



Elżbieta Trocka-Leszczyńska  
Agnieszka Tomaszewicz\*

## *Urban transformations of Beijing*



Fig. 1. Beijing, Tian'anmen Square: a) viewed to the north, in the distance Tian'anmen Gate – the front entrance into the Imperial City, b) Monument to the People's Heroes with the National Museum of China in the background, c) Mausoleum of Mao Zedong, d) southern enclosure of the square – Front Gate consists of the proper gatehouse (Zhengyangmen in the foreground) and the archery tower (Jianlou) – formerly elements of Inner City walls (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

Il. 1. Pekin, plac Tian'anmen: a) widok w kierunku północnym, w oddali Brama Tian'anmen – frontowe wejście do Miasta Cesarskiego, b) Pomnik Bohaterów Ludowych, z tyłu Muzeum Narodowe Chin, c) Mauzoleum Mao Zedonga, d) południowe zamknięcie placu – Brama Przednia (Qianmen), złożona z właściwego budynku bramnego (Zhengyangmen, na pierwszym planie) i wieży łuczniczej – dawniej elementy obwarowań Miasta Wewnętrznego (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

On October 1, 1949 in Tian'anmen Square the president Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China with its capital city in Beijing – the city which has been performing capital functions for most of the time throughout a thousand year history of imperial China. One of the first decisions of the government was to appoint a commis-

sion whose task was to reconstruct the city which was to become the capital of 'The New State'; members of this commission discussed possible ways of reconstructing the old city complex. In spite of the fact that one of Maoism's main ideological aspects was a radical cut off from the past, they did not decide to pull down the Emperor's palaces. Instead, the square in front of the palace was transformed into the place of people's meetings (Fig. 1), in this way allowing 'the past to serve the present times' [22, p. 4].

\* Faculty of Architecture Wrocław University of Technology.

Beijing's past, which is historically documented, dates back to the Neolithic Age – at that time the first permanent settlements were built on the territory of the today's metropolis. The earliest capital city connected with the location of today's Beijing that was then called Yanjing or Ji, was founded at the time of the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.), most probably during the reign of King Zhanguo from the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 B.C.) who was the ruler of the Yan State [19]. At the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C., when Shi Huangdi (221–210 B.C.) the founder of the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.) united China for the first time, the first capital of Yan was transformed into the administration centre of one of the 36 prefectures of the first feudal State of China [13]. During the reign of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.) the city was a scene of battles between the Chinese and nomad tribes of Xiongnu and Huns who invaded the empire from the north. During the Three Kingdoms period (220–280), due to the vicinity of the northern state border, the former capital city of the Zhou dynasty became the local centre of great political and strategic importance. For almost three consecutive centuries (from the end of the reign of the Western Jin dynasty in 316 until the beginning of the Sui dynasty in 581) the northern territories of China, including the place where Beijing is situated today, remained under the control of nomadic invaders [8]. During the short reign of the Sui dynasty (581–618) China was united again and the former capital city Yan was transformed into a military city. Emperor Yang (604–618), the last of the Sui dynasty, gathered troops in the city as he was planning to invade Korea. During the reign of the next dynasty – Tang (618–907) the city under the name of Youzho performed the function of a stronghold that guarded the northern border of the state. The second emperor of the Tang dynasty – Taizong (626–649) founded the Fayuan temple, thus commemorating the soldiers who were killed in battles with nomadic northern tribes. This building was situated beyond the city walls and today it is considered to be the oldest temple of Beijing<sup>1</sup>.

After the fall of the Tang dynasty, power over north-east China was seized by the Khitans – a Turkish-Mongolian people from Manchuria – who established the Liao dynasty in 907 A.D. (907–1125). On the ruins of Youzhou, the capital city of the Liao State, Nanjing (Southern Capital) was founded, which performed the function of a base for conquering the planes of central China. Nanjing is thought to have been a fortified city, set up on a square plan, which contained an independently fortified complex of imperial palaces inside [22].

In 1115 the Khitans were conquered by another semi-nomadic tribe – the Jurchens who came to power over northern China and started the Jin dynasty (1115–1234) [5]. In 1153 Wanyan Liang (1149–1160, the fourth emperor of the Jin dynasty, moved the capital from Huining in today's Liaoning Province to Nanjing, and at

the same time gave the city a new name – Zhongdu (Central Capital). Two years before that, the reconstruction of the city was started by extending its borders towards the east, west and south [23]. Along the external fortifications whose periphery was 17.6 kilometres twelve city gates were installed, with three gates at each segment of the wall. The gates were connected by means of alleys which went in the direction north-south and east-west and constituted a framework for the designed rectangular street network. In the central part of the city plan, an independent fortified imperial town along with a palace complex was built, which was located in a concentric system. The spatial system of Zhongdu is thought to have been modeled on the plan of Bianliang (now Kaifeng), the capital city of the Northern Song dynasty, situated in Henan Province [23]. Bianliang is the earliest known Chinese town that consisted of three fortified functionally different sections which were situated centripetally to one another [26]. Looking at the plan of the capital of the Song state, we can easily notice one more distinguishing feature of the later imperial cities – a three-axial imperial way which connects the middle gate of the southern segment of the external city walls with the corresponding gate of the imperial city, leading further towards the southern gate of the palace city. It was along the imperial way that the most important buildings were located and at the same time it constituted the symmetry axis of the imperial city composition [2]. After the army of Jurchens seized Bianliang, some elements of the imperial palaces were taken up north and used in the construction works of the new capital city of the Jin dynasty. On the list of objects which were taken away by Jurchens there was also a rock fragment – the symbol of the spirit of rule which was used in shaping the island Qionghua surrounded by

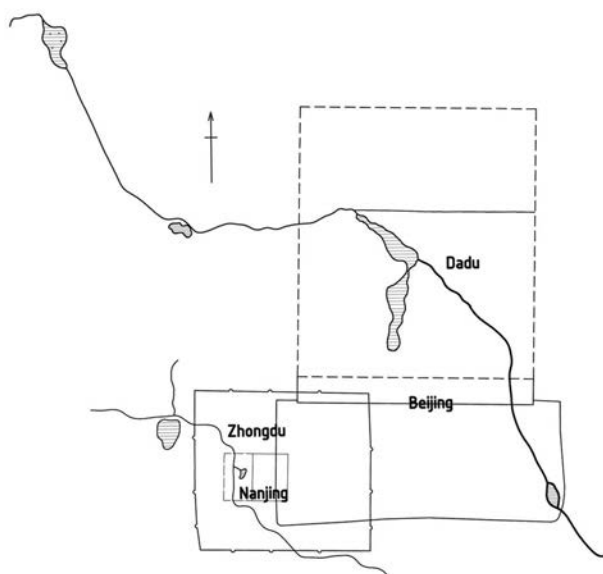


Fig. 2. Beijing, sketch of city plan, showing earlier capitals of Liao (Nanjing), Jin (Zhongdu), Yuan (Dadu) and Ming-Qing (Beijing) dynasties (according to [23, fig. 4] drawn by J. Kowalczyk)

