



# Shaping Canton

## The Mountains are High and the Emperor Far Away

Peter Cookson Smith

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- China is urbanising faster than any country in history, and Canton itself, positioned at the head of the designated Greater Bay Area within Guangdong Province, and incorporating the two special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau together with nine regional cities, is spearheading this drive
- The book sets out a comprehensive exploration of Canton from its ancient history through the events of the late 19th and 20th centuries to the contemporary modernisation in the context of the new China
- The book examines the most notable events that have impacted on the evolution of the city's urban design up to the present strategic development initiatives
- The book illustrates, through some 200 illustrations and drawings, the key events surrounding the development of Canton, from its preliminary trading and treaty port history, to its Republican city building program, the Socialist planned economy after 1949, the post-1978 reform period, and the regenerative impetus of the contemporary city

The book takes as its starting point the city of Canton, at the heart of the most populous built-up metropolitan area in Mainland China, and a city that has for several centuries held a central position with regard to economic, social, and physical change in the country.

Included are hundreds of beautiful illustrations and drawings that help articulate Smith's historical insight into key events surrounding the development of Canton, from its preliminary trading and treaty port history, to its Republican city building program, the Socialist planned economy after 1949, the post-1978 reform period, and the regenerative impetus of the contemporary city.

**Shaping Canton** focuses on the modern history of Canton. The text and illustrations explore and set out the various stages and events leading up to the modern city, by way of a reinvigorated Chinese superpower, from the founding of trade between Europe and the East in the late 15th century, to the beachheads of foreign influence, and forces of transformation through periods of revolution, political transition, and reform up to the present time.

**Dr. Peter Cookson Smith** is an architect, urbanist, and founder of the URBIS consultancy in Hong Kong, which has operated throughout Asia for more than forty years. He is a former professor of architecture and former president of Hong Kong's Institutes of Planning and Urban Design. He is the author of six previous books on cities and urban design, including his three most recent publications, with ORO Editions, *Seeking Savannah* (2018), *An Enterprising Path to Barrio Chino* (2019), and *After Dante* (2020).

