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Training Programme on Planning for Development and
Conservation of Chinese Historic Cities

中国历史文化名城保护与规划

Planning and Conserration of Chinese Historic Cities

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前 言

为了提高中国城市建设和城市文物保护部门的干部在从事历史文化名城保护及规划工作的能力以及研究中国历史文化名城保护和规划中的问题,联合国区域开发中心(英文简称 UNCRD)和中国建设部、同济大学合办的“城市建设干部培训中心”联合举办了“历史文化名城保护研修班”。从 1992 年 10 月起至 1994 年连续三年,在中国上海举办研修班,每次一月左右,由 UNCRD 向中国派遣日本古城保护专家进行讲课,每次两人,并于 1993 年 7 月组织了研修班学员到日本进行调研与培训活动。在集中培训基础上组织学员及各历史名城的保护工作干部编写了这本《中国历史文化名城保护与规划》,作为研修班的综合成果,并列为 UNCRD 的工作交流文件。由于有些名城未能及时提供必要的资料,所以不全,并因受资料的限制,所摘编的内容难免会有不妥与不准确之处,还望谅鉴。

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中国的历史文化名城名镇的保护

同济大学 阮仪三 教授

中国历史悠久,文物众多,历史性城镇遍及全国,约有 2000 多个,数量之多、传统特色之丰富是举世闻名的。这些城镇拥有优美的自然环境、名胜古迹、乡土建筑,它们体现了中华民族灿烂的历史文化。对于这些历史古城,中国过去是不重视的,因为中国自古以来由于封建意识的作用,改朝换代中都要把过去前代的东西毁掉,即是所谓革故鼎新,许多宏伟壮丽的都城大多在政权的更迭中毁于一旦,因此,中国能保留下的历史古城就更为珍贵了。到了近代,人们对历史文化的意义和作用的提高,认识到城市是历史文化积累最多的地方,在城市中存在的各种物质的实体:如宫殿、坛庙、寺观、府第、园林、街道、民居、桥梁等都是各个时期的历史遗存,是中国各地方悠久历史的例证,具有很高的价值,是人类文化的结晶和科学技术的成就。特别是近代以来,欧洲先进国家对历史文化的重视,西方科学文化的传入,中国有很大的影响。在 30 年代,中国的“营造学社”就做了许多非常有益的工作,为中国的建筑和城市文化保护奠定了重要的基础。

1949 年新中国成立以后,就把保护历史文物作为新中国文化建设事业的重要组成部分,设立专门机构,颁布一些法令,取得了卓有成效的成果。但在以后的几十年中,特别是文化大革命中,中国的历史文化遗存遭受了一场大浩劫,许多精心保护的东西,又一次受到破坏。

进入 80 年代初,中国掀起了经济建设的高潮,许多城市有了巨大的发展。由于人们对城市中历史文化遗存的重要价值认识不足,许多历史古城也遭到了严重的破坏。如有的城市中优秀历史传统建筑和重要历史地段遭受破坏或被拆迁;或在它们附近布置不恰当的建筑物,这样的结果使文物古迹丧失了它们原来的意义,或破坏了这些历史文化景区的外部形象,或破坏了古建筑优美的轮廓线;有的从旅游要求出发,对古建筑或建筑群,随意地加以改造、添加、拆改,致使原来面目全非,降低以致丧失了原有的历史价值。对于以上这些情况,我们常将它称为“建设性破坏”,是在建设城市中遭到的破坏,很多是人为的,是可以防止的。由于中国尚未制定对历史城镇和历史性地段的保护性法规条文,一些有识之士提出要求,国家对历史文化城镇进行有效的保护,经过几年的酝酿,中国国务院于 1982 年 2 月公布了北京、西安等 24 个有重大历史价值和革命意义的城市,为国家第一批历史文化名城。自此“历史文化名城”的概念在中国正式明确的提出,名城保护的研究工作也开始兴起。1986 年 12 月又公布了上海、福州等 38 个城市为第二批国家历史文化名城;一些省公布了省级名城。1994 年又公布第三批国家级的历史文化名城 44 个,国家级历史文化名城一共有 99 个。与此同时逐步明确了历史文化名城的标准、保护规划的要求,以及历史文化保护的概念,将历史文化名城保护工作全面地开展起来。相应的学术研究机构也组织起来,1984 年先在中国建筑学会下,成立了“中国历史文化名城学组”,以后升格为“中国历史文化名城学术委员会”。1987 年由全国各个历史文化名城的主管城市建设工作的市(县)长联合成立了中国历史文化名城协会,后改名为“中国历史文化名城委员会”,并办有《中国名城》刊物。1994 年由国家建设部,国家文物局联合聘请了国内