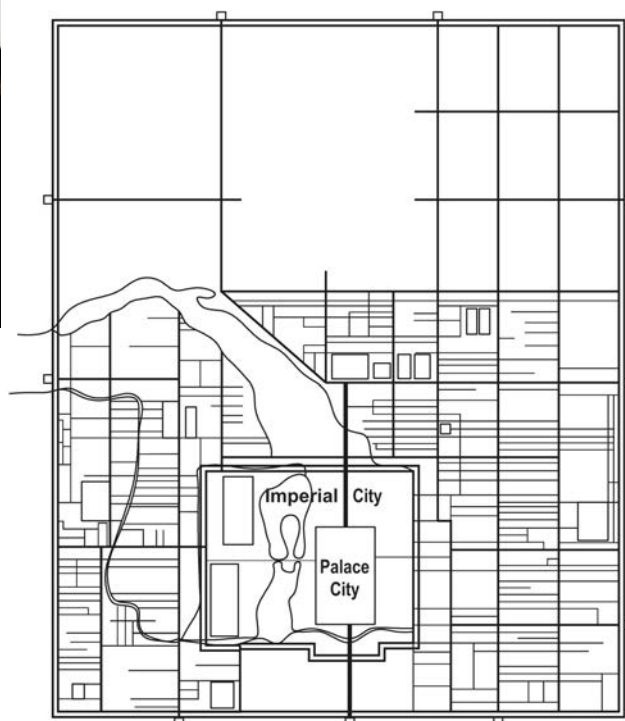
Il. 2. Pekin, szkic planu Starego Miasta, na którym zaznaczono usytuowanie stolic dynastii: Liao (Nanjing), Jin (Zhongdu), Yuan (Dadu) oraz Ming i Qing (Beijing), wg [23, il. 4] rys. J. Kowalczyk

<sup>1</sup> The buildings which were consecrated by emperor Taizong were destroyed in an earthquake; the today's building is the reconstruction of the old temple that was made during the reign of the Qing dynasty [14].



Fig. 3. Scheme of Dadu plan (according to [23, fig. 1] drawn by J. Kowalczyk) and imperial palace complex (mainly from Ming and Qing Dynasty): a) walls around Palace City, b) view from the Gate of Supreme Harmony to the Hall of Supreme Harmony, c) the Hall of Central Harmony and the Hall of Preserving Harmony (left), d) the gilded lions in front of the Palace of Tranquil and Longevity (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczynska)

Il. 3. Schemat planu Dadu (wg [23, il. 1] rys. J. Kowalczyk) i zespół pałaców cesarskich (z czasów dynastii Ming i Qing): a) mury wokół Zakazanego Miasta, b) widok z Bramy Najwyższej Harmonii w kierunku Pawilonu Najwyższej Harmonii, c) Pawilon Środkowej Harmonii i Pawilon Trwałej Harmonii, d) złożone smoki przed wejściem do Pałacu Spokoju i Długowieczności (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczynska)



waters of the artificial lake Taiyi Zhi [23]. This lake along with the island symbolizing the mythological Island of the Immortals soon became a basic element of imperial gardens (today's Beihe Park) situated beyond the city walls in the north-east part of Zhongdu. In 1179 a palace complex was built on the island where the emperor spent the summer months of the year.

In 1215 the city was seized and completely destroyed by the Mongolian army of Genghis Khan; an attempt to

rebuild Zhongdu was made 45 years later when Khubilai Khan, a grandson and inheritor of the famous leader, came to power over Great Eastern Khanate [15]. In 1260 Khubilai Khan came to Zhongdu where he settled down in the extended summer palaces of emperors of the Jin dynasty and started the reconstruction of the city. A few years later he ordered to stop the works and in 1267 he laid the cornerstone for the construction of a new city. This is how Marco Polo in his travel accounts explains

