

# Multi-factor Consideration in Selection of a Capital for a Country

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## Abstract

Selection of a capital is of critical importance to security and stability of a country and consolidation of its regime. In selection of the capital in all Chinese dynasties over the past, what the governors usually take into account contained a variety of factors, such as, the strategic military position of a city, its economic development, its traffic convenience condition, its ethnic relations, etc. The same is true with other countries. Consideration of multi-factors is an inevitable route in selection of a capital. With development of the time and swift increase of population, capitals of some countries might be encountered with contradictions between population resources and environmental pressure and political functions. To resolve these contradictions, these countries, one after another, take different measures by moving their capitals elsewhere and decomposing functions. To the end of give play to the political function of a capital and maintain the integration capacity of a country, it is a must to pay attention to and deal with the issue of capital.

**Keywords:** capital, geographical location, resources and environment, political function, multi-factor

Selection of capital correlates to the destiny of a country for all Chinese dynasties over the past. When selecting a capital, the governors need to take into comprehensive consideration of a variety of factors, such as, economy, military, traffic and ethnic relations. Study on capital is a comprehensive discipline which involves history, geography, politics and urban construction. It has had some foundation in terms of study on the issue of capital. During the period of the Republic of China, Mr. Chen Qiao-yi wrote a book entitled “The Seven Major Ancient Capitals in China”. In this book, he introduced in details the seven major ancient capitals in China, including Anyang, Xi’an, Luoyang, Kaifeng, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Beijing. He also made overall and systematic description of the history, geography, humanistic and anecdotes of each ancient capital. Qu Yingjie wrote “Investigation of Capitals in the Historical Records”, in which he verified in details the geographical condition, scales, layout and street, palace, governmental office, market and residents of capitals recorded in “The Historical Records”. In the recent years, there have been a lot of related works published about studies on capitals. For example, in “The Institutional History of the Ancient Capitals in China”, Yang Kuan studied and demonstrated in a systematic way the developmental evolution of ancient Chinese capitals and their systems. However, the emphasis of the author was laid on the form and pattern of capitals instead of selection of a capital. In “Chinese Ancient Capitals”, Wu Songdi introduced capitals in early China, including capitals of unified dynasties, capitals at split times, capitals of borderland minority political power and capitals neighboring to their capital – a second capital. Wu Songdi also illustrated the reasons for moving capitals of unified dynasties, site selection of capitals and layout of capitals. The content of the book is quite plentiful. The work “Archaeological Discovery and Research of Ancient Chinese Capitals”, in which Liu Qingzhu was the Editor-in-Chief, divided ancient China into 11 historical periods in a historical and chronological order. These 11 historical periods include Xia Dynasty, Shang Dynasty, the Western Zhou Dynasty, the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, Qin Dynasty, Han Dynasty, Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties, Sui and Tang Dynasties, Song Dynasty, Liao and Jin Dynasties, and Yuan Dynasty. The book elaborated in a comprehensive way archaeological discoveries of capitals during each dynasty period. Furthermore, there are some other scholars who have works on ancient Chinese capitals. For example, Ge Jianxiong’s “Ancient Capitals and Cities”, Zhao Yongfu’s “The Historical Evolution of Metropolis Extending in All Directions”, and “Capital China: Moving of Capitals and Flow of the Main Artery of Chinese History” compiled by Xin Xiangyang and Ni Jianzhong, etc. In addition, many of some journals in China have studied the issue of capital construction. For instance, “Studies on Ancient Chinese

Capitals” specially published works on the science of capitals; “Beijing Union University Journal” launched a special column on Pekingology. Considering the situation in foreign countries, we find that there are not many works that specially study the science of ancient capitals. Such works include *capital city cultures* by Monika De Frantz, *Capital Cities in the Aftermath of Empire* by Emily Gunzburger Makas and Tanja Damljanovic Conley, “Capitals in Ancient Japan” by the Japanese scholar Kano, Hisashi (かのう ひさし, August 5, 1933 - ) and “Study on the System of Ancient Capitals in Japan” by Imai Kouki, etc.

