernity and in what ways they enter into conflict with Chinese culture.
- To explore sources of Modernity within the Chinese native tradition.

**Methodology** In order to accomplish the proposed goals, the research development was divided into two parts: a theoretical research into the broader analysed topics; and an analysis of these topics considering three case studies. The chosen geographical and temporal limits of the thesis were: the city of Shanghai, which, through its contact with foreign powers, was the effective

locus of modernity in China; and from 1912 to 1937, the Republican period where the city enjoyed a greater degree of freedom to pursue a modern project.

The research was based on a literature review of secondary sources as to gain a broader understanding and a concrete framework within the following topics:

- i. Cultural Theorization of Western Modernity;
- ii. Chinese Traditional Culture – Philosophy and Architecture;
- iii. Chinese Modern History – Cultural Dilemmas and Architectural developments

Based on this research the topics of – the *Consumer Metropolis*; *Universal Globalization*; and *Nationalism* - were chosen for their intersecting importance within both Western modernity and Chinese Modern history. As such three case studies were chosen to explore the problems, dilemmas, and possible alternatives to the chosen topics. A consequent research with a more focused literature review through books, articles and primary sources (in the forms of personal accounts and technical drawings) was led with the intent of more concrete and further research.

The present dissertation is organized into five chapters besides the Introduction. The first one attempts to provide a general context of the main topics approached within the thesis: Modernity, the West and China. The following three chapters represent the case studies, where, within the approached topics in the first chapter, the thesis attempts to explore the different situations and responses within each case study. And finally the fifth chapter attempts to parcel their conclusions as to provide a final response towards the thesis problem. Each chapter approaches the following topics with the following objectives:

## Structure

### ***01 – Chinese Native Tradition and Western Modernity***

The first chapter aims at establishing the challenge that Western modernity posed to the ancient Chinese tradition, as well as giving an historical background towards the contact between China and the West until 1937. This chapter can be divided into three parts: firstly, it is discussed the main characteristics that composed traditional Chinese society; secondly, the cultural impact Western imperialism and scientific innovations had in pre-nineteenth century China; and finally it's discussed Western modernity's main characteristics, its relationship with Western imperialism and science,



and the way China adapted to these challenges throughout nineteenth and twentieth century.

### ***02 – Nanking Road and a Modern Consumer Culture***

The second chapter analyses the case study of the adoption of Western consumer culture in Shanghai's Nanking Road. The chapter can be divided into three parts: firstly, the analysis of the adoption of Western modern and bourgeois consumer culture in Nanking Road, seen in its consumption centres and skyscrapers; secondly, a questioning of the problems within Western consumer culture and its conflicts with Chinese tradition; and thirdly, an exploration of Chinese urban and consumer models that might provide alternatives to such problems.

### ***03– Hongqiao Sanatorium and the Diaspora of the Modern Movement***

The third chapter aims at analysing the diaspora of the Modern Movement with Xi Fuquan's 1934 Hongqiao Sanatorium. A comparative analysis between the Western Modern Movement and Chinese Traditional architecture is explored. The chapter is divided into three parts: a brief description of the western Modern Movement and study of its transplantation to China with the Sanatorium; a study of the inherent problems in such a project, relating to the imperialist context within China; and finally, as a proposed solution a study of modern elements in traditional Chinese architecture and gardens;

### ***04 – Greater Shanghai Plan and Modern Nationalism***

The fourth chapter aims at analysing the empowering Nationalist project as a way to achieve a Chinese modern architecture through Dong Dà'yǒu's Greater Shanghai Plan. The chapter is divided into three parts: an analysis for the nationalist project and formulation of a modern Chinese national "style"; its development within foreign formulations and implicit homogeneity of Chinese native tradition; and finally, an exploration into Chinese urban models and architecture as a way to overcome the inherent problems of homogeneity and foreignness present within the case study.

### ***05 – Conclusion and Multiple Modernities***

The fifth chapter, based on the concept of Multiple Modernities, aims at providing a final synthesis of the main explorations reached within the previous case studies and attempts to exhibit the rich source of traditional China. A brief overview of contemporary practice is made as to form a

bridge between the conclusions reached within the thesis and their relevance for the present challenges felt within contemporary China.

On the subject of the encounter of Modernity and Republican China (1912-1949) plenty of research has been carried out, though often not being able to escape the East/West paradigm. ***Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China (2002)***, by Seng Kuan and Peter Rowe, takes the Neo-Confucian notions of *tǐ* – essence – and *yòng* - function/form – to characterize the constant tension between Chinese essence and Western forms. Jianfei Zhu's ***Architecture of Modern China: A Historical Critique (2009)***, traces the social, historical and formal development of Chinese modern architecture from 1729 to 2008. In ***Chinese Architecture and the Beaux-Arts (2011)*** editors Jeffrey Cody, Nancy Steinhardt and Tony Atkin, collect a compendium of essays tracing the influence of Western Beaux-Arts education on the first generation of Chinese modern architects. Edward Denison's ***Architecture and the Landscape of Modernity in China Before 1949 (2017)***, is the closest source to the objectives of the present thesis, from its temporal range - the Republican Period; to its scope – with a wide range of sources besides architecture; to its conceptual critique - defending the development of Multiple Modernities using Chinese tradition as a source.

State of the Art

On Shanghai, Edward Denison and Guang Yu Ren's ***Building Shanghai: The Story of China's Gateway (2013)*** traces the city's architectural and urban history from its origin to its contemporary scene. Cole Roskam's ***Improvised City: Architecture and Governance in Shanghai, 1843-1937 (2019)*** has the same temporal scope of this thesis and traces the complex relationship between architectural developments and governmental changes within the city. Focusing on Shanghai's economic and cultural modernization, Marie-Claire Bergère's ***Shanghai: China's Gateway to Modernity (2009)*** provides an extensive and detailed overview of Shanghai's complex economic agents from 1842 to the present day. Leo Ou-fan Lee's ***Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930-1945 (1999)*** and Shu-mei Shih's ***The Lure of the Modern: Writing Modernism in Semicolonial China, 1917-1937 (2001)*** stand as comprehensive studies on the cultural modern developments within the city, focusing on the development of Shanghai's modern urban culture and Chinese modern culture within a local and global context.

For a more general history of modern China, John King Fairbank's and Denis Twitchett comprehensive *The Cambridge History of China (1978-2020)* and Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China (1990)*. And for a cultural and philosophical analysis, Bertrand Russell's *The Problem of China (1922)*, provides a rich exploration on the differences between East and West as well as the meaning of their meeting

On the development of Western modernity, Marshall Berman's *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity (1982)*, Ana Tostões *A Idade Maior: Cultura e Tecnologia na Arquitectura Modern Portuguesa (2015)*, and Hilde Heynen's *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique (1999)* provide the theoretical framework for this thesis.

On the topic of Chinese tradition Liang Sīchéng's *A Pictorial History of Chinese Architecture (1984)* remains one of the most fundamental researches into the structural components of Chinese architecture; Nancy Steinhardt's *Chinese Architecture: A History (2019)* provides a full account of Chinese built tradition from its inception to the present day; David Wang's *A Philosophy of Chinese Architecture: Past, Present, Future (2017)* connects Chinese traditional philosophy with its built environment; and Yinong Xu's *The Chinese City in Space and Time: The Development of Urban Form in Suzhou (2000)* connects the Chinese Urbis with its metaphysical worldview.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All consulted books and editions can be found under the section 'Bibliography – State of the Art'

## 01 The Middle Country and Western Modernity

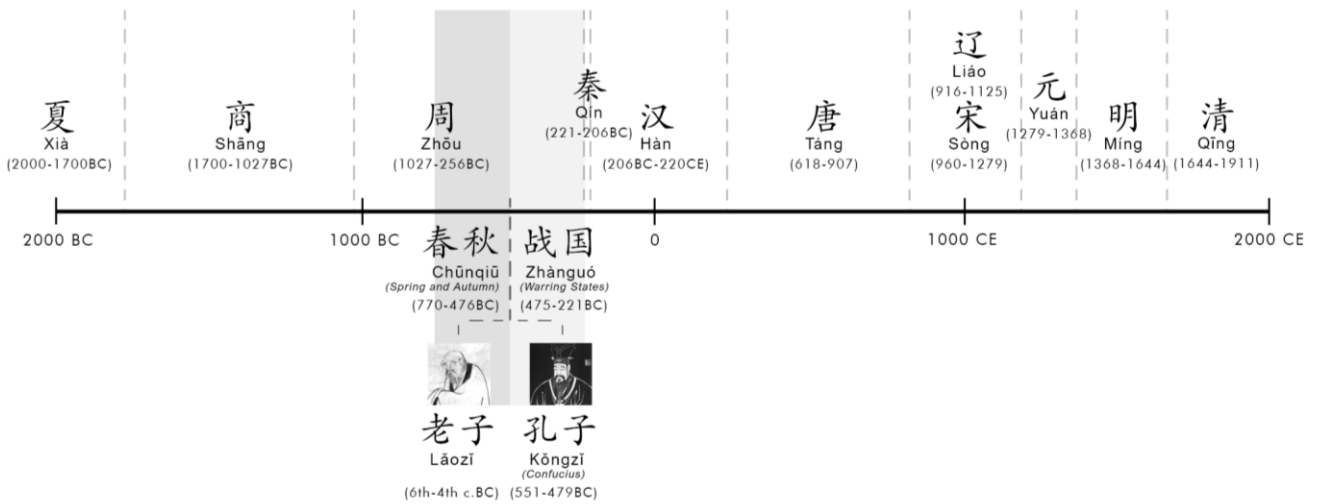
*An Introductory Problematic*

*“The Tao nourishes by not forcing,  
By not dominating, the Master leads.”<sup>2</sup>*

- *Lǎozǐ, Dào Dé Jīng* (350-250 B.C.)

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<sup>2</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 01



01 Timeline of Chinese Dynasties

## 01.1 The Chinese World Order

China's encounter with modernity will take on a unique position among nations peripheral to the West. For centuries China fascinated the Western countries and was seen as the great empire to the East, the *Orient*. No other nation represented an equally as central position in its relative context as China.

### 01.1.1 *The Middle Country and Oppositional Correlations*

The term for 'China' in mandarin - 'Zhōngguó' 中国 – translates to 'Middle Country'. Implicit in its etymology is a metaphysical worldview where China was at the centre of reality itself. *Hán* 汉 dynasty's (206 B.C. – 220 C.E.) Sino centric and patriarchal world order conceptualized a centripetal world with five concentric rings which separate the exterior *barbarians* to the interior and central *civilization* – China.<sup>3</sup> The Chinese emperor, the *Tiānzǐ* 天子 - 'Son of Heaven' - was the ruler of *Tiānxià* - 天下 'Land Under Heaven'.

Within this hierarchical structure, there is implicit a perspective that emphasizes the *whole* rather than the *particular*, a correlative approach that values *relationships* rather than *individual entities*. Termed by A.C. Graham (1919-1991) as the '*Chinese correlative thinking*', permanently *transformative correlations*<sup>4</sup> such as *Yīn Yáng* 阴阳 - and *Wǔ Xíng* - 五行 *The Five Phases* – will find meaning not in *things* themselves but rather in their *intangible relationships*. Focusing on *change* then, human being-ness - the *self* - resides only in a "temporary" impermanent state of



02 The *Hua I Thu* (Map of China and the Barbarian Countries), 1040-1137 C.E.

<sup>3</sup> Ying-Shih, Y. (2008) p. 379

<sup>4</sup> First developed after the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) in texts such as the *Yijing- Book of Changes* – and the *Chunqiu – Spring and Autumn Annals*

being, coterminous with the *cosmos* and experiences all things from an unreflective and *immersed* position from within<sup>5</sup>.

Within this purview, binary oppositions will be seen not as *confrontational* but as intimately *interrelated*, the harmonious *Yīn Yáng*. Oppositions between *Heaven and Earth; Day and Night; Father and Child; Ruler and Subject; Above and Below...* will construct through their interrelation the evolution of the cosmos itself<sup>6</sup>. The fundamental binary within Chinese society is the relationship between its two major philosophies: *Confucianism* – *rúxué* 儒学 and *Daoism* – *Dàojiào* 道教. Both philosophies share this correlative thinking and emphasized *ziran* 自然 – *spontaneity* – as the natural state of things. Though, for Confucius that was only achieved after a lifetime of *rigid* propriety in accordance with the *lǐ* 礼-*rituals* — not trespassing one's bounds - *guò* 过 – whereas in Daoism, through *fluid* letting go, *wúwéi* 无为 –*effortlessness*. Whereas *Lǎozǐ's* (6<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> c. BC) *Dào Dé Jīng* 道德经 - *The Book of the Immanence of the Way* – focused on *formlessness* and *namelessness* seen in its first passage:

“The Tao that can be told  
Is not the eternal Tao.”<sup>7</sup>

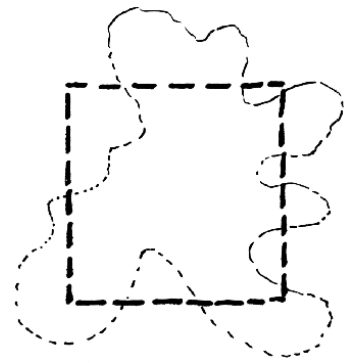
*Confucius'* - *Kǒngzǐ* 孔子-(551-479 B.C.) *Lúnyǔ* 论语 – the *Analects* - by contrast, placed *fixed* nameable entities as the fundamental building blocks of its hierarchical and patriarchal order:

“Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son”<sup>8</sup>

How then, can the contrasting chaotic *fluid change* of Daoism and the *rigid fixity* of Confucianism correlate rather than oppose each other? Through the use of the fundamental fixed module of Chinese society, the *jiā* 家 – the *family*<sup>9</sup> - Daoist focus on the potential for *growth* through *xūwú* 虚无 - *void / nothingness*– will be able to incorporate a fractal modular structure unto its chaotic growth, where the fixed modules will have strict boundaries within which they can correlate and permeate with the cosmos.

### 01.1.2 The Correlative Space

This correlative view is going to have two major consequences in Chinese space and architecture: a focus on *apperceptive* or *spontaneous* relations within the correlative whole and a *modular* structure governing its fixed and fluid entities.



03 - Diagram of Chinese Philosophy –  
The square represents Confucian rigidity  
and amorphous shape Daoist fluidity

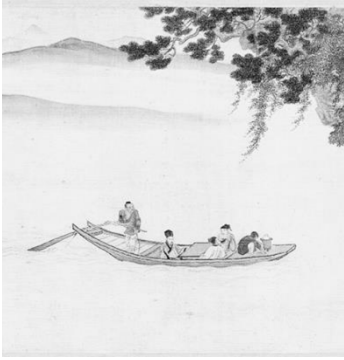
<sup>5</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p.15

<sup>6</sup> Graham, A.C. (1986) p. 32

<sup>7</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 01

<sup>8</sup> Confucius (1979) p. 114 (Book XII, 11)

<sup>9</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 26

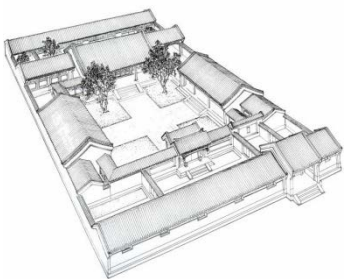


04 Qiu Ying (1494-1552), *Red Cliff*

If the self and the cosmos are coterminous, an *external* observation is impossible. Hence Chinese building tradition remained *apperceptive*. Chinese construction was built by *jiàng rén* 匠人 - *craftsmen* – non-ideological officials in service of the imperial court whom followed principles and standards dictated by centuries of building practices<sup>10</sup>. Seen in Confucius' respect for tradition - '*I transmit but do not innovate*'<sup>11</sup> – or Lǎozǐ's acceptance of change - '*Do you want to improve the world? / I don't think it can be done*'<sup>12</sup> - imparting a personal idea into one's design is not emphasized, which is why China had the longest built tradition in the world (more than four thousand years old)<sup>13</sup>.

On the other hand, this tradition is also a highly fluid and adaptive entity in the world of *changes*. David Wang characterizes Chinese space as a *rimless world*<sup>14</sup>, where relationships are evidenced and boundaries are blurred. Interpenetrations, transformations and correlations permeate this space, wherein the artistic corpus can never accurately represent reality, but rather, unreflectively participates and enjoys the multifaceted changing perspectives and transformations that spontaneously unfold, a space of *many-sidedness*. In this perspective, architecture is simply another piece, never standing in isolation or a distinct entity.

The junction of these fluid relationships with a structured *fixed module* will materialize in the *sihéyuàn* 四合院 courtyard layout, the allotted location of the *jiā*. Within a fixed boundary of rigid *walls*, the cluster of buildings that is the courtyard will guarantee a highly fluid and adaptable construction composed of relations between elements. The metaphysical significance of walls for Chinese society then, seen also in the *Great Wall*, is what keeps this binary relationship stable and whole, where what is kept within one's *bounds* is the ordered world of China itself.



05 Example of a *sihéyuàn* courtyard module

The modular correlative whole permeates the entire physical space of Chinese architecture: from the smallest of the building elements, the *dǒugǒng* 匠人 bracket-set, the guiding module of any Chinese construction; to the entire urban layout of Chinese cities, structuring through fractal geometry a highly fluid environment with the *sihéyuàn*'s walls.

Finally, the Daoist focus on *voids* as allowing *growth* and potential relationships, not fixing things to a concrete given *form*, is going to be materialized in the *sihéyuàn*'s *inner void*. By not giving concrete *form* to the

<sup>10</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.01

<sup>11</sup> Confucius (1979) p. 86 (Book VII, 01)

<sup>12</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 29

<sup>13</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.xviii

<sup>14</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 14

image or experience of the built environment, a visually forbidden and sensorial presence permeates Chinese space<sup>15</sup>.

Though Graham emphasizes this correlative perspective is not always central in Chinese thinking, for the purposes of this thesis it is the main element of Chinese philosophy to be studied. Namely, for being in stark opposition, as Graham notes, to the progressive and scientific Greco-European tradition in its conception of the *subject* with the *cosmos* and also, more importantly, because '*China tends to treat opposites as complementary, the West as conflicting.*'<sup>16</sup>

## 01.2 Renaissance Individualism and Cartesian Dualism

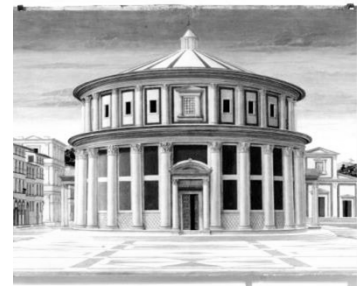
### 01.2.1 *Cartesian Dualism and Renaissance Perspective*

Cartesian dualism thinking will conceptualize an inherent separation of the *self* from the *cosmos*. Its mission is to accurately understand, represent, dominate and, ultimately improve the *external* and *analysable* cosmos<sup>17</sup>. The individual will act as an *ideologue* which, through logical operations, will improve existing external conditions. The *self*<sup>18</sup> is fundamentally different from the *cosmos*.

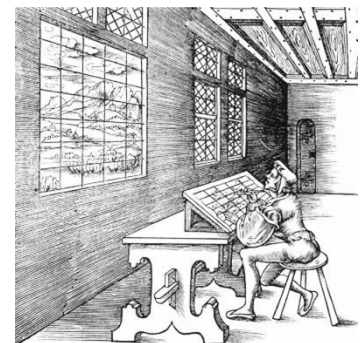
Positivist thought will attempt to accurately analyse these external reality through fixed *facts* attempting to form a concrete, accurate and mathematized picture of the external world. Within this purview, value is derived from the *individual's idea* and from the *singular* objects to which he attributes it – a synthesis of *fact* and *value*.

The individualist and scientific world is then going to be materialized within Renaissance space, where, the representation of one *single vision*<sup>19</sup> of the observable reality, within one concrete *scene*, composed of fixed mathematized *objects*, is going to be achieved through Renaissance *linear perspective* and its use of Euclidean geometry. The Chinese *rimless* world and European bounded *scene* is then the biggest contrast between the two artistic traditions.

The achievement of *monumentality* by placing buildings within the vanishing point of endless perspectives, seen in Renaissance ideal cities, means that all value of any given scene is being placed within that single object. The value a building *façade* gained within such an urban space was



06 Luciano Laurana or Melozzo de Forlì, *The Ideal City of Urbino*



07 Hieronymus Rodler, *Alberti's Veil* (1531)

<sup>15</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 220

<sup>16</sup> Graham, A.C. (1986) p. 28

<sup>17</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p.15

<sup>18</sup> The only entity one can know exists – *cogito ergo sum* – hence fundamentally different from external reality

<sup>19</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.129



heightened; the *façade* became the repository of value itself and the means by which the building expresses itself.

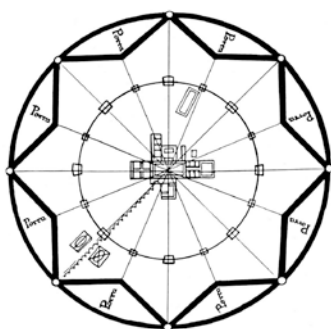
The belief in the power of the individual and one's own *ideas* is then always in pursuit of progress with a *linear* forward momentum - a *linearization* of the experience of time itself. The split present between mind and reality is also present in the way progress is achieved: through an opposition of ideas tending towards a new *synthesis*, the Hegelian dialectic – where an attempt to homogenize and synthesize one's ideas into a coherent whole will be valued over a multi-faceted approach.

### 01.2.2 Diaspora of Western Thought

Once Vasco da Gama sailed around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498, a new phase for Asian history began. The establishment of Macau and the relationship with the Portuguese in many ways set the precedent for the nineteenth century unfair treaties placed on China. While, the situation in Macau was initially hostile towards the Portuguese, their weaponry and scientific acumen were appreciated<sup>20</sup>.

Jesuit Christian missionaries would play an important role in the mediation between the two empires. Matteo Ricci - *Li Mǎdòu* - (1552-1610), an Italian Jesuit, arrived in Macau in 1582 and was a guest in the Imperial palace in Beijing in 1601. Ricci will exemplify the Western approach within Chinese relations, namely, an importation of Western culture (in this case Christianity) by sharing Western scientific knowledge as well as adapting it towards Chinese Confucian culture<sup>21</sup>. European culture seemed developed and awed Chinese officials.

The Chinese interest for *Western Learning*, in architecture would find two European importations: the study of Platonic solids with Ricci's translations of Euclid's '*Elements*' in 1607, and the introduction of Cartesian dualism through studies of linear perspective, with Giuseppe Castiglione's (1688-1766) – *Lángshìníng*- and Nian Xiyao (?-1739) 1729 '*Shí Xué*' – '*Principles of Visual Perspective*'<sup>22</sup>. Castiglione will leave an important legacy in China through his syncretic Sino-European perspectives, and through his Western-style buildings, the *Xiyànglóu* 西洋楼, in the Beijing *Yuánmíng Yuán* 圆明园 – *Imperial Summer Palace*<sup>23</sup>. Juxtaposing the palace's traditional *sihéyuàn* building clusters, these buildings introduced a new kind of space in Chinese territory: that of *visual* Cartesian perspective composed of long stretching avenues leading to *monumental objects*.



08 Filarete, *Sforzinda* (1460's)

<sup>20</sup> Wills, J.E. (1998) p.340

<sup>21</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 12

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p.21

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p.28

Designed in an eclectic synthesis of Western Baroque and Chinese styles, structures such as the *Xiyànglóu* or Macau's *St. Paul's Cathedral* (1640) will serve as an early importation of European space into Chinese territory and mark the start of a cross-cultural synthesis in search of new symbolic forms.

Sino-Western relations will reach a boiling point in the nineteenth century (the century of Imperialism and Modernity) with the *Opium Wars* (1839-1842 and 1856-1860) - which faced China with the global superpowers of the British and French Empire and the United States. The consequent semi-colonialization of China will increase foreign influence, equating the Renaissance Cartesian tradition with the new concept of the *modern*. Inversely, in Europe the changing forces of modernization meant precisely a questioning of such traditions. An inverse paradigm was occurring, a move towards a space where, as Karl Marx (1818-1853) put it:

*'All that is solid melts into air'*

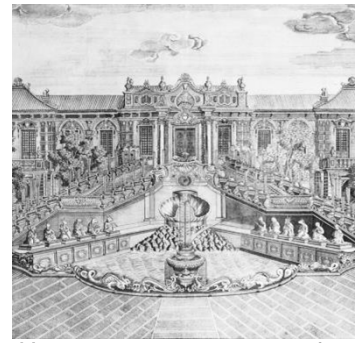
### 01.3 Modernity

#### 01.3.1 *Western Modernity and Chinese Tradition*

The individualist impetus to *control* and *improve* external reality will result, through a process of dialectical opposition, in the concept of *linear progress*, and pave the way towards what is understood as *Western modernity*.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's (1749-1832) *Faust* will embody the entire modern drive towards *development* itself<sup>24</sup>. From the bourgeois intellectual ideals achieved in the Enlightenment of *liberty*, *individualism* and *development*, and with the material capabilities enabled by the Industrial Revolution, the modern project brought an unprecedented individual and autonomous freedom to the forefront<sup>25</sup>. In its impetus for *change*, the modern environment will attempt to improve the entire external cosmos resulting in, as Ana Tostões (1959-) explains: '*a perception of space and time transformed by velocity*'<sup>26</sup>.

An environment filled with potential but also with a more sinister drive, a perceived necessity to let everything go in order to make way for its promising *new world*<sup>27</sup> – *tabula rasa*... Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) noted the temporary character imbued within the modern world,



09 Giuseppe Castiglione, one of the Baroque buildings in the Beijing Summer Palace

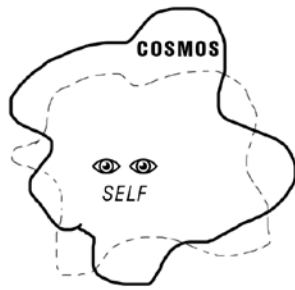
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<sup>24</sup> Berman, M. (1982) p.39

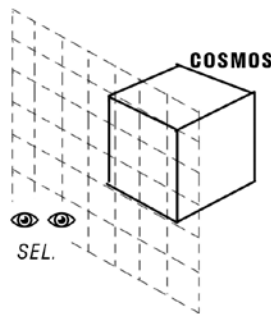
<sup>25</sup> Eisenstadt, S. (2002) p.29

<sup>26</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.36

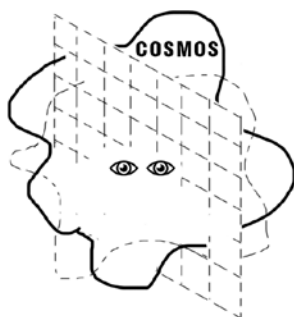
<sup>27</sup> Berman, M. (1982) p.48



Chinese Correlative View



Renaissance Cartesian Dualist



Western Modern Paradox

10 Diagram exemplifying the three currents of thought – Chinese Correlative View, Renaissance Cartesian Dualism and Western Modernity

characterizing it as *'the transient, the fleeting, the contingent.'*<sup>28</sup> For him, the modern metropolis, in its endless vitality, many-sidedness, and chaotic scale, will be the material manifestation of the *modern*. Siegfried Giedion (1888-1868) will characterize this environment as a change in *space-time* itself. Cubist space, in its successive displacement of the viewing angle, and kaleidoscopic visual interrelations – the experience of *collage* - will find an *'infinite potentiality for relations within it'* where the observer, the *self*, will no longer merely externally visualize reality, but rather *'project himself through it'*<sup>29</sup> - become coterminous.

Within this arising modern environment, which projects the *self* through the changing cosmos, and the Renaissance Cartesian dualist perspective, of an *observer* attempting to control the external cosmos, Ana Tostões notes the Western modern paradox as something that:

*'wants to hold on but that is now in permanent transformation'*<sup>30</sup>

Georg Simmel (1858-1918), in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, notes this paradox in what he terms a turn towards *objectivity* which threatens man's entire subjective *value* as an individual in its attempt to control the chaotic modern environment, transforming everything *'into the form of a purely objective life'*<sup>31</sup>.