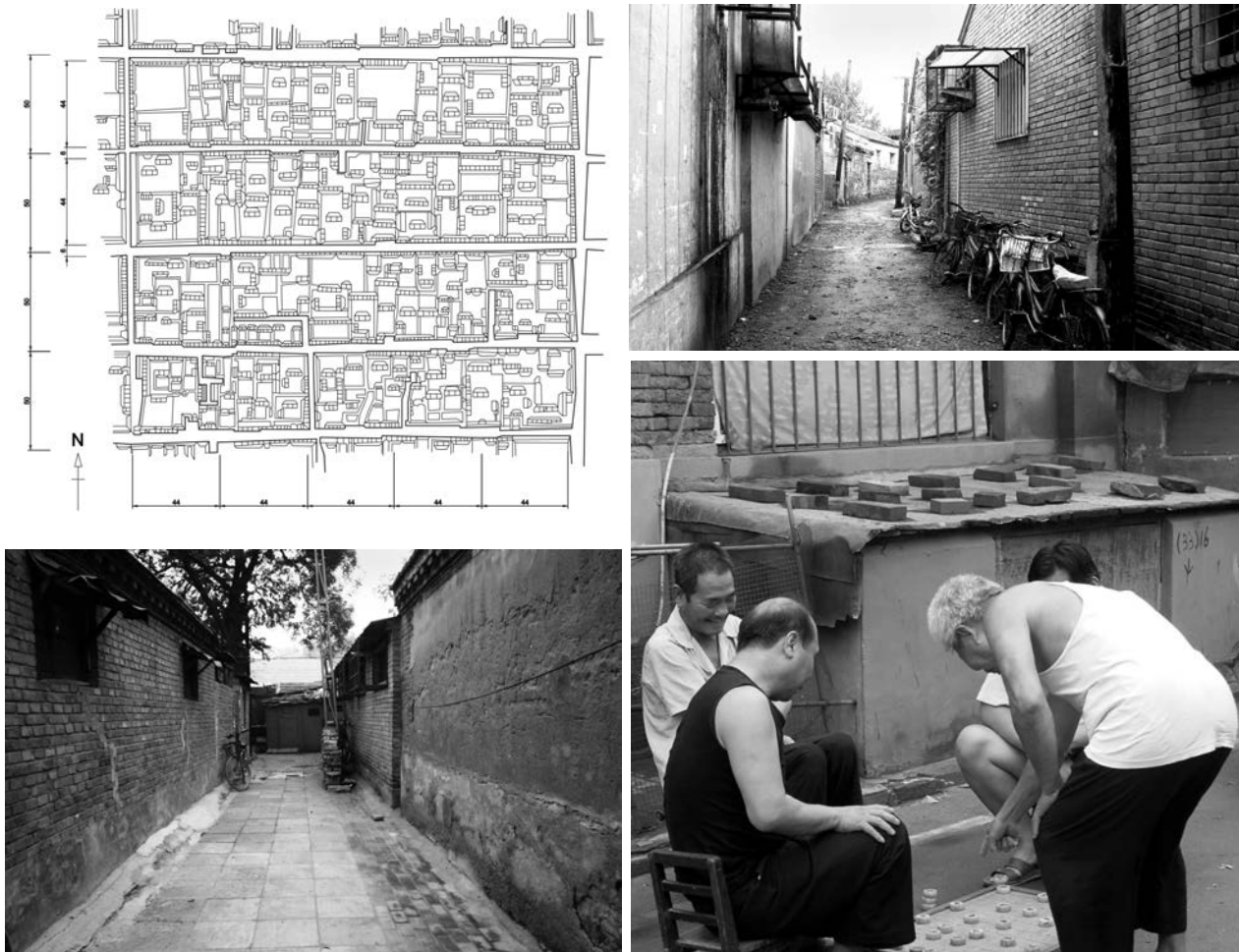


Fig. 4. Beijing, Inner City, residential district, the plot divisions visible on the city plan from 1750 (drawn by J. Kowalczyk) and Hutongs in the southern part of Inner City (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

Il. 4. Pekin, Stare Miasto, kwartał zabudowy mieszkaniowej pokazany na planie miasta z 1750 r. (rys. J. Kowalczyk) oraz hutongi w południowej części miasta wewnętrznego (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

the reasons of Khubilai Khan's decision: 'His Majesty was informed by astrologists that [the city] shall rebel against his authority' [25, p. 132]. Therefore, a new town was built in the north-east part of Zhongdu (Fig. 2). In 1279, after the final victory over the Southern Song dynasty, Khubilai Khan proclaimed himself the first emperor of Yuan dynasty and the city was made the capital of the Empire and named Dadu (Great Capital). In accordance with the Chinese pattern of the imperial city, the new capital city founded by Khubilai Khan was composed of three independently fortified units: an external city, an imperial city and a palace complex, which were situated centripetally to one another (Fig. 3). The main elements of the city structure were arranged on the plan of a rectangle whose composition axis corresponded to the cardinal points. The construction of the Great Capital started with erecting the external city walls of the periphery of 28.6 km [23]. Along the internal face of the fortifications, the widest (50 steps, i.e. 77.5 m) road in the city was situated which served military purposes – during the state of siege this road enabled a quick movement of troops, whereas during peace it was the place of military training. Eleven gates were planned in the city walls – two in the northern wall and three in each of the remain-

ing walls of the fortifications; in between, a rectangular network of streets (dajie) was situated; these streets were 24 steps (circa 37 m) wide and they were elegant places where trade was conducted. The network of roads was accompanied by streets which were 12 steps (about 18.5 m) wide and went parallel to the axis connecting the city walls (xiaojie). In the checker of streets it was possible to single out 55 square building quarters which were further divided by hutongs – alleys-passages between the rows of estates which served living purposes. In the Dadu design, most of the streets went parallel and they were 6 steps (about 9 m) wide [12]. The areas of estates between the hutongs were further divided into square plots of land, with each side measuring 44 steps (about 68 m), on which houses were located along the north-south axis (Fig. 4).

In the middle part of the city, at the southern side, the imperial city was designed – an area surrounded by fortifications, which was used by the imperial family as well as by the state administration [9]. Buildings of the imperial city, usually situated symmetrically along the dominating meridional composition axis, in the case of Dadu were situated asymmetrically, at both sides of the Taiyi Zhi Lake. At the western side of the Lake, there was an imperial palace with two palace complexes: Longfu Gong

– the empress's residence, the building of which was started in 1294 and Xingsheng Gong – heir to the throne's residence dated at the year 1308 [23]. At the eastern side of the Lake, there was another fortified unit – palace city, used exclusively by the emperor. Within the area of fortifications which were 3.480 metres long, three multi-pavilion palace complexes were erected (Daming, Yanchun, Yude), which served public, private and religious aspects of imperial life [4]. Building of the palace city started before the western residences were built and it was necessary to look for places where the next buildings for the imperial family could be erected – this explains why the imperial city expanded towards the west and consequently it had an untypical spatial system [23]. Beyond the imperial city walls, two more buildings used exclusively by the emperor were erected: taimiao, Ancestral Temple, situated by the eastern wall of the external city walls and a twin complex of altars dedicated to Soil and Grain (she, je tan), which were placed at the north-west side of the imperial city. Building of the Ancestral Temple was started in 1263, that is, before the external city walls were built. The emperor also reconstructed the former capital city of Jin, which was transformed into residential suburbs of Dadu. The last stage of the process of building the city was the completion of the Tanghui Canal connecting Dadu with the Great Canal.

The new capital city of the Yuan dynasty enjoyed great fame in the thirteenth century world. It was Marco Polo who, in the accounts from his travels, familiarized the people of the Western world with this city: *This new city is of a form perfectly square, and twenty-four miles in extent, each of its sides being six miles. It is enclosed with walls of earth that at the base are about ten paces thick, but gradually diminish to the top, where the thickness is not more than three paces. In all parts the battlements are white. The whole plan of the city was regularly laid out by line, and the streets in general are consequently so straight that when a person ascends the wall over one of the gates and looks right forward, he can see the gate opposite to him on the other side of the city. In the public streets there are, on each side, booths and shops of every description. All the allotments of ground upon which the habitations throughout the city were constructed are square, and exactly in line with each other, each allotment being sufficiently spacious for handsome buildings, with corresponding courts and gardens. One of these was assigned to each head of a family. Afterwards the property passed from hand to hand. In this manner the whole interior of the city is enclosed in squares to resemble a checker and it was planned with precision and beauty impossible to describe. The wall of the city has twelve gates, three on each side of the square, and over each gate and compartment of the wall there is a sizeable building; so that on each side of the square there are five such buildings, containing large rooms, in which are disposed the arms of those who form the garrison of the city, every gate being guarded by a thousand men. [...] Outside each of the gates is a suburb so wide that it reaches to and unites with those of the other nearest gates on both sides, and in length extends to the distance of*