Nonetheless, some theses refer to the issue of capitals, such as, Mark Traugott’s “Capital Cities and Revolution” published in Vol. 19, No. 1 (Spring, 1995) of *Social Science History*; Chad F. Emmett’s “The Capital Cities of Jerusalem” published in Vol. 86, No. 2 (Apr., 1996) of *Geographical Review*; William S. Logan’s “The Cultural Role of Capital Cities: Hanoi and Hue, Vietnam” published in Vol. 78, No. 4 (Winter, 2005/2006) of *Pacific Affairs*; Joe Uziel and Itzhaq Shai’s “Iron Age Jerusalem: Temple-Palace, Capital City” published in Vol. 127, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 2007) of *Journal of the American Oriental Society*; Preston E. James and Speridião Faissol’s “The Problem of Brazil’s Capital City” published in Vol. 46, No. 3 (Jul., 1956) of *Geographical Review*; O. H. K. Spate’s *Factors in the Development of Capital Cities* published in Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct., 1942) of *Geographical Review*, etc.

On the basis of drawing from the research achievements of scholars, this paper makes a comprehensive analysis of the influential factors of site selection of capitals in all countries, with the aim of searching for regular and instructional conclusions. With regard to research methodology, this paper mainly adopts three methodologies, namely, historical research methodology, comparative research methodology and inductive methodology. In the first historical research methodology, the paper conducts an analytical research on the history of selection of capitals both at home and abroad. In the second comparative methodology, this study has not only studied cases in China, but also studied cases in foreign countries. After comparison of the similarities and differences, the key is to summarize the similarities and find out the commonness. In the third inductive methodology, among all countries in the world, China has a long-standing history, so there is a variety of forms in selection of capitals. The reasons are both regular and occasional. Thus, in order to find out the rule and get an effective conclusion, it is necessary to summarize among a great variety of fantasies.

In order to make clear how the governors of all the dynasties over the past took into account all the various factors in the process of determining their capital, it is, first of all, necessary to delve into selection of capitals in the history of China.

## 1. Factors Considered in Selection of Capital in the History

In the history of China, selection of capital by all the dynasties over the past implied different historical backgrounds, including different territories, different circumstances of war and peace, and different comparison of a country with its surrounding power, etc. Hence, specific considerations were taken according to different circumstances in selection of capital.

### 1.1 *The Primary Consideration in Selecting a Capital Is the Military Factor*

Military consideration means whether a city is favorable for military defense. If a capital only has the advantage of convenient traffic and developed business, while it is easy to attack and hard to defend in military, it is neither a good choice. For instance, in Dongjing Bianliang in Song Dynasty in the history of China, although it had developed water transport and convenient traffic, there was no strategically located barrier surrounding, it was vulnerable to get attacked directly by the troops of Jin State. In such situation, even the Yellow River could not give its full play as both of the two parties had the opportunity to gain by standing on the both sides of the River. Once the enemy reached the city gate, defense of merely the moat and the rampart became extremely passive. If there was a strategically located barrier as defense, it would be able to keep the enemy troops thousands of miles away and have larger military margin.

Over the history of China, Xi’an was chosen as the capital of several dynasties, as it had high mountains and large rivers on its east as a protective screen and had the corridor of the river valley as its passageway. Furthermore, Tongguan and Hangu Pass on the corridor as defense. In this way, it was both open and defensive on the east, so both advancing and retreating were feasible. Once a crisis occurred on its east, the troops could retreat to Hanzhong and Sichuan. In the earlier Western Han Dynasty, Lou Jing proposed to Liu Bang, the Emperor Gaozu of Han Dynasty, “Guanzhong Region is surrounded by high mountains and large rivers and has strategically located barriers. Therefore, even if urgent military crisis occurred and we were attacked by millions of troops, we are still able to resist against them.” (Sima, Q., 2006, p418) Lou Jing persuaded Gaozu to establish their capital in Chang’an. Liu Bang was still suspicious at that time. It’s recorded, “Liu Bang, the Emperor Gaozu, hesitated, seeking for views from the ministers around him who all came from the eastern area and hoped

