

# New Looks of China

Thomas Wu, October, 2010

## HONG KONG (香港)

The British ruled Hong Kong for one hundred years, and the great talents of British architects, engineers, financiers and those in many other disciplines contributed to build Hong Kong as an international transportation port and financial center. Ten years prior to its return to the Chinese government in 1997, the Hong Kong government initiated many large-scale construction projects which at the time were controversial. The concern was that the monetary investment was too large, and that the next government under the Chinese would have to bear the burden and be forced to make the payments. One major project was the construction of the International Airport, located on an island separate from Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon peninsula (九龍). Projects such as the construction of subway systems and an expressway with bridges to allow island hopping were planned also. It turned out that these projects helped to build Hong Kong into a world class city with convenient travel in many directions to the world and within metropolitan Hong Kong. After the Chinese took over Hong Kong, many more construction projects were completed, most notably residential high rise buildings. The Chinese and the people of Hong Kong have shown to the world that their engineers are well qualified and capable of managing and constructing large projects with technical knowhow. Pictures below show typical new residential high rises and a transportation port in Kowloon.





## KOWLOON STATION

Coming out of the subway station, there are two levels of shops and restaurants, an ice rink, movie theaters and an open space performance center. Level six is a parking garage, and outside the garage on the same level are open space outdoor gardens, a gym and swimming pools. Lobbies of several residential towers that reach 85 stories high are also at this level. These are the towers of Sorrento Island, buildings constructed within the past twenty years. It feels like the set of a 'Future City', needing only electric or hydrogen cars to move on the ground and flying machines to travel between the towers. At the lower levels, these towers are connected to a huge mall and subway structures. Imagine the work involved and the details of its construction at each stage!

## TIU KENG LENG (調景嶼) STATION

Just like many other parts of the Kowloon Peninsula, next to this station are many mid-rise towers with similar design to the larger scale Kowloon Station. This area was once wilderness that was only fit for refugee camps. The refugees included many military and civilian officers that flocked to Hong Kong in 1949 to escape communist rule. Refugees were given tar paper, wooden sticks and limited building materials to build their own tents. The British government set up this camp and provided necessary food and supplies. Basic medical and hospital assistance was also offered.

Many years ago, a small boy of nine was released from one of these British hospitals after a cholera infection brought him close to death. The happy mother and child decided to go home immediately, for the mother wanted to travel the long distance quickly, and the young boy was afraid the hospital might charge him because he just dropped and broke a thermometer. However, since the boy was too weak to walk, his mother had to carry him on her back. It looked like a small young lady carrying a big man climbing uphill. The young lady was my mother and the boy was me. The picture shows modern mid-rise buildings and the hill in-between might have been the hill that led to the old refugee camps.



## SHENZHEN (深圳)

A city close to Hong Kong, Shenzhen was established as one of China's initial special economic zones. It is now a skyscraper-filled city. This picture was taken in a revolving restaurant of a hotel with our friend Dr. Madeline Wu, and the building behind us houses the Custom stations of Hong Kong and China. The next picture shows a tourist district. Shenzhen has many low priced shops, and its tailor-made suits beat what tourists can expect from tailors in Hong Kong.



## GUANGZHOU (廣州)

The Asian Games of 2010 has helped build a new city of Guangzhou. A high speed train that travels 350 km/hr can reach WUHAN (武漢) in about 3.5 hours. The train station is so fabulous it is comparable to the best new stations of the world such as Germany's Berlin station. Several pictures show the structure of this gigantic station. Modern buildings, including the athletic village, were built within a short period of time. Merchants were moved out of their retail stands, and shaggy shops were demolished without much difficulty. Even the traffic patterns are well controlled. Cars with odd plate numbers take turns with cars of even plate numbers to enter the city. In addition, City passengers are encouraged to enter the city through subway systems. This is partially accomplished by allowing passengers to enter subway stations free of charge during certain times and days. The new city of Guangzhou is taking shape and soon shall be able to enter the class of cities such as Shanghai and Hong Kong.



## DANXIASHAN WORLD GEOPARK (丹霞山)

A two hour ferry, one hour bus ride and one hour speed train took us to SHAOGUAN (韶關) from Hong Kong. DANXIASHAN is a red rock park in SHAOGUAN. This park was recognized this year as a natural treasure of the world by the IUCN world organization. The park has several independent rock walls and natural bridges. A major tourist attraction is the male stone (陽元石).



A nearby hotel has a several sets of hot spring systems, one of which is an outdoor waterfall with several levels of hot spring pools of different water temperatures.