*three or four miles, so that the number of inhabitants in these suburbs exceeds that of the city itself. Within each suburb there are, at intervals, as far perhaps as a mile from the city, many hotels, or caravanserais, in which the merchants arriving from various parts take up their abode; and to each description of people a separate building is assigned, as we should say, one to the Lombards, another to the Germans, and third to the French [25, p. 132, 133].*

It is generally thought that the urban system of Dadu was designed in accordance with the utopian concept of an ideal Chinese capital city which was described in the Rites of Zhou [24] – a collection of anonymous texts that were written most probably towards the end of the Warring States period (475–221 B.C.). The instructions how to build a city were included in Kao Gong Ji, i.e. the Artificer's Record, one of the books of Rites, and they corresponded to the Confucian ideology which constituted the essence of the Chinese feudal hierarchical social system [21]. An ideal capital city ought to be founded on *a square network measuring nine by nine li (about 4.5 km), with three gates in each of the city walls. Nine streets and nine alleys [must be planned], which would be wide enough for nine-horse carts going past each other. In the middle of the city there should be an imperial palace with a family temple on the left [side], deity temples on the right [side], office buildings at the front and a market place at the back [23, p. 152].* So far, archeological examinations have not confirmed the existence of a city so described in the Record; however, the closest to this description is the plan of the capital erected in China by the Mongolian ruler [19]. A possible reason why Khubilai Khan used the classical Chinese city building models was not only the lack of his own tradition, but also his willingness to symbolically confirm himself as a legally legitimated ruler – 'Son of Heavens'. In China, imperial authority was always compared to the standard power model of the previous emperors and even of pre-imperial dynasties. Therefore, any changes in the widely accepted tradition, including the one related to town building, were considered as an act of defiance of the imperial past [22].

In August 1368 the army of Zhu Yuanzhang, founder of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), seized Dadu and the city was given a new name – Beiping (Northern Quiet). However, Zhu, also known by his imperial name of Hongwu (1368–1398), proclaimed Nanjing as his first capital city [6]. Almost forty years later, in 1406, Yongle (1403–1424), the third emperor of the Ming dynasty, started large scale works on the modernization of Beijing. First, the city walls were reconstructed and at the same time the northern wall of fortifications was moved by 2.5 km towards the south. For the first time in the history of the city, earth fortifications were replaced with a brick construction. The new curtain of the city wall was 13.2 m high and 16.5 m wide at the top of the construction and was higher by 3.3 m and wider by 9.9 m than the former embankments [3]. In the years 1417–1420 a new imperial palace and garden complex was built and also the most important sacral buildings were erected: Temple of Heaven, Altar of Earth and Crops, Altar of Mountains and

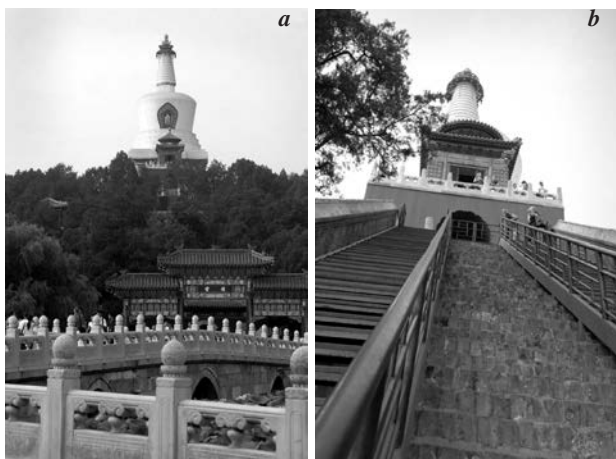


Fig. 5. Beijing, White Dagoba: a) viewed from the south, b) main entrance to the stupa (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

Il. 5. Pekin, Biała Dagoba: a) widok od strony południowej, b) główne wejście do stupy (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczyńska)

Rivers and Ancestral Temple [14]. In 1421 emperor Yongle officially moved the capital to Beiping and again changed its name to Beijing (Northern Capital). The structure of the city was finally formed during the reign of emperor Jiajing (1522–1567), when the Internal City (also called Tatar) was supplemented by External City (Chinese) enclosed in the rectangular plan [14]. During the reign of the next and at the same time last dynasty – Qing (1644–1911), the complex of imperial palaces was reconstructed and many, mainly suburban, gardens were established; however, the spatial city system remained unchanged. Archeological examinations confirmed the fact that the rulers of Ming and Qing dynasties, while reconstructing the capital city, continued and developed the spatial concept of Dadu [16]. They preserved the three-section plan of the city with one dominating composition axis as well as the old transportation system along with the residential buildings and the horizontal silhouette of the city. The height of the majority of the buildings in the city did not exceed 8 metres, with the exception of the buildings situated along the central axis which were made special in the silhouette of the city by gradually increasing in height towards the north. The composition culminated in White Dagoba which was built on the former island of Qionghua (Fig. 5) – since the times of the great reconstruction ordered by emperor Yongle, this island was the central point of the Imperial City [10]. Composition of all the elements of the Beijing old city complex was strictly geometric, hierarchic, axial and symmetric. According to the traditionally understood spatial conception, which, on the one hand, corresponded with the balanced relations between an individual and family, family and society and human order and cosmic order, while on the other hand, it reflected the rules of the feudal Chinese society, a special importance was ascribed to orientation and closure of both the city and its parts as well as the single and functionally uniform building complexes [28]. In 1911 after the fall of the Chinese Empire, Beijing's Old Town covered an area of 62 km<sup>2</sup> and con-

sisted of four main parts: External City, Internal City from which the Imperial City was separated in which, in turn, imperial palaces were set apart [14].

A completely new chapter in the history of Beijing's urban development was opened with the proclamation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. During the first three years of the existence of the New State, introductory reforms of economy, agriculture and financial system were conducted and the political assumptions of the so called transitory period from capitalism to socialism were elaborated – they comprised national industrialization, collectivization of agriculture and nationalization of industry and trade, whose reforms were to be completed within 15 years [18]. In 1953 the first Five Year Plan was started whose key objective was national industrialization, mainly with the help of the Soviet Union. The first Five Year Plan also included development and extension of Beijing. In 1953 the Capital Planning Commission elaborated a comprehensive development project of Beijing, which assumed that within 20 years' time a new metropolis would be built of the total area of 500 km<sup>2</sup> and with the population of 4.5 million people [17, 1953–54]. The authorities planned to transform the former capital city of the empire into the administration centre of 'The New State'. Big industrial districts and agricultural areas were planned on the northern, western and eastern outskirts. Southern suburbs were supposed to serve as a place for cultural and scientific objects. Residential communities of the area of 9–15 hectares were to be built and further divided by means of a network of roads into square blocks where 4–5 storey family houses were to be built. A checker system of a transportation axis complemented by two by-passes and a radial system of collective roads were designed in new districts. The railway was built outside the city, whereas in the city the underground and electric bus routes were designed. There were also plans to create a network of public access city parks and a protection wood belt surrounding the city.