知名的专家学者成立了“全国历史文化名城保护专家委员会”，以加强对历史文化名城保护工作的监督管理和协助中央政府，研究制定有关的政策方针。

在公布了第一批历史文化名城后的十年来，中国对城市历史文化遗存的保护，取得了前所未有的成绩，在具体的保护工作的实践和保护规划中，我个人感到有以下几个特点和情况：

一、中国历史文化名城保护工作的特点

在日本和欧洲一些国家，他们对城市历史文化遗存的保护，除了一些范围和规模不大的、保存比较完整的古城以外，大多是根据要保护的建筑物或建筑群的具体情况，划定一个范围，如街区、地段以采取保护措施。中国则是公布城市的名称，这些城市大小不一，情况各异，如有的是规模和范围很大的特大城市，如上海、北京、天津、广州等。对于这样的大城市，必须从总体上来研究和安排对其存在的城市传统历史文化的保护，在城市建设和发展中要认真地作为一种总的指导思想和原则，在城市规划中体现出来，并对整个城市的发展形态、结构布局、土地利用、环境规划设计等方面产生重要影响。因此，要求历史文化名城一定要认真制定历史文化名城保护规划，并且明确这个保护规划是城市总体规划的一个重要组成部分，以使这个名城在建设和发展中，要注意继承和发扬本城市的历史优秀传统文化，保护好城市地区的文物古迹、风景名胜以及其环境。保护规划既是一项专项规划，又是一份纲领性的文件，因为除了保护城市中的文化遗存物质性的东西，也要保护建筑等以外的文化传统：如语言、文学艺术、地方戏曲、衣冠服饰、民俗风情、土特名产、工艺、菜肴等精神文化的内容，这也是城市特色的重要组成部分，同样有继承和发展问题。

我国幅员广大、城市众多，已公布的国家级历史文化名城就有 99 个，这些名城在规模和职能上都有很大区别，由于每个名城发展的不同历程，所处的不同的自然地理环境，因而又存在着不同的特点和特色。为了清楚地认识各个历史名城，需要对各个名城进行分析研究，确定它们的类型和属性，以便于制定有针对性的保护规划与建设发展的对策，才不致于使各个名城的保护规划做得相互雷同。另一方面，要认真研究历史名城化名城的特点，这种研究不是简单地研究城市的外貌、建筑物的特征、色彩或一些文物古迹的特点，因为这些仅是外部的视觉感受，更重要的要去研究他的精神与物质感受，要深入到城市发展形成的因素中去认识它。我们提出了对历史文化名城的特点要素的分析，以及对这些特色的保护与继承。以便在建筑与保护上具有针对性，否则，都只是去修复几幢古建筑，恢复或发掘几个历史上的景点，修造几条街市，也就使众多的名城会变成彼此的相似，以致于丢掉自己的特色，也不成为名城了。

如当前在振兴上海、开发浦东的热潮中，整个上海掀起了前所未有的建设高潮，许多旧城地段被成片改造，已经批租的土地有 100 多块，她正日新月异地改变着原有面貌。但上海是座历史文化名城，对于这样一个近代形成的，又不具有中国传统风貌的城市该怎样保护，引起了许多争论。我们在上海的名城保护规划中，抓住了最有影响的外滩、南京路和老城区做出了地段保护规划。分析了外滩的风貌特色，它优美的滨江轮廓线是上海的标志，它虽是外来的艺术形象，但却是体现了中外文化的交汇和兼容，是东方国际大都会的海派风格。它向人们展示着历史和文化，无声地进行着艺术、文化、美学的教育。规划提出对优秀建筑严格的保护措施、及空间轮廓要求，划定保护范围，对建筑高度进行限制等。对于南京路的做法是对沿街所有建筑进行了调查、分类、定性，确定保护和拆除对象，划分了风貌区。分析了南京路的风貌特色，既传统又现代的独特风格，从而提出要保护它的街道气氛和空间尺度，但又综合解决扩大商业面积和交通、市政设施等问题。并规定了外滩、南京路的新建筑一定要经过专家会议审查，以保护它的造型与近旁优秀建筑的协调。我们相信通过这样的努力，外滩、南京路不仅能继续保持它的特色风貌和魅力，又将具有时代气息。