that the Emperor could establish the capital nearby Luoyang in the east. They believed that Luoyang had a good geographical location which was solid enough to cope with the enemies. Furthermore, since Luoyang had been the capital for the Kingdom of Zhou for several hundred years, it was relatively auspicious. By contrast, as a place of Xianyang of the Qin Empire, Guanzhong Area perished just after two generations, so it was ominous. Hence, it might well be better to establish the capital in Luoyang. The important adviser Zhang Liang said, although Luoyang had a solid location, it had a narrow area and had no high mountains and large rivers around, which was disadvantageous for military defense. However, the Guanzhong Plain Area had high mountains and large rivers to defend and had a perfect strategic location, a land of abundance. Again, Liu Bang asked the Minister Lou Jing who also agreed with the view of Zhang Liang. Thus, Gaozu decided to establish the capital in Guanzhong, namely, Chang'an. This dynasty, got peace in the capital for several hundred years." (Liu, X., 1997, p339) Thereafter, several dynasties established their capital in Chang'an due to its geographical location which is easy to defend and hard to attack.

### *1.2 Consideration of the Place of Origin*

Most inaugurators of a country or a dynasty choose the capital out of consideration of its place of birth. Place of birth is the source of its culture and the foundation of its political and military strength. Place of birth not only refers to a city, but also contains the entire area at the beginning of its birth, which covers the vast rural area or the prairie. Within the entire area, there is usually a relatively large city which is regarded as the center of governing. If there is, indeed, no such city, the governor usually builds such a city on the spot. Therefore, the primary capital of a dynasty, beyond controversy, is established in such a place, such as, Shangjing in the Dynasty of Liao, Nanjing in the Dynasty of Ming and Hetuala in the Dynasty of Qing. The Northern Song Dynasty chose Kaifeng as its capital just because it inherited the regime of the Northern Zhou Dynasty. As a local small dynasty, the Northern Zhou Dynasty had no more cities to choose as its capital.

### *1.3 Consideration of the Central Geographical Location*

It says in "Taiping Imperial Encyclopedia", "When a monarch builds his dynasty, he must establish his capital in a central location of the country, which enables him to take control over his people and govern all surrounding areas." (Zhu, Y., 2003) Indeed, selection of a capital in a city located in the central governing area can bring much convenience. In this respect, as a result of changes in territory, the location of Luoyang was more close to the center of the territory than Xi'an at some time of the ancient China. Furthermore, Luoyang was abundant in products, convenient in traffic and developed in its surrounding water route, it was better to resolve the problem of supplies for the capital of the country. Besides, the distance for all small dynasties to come to Luoyang to pay tribute and report to the emperor was almost the same. Therefore, a large number of dynasties chose Luoyang as their capital. The Sui Dynasty had chosen Luoyang as its second capital. The Wu Zhou Dynasty of the Empress Wu Zetian established Luoyang as its capital throughout the entire period. All over the entire history of China, there are although thirteen (fifteen in another report) dynasties which established their capital in Luoyang.

### *1.4 The Element of Contrast of Political Power*

Under the feudal system, different political groups held different political strengths. For instance, Zhu Di, the Emperor Chengzu of Ming Dynasty moved his capital from Nanjing to Beijing as he had had long-standing business dealings in Beijing and held solid political strength there. In modern times, after the Revolution of 1911, to the end of urging Yuan Shikai to compel the Qing Emperor to abdicate, Sun Yat-sen made the commitment to resign from the post of the Provisional President after abdication of Qing Emperor and to take over the post by Yuan Shikai. Yet, Sun Yat-sen required Yuan Shikai to take over the post in Nanjing when the latter chose the capital for the provisional government. However, Yuan Shikai directed and acted by himself a series of mutinies, claiming he was incapable of extricating himself to take over the post in Nanjing. Ultimately, he had his wishes fulfilled to take over the post in Beijing where all his political strengths were kept.