This plan was accompanied by six ideological postulates of the city development formulated by a group of planners who were members of the city communist party committee. *Firstly*, – according to the document entitled: 'Key Points of Planning Draft for Reconstruction and Expansion of Beijing City' – *the central district of the whole city shall function as the location of the departments for the Central Government and Party Central Committee, and shall be changed into a center serving the people of the whole country. Secondly, the capital should become the center of politics, economy and culture in our country and especially it should become a powerful base of industry and the leading center of science and technology in our country. Thirdly, the reconstruction and expansion of the Capital should proceed from the city base which was formed in the past, however, it should not only preserve and develop the style and characteristics in conformity with people's needs, but also break through the limitations and constraints of the old patterns which make it difficult for the Capital to become a socialist city suitable for the lifestyle of collectivism. Fourthly, in relation to the buildings left by his-*

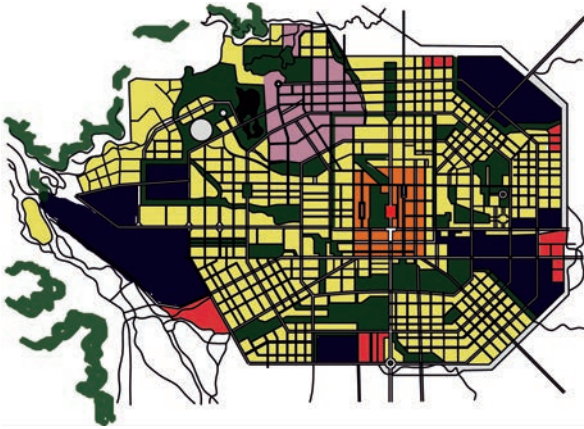


Fig. 6. Beijing, master plan scheme, 1954 (according to [17, 1953–54] drawn by J. Kowalczyk)

Il. 6. Pekin, schemat planu rozbudowy miasta, 1954 (wg [17, 1953–54] rys. J. Kowalczyk)

tory, the attitude of complete negation is not correct; however, taking steps with the view of complete preservation and constraining the development is also wrong. Currently, the main trend is the latter. Fifthly, the reconstruction of the road system should possibly proceed from the existing condition as much as it is possible, but should not be further constrained by the existing situation. Sixthly, the climate conditions in Beijing and the lack of necessary water sources should be transformed in a planned way, in this way creating favorable conditions for industry development [17, 1953–54]. The postulates quoted here, which resulted from the model of society which was preferred by Maoism, i.e. the community living in the conditions of radical egalitarianism, were included in the plan of the city development the final version of which was published in 1954 (Fig. 6); in the same year the decision to implement the project was issued.

In the late autumn of 1957, Mao Zedong announced the acceleration of the reforms by starting the campaign of the Great Leap Forward in the spring of the following year. Village restructuring was planned, which consisted in the creation of people's communes that were considered as basic social units [29]. These people's communes were responsible for the organization of collective agricultural works, creation of local administration, maintenance of village armed groups and village industrialization. These activities were supposed to liquidate differences between city and village and, therefore, to stop the migration of people from villages to cities [18]. The reform acceleration policy was indirectly reflected in the new development plan of Beijing prepared in 1958 [17, 1957–58]. At that time, the city struggled with the uncontrolled growth of population, which was caused mainly by the influx of village people who were directed to work in the industry sector. During only eleven years of the existence of 'The New State', the number of Beijing inhabitants grew by 3.18 million, reaching in 1960 the number of 7.32 million. The 1954 the city development plan was prepared for 4.5 million of inhabitants; therefore it had to be significantly corrected. The new

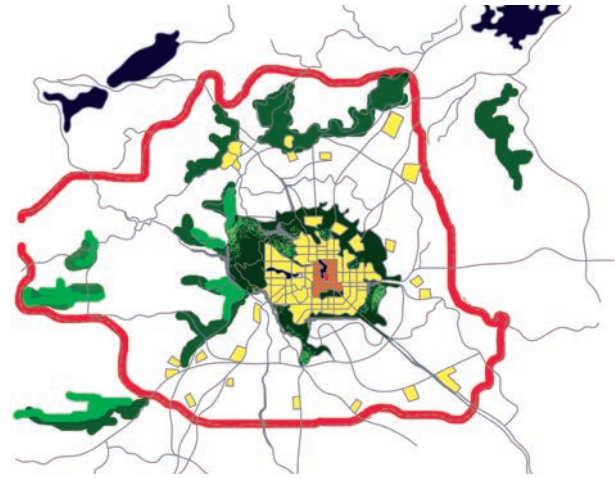


Fig. 7. Beijing, scheme of urban complex consisting of a central city and 40 satellite towns (according to [17, 1957–58] drawn by J. Kowalczyk)

Il. 7. Pekin, schemat zespołu miejskiego złożony z miasta centralnego i 40 miast satelitarnych, 1957 (wg [17, 1957–58] rys. J. Kowalczyk)

elaboration comprised an area of 16.800 m<sup>2</sup>, Beijing's urban complex, which was so far limited to the central city, was completed by 40 satellite towns (Fig. 7). In the extended central city borders, 20 new residential districts were planned, as the dramatic deficit of flats constituted one of the major problems of the city. This problem was addressed by accommodating the newly arrived inhabitants in the already existing residential houses – the traditional residential houses (siheyuan) which, before 1949, were used by single although multi-generation families were now populated by as many as 5 to 10 households. The designed residential districts which enabled 'collective life based on the principle of the People's Communes' [17, 1957–58], were provided with basic services and workplaces. In the city plan, residential units were separated by broad green belts which, according to the planners' ideas, constituted not only a natural protective barrier but also a construction land reserve (Fig. 8). The new plan did not provide for any extension of the already



Fig. 8. Beijing, master plan scheme, 1958 (according to [17, 1957–58] drawn by M. Garbacz)

Il. 8. Pekin, schemat planu rozwoju miasta, 1958 (wg [17, 1957–58], rys. M. Garbacz)