The Daoist concepts of *permanent change* and focus on correlations within the whole, is going to find striking similarities with the modern environment:

*'He [the Master] understands that the universe  
Is forever out of control,  
And that trying to dominate events  
Goes against the current of the Tao.'*<sup>32</sup>

The modern paradox enunciated by Tostões does not exist within Chinese tradition. *Wúwéi* and *Yīn Yáng* are diametrically opposed to Western modernity's attempt to control the chaotic modern environment. Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) evidenced this contrast when he claimed that Lǎozǐ was *'the antithesis of Nietzsche'*<sup>33</sup>. Within Daoism, Russell sees a culture of acceptance, of *'freedom, not domination'*<sup>34</sup>, unlike Western modernity's regard for mankind *'as raw material, to be moulded by our scientific manipulation into whatever form may happen to suit our fancy'*, where *'progress consists in the spread of a doctrine'*<sup>35</sup>. Russell reveals a dark

<sup>28</sup> Baudelaire, C.-P (2010) p.19

<sup>29</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) pp. 435-436

<sup>30</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.32

<sup>31</sup> Simmel, G. (1969) p. 58

<sup>32</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 29

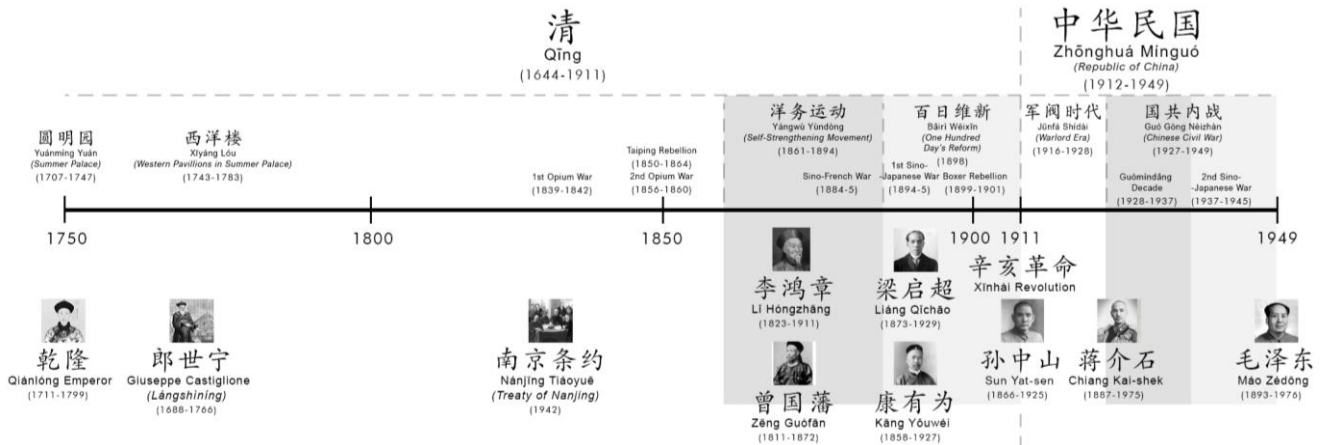
<sup>33</sup> Russell, B. (1922) p. 84

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.195

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p.82

underbelly to the modern project, a love for *power, industrialism, militarism, and domination*, to control the whole external reality to be shaped by the *individual's* imposed vision – the ideology of *imperialism*.

### 01.3.2 Western Imperialism and Chinese Modernity



11 Timeline of Modern China

In what Marshall Berman (1940-2013) terms a ‘*desire for development*’<sup>36</sup>, Modernity and Imperialism will both share a global scope. Enlightenment Universalist concepts, derived from neutral human *reason*<sup>37</sup>, will assume the entire world in its scope and discriminate other cultures according to its own implicit universality. Modernity’s origin in Europe, as well as Europe’s technological supremacy over colonial nations, maintained the illusion that the global project of modernity was in fact *western*<sup>38</sup>. As Shu-mei Shih claims:

“Although Western discourse conceived “modernism” as an “international” movement, it systematically denied a membership in its pantheon to the non-white non-West.”<sup>39</sup>

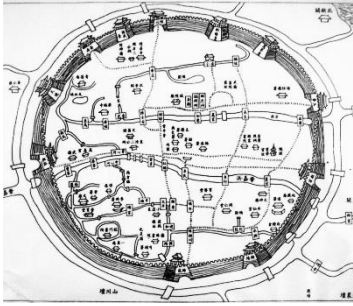
The Opium Wars opened a new chapter in Chinese history and Sino-Western relations commonly referenced as the *Century of Humiliation*. Starting with the treaty of Nanjing in 1842, a succession of unequal treaties and establishment of foreign treaty ports, such as *Shànghǎi* 上海, would endanger China’s national sovereignty and place the country under existential threat.

<sup>36</sup> Berman, M. (1982). p.39

<sup>37</sup> Sachsenmaier, D. (2002) p. 62

<sup>38</sup> Ricoeur, P. (2007) p. 48

<sup>39</sup> Shi, S. (2001) p.2



12 Map of the Old City of Shanghai (1860)

Shanghai bridged global commercial routes through the Pacific Ocean, with rich internal commercial routes<sup>41</sup> with the *Huángpǔ River* 黄浦江 to the East and *Sūzhōu Creek* 苏州河 linking with the historical *Grand Canal*.

The first foreign settlements established after 1842 – the British and American Settlement and the French Concession – will have an irregular layout due to Shanghai's difficult terrain, where, as a resident remarked, the establishment of the Shanghai roads and draining system was a '*triumph of mind over mud*'<sup>42</sup>. In 1850's along with the Bund four additional main roads were planned and marked the start of the British Settlement. (Annex 01)

The *Taijing Rebellion* – (1850-1864), had as a result an increased foreign control in Shanghai with the formation in 1863 of the *International Settlement* and its own autonomous administration - the *Shanghai Municipal Council*<sup>43</sup>. As a result Shanghai began modernizing, with roads and infrastructure such as Gas, Electricity, Running Water and a working railway<sup>44</sup>. The Rebellion also launched, as a response, the first Chinese *modern* reform towards industrialization – *Zēng Guófān's* 曾国藩 (1811-1872) and *Lǐ Hóngzhāng's* 李鸿章 (1823-1901) *Self-Strengthening movement* (1861-1894). Using the important concepts of *tǐ* 体 – *essence* – and *yòng* 用 – *function* or *form* – the Movement will attempt to incorporate the Western *yòng*, its technology and science, while retaining its own Chinese *tǐ*<sup>45</sup>. Feng Guifen (1809-1874) lays bare the project as:

*'we should use the instruments of the barbarians but not adopt the ways of the barbarians. We should use them so that we can repel them'*<sup>46</sup>.

A paradoxical project of Westernization ("modernization") in order to repel the invading West. Implicit within the movement is a belief that it is possible to separate Western culture – *tǐ* – from Western science and technology – *yòng*, something which was before exploited by Ricci as a stable and sustainable way to introduce Christianity into China. As Kuan and Rowe claim, '*one cannot halfway Westernize.*'<sup>47</sup>.

The imperialist uneven relationship, which equalized the *West* with the *modern*, will make their separation an impossibility. Linear progressive Darwinian time meant *development* was used as a justification for the superiority and dominion of the *modern* West over the *primitive Other*. Modernity's desire to eradicate the old in order to build the new is here taken as a literal subjugation of the *old Other* by the *new West*. This

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.14

<sup>42</sup> Lang, H. (1875) p.33

<sup>43</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) p. 48

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, pp. 113-114

<sup>45</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) p.05

<sup>46</sup> Guifen, F. (2000)

<sup>47</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) p.07

process was internalized by the colonized themselves, whom found in the West a path to their own modernity, and found in the West their own future<sup>48</sup>. If on the one hand, attributing to China the status of a *latecomer* was an empowering message, claiming that someday China could reach the status of the privileged societies<sup>49</sup>, on the other hand, as Tostões notes, this meant *'the pure and simple abandonment of all cultural past'*<sup>50</sup>. A paradoxical attempt to both search for its native roots, to distinguish itself from the imperial invaders, and to modernize and enter universal time will characterize the struggle for Chinese modernity.

The Self-Strengthening need to *learn from abroad*, will also represent the turning point within China's own *crisis-consciousness*: collapsing its cyclical view of time and self-perception as the centre of the world.<sup>51</sup> For the first time China had to conceptualize just what was *'Chineseness'* itself. The Chinese crisis-consciousness will first materialize in the difficult nationalist and democratic project that will arise after yet another defeat<sup>52</sup> where a wave of both modernization and anti-foreign sentiment took place simultaneously. *Liáng Qǐchāo's* 梁启超 (1873-1929) and *Kāng Yǒuwéi's* 康有为 (1858-1927) 1898 unsuccessful *One Hundred Days Reform* and the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901)<sup>53</sup> will result in a pushback and increased foreign control over China in the form of the *'Boxer Protocol'*. The protocol stipulated the payment by China of exorbitant war reparations to the foreign powers involved and established the 1908 Boxer Indemnity Scholarship Program<sup>54</sup> by the United States, which sent young Chinese to study in the US and guaranteed its cultural and economic influence in the process. With the *'Treaty of Shimonoseki'* in 1895, foreigners were also allowed to set up industries within the treaty ports and a rapid process of industrialization within Shanghai started<sup>55</sup>. By the 1900's the city had grown beyond its borders, with the International Settlement taking on its final expansion beyond the Race Course with the Western Suburbs in 1898. (Annex 01)

The 1911 Xīnhài Revolution led by Sun Yat-sen 孙中山 (1866-1925) ended the Manchu Qīng dynasty's almost three hundred year rule. Though in 1916 China would break up into a period of civil war, its more accepting embrace of Western ideals while maintaining an anti-foreign attitude would



13 E.J. Powell, *City and Environs of Shanghai* (1862)

<sup>48</sup> Dirlik, A. (2005) p.44

<sup>49</sup> Sachsenmaier, D. (2002) p.46

<sup>50</sup> Tostões, A. (ed.) (2013) p.67

<sup>51</sup> Sachsenmaier, D. (2002) p. 15

<sup>52</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Sino-Japanese War - of 1894-5

<sup>53</sup> An armed anti-foreign and anti-Christian uprising that will once again see the use of foreign forces in Chinese territory

<sup>54</sup> The scholarship also increased Western missionary presence and education within China. In Shanghai, Jiaotong University in 1897, Fudan University in 1904 and St. John's University in 1905 were some of the first to be constructed as well as the preparatory and influential Tsinghua College in Beijing in 1911.

<sup>55</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) p.58

be heightened throughout this period. The modernists of the *May Fourth Movement*<sup>56</sup>, demanded complete Western modernization, in a call for “*Mr. Science*” and “*Mr. Democracy*” as a matter of national sovereignty. The 1920’s were a period of economic growth, industrialization and intense modernization where a new generation of Chinese entrepreneurs constructed empires during these decades. An emerging urban sphere, with a colonial background, began to appear as bourgeois entertainment venues such as cafés, cinemas, cabarets, jazz bars, department stores, amusement parks, etc. became a staple of Shanghainese life. They were also the years that saw the birth of the modern ‘architecture’ profession in China, where, for the first time, architecture was considered a science and was simultaneously threatened by the forward impetus of modernity<sup>57</sup>.

In 1928, the *Guómíndǎng* (KMT) – the *Chinese Nationalist Party* – had reunified China under its control, creating the first *nation-state* of China, and the so called *Guómíndǎng Decade* from 1928-1937 had begun. The 1930’s will mark a golden period for Shanghai and Chinese architecture, where the nationalist government’s search for a Chinese modern architecture will result in explorations of a ‘Chinese style’ helped by its *grandiose* urban plans, and in the *International Settlement* an *art deco* boom will result in a race to the skies making Shanghai the *New York of the East*. (Annex 01)

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<sup>56</sup> Following the decisions at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, students from the modern Peking University rallied in Tiananmen Square.

<sup>57</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 165

## 02 Delirious Nanking Road

*The Mire of the Neon-Lights*

*"Fast-asleep buildings stand up, raise their heads, strip off ashen nightclothes, the river gurgles eastwards, factory whistles blow.  
Song of new life, the destiny of nightclubbers!  
Wake up, Shanghai!  
Shanghai, A Heaven built on Hell."<sup>58</sup>*

*-Mu Shiyong, 'The Shanghai Foxtrot, 1932*

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<sup>58</sup> Macdonald, S.; Shiyong, M. (2004) p.805



## 02.1 New York of the East

When tracing the developments of Chinese modernity, a study of the creation of a modern metropolitan experience and an urban consumer culture within Shanghai will provide an important research to be carried.

A unique blend of Sino-Foreign capitalism will result in a more accepting populace in Shanghai towards foreigners and more welcoming of the chance to make business<sup>59</sup> – a more pragmatic and less ideological driven social class.

### 02.1.1 *The Mire of the Macadam*

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Charles Baudelaire will see in the modern metropolitan environment the experience of Modernity itself. The changing environment of modernity will find itself materialized in the new urban metropolis and its chaotic energy will be seen in its movement, scale, multi-faceted collage of experiences, and, most of all – in its *crowds*.

The new anonymous metropolitan experience gave an unprecedented degree of freedom within an enticing visual and sensual spectacle of *stimuli*. The Baudelairian *boulevard* will be a collage of changing images and people, a chaotic totality of interactions between thousands of different strangers every day. Within the metropolitan experience Baudelaire will announce the *modern* as the experience of *movement* and *speed* itself, of the *transient* and the *ephemeral - fashion*<sup>60</sup>.

Within this spectacular and transient environment then, the *new*, is going to be what's valuable and recognized. The phenomenon of consumption is going to make use of the novelty as the driving force of the money economy. The prestige accompanying those who can keep up with the *latest fashion* will be seen in the figure of the *dandy*, who makes *commodity consumption* his entire identity, and which places value not on the things themselves but on their transient *newness*.

The spectacle of consumption will be the way through which this cult of the *new* will be consecrated in the metropolis, it was not long before spaces that could accommodate these phenomenon . The Parisian *magasins de nouveautés*, and Walter Benjamin's (1892-1940) *arcades*, would become the '*temples of commodity capital*'<sup>61</sup>. In an effort to pragmatically synthesize and intensify these consumer energies, these spaces will evolve towards a single unitary space so that the floor can be taken at a single glance – the

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<sup>59</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) p.49

<sup>60</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.31

<sup>61</sup> Benjamin, W. (1999) p.37

*Department Store*. Seen in Gustave Eiffel's Parisian '*Au Bon Marché*' (1852), these spaces will embody the experience and consumption of the *new*, from its modern materials which allow new kinds of open unitary spaces, to its new goods advertised with large billboards, to its unpredictable intensive energy in its crowds, and, most of all, in its new and pragmatic way to consume products – with fixed prices and do away with time-consuming bargaining. Within this environment, consumerism '*became a criterion of modernity and by the same token, of social distinction*'<sup>62</sup>.

### 02.1.2 *The Chinese Bourgeoisie*

Private initiative, both by Chinese entrepreneurs and foreigners is going to provide a powerful engine of modernization in Shanghai. Following the Taiping Rebellion in the 1860's, a wave of pragmatic western-accepting émigrés in search of wealth, much like in New York, will create a friendly environment towards learning from Western material progress.

A new Chinese urban class – the Chinese bourgeoisie – began to emerge in the following decades, composed of entrepreneurs ready to make business with foreigners, such as the middle-man *compradores* – *maipán* – and several industrialists, where a process of mutual-growth within a Sino-foreign capitalist symbiosis constructed the economic engine of this modernization. The new global capitalist interaction gave way to an ideology of *growth* and a change within the Chinese rigid Confucian society, where the prestige of wealth and economic pursuit started to eclipse that of state education or moral virtue<sup>63</sup>. The Chinese elite were making a concerted effort to modernize driven by wealth and looking at Western material progress as a desire to be pursued. They invested in both industrial and commercial enterprises that gave them enormous material wealth. Entrepreneurs like the Guo family who had experience in Australia and later opened the *Wing'On Department Store*, would learn from the West two things: technological innovations and rationalized management<sup>64</sup>.

After the 1911 Revolution and in the following decades a more wealthy and educated populace would, along the May Fourth fervour, value the development of scientific and professional training as an essential condition for economic modernization<sup>65</sup> and construct an emerging metropolitan urban society. Within this complete acceptance of Western modernization, the allure of foreign prestige and attempt to follow Western modern *fashion*



01 Le Monde Illustré, *The New Staircase in Au Bon Marché* (1875)

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<sup>62</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) p. 252

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 107

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 155

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 128

penetrated this colonial environment. The Shanghai *Bund* stands as evidence of the power foreign prestige held in Shanghai, first in the godowns built by the *compradores*, following the British colonial style, and later with the neo-Classical buildings that towered over Shanghai.

### 02.1.3 Nanking Road's Culture of Congestion

Nanking Road was one of the first streets to be macadamized since it was the continuation of the important Yang Jin Bang creek, to which it owed its irregular layout<sup>66</sup>. The International Settlement quickly modernized, the plots behind the Bund became the heart of the British Settlement and beyond Henan Road it was the picturesque Chinese countryside full of paddy fields and rural life. (Annex 01)

In no other place did the consumer culture crystallize better than in Nanking Road. By the 1870's it was already referred as '*modern*'<sup>67</sup>, C.E. Darwent paints a vivid picture: '*almost all day this road is crowded with traffic; foot-passengers, coolies, silk-clad merchants, foreigners of all nations, barrows, jinrickshaws, and carriages*'<sup>68</sup>. By 1900 it had over two hundred shops and over 60.000 inhabitants per square kilometre<sup>69</sup> and its building typology changed from the overwhelming two-storey Chinese teashops to *new* massive constructions. Department Stores were quickly established, first by foreigners for foreigners, with the four great foreign department stores<sup>70</sup>, and in a later phase by Chinese entrepreneurs to penetrate the growing Chinese middle class market<sup>71</sup>: first with Ma Yingbao's (1860-1944) *Sincere Company* (1917) – *Xiǎnshì Gōngsī* 显示公司 ; and the Guo Brothers *Wing'On Company* (1918) - *Yǒng'Ān Gōngsī* 永安公司 ; and later with the *Sun Sun Department Store* (1926-7) - *Xīnxīn Gōngsī* 新新 ; and finally the *Dah Sun Department Store* (1936) - *Dà Xīn Gōngsī* 大新



02 Shanghai Municipal Council, *Plan of the English Settlement at Shanghai* (1866)

Rem Koolhaas' (1944-) "*culture of congestion*" will find its materialization within the Shanghai metropolis. Supported by the global market, an unprecedented assortment of goods under one roof was possible, where food, clothing luxury items, etc. were elegantly displayed<sup>72</sup>. Just like in '*Au Bon Marché*', in *Sincere* and *Wing'On*, the focus placed on *novelty* will be the main drive of the stores, introducing the foreign and new concept of fixed prices into the Chinese market.

<sup>66</sup> Maclellan, J.W. (1889). p.17

<sup>67</sup> Lang, H. (1875) p.23

<sup>68</sup> Darwent, C.E. (1904) p.13

<sup>69</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) p. 244

<sup>70</sup> Weeks & Co. Department Store; Hall & Holtz; Lane Crawford & Co.; and Whiteaway, Laidlaw & Co.

<sup>71</sup> Macpherson, K. (ed.) (2016) p. 01

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p.67

Designed in 1917 by Lester, Johnson & Morris, *Sincere* was the combination of four buildings into one. Built in an English Renaissance style<sup>73</sup>, the reinforced concrete building had a ground floor arcade, with shopfronts panelled with Ningbo stone, while the *piano nobile*, and second and third floors, adorned with pilasters and pediments, were finished with granite-chip cement. Crowning it was a 45m corner double arched tower with a dome and a clock on top.<sup>74</sup> (Annex 02)

*Wing'On*, opposite across the street, was designed in 1918 by Palmer & Turner and featured a similar design. Covering six storeys and an entire block, this Renaissance revival style reinforced concrete building featured a ground floor full of glass windows partitioned by pilasters and columns, a *piano nobile* complete with terraces, while the last storey featured a single terrace spanning across the entire granite-panelled façade. The building also had a tower that rose 20m above the roof, and was adorned with pediments and cornices giving it a luxurious western look.

Within these massive foreign buildings, lies an aesthetic that was '*deliberately western, both in appearance and service (...) with the intention of meeting 'the demands of the Chinese accustomed to Occidental manners and customs'*<sup>75</sup>. Present in their foreign façades and new construction materials, these department stores coupled the value that Baudelaire placed on *novelty* with the exotic allure of *foreign prestige*.

To finally have access to foreign products in a foreign environment was a status symbol that elevated Chinese bourgeois business man. As seen in Liu Na'ou's (1905-1940) and Mu Shiyong's (1912-1940) stories<sup>76</sup>, the constant use of foreign brands and activities in which their protagonists engage - driving a 1932 *Buick* or drinking *Jack Daniel's* - was a way to convey their cosmopolitan modernity. The 1920's and 30's '*modeng*' women epitomized this social and material revolution, adorning a modern *qipao* and becoming cultural icons of commodity advertisement for foreign and national brands like *Coca-Cola*. A spectacular environment will be cultivated in order to enjoy foreign entertainment, horse racing in the *Paomating*, dance halls dance the *foxtrot*, bars to listen to *jazz*... the crystallization of a truly cosmopolitan modern metropolis within Shanghai.

In order for the public to keep returning, Benjamin notes how the department stores needed to become a '*city, a world in miniature*<sup>77</sup>. Similarly to New York, Shanghai's first experiments with the culture of the



03 Lester, Johnson & Morris, *Sincere Department Store* (1917) – view from main intersection on Nanking Road



04 Palmer & Turner, *Wing'On Department Store* (1918) – view from main intersection on Nanking Road



05 Ye Qianyu, Shanghai Manhua 6, *Summer Features* (1928)

<sup>73</sup> Denison, E., Ren, G.Y. (2013) p.94

<sup>74</sup> Macpherson, K. (ed.) (2016) p.11

<sup>75</sup> Denison, E. (2017) p. 278

<sup>76</sup> Shanghai modern writers part of the *New Sensationalism* movement

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin, W. (1999) p.03



06 'Haipai' Modeng (2021)



07 Chen Xiaozuo, Shanghai Modern Sketch 29, 35 (1936)

spectacle also occurred with entertainment venues, namely in the Race-Course and the amusement centre *Great World*. On the corner of Nanjing and Zhejiang Road, an estimated two hundred thousand people passed every day<sup>78</sup>, a perfect location to create mass-entertainment structures.

*Sincere* also housed the Oriental Hotel, an open air cinema, Chinese shops along with staff accommodations and a roof-garden, with the spectacle of the neon lights along the street making it an attractive place to host parties along with bars and restaurants. *Wing'On* had a roof-garden at the top, with a luminous spire, and housed the Great Eastern Hotel. Undoubtedly modern, it featured copper shopfronts and doors, public elevators and air-conditioning, four theatres, music halls, restaurants, an amusement park and a money savings business. A luminous spectacle of neon lights lit its exterior façade as well.<sup>79</sup>

Much like in New York, in the 1930's Shanghai and Nanking Road will have a similar 'race to the skies' with yet another development in the street and the arrival of the quintessential moderne style – *Art Déco*. A style that, according to Kenneth Frampton (1930-), had 'arisen out of a spontaneous desire to celebrate the triumph of democracy and capitalism in the New World'<sup>80</sup>, something new and different, with a *joie de vivre* that focused on verticality and streamlined designs – an *urban* style.

Nanking Road's permanent reconstruction continues with new stores and renovations, each with bolder, taller and more exuberant art deco designs<sup>81</sup> continuing the city's intense vitality. The pace of construction, where, in only two years<sup>82</sup>, twenty new blocks had been built along Nanking Road, made Shanghai an '*ephemeral and practical*'<sup>83</sup> city. As Mu Shiyong writes evoking Filippo Marinetti's (1876-1944) description of the *futurist city* as '*a noisy construction site*'<sup>84</sup>:

*“Over the blood, spread a layer of concrete, steel rods arise, a new restaurant arises! A new dance hall arises! A new hotel arises! Take his strength, take his blood, take his life crushed underneath”<sup>85</sup>*

Seen in the writings of these authors, a lack of *cohesiveness* and a *collage* of unrelated moments is what characterized the city. In their narratives the

<sup>78</sup> Denison, E., Ren, G.Y. (2013) p.93

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.92

<sup>80</sup> Frampton, K. (2007) p.220

<sup>81</sup> Palmer & Turner's 73m *Sasson House* (1929) Gonda's *Whiteaway Laidlaw & Co.'s* (1930) department store renovation; Percy Tiley *Liza Hardoon Buidling* (1936), Elliot Hazzard *Shanghai Power Company* (1931); Tilley's *Laou Kai Fook & Company* (1935); and Zhuang Jun's, one of the first Chinese architects returning from abroad, *Continental Emporium* (1931).

<sup>82</sup> Denison, E., Ren, G.Y. (2013) p.90

<sup>83</sup> Na'ou, L.; Shiyong, Mu and Heng, Du (2016) p. 09

<sup>84</sup> Sant'Elia, A. and Marinetti, F. (2010) [original manifesto 1914] p.98

<sup>85</sup> Macdonald, S.; Shiyong, M. (2004) pp.802-803

city's vitality comes alive in its elements. Shying's buildings 'swirl up' to the sky with huge spires, the spectacle of Neon Lights 'fills' the streets, elevators 'spit out' crowds of people, towering skyscrapers 'stand up'.

The city's frenetic energy seemed overbearing and everlasting. In 1926 Karoly Gonda designed the *Sun Sun Company* next to Sincere, rising seven storeys and showing simpler and more vertical lines in comparison. (Annex 02) It featured Shanghai's first ballroom and a radio station where customers could watch the leading musicians perform live.<sup>86</sup> In 1934, *Wing'On* built a twenty one storey art déco extension designed by Elliot Hazzard and ESJ Phillips. The building's uncanny resemblance to *Times Square* earned it that nickname. Long vertical lines extending into the receding top of the building intensified its towering nature. Similarly to Harvey Willy Corbett's (1873-1954) perspectives, the building featured an overhanging bridge and connection the now 'old' original building, creating a modest tridimensional circulation and bringing the city's urban life closer to the air.

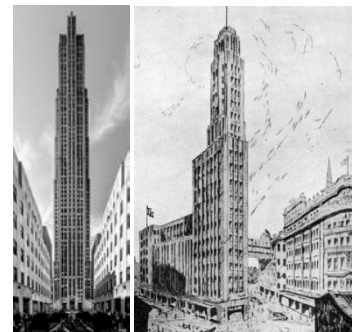
If anything can be termed Nanking Road's crown jewels, that would be both the 1934 László Hudec's masterpiece<sup>87</sup>, *Park Hotel*, and 1936's Kwan, Chu and Yang art déco *Dah Sun Department Store*.

Hudec's *Park Hotel*, finalized what was Shanghai's New York addiction. The building, with twenty two storeys and 83.8m remained up until the 1980's the tallest building in China, and symbolized what would be contemporary Shanghai's obsession – the *mótiān dàlóu* 摩天大楼 - meaning 'the big building that reaches the sky'. The building's vertical detailing and stripping on a brick façade, stepped massing, and exuberantly decorated cornices, emphasized its verticality and gave it a luxurious appearance.

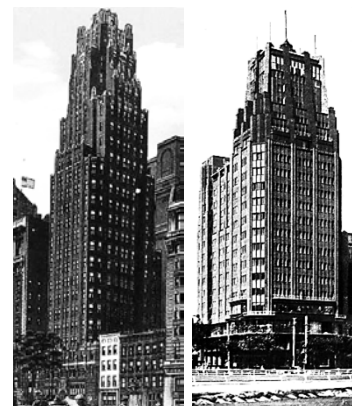
*Dah Sun* opened in 1936 on the corner of Nanking Road and Tibet Road, facing the Race Course and Park Hotel. Unashamedly in art déco lines, designed by Chinese architects, built by Chinese contractors, managed by a Chinese company and opened towards Chinese consumers, the building is going to symbolize everything 1920's and 30's Shanghai was trying to achieve. As the name implies, *Dá Xīn* – 'big' and 'new'. The towering building was built by Kwan, Chu and Yang, a Chinese architecture firm organized by the first generation of Chinese architects who studied abroad



08 Karoly Gonda, *Sun Sun Department Store* (1926)



09 Comparison between Raymond Hood's *Rockefeller Center* (1933) and Hazzard's and Phillips' *Wing'On Addition* (1934)



10 Comparison between Raymond Hood's *American Radiator Building* (1924) and Hudec's *Park Hotel* (1934)

<sup>86</sup> Macpherson, K. (ed.) (2016) p.11

<sup>87</sup> Also worth noting is Hudec's other masterpiece on what was the end of Nanking Road and the transition towards the suburb villas Bubbling Well Road, the 1933 modern Grand Theatre, highly contrasted with the Park Hotel since here, as in Hudec's Dr. Woo Green Villa, the horizontal lines are the ones who are given expressive form.

composed by: Kwan Song-Sing (Guan Songchen, 1892-1960), Chu Pin (Zhu Bing) and Yang Tingbao (1901-1982)<sup>88</sup>.