### *1.5 Consideration of the Economic Status*

A capital is often chosen in areas where the economy is relatively developed so as to guarantee favorable living conditions of the capital. Chang'an was chosen as the capital for two major reasons. On one hand, without doubt, it had a strategically located geographical and natural conditions, so it is easy to defend and hard to attack. On the other hand, it is closely related to its developed agricultural conditions which were exploited at earlier time. Therefore, when the economic recession of the Guanzhong Area occurred as a result of the turmoil, the function of Chang'an as a capital was lost. In the late Western Han Dynasty, the Red Eyebrow Rebellion made a war with the regime headed by Liu Xuan in the Guanzhong Area. The common people either perished or escaped, as a result of which the farmland went out of cultivation. It is recorded in "Book of Han - Liu Penzi Bibliography" that, "The great famine occurred in the Guanzhong Area at the end of the Western Han Dynasty. What's serious,

the phenomenon of dog eating dog even occurred. The whole city was empty and bones of the dead were all over the wild field.” (Fan, Y., 2005, p56) This is also one of the reasons why Liu Xu, the Emperor Guangwu gave up Chang’an and chose Luoyang for his dynasty. Throughout operation and recovery for many years in the Northern Dynasties, by the period of Sui Dynasty and Tang Dynasty, Guanzhong had received substantially developed economy. Chang’an was well-known to the world and became an international metropolis with unprecedented prosperity. Nonetheless, the An Lushan Rebellion smashed once again the prosperity of Chang’an. “During the An Lushan Rebellion, the land went out of cultivation and no grass grew out in the Guanzhong Plain Area to the west of the Yellow River. As a result, the people escaped and wandered about. The situation was quite miserable.” (Chen, Z., 2013, p217) In a manner of speaking, famine in the Guanzhong Area could not bear the sight and its economy thoroughly collapsed. Thus, in the Wuzhou period, Chen Zi’ang strongly suggested that Wu Zetian moved the capital to Luoyang, as he thought “Luoyang has Tai-hang Mountains on the north, plentiful grain-producing area on its south, and such a land of fish and rice as Yangze River and Huai River as well as such large granary as Luokou on the east, which is a great advantage”. (Chen, Z., 2013, p217) In the later Tang Dynasty, the grain transport of Chang’an city was disadvantageous. As a result, grain of rice in the southeast area was unable to be transported successfully to the capital. This gave rise to greatly negative effects on the national strength of Tang Dynasty. By contrast, the economic and geographical position enjoyed exceptional advantages. As Mr Chen Yinque said, “In addition to some political and recreation reasons, there is a major reason why the emperors in the ancient China moved their capital from Chang’an to Luoyang, not mentioning the Emperor Yang of Sui Dynasty and the Empress Wu Zetian. It is the reason of economic suppl<sup>y</sup>” (Chen, Y., 1963, p146)

All over the history of China, Jiankang (Nanjing) and Hangzhou as well as other several cities were an ideal choice of capital owing to their convenient commercial traffic and prosperous handicraft industry. Moreover, they played a great role in stimulating the economic development there. Even Kaifeng in the Song Dynasty and the Great Capital of the Yuan Dynasty which had no good economic conditions at the very beginning finally obtained good economic conditions by means of canalization.

All the factors mentioned above have been taken into account by all the dynasties in the Chinese history. However, as a result of some constraints, some visions might have not been fulfilled by some locality separatist power. For instance, during the Sixteen States Period, the principle of selecting a capital is to make things done with whatever is available and the decision to choose a capital is relatively hasty. During the long period of Five Dynasties and Ten States, the situation is almost the same. Anyway, for a feudal dynasty which is devoted to unification of the entire country, it is a critical issue to be faced how to handle all kinds of relations in the process of selecting a capital. Among all the relations, the ethnic relation is also an extremely important aspect.