二、努力提高人们的城市保护意识

在我国的历史文化名城和名镇中,有一些保存得比较完整的,像山西平遥县,不仅城墙完整,而且城内清代以前的街道、民居也基本未遭破坏。江苏的周庄、甪直等也基本保持了古镇旧貌,荡漾着优美的水乡风光。这些城镇之所以能保存下完整的历史景观,主要原因是在明清时代,经济上繁荣,城镇较为富庶,当进入到近、现代,由于所处经济地理环境的闭塞而致使经济衰退,成为被遗忘的角落,无力进行新的建设,所以也就没有大的变化。但从保护历史文化出发,这是珍贵的范例。当我们发现了这些典型,并及时进行了保护工作。保护的做法:就是强调新旧分开,完整地保护老城区,果断地开辟新区,新区可以搞全新的不受限制的建设,老城老镇则严格保护,基本不动,谨慎地进行必需的市政设施的改善工作。平遥、周庄等保护工作开始于 80 年代初,十多年来,各方面的努力取得了良好的成绩。这些城镇从不为人所知一跃成为旅游的热点。但也存在不少问题,如在这些城镇的居民们及一些领导者,在心理上很不平衡,他们认为这些“古董”是经济落后的象征,现在又要保护,不允许开大路、盖大楼,是保护落后。另一方面,古老的旧城镇,缺乏必要的生活设施,老式低矮的古屋不能满足现代生活的要求,就会形成尖锐的对立情绪。这里重要的要进行教育,特别是要提高那些领导者的认识,并借助于一些行政措施,不使这些遗存遭受破坏。当经过了一些报刊的宣传,提高了这些名城名镇的知名度,引来了众多的旅游观光客,就给他们带来了新的活力,城市经济也能得到发展,城镇市居民也从中得到了好处,保护规划也能得到较好的执行。总结其中的经验,重要的是努力提高人们对保护历史遗产的认识,而这种提高认识的教育,要有事实的感召力,而感召力的出发又在于以一开始要动用一切手段,努力做好保护工作,只有保护好完整的古城风貌,才能提高它的知名度,开发才有了基础。

三、传统民居地段的保护是个难题

我国的历史文化保护工作,从开始时对单个文物古迹的保护到提出历史文化名城的保护,近些年来,逐步地注意到城市中的历史地段的保护。保护工作以前仅是文物管理部门的独家管理,发展到城市规划、城市建设和文物管理等部门共同参与,这样不仅保护了文物古迹的本身,而且保护了其周围的环境,并逐步地开始运用立法的手段来使其得到保证,这是城市保护工作的重要进步。

在历史名城中,大多保留有成片的传统民居的地区,其中有较高历史文化价值的传统民居,一般都划为保护区,并得到较好的保护。但是如何既能长期地保护它传统的风貌,又能继续为居民使用,这是一个难题。因为中国广大地区的民居,大多为砖木结构房屋,至今大多已木朽墙危,多数居民因长期居住条件简陋,渴求改善,传统生活环境不符合青年人的要求,而向往现代化的设施和环境。在有的名城中不少居民自己改建旧房,在成片的传统民居中冒出许多二三层的方匣子式的小楼,破坏了面貌。按目前中国的经济能力,政府还不能全面地对这些民居维修。在当前土地有偿使用,房屋地产开放改革的浪潮下,在许多旧城中,开始成片的改造,成片的拆除旧房,建成多层、高层的房屋,许多名城在急剧地改变着她的面貌。因此,应该如何划定切实可保护的范圈,提高传统民居保护区内的生活环境质量,消除居民要求拆除旧房的想法,控制居民自己动手改建的行为,需要一系列有力的措施,否则保护将成为纸上空谈。