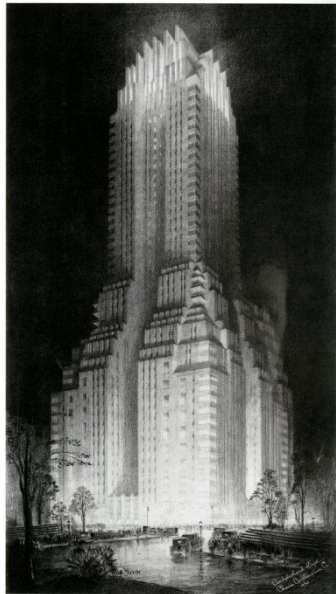
With 30.000 sqm, *Dah Sun* would fully bring western modernity towards the Chinese public. The building's verticality with 44.5m and nine storeys, twice bigger than *Sincere*, was intensified by the vertical detailing along its façade with several vertical stripes lining the entire façade and completely erasing the horizontal sectioning of the building. Its ground floor, glazed with glass shop fronts was protected by an extended roof that gave the customers a protected area to stroll and gave the building a floating like quality, as if it was floating above the city. Its curved corner crowned with an exuberantly decorated cornice extolled its presence. The building's Chinese heritage is minimally displayed only in very brief ornaments. (Annex 02)



11 Kwan, Chu and Yang, *Dah Sun Department Store* (1936)

Modern amenities and innovations were the buildings main attractions. The display of goods for consumption was perfectly curated, as handicraft art objects and Chinese specialties were brilliantly displayed behind glass counters. The building featured a shopping area in the basement, ground floor, and first two floors. The third floor was the *taipan's* offices, and the upper floors housed a restaurant, theatre, amusement park and a roof-garden tea house<sup>89</sup>. The building's biggest attraction was the two Otis escalators imported from the US, the two first escalators in China.

Dah Sun was the culmination of four department stores which had one function in the entire city, to provide the Western experience of modern consumption, with the spectacle, prestige and social status associated with it, towards a Chinese middle-class clientele. Both Park Hotel and Dah Sun will become monumental icons of Shanghai.



12 Hugh Ferriss, *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* (1929)

The sketches of Hugh Ferriss (1889-1962) and Koolhaas' depictions of skyscrapers as *worlds within worlds*, gained even more significance when transplanted to the contrasting Sino-western environment of Shanghai. Juxtaposed by clusters of two-storey Chinese *shophouses*, these urban mountains represented a utopian *imaginarium* of virgin sites completely devoid of context<sup>90</sup>. Devoid of context *within*, seen here in the spectacular different programs the buildings had within them; and *without*, seen in the contrast between their massive scale and the surrounding low rise Chinese city. In this purview it is inevitable that these buildings, through sheer volume, became icons and symbols devoid of meaning within the



13 Neon Lights of Nanking Road showcasing the contrasting scale between buildings

<sup>88</sup> Kwan Song-Sing studied in MIT between 1914-17 and Harvard in 1919, Chu Pin studied at the University of Pennsylvania, and Yang Tingbao went to the University of Pennsylvania in 1921 to study architecture, where he was a class colleague of Louis Kahn, having returned to China in 1927.

<sup>89</sup> [viewed 31 jan. 2021] <https://www.shine.cn/feature/art-culture/1801279495/>

<sup>90</sup> Koolhaas, R. (1994) pp. 86-87

commodified city. As Koolhaas claims, 'available for meaning as a billboard is for advertisement'<sup>91</sup>.

Nanking Road's modern spectacle would be incomplete without mentioning the biggest urban expression the road offered, the light spectacle and advertising overdose created by the building's neon lights and hanging signs. A *flaming city*, noted by all who saw it. Mao Dun's 1930 *Midnight* notes the phenomenon:

*"Looking east, one could see the warehouses of foreign firms on the waterfront of Pootung like huge monsters crouching in the gloom, their lights twinkling like countless tiny eyes. To the west, one saw with a shock of wonder on the roof of a building gigantic neon sign in flaming red and phosphorescent green: LIGHT, HEAT, POWER!"*<sup>92</sup>

A semiotic wonderland of foreign goods and expressions, these signs, along with the spectacle of the neon lights and the bustling street traffic, were the most quintessential representation of the chaotic and intense environment seen in Nanking Road. An environment in which Marshall Berman's modern man is both 'thrown into the maelstrom of modern city traffic'<sup>93</sup> as well as allured by the 'city's bright lights, beautiful women, fashion, luxury, is play of dazzling surfaces and radiant scenes'<sup>94</sup>.

As Leo Ou-fan Lee claims, the foreign character of this dazzling dance conveyed a:

*"simulacrum' of the new urban lifestyle (...) It is, for Chinese eyes, alluring and exotic precisely because it is so unreal"*<sup>95</sup>.

## 02.2 The Alienating Metropolis and Imperialist Commodification

*"-But there's also a pious old man – a believer in the Supreme Scriptures of Rewards and Punishments.*

*-Yes, but the old man is – he's dying fast.*

*-But in our country there are heaven knows how many more like him.*

*-Never mind. They'll die directly they arrive in Shanghai. Shanghai is..."*<sup>96</sup>

- Mao Dun, 'Midnight' (1933)

The modern metropolis is built upon a feeling of *alienation*. Following the massive rural exodus in the nineteenth century, Baudelaire's shock can be traced, among other things, to the intense split between the *rural* and the *urban*, in terms of scale and atomization of the individual within its surrounding environment.



14 Nanking Road Neon Lights on the corner of *Sincere* and *Wing'On*



15 Hanging Signs on Nanking Road

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, p. 100

<sup>92</sup> Dun, M. (1979) p.22

<sup>93</sup> Berman, M. (1982). p.159

<sup>94</sup> Ibid, p.146

<sup>95</sup> Lee, L. (2001) p.94

<sup>96</sup> Dun, M. (1979) p.22



### 02.2.1 *The Imperial Cog in the Machine*

If Imperialism is indeed '*The Highest Stage of Capitalism*' (1917) as Lenin (1870-1924) put it, it follows suit that its alienating relationships would carry. The alienation inherent to *labour opportunism* in the search for *profit* takes here global space with an exploitation of the *Other* by the metropolitan centre. The entire imperial system is built on the desire for cheap raw materials and cheap labour<sup>97</sup>. Production is always looking for new sources and markets for which to *expand*. The introduction of *industrial capital* will transform the environment of the colonized, much like in Shanghai, and endanger a displacing and territorial feeling of *alienation*.

Georg Simmel (1858-1918) will connect this loss of value, *alienation*, to both the increased objectivization of the modern world and to the capitalist *production cycle*, where '*all things float with equal specific gravity*'<sup>98</sup>. Subjective individuality cannot be objectively measured, its *price* cannot be determined. Hence, the production-consumption cycle does not value individuality and '*man is reckoned with like a number*'<sup>99</sup>, he becomes a '*mere cog in an enormous organization of things*'<sup>100</sup>.

With the transience of value becoming the only constant within the logic of commodities, the one thing that became truly valuable was their *novelty*. The objects, like Baudelaire explains, mean nothing in themselves, they have no inherent value besides the cult status of the *new*, stuck in a transient destructive cycle.

For Manfredo Tafuri (1935-1994) capitalism is irrevocably at the centre of all major happenings of the metropolitan condition. The metropolis, with its eager *consumer crowds*, is going to be moulded by and materialize the capitalist production cycle<sup>101</sup>. The alienation of the modern metropolis and its crowds will be a direct consequence of the rationalized, impersonal and efficient capitalist production cycle where constant *renewal* and concentration of capital into a dense and large-scale machine of consumption, was incentivized. The result is a quick, pragmatic and rationalized environment, as Simmel claims:

*"The modern metropolis, however, is supplied almost entirely by production for the market, that is, for entirely unknown purchasers who never personally enter the producer's actual field of vision"*<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Brewer, T. (2002) p.02

<sup>98</sup> Simmel, G. (1969) p. 52

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, p. 49

<sup>100</sup> Simmel, G. (1969) p. 58

<sup>101</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.134

<sup>102</sup> Simmel, G. (1969) p. 49

For Tafuri, the *spectacle*, the *public*, and overall *consumption*, were not isolated or ending points for the constitution of the metropolis, but were simply necessary pieces in what constituted the capitalist production-consumption cycle, they are ways to correctly engage with the capitalist city.

A neurotic environment that attempts to interest the subject in everything all of the time with its chaotic '*rapid crowding of changing images*'<sup>103</sup>. Materializations of this condition within one intense space, department stores will become, as Tafuri put it, the '*spatial and visual means for a self-education from the point of view of capital*'<sup>104</sup>. A *spectacular* escape for the metropolitan shocked crowd, completely separating the subject from his environment replacing it instead with a highly artificial and rationalized substitution especially designed to protect and distract him from his own alienation.

Such a chaotic environment will result in a paradoxical attempt to *control* it, and further alienate the individual by permeating it with rational processes. We see here then, the aforementioned paradox of something that '*wants to hold on but that is now in permanent transformation*'<sup>105</sup>. Seen also in the split and opposition created between the *urban* and the *rural*, Tafuri will also note the inherent paradoxical forces that permeate the highly fluid and chaotic metropolis and its increased attempts at rationalization, where the '*apparent chaos of the constantly changed dynamic image of the city on the one hand and the underlying order of the de facto rationality of the system of production on the other*'<sup>106</sup> are in constant tension and often exacerbate one another.

### 02.2.2 Foreign Alienation and the Motian Dalou

Shanghai's colonial setting, where *West* was equated with the *moderne*, will imbue the *alienating* character of the consumer metropolis with an equally alienating foreign character. The sense of *displacement* shown in the western dichotomy between *urban* and *rural*, will see here the added feeling of *foreign replacement*.

By attempting to bring Western luxury items and consumer environment to Nanking Road, Chinese entrepreneurs were consequently helping the project of colonization and Westernization in China. The elevation of social

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid, p. 48

<sup>104</sup> Tafuri, M. (1976) p.84

<sup>105</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.32

<sup>106</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.133

strata was reached not only through the consumption of *novel commodities* but, more importantly, *foreign commodities*.

In Shanghai the transient value implicit in the logic of commodities, that alienates the *flâneur*, was characterized by the *foreignness* of consumption of western forms. The department stores were seen as modern institutions, as symbols of modernity, even though they were built in neo-classical Western styles. Designed by British architects, Ma and the Guos wanted to bring this Western culture as a *new phenomenon* to be experienced. A conflation of Western forms with *modernization*, hence the use of the Western tradition instead of Chinese designs, since '*traditional Chinese architecture was often deemed inappropriate for the new institutions, commercial enterprises, and even stately homes of a modern city*'<sup>107</sup>.

The contrast that these massive conglomerates offered next to traditional Chinese shops, two-storey *clusters* of buildings, was intentional and a differentiating factor that brought attention towards the bourgeois foreign luxury that Sincere and Wing'On could offer. (Annex 02)

The allure of foreign prestige was something to be pursued but impossible to achieve. For many Chinese residents most of these foreign forms were literally impossible to access remaining as alienating and mysterious foreign masses which towered over them every single day<sup>108</sup>. They were to remain "*unknown places*", as Shu-mei Shih explains:

*'the place of Shanghai became increasingly "phantasmagoric" (...) Phantasmagoria subjected the viewer to a promise of consumption, and then, breaking that promise, led the viewer to loss and dejection*'<sup>109</sup>



16 Contrast between Department Stores and surrounding Chinese shops

Within the glittering race to the skies of Shanghai therein lay also ambivalent feelings of alienation on part of the Chinese bourgeoisie. Building in height was no strange sight for the Chinese. Pagodas had been built in China since the 5<sup>th</sup> century<sup>110</sup>, long before the foreign arrival in China. In Shanghai, the famous *Longhua Pagoda* with 40m had been built during the Northern Song Dynasty (1066 AD)<sup>111</sup>.

These structures, also foreign imports from Indian *stupas*, had been harmoniously integrated with the adaptable Chinese construction. Contrastingly, Chinese descriptions of Shanghai's skyscrapers tended to emphasize their imposing alienating feeling. The *mótiān dàlóu* created ambivalent feelings among Shanghai residents. Liu Na'ou refers to the

<sup>107</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) P.56

<sup>108</sup> Bergère, M. (2009) pp. 250

<sup>109</sup> Shih, S. (2001). p.271

<sup>110</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.95

<sup>111</sup> [viewed 05 feb. 2021] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longhua\\_Pagoda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Longhua_Pagoda)

department stores on Nanking Road as the 'three big urban monsters'. Cartoons constantly mocked these structures. In Shao Xunmei's 1928 *The Soul of Shanghai*, depictions of skyscrapers as standing atop the decadent life of the city, as 'the soul of Shanghai'<sup>112</sup> itself, showcased the ambivalent feelings such structures created.

These buildings engendered these feelings not so much because of their verticality, but because of their imposition on the surrounding environment, their *monumentality*. Whereas pagodas sought to relate with nature and the building compound they were in, following the Chinese correlative search for *correlations*, skyscrapers attempted the opposite: to *stand out*, externalize themselves from its surrounding environment. An emphasis on *singular objects* and consequent *externalization* from the surrounding environment in an attempt to *control* it.

Furthermore, the skyscraper's junction of an attempt to concentrate capital within a single *object* and the highly changing environment of the modern metropolis will make it an *object without value*. The building's main drive will be its economic value<sup>113</sup> and any individual expression that the skyscraper has, would be surplus value and manifested in its ornamentation, which for Tafuri had the precise function of soothing the shocked metropolitan public by emitting assimilable messages. Architecture in this purview resigns itself to the 'deadly silence of a pure sign'<sup>114</sup>.

Most Chinese architects reckoned with the challenge of just what a *Chinese* skyscraper could be. Early Dah Sun sketches show the literal transplantation of a Chinese roof unto its top, something also seen in the close-by *Chinese YMCA Building* (1931) and the *Bank of China* (1937).

Tafuri's metropolitan paradox, of a chaotic and highly rationalized environment, will also be seen in the ambivalent relationship Chinese writers had with the city and its skyscrapers. A constant juxtaposition of their glamour and decadence, utopia and oppression. In Mu Shiyong's 1933 'Shanghai Foxtrot' a constant tension is illustrated:

*'On top of the Shanghai Racing Club track, the weather vane's golden horse kicks out four hooves toward the red moon. The grass racing track surrounded by an overflowing sea of light, waves of sin, Moore Memorial Church penetrates the darkness, kneels, prays for these men and women descended to hell. Radiating circles of light, the Great World spire, refusing all repentance, glances down condescendingly at the pedantic missionary'*<sup>115</sup>



17 Tiger Hill Pagoda, Suzhou (327-1871)



18 Shanghai Modern Sketch 38, 11 (1937) – collage of a traditional hut with Park Hotel



19 Zhang Guangyu, Shanghai Modern Sketch 15, 15 (1935) – Two country 'bumpkins' talk about Park Hotel:  
"Bumpkin One - What's that there big building fer?"  
"Bumpkin Two - Dontcha know? It's built in case the Huangpu River floods!"



20 Early sketches of Dah Sun Department Store with a Chinese roof on its corner tower.

<sup>112</sup> Shi, S. (2001). p.263

<sup>113</sup> Tafuri, M. (1987) p.172

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 145

<sup>115</sup> Macdonald, S.; Shiyong, M. (2004) p.801

A glittering spectacle of 'radiating circles of light' and a simultaneous horrifying experience of sin and decadence.

These shifting oppositions will find a close contrast with Chinese urban conceptions, exemplified by the case of the *pagoda* and its relation to its environment. Within it one sees a culture that does not attempt to paradoxically distil value from single objects in a highly fluid environment, as in the case of skyscrapers, but rather from the temporary relationships between them.

## 02.3 Towards Humane Urban Models

### 02.3.1 *The Urban-Rural Continuum and the 'Lived' Metropolis*

Medieval China saw much of the same changes that would happen to European cities in post seventeenth century Europe. China also saw a period where 'large cities grew rapidly, often spilling out from their walls into suburbs'<sup>116</sup>. This was intensified during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1912) dynasties commonly referred to as the imperial era.

Implicit in the *apperceptive correlative* world of Chinese philosophy, cities were mainly political instruments, and didn't have a *bourgeoisie* that demanded an individual and external political status<sup>117</sup>. The scholar-official Chinese *literati* were so entrenched within Chinese social structure that the merchant class was never able to earn liberties and autonomy for themselves. Bourgeois free towns were then not able to appear in China like they did in medieval Europe. Ideas of liberty and individualism never developed and Chinese urban space was not defined by its *opposition* to the rural environment.

This is what Yinong Xu (1961-) calls the *urban-rural continuum*. In line with Chinese appreciation for *formlessness*, the urban and the rural formed a 'kind of organic unity'<sup>118</sup>. In architecture, a formal similarity between urban and rural space will also be seen. Urban and rural structures were indistinguishable<sup>119</sup>, since Chinese buildings strictly adhered to the *Yingzào Fāshì* 营造法式 - *Building Standards*<sup>120</sup> - and were constructed according to social hierarchy, not wealth.

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<sup>116</sup> Xu, Y. (2000) p.77

<sup>117</sup> Ibid p.79

<sup>118</sup> Ibid p.81

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p.84

<sup>120</sup> The 'Chinese Building Standards' written by Li Jie in 1103 during the mid-Song dynasty

This correlation between parts will extend to urban space itself. Its insistence on being part of an interrelated environment rather than a *single entity*, will create urban models, that, while structured, will not arise the feelings of alienation resulted from the western metropolitan environment.

The Chinese urban metropolis will find close resemblance with the modern metropolitan environment in its fluidity and 'lived' experience. Much like the modern metropolis, and similar to the *collage* environment described by the *New Sensationalist* authors, the Chinese city will be a *dense* world of compounds, streets and lanes, a *mosaic collage* of differing and changing environments. One experienced not visually within one single space or identity (Chinese cities had no city centre) but rather by walking through its streets, temples, markets, etc. As Jianfei Zhu claims, if Western urbanism is 'optical, formal, centric with the logic of the gaze', Chinese is 'invisible (always 'behind' and 'around the corner'), localized, corporeal and experiential'<sup>121</sup>.

The urban tissue of Beijing was composed of a soft uniform layer of building clusters rather than stand out *objects* or *monuments*. Shape was 'dissolved'<sup>122</sup>. *Formlessness* will be preferred to accommodate its enormous potential for relationships within, a metabolist logic of *growth* and *adaptability*<sup>123</sup>. The fluid and chaotic nature of the city will be organized not by a dominating structure, but by a harmoniously combined *fractal* geometry composed of modules. As Zhu remarks, we 'combine the two spatial orders, the conceived and the lived, where the perspective and formal geometry do not dominate but instead merge with a messy world of actual life and its religious and anthropological expressions.'<sup>124</sup>

One notes then how the paradox noted by Tostões, Simmel, and Tafuri, of the chaos of the modern environment and the rational attempt to control it within ordered urban space<sup>125</sup> is harmoniously integrated within Chinese cities. The oppositions that characterize the Western metropolis, between rural and urban, order and chaos, natural and artificial, the subject and its environment, will be harmoniously integrated, not alienated.

Public space isn't the main orderer of this space but rather a dense geometry of separate compounds, one that must be explored in order to be understood. As Zhu explains, with the module of the *sihéyuàn*, the *jiā*, as its structural piece (much like it did in the Daoist-Confucian dichotomy), and



21 Ming dynasty's (1368-1644) Beijing composed of a fractal geometry of building compounds and lanes



22 Beijing – Hutong's soft layer of courtyard compounds

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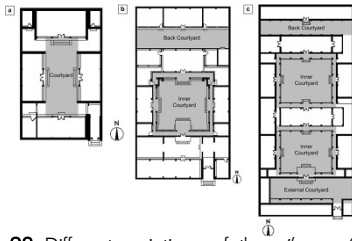
<sup>121</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 219

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p. 226

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, p. 223

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, p. 217

<sup>125</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.133



23 Different variations of the *siheyuan*'s inner courtyard and building relationships, based on socio-economic level of the family

the *walls* as its structural boundaries, a hidden formal geometry is able to accommodate and adapt towards the local world of lived experiences.

Adaptable and horizontal clustered structures that could house various activities and adapt each module to any use. The *siheyuan*'s inner *void* will accommodate and represent the Daoist notion of *growth* and hence the entire concept of *formlessness* within it. Within the *siheyuan* one can then see a relational structure that attempts to relate to the subjects needs and desires, through its expression of the subjects place in the social hierarchy, through its horizontal scale that doesn't attempt to dominate him, and through its modular structure composed of multiple and inter-related structures rather than attempting to accommodate every single experience unto *one single space* on the name of commodity capital. David Wang summarizes:

*'It never occurred to anyone that every human activity had to be supported by a unique physical form. But the Machine outlook itemizes all particulars in relation to the operations of larger mechanisms. As existence itself becomes conceived of as a technological operation, functions proliferate.'*<sup>126</sup>

Once buildings, architecture, and urban fabric, are organized unto *singular forms*, with segregated particular functions, the relation that binds objects together is lost<sup>127</sup>. By contrast, Chinese architecture is never meant to be appreciated as one individual building, but rather as a cluster of interrelated ones<sup>128</sup>. In this sense, Chinese architecture and urban space not only harmoniously integrate the modern environment of multiple lived experiences with an organizational system that can adapt to it, they also directly address the topic of alienation by interrelating its environment within itself and with the subject.

### 02.3.2 The Shophouse

Important to mention is then the cluster of buildings that co-existed with the towering structures on Nanking Road, an adaptation of the *siheyuan* module, the family itself, to the consumer metropolis – the *shophouse*.

The Tang dynasty (581-618) commercial reach saw the growth of powerful merchants creating an urban revolution<sup>129</sup>. With the growth of trade, trade left the boundaries of the market, and residential houses started also



24 Dah Sun Department Store and surrounding shophouses

<sup>126</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 103

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, p. 104

<sup>128</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.230

<sup>129</sup> Xu, Y. (2000) p.67

dealing with commerce. Thus shops and houses were no longer segregated and were harmoniously integrated<sup>130</sup>.

During this period the transformation of the walls of the city blocks into 'busy streets flanked with shops, restaurants, houses, and the like' brought 'a true sense of "public space" into the city: urban space for daily activities in which all residents of and around the city could freely participate'<sup>131</sup>. The creation of an urban identity started to emerge, though, still deeply entrenched in what Xu called the *rural-urban continuum*. This is why, though China at this time was the most urbanized society in the world<sup>132</sup> it never saw the contrast between urban and rural experienced in the West and never engendered the same feelings of alienation.

The architectural conception that arose out of this was the aforementioned *shophouse*, a building that combined residential and commercial activities within it.

The shophouses were two-storey, narrow, and cramped structures confined to long compounds with a dividing party-wall and a one or two gable roof. The family typically lived above or behind the shop. *Shophouses* did create what can be termed a consumer culture in Chinese streets, though the Confucian familial connection between business and residential home meant that the urban relationship was of a much more personal nature. Trade never developed beyond the familial ties between trader and consumer, never reaching the impersonal alienable scale of capitalistic consumerism, hence, the streets though chaotic and bustling with life, did not create the feeling of alienation seen in modern metropolis seen both in the scale of its buildings and anonymity of its residents. Much like the *siheyuan*, their inner *void* maintained their relational structure between parts and allowed for a deeper interpenetration of the outside and urban space into the interior.

In Nanking Road these shophouses comprised much of the street creating a contrast with the Western buildings. As was common in Chinese architecture, they were organized by compounds or clusters of buildings, they were all relatively inter-related and their character was to be found on the collective clusters rather than in individual buildings.

By the 1910s, Nanking Road, west of the intersection with Henan Road, was composed entirely of *shophouses* adorned with bright lights and bold colours. Reverend C.E. Darwent (1858-1924) offers us a good description of the kinds of Chinese shops existent in Nanking Road in 1904. Its most



25 Chinese *shophouses* on Nanking Road

<sup>130</sup> Xu, Y (2000) p.71

<sup>131</sup> Ibid p.74

<sup>132</sup> Ibid p.71



defining features for him were *'its hanging signs, globular and octagonal lamps, often adorned with red tassels, and its carving.'*<sup>133</sup> Similarly, James Ricalton (1844-1929) describes the interior of a Chinese teashop claiming the two large rooms of a typical teashop are *'decorated with handsome mirrors, rich carving in wood, and elegant painted wall-screens. The rooms are lighted by large lanterns of glass set in wooden frames, which you can see suspended from the ceiling.'*<sup>134</sup> Nanking Road had mostly catered to small shops and residential dwellings up until the turn of the century, the Chinese shops could be teashops, gold-merchant shops, silk, satin, embroideries, etc.<sup>135</sup>

*Shophouses* formed a blueprint for how Chinese tradition and consumer culture intermingled into what came to be a typical prototype and quintessential typology, even today, of Asian commercial centres. Gaudy colours, extravagant ornaments, bright lights, coloured lanterns, huge streamers and banners... some of the most defining feature of Nanking Road, namely its nurture for neon lights, were present for centuries within Chinese consumer streets. But within them we also see a different formulation, native and non-alienating, that might provide us different alternatives towards our current capitalist consumer spaces. The Shophouse then stands as an adaptable example of an urban consumer culture that is rooted not in foreign alienating models, which disconnect the individual from its surrounding culture and environment in search of profit, but rather, are built in soft relational urban clusters with a human and relational scale.

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<sup>133</sup> Darwent, C.E. (1904) p.13

<sup>134</sup> Ricalton, J. (1901) P.85

<sup>135</sup> Darwent, C.E. (1904) p.14

### 03 Hongqiao Sanatorium

*The Diaspora of the Modern Movement*

*'To-day the idea of the scientific and healthful city is spreading over the breadth of the world, but the conscious and intelligent application of which, I think, is especially urgent in China. To be sure, we do not possess those marvellous resources which have made it possible for the great European and American municipalities so easily to solve their social problems (...) Whenever we grapple with this task we must do so in a truly scientific and common sense manner.*

<sup>136</sup>

- William Chaund (1919)

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<sup>136</sup> Chaund, W. (1919) p.535

### 03.1 The Chinese Modern Movement

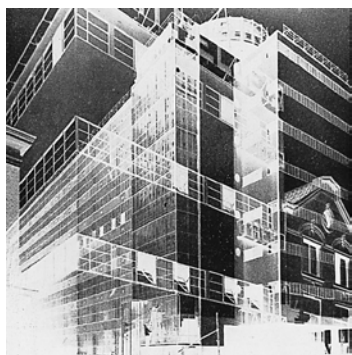
#### 03.1.1 *The New-Space Time Conception and Universal Reason*

Siegfried Giedion's (1888-1968) 1941 *magnum opus* 'Space, Time & Architecture: the growth of a new tradition', coached the formulation of the Modern Movement itself within the new space-time paradigm, a bridge that would heal the modern split between thinking and feeling<sup>137</sup>. The modern age wasn't defined by *stability* (or tradition) but by *dynamic change*.

For him, the change from Renaissance *static space* towards the modern cubist *dynamic space*, was what characterized the modern age. Made possible by the advent of new technologies, architecture was now lightweight and transparent, where 'matter is transformed into a container membrane'<sup>138</sup>. The concept of *simultaneity*, *inter-penetration*, *many-sidedness*, and *dynamism* are what Giedion sees as characterizing modern age itself. Much like modernity, non-static *space* and '*the infinite potentiality for relations within it*'<sup>139</sup> are, for Giedion, endless:

*"Today we need a house that corresponds in its entire structure to our bodily feeling as it is influenced and liberated through sports, gymnastics, and a sensuous way of life: light, transparent, movable. Consequentially, this open house also signifies a reflection of the contemporary mental condition: there are no longer separate affairs, all domains interpenetrate."*<sup>140</sup>

The belief on reason as a universal value, and the unbridled optimism in humanity's infinite *progress* based on it, is the *lingua franca* of Western modernity. Enlightenment Universalism was built on the premise that normative concepts could be formulated universally since they derived from neutral human reason.<sup>141</sup>



01 Laszlo Moholy-Nagi, *Von Material zu Architektur, "architektur"* (1929)

The Modern Movement's strongest characteristic will rely on this to use objective reason and the power of industrialization to progress and universalize architecture. Implicit in the Movement's social mission is a belief in the power of architecture to achieve a better future for everyone in the world. The more objectivist direction of the Movement will try to create an aesthetic based on reason, seen as a more honest expression of the *zeitgeist*, and the main tool used in order to achieve what were supposedly universal aesthetics.