## 2. Consideration in Terms of Ethnic Relations

If we observe the history with a current viewpoint, the unified feudal dynasties throughout the history of China include Qin Dynasty, Western Han Dynasty, Eastern Han Dynasty, Sui Dynasty, Tang Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty, Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty. For all these dynasties, it is only possible to consolidate the territory and impose power over the world by means of handling well the ethnic relations and choosing a capital with a favorable position.

The Qin Dynasty has a short history, existing for only 21 years. Qin Shi Huang, the First Emperor of Qin Dynasty finished the national unification on the basis of the previous vassal states. Hence, he had no spare time or had no intention to consider the issue of seeking for a capital. During the period of Western Han Dynasty, the ethnic issue is mainly contradictions between the Han Dynasty and Xiongnu, an ancient nationality in China. On the whole, the strength of Han Dynasty has no upper hand. In 200 BC, Liu Bang, the Emperor Gaozu of Han was besieged in Baideng Mountain for seven days and nights by the Hephthalites. They went out of danger finally only by means of throwing a sop to the wife of Chan Yu, chief of the Xiongnu in ancient China. Afterwards, the Han Dynasty had no other choice but to, on one hand, defend tenaciously the Great Wall, and, on the other hand, carried out the policy of peace through marriage. It is only by the period of the Emperor Wu in the Han Dynasty which began to expand in strength that the Han Dynasty assembled the national power and pressed all-side attack on Xiongnu with Chang’an city as the support. Finally, the Han Dynasty achieved a decisive victory. So to speak, establishment in Chang’an as a capital placed the Western Han Dynasty in a position of forward defense. The Han Dynasty had no choice to retreat but to move forward. This is a foundation to gain victory over Xiongnu. In the earlier years of the Tang Dynasty, Chang’an city was often faced up with harassing attack from Tujue, a nationality in ancient China. In the year 626 AD, Xie Li Khan led his army to troop below Chang’an city. “The Emperor Taizong of Tang Dynasty, along with several of his ministers and altogether six people, got out of Chang’an City from the Black Tortoise and came to the side of Weihe River. They had a conversation with Xie Li Khan on the other side of the Weihe River. Taizong condemned Xie Li Khan about his violating their

neighborly treaty of alliance. His courage shocked Xie Li Khan and his reasoning of words persuaded Xie Li Khan. Finally, the two parties held the ritual of killing a white horse to ally with each other and Tujue withdrew their troops.” (Geng, X., & Kang, H., 1996, p867) As it were, as “a place where an imperial resided”, the danger of Chang’an was, beyond doubt, obvious. However, the Tang Dynasty did not have the plan to move their capital to the east. Instead, they kept moving forward. Chang’an was, all the time, kept as an outpost to resist aggressive enemies. Finally, the East Tujue wiped out. The foreign policy of active defense helped consolidate the great Tang Dynasty.

In the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Di, Chengzu, the Emperor of the Ming Dynasty chose to select Beijing as their capital because, on one hand, Beijing was the place of his sphere of power, and, on the other hand, they took their own initiative to defend against attack by the Mongolian who had retreated beyond the Great Wall. This is the so-called “the Emperor garrisoning the frontiers”. In the fourteenth year (1449) of Zhengtong, an Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, the “Event of Tu Mu Bao” occurred and Yingzong, an Emperor of the Ming Dynasty was captured. Nevertheless, this didn’t compel the Ming Dynasty to change their initial intention. Under the leadership of Yu Qian, the whole country pledged their lives to guard Beijing.

Different from the ethnic relation of separation between the north and the south during the periods of the Han Dynasty, Tang Dynasty and Ming Dynasty, the minorities of the Yuan Dynasty and Qing Dynasty attempted to achieve effective governing and administering on the areas of Han people in terms of ethnic relations after they acquired the national regime. For this reason, the two dynasties made a great effort to choose their capital nearby the farming areas of the Han Nationality and both moved their capital to Beijing from outside the Great Wall.