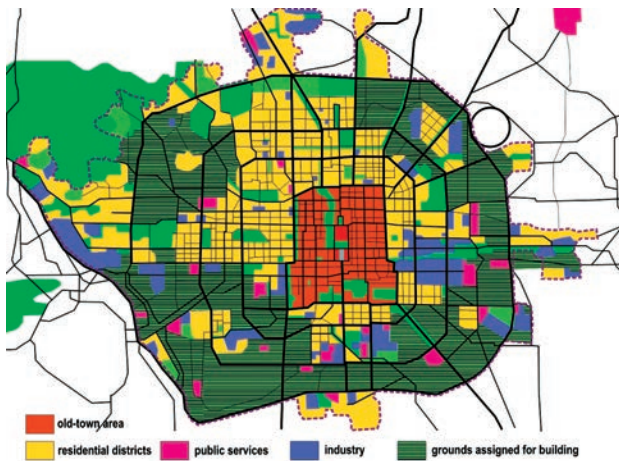


Fig. 9. Beijing, master plan scheme, 1982 (according to [17, 1982] drawn by A. Tomaszewicz)

Il. 9. Pekin, schemat planu rozwoju miasta, 1982 (wg [17, 1982], rys. A. Tomaszewicz)

existing industrial districts nor were any new heavy industries within the city limits planned. As part of the campaign of ‘getting rid of differences between city and village’, several settlements situated ‘on the distant outskirts of Beijing’ were chosen as locations for burdensome heavy production. The whole city complex was connected by means of three city ring roads, three suburban motorway bypasses and eighteen radial roads. At the same time, the process of pulling down the external fortifications<sup>2</sup> was commenced, where the line of the second city ring road was designed. For the first time, the plan of development of the road and railway transport network was prepared as well as of water, gas and electric energy deliveries on the scale of the whole region.

The effects of the campaign of the Great Leap Forward were adverse to the intended aims as a significant decrease in agricultural and industrial production was observed. The implementation of the policy of ‘getting rid of differences between city and village’, especially an attempt to obtain a significant increase in steel production by melting it in primitive furnaces situated almost in village cabins as well as creating people’s communes, led China into a serious economic crisis [29]. Due to the economic slump, Beijing’s population growth rate significantly decreased as a large part of the newly arrived village people left the city in the years 1960–1962.

In 1961 the so called regulation policy was adopted, taking into account economic mechanisms, which was supposed to help the country to overcome the crisis. However, five years later this policy was considered as ‘reactive’ and the ‘cultural revolution’ was proclaimed as ‘a continuation of class struggle in a socialist society’ [18, p. 210]. The ‘Cultural Revolution’ disorganized the life in this country and led to an enormous loss of life. In Beijing the city administration institutions were officially banned,

<sup>2</sup> The process of pulling down the external fortifications of the capital of China was completed in 1969; only four city gates and two shooting towers were left unchanged [14].

including the town planning department and at the same time the implementation of the capital city development plan was discontinued. In July 1971 ‘a working conference’ was appointed in order to create new directions of the city development [17, 1973]. In the following year, Beijing’s town planning department was restored and in 1973 this institution prepared a new city development plan which was ‘based on the corrected 1958 plan and the thirteen years’ experience in the building of the capital of the New State’. This project was never implemented and the next plan was not prepared until 1982, already after the death of Mao Zedong (1976) and after power was seized by Deng Xiaoping (1978) who introduced the ‘socialist market economy’ [18]. Xiaoping’s reforms as well as the policy of ‘opening China to the world’ led to the re-birth of the private sector, de-collectivization of agriculture and creation of the first special economic zones. Economical development of the city was acclaimed as the superior objective in the assumptions of the new Beijing’s development plan [17, 1982]. Despite the former proclamations, the authorities decided to develop non-burdensome branches of industry within the city limits and the existing heavy industry was to be modernized. Strict control of the scale of the city, including its population, was postulated – the population of the central city was planned to reach 4 million in the year 2000 and the agglomeration of up to 10 million of permanent inhabitants. The capital city development policy was based on the following three main guidelines: *gradual transformation of the old town, regulation of the nearby suburbs and active development of the distant suburbs* of Beijing. For the first time, the postulates of cultural heritage protection were introduced – the authorities noticed the necessity to protect not only the architectural monuments but also their surroundings: gardens, countryside and water system. They also noted that *the old town reconstruction ought to be integrated with the new investments [situated] in suburban areas*. This concept of transforming the old town included extending the most important composition axis of the imperial city towards the north and locating sports facilities at its end – the National Olympic Sport Centre and Asian Sports Village. They also postulated ‘freeing’ the old town area from old residential buildings by replacing them with *the extended network of roads, reinforced green areas, improved city infrastructure, office buildings [...] and large-scale public buildings*. *At the same time, three concentric zones of limitation of height of the newly designed buildings were planned. Within the 250 m wide belt surrounding the complex of the emperor’s palaces, only building three-storey constructions was permitted; on the territories limited by the second by-pass – six-storey constructions were permitted and finally, within the belt which was situated between the second and third city by-pass – ten-storey constructions were permitted* [7]. The people living in the old town were to be gradually displaced and moved to the suburbs to be accommodated in the newly built residential districts which still performed the function of the city development basic units. Within the framework of ‘regulation of the nearest suburbs’ of