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<sup>137</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) p.x

<sup>138</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.99

<sup>139</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) pp. 435-436

<sup>140</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.36

<sup>141</sup> Sachsenmaier, D. (2002) p. 62

Rationalization is what will allow architects to make use of the power and possibilities of industrialization through processes of *standardization*. The rejection of ornament on part of Adolf Loos (1870-1933) was not only because he deemed modernity a universal culture without a *style*, but also because of rational and pragmatic reasons. Ornament was 'a waste of work and consequently an attack on health'<sup>142</sup>. Mass production on a global scale necessitated less elaborate designs, in order to develop an efficient language that would focus not on the subject but on an objective universality through rationalization<sup>143</sup>. Ornament is precisely that excess that standardization cannot accommodate.

Hermann Muthesius (1861-1927) defended that '*only standardization, conceived as the result of a healthy concentration, can permit to rediscover a safe and universally valid taste*'<sup>144</sup>. Standardization became a tool as to harness the power of the industrial age unto architecture. A flexible standard whose worth was to be found in its infinite potential for adaptability and variation as keenly demonstrated by Le Corbusier (1887-1965) in his *Maison Domino* (1914), or in his *Five Points - a machine d'habiter*.

Reinforced concrete will become the chosen material for this emerging rationalist culture.<sup>145</sup> Through its *in-situ* and formless nature, reinforced concrete will be associated with calculus, science and objectivity, while also lending itself to extreme malleability and creativity. In this rational purview, it was the first truly universal material, with a belief that man's necessities were the same everywhere; in Paris as in Shanghai.

Objectivity and functionalism were then, seen as effective ways to produce better quality architecture for the masses. Nowhere else was this focus more evident than in the architecture of the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, as Tostões notes '*the objectivity Sachlichkeit compares itself to the new necessities then spread of comfort and hygiene. (...) quickly transformed in requirements of functionality: from comfort to health, from cleanliness to daily hygiene*'<sup>146</sup>.

The focus on *hygiene* as a benchmark as to effectively value what is a objectively *better* space, is going to be important when dealing with the architecture of sanatoriums. Though the Movement's focus on rationality tends to be on its empowering potential, Beatriz Colomina (1952-), echoing Simmel's thought, will also note that this turn towards objectivity was



02 Johannes Duiker, *Zonnestraal Sanatorium*, Hilversum, Netherlands (1925)



03 Le Corbusier, *Villa Savoye*, Poissy, France (1928)

<sup>142</sup> Loos, A. (2010) [translated by the thesis author] p.83

<sup>143</sup> Dogan, H. (2018) p.115

<sup>144</sup> Muthesius, H. and Velde, V. (2010) [translated by the thesis author] p.94

<sup>145</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.63

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, p. 89



04 Yang Tingbao, *Nanjing Central Hospital*, Nanjing (1933)



05 Tong Jun, *Apartment Blocks A and B for American Advisors*, Nanjing (1947)



06 Xi Fuquan, *Shanghai Pudong Association*, Shanghai (1934-6)



07 Xi Fuquan, *Longhua Asian Airlines Hangar*, Shanghai (1935-6)

simultaneously one of *empowerment through modernity* as well as *protection from modernity*:

“Modernity was driven by illness. The engine of modern architecture was not a heroic, shiny, functional machine working its way across the globe, but a languid, fragile body suspended outside daily life in a protective cocoon of new technologies and geometries.”<sup>147</sup>

### 03.1.2 A Sanatorium in China

The first generation of Chinese architects studied abroad through the Boxer Indemnity Fund having had the chance to go to universities in the US, Germany, France and United Kingdom. Though the education they received followed the Beaux-Arts method, the revolutionary decades of the 1910's-30's brought them in close proximity with modern architecture<sup>148</sup>.

To learn about the objectivist iteration of the Modern Movement, no country would be a better influence than Germany. Xi Fuquan (1902-1983), otherwise known as *Fozhien Godfrey Ede* 奚福泉 or Qiming, was the first Chinese architect to study architecture in Germany.<sup>149</sup> According to Liu Kan his works are ‘a perfect example of transculturation in architecture’<sup>150</sup>, in this case, the *Modern Movement Diaspora*. Xi studied and travelled in Germany at the beginning of the Modern Movement. Consequently, Xi will design truly modern structures near Shanghai<sup>151</sup>, showing close associations with Walter Gropius, Bruno Taut and other members of Der Ring<sup>152</sup>.

His most faithfully rationalist design is, unsurprisingly, the *Shanghai Hongqiao Convalescent Hospital* of 1934, better known as the *Hongqiao Sanatorium*. The program dealing with health would, as Georges Teyssot (1946-) put it, encourage the merging of ‘total sanitarianess’ with ‘total technology’<sup>153</sup>.

Shanghai, due to its marshy terrain and humid weather, had a strong preponderance for disease and epidemics. Like European metropolises,

<sup>147</sup> Colomina, B. (2019). p.11

<sup>148</sup> Zhuang Jun (1888-1990) whom designed *Shanghai Maternity Hospital in Shanghai* (1935) graduated 1914. Yang Tingbao (1901-1982) studied at UPenn and designed *Nanjing Central Hospital* (1933) and *Beijing Peace Hotel* (1949). Tong Jun (*Tung Chuin*, 1900-1983), also graduated from UPenn and eclectic contradiction emerged in architects such as Dong Dayou (*Doon Dayu*, 1899-1973) whom designed his own apartment (1935) following the *International Style* aesthetic.

<sup>149</sup> Studied between 1923-26 in Technische Universitat Darmstadt and obtained his masters from 1927-29 in Technische Hochschule Charlottenburg, now Technische Universitat Berlin Upon returning to Shanghai he worked for the most prominent foreign architectural firm, Palmer & Turner.

<sup>150</sup> Kan, L., Lun, L. and Chau T.S.L. (2011) p. 46

<sup>151</sup> The *Shanghai Pudong Association* (1934-36); the *Asian Airlines Hangar in Longhua* (1935-6); and *Nanjing National Museum of Art* (1936).

<sup>152</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) p.61

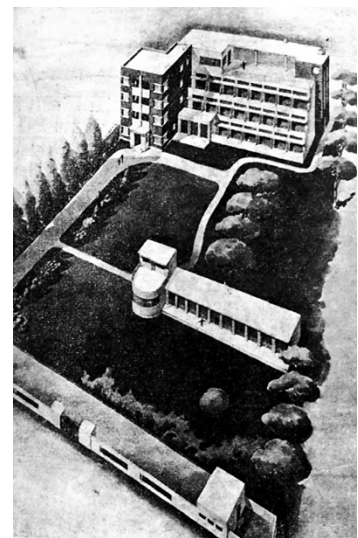
<sup>153</sup> Teyssot, G. (2020) p.19-27

Shanghai was a dirty, noisy and congested urban centre. Nevertheless, a real difference between the Western and Chinese parts of Shanghai would be felt. Bertrand Russell lays bare this opposition when he notes '*In the European town one finds safety, spaciousness and hygiene; in the Chinese town, romance, overcrowding and disease*'<sup>154</sup>. C.M. Dyce, in 1906, claims that '*in brilliant sunshine, I found the squalor and dirt were quite real*'<sup>155</sup>. The sanitary conditions of many of the Chinese parts of Shanghai would be the reason for calls to modernization, as was the case of the architect William Chaund's opening quote in this chapter, largely motivated by the fact that the '*prevalence of plague, tuberculosis, and infant mortality stand at world record*'<sup>156</sup>.

This contrast prompted a more open embrace of Western development as opposed to other places. In architecture, as far as western material progress goes, the architecture of the Modern Movement was the *avant-garde*. Its advances will be also be informed by the sanitary crisis resulted from the Industrial Revolution. If for Goethe's Faust, progress was a *desire*, for medicine it is a *need*. Built as a '*domestication of the sanatorium*'<sup>157</sup>, the Modern Movement will be adopted as the path forward.

Hongqiao Sanatorium, though small and compact when compared to the ones in Europe, also segregates its building according to function in order to not disturb its patients. This difference in function can easily be seen by the volumetric and aesthetic differences between buildings as well as their asymmetrical composition: noting two single story buildings in the entrance of the sanatorium, a two-story annex in the front, and the main building of four-storeys composed of three juxtaposed volumes: one volume for circulation, another for the patients bedrooms and treatment rooms, and another which comprised the main entrance and allocated spaces for other patient's rooms and staff spaces.<sup>158</sup> (Annex 03)

In 1927, while Xi was getting his Master's in Berlin, Richard Döcker (1894-1968) published his influential book '*Terrassentyp*'. In it he traces the development of the roof terrace as an efficient tool for health, something he will develop in his *Waiblingnen Sanatorium* (1928). In it Döcker uses diagrams to show how to achieve maximum sun exposure using a sloped layout so every patient's room could have a terrace. This typology will be what best connects Hongqiao Sanatorium with the European *avant-garde*. The sanatorium also sets back each floor in order to create a closed



08 Xi Fuquan, *Hongqiao Sanatorium*, Shanghai (1934)

<sup>154</sup> Russell, B. (1922) pp.74-75

<sup>155</sup> Dyce, CM. (1906) p. 22

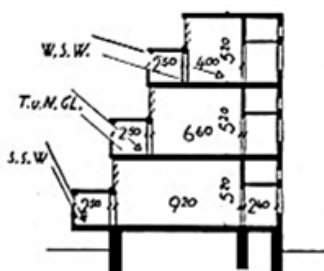
<sup>156</sup> Chaund, W. (1919) p.535

<sup>157</sup> Colomina, B. (2019) p.94

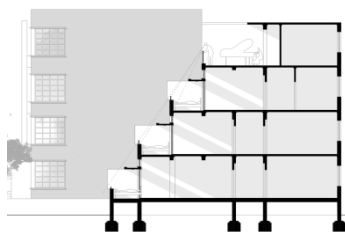
<sup>158</sup> Shi, Y. (2006). p.51

balcony for each room. In this building we also find that the patient's bedroom comprised the entire southern façade while the more technical rooms such as X-ray room, solarium and treatment were in the northern one. Like Döcker the building also uses its terraced typology to create a communal living open terrace in the roof. (Annex 03)

The attention to *function* doesn't stop in the building's typology and goes further unto a level of detail closer to Alvar Aalto's (1898-1976) experiments at *Paimio Sanatorium* (1929). Just as Aalto wanted to 'meet the patient's needs not only at the level of environmental control but also in terms of identity and privacy'<sup>159</sup>, Hongqiao Sanatorium sought such careful attention. Constructed in concrete framing, it achieved a soothing formal abstraction with its pure white walls, it furnished rubber flooring for soundproofing<sup>160</sup>, a curved ceiling-wall header connection to soothe the edges in the room, and each balcony featured a partitioning wall and a translucent canopy to ensure the patient's privacy but still allow sunlight to pass through<sup>161</sup>. One can then claim the *Neue Sachlichkeit* and functionalist tradition was followed in Hongqiao and the building was 'truly a case of form following function'<sup>162</sup>.



09 Richard Döcker, *Terrasentyp* (1929) – comparative diagrams



10 Xi Fuquan, *Hongqiao Sanatorium*, Shanghai (1934) – Section



11 Xi Fuquan, *Hongqiao Sanatorium*, Shanghai (1934) – Entrance volume



12 J.J.P. Oud, *Hoek van Holland Housing Block*, Hoek van Holland, Netherlands, (1926-7)

The formal connections with the Modern Movement can still be observed in other areas. The two-storey annex in the entrance of the sanatorium, with its use of curved glass shapes coupled with horizontal volumes, closely resembles the work of Dutch architects such as J.J.P. Oud's (1890-1963) designs at *Hoek van Holland* (1924). Perhaps the most expressive influence besides Döcker's *Terrasentyp* is in the work of Bruno Taut (1880-1938), more specifically in his residential projects for Berlin.

Like Taut, Xi uses colour along with massing to differentiate the different parts that compose the building, such as the balconies of the main building. The use of colour also differentiates the different juxtaposed volumes within the building. Xi is able to create depth, rhythm and dynamism in what would otherwise be a very compact and monotonous volume. The formal aesthetic is then one where the façade of the building is a *collage* of different shapes, interpenetrating one another, much like the paintings of *De Stijl* Dutch painters.

The sanatorium is then, not only closely in line with the developments occurring in the 1920's and 30's in regards to German and Dutch modern architecture, but also embodied the rational spirit of the Modern Movement

<sup>159</sup> Frampton, K. (2007) p.198

<sup>160</sup> Kan, L., Lun, L. and Chau T.S.L. (2011) p.43-53

<sup>161</sup> Shi, Y. (2006) p.51

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p.51

in its qualities as a sanatorium - as a *protective cocoon* away from the ills of the modern city that is Shanghai in the far off suburb of Hongqiao (Annex 01). Closely in line with Taut's utopian sketches within the Swiss Alps<sup>163</sup>, Thomas Mann's (1875-1955) '*Der Zauberberg*' (1924) or Aalto's concerns for Paimio as 'the *protection of the isolated human being, of great groups of people, and the pressure of the collectivity*'<sup>164</sup> - the utopia and the sanatorium combined.

Hongqiao Sanatorium can then be said to be a perfect study of *transculturation* of the Modern Movement. It looks at the formulations of the Modern Movement as the future for architecture in China, of an architecture that supports itself in universal rational values to better the quality of the spaces which it serves and finds a freeing liberation in its cosmopolitan modernity. For all intents and purposes the building strikes no resemblance to Xi's own Chinese identity, instead it insists on a globalized notion of a shared global architecture. That is except for a few minute details which find striking importance. For the building shows no Chinese identity except in a department that the Modern Movement sought to radically eradicate from architecture - its ornament.

### 03.2 The Diaspora of the Modern Movement

The use of ornament indicates a recoil from the Modern Movement's universal formulations and an expression of a national identity through the use of traditional motifs. Loos' acceptance of a loss of culture, and hence, *style*, is not accepted as freely in China. Supported by "universal" reason, an equation between the *modern* and the *western* was created. In Hongqiao Sanatorium, Xi looked at the West as the *signifier for the modern*, conceptualizing one single western conception of modernity.

Likewise, the Modern Movement has a singular conception of the future of architecture. The faith in rationality and functionality, was a universal value to be adopted by the entire world in its strive for development. As Tostões claims:

*"the architecture of the Modern Movement in its civilizing impulse always served colonization (...) It is therefore important to ask how modern principles, resulting from a Eurocentric culture, were crossed with the ancestral cultures of the Orient and Africa"*<sup>165</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Seen in his '*Alpine Architecture*' (1917)

<sup>164</sup> Frampton, K. (2007) p.198

<sup>165</sup> Tostões, A. (ed.) (2013) p.63



13 Bruno Taut, *Falkenberg Gardenstadt Housing Estates*, Berlin, Germany

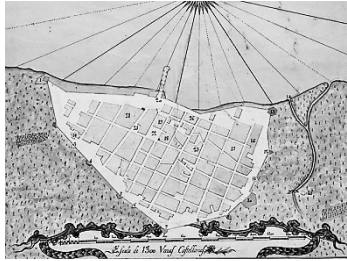


14 Xi Fuquan, *Hongqiao Sanatorium*, Shanghai (1934) – Main Volume





15 Le Corbusier, *Plan Voisin*, Paris, France (1925)



16 Veracruz, Mexico (1519) – the Spanish Colonial Grid



17 Xi Fuquan, *Hongqiao Sanatorium*, Shanghai (1934) – Ornamental details

The rationalist eradication of ornament and style is in this respect *destructive*. As previously mentioned, modernity's impulse to erase what was *before* in favour of the *new* - *tabula rasa* - gains a disturbing parallel when applied within the imperialist context as Arif Dirlik noted. That of the colonial *terra nullius*, where 'both assume blank places, erasing everything before them, including human life'<sup>166</sup>.

Hongqiao Sanatorium's uncritical embrace of the Modern Movement then, puts it within this paradigm, of false cosmopolitanism. A *Westernization* through the use of objectivity and universal reason. The sanatorium's adoption of the Modern Movement as the only way to achieve its functional goals, paying little attention to the rich Chinese tradition, is a product of a perspective where the *modern*, the *new* and *functional* was conflated with the West. By ignoring Chinese tradition, Xi is placing it in the realm of the *old*, the *under-developed*, and hence, the *disposable*, that which is supposed to be eradicated in a *tabula rasa*. The Modern Movement then 'in its will to standardize conforms a transformative and colonial action that reserves little space for the valuation of ancestral and local cultures'<sup>167</sup>.

The question and use of ornament in Hongqiao sanatorium gains here a new dimension then, since it stands in direct opposition towards this reflexive destructive tendency of the Movement and it's precisely where Xi will preserve its Chinese identity.

The connection between ornament, style and identity was one that was keenly understood by Loos himself. It is precisely because he sees no stable culture around him that he seeks to destroy it in the first place. Gottfried Semper (1803-1879)'s theory of *dressung - bekleidung* - was able to tie the cultural identity of a *style* with the particularities and techniques of *ornament*, claiming that '*form must be considered as a function of the technical means that come into play*'<sup>168</sup>. This means that ornament is a direct by-product of the culture and intimately tied with its identity in its formulations, what best demonstrates the intricacies of any given *style*.

Xi's use of Chinese ornament in window lattices and entrance doors, speaks not only to the importance and connection between ornament and identity but also to a different perspective between *style* and *standardization* than the one formulated in the Modern Movement.

Standardization and ornament were completely integrated within Chinese tradition. As Nancy Shatzman Steinhardt (1954-) notes, the Chinese

<sup>166</sup> Dirlik, A. (2005) p.50

<sup>167</sup> Tostões, A. (ed.) (2013) p.67

<sup>168</sup> Semper, G. (2010) p.226

tradition had for millenia dealt with a completely standardized architecture, translated in the Song 'building standards manual', the *Yingzào Fǎshì*, while also standardizing and developing multiple ornamental motifs. Standardization was precisely what connected Chinese society and its built environment, through the *fēn* 分 module, as David Wang explains:

*"fēn connects neo-Confucian social philosophy with architecture, in that both are conceived of as systems composed of apportioned units relationally ordered."* <sup>169</sup>

*Fēn* was both the 'allotted piece of this cosmic fabric.' <sup>170</sup> reserved for each person, as it was part of the fundamental module that governed Chinese construction for millennia – the *dǒugǒng* bracket-set. Chinese construction was completely standardized from the dimensions of its *dǒugǒng*. Within Chinese construction, *cái* 材 and *zhì* 志 – both formed the cross-section of a *dǒugǒng* bracket-set, and defined all building dimensions from the height to the width of the building; *fēn* – a subunit of the *cái* comprising 1/15 its height and most essential unit of Chinese construction <sup>171</sup>. The *cái-fēn* system had eight grades in total which standardize from small to large architecture. All of this measurements determined and were determined by social rank such that, as Denison claims, 'Building made visible the logic and order of Chinese society.' <sup>172</sup>. Hence every unit from the smallest room to the entire city 'represented and thus facilitated the organisation of everything, from the position of the cosmos to an artefact on a table.' <sup>173</sup>

Rationalization was intrinsic to Chinese society itself, placing the individual in a complex 'cosmic fabric', not alienating him from its culture. Hence, though rationalization and standardization was often equated with a turn towards objectivity and hence loss of *meaning* in the West, in China it was precisely standardization that meaningfully situated Chinese construction within its environment.

Through the affirmation of a Chinese identity precisely through its ornamentation, Hongqiao Sanatorium rejects the notion that standardizing building construction means a loss of cultural identity and subscription to a universal standard. Though the building still adheres for the most part to western formulations of modernity (one has to pay attention to notice ornamental details after all) it does open questions regarding Modern Movement's alternatives and formulations of modern architecture in spaces beyond the West.

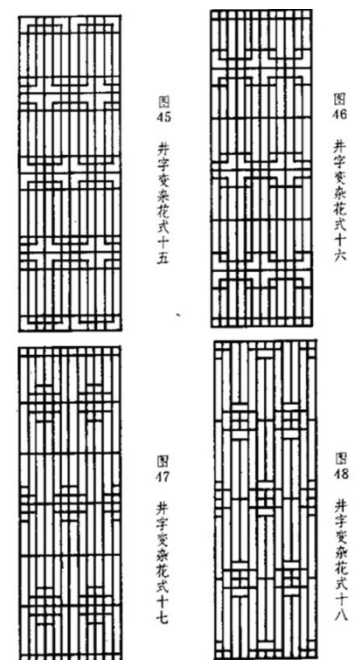
<sup>169</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p.52

<sup>170</sup> Ibid, p.50

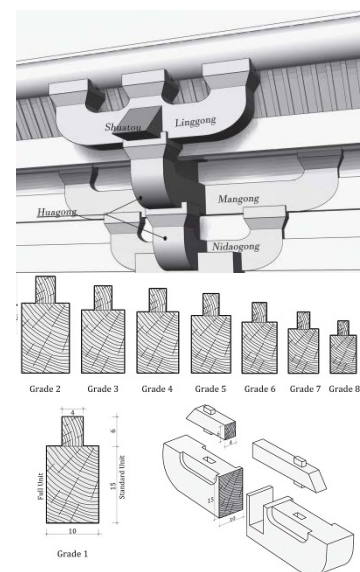
<sup>171</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.154

<sup>172</sup> Denison (2017) pp. 94-95

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, pp. 94-95



18 Ji Cheng, *Yuanye* (1631) – Different standardized window lattices



19 *Dougong* bracket-set and grades of *cái* and *zhì* from its cross-section

Searching for different formulations of architectural modernity besides the limited European perspective, much like Xi did in the employment of Chinese ornament in the sanatorium, will open up new perspectives. Bertrand Russell's interest in China is important in this regard, since he was looking precisely for alternatives to the Western *machinist outlook*.

Though Europe was successful in industrial and scientific terms, it strayed away, according to Russell, from a more humanistic perspective, a critique that is often levied against the Modern Movement itself.

### 03.3 Going Beyond the Modern Movement

*"We shape clay into a pot, but  
it is the emptiness inside that  
holds whatever we want. We  
hammer wood for a house, but  
it is the inner space  
that makes it livable."<sup>174</sup>*

*Tao Te Ching - Chapter 11*

As previously mentioned, Modernity and the correlative Daoist philosophy share a fundamental similarity of a reality that is in *permanent change*. The Western modern paradox of 'something that wants to hold on but that is now in permanent transformation'<sup>175</sup> will be the fundamental difference between the two realities. The *Dào* will be a philosophy of acceptance of correlations between oppositions instead of dialectically confronting them into a synthesis.

#### 03.3.1 *The Old and New Space-Time Conception*

Chinese conception of space, found in its paintings relative perspectives from different vantage points, will find close resemblance to Giedion's description of the new *space-time*. An environment where 'there are no longer separate affairs, all domains interpenetrate.'<sup>176</sup>, something that will parallel the correlative view's 'rimless world', a space that values *formlessness, inter-relations* and the potential found in *voids*.

Giedion's description of the new space-time conception where 'in order to grasp the true nature of space the observer must project himself through it'<sup>177</sup> will be paralleled by Chinese space, where the spectator is *inside* the painting and where artists were taught to 'view landscape in different and shifting angles with an interactive relation with the world'<sup>178</sup>. This space is



20 Hung Jen, *River Scene in Winter* (1663)



21 Wang Tingna, *Gardens of the Hall Encircled by Jade* (c. 1600)

<sup>174</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 11

<sup>175</sup> Tostões, A. (2015)p.32

<sup>176</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.36

<sup>177</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) pp. 435-436

<sup>178</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 22

then characterized by the *intangible relationships* between things, and for whom a clear definition isn't possible due to its interpenetrating quality - *rimless*.

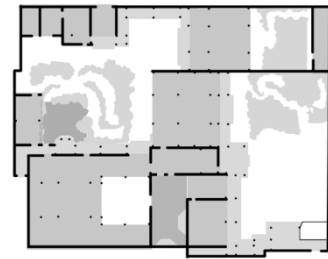
This focus on inter-relations between elements, in *dynamic change* rather than *staticism*, is going to tend in the Modern Movement towards a modular rationalized and lightweight architecture made possible by industrial innovations in building construction, from the *dense brick* to the *open box*. Similarly, Chinese literati gardens show a freedom and conceptualization of space freer than imperial architecture, and will share the values Giedion saw in modern architecture, namely, its many-sidedness, dynamism, transparency, flexibility and interpenetrations.<sup>179</sup>

Tong Jung and Liu Dunzhen (1897-1968) both researched extensively on Chinese gardens and found in them similarities towards modern space. Within them no object or building is valued in isolation, leading to an architecture of complex layouts and clusters of buildings rather than unitary designs. As Tong Jun explains '*symmetry, while observed in monumental and even domestic architecture, is completely disregarded in the lay-out of a Chinese Garden, where relaxation, and not reason, rules.*<sup>180</sup> A Chinese garden is something that can't be taken in at a glance, but is in fact, only enjoyed when wandered through, discovering its twisting and interpenetrating spaces.

The focus on *void* as allowance for *growth* is a freeing conception that is going to find close resemblance with Giedion's conception of *space* as the '*infinite potentiality for relations within it*<sup>181</sup> as David Wang characterizes:

*'once the point of tangible fulfillment is reached, the potential of growing is exhausted. (...) Void, conventionally regarded as negative, actually is more important because it is always capable of being filled by solid'*<sup>182</sup>.

Furthermore, this focus on *growth* will be the reason Chinese architecture has such a strong focus on *modularity* such as in the *sihéyuàn*'s highly modular Chinese timber frame, composed by a system of columns, lintels, bracket-sets and the roof. The frame is in its modularization remarkably similar to Le Corbusier's system of pilotis and slabs in his *Maison Domino*. Chinese partitioning of space then brings Chinese construction closer to a *containing membrane of space*, flexible, adaptable and open. The free conception of space as an asymmetrical interplay of partitioning walls, pillars and natural environments is reminiscent of Le Corbusier's freedom



22 *Ting Feng Yuan (Listening to Maples Garden, Suzhou* – Diagram showcasing exterior, interior and interstitial spaces



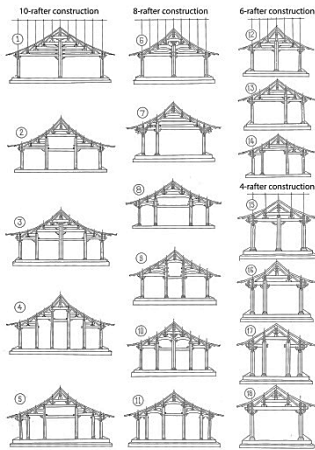
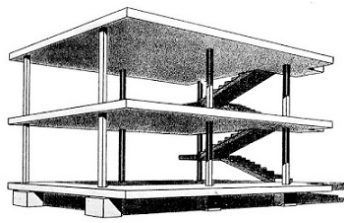
23 *Zhuozheng Yuan (Humble Administrator Garden), Suzhou (1510)* – Interpenetrating and phenomenological experience of the garden

<sup>179</sup> Heynen, H. (1999) p.40

<sup>180</sup> Chuin, T. (1936) pp.221-222

<sup>181</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) pp. 435-436

<sup>182</sup> Chang, A. (2017)p.07



24 Le Corbusier, *Maison Dom-inc* (1914) and different variations of several *tingtang* in *Yingzao fashi*.

of plan. In Chinese gardens, buildings were always open on one or more sides to find relations with views and the surrounding nature. <sup>183</sup>

This allowance for *growth*, adaptability, will also be seen in the modern acceptance of *perishability* and constant renewal. As Steinhardt claims '*parts can be remade, replaced, or moved*' something which is ironically one of the main reasons '*the perishable timber frame persisted for so long as the primary structural type*'<sup>184</sup>. Chinese structures weren't made to last forever but thought *a priori* to be constantly remade and replaced, a much more sustainable system that allows for the persistence of building tradition.

Formulations of the Modern Movement and the Chinese tradition share similarities. Such sources might have meant radically different interpretations of the main precepts of the Movement, as in the case of Hongqiao Sanatorium. Furthermore, drawing from their own Chinese tradition, Chinese modern architects would have been able to move beyond western conceptions and arrive at different formulations that were both *modern* and *Chinese*. Russell's description of *Lǎozǐ* as a deeply empathic and *humane* philosophy will provide an important alternative.

### 03.3.2 The Humanization of Architecture

The Daoist acceptance of *change* and *interrelations* will move beyond the modern paradox and arrive at more humane formulations.

*"Things arise and she lets them come;  
Things disappear and she lets them go  
She has but doesn't possess,  
acts but doesn't expect.  
When her work is done, she forgets it.  
That is why it lasts forever"*

*Tao Te Ching - Chapter 02* <sup>185</sup>

There is then an important distinction between the *Dào's* notion of *constant change* and modernity's conception of *endless progress*. The *Dào* does not have a '*desire to change whatever they see*' and '*wish to reduce everything to a preconceived pattern*' <sup>186</sup>. Rather it embraces and accepts the changing nature of reality and doesn't attempt to paradoxically rationalize and control it, erasing the subject in its process.