许多专家在悉心研究如何继承传统的民居特色,并使之适应今天的需要,吴良镛教授设计的北京菊儿胡同四合院,就取得了很好的效果,并已进入成片建设。苏州十梓街 50 号的典型的江南庭院式住宅的改造,外观形式不动,内部按照现代要求适当的分间,使住户都有独用的厨房与厕所,造价不高,居民满意,目前也在推广这种做法。苏州旧城区内正着手进行较大面积的整片的改造,如拙

政园南面的桐芳巷街坊,由中国城市规划院作了详细规划,我们已经看到了她们具有苏州风貌的居住群。

历史传统地段民居的保护,一种是维持现状的绝对保护,这只能是少数有重要价值的民居,其原来的居住性质,必然会改变,许多已改作为文化或旅游的功能;其二是改造内部而外形保持原貌,有的对房屋结构也需加以改造,以适用当今的使用要求,这样做的结果是留下了外壳,但失去了原来的历史文化信息;第三种是在新的住宅设计和居住区规划中,努力寻求历史传统的信息,以求继承和发扬优秀的民族文化遗产,但这是新的再生,已完全不是历史的遗存,不属于保护的范畴,却有保护发扬城市特色的宏旨。到底如何做,这里有理论与实践的问题,有待我们去探索。

四、国际合作开创城市保护的新天地

世界上先进国家的历史城市保护工作在 19 世纪就开始了,许多国家有了较成熟的经验。中国的工作刚刚起步,但已引起国际上有关方面的关注,并得到有效的帮助。联合国教科文组织就在平遥举办过学习班。联合国区域开发中心(UNCRD)和中国建设部、国家文物局、同济大学联合举办了历史文化名城保护研修班,几年里派遣了多位日本著名专家来中国授课,并组织了中国的名城保护与规划的干部去日本学习考察,这本书就是这个学习班的成果之一。

1964 年制定的有关城市保护的“威尼斯宪章”、1987 制定的“华盛顿”宣言,都是有重要的指导意义,在另当不为许多人知晓。欧洲、日本许多国家在保护历史城市方面,制定了许多法规条例,政府也有一定的财政支持。而我国在这方面的工作与之相比,有很大的差距。像最近几年许多城市热衷于兴建所谓历史风貌街,重建已毁的古建筑等,都认作为是保护历史城市,实质上这只是为了满足旅游景点的需要,而根本不符合城市保护的基本概念。许多国际上知名专家对中国寄托了满腔的希望,因为中国拥有历史悠久和独特的文化和众多的富有特色的名城。希望中国在向现代化进程中保持住自己传统的文化。而不是在建设新城中,把许多优美的古代城市和遗迹毁坏殆尽。有个德国记者曾写了一篇题为“无所顾忌的狂热,使北京变成一座没有特色的城市”的文章(《德国商报》1995. 4. 11.),这很能代表世界上一些人们对中国城市保护的担忧。法国的巴黎、意大利的威尼斯、日本的奈良、德国的汉堡……等等世界名城都是我们的楷模,我们要认真汲取他们的先进经验,开展多方面的国际合作,开拓我们的视野,以提高我们的认识水平和理论水平,学习他们的方法和办法,藉以提高我们的历史文化名城的保护工作。

Conservation of Historic Cultural Cities in China

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China, with such a long history, has many cultural relics. Its historic cities, numbering as many as 2000, and the diversity of their historic features, are famous worldwide. With their beautiful natural environment, scenic spots and historic relics as well as their vernacular buildings, the cities reflect the brilliant historic culture of the Chinese nation.

In ancient times, little attention was paid to those cities as it was the custom for a new dynasty to sweep away everything from the former dynasty, 'destroying the old to establish the new'. In this way, many magnificent capitals were destroyed in a single day as a result of the alternation of dynasties. Therefore, the Chinese historic cities well preserved to the present are even more precious.

