RENOKATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN PEIPING
BY
HALDORÉ E. HANSON

For five hundred and nineteen years the present city of Peiping was the seat of imperial splendour. Flagstone trails from a thousand miles to the south and west and north converged upon this triple-walled Forbidden City, the symbol of power and obeisance to half a continent. Versailles was no match for its half square mile of throne halls. In its Sea Palaces there was something of the freshness and aquatic finesse of modern Stockholm. The opulence of the imperial temples was unbelievable, probably surpassing the Temple of Solomon. And no cathedral of the Renaissance period in Europe is to be compared with the Temple of Heaven for the solemnity of its natural setting. Such concentration of grandeur is rare if not unique in history.

All that was before 1911. To-day many of the old buildings are shedding their coats of guilt paint, pillars are tottering, and roof dogs are acquiring unlawful masters who place them beside fireplaces in many parts of the world. The flagstones on the Altar of Heaven, once the most sacred spot in Asia, have now been heaved up or sunk by frosts until they resemble the waves of the sea. The Jade Fountain Pagoda is no longer safe for visitors to enter. The Hall of Classics is overgrown with weeds. The great Ch'ien Mén archway was recently condemned by the Municipal Department of Public Works. Imperial splendour has been fading for want of Republican money.

Such, at least, was the shabby condition of the cultural relics prior to 1935. When Mayor Yuan Liang assumed office in 1933 he called attention of the National Government to the possibility of making Peiping the best museum of Chinese culture this country had to offer, and at the same time a first class tourist centre. Chiang Kai-shek personally studied the matter, and prevailed upon the Ministries of Finance and Railways to contribute $2,500,000 toward a "Greater Peiping" project, which the Municipal Government had initiated with a million dollar fund of its own.
The "Greater Peiping" project contemplates nothing short of a complete restoration of its old splendour to the Peiping area. It is a four-fold plan, the first and most urgent need being the rehabilitation of some of the palaces, temples and city gates, which are now shabby from neglect. Next in importance is the need for first class motor highways leading to all the important sights. To facilitate these first two plans the city boundaries will be greatly enlarged on the north, west and south, bringing within its jurisdiction many outlying tombs and temples now neglected by the kaisen authorities. Lastly the City Government, under the leadership of Mayor Yuan Liang, has undertaken to improve the social welfare of the people in order that domestic squalor may not act as a deterrent to foreign visitors.

The supervision of the $3,500,000 fund, which is to be expended during a three year period between 1935 and 1937, has been placed in the hands of a special commission representing the Executive Yuan, the Ministries of Interior, Finance and Railways and the Municipal Government. About two-thirds of the money has been allotted to building reconstruction, and the contracts have already been signed for the three years of work. The remainder of the fund, amounting to about a million dollars, will be used for paved motor highways in and about the city. In addition to this fund the Municipal Government is spending $700,000 annually on street repair.

Throughout the past spring and summer Peiping has echoed to the stone cutter's hammer and the chug of a Belgian steam roller. In the courtyard of the Ming Tombs, about fifteen miles north of the city, is one of the strangest sights which the residents of Peiping have seen since the rebuilding of the Ch'ien Mên tower thirty years ago. Chinese contractors have spun gossamers of bamboo over the great tablet hall of Emperor Yung Loh, the largest hall in China; and intrepid coolies are scurrying about on causeways a hundred feet in the air, some bearing fresh tiles from the kilns in Kiangsi, some crying for more mortar from the hodsters on the ground. The open six-acre courtyard has been converted into a vast carpentry shop, and all the expert wood carvers of Peiping have been called out to execute the fine flourishes on each of the eight thousand new eave-arches in this classical-styled building. There must have been five hundred men at work in the early part of the summer.

The Temple of Heaven has likewise become a hive of energy, with three hundred contractors, painters, stone cutters, masons, carpenters and sculptors at work daily to restore the pristine solemnity of the Altar and Temple. Thirty years ago the Chinese were greatly perturbed by the report that a foreigner had danced on the Altar of Heaven, yet to-day they look on stolidly while coolies tear apart the sacred flag-stones on which the Emperor used to kneel. Every block of the Altar is to be taken out for re-alignment, and the surface will be re-chipped with a fine cross grain.