The largest empire all over the Chinese history – the Genghis Khan Empire established its capital in Hala during the earlier period of the empire. Kublai Khan, the Yuanshizhu Emperor, moved his capital twice. In the first year (the year 1260) of Zhongtong, the title of Kublai Khan's reign, Kaiping Mansion was established as the capital, and the capital was moved to Zhongdu (Beijing today) in the fourth year (the year 1267) of Zhiyuan, another title of Kublai Khan's reign. In this way, the emperor realized his political intention of governing the central plain area by Beijing and governing the northern desert area by Kaiping.

Qing Dynasty, a unified and multi-ethnic dynasty, laid foundation for the current territory of China. During the years from 1587 to 1625, Nurhachi moved its capital for altogether five times, among which the relatively important move was from Liaoyang to Shenyang in 1625. In the eyes of Nurhachi, Shenyang was a place which could extend in all directions. If they went to the west on a punitive expedition to Ming Dynasty, the route was straight and short in distance. If they went to the north on a punitive expedition to the Mongolia, they could get there within three days. If they went to the south on a punitive expedition to the North Korea, they could take Bai Qinghe Road. (Chen, L., 2014) In the year 1644, Wu Sangui led the troops of the Qing Dynasty to go through Shanhai pass. In May of the same year, Dorgon led his army to take over Beijing and declared immediately to move the capital to Beijing. In September, Fulin (the Emperor Shunzhi) arrived in Beijing. Shortly in October, Fulin succeeded to the throne and Beijing was formally announced as the capital of the Qing Dynasty. Thereafter, Qing Dynasty turned out to be a great power which unified the who country from a regional regime in an area of the Northern China.

It is observed that any unified feudal dynasty in the history of China regarded selection of the capital as an important aspect in reinforcing the ethnic relations and consolidating its dominant position. They also adapted themselves to changing circumstances. They either moved their capital or built a different governing center in the original place of birth and in the areas newly occupied. This objectively speeds up the step of national integration and enables the concept of a unified and multi-national country to gradually get into shape and enjoy popular support.

Throughout the history of China, there are not only great empires which successfully unified China, but also great efforts made by local regimes to facilitate national integration. Xiaowen, a well-known Emperor of the Wei Dynasty moved his capital, dressed up with Han Chinese clothes and changing his family name to a Chinese surname, and committed himself to get integrated with the Han nationality so as to better maintain his governing of the regime. In the first year of Zhenyuan (a title of an emperor’s reign) in the Jin Dynasty, Wanyan Liang, the Emperor Hailingwang of Jin Dynasty, formally moved his capital from Huining Prefecture in Shangjing (south of Acheng in Heilongjiang today) to Yanjing and changed its name to Zhongdu (Beijing today). The population in Zhongdu Area increased rapidly and became a large city with a population of more than one million. Agriculture, handicraft industry and commerce in that area were all developed rapidly. After the Jurchen people entered Zhongdu, they lived together with the Han people and learned and accepted advanced scientific culture and customs as well as habits of the Han people. Among them, “many Jurchen people learned only customs of

the Han people, having no idea about the pristine customs of Jurchen. Some even forgot how to speak the language of Jurchen.” (Tuo, T., 1975, p159) Later, when Wanyan Yong, the Emperor Shizong of Jin Dynasty, succeeded to the throne through a coup, he still established his capital in Zhongdu and gained a stable governing position. All the above cases are examples of efforts made by local regimes of minorities to fulfill national integration.

Having analyzed the situation of the ancient China, we will continue to have a look at whether these factors of selecting a capital in ancient China have their universality in the contemporary world?