It is then interesting to note that a more *humane* and less *rational* approach towards architecture will precisely be tied with a closer connection to the

<sup>183</sup> Chuin, T. (1936) p.228

<sup>184</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.01

<sup>185</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 02

<sup>186</sup> Russell, B. (1922) p. 194

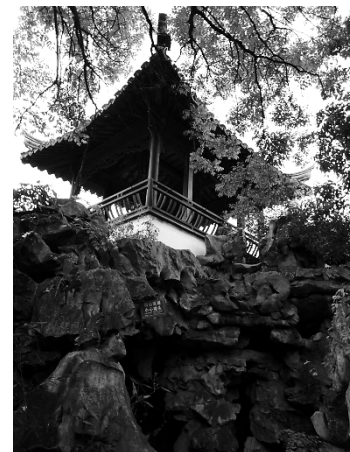
East in the figures of Bruno Zevi (1918-2000), Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959), Alvar Aalto (1898-1976) and Jørn Utzon (1918-2008). By moving closer to the East the Modern Movement will shift from Corbusier's '*machine d'habiter*', towards Wright's '*human shelter*'.

The opening quote of this section, the *Dào's* eleventh chapter, is one of the most remarkable passages of the text - '*We hammer wood for a house, but it is the inner space that makes it livable*<sup>187</sup> - a statement that excited Wright in his readings of Okakura and which will find a bridge in the notion of *space* in Bruno Zevi. In his opposition to Le Corbusier, Zevi claims an *organic* architecture is necessary. Zevi's insistence on space arises out of a deeply human and sensorial experience of architecture, not a rational one. As Amos Ih Tiao Chang claims:

*"it's the existence of intangible elements, the negative, in architectonic forms which makes them come alive become human, naturally harmonize with one another, and enable us to experience them with human sensibility"*<sup>188</sup>.

Zevi's main points in '*Towards an Organic Architecture*' will find close resemblance to Chinese architecture, namely in their focus on *interiority* and the house as a *shelter*. Noted by Giedion in relation to Wright's architecture, his house was '*a shelter, a covert into which the human animal can retire as into a cave, protected from rain and wind and - light*<sup>189</sup>. Wright's unity with the soil, with culture itself, show his parallelism with Chinese space. A quintessential quality of a literati garden, architecture in gardens never stood in isolation but rather completed a whole along with the surrounding water, vegetation and rock scenery<sup>190</sup>. Though both Le Corbusier and Wright's architecture share a conception of the house as a '*protective cocoon*', Le Corbusier disconnects itself from the surrounding environment through the use of pilotis, while Wright, much like in literati gardens, connects himself with tradition and culture and firmly places its house on the soil.

Daoism's acceptance of oppositions will be its biggest contrast with the Modern Movement's dogmatic approach. Modernity's tendency to dialectically synthesize oppositions into a unified whole, as Giedion premised his entire book on, is going to be completely rejected here. Oppositions are constantly found within Chinese architecture and gardens in an harmonious equilibrium, between *Fluidity* and *Fixity* between *Yin* and *Yang*.



25 Frank Lloyd Wright, *Fallingwater*, Pennsylvania, US(1939) and *Songshu Wuyan Garden*, Tonglizhen, Suzhou

<sup>187</sup> Laozi (2013) Chapter 11

<sup>188</sup> Chang, A. (2017) p.09

<sup>189</sup> Giedion, S. (2008) p.417

<sup>190</sup> Qingxi, L. (2003) p.58

Chinese architecture will be, at the same time, a deeply *interior* architecture while being completely *open* to nature. It is structured around a geometrical, rationalized system of construction while being completely fluid and free in its placement within the garden. It has a rigid boundary wall with a highly fluid interior. Its materials are composed of a light timber-frame structure on top of a heavy stone masonry podium, the perishable and the eternal, as noted by Jørn Utzon, '*there is magic in the play between roof and platform.*'<sup>191</sup>

But nowhere else can this ambivalent acceptance better be seen than in the delicate mediation between light and shadow, seen in Jun'ichirō Tanizaki's (1886-1965) thought, whom repeatedly notes that his sentiments come from a deep Chinese tradition and are not reserved to Japan<sup>192</sup>. Tanizaki sees in the East a different sensibility from the West, a world of shadows, as he claims '*the beauty of a Japanese room depends on a variation of shadows heavy shadows against light shadows – it has nothing else*'<sup>193</sup>.

Tanizaki's love for *old* things, shows a sensibility different from that of modernity's project of *total cleanliness*. Within his text we find a culture that doesn't try to *change* things at its own will, but rather, finds appreciation in what they already *are*, as he claims:

*"we Orientals tend to seek our satisfactions in whatever surroundings we happen to find ourselves, to content ourselves with things as they are; and so darkness causes us no discontent, we resign ourselves to it as inevitable. If light is scarce then light is scarce; we will immerse ourselves in the darkness and there discover its own particular beauty. But the progressive Westerner is determined always to better his lot. From candle to oil lamp, oil lamp to gaslight, gaslight to electric light - his quest for a brighter light never ceases, he spares no pains to eradicate even the minutest shadow."*<sup>194</sup>.

Tanizaki's thought shows a different sensibility, different from Western formulations and which might provide different answers and alternatives towards the shared modern project. Chinese architecture finds plenty of similarities and differences from which to source a formulation for what can be termed a *Chinese Modernity*. Hongqiao Sanatorium's embrace of Western formulations and disregard for spatial differences not only participates in the colonial project of Western global homogeneity but also exhausts the modern project in its Western origins and ignores any new possible sources that might inform new kinds of spatial conceptions.



26 Jørn Utzon, *Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of a Danish Architect* (1962) Sketch of a Chinese temple



27 *Jiayin Hall*, Tonglizhen, Suzhou

<sup>191</sup> Utzon, J. (1962)

<sup>192</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p.79

<sup>193</sup> Tanizaki, J. (2001) pp.28-29

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid*, pp.47-48

## 04 Greater Shanghai Plan

*A Chinese Architecture National Revival*

*'A group of young students went to America and Europe to study the fundamental of architecture. They came back to China filled with ambition to create something new and worthwhile. They initiated a great movement, a movement to bring back a dead architecture to life: in other words, to do away with poor imitations of western architecture and to make Chinese architecture truly national'<sup>194</sup>*

- Dong Dàoyǒu (1936)

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<sup>194</sup> Dàoyǒu, D. (1936)



## 04.1 Nationalist China

China's crisis-consciousness, from 'Zhōngguó' to 'guójia' 国家 - a *nation-state* - will result in a need to legitimize itself on the global space through a nationalist project.

### 04.1.1 *Nationalism and Modernity*

Nationalism and national identity are modern social phenomena. Within an equalized global space, Benedict Anderson's (1936-2015) imagined community<sup>195</sup>, in substitution of previous traditional identities such as 'God' and 'King', will have to create its own identity within global space – the *nation*, and its *people*.<sup>196</sup> Being a *nation among nations*, such an identity will attempt to be grounded in a stable formulation; hence the nation will attempt to gain an *eternal* and *monumental* character. A messianic, homogenous and almost mythical past is constructed out of the nation's history, purging *'the collective self of any trace of 'the other'*<sup>197</sup>. The search for a *shared past* that differentiates one from the *'other'* is then the *nationalist project*.

The way by which the nation and its people are governed and organized is through its self-representation in the impersonal and abstract *bureaucratic state*<sup>198</sup>. Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) notes that the State, in its will to represent the people and project its own authority, will attempt to *'homogenize, to hierarchize, and to fragment social spaces'*<sup>199</sup>. The nation with the *State* as its center.

Since *'the State has the city as its center'*<sup>200</sup>, the space of the city will represent the entire metaphysical reality of the *nation* itself, and hence it will gain a representational and rhetorical character which it previously did not have. Representation and *symbolism* are, then, going to be the main avenues by which the State attempts to represent itself. Architecture and urbanism will play crucial roles in materializing these spaces through the use of Renaissance linear perspective - *monumentality*.

Seen in Renaissance ideal cities, where all streets tended towards the same vanishing central point, manifestation of the town will be represented

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<sup>195</sup> Anderson, B. (2006) p.06

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, p.11

<sup>197</sup> Smith, A. (2003) p.44

<sup>198</sup> Greenfeld, L. (1996) p.24

<sup>199</sup> Lefebvre, H. (2009) p. 223

<sup>200</sup> Ibid, p.224

within one single homogenous locus, the *town square*.<sup>201</sup> Imbuing with symbolic meaning the '*monument*', urban *façades* became the symbolic representation of the *public scene*, and expressions of the identity of the *nation* itself. In this sense, their tendency towards a unified homogenous *national style* was to be the main architectural project of the nation-state.



01 Piazza della Signoria, Firenze, Italy

#### 04.1.2 The Chinese Nation-State and the Modern Architect

The modern nationalist project in China will confront the question of national liberation and native identity which up until here, in Nanking Road and the Hongqiao Sanatorium, remained marginal. Using Guófān's and Hóngzhāng's *tǐ - yòng* dichotomy, the nationalist project will attempt to simultaneously search for its own Chinese '*essence*' - *tǐ* - while also attempting a project of modernization by subscribing to universal time and global space through Western methods and technology - *yòng*. Guofan and Hongzhang's call to '*Learn from the West*' and for '*youths to be sent to the schools of various Western countries to study*'<sup>202</sup> was to be adopted both by the first generations of Chinese nationalists - Liáng Qǐchāo (1873-1929) - and later by the first generation of national Chinese architects - Liáng Sīchéng 梁思成 (1901-1972).

Modernity by definition, through its linearization and universalization of time, demanded a history, something from which to push itself forward and from which to break with. An attempt to both push the country forward by learning from the West and find out in that pursuit what is the Chinese cultural essence was to define the nationalist modern project<sup>203</sup>. Qǐchāo's historiographical and nationalist project, to legitimize Chinese history within global space<sup>204</sup> will attempt to systematically record Chinese history based in factual and scientific Western methods. Such a project, Qǐchāo believed, would allow a cultural renewal for the country - a *Chinese Renaissance*.

Liang Sīchéng will take his father's historiographical nationalist project and attempt to at the same time *preserve* and *renew* Chinese architecture. With a Beaux-Artian education at the University of Pennsylvania (1924-27) Sīchéng will attempt to construct an architectural history based on historical facts, patterns and try to delineate a workable genealogy based on *stylistic changes*. By this scientific and rigorous method, Liang hoped to be able to, much like his father, legitimize Chinese architecture in global history as coherent and homogenous.

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid, p.232

<sup>202</sup> Guofan, Z. and Hongzhang, L. (2000)

<sup>203</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 92

<sup>204</sup> Tang, X. (1996) p.233

To study *architecture* itself, meant a separation of architecture from the correlative cosmos – architecture became an *object*<sup>205</sup>. Through the empowering nationalist discourse, a newfound sense of the role of the citizenry and the architect saw a shift from the anonymous craftsman – *jiànggrén* – to the individualist architect – *jiànzhùshī* 建筑师<sup>206</sup>. Through the aforementioned Boxer Indemnity Fund numerous Chinese students went on to the US to study architecture and came back with a completely different outlook in the role building construction was to play in China's future. With an *entity* of their own, no longer part of an *apperceptive* correlative cosmos, these architects became ideologically driven and demanded the emancipation of architecture itself.

A modern bourgeois public sphere started to open up by which architects could express their *ideas*. The first published architectural journals such as 'The Chinese Architect' – *Zhōngguó Jiànzhù* – and 'The Builder Monthly' – *Jiànzhù Yuèkān* – opened in 1932. One of the most prescient and earliest texts on the subject is by the Chinese William H. Chaund, in the 'Far Easter Review'. As early as 1919, Chaund was asserting that architecture needed to play a role in the creation of the new nation-state, and must evolve and adapt to new circumstances. Echoing the *tǐ-yòng* concept, the new Chinese architecture must:

*'select and adopt that which will fill our requirements and strengthen us (...)* however profoundly influenced by the western attitude and thought we must work out our own salvation'<sup>207</sup>.

Architectural rejuvenation was '*absolutely urgent for our national evolutionary progress*<sup>208</sup>. In Chaund's text one will then find the first demand by a Chinese architect for his profession's own autonomy, as a matter of national salvation.

#### 04.1.3 "China Renaissance" – The New National Style

Beaux-Arts as a design method was to play a crucial role in providing the framework that would characterize China's new *national architecture*. If the *tǐ* was to find its sources in Chinese historiographical research, the foreign *yòng* would be the Beaux-Arts method and education that the 1st generation of architects received abroad<sup>209</sup>. Though most

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<sup>205</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 96

<sup>206</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2011) p. 18

<sup>207</sup> Chaund, W. (1919) p.534

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid*, p.533

<sup>209</sup> "William" Chaund went to Chicago's Armour Institute of Technology, Lu Yanzhi (1894-1929) studied at Cornell University; Liu Dunzhen (1897-1968) went to Tokyo; from 1918 to 1941, 25 students studied at UPenn, such as Fan Wenzhao (1893-1979), Zhao Shen (1898-1978), Yang Tingbao (1901-1982), the aforementioned Liang

studied under the tutelage of Paul Philippe Cret (1876-1945) at the University of Pennsylvania, *Dǒng Dà yǒu* 董大酉 (1899-1973) – the architect of this research - studied at the University of Minnesota and Columbia University.

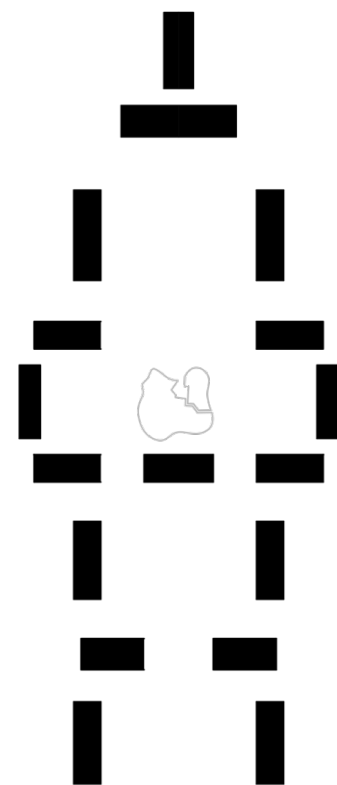
Besides being the design education these architects received, Beaux-Arts will fit neatly into the Chinese nationalist project for other reasons. It easily adapted to the Chinese *tǐ*, sharing with Chinese architecture a focus on axuality, symmetry, and sequential layouts<sup>210</sup>; and also fulfilled the *yòng* function, described by Cret as a ‘*science of design*’ rather than a style’ that could ‘*incorporate modern programs and technology into the Western architectural tradition*’<sup>211</sup>. Furthermore, Beaux-Art’s use of Renaissance monumental perspective (imbuing with symbolic meaning its buildings) and insistence on the architect as an individual *ideologue*<sup>212</sup> will also fulfil the need for a rhetorical nationalist architecture with an international vocabulary of power and prestige, placing China in the global stage of *nation-states*.<sup>213</sup>

Henry Killam Murphy (1877-1954), for whom several architects of the first generation worked for, including *Dǒng Dà yǒu* <sup>214</sup>, is going to provide the morphological template through which this *tǐ-yòng* concept was first formulated with his ‘*adaptive architecture*’<sup>215</sup>. He was committed to ‘*the revival of the ancient architecture of China into a living style by adapting it to meet the needs of modern scientific planning and construction*’<sup>216</sup>. In his *Ginling College for Women* in Nanjing (1918) a cross-shaped urban layout was combined with a formal syncretism of both a Beaux-Artian *façade* and traditional Chinese architecture. Murphy will formulate the main elements of the *new national style* with a formal *abstraction* of Chinese traditional elements as an adaptation to modern amenities and construction, and the copying of morphological elements of the Beijing palaces: vermillion columns and beams, *dǒugǒng* -brackets, curved upturned roofs clad in clay and a lavish use of colours.

The years of the *Guómíndǎng* decade (1927-1937) are going to see the development of a national architecture within State institutions (monuments representing the *people* and the *nation*). The nationalist architecture, now with Murphy, a more concrete national style – the so called *China*



02 Henry Murphy, *Ginling College for Women*, Nanjing (1918)



03 Henry Murphy, *Ginling College for Women*, Nanjing (1918) - Plan

Sīchéng 梁思成 (1901-1972), and his wife Lin Huiyin (1904-1955), Chen Zhi (1902-?), Tong Jun (1900-1983), among others.

<sup>210</sup> Roskam, C. (2019) p.162

<sup>211</sup> Atkin, T. (2011) p.60

<sup>212</sup> Zanten, D. (2011) p.24

<sup>213</sup> Kuan, S. (2011) p.170

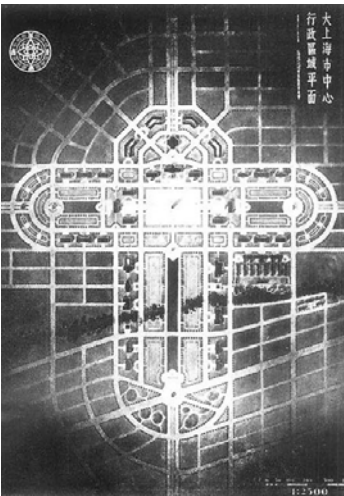
<sup>214</sup> Ibid, p.178

<sup>215</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) p.221

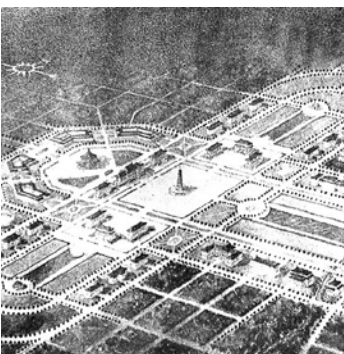
<sup>216</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 168



04 Daniel Burnham, Charles McKim, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., *Washington D.C. National Mall McMillan Plan*, Washington D.C., US (1902)



05 Dong Dayou, *Greater Shanghai Civic Centre*, Shanghai (1931)



06 Dong Dayou, *Greater Shanghai Civic Centre*, Shanghai (1931) - Perspective

*Renaissance Style* or *Chinese Native Style*— found the opportunity for its development with the two urban plans developed during these years, the capital Nanjing (1927) with Murphy as its chief advisor<sup>217</sup> and another for Shanghai (1929-1931), the heart of modern and colonial China (Annex 01). The focus on city plans to better explore their nationalist intentions goes along with Lefebvre's claims of '*the State has the city as its center*'<sup>218</sup> and attempt to represent the nation through the planning of *grandiose* urban plans.

The *Greater Shanghai Plan's* main goal was a direct statement of national sovereignty, its stated goal was to:

*"unite all the areas comprising Shanghai into one unified administrative whole, encompassing and eventually absorbing the foreign settlements"*<sup>219</sup>

Aiming to rival the economic importance of the concessions, the plan envisioned a new port at the north in *Woosung* at the mouth of the Yángzǐ River three new railway lines, new industrial commercial and residential zones with public housing and a new city centre (Annex 01). Dong Dàiyǒu came in 1931 to redesign the initial plans towards a more monumental conception in the new *Civic Centre*.

The heart of the plan, designed by Dong Dàiyǒu along clear American City Beautiful lines covered about 330 acres.

Dàiyǒu's own *University of Minnesota* used a cruciform layout to arrange its buildings, though given its importance, the recent Washington DC's *National Mall McMillan Plan* (1902), proved a more apt comparison. Julien Guadet's (1834-1908) teaching of '*a tall visual element, a monumental approach, and architectural coherence among buildings*'<sup>220</sup> will be followed. With 60m wide avenues composing its main axis and a 609m reflecting pool extending throughout its 170 acres open expanse, state buildings were surrounded by open stately plazas and oriented along embellished green boulevards in order to form a '*monumental and beautiful ensemble*'<sup>221</sup>. These boulevards' vanishing point would be the locus of the entire urban space, the centre of the two main axes with a 55m tall central pagoda and the Mayor's Building - the homogenous representation of China within a single *locus*. Renaissance perspectival space initially introduced with Castiglione's *Xiyànglóu* at *Yuánmíngyuán* (1747-1860) had now completed its integration with the nationalist project.

<sup>217</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p.58

<sup>218</sup> Lefebvre, H. (2009) p.224

<sup>219</sup> Macpherson, K. (1990) p.39

<sup>220</sup> Kuan, S. (2011) p.169

<sup>221</sup> Dong, D. (1935) p.105

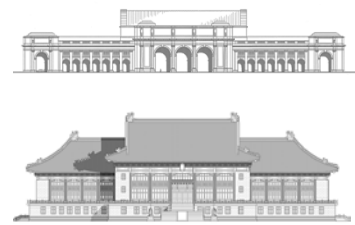
Designed as a response to the poor conditions seen in the Chinese areas of Shanghai, where ‘the streets are narrow, and crooked, parks and open spaces are scarce, factories and residences are built side by side’<sup>222</sup>, the plan offered a new kind of urban space to the city. As Dàyǒu claims, ‘the orderliness and legibility of the vast expanses of open space offered a panoramic visual experience that was entirely modern to this country’<sup>223</sup>.

The Civic Centre, coached in a language of power and prestige and international planning standards, attempted to represent an homogenous conception of China as way to project it unto the global stage of nation-states. A monumental effort to eternalize Shanghai and the national spirit within one location, a messianic utopianism keenly understood by its planners. Mayor Wu Tiecheng (1888-1953) compared it to *El Dorado* and Dong Dàyǒu himself claimed “a new city is arising like magic upon the once open lands.”<sup>224</sup>

Dàyǒu’s *Mayor’s Building* (1933), was the crown jewel of the entire *Civic Centre*. The building follows the Beaux-Artian *tripartite* scheme found in Burnham’s *Union Station* (1907), with two symmetrical side wings and a central volume (Annex 04). 94.5m long by 30.5m wide in the middle and with only four-storeys, the building sought its *monumentality* by its open surrounding arrangement and tripartite symmetry, emphasizing its central volume through several ways: the two side wings were placed at a lower level, with the central volume’s ridge being 30.5m from the ground; the central volume uses one more level of *dǒugǒng* brackets supporting the roof (something completely in line with Chinese tradition); the use of taller supporting pillars; and, more importantly, in its roof typology. The two wings have a simple hipped roof – *wūdǐng* 屋顶 – and the main ridge takes the form of a hip-gable roof – *xiēshāndǐng* 歇山顶 .

The chosen architecture, much like Henry Murphy at Nanjing, was an adaptation of the Palaces of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Though here *juxtaposed* within one single building, the difference in roof-typology to distinguish building *status* can also be seen in the sequence of the *Tài Hé Diàn* 太和殿 – *Zhōng Hé Diàn* 中和殿 – and *Bǎo Hé Diàn* 保和殿

The separation of the building into three horizontal parts: base, middle and roof, is also a direct reference to the palaces in Beijing.<sup>225</sup> The balustrade stone base, the exterior artificial granite wall and the grand stairway are all



07 Daniel Burnham, *Union Station*, Washington D.C., US (1907) and Dong Dayou, *Mayor’s Building*, Shanghai (1933-5)



08 Comparison between *Bao He Dian* (Hall of Preserving Harmony) / *Tai He Dian* (Hall of Supreme Harmony) and *Mayor’s Building* roof typologies



09 Dong Dayou, *Mayor’s Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) - *Dougong* brackets comparison

<sup>222</sup> Ibid

<sup>223</sup> Kuan, S. (2011) p.186

<sup>224</sup> Roskam, C. (2019) p. 194

<sup>225</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 182



10 Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) - *chiwen*

direct references from the 'Peking palace style'<sup>226</sup>, with other elements such as the column-beam-*dǒugǒng* system, roof ridges and eaves and an altered version of the so called *chīwēn* 鸱吻<sup>227</sup>. Other similarities include its use of lavish colours with vermilion columns, beam and eaves with complex blue and gold decorations, and finally a glazed green roof tile punctuated by a yellow tile ridge<sup>228</sup>.

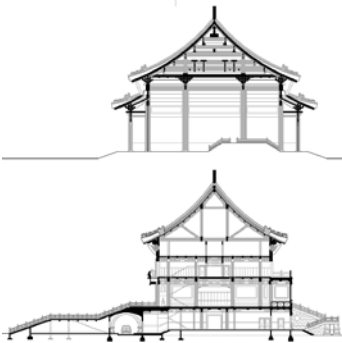
Dàyǒu goes on to explain what differentiates for him Chinese from Western architecture. Its key qualities were its *decorative richness*, with bright colours and ornaments rather than its *scale*, as he claims:

*"Chinese temples, pagodas, and pavilions are interesting rather than impressive. Great size and splendour, massiveness and originality of construction are features that are conspicuously absent"*<sup>229</sup>

As for the building's *yòng*, the building housed on its first floor several offices, on the second main floor an entry Assembly Hall, and on the third, overlooking the city centre, the Mayor's Office itself and other office spaces. The fourth floor comprised the attic of the roof. Moreover the building also had spaces for the new bureaucratic administration, such as an accounting department, a general management office, a municipal archive, a research centre, banquet halls, and meeting rooms.<sup>230</sup> Because of its program then, the building will also have to use modern technologies and provide modern amenities.

Constructed in reinforced concrete and steel, the building's structure makes use of modern trusses instead of the *jǔzhé* 举折 - *raise and lower*-structure that characterizes Chinese timber-frame (Annex 04). Advanced features like indoor plumbing and central electricity<sup>231</sup>, elevators, electric lights, water heaters, plumbing fixtures, proper heat and ventilation<sup>232</sup> window lattices, gutters, ventilation shafts, and downspouts will be creatively integrated with the buildings more traditional forms. Like Cret, Dàyǒu was not a strict traditionalist:

*"No good can come from mere reproductions of ancient buildings. The old styles must of course be well studied, not only for their outward forms and features, but also for the principles of construction upon which they are founded (...) Only thus will the architect be able to produce buildings that will truly reflect the hopes, the needs, and the aspirations of his age and country."*<sup>233</sup>



11 *Tai He Dian* (Hall of Supreme Harmony), *Forbidden City, Beijing* (1406-1430) and Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5)

<sup>226</sup> Dong, D. (1935) p.106

<sup>227</sup> Little statues adorning the edges of Chinese roofs. Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.50

<sup>228</sup> Dong, D. (1935) p.106

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>230</sup> Roskam, C. (2019) p.185

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid*,) p.183

<sup>232</sup> Dong, D. (1935) p.106

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid*

The homogeneity of the *China Renaissance Style* and of a singular *Chinese Architecture* starts to weaken once one looks at other buildings. Dàyǒu's Civic plan had several buildings which differentiated wildly in their adoption of the Chinese tradition. While the *Mayor's Building* was more closely in line with a revivalism of Chinese tradition, the new *Stadium*, *Gymnasium* and *Hospital* follow Art Déco developments, and the *Library* and *Museum* follow more closely neo-Classical Western layouts with Chinese roofs.

Dàyǒu's eclectic use of modern forms encapsulates what might otherwise be a not so confident faith in his and other architect's approach towards modernity. His own apartment followed the precepts of the *International Style*, with an asymmetrical composition, white colour and flat roof. The house could not be further away from his committed formulations towards a Chinese *national style* and hence share the same problems as *Hongqiao Sanatorium*. This eclecticism indicates a lack of confidence in the new style's homogeneity and foreign sources.

## 04.2 Nationalism from Abroad

### 04.2.1 *Nationalism and Imperialism*

Imperialism both precipitated and was influenced by each country's nationalism. The belief in the uniqueness of the *nation*, separating it from the *Other*, will be a central justification for the imperial project.

Through the imperialist threat of cultural substitution, a nationalistic project will also be necessitated by the colonized in search for its own threatened identity<sup>234</sup>. A homogenization of native culture and erasure of local diversities will be imposed so as to form a coherent national identity through which the colonized can rally behind a project of national liberation. Nationalism is then a response by a local community towards global space. As nations subscribed to a modern *universal time*, a desperate resistance is taken in the *national space*<sup>235</sup>. Nationalism both subscribes to and resists modern global space and universal time.

China's modern struggle consisted in the contemporaneity of this paradox. On the need to both formulate a *national essence* through a study of its tradition, while trying to break with that same tradition in its search for modernity<sup>236</sup>. China relied on the West's perceived progress to signify the *modern*, and attempted to shape itself towards what the West deemed acceptable – *western recognition*.