Most curious of all the sights about the Temple during July was the group of six sculptors who were giving new eyes, noses and ears to the dragons. Around the Altar are several hundred gargoyle-like heads, many of them chipped by malicious tourists. Should the sculptor be giving the dragon a new nose, as an accompanying picture
shows, he first covers the broken part with a generous coating of cement, which he allows to become almost dry. Then by a few deft strokes with his chisel he shapes the nostrils into rough relief. When this rough form is thoroughly hardened, a finishing layer of white plaster is applied, a finely grained plaster for delicate sculpturing, yet able to crystalize later to the durability of stone. When the new nose is completed, the white marble and the new plaster are of an identical colour, almost defying detection.

In dealing with the Temple of Heaven the Municipal Government has shown considerable wisdom. This is to reduce the area of all historical relics to a minimum, and to concentrate the available money on the upkeep of the really worth while objects. The vast park surrounding the Temple of Heaven is more than a square mile in area, and was not worth the cost of relandscaping, though it has afforded the public some excellent riding paths. One remote corner of the park is used as an Agricultural Experiment Station, while animal anti-toxin experiments are being conducted in the former Imperial Stables.

The old pai lou or archway outside of Ch'ien Mên presents another interesting piece of reconstruction going on at the present time, and one which has caused some public dissension. When the city engineer announced in the English papers that the tottering landmark was to be torn down and replaced by a modern structure of cement and steel, letters poured in from loyal residents pointing to the ugliness of the Kettler stone archway in Central Park, and begging the administration to retain the old Chinese architecture. The engineers replied quite truthfully that, when the present building operations shall have been completed, no one will be able to detect the difference between the old and the new. The upright pillars will be of cement, heavily coated with marine paint; the buttresses will be of steel, but likewise disguised under paint; the delicate wood carvings of the cross wings will remain unchanged, most of the carvings being those removed from the falling structure.

The point which the engineers have raised is an important one. When a venerable old structure has become a public menace, is it not the wisest policy to replace it with a structure in modern materials, retaining as much as possible of the old carvings? The sentiments and traditions are destroyed, some say. Yet in this same manner every cell of the human body changes in seven years without in anyway upsetting the personality of the individual involved.

One of the most necessary items on the three year rebuilding programme is the repairing of the city gate towers. The wall of the Tartar City contains nine gates, whose seasoned rafters and roofs have been neglected by both the Manchus and the Republic. The dust-laden staircases leading to the upper lookouts have all been condemned, and at least one staircase collapsed when the sentries tried to mount to the lookout during the Japanese advance of 1932. One of the most tragic sights in the whole city is the Fox Tower on the south-east corner of the city wall, its roof still gaping from the cannon shots fired by the Russians in 1900. As for the city walls themselves, thirteen miles in length, they are stronger now than on the day on which they were com-
rous coating of cement, a few deft strokes with relief. When this rough white plaster is applied, yet able to crystallize, a new nose is completed, in identical colour, all.

Municipal Government since the area of all the available money. The vast park a square mile in area, though it has afforded the corner of the park while animal anti-toxin Imperial Stables.

Men presents another the present time, and when the city engineer ring landmark was to use of cement and steel, to the ugliness of the administration his reply quite truth shall have been come between the old and it, heavily coated with likewise disguised under wings will remain removed from the falling

is an important one. Public menace, is it not? in modern materials, ? The sentiments and same manner every cell not in anyway upsetting

year rebuilding pro. The wall of the Tartar s and roofs have been

The dust-laden stairwell condemned, and at tried to mount to the one of the most tragic south-east corner of non shots fired by the lives, thirteen miles in which they were com-

Below is seen a Stone Mason re-surfacing one of the great Marble Slabs.

Cunningly restoring with specially prepared Cement the Carving on a Stone Dragon's Head.
Before and After Renovation of the Gate Hall in the Forbidden City. The Decay in this Building is well shown in the Picture above. Note the Ten-foot Inscription as seen in the Repaired Building to the Right.

The above Picture gives a very good Idea of the intricate Woodwork in the Eaves of a large Chinese Building in the Old Style of Architecture.

Looking through one of the Archways of the Ming Tombs.

Scaffolding surrounds many of the Buildings Peiping to-day as a Result of War's Ruin.
Another Example of "Before and After" Treatment is here seen in the Great Tablet Tower on the Spirit Road, Peiping. Below are shown some Donkeys and their Drivers resting in the Shadow of this impressive Edifice.