Only in modern times did people begin to have a better understanding of the significance of historic culture. They came to realize that cities are the meeting places for many historic and cultural relics, where the palaces, temples, abbeys, residences, gardens, streets, vernacular houses, and bridges are of great value. They are reflections of national and local culture of long history, as well as the cultural and scientific achievements of mankind. In modern times, with the introduction of western science and culture, the European regard for historic culture has had great influence upon Chinese people. In the 1930's, Chinese Salvation Society has made valuable contributions, laying significant foundations of the conservation of China's building and city culture.

Since the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the conservation of historic relics has been an important part in the country's cultural construction. With the establishment of special agencies and the promulgation of acts, fruitful results have been achieved. However, during the next several ten years, especially during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese historic and cultural relics experienced a great calamity. Many carefully protected relics were destroyed in one day.

Since the early 1980's, China has gone into a new stage of economic construction. Dramatic changes have taken place in many cities. However, due to inadequate attention to the significance of historic and cultural relics conservation, many historic cities have suffered serious damages.

In some cases, splendid traditional buildings and historic sections of the city were damaged or pulled down; while in other cases, inappropriate factories and the like were arranged in the vicinity, both resulting in the deprivation of original significance of the cultural relics, or the damage to the outlook of the historic cultural spots, or the spoilage of elegant outlines of the an-

cient buildings. In some cities, only for tourism, the ancient buildings and architectural complexes have been renovated, added and destructed at random, the original historic value of which has reduced or completely lost. Usually, these cases are called destructive construction. As it is the destruction in the course of construction, purely man-made in most circumstances, such damages are not unavoidable.

Since there were no laws about the conservation of historic cities and historic sections, according to some persons of insight and after several years deliberation and consultation, the State Council published the first batch of national historic cultural cities in February 1982, including 24 with historic or revolutionary significance, such as Beijing and Xi'an. At that time the concept of 'historic cultural city' was established, and reasearch work on their conservation began. In 1986, 38 cities including Shanghai and Fuzhou were published as the second batch of national historic cultural cities, and provincial-level historic cultural cities were announced by some provincial governments. With another 44 cities being listed as the third batch of national historic cultural cities in 1994, the total number has reached 99. In the meantime, the criteria of a historic cultural city, requirements for conservation planning, and the concept of historic cultural city conservation were established. Thus the conservation research could be carried out in an all-round way. Recently a Central-level 'Expert Committee of National Historic Cultural Cities Conservation' has been set up by the Chinese government to give assistance in formulating conservation measures, supervising conservation work, and solving technical problems concerning conservation and construction.

During the past ten years after the publishing of the first batch of historic cultural cities, China has achieved unprecedented effects in the conservation of historic cultural relics in its cities. From the conservation practice and conservation planning. I personally summerized the situation and characteristics as follows:

I. Characteristics of Chinese Historic Cultural Cities Conservation

In Europe, Japan and other countries in the world, apart from some small and comparatively well-preserved ancient castles, their practice of conservation is in most cases delimiting an area such as block communities and sections according to specific conditions of the buildings or architectural complexes to be conserved, and then making conservation measures to the area prescribed. However, in China things are different.

Instead of delimiting areas, the names of the cities have been published. As the cities are different in size and other conditions, some being metropolis such as Shanghai, Beijing, Tianjin, and Guangzhou, the conservation of their traditional historic cultural relics must be studied and arranged from the overall point of view. The overall conservation guidelines should be taken as the guiding principle to direct the urban construction and development, be reflected in the urban plan, and have important influence on such aspects as the whole city's development pattern, city

structure layout, land use, and environment plan. Therefore We must seriously make the conservation plan of the historic cultural cities preparing which should be defined as an important component of the master plan, so that the splendid historic tradition could be taken over and further developed during the course of its development and construction by taking good care of its cultural relics and historic cities, scenic spots and its environment.

Conservation plan is not only a special plan but also a programmatic document, as material objects like cultural relics in cities and cultural tradition like language, literature and art, tradition opera, costumes, folkways and customs, local products, crafts, and local dishes which are important components of a city's distinguishing feature.

China has vast territory of land and a large number of cities, among which 99 have been published as national historic cultural cities. They are different in size and function, and have their own characteristics respectively due to different courses of evolution and geographical circumstances. In order to know each historic city well, further research on them has to be done. Only after the type and property of a city are classified should the appropriate conservation plan and the construction and development countermeasures be formulated, so as to avoid the identification between various cities' conservation plans.