<sup>234</sup> Tostões, A. (ed.) (2013) p.68

<sup>235</sup> Tang, X. (1996) p.79

<sup>236</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p.136



12 Dong Dayou *Municipal Library* (1936), *Municipal Museum* (1936), *Municipal Hospital* (1935)



13 Dong Dayou, *Dayou Residence* (1935)



Such a project implies a cancellation of its own indigenous space and break with its own traditions in substitution of Western formulations resulting in recognition of complicity between nationalism and the imperialist aggressors.<sup>237</sup>

Chinese nationalism is then going to be defined by these two contradictory characteristics: by its opposition to the West through a national search, *tǐ*, but also by the need to subscribe to 'western' *modern time*, *yòng*, and be recognized as a nation within *global space*.

#### 04.2.2 Orientalist Homogeneity

The *tǐ-yòng* concept assumes that there is a fundamental structure of Chinese moral and philosophical values and that Western technology and science can be compartmentalized and used to benefit China. This separation, as previously seen, will create two problems: in its forced search for a Chinese *tǐ*, China is forced to assume one essential single homogenous conception of itself, ignoring any regional diversity that might 'defy any idea of Chineseness'<sup>238</sup>; and also, as previously mentioned with Matteo Ricci, assume a false compartmentalization of Western culture allowing it to find a stable ground to establish itself in China.

The programs arisen out of the Boxer Indemnity Fund were an attempt to stabilize Western animosity within China. The 'Localization Movement' explicitly wanted to 'sinify' Christian institutions so as to ease the missionary mission in China. Dàyǒu himself traces the beginnings of the China Renaissance style 'to the earlier work of the missionaries who adapted Chinese style for their buildings'.<sup>239</sup>

This 'adaptation' is a quintessential role assumed by any colonizer nation, a legitimation of its own cultural hegemony<sup>240</sup>. The search for a Chinese *tǐ* will under this framework be done in order to find a more stable relationship between the Chinese and the foreigners.

The architecture of Henry Murphy in his Christian campuses, whether willingly or not, will fit into this colonial project. Murphy's architecture attempts to fuse western formulations within a 'Chinese cloak'<sup>241</sup>. Such 'cloak' can, in Murphy's formulations of Chinese architecture, be said to be an example of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. As Said claims, 'knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the

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<sup>237</sup> Tang, X. (1996) p.234

<sup>238</sup> Dirlík, A. (2005) p.43

<sup>239</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 165

<sup>240</sup> Dirlík, A. (2005) p. 37

<sup>241</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 166

*Orient, the Oriental and his world*<sup>242</sup> and tries ‘to make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature’<sup>243</sup>. In this sense, the search for a Chinese *tj* by forcing a homogenization of Chinese culture through a Western *yong* –the Beaux-Arts tradition - becomes akin to a Western conception of the *Orient*, a ‘*Orientalist architecture*’. Murphy’s focus on the building’s *cloak* or *façade*, is already a product of his Western education. Murphy’s claim that ‘we must start out with Chinese exteriors, into which we would introduce only such foreign features as were needed’<sup>244</sup> shows his ‘cloaked’ approach, of a Western building with Chinese dressing. This dichotomy will best be seen in the contrast between the Western interiors of his buildings and the ‘Chinese cloaked’ *façades*<sup>245</sup>.

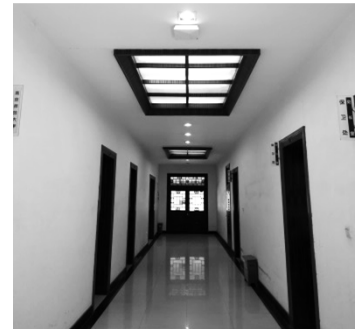
A vision always mediated by *Western recognition* was pervasive and at the origin of the nationalist project. Liang Sīchéng’s historiographical project will also incorporate this Western referential. His quest to study and search for a Chinese architecture was by itself a loss of the *apperceptive* quality Chinese architecture used to enjoy, and a preservation mentality that assumes a *resistance to change*<sup>246</sup>. As Wang claims, ‘prior to Chinese modernity, it occurred to no one to search for a “national architecture”’<sup>247</sup>.

The Western framework completely changes and forces a homogenous Westernized image of Chinese architecture. His imposition of the ‘Chinese Order’, tries to present the modular Chinese system in a Western canonical manner, *static* and *perfect*. Though Liang himself seems to have understood that ‘the study of a Chinese building is primarily a study of its anatomy’<sup>248</sup>, his genealogy of Chinese architecture still studies it by the changing of *façades* and *styles*, a Western construct<sup>249</sup>.

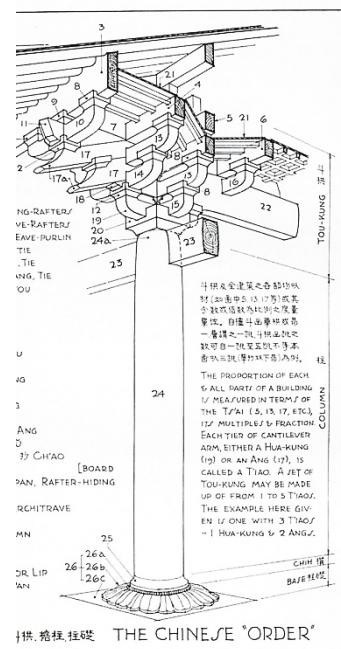
Liang’s own historiographical project would show the ‘*impossibility of defining a “Chinese” architecture*’<sup>250</sup> while also, through its adoption of Western frameworks, attempt to homogenize and erase any local diversity that made it so. It will, in this regard, also be a Western recognized version of what Chinese architecture can be, an indirectly *Orientalist Chinese Architecture*.



14 Henry Murphy, *Ginling College for Women*, Nanjing (1918) - Façade



15 Henry Murphy, *Ginling College for Women*, Nanjing (1918) - Interior



16 Liang Sicheng, *The Chinese Order* (1984)

<sup>242</sup> Said, E. (2003) p.40

<sup>243</sup> Ibid, p.86

<sup>244</sup> Rowe, P. G., & Kuan, S. (2002) p.61

<sup>245</sup> Haiqing, Li, and Xiaoqian, W. (2015), p.11

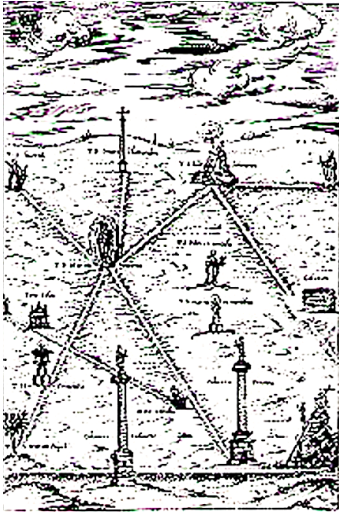
<sup>246</sup> Wang, D. (2017) pp.22-23

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, p. 101

<sup>248</sup> Sīchéng, L. (1984) p. 03

<sup>249</sup> Chen, Z. (2011) p.195

<sup>250</sup> Dirlik, A. (2005) p.43



17 Pope Sixtus V, Rome (1585).



18 Dong Dayou, *Greater Shanghai Civic Centre*, Shanghai (1931).

#### 04.2.3 *The Nationalist Style in Service of Imperialism*

The concept of a homogenous representation of China within global-space is going to be the main aim of Dàyǒu's Greater Shanghai Plan both at an urban and architectural level. A Western mediation and recognition of the project will permeate the entire project.

The domination of the urban space through a forced homogeneity will be accomplished using Western methods – Beaux-Arts monumentality – and forms - the Latin cross of Versailles and Washington D.C.<sup>251</sup> As previously mentioned, unlike Renaissance free cities, Chinese urban spaces were always part of a bigger correlative whole. The need to represent itself through a marked identity, to separate itself through its urban centre – the *town square* - is also an inherited Renaissance formulation, seen in Dong Dàyǒu's Civic Centre.

Lefebvre notes within the modern Urbis a paradox, not unlike that noted by Tafuri, where the homogenous pendant of the State (to represent the *nation*) will be in direct conflict with the liberal democratic forces that rule the Urbis. A highly rigid, homogenous, and rational order will be imposed on a highly chaotic environment.<sup>252</sup> Within China, this paradox will be doubly so, since the urban homogeneity, the representation of the nation through an architectural *style* in its urban space will be one referenced and mediated by the colonial powers.

The external representation of itself through *monuments* is something completely foreign to the Chinese *apperceptive* correlative tradition. Each building is going to become a *monument* and stand in isolation. Hence why in the plan one cannot see any building relationship or programmatic intersection, the Museum, the Library, the Hospital, the Stadium, and the Mayor's Building, all stand in isolation separated from each other.

In *Greater Shanghai Plan*, the use of long boulevards and open expanses with perspectives ending in several monuments will represent the attempt to homogenize the entire *nation* into one single locus of representation. Murphy's cloaking of a Chinese *façade* unto a Beaux-Artian building is going to then represent a literal Chinese 'dressing' of a Western building in its most fundamental conception.

The Mayor's building insistence on conceptualizing itself as a single *object*, seen in its Beaux-Artian tripartite juxtaposition of what should be three separate interrelated buildings, is going to find its sources in this necessity

<sup>251</sup> Kuan, S. (2011) p.173

<sup>252</sup> Lefebvre, H. (2009) p.227

to homogenously represent the Chinese nation-state within one *façade*. This fundamental misconception is also going to be seen in the building's difference in roof typology. Contrary to Chinese tradition, for which the *wūdǐng* typology was reserved for the most important buildings, Dàyǒu gives primary importance to the *xiēshāndǐng* typology<sup>253</sup>. The result is a Chinese *façade* within a neoclassical volume<sup>254</sup>. Comparing the two plans, of the Forbidden City's palaces and of the Mayor's Building, evidences the buildings foreign roots (Annex 05).

The aforementioned *urban façade*, is going to be the biggest European importation within the Centre's buildings. As Chen Zhi claims, the concept of the urban *façade* arose out of the role buildings had within Western urban space, 'to erect an elevated surface wall to face the public (...) one so powerful that it could stand alone to signify a building'<sup>255</sup>.

As previously seen, in China, the public sphere and the concept of a *façade* take completely different interpretations. Chinese architecture 'is a system that places the interior, concealed timber frame above all else'<sup>256</sup> where there's never a fully vertical wall that could encapsulate one building. Dàyǒu's Mayor's building more closely resembles an elevated wall that faces the public. The existence of a full vertical wall on the building, with windows directly facing the exterior, gives the building an urban expression which a Chinese building would not have. The building places its outer most wall at the level of the columns, rejecting the layering of interior space characteristic of Chinese architecture (Annex 04).

The building's podium also emphasizes this vertical element, being an inhabited space, instead of serving as a horizontal base to the building. The typical layering of stone bases with different successive levels is here substituted for an inhabited element of the building's *façade*. Whereas Chinese tradition always values interstitial space, finding meaning in the relationship between elements, the building will distil Chinese tradition into a pure *symbol* and interpret it as a Western mediated and internationally recognized one-dimensional *façade*.

Nowhere else is this *representational* aspect more clear than in the *dǒugǒngs* bracket-sets employed in the building. *Dǒugǒngs* are the most important Chinese architectural component, acting as the building module of its complex timber-frame system and mediating as the structural joint between its roof and columns. The building, using a reinforced concrete



19 Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5).



20 *Tai He Dian (Hall of Supreme Harmony)*, Forbidden City, Beijing (1406-1430) and Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) – Comparison between podiums.

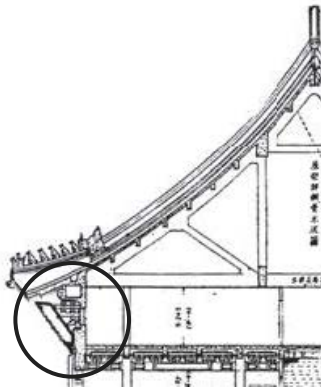
<sup>253</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.161

<sup>254</sup> Kuan, S. (2011) p.175

<sup>255</sup> Chen, Z. (2011) p.200

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, p.197

frame and a *modern* truss system, uses use the entire timber-frame vocabulary as mere decoration and give it a merely *symbolic and* decorative value. The abstract interpretations are proof of this *simulacrum* of the *dǒugǒng*.



21 Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) – Trusses and *dougong*.

By using Beaux-Arts urban planning and architectural principles as a legitimation of the Chinese modern nation-state, Dàyǒu, like Murphy, will complete an indirectly Western mediated *Orientalist* homogenous conception of a '*modern*' Chinese architecture. This is evidenced by the use of Western interiors in the building much like Murphy did in Nanjing. Equating the *modern* with the *western*, this first attempt at formulating an unashamed Chinese modern architecture is irrevocably interconnected with the power relationships which gave it form.



22 Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) – *dougong* as decoration.

Greater Shanghai was thought out as a direct response to the foreign concessions<sup>257</sup>. The nationalist cause, as much as it is based in an empowering concept of national sovereignty, always defined itself by its *opposition* towards the foreign barbarians and its criticality lay not within but with imperialism from without<sup>258</sup>. The plan aimed, within its utopian scope to encompass the foreign concessions and force their influence away from China<sup>259</sup> and represented for the first time in almost one hundred years China's will to gain control of its own territories back.



23 Dong Dayou, *Mayor's Building*, Shanghai (1933-5) – interior

Both this lack of a unified *criticality within* and the *Orientalist* conception of a *Chinese architecture* through a *Western referential* are going to show problems in the creation of a modern and national *Chinese style*. China's *crisis-consciousness* from a *Zhōngguó* to a *guójiā* finds here its crystallization, as it attempted to desperately find a homogenous identity in its past and a path forward for China in Western standards.

Dàyǒu's eclectic use of Western forms is a by-product of this relationship. A closer look at the rich Chinese urban and built tradition provides us with different answers and formulations towards modern urban spaces and representations of the *nation* within its built environment. Its *apperceptive* and non-representational quality will allow for multiple expressions of its *imagined community*, not forcing homogenous representations of what is *China*.

<sup>257</sup> Denison, E. (2018) p. 179

<sup>258</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p.53

<sup>259</sup> Roskam, C. (2019) p. 194

### 04.3 Towards a Post-Nationalist Future

*"Indeed, there is a basic similarity between the ancient Chinese and the ultramodern. But can they be combined? (...) Possibly, but it must not be the blind imitation of "periods". Something new must come out of it, or Chinese architecture will become extinct"<sup>260</sup>*

- Liang Sīchéng

#### 04.3.1 *National Architecture within the Correlative World*

The previously mentioned modular relationship between Confucian rigidity and Daoist fluidity will provide a framework that accepts the opposing forces of the Urbis rather than attempting to forcefully homogenize them.

As previously mentioned, the Western paradox of attempting to control something that is in permanent change, seen in the newfound diversity of the *nation-state* and its paradoxical attempt to homogenize and eradicate it into a single identity, will not exist within the correlative worldview which can accommodate and find meaning in diversity and interrelationships while keeping a structured whole within its modular Confucian system.

Within this purview, one can then formulate a path towards a distinct architectural identity, proper to the *nation*, without forcing a homogenous and external symbolic conception of architecture itself in order to represent it.

Unlike the European conception of the architect as an *individual ideologue*, whose role is to imbue with meaning his design, Chinese architecture, will find rich and diverse expressions through its interactions with the cosmos. In line with the aforementioned concept of *wúwéi* – effortlessness – architecture did not need to represent something external to itself. The standardized aspect of Chinese architecture, as we've seen, also extends to this *apperceptive* quality. The *Yingzào Fǎshì* formalized Chinese imperial architecture as an expression of social hierarchy not a contemplative pursuit, to be done by the labourer-builder and not the architect as visionary<sup>261</sup>.

While one can claim that the dualist turn is a result of a need for self-identity within global-space, Chinese architecture has, despite its *apperceptive* quality, been able to maintain a unique, distinctly Chinese identity for millennia, which implies that *national identity* itself is a product of local,

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<sup>260</sup> Sīchéng, L. (1984) p. 03

<sup>261</sup> Wang, D. (2017) pp.49

apperceptive and diverse formulations and not a forced homogenous conception. As Jianfei Zhu claims, it is an architecture from 'within' not a top-down representation from 'outside'<sup>262</sup>.

While Sīchéng's historical project tries to hold on to its own self-created image, as modernity threatens its own tradition, Chinese tradition does not attempt to create *eternal* and everlasting homogenous models. Noted by Sīchéng himself:

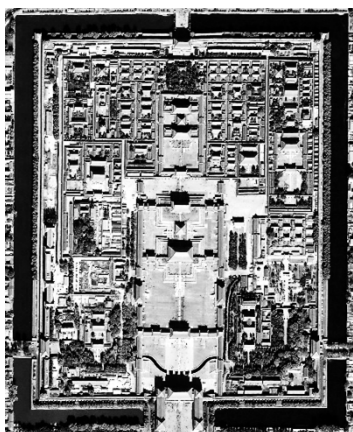
*"It seems Chinese architecture never sought the monumentality or eternity that was Egypt's (...) building, like life, should die a natural death. [In China,] the building changes as covering for a body or a coach for transport; it changes as does time, never ambitious to retain its form forever."*<sup>263</sup>

Through the impermanence of their built environment, the permanence of their construction methods was the structure that gave it stability and kept the Chinese tradition alive for over four millennia. Through the Confucian-Daoist model Chinese architecture has been able to maintain a stable identity while being built on a highly diverse and adaptable system.

#### 04.3.2 Chinese Public Space

Lefebvre's paradox is also going to find remarkable importance within this concept. Coached on a fractal and modular system, Chinese cities harmoniously integrated both the chaotic fluid experiences of the city with a rationalized structural order. As Zhu remarks Chinese cities combined:

*"the conceived and the lived, where the perspective and formal geometry do not dominate but instead merge with a messy world of actual life and its religious and anthropological expressions."*<sup>264</sup>



24 *Forbidden City*, Beijing (1420) – Fractal Geometry

Walls will structure the highly fluid and adaptable *sihéyuàn* modules and construct the Chinese urban fabric, dividing the interacting and seamless soft continuum that characterized the Chinese built world. The total geometry of the formal state harmoniously integrated with the informal texture of local society<sup>265</sup>.

The rationality employed was not a visual and dominating kind of rationality, but rather, an organizational and fractal rationality, based on interrelationships and an ideology of *growth*. Beijing does not find the same conception of *public* as Renaissance cities did. What characterized its urban space were not *façades* expressive of the city but rather, a vast

<sup>262</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 12

<sup>263</sup> Chen, Z. (2011) p.202

<sup>264</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 217

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, p. 228

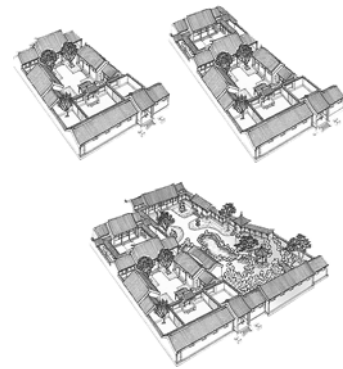
network of walled compounds where the urban life happens *inside* rather than *outside*.

Whereas the walls provide its structural mechanism, the correlative whole and the natural environment constantly bridges and interpenetrate compounds. The compounds themselves have hundreds of adaptable variations within which to build its interrelationships. In this sense, Beijing requires a phenomenological granular approach to be understood, composed of multiple and diverse identities and experiences - a mosaic of *lived life* - rather than a visual synthesizes of its entire identity within a single *locus*. A visually '*forbidden*' city <sup>266</sup>, where the sensorial experience rather than the visual understanding is valued. Only through browsing its temples, streets, markets, etc. did one come to understand the loci of miscellaneous social activities rather than concentrating them in the same homogenous *locus* of the city centre. In its non-representational *apperceptive* quality, Beijing does not have a *city centre* but rather a *central void* – the *Forbidden City*.

There is then a fundamental different conception of the city in Europe and China. Whereas in Europe cities were separate *entities* from rural space, with one city wall and one city centre, Chinese cities, in their tendency for *formlessness* and focus on *voids* as allowing space for *growth*, and *inter-relatedness* of its constituent elements, will be part of a bigger whole, form a *rural-urban continuum* and be constituted by a vast network of multiple walls.

While the Western rationalist impetus was to, as Lefebvre put it, have '*no institution without a space*'<sup>267</sup> to segregate its objects as having meaning in themselves, in the correlative world any space of considerable size should '*exist for a certain reason rather than for its own sake; that is, it must not be an independent entity of its own but pertain to a certain institution so as to be explainable and therefore meaningful*'<sup>268</sup>. Implicit within Beijing's fractal geometry was a metabolist ideology of growth never crystallizing an *ideal form*. Form was dissolved by highly adaptive and modular clustered compounds and wall enclosures.

The entire city of Beijing had been modularly planned, with its strict four cardinal axes, the city organizes from the smallest scale to biggest its



25 Different variations and additions within the same *siheyuan* module

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid, p. 220

<sup>267</sup> Lefebvre, H. (2009) p.224

<sup>268</sup> Xu, Y. (2000) p. 196



buildings within this structure<sup>269</sup> and places the distances between compounds and walls within that module as well<sup>270</sup>.

Interesting to note once again is how, while Chinese modern urban planning, based on Western tradition, took a turn toward a positivist Cartesian use of *singular forms*, most urban planning proposals of the Modern Movement focused on building clusters and building relationships rather than individual buildings themselves, thinking of a correlative urban whole rather than single monuments.

By integrating highly rational structural models while allowing for a rich diversity of experiences and identities within its space, the Chinese city presents a formulation that strays away from a de facto rationality that attempts to homogenize its inner constituents. Through its *formless* and *apperceptive* nature, with a strong modular system supporting it, Chinese cities and architecture have been able to maintain a distinct national identity without erasing local differences. Furthermore, a lot of its own traditions allow for structured *change* rather than paradoxically engaging in a dichotomy between static and monumental urban models and a highly chaotic metropolitan environment, such as the one used in Greater Shanghai Plan.

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<sup>269</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 222

<sup>270</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.230

## 05 Towards a World of Multiple Modernities

*A Concluding Perspective*

*"Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines, the same plastic or aluminium atrocities, the same twisting language of propaganda, etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse a basic consumer culture, were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level (...) There is the paradox: how to become modern and to return to source; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization"<sup>271</sup>*

- *Paul Ricœur (1913-2005)*

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<sup>271</sup> Ricœur, P. (2007) p. 47

## 05.1 Multiple Modernities

The homogenization of global culture is not a problem reserved to the Chinese context or the imperial era. Contemporary post-modern theories of globalization take this as its central issue as well. The opening quote by Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) poses exactly this question: How can one maintain one's identity while at the same time participating in modern global culture? Is it possible to participate in this universal civilization without subscribing to foreign Western culture?

Throughout this thesis two modes of thinking have been contrasted:

- i. the *Cartesian dualist perspective*, which separates the *subject* from the *cosmos*. Objectifies, studies and attempts to *control* and *improve* the external world, through a process of dialectical synthesis;
- ii. and the *Chinese correlative world*, which finds the *subject* inherently coterminous with the *cosmos*. Accepts the constant *change* and interrelation between the cosmos and the *self*;

Comparing the findings of the three chosen case-studies – the *Consumer Metropolis in Nanking Road*; *Globalism and Universal Reason in Hongqiao Sanatorium*; and *Nationalism and Homogenization in the Greater Shanghai Plan* – allows us to understand the inherent problems in a single conception of modernity within a Western Imperialist context, the homogenization of global culture through a western lens, but also the inherent paradoxes of Western modernity. We've also seen, then, how Chinese tradition can provide different alternatives which might not only enrich the discourse of modernity as well as maintain cultural distinctions.

### *05.1.1 China's Encounter with Modernity*

China's first experience with modernity can then be said to not only be a passage from a *Zhōngguó* – *Middle Country* – to a *guójiā* – *nation-state* – but to a *Westernized guójiā*, an acceptance of Western cultural hegemony. Modernity's inherent problems will be doubled within the Imperial context, where China will need to also deal with the element of *foreignness* and *cultural substitution*. Three interrelated paradoxes characterize China's initial contact with modernity:

1. An urgent need to *learn* from the West in order to *repel* the West
2. An internalization of the *West* as the *signifier of the modern*
3. An establishment of its own identity in the *past* while simultaneously attempting to break with that same tradition by progressing towards a modern *future*

By subscribing to universal linear temporalization and ignoring any spatial differences, China accepted the imperialist association of the *modern* with the *western*, and while such a project carried great promise, it was also one that resigned itself to Western cultural hegemony. In its acceptance of the *other's* culture, China will also simultaneously need to search for its own identity amid its *crisis-consciousness*, and search for its own cultural history with the "*modern*" tools it was simultaneously attempting to build. The result is an inner search for a Chinese *tǐ* that will be permeated by a foreign *yòng* and as a result create a self-imposed Orientalist vision of itself.

In the three case studies, these problems were analysed within the general topic of *Chinese modernity*. In all of them one can see that the importation of Cartesian dualism and objectification, initially with Giuseppe Castiglione, imbued the search for Chinese modernity with a radically foreign culture:

1. *Nanking Road's* metropolitan alienation reveals how modernity's paradoxical relationship between *transience* and search for meaning within *objects*, results in an alienating objectification of the whole external environment, while also being exacerbated by an added spectacle of *foreign prestige* and alienating *foreignness*.
2. *Hongqiao Sanatorium's* implicit universality based on Western formulations showcases the *uneven* global space within which the Modern Movement was operating in and questions the West's legitimacy to universal concepts such as *reason* and *modernity*. Through its dismissal of spatial differences the Movement's *tabula rasa* approach will also exacerbate the colonial struggle.
3. *Greater Shanghai Plan's* showcases the inherent problems to an individualist homogenization of *national identity* and the consequences of applying Western formulations as a way to legitimize one's own identity.

Cartesian dualism and objectification also creates *new* and *foreign* formulations within China which projected a Western culture that contrasted with China's own tradition. Nanking Road's *motian dalou* were isolated objects that attempted to dominate its surrounding environment alienating its crowds in the process; Hongqiao Sanatorium attempts to formulate a design based on completely objective formulations in an attempt to use modernity's chaotic energy; and the Mayor's Buidling attempts to formulate an external singular representation of China within an *urban façade*.

These paradoxes resulted not only from the existential threat that Western imperialism posed in China, but also because modernity was not a natural by-product from Chinese developments, but imposed from *'without'*.

Within this purview, one can either reject modernity and return to a cultural past immemorial (by itself a questionable project within the modern world), or accept modernity's material progress and universal condition through a more sustainable approach – one that doesn't equate the *modern* with its *western formulations*.

Liáng Qǐchāo's thinking provides an alternative towards a *post-national global imaginary*. A project to *'discover the modernity of the native cultural tradition'*<sup>272</sup> 'is going to guarantee a modern globe built on differences. In other words:

*Modernity isn't owned by the West if it's truly global.*

Anticipating by more than fifty years post-modern notions of globalism, Liang insists on a *'reaffirmed-spatiality rather than a universalist future-oriented temporality (...)* an unmistakably *"cosmopolitan nation"*<sup>273</sup>. A post-nationalist global imaginary, founded upon cultural spatial differentiation – a *global imaginary of difference*.

#### 05.1.2 A Different Formulation of Modernity

Shmuel Eisenstadt's (1923-2010) concept of *'Multiple Modernities'* will find a close resemblance to Qǐchāo's thought. The core of this project lies in *'assuming the existence of culturally specific forms of modernity shaped by distinct cultural heritages and socio-political conditions.'*<sup>274</sup>



01 Sapajou, *'Who Said Shanghai is a Babel?'*, NCDN (1933)

Paul Ricoeur's (1913-2005) 1965 essay entitled *'Universal Civilization and National Cultures'* will argue for a very similar framework. He will dialectically oppose what he terms the scientific and political *'universal civilization'* – which brings gigantic progress for everyone – to the local *'cultural heritage'*<sup>275</sup>. Though value is to be found in the representation of humanity as a *single entity* there are also inherent problems in its eradication of local culture. Ricoeur, then, recognizes the paradox that colonial nations find themselves in:

*'how to become modern and to return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization.'*<sup>276</sup>

<sup>272</sup> Tang, X. (1996) p.184

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, pp.194-195

<sup>274</sup> Eisenstadt, S.; Riedel, J. and Sachsenmaier, D. (2002) p.01

<sup>275</sup> Ricoeur, P. (2007) p.43

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, p. 47

Both Qǐchāo and Ricoeur think culture should not be an autonomous closed system, but rather, find its vitality and *change* within a constant dialogue with universal civilization and other cultures<sup>277</sup>. On the other hand, each culture's native tradition might reciprocally influence and introduce structural differences to the project of universal civilization<sup>278</sup>. Projects of cultural synthesis or syncretism are within this purview always exhausted and doomed to eventually die for lack of new cultural resources.