### **3. Comparison with Foreign Situations**

#### *3.1 Consideration out of Military Aspects*

Capitals of a great many countries are the leading edge of military defense and a military vital. For instance, Vienna, capital of Austria, ever played an important military role during the period of Habsburg Empire. In the year 1529 when the Ottoman Empire attacked Vienna for the first time, with the help of the ramparts handed down in the Middle Ages, the Austrians struggled to resist against the attack by the Turkish people. Ever since the year 1548, Vienna has been remoulded to a stronghold constituted by eleven fortresses and one ditch. When the Turkish people attacked Vienna for the second time in the year 1683, the stronghold that had been remoulded guarded Vienna for as long as two months. The Siege of Vienna was not relieved until the Poland King Jan III Sobieski dispatched troops for rescue. This also led the Ottoman Empire to begin to decline. St. Petersburg ever acted as the forward position by the Tsarist Russia to realize its foreign aggrandizement.

After World War I, the Soviet Union moved its capital from the coastal city Sankt-Peterburg to the inland city Moscow. To a large extent, this was done for the purpose of preventing attacks by imperialist countries. Indeed, the subsequent Soviet and Germany War proved the measure of moving inland had played an important role in the war which caused the lighting war of Germany beyond their grasp. The capital of Pakistan was initially located in Karachi, a coastal city. As it was vulnerable to attacks from the navy of its enemy countries, the capital was moved to the inland city Islamabad in 1970. In 1923, Turkey moved its capital from the border area Istanbul to the inland city Ankara. In 2005, Burma moved its capital from the coastal city Rangoon to the inland mountain city Pyinmana. All these moves were out of consideration of military security.

#### *3.2 Consideration out of the Central Geographical Location*

Foreign countries also have their considerations in selection of a capital. After realization of unification, Italy established its capital in the ancient capital Rome instead of such famous historic and cultural cities as Turin and Florence. That was out of consideration of its central position to connect the south and the north. The French capital Paris is also a central city which connects different cultural regions within the country, such as, the Rhein culture, the Frank culture, the Roman culture, and so on.

Kazakhstan moved its capital from Alma-Ata which is located in the southwestern corner of the country to Akmola in the center. Nigeria moved its capital from Lagos in the western coastal area to the central city Abuja. Tanzania moved its capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma in the center of the homeland which has almost the same distance from all administrative districts of the country.

Belgrade, which was ever the capital of Yugoslavia, and which is currently the capital of the Republic of Serbia, is located in the central position of the Balkan Peninsula. It is located in the intersection between the Danube and the River Sava, with the plain of middle reaches of the Danube to its north and the Šumadija Hill to its south. It is also the water and land transport thoroughfare of the Danube and the Balkan Peninsula. Therefore, it is a key point of contact between the Europe and the Near East and is termed as the key to the Balkan owing to its important strategic significance. It has a superior geographical location.

#### *3.3 Consideration out of Economic, Political and Ethnic Factors*

Paris, capital of France, is located in the Paris Basin on the side of the Seine River, a fertile agricultural area. The capital of UK is located in the major farming area – on the plain on both of the sides of the Thames River. Brazil moved its capital from Rio de Janeiro to Brasilia, which was also aimed to spur balanced development of the regional economy. Nevertheless, with development of the times, a capital is usually separated with the economic center of a country for the purpose of overcome such pressure as population, resources, environment, traffic and housing, etc. caused by rapid expansion of large cities.

In terms of balance of political power in foreign countries, the United States initially established its capital in Philadelphia. However, as this city had a northward deflection, its function as a capital was opposed by all states in the south. As a result, another new capital was selected. Finally, a new city, Washington, was built on the flat

ground with an appropriate position. This has better balanced the relationship between the south and the north.

In terms of ethnic relations, Canada finally established its capital in Ottawa after selection and move for several times. This city is not only close to the vast area where English is spoken, but also adjoins the Quebec area where French is spoken. After its unification, Germany moved its capital from Bonne to Berlin, which played an important role in national unification and recognition. Thus, it can be found that in selection of capitals by all countries, there are some inevitable factors to be considered, including military, politics, economy, nationality and geographical location. Furthermore, factors of all aspects are usually out of comprehensive consideration. For example, ever since the period of the Roman Empire, London in the United Kingdom has been an important city on the island of the Great Britain. It is located at the mouth of the Thames, so it not only has a convenient traffic, but is also closely neighboring the Strait of Dover and echoes with the continent of Europe, the most convenient and fast node that leads to the continent of Europe. In addition, population gathers here in this area and the business is developed. With regard to politics, during the period of the Civil War in the history of the United Kingdom, usually, the party that won support of London would gain victory. Hence, it has a decisive political and military significance. It closely neighbored the episcopate of Canterbury, so it has huge rally point in religion. It can be said that the bishop of Canterbury resorts to London to highlight his religious position, whereas London resorts the bishop to consolidate its political status.