On the other hand, the characteristics of historic cultural cities should be investigated comprehensively. Such investigation is not simply upon the city's outlook, buildings' feature and color, or characteristics of cultural relics and historic sites, because these are only exterior visual perception. What is more important is to probe into the primitive factors of the city's development and grasp the spirit and material reflections.

We have put forward the analysis of characteristic elements of a historic cultural city, as well as its conservation and inheritance, so as to make the construction and conservation in accordance with the city's special characteristics; otherwise, the resemblance would occur to historic cultural cities resulting from the uniformly rehabilitation of several ancient buildings, reopening or exploring historic scenic spots, and the building of several streets. Without their own characteristics, there would be no notable cities at all.

Shanghai, for example, is undergoing changes day after day in the unprecedented upsurge of construction to 'vitalize Shanghai and develop Pudong'. Many old sections have been rebuilt and more than 100 pieces of land have been leased. However, it is a historic cultural city that needs conservation, and the subject of how to conserve such a city that formed in modern times without Chinese traditional features has invited numerous debates. We, nevertheless, have attached great importance to the most influential Bund, Nanjing Road and the Old area, and the sections conservation plan was made in particular when the historic city conservation plan regarding Shanghai was made out.

As for features of the Bund, its elegant riverside outline is the symbol of Shanghai. Not native as it is, it represents the distinctive style of an international metropolis in the east of the world, reflecting the confluence and incorporation of Chinese and foreign cultures, showing the history and culture, and giving people silent education of art, culture, and aesthetics.

Thus, a series of measures have been proposed in the plan, such as the strict conservation of

splendid buildings, requirements on space forms, delimitation of conservation zones, and restriction of buildings' height.

As for the Nanjing Road, a survey was made to classify the buildings along the street, deciding which should be demolished and which should be conserved. After mapping out the sections with features of the traditional and modern style we have put forward the issue of keeping its street atmosphere and space dimensions while expanding commercial area and solving problems about traffic and municipal facilities. Such regulation has also been made that any building planned to be built on either the Bund or Nanjing Road must be subjected to expert-meeting examination to avoid its inharmoniousness with the neighbouring splendid buildings. We believe that through such efforts, the Bund and Nanjing Road would be able to keep their distinctive features and charms while incorporating the characteristics of the era as well.

II. Making Efforts to Raise People's Consciousness of City Conservation

Of the historic cultural cities and towns in China, some are well preserved, such as Pingyao county in Shanxi Province, which has complete city walls, intact streets and vernacular houses dating back to the Qing Dynasty and before. Zhouzhuang and Luzhi, both in Jiangsu Province, also keep their original ancient town features with beautiful scenery of rivers and lakes. The main reason for their good preservation is that after flourishing economy during Ming and Qing dynasties, they became the 'forgotten corner' due to the changes of economic and geographic circumstances, resulting in economic recession and lack of fund available for new construction; hence little noticeable changes.

From the historic cultural conservation point of view, the above are valuable examples. Upon the discovery of these typical cases, conservation research was carried out in time, stressing on the separation between old and new, that is, the ancient city area should be conserved completely, whereas the new area should be opened up resolutely where unrestricted brand-new construction could be made. However, necessary improvement on municipal facilities in the old area must be carried out with caution so as to maintain its original form.

The conservation of Pingyao, Zhouzhuang, etc. started between 1981 and 1982, and success has been achieved in various aspects during the past ten years, as these previously unknown-to-the-world places have become among the most welcomed tourist spots. Nonetheless, problems still exist. For example, local dwellers and some leaders couldn't comprehend very well, who consider these 'antiques' as the symbol of backward economy which, nevertheless, are to be preserved; but wide streets or tall buildings are forbidden to be built, which is believed to protect the backward. On the other hand, because of the lack of necessary living facilities in such ancient cities, the old-style low houses could no longer satisfy the needs of modern life, all of which might bring about antagonism. In this case, education is most important. Understanding of those on leading positions should be heightened, and administrative measures should also be drawn as

an aid in order to keep the relics from being spoilt. The propagation via articles and newspapers has raised the fame of these cities, which attracts numerous tourists and in turn brings about new vitality to them. Therefore, the city's economy could grow, from which the city inhabitants would benefit as well. Meanwhile, the conservation plan has also been well implemented.