In order for local culture and universal civilization to establish a sustainable and reciprocal dialogue, a post-colonial global space built up of horizontal relations between nations must first be established. A global space without one single centre – be it China or the West – but rather finds its meaning in its multitude of interrelating cultures – a correlative global space.

China's unique semi-colonial condition might have contributed to the similarity between Qǐchāo's and these thinkers' thought. Liang as well as Russell saw something specific in Chinese culture that answered directly to western modern dilemmas. The discontinuity between subject and object within an ever changing environment would contrast with China's correlative metaphysics.

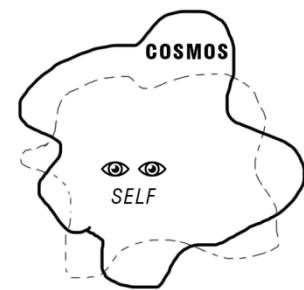
Chinese tradition has then, been referenced and opposed throughout this thesis as both a parallel and contrasting philosophy to Western modernity. Western modernity's paradoxes – an attempt to control something that is in perpetual change<sup>279</sup> - will be answered by Chinese tradition's acceptance of *change*. It structured its world within fractal geometries and phenomenological experiences, instead of Euclidean closed geometries and visual experiences. The three case studies allowed a closer exploration of these topics:

1. *Nanking Road's* alienation through paradoxical processes of objectification will find a relational and adaptable approach within the Chinese urban space, where the harmonious correlation and interpenetration of the particular with the whole is going to be valued through the modular system of the *sihéyuàn* and the *jiā*.
2. *Hongqiao Sanatorium's* turn towards rationalization and standardization amid a perceived loss of culture will find in China a culture which is valued *precisely* because of its interrelated and changing nature and an architecture prone to modularization and that accepts the interrelationship between oppositions and beauty in ambivalence.

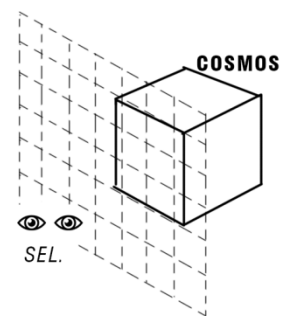
<sup>277</sup> Ricoeur, P. (2007) p. 50

<sup>278</sup> Tang, X. (1996) p.216

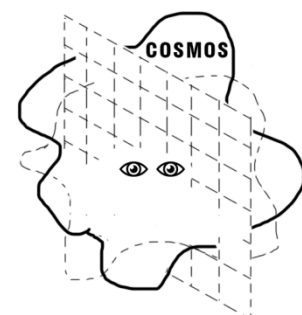
<sup>279</sup> Tostões, A. (2015) p.32



Chinese Correlative View



Renaissance Cartesian Dualism



Western Modern Paradox

02 Diagram exemplifying the three currents of thought – Chinese Correlative View, Renaissance Cartesian Dualism and Western Modernity

3. *Greater Shanghai Plan's* homogenous top-down representation will find in the Chinese environment an *apperceptive* and *formless* quality which, while structured within a coherent identity, accepts a diverse and multifaceted lived reality for its urban space.

What we find in China is, as initially stated, a fundamental similarity to the *modern environment* but also a fundamental difference from its western formulations, as A.C. Graham claimed:

*'China tends to treat opposites as complementary, the West as conflicting.'*<sup>280</sup>

Chinese tradition's value placed on *relationships* rather than *objects* and its correlation of *oppositions* are then its biggest contributions to *modernity* as a universal project. The post-war reappraisal of architects closer to the East such as Wright, Aalto and Utzon, will confirm the importance of this tradition and its importance within contemporary practice.

The recent 'Chinese economic miracle' and rise of the country onto the global-stage, as well as the rapid process of modernization the country since the 1980's, will provide an opportunity for a re-evaluation of the Chinese tradition within a modern environment.

## 05.2 Sustainable Formulations for the Future

*Within a very short period of time, they have eliminated almost all of their traditions and built something new. All of the original society has been destroyed. All of the people of the city have been turned into a kind of migrants who move back and forth. It has formed a new, strange creature(...)But it also appears to be full of vitality. That is its characteristic. It really has a lot of vitality.*<sup>281</sup>

- Wang Shu (1963-)



03 Ruins of *Mayor's Building* and *Sincere Department Store* after Japanese aerial bombing.

In 1937 the Republican dream grinded to a halt with the land invasion of Shanghai by the Japanese on June 8<sup>th</sup>. The end of an era lay in ruins, as bombs and indiscriminate fighting took out thousands of Chinese lives and destroyed Shanghai's modern heritage. The *Great World*, *Sincere*, and the *Mayor's Building* were all targets of attacks by Japanese troops. Shanghai as a modern cultural centre would remain marginal between 1949 and 1976, from the establishment of the communist *People's Republic of China*, until the end of the *Cultural Revolution* and re-opening of Chinese trade with the Occident. Though the years between had important developments within institutional designs, recent developments dealing directly with Chinese tradition remain more important for the focus of this thesis.

<sup>280</sup> Graham, A.C. (1986) p. 28

<sup>281</sup> Louisiana Channel (2017) 16:20

After 1994-5, a reinstatement of a professional registration system for private architecture firms<sup>282</sup> has resulted in a reawakening of the 'Concrete Dragon' and a globally unprecedented urban revolution.

#### 05.2.1 Critical Regionalism and Contemporary Practice

Parallel to this trajectory, Kenneth Frampton (1930-), supported by Ricoeur's thought, constructed a framework of thought on which to create *local architectural modernities* termed 'Critical Regionalism'. Opposed to the modern concept of the *avant-garde*, Frampton wishes to see an architecture of *resistance* in dialogue with it, the *arrière-garde*.

The elements for which Frampton wishes to see influence and resist universal civilization will find close resemblance to the Chinese tradition itself: paralleling *Topography* or *Cultivating the Site*<sup>283</sup> is the Chinese value placed on *soil* as a means of stability and identity<sup>284</sup>, where its gardens were '*guided by the landscape rather than oriented toward a direction*'<sup>285</sup>; the value placed on *Context* can be seen in the correlative value placed on relationships within the surrounding cosmos and in the phenomenological *apperceptive* approach to Chinese space; the value placed on *Climate* can be found in Chinese architecture's adaptable structure which '*renders a house practical and comfortable in any climate from that of tropical Indochina to that of subarctic Manchuria*' and '*would effectively shelter occupants from the elements, however diverse they might be*'<sup>286</sup>; and the value placed on *Light* has already been mentioned by Tanizaki and can be seen in the meticulous layering of light and shadow present within Chinese architecture. Frampton's value placed on the work of Wright, Aalto and Utzon to inform this *critical regionalism* seems to confirm the Eastern connection.

No value espoused by Frampton connects him closer to Chinese tradition than his conception of *Tectonics*. Frampton values a *tactile* rather than a *visual* experience of space. For him the tectonic experience is much more intimately tied with the spatial and cultural specificity of any given site, as he claims:

*"The tactile and the tectonic jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of global modernization."*<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Zhu, J. (2009) p. 137

<sup>283</sup> Frampton, K. (1983) p.26

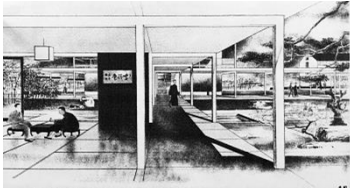
<sup>284</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 158

<sup>285</sup> Steinhardt, N. (2019) p.302

<sup>286</sup> Stch ng, L. (1984)

<sup>287</sup> Frampton, K. (1983) p.29





04 I.M. Pei, *Huatung University Campus*, student design at Harvard GSD (1948)



05 Liu Jiakun, *Luyeyuan Stone Sculpture Art Museum*, Chengdu (2002)



06 Qingyun Ma, *Father's House*, Xi'an (2003)



07 Lu Wenyu and Wang Shu, *Library of Wenzheng College*, Suzhou (2002)

An architecture that ‘does’ instead of ‘speaks’. The concept of *letting be*, seen in the correlative view and Daoist concept of *wúwéi*, finds close importance in Frampton’s study of *tectonics*, where originality should arise spontaneously – *ziran* – from the correlative whole.

Liang Sīchéng emphasizes the tectonic qualities of Chinese construction when he claims that ‘*the study of a Chinese building is primarily a study of its anatomy*’<sup>288</sup>. As Sīchéng notes, with the coming of reinforced concrete, a similar focus on *tectonics*, on the *unsayable*, seem to be important for contemporary practice. With China’s newfound position on the globe, new autonomous architects seem to be bridging and discovering their own tradition. An exploration into Chinese tradition’s own modernity and diverse interpretations will create a local, sustainable and novel indigenous architecture from *within*.

I.M. Pei (1917-2019) was early in this exploration, as he claims:

“We shouldn’t focus our attention on foreign buildings every time when designing a new building. The root of Chinese architecture is still there, and it can sprout”<sup>289</sup>

Contemporary architects such as Qingyun Ma (1965-) from *MADA s.p.a.m.*; Liu Jiakun from *Jiakun Architects*; Yung Ho Chang (1956-) from *Atelier FCJZ*; and Wang Shu (1963-) and Lu Wenyu (1966-) from *Amateur Architecture Studio* will be on the *avant-garde*, or as Frampton terms it, *arrière-garde*, of this ‘*architecture of resistance*’.

The work of Lu Wenyu and Wang Shu will be particularly relevant as emphasized by Frampton’s critical regionalism and his recent lecture at HarvardGSD<sup>290</sup>. The name of the studio itself, ‘*amateur*’, shows an affinity not only with the Chinese tradition of craftsmanship but also a spontaneous and *experimental attitude*<sup>291</sup>.

Their garden influence, focusing on relationships rather than *single objects*, can be seen on their *Library of Wenzheng College* in Suzhou (2002), which asymmetrically places several interconnected buildings penetrated by large bodies of water. A result of an experimental and *apperceptive* approach that leaves space and freedom for adaptability and change within the construction.

*Amateur’s Ningbo Historic Museum* (2008) as well as the two-phase *Xiangshan Campus* of China’s Academy of Arts (2003-2007) mark a

<sup>288</sup> Sīchéng, L. (1984) p. 03

<sup>289</sup> Seen in a mural inscription in his *Suzhou Museum* (2006)

<sup>290</sup> Harvard GSD (2016)

<sup>291</sup> Botz-Bornstein, T. (2009)

turning point where Shu and Wenyu explore a more tactile experience with local culture. Wenyu's focus on a building's construction can be seen in an interview where she claims, *'We need more people doing instead of talking. [At Amateur Architecture Studio] we spend an enormous amount of time experimenting, trying to resurrect the craftsmanship that is almost lost.'*<sup>292</sup>

In *Ningbo Museum* Shu and Wenyu focus on tactile environment using recycled stone from the area as a way to create the cladding for the concrete walls. The result is a random and completely *apperceptive* expression of materiality. Their focus on materiality will also be extensively explored with Xiangshan campus, as for example, in the recent Guest House, concrete, bamboo, wood, stone and ornamental metal are all interconnected within a single building<sup>293</sup>.

Xiangshan Campus will showcase their experimental approach and focus on diverse and adaptive interrelations within the correlative whole. Phase II of the project will implement an asymmetrical and interconnected urban layout of buildings organized around the site's existing topography. The buildings' placement constantly shifts interrelating them with the surrounding landscape. Either advancing or contracting within the surrounding body of water and between each other, their urban layout form a continuous soft cluster, much like in the *sihéyuàn's* urban tissue, on which to find tactile relationships between one another. A phenomenological sense of discovery rather than a visual axis is emphasized, something which, in its attempt to build meaningful relationships between the whole.

The campus leaves space for *growth* and *adaptability* preserving an ideology of *growth* within its scope. The exploration of other elements of traditional Chinese architecture, be it in the use of big curved roofs, or the partitioning of space with "moon gates", will make the campus a free and exploratory laboratory in communion with nature and open-ended.

*Shu* will then reference his modern design within the Chinese architectural correlative experience, reaching a free design that can both accommodate traditional and local elements as well as universal ones. Frampton himself recognizes the importance *Shu* and *Wenyu* have for *critical regionalism*:

*"Critical regionalism requires a going back into certain tectonic and constructional systems we, at least I, didn't have examples of until recently, the way that Wang Shu can use traditional laying up of the tile and the brick legitimately"*<sup>294</sup>

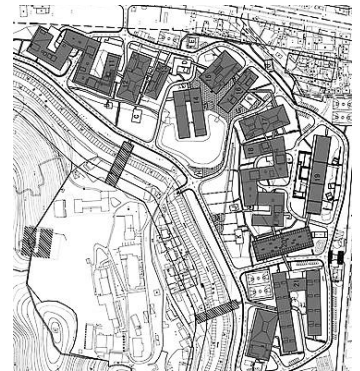
<sup>292</sup> Rizzardi, P. (2013)

<sup>293</sup> Wang, D. (2017) p. 29

<sup>294</sup> Harvard GSD (2016) 52:34



08 Lu Wenyu and Wang Shu, *Ningbo Historic Museum*, Ningbo (2008)



09 Lu Wenyu and Wang Shu, *Xiangshan Campus of China's Art Academy Phase II*, Hangzhou (2003-)



10 Lu Wenyu and Wang Shu, *Xiangshan Campus of China's Art Academy Phase II*, Hangzhou (2003-) – variations on Chinese forms and materials

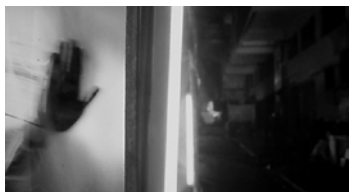
### 05.2.2 Awakening the Concrete Dragon



11 The *Bund* standing across the Huangpu River facing off the new Pudong skyscrapers



12 Katsuhiro Otomo, *Akira* (1988)



13 Wong Kar-Wai, *As Tears Go By* (1988)

Officially away from the threat of Western imperialism, with the reversion of the lease in Hong Kong in 1997 and return of Macau in 1999, Chinese professionals now enjoy a greater degree of freedom and national sovereignty than in the Republican period. International relations are growing<sup>295</sup>, Chinese products, culture and media are globally consumed and China has a newfound confidence in its rich cultural depository.

The recent rise of Shanghai's '*Concrete Dragon*' also parallels Shanghai's boom in late-nineteenth / early-twentieth century and as such, an interest in the study of this period has been developing<sup>296</sup>. Not only motivated by the modern cultural relics present in one of the world's leading metropolises, but also because of its parallels with the recent situation.

The megalopolis that is now Shanghai, with new centres, towers and highways changing it every year, threaten its cultural relics to nostalgic *phantasmagoria*. The metropolitan concept first iterated by Baudelaire - the *ephemeral* - is today felt throughout East Asia where, among multiple narratives and artistic productions, Baudelaire's disillusioned *flanêur* finds today new reinterpretations among alienated protagonists within the Asian megalopolis.

The city's cultural history, of decadent lifestyles of gangsters and mafiosos, of an international hub of foreign spies, or simply as the quintessential representation of the *modeng* in China, has been reinterpreted and crystallized across several mediums. Its heritage as the locus of Chinese modernity through its mediation of East and West, a localized distillation of China's relation with the entire global imperial space, will provide important lessons for China's future going forward.

<sup>295</sup> The thesis' author study abroad program in Shanghai and the thesis itself is an example of such a reality

<sup>296</sup> Most of the research compiled within this thesis has been created because of this recent interest

*Nanking Road's* sky needles and glittering neon lights are now dwarfed by ever-rising skyscrapers right across the Huangpu. *Hongqiao Sanatorium* was quietly demolished during the Communist period and the entire *Greater Shanghai Plan* was left unfinished and reintegrated into new urban tissues, with its buildings to be found among university quarters and residential blocks.

If the *Pudong* skyscrapers have become symbolic representations of the *new* China, they are still imbued with the same contradictions and problems that semi-colonial Shanghai was engaged in. A gaze of *foreign prestige* attempting to copy an international language of modernity in order to project China's power to the world. To create sustainable architectural models, that don't result in this new kind of homogenization of city centres, Chinese architecture needs to resist its foreign gaze by finding the modernity of its own tradition. Don't be *New York*, be *Shanghai*.

In China we find a more *humane* sensibility that might provide us more relational and less alienating models. Within Tanizaki's thought we see the different Eastern sensibility, a culture that will immerse itself in darkness and there '*discover its own particular beauty*'.<sup>297</sup> Implicit in his writings is a constant sorrow for the march of *progress* that Western modernity and imperialism forced upon the East. He understands very well that the West's formulations of science and modern technology are not the only formulations that could have been achieved, but it is one that is being accepted by the East as they march forward in a singular linear view of modernity:

*"it is on occasions like this that I always think how different everything would be if we in the Orient had developed our own science. Suppose for instance that we had developed our own physics and chemistry: would not the techniques and industries based on them have taken a different form, would not our myriads of everyday gadgets, our medicines, the products of our industrial art - would they not have suited our national temper better than they do? In fact our conception of physics itself, and even the principles of chemistry, would probably differ from that of Westerners"*<sup>298</sup>.

In this purview, Tanizaki finishes with a last wish:

*'perhaps we may be allowed at least one mansion where we can turn off the electric lights and see what it is like without them'*<sup>299</sup>.

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<sup>297</sup> Tanizaki, J. (2001) pp.47-48

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*, pp.13-14

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid*, p. 64



14 *Zhuozheng Yuan (Humble Administrator Garden), Suzhou (1510)*

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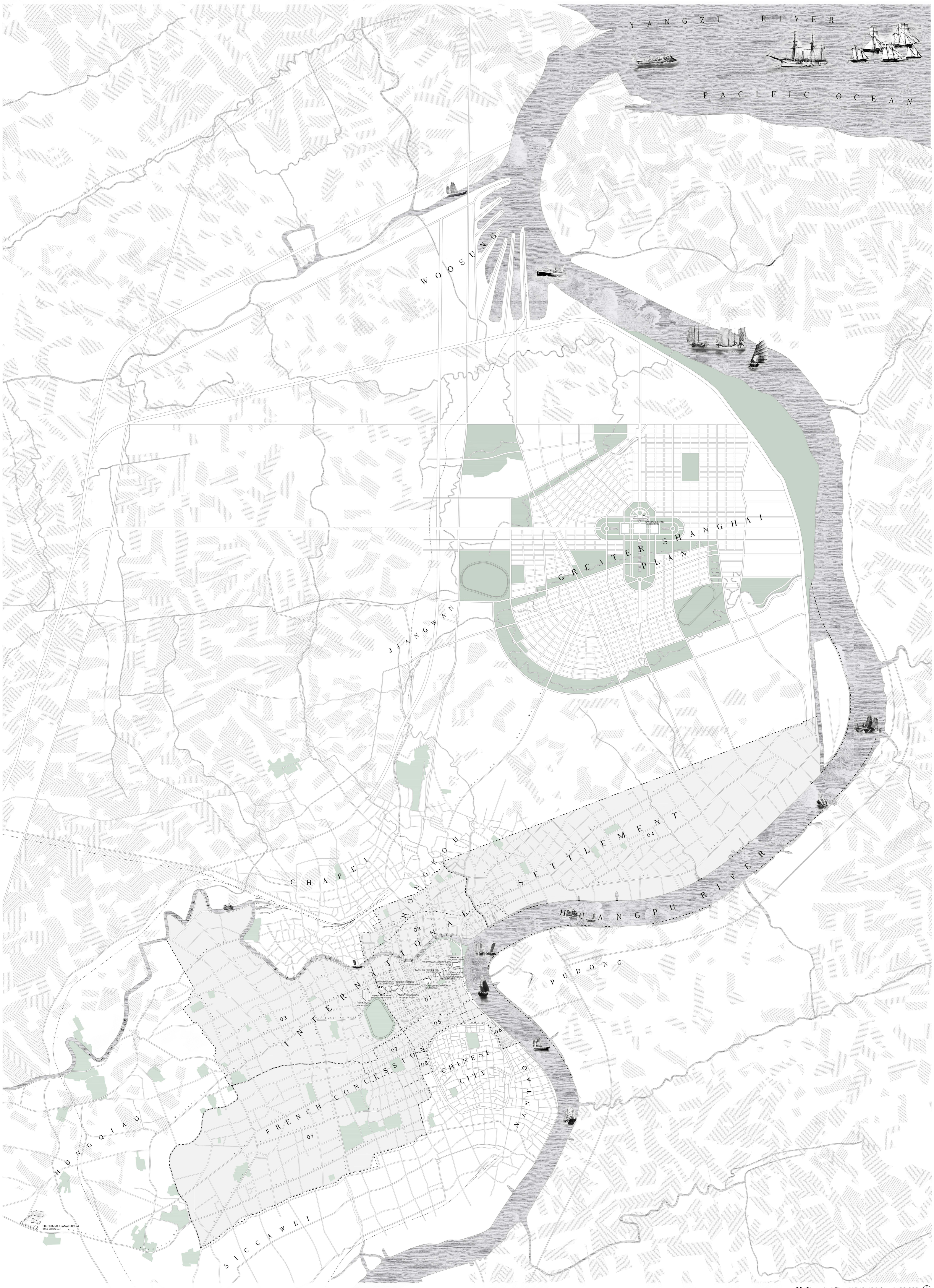
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Annexes





01. Shanghai Plan (1846-1944) 1:30,000

ANNEX 01: SHANGHAI REFERENCE MAP

01 British Settlement Central Suburb (1846)

02 Intl. Settlement Northern Suburb (1865)

03 Intl. Settlement Western Suburb (1898)

04 Intl. Settlement Eastern Suburb (1898)

05 French Concession (1849)

06 French Concession (1861)

07 French Concession (1900)

08 French Concession (1900)

09 French Concession (1914)

Foreign Concessions

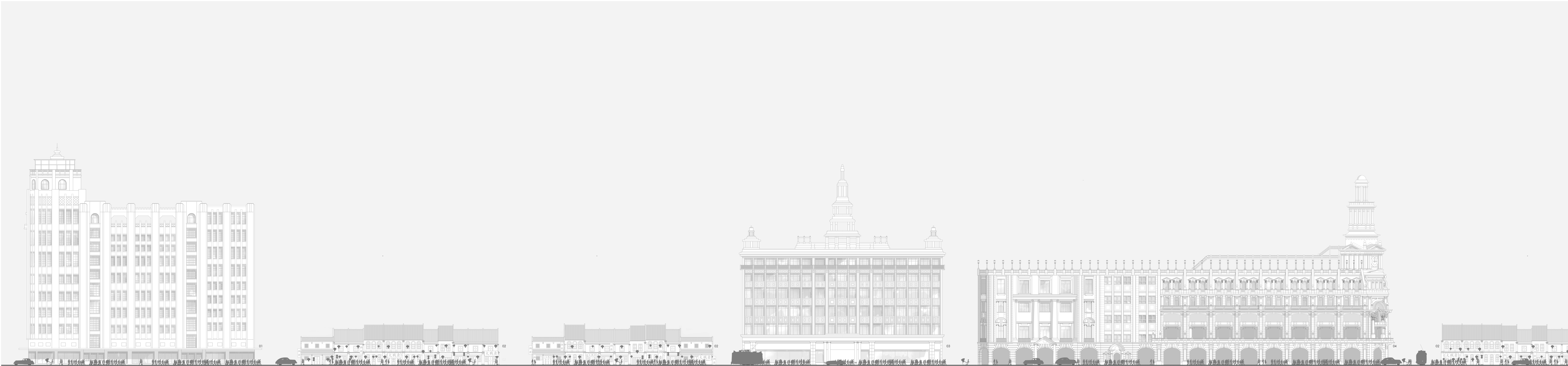
Main Streets

Railways

Green Spaces

Legislative Borders

Rural Areas

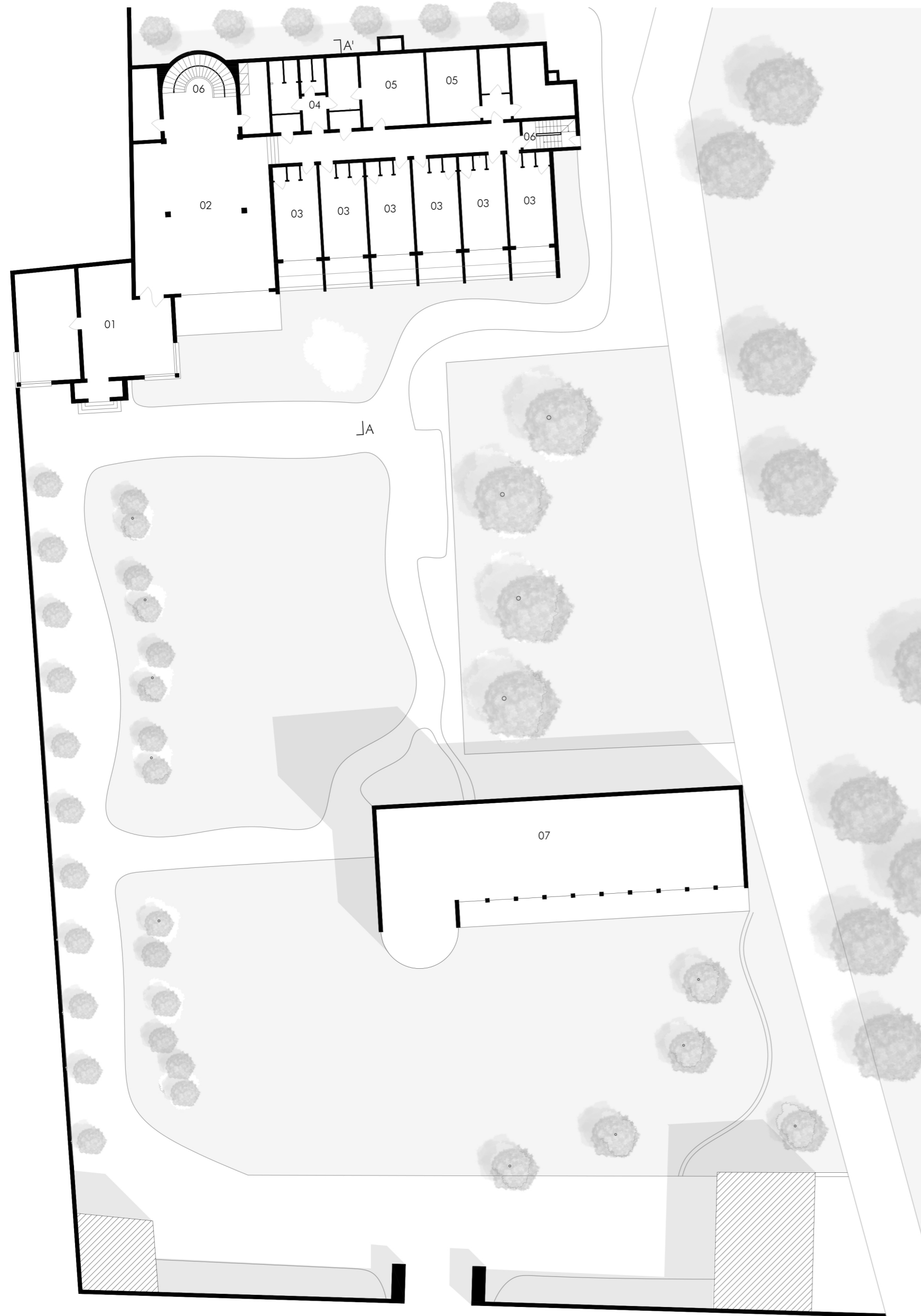


01. Nanking Road - Kwan, Chu and Yang, *Dah Sun Dept. Store* (1936); Karoly Gonda, *Sun Sun Dept. Store* (1926); Lester, Johnson & Morris, *Sincere Dept. Store* (1917) and *Chinese Shophouses* - Street Elevation 1: 300