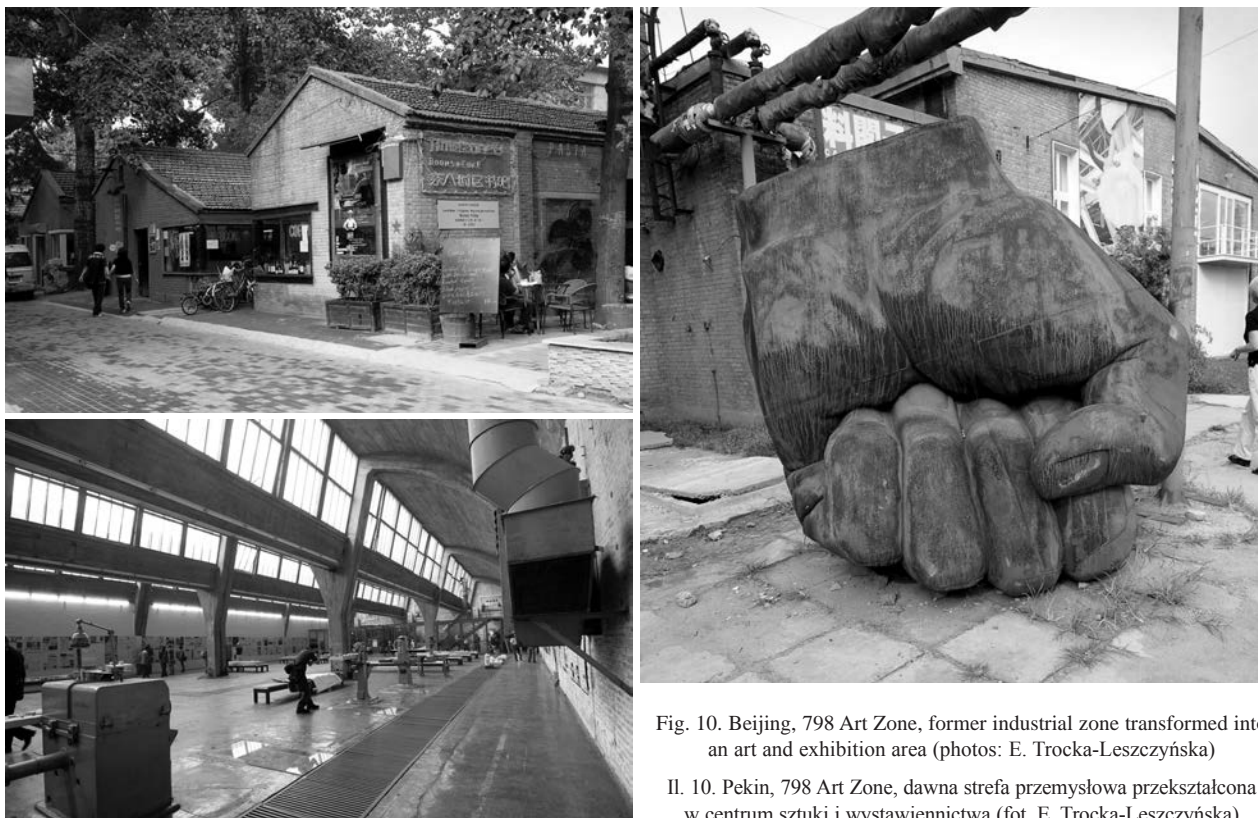


Fig. 10. Beijing, 798 Art Zone, former industrial zone transformed into an art and exhibition area (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczynska)

Il. 10. Pekin, 798 Art Zone, dawna strefa przemysłowa przekształcona w centrum sztuki i wystawiennictwa (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczynska)

Beijing, the new suburban areas were marked out on which ten residential districts were planned to be built; in each of these districts 200 thousand residents were supposed to live (Fig. 9). New residential areas were planned to be separated from the urban territories by means of a green belt. The political concepts of ‘the promotion of constructing satellite towns on the distant outskirts’ of Beijing were also presented [17, 1982].

The economic development of the Chinese capital city speeded up enormously in the 1990s. There was a violent growth of construction land consumption and the real estate market became one of the most profitable sectors of the city economy. In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the authorities of Beijing designated once a year 20 km<sup>2</sup> of arable lands for the needs of the city development; however, the state regulations in big cities ordered to keep the limit of 100–120 m<sup>2</sup> of the area of the urban territory as per inhabitant [11]. This meant that assuming a ten-million population of the city in 2010, the area of Beijing should not exceed 1200 km<sup>2</sup>. In this situation, in 1993 a decision to prepare a correction of the 1982 capital city spatial development plan was made. Therefore, strict control of population in urban areas became the key element for the development of the city. A new policy of Beijing development was formulated and it was named as ‘Two Strategies Transfer’ [17, 1993]; this policy boiled down to: plans of the suburban territories development, extension of satellite towns and resigning from extending the central city limits. The authorities resigned from the concentric spatial development model of Beijing and chose a band system, which meant that the main axis of the city development was an express way leading towards the south-east, to Tianjin [1].

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the planners – members of the Beijing City Planning Commission – summarized their activities so far for the capital city development and arrived at the definition of the following six functionally separate elements in the city spatial system [11]:

1. Old Town – area of the imperial city, now deprived of its historical coherence, permanently divided by means of wide transportation arteries which were built mostly in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, most of the state and city administration buildings were erected and situated in the western part of the imperial city, whereas the eastern part was the seat of diplomatic posts of the states that maintained diplomatic relations with China. Beijing’s old town complex was subjected to major transformations in the 1980s and 1990s, along with the commencement of economic reforms and permitting foreign capital companies to invest in China. Although in the city development plan there were limitations as to the height of the erected buildings, many high constructions were built which completely changed the scale of the old town. In the immediate vicinity of the imperial palaces several 17-storey hotels were built (Beijing, Peace, Princess) and, in turn, in the zone of buildings limited to 10-storey height, trade and office center skyscrapers were situated; the highest are 52 and 50-storey skyscrapers (Jinguang and Capital City) [7]. The old town area is populated by circa 1.3 million people.

2. Downtown Zone – circa a 300 km<sup>2</sup> belt surrounding the old town evenly, which was subjected to systematic, functionally differentiated development since the beginning of the 1950s. After 1979 most of the former industrial zones that were developed as a result of the 1954



Beijing development plan were transformed into trade, business and residential districts (Fig. 10). About 5 million people live in this part of the city.

3. Internal green belt surrounding the downtown zone – according to the guidelines of the 1982 Beijing development plan, this area ought to cover 300 km<sup>2</sup>, while in the next plan of 1983 this area was reduced to circa 240 km<sup>2</sup> and in 2004 it was only 100 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2001 the authorities suggested creating nine ‘green corridors’ which would connect city or suburban green areas with open areas outside the city.

4. Dispersed districts which, according to the 1982 plan, were designed as suburban residential building areas, at the moment constitute ‘bedrooms’ of Beijing because these areas were not provided with workplaces and necessary services. A single residential unit was designed for 200 thousand residents, whereas each of the districts which were built in the north and north-east of the city was populated by about half a million people in 2004.

5. Satellite towns considered as self-sufficient and independent administration units were created with a view of decentralization of the Beijing city complex. Although according to the 1958 capital city development plan as many as 40 locations of the satellite towns were designed, only 14 of them came into existence. Development of satellite towns was only possible towards the end of the 1990s, when the distant suburbs of Beijing were provided with a sufficient network of transportation connections with the central city.

6. City transportation system, which was designed in Beijing development plans elaborated in the 1950s and consequently developed in the 1982 and 1993 plans, consisted of by-passes and the system of radial roads. It was assumed that the periphery of the fourth by-pass shall constitute the border of Beijing city centre complex, the fifth by-pass shall connect the dispersed districts while the sixth one – several satellite towns. The radial roads connected by-passes with one another and constituted transportation ‘corridors’ from Beijing to other cities (Fig. 11).