It has been summerized that it is important to heighten people's understanding about the conservation of historic relics, and the education for this purpose should incorporate influential evidence which could only result from good conservation work by all means from the very beginning. Only by conservation of the complete features of the ancient city could its fame be raised and the basis for development be available.

III. Difficult Problem of Conserving Sections of Traditional Houses

Chinese historic culturae conservation has changed from the conservation of individual cultural relics at the beginning to the conservation of historic cultural cities. Since recent years, attention has gradually been paid to the conservation of historic sections in a city. Previously, the conservation work was solely supervised by cultural relics management department. Later, departments for urban planning and urban construction were also involved, so that in addition to the relics themselves, their ambient circumstances could also be protected. This practice has gradually been guaranteed by means of legislation, which is a great advance in city conservation.

In most of the historic cities, there still preserved sections of land where traditional houses are located. In general, the houses of high historic and cultural value have been divided into the conservation zone and well preserved. However, it is a difficult problem how to preserve the traditional features over a long term and at the same time make them still be used by local dwellers as well, because vernacular houses in vast land of China are mostly of brick-wood structure, most of which are in dangerous situation up to now. Having dwelt in such houses with simple and crude facilities over a long period of time, most dwellers are longing for modern facilities and environment, as the traditional living environment could no longer satisfy the young generation's requirements. Therefore, many dwellers in some noted cities have redeveloped their old houses by themselves; hence the small box-like buildings of two or three storeys emerged from the group of traditional houses. Thus, the feature has been spoilt.

With regard to the present economic strength of China, it is impossible to repair all the houses. In the tide of repaid-use-of-land and the real estate open-reform, stretches of land are under reconstruction in many old cities. Old houses have been demolished in groups to make room for multi-storey or high-rise buildings. The features of many noted cities are under rapid change. Therefore, a series of powerful countermeasures are needed to define practicable conservation zone, to improve the living circumstances of the traditional houses protection zone, to dispell the dwellers' desire to demolish old houses. and to control the dwellers' renovation by themselves. Otherwise, conservation will be simply an empty talk on paper.

Nowadays many experts are devoting themselves to the study of how to carry on traditional features of vernacular houses and make them adapt for today's requirements. The Juerhutong Siheyuan (quadrangle compound) in Beijing designed by Prof. Wu liangyong has been a success, and is being copied to large areas. In Suzhou, dwellers are satisfied with the low-cost renovation of the typical courtyard residence at No. 50 Shizi Street. Such renovation could separate the rooms according to modern requirements with each household having its own kitchen and bathroom without any change of the exterior appearance of the house, which is as well being spread. The old city area of Suzhou is under large-scale reconstruction. such as the No. 12 and No. 13 Jiefang, both to the south of Zhuozheng Garden, have been planned by China Urban Planning Institute, and we are looking forward to its creative results.

There are three types of conservation regarding vernacular houses on historic or traditional sections. First, the absolute conservation by keeping their original forms. This can only be applied to a small number of residences with great value, as the original nature of living will certainly be changed. Many of them have been refunctioned as cultural or tourist spots. Second, interior space renovation only. For some houses, the structure has to be changed to cater for today's requirements. The result by doing so is the loss of original historic cultural information though the shell remains. Third, while designing new residences or planning residential quarters, trying to seek historical tradition information so as to carry on splendid national cultural relics. But this is regeneration and is by no means the historic relics, thus beyond the conservation scope. However, it is also aimed at conserving and carrying forward the city's features.

City conservation in advanced countries dates from the 19th century, forming ripe experiences in that field. Although China has just started its research, it has attracted the attention of the international quarters concerned and has received effective help. For example, the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) is helping China's historic cities such as Baoding and Lijiang to carry out the conservation planning. This year, a historic cultural city conservation training course was held jointly by UNCRD, Ministry of Construction of China, State Cultural Relics Bureau and Tongji University. Japanese famous experts have been sent to give lectures on the course, which is of great help to China's conservation and planning work.

We believe that China's historic cultural cities conservation will make good progress, and our Oriental civilization will be better carried on.