

## *A Chinese Kaleidoscope; An American Mosaic*

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After the reforms, not only were old cities transformed, but new cities developed rapidly. Thirty years ago Shenzhen was just a small village, and Shanghai was only a piece of farmland, but now both are massive special economic centers. Bordering near Hong Kong, after thirty years of construction Shenzhen is now a large international city with a population numbering in the millions. Shanghai is the same, and has numerous skyscrapers, each with its own unique style and famous architects. Shanghai has been called the Manhattan of the East. Pudong has numerous industrial parks and Shanghai's largest airport as well.

The buildings in China's cities were originally very old-fashioned. The speed with which buildings and cities were transformed left some people in disbelief. In the outskirts of cities, there are many housing developments that can each accommodate several tens of thousands of people. Fifteen years ago, the government did not allow foreign investment in real estate, so many houses went unsold. However, since 2001 this regulation has been lifted, and so foreigners can invest in Chinese real estate, and this has led to a housing market in which prices have been rising rapidly. Now, sometimes one must even line up to buy a house, and several thousand houses can be bought up in an instant. The odd thing is, however, that more and more houses are being built, with more luxurious qualities, and higher prices, but they are difficult to rent out. Chinese people have the habit of buying houses, rather than renting them.

With the improvement in the economy, more Chinese people are travelling abroad for vacations. In the past only large cities had airports, but now even middle-sized cities have them. For example in the past Shanghai had just the Hongqiao Airport, but now a larger airport has been built in Pudong, and the Hongqiao airport is being expanded. The airports in Guangdong and Hong Kong have gone through the same situation. New, larger international airports are built and old ones are expanded. The airports are so large that dedicated light rail systems must be built to facilitate moving from terminal to terminal. Additionally, four and five star hotels are built in the area.

Shanghai's most famous tower is the Jin Mao Tower, which has been called "China's number one building." It is situated in the Pudong commercial district, with many other skyscrapers. The tower is one hundred stories tall and has an observation deck at the top. The first fifty floors are dedicated to office space, while the top fifty floors are for a hotel, and the underground floors are for a shopping mall.

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The province of Guangdong used to place priority on agriculture. Since farming is a difficult life, there were many people from Guangdong leaving for foreign places, particularly Southeast Asia. Quite a few became wealthy merchants.

When Deng Xiaoping went to Guangzhou, he encouraged overseas Chinese in Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan to invest in industry in Guangzhou. Businessmen in Hong Kong were smart and sent people to all of the villages in Guangzhou to open factories because the cost of labor was so low. The local government rented land to these companies at a very cheap rate. In just a few years, all of the manufacturing in Hong Kong had moved to Guangzhou.

In 1949, only ten percent of the population lived in cities. With the rise of manufacturing, and the flow of peasants from the countryside to factories in the urban areas, the urban population had surpassed the population in the countryside by 2003. With hundreds of millions of people moving to the cities, the cities grew in size rapidly. Accordingly, construction of new transportation systems in the cities has been very important. Originally no cities in China had subway systems. Then several decades ago Hong Kong developed a rapid transit system, and large cities in the Mainland gradually followed suit. The metro in Hong Kong is the best because it is safe, has many lines, the stations are air conditioned, and there is cell phone service. For this reason people like the Hong Kong metro very much.

With the improvement of the economy, the number of people traveling abroad grows greater and greater. Everyone wants to go to places like Disney Land, and other large-scale entertainment parks. But these types of entertainment parks require excellent managers to run properly, and currently China lacks such managerial talent.

### **Eleven: The world-famous Shanghai Great World Playground seems small in retrospect.**

A long time ago, Shanghai had a very famous playground. After buying a ticket you could enter and drive bumper cars, watch song and dance performances, see movies, visit the zoo, and engage in all kinds of entertainment. Due to improper management however, it was closed down and only traces of it remain.

Currently there is a Disney Land in Hong Kong, and one being built in Shanghai. The Western entertainment industry is testing the Chinese market, because if the people of China become wealthy, the value could surpass that of the American market.

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After the reforms, there were many changes; factories were built in the countryside to take advantage of the large peasant population, and China became the world's factory. The large coastal cities also built many factories, as well as huge skyscrapers. The farmers on the coast no longer make their living by planting crops, but instead rent out their land and live off that income. The lifestyles of the businesspeople and local officials are much better than anything the landlords of China's old society ever enjoyed.

Since China's economy grows more developed with every passing day, the country's public relations industry has also become very developed, even more so than in foreign countries. In foreign countries public relations companies focus on creating advertisements and announcements for their clients, and raising brand awareness. If the client is a politician in an election, then the company helps develop his or her image to get more votes. Chinese public relations companies, in addition to handling all of the above, also help clients whose business plans are being obstructed by the government, and helps them do things like obtain land usage rights or bank loans.

Before the reforms in China, the vast majority of government cadres worked very hard. They would work hard all the way until retirement, but not in search of fame or profit. The pensions were small, and the lifestyle was difficult. It could be said that they devoted themselves completely to serving the people. Nowadays, government cadres can go into private industry after retirement and work as managers, while enjoying health benefits and a good pension from their previous work in the government. The lifestyle is not at all bad.

After the reforms, private companies and joint-stock companies developed very rapidly. This was because the people running the companies benefitted from the business being profitable. National industries, however, did not develop as quickly because no one genuinely took responsibility for the work being done. Every two or three years, the manager would change, so there was never someone who really knew the business and was in charge. Since private companies operate more efficiently, the government would sell off government-owned companies to private companies, and use the money from the sale to pay for severance packages for employees that were laid off. The opportunities from running one of these privatized businesses were great, and so many government officials became heads of private companies when they retired from government.