Of course, in weighing among different factors, a country tends to establish its capital by taking into account the most important factors and get rid of relatively unimportant factors. For instance, although the United States capital Washington had a central position at the beginning of the building of the country, it is, obviously, not the central position of the United States territory even today. However, owing to its historical heritability, the country has no plan to move its capital elsewhere.

#### **4. Assessment of Functions of the Contemporary Capital of China**

There were specific historical conditions for Beijing to be ascertained as the capital of the People's Republic of China. In earlier 1949, Mao Zedong, the founder of the PRC, asked for opinions from Wang Jiaxiang about the issue of selection of capital for the new China. After an analysis of several conditions, such as, the historical geography, strategic position and cultural psychology, Wang Jiaxiang summarized that Beiping (Beijing today) was the ideal city for establishment of the capital. Beiping was the imperial capital of the two dynasties of Ming and Qing for over 500 hundred years, so it was readily accepted by the masses. Mao Zedong said Wang Jiaxiang's opinion really made sense. On the basis of extensive soliciting for opinions and deep consideration, it was formally announced that Beiping was the capital of the new China.

Nowadays, Beijing has become a place of attraction in the eyes of the Chinese people and also an internationalized metropolis. People from the whole country and even all over the world gather there. Nonetheless, with changes of the times, Beijing is also faced up with a lot of "big city malaises". First of all, its city functions are overlapped. Today, Beijing has had the functions of "six centers", namely, political center, economic management center, cultural center, scientific and educational center, traffic center and information center. As a result of overlapping of its functions as the "six centers", stream of people, physical distribution and traffic flow of the whole country and even the whole world are collected in this old capital, so its population density has reached as large as 1311 persons/km<sup>2</sup>. Its residents have crowded living space, built-up psychological pressure and weakened sense of happiness, so the social administration difficulty increases. Secondly, resources in Beijing are on the verge of the bearing limit. Water resources, land resources and spatial resources are all in large shortage. The increasingly strained land resources give rise to high upsurge of the house price. As a result, the living costs of the citizens increase by times. Under such circumstance, some scholars come up with the idea of moving the capital. However, as is well-known, moving a capital is absolutely not an easy digging for any large country as it involves overall consideration of various factors, especially historical factor, moving cost and national psychology, etc. Furthermore, in addition to moving a capital, historically, China and other countries have different historical experiences for reference.

For example, in the ancient China, the phenomenon of two-capital system ever happened, such as, Chang'an and Luoyang in the Tang Dynasty, and Nanjing and Beijing in the Ming Dynasty. In the contemporary world, Bolivia and the Netherlands still have two capitals. The legal capital of Bolivia is Sucre with a population of approximately 90 thousand, where its Supreme Judicial Court is stationed. Its administrative capital is La Paz, the central government station, with a population of approximately 800 thousand. The legal capital of the Netherlands is the Hague, a station of the Palace and the central government, where the international court of justice is located. It has a population of approximately 480 thousand. Its administrative capital is Amsterdam, the economic and cultural center of the Netherlands, with a population of approximately 800 thousand.

In other words, moving a capital is really not the unique choice either for the purpose of resolving the large city malaise in a capital or to the end of give better play to the political functions of a capital. It's even not the best choice. In some cases, moving of a capital might be to move to another place and to build a megacity. It might also be a path of low cost and high benefit to resolve the oversize population and environmental pressure and reserve its political function and cultural function by means of moving large enterprises and decomposing its economic function.

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