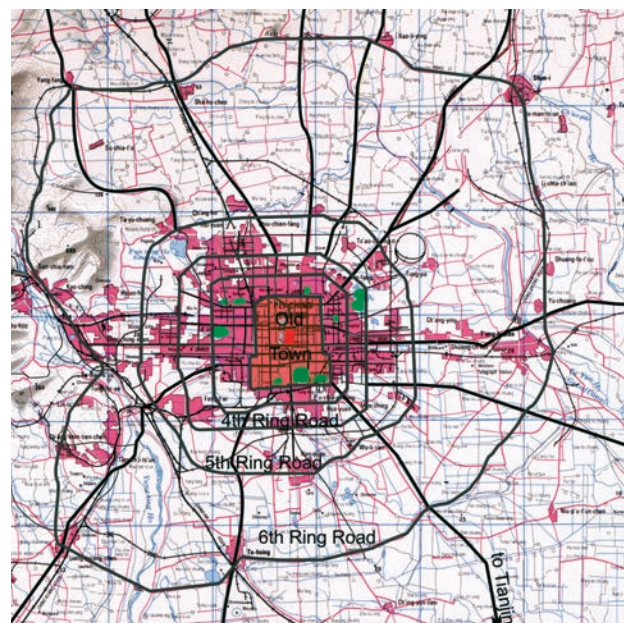


Fig. 11. Beijing, present-day city transportation system marked on the map from 1986 and views of second ring road (photos: E. Trocka-Leszczynska)

Il. 11. Pekin, współczesny system komunikacji miejskiej naniesiony na plan miasta i okolic z 1986 r. z widokami drugiej obwodnicy miejskiej (fot. E. Trocka-Leszczynska)

The analysis of the existing situation of Beijing city agglomeration as well as the fact that the town was granted the privilege of organizing the Olympic Games in 2001, made the city planning commission formulate directions of further spatial development of the city. The last plan of the extension and development of the metropolis, which was prepared in 2004 assumed further continuation of the band development of the city along the main transportation axis leading from the central city towards the north-east, east and south directions [17, 2004]. At the same time, the authorities decided to significantly limit the development of the forest upland areas surrounding the city on the west and north side and for the first time, the issue of environment protection and natural resources protection was addressed. They emphasized again that the superior objective of Beijing's planned development is to maintain the existing city borders; therefore, they decided to extend the three satellite towns which bordered with the central city on the east (Huairou, Shunyi, Tongzhou). The population of Beijing is expected to increase up to 18 million people by the end of 2020; thus, the population transfer to the satellite towns is assumed on such a level so that the number of the people living in the central city is reduced to 8.5 million [26]. Consequently, the necessity to finance the development of the network of regional transportation connections was emphasized, particularly, the 'corridor' leading to Tianjin which in the future is going to be included into the Beijing metropolis [1].

The Beijing future development plan, in its ideological conception, assumed the necessity to maintain the town's rank as the capital city and the need to transfer the city into a world metropolis that is an inheritor of great cultural heritage and constitutes the city which is really

adjusted to the needs of its population. Three stages of the implementation of the aforementioned plan were assumed: modernization of the central city in the years 2004–2008, supporting the development of the satellite towns after the Olympic Games and finally, in the perspective of the next decade, Beijing should become a city in which *economy, society and ecology develop in harmony and in a comprehensive way* [27].

Traditionally understood Chinese culture led to the formation of a coherent model of the imperial city – a strong symbol of the imperial power, which throughout centuries was subject to slight transformations and was taken over by the subsequent rulers, also those who were non-Chinese. With the proclamation of New China in 1949 and the rejection of the imperial past, a search for a new scheme of creating urban space was commenced by accepting the patterns which were strange to Chinese culture. In the 1950s, when China became dependent on Soviet industrialization, the projects of Beijing's extension imitated the development plans of communist Moscow. The authorities started gradual extermination of the old traditional city buildings. Starting from the beginning of the 1980s, along with the introduction of the policy of 'opening China to the world', the city development was subjected to the diktat of economy and the investments supported by the state governments were most often conducted contrary to the comprehensive plans of the capital city development. As part of 'freeing' the areas situated in the centre of Old Beijing, almost all the city tissue which remained from the imperial times was completely destroyed. Nowadays, the capital city of China is a scene of activities of the world avant-garde architecture and in this way it is becoming similar to other Asian and American metropolises, at the same time losing irrevocably its old identity.

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### *Przekształcenia urbanistyczne Pekinu*

Tradycyjnie pojmowana kultura chińska doprowadziła do wykształcenia spójnego modelu miasta cesarskiego – silnego symbolu imperialnej władzy, który przez stulecia ulegał niewielkim przeobrażeniom i był przejmowany przez kolejnych władców, także tych pochodzenia niechińskiego. Kompozycja wszystkich elementów miast cesarskich, w tym także pekińskiego zespołu staromiejskiego, była ściśle zgeometryzowana, hierarchiczna, osiowa i symetryczna. W tradycyjnie pojmowanej koncepcji przestrzeni, która z jednej strony korespondowała z pozostającymi w równowadze relacjami między jednostką i rodziną, rodziną i społeczeństwem, porządkiem ludzkim i porządkiem kosmicznym, z drugiej zaś odzwierciedlała reguły rządzące feudalnym społeczeństwem chińskim, szczególne znaczenie nadano orientacji i zamknięciu zarówno miasta i jego części, jak i pojedynczych, jednorodnych funkcjonalnie zespołów budowli.

Wraz z powstaniem w 1949 r. Nowych Chin i odrzuceniem imperialnej przeszłości rozpoczęto poszukiwania nowego schematu kreowania

przestrzeni miejskiej, przejmując przy tym obce chińskiej kulturze wzorce. W latach 50. XX w., kiedy Chiny stały się zależne od radzieckiej industrializacji, projekty rozbudowy stolicy Nowego Państwa wzorowano na planach zagospodarowania komunistycznej Moskwy. Rozpoczęto też stopniową eksterminację dawnej, tradycyjnej zabudowy miasta. Od początku lat 80. ubiegłego stulecia, wraz z wprowadzeniem polityki „otwarcia Chin na świat”, rozwój Pekinu został poddany dyktatowi ekonomii, inwestycje popierane przez rządy państwowe prowadzono najczęściej wbrew kompleksowym planom rozbudowy stolicy. W ramach „uwalniania” terenów położonych w centrum Starego Pekinu dokończono dzieła zniszczenia prawie całej tkanki miejskiej, pozostałej za czasów imperialnych. Obecnie stolica Chin jest sceną działań awangardy światowej architektury, miasto upodabnia się do innych azjatyckich i amerykańskich metropolii, traci przy tym bezpowrotnie swoją dawną tożsamość.

**Key words:** China, Beijing, urban planning

**Słowa kluczowe:** Chiny, Pekin, urbanistyka