The round Arch is one of the most characteristic Features in Chinese Architecture.

Picture gives a very good intricate Woodwork in the large Chinese Building in Style of Architecture.

Scaffolding surrounds many of the Buildings of Historic Interest in Peiping to-day as a Result of a Reconstruction Programme.

It was built Twelve Years before it sailed for America. Soon it will be restored to its former Glory.
Three of Peiping’s Historic Buildings that have recently been Renovated.

Above is the Spirit Tower of Yung Loh.

To the Right are Archways on the Spirit Road.

The Tablet Hall of Yung Loh.
RENOVATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING IN PEIPING

completed more than five hundred years ago, for the sun has baked the huge bricks to the hardness of rock.

Other extensive repair projects are the Temple of Confucius, the Hall of Classics, the Jade Fountain Pagoda, and a dozen minor temples within and without the city. The most famous sights of old Peking—the Forbidden City, the Sea Parks, and the Summer Palace—have recently been kept in good condition for visitors to see, and will require but little money from the “Greater Peiping” project. The two palaces have been showing an annual profit from entrance fees, but this is not a good thing in itself, since the price of admission has been too high to attract the common people. No one would wish to see the Government imitate the Japanese, who have closed the Palace at Kyoto to their own people, yet open it to foreign visitors. A country’s historical relics are of first importance to her own people.

The control of all these relics after the completion of the “Greater Peiping” project will revert to the City Government, which is financially able to maintain them thereafter. City revenues have shown a marked increase under the present administration without any great change in the tax burden, which itself is an encouraging sign of stability. Yet, despite the favourable outlook, thoughtful residents, both foreign and Chinese, are hopeful that the historical buildings may soon be placed under a non-partisan endowment, as are the important cultural landmarks of Europe and America.

The road building plans of the next three years are in many respects more phenomenal than the repair of buildings. During the Ch’ing Dynasty Peking was but a dust-blown network of untended cart roads, with the exception of the Emperor’s highways to the Temple of Heaven and to the Summer Palace. In 1904 the Empress Dowager finally realized the backwardness of the city, and had thirty-five miles of streets macadamized during her remaining years of power. These streets, augmented by similar work under the Republic, were an improvement, but the arid climate of the city soon caused them to crumble under the pounding of heavy cartwheels.

In 1929 a new administration decided to try an American form of asphalt surfacing, very expensive because of the importation of tar. The experiment showed that this was ideal for the climate, and fourteen miles of the new streets were built prior to 1935. Under the “Greater Peiping” project twenty-three additional miles of asphalt will be laid, giving the city thirty-seven miles of first class motor road. Every important historical building in the city is to have a dust-free motor approach. One mile of this work along Hatamen Street was completed this spring in the record time of seven weeks, with armies of coolies working day and night, and seven ten-ton steam rollers pausing only for re-coaling. Similar work may now be observed on the road to the Summer Palace, as well as on a dozen smaller streets within the Tartar City.

The most costly item in the entire building programme is the new road to the Western Hills. The first eight miles from the north-west gate, running past Yenching University and the Summer Palace, circling the Jade Fountain pagoda and heading westward to the Imperial Hunting Park, will be made entirely of asphalt. The rest of the road on
its southward run through the hills to Pa Ta Ch'u, past Emperor Ch'ien Lung's military reviewing grounds, eastward to the golf course and so into the city through the west gate, is to be macadamized. This entire circuit of twenty-four miles, passing dozens of temples dating from the Sung, Yuan and Ming periods, will then be reduced to an hour's ride on a Sunday afternoon, and the visitor may linger at a different temple each week.

The third part of the "Greater Peiping" project is the enlargement of the city boundaries. On the north and west of the city are many tombs of Princes and Imperial Consorts, which are crumbling away for want of attention from the rural officials. These could easily be cared for if brought within the jurisdiction of the Peiping Council. To the north also are the famous Tang-shan Hot Springs, and to the southwest the Marco Polo Bridge. The latter is an interesting marble structure about ten miles outside the city walls. It was on the flagstones of this bridge that Kublai Khan is said to have given his blessing to Marco Polo as he started back to his native Venice.