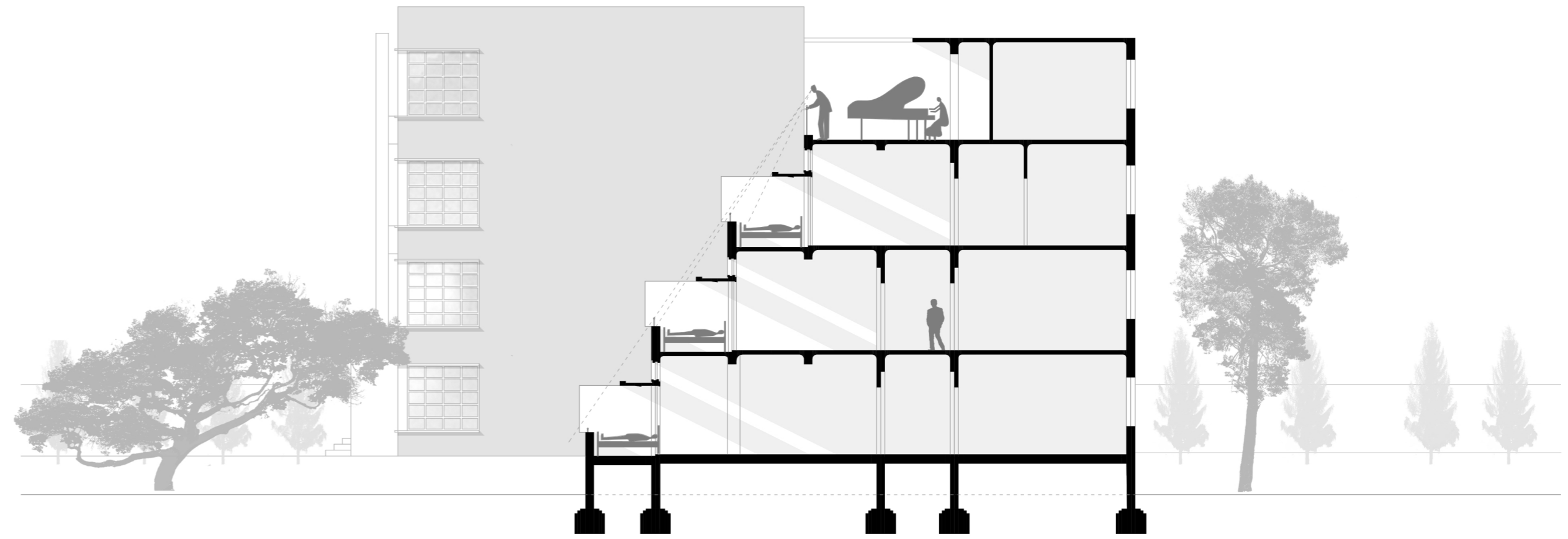
ANNEX 02: NANKING ROAD TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

- 01 Kwan, Chu & Yang, *Dah Sun Department Store* (1936)
- 02 Chinese Shophouses
- 03 Karoly Gonda, *Sun Sun Department Store* (1926)
- 04 Lester, Johnson & Morris, *Sincere Department Store* (1917)

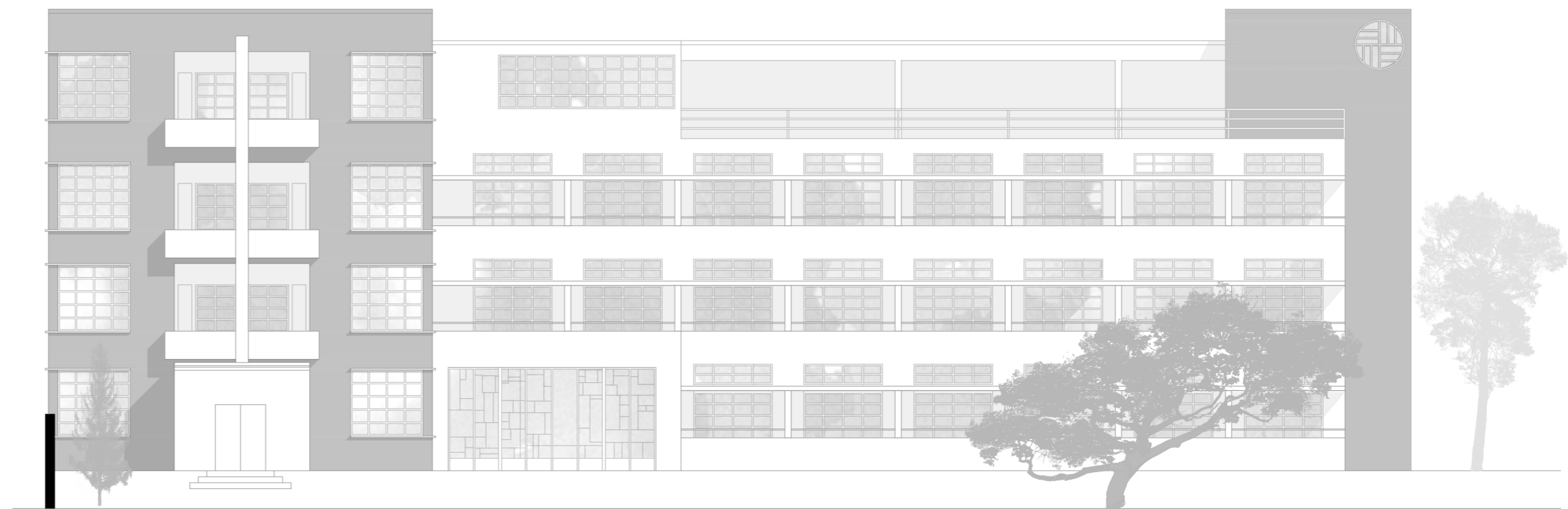
Source: Hulín, Z. (2015) 'A Study of the Development and Architectural Characteristics of Department Store Buildings in Shanghai' in *建筑学报*, 07, pp.81-86. Hulín, Z. (2017) '殖民主义在近代上海的理想与现实——以上海大新公司建筑方案的三次修改' in *Tongji University Journal Social Science Section*, no.28, pp. 87-95. Teuling, M. (2009) *Rebirth of the Malacca Shophouse, a typological research*, Delft University of Technology.



01. Xi Fuquan, Hongqiao Sanatorium, Shanghai (1934) - Site Plan 1: 300



02. Xi Fuquan, Hongqiao Sanatorium, Shanghai (1934) - Section A-A' 1:150

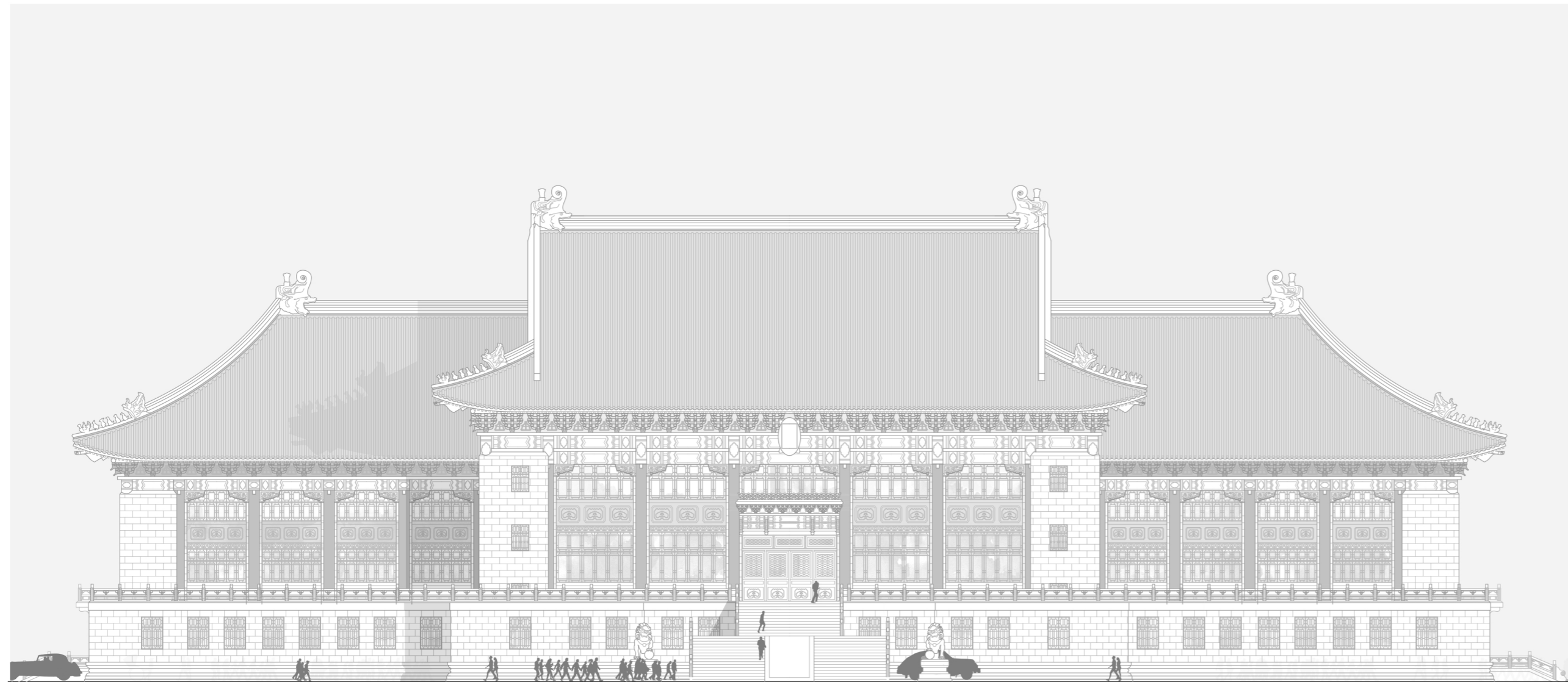


03. Xi Fuquan, Hongqiao Sanatorium, Shanghai (1934) - Main Volume Façade 1:150

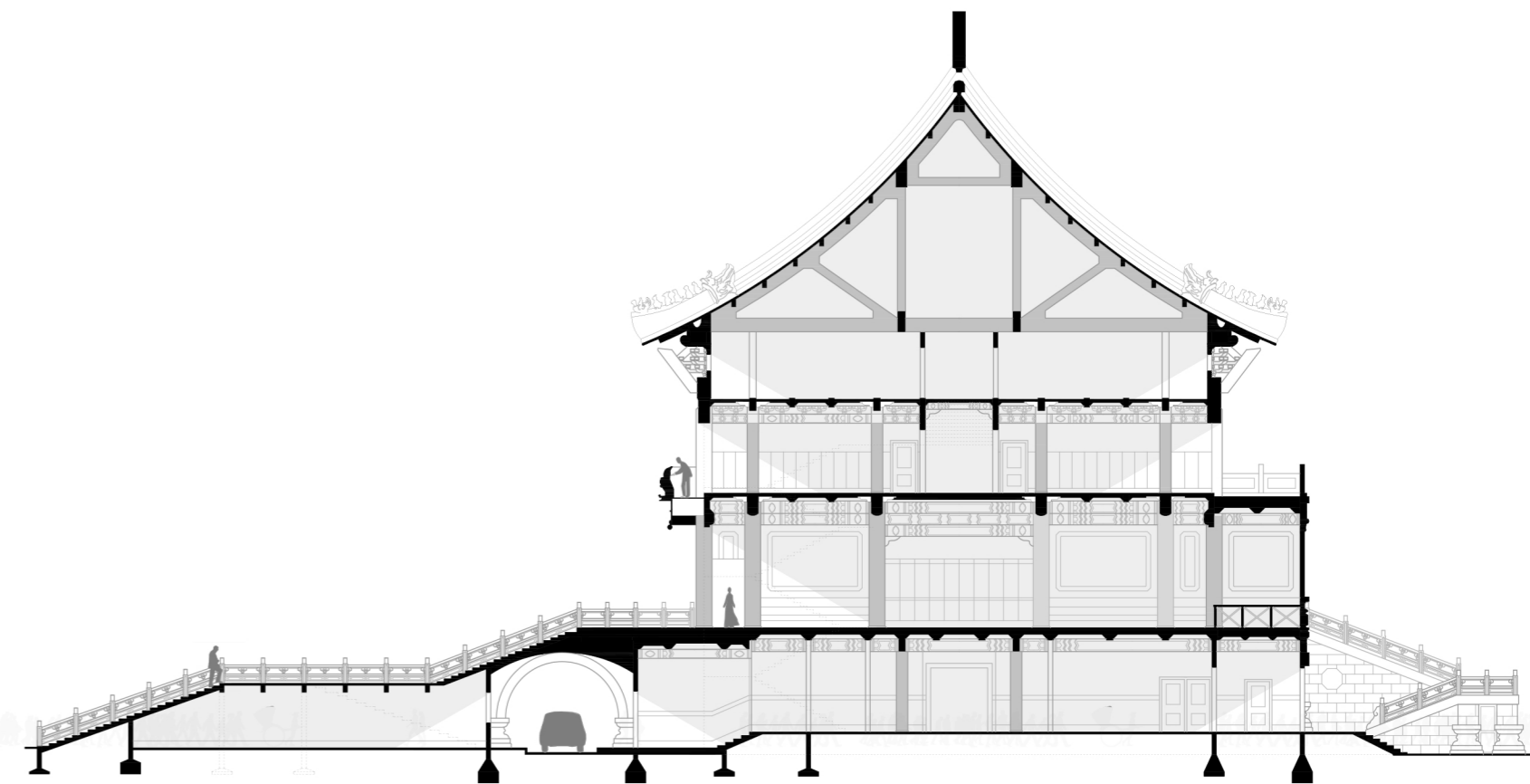
### ANNEX 03: HONGQIAO SANATORIUM TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

- 01 Main Entrance
- 02 Entrance Hall
- 03 Patient's Bedroom
- 04 Bathroom
- 05 Technical Rooms
- 06 Circulation
- 07 Entrance Annex

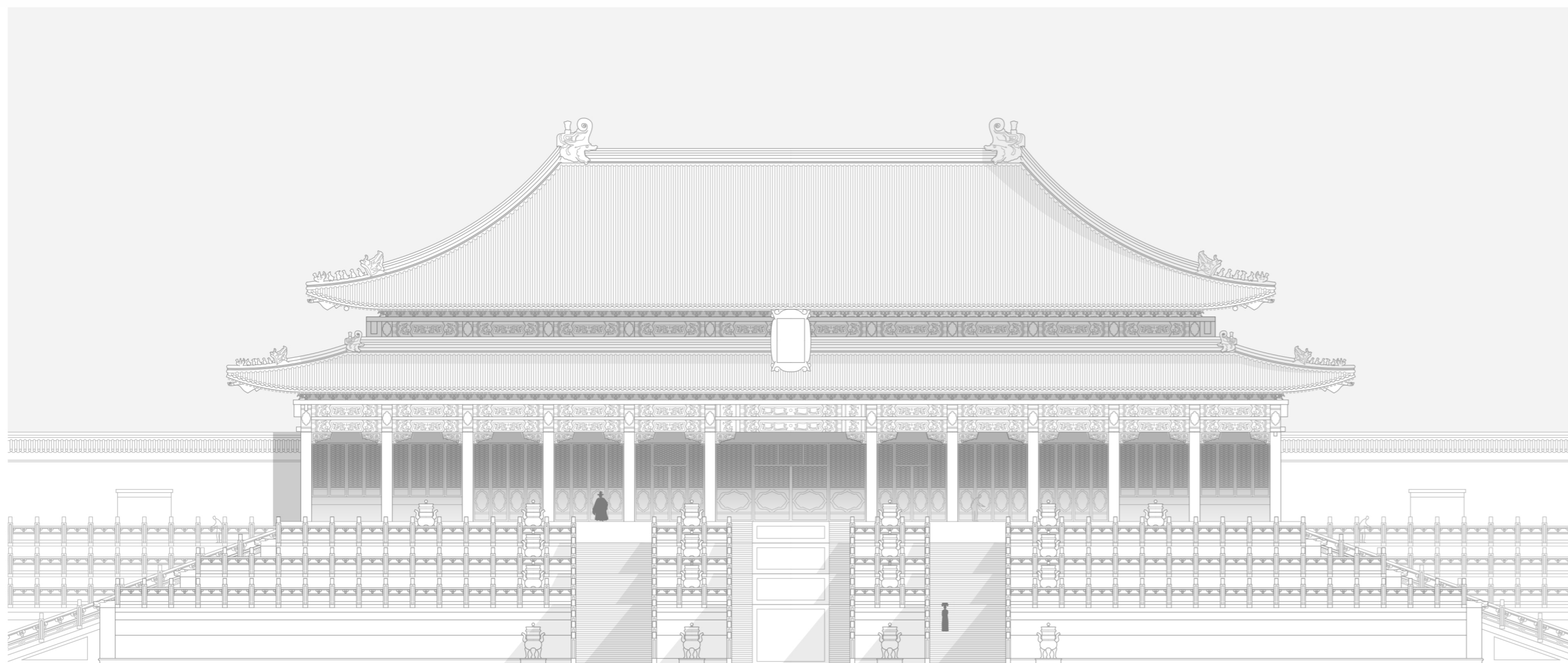
Source: Kan, L. (2019) 'A Rare Gem: Fohzien Godfrey Ede (1902-1983) of the First Generation of Chinese Architects' in Time+Architecture, 04, p.158



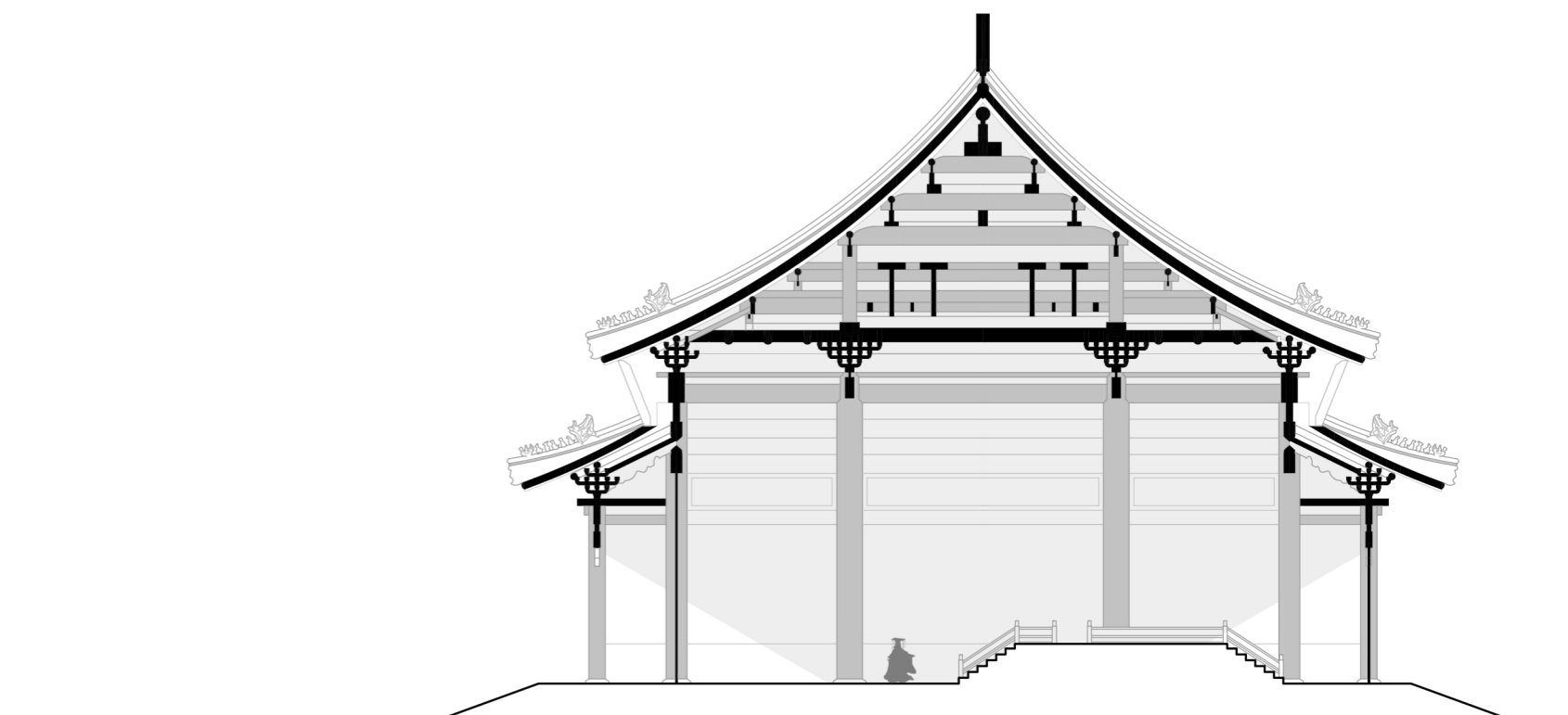
01. Dong Dayou, Mayor's Building, Shanghai (1933) - Main Façade 1: 300



02. Dong Dayou, Mayor's Building, Shanghai (1933) - Section 1: 300



03. Tai He Dian, Forbidden City, Beijing (1406-1430) - Elevation 1: 300



04. Tai He Dian, Forbidden City, Beijing (1406-1430) - Section 1: 300

## ANNEX 04: MAYOR'S BUILDING AND FORBIDDEN CITY TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

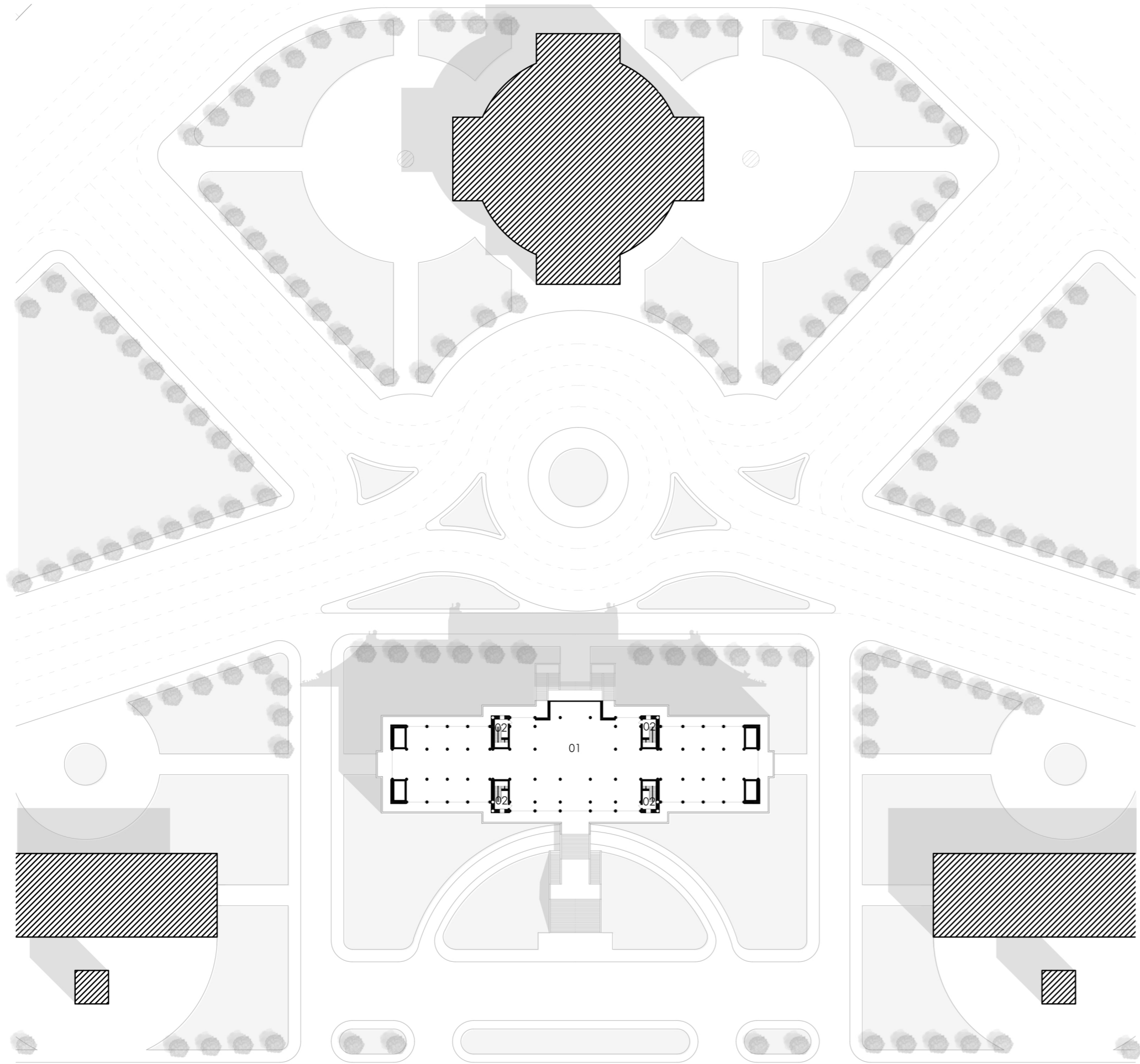
01 Assembly Hall

02 Circulation

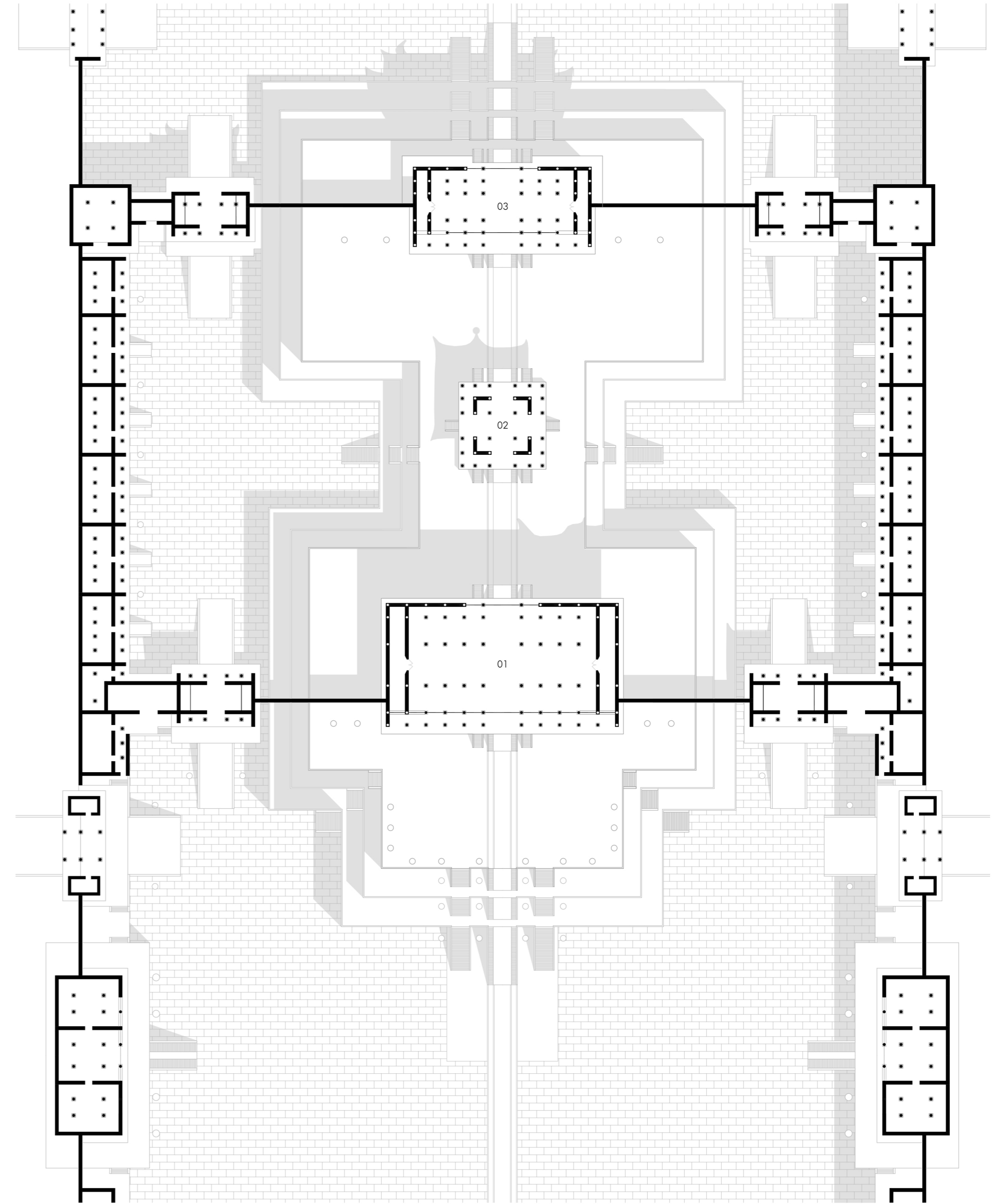
01 Tai He Dian (Hall of Supreme Harmony)

02 Zhong He Dian (Hall of Central Harmony)

03 Bao He Dian (Hall of Preserving Harmony)



01. Dong Dayou, Mayor's Building, Shanghai (1933) - Site Plan 1: 1000



02. Tai He Dian, Zhong He Dian and Bao He Dian, Forbidden City, Beijing (1406-1430) - Site Plan 1: 1000

ANNEX 05: MAYOR'S BUILDING AND FORBIDDEN CITY TECHNICAL DRAWINGS

01 Assembly Hall

02 Circulation

01 Tai He Dian (Hall of Supreme Harmony)

02 Zhong He Dian (Hall of Central Harmony)

03 Bao He Dian (Hall of Preserving Harmony)