Enlarging the city's boundaries affords the additional benefit of greater safety from bandits. It will bring the entire area of the Western Hills under the surveillance of the City Police, whose fleet of riot trucks and motorcycles, each mounting a machine gun, have kept excellent order within the old city boundary. Although some foreign travel agents have recently refused to book tourists to Peiping because of the bandit raid late in June, the incident actually proved the safety of the city. During the weeks of martial law which followed the attack, foreigners were treated with the utmost care and courtesy by the thirty-three thousand soldiers gathered about the city. The city gates were frequently opened after dark to accommodate a foreigner, whereas the ricksha man who came too late was simply out of luck.

The fourth part of the "Greater Peiping" project is the elevation of public welfare by the City Authorities. A city may have many alluring buildings, yet frighten people away by the squalid condition of the inhabitants. That was the apprehension of Chicago in 1932, when prospects for the World's Fair were dark because of political graft. That, too, was the apprehension of Mayor Yuan Liang, when he came into office and surveyed the extreme poverty of the working people, the inadequate school system, the complete lack of playgrounds, the non-cooperation among local industries and the sad neglect of public health.

Two years have seen a difference. This autumn there will be nearly twice as many schools as there were two years ago. Public playground equipment has been provided in every park, and a swimming pool to accommodate a thousand people is in daily use at Chung Nan Hai Park. A poor man's bank operated by the Municipality has been making character loans without collateral. Local industries have been persuaded to form an association which is now advertising Peiping products throughout the world. Mayor Yuan Liang has devoted so much attention to the immoral cafes and student rooming houses that the English newspapers have dubbed him "the moral mayor." All this may sound like so much patronage, but, as a matter of fact, the political rivals of the present administration have tardily expressed their approval of the despatch with which reforms are now being carried out.
The "Greater Peiping" project would burst like a bubble, some say, if the legations were to move to Nanking in the near future. Economically it is true that Peiping would be adversely affected, because twenty or thirty thousand servants and wholesalers are directly concerned with the maintenance of the Legation Quarter. But from a political point of view the legations are but so many thorns in the side of Peiping. They pay no taxes, they require their special police force, their foreign secretaries demand special privileges throughout the city, and the other foreigners follow their example. There is nothing artistic about the legation quarter from a Chinese point of view, its one doubtful value being to serve as a foil for true architectural beauty as revealed by the rest of the city. A "Greater Peiping" will in no wise suffer from the moving of the legations.

With such restoration plans already in operation, I think we can justifiably speak of Peiping in the same breath with Paris, Rome, Athens and other centres of former culture. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that the time is not far removed when the American tourist will find no more bother or expense in visiting Nikko, Kyoto, Peiping and Angkor on a summer's tour than in spending a vacation on the Rhine and the Danube.

---

**ENGINEERING, INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL NOTES**

**AVIATION**

**News of Trans-Pacific Air Line:**

Early inauguration of the Pan-American Airways' air mail and passenger service across the Pacific Ocean seems assured as the result of recent successful test flights and the announcement that the Philippine Senate had granted the firm a twenty-year franchise for operation in the islands. The last of the series of test flights was made to Guam during October, and the giant "Flying Clipper" returned to its base in Alameda, California, after an entirely uneventful trip. With a base on the Asiatic mainland assured as the result of the Portuguese Government's permission to use Macao harbour, Pan-American Airways is expected to start its America-China service at an early date.

**Eurasia Opens Cheng-tu Service:**

On September 26 the Eurasia Aviation Corporation opened a new service between Shanghai and Cheng-tu, the capital of Szechuan. Stops are made at Nanking, Cheng-chou, Si-an Fu and Hanchung Fu. The complete trip takes a little over ten hours, the big new Junkers 'plane leaving Cheng-tu at 8 o'clock in the morning and reaching Lung-hua Airdrome at 6.15 that evening. Newly installed night-flying equipment makes the latter part of the journey safe.

The same firm is hoping to re-establish its Peiping-Canton line soon, and, by using faster aeroplanes, cut the time required for the trip down to one day. Up to the present it has been necessary to stop overnight at Hankow. The new 'planes, which are reported to have been ordered, are capable of a cruising speed of 200 miles an hour.

**Express Service is Announced:**

Two round trips a week, covering the 1,400 miles between Shanghai and Cheng-tu in eight hours, are now being operated by the China National Aviation Corporation, following announcements which appeared in the Shanghai papers on October 19 giving rates and schedules. A single fare between the terminals by this express 'plane will cost $40. The