

# Underestimated Contributions: Contemporary Academic Understanding of the Relationship between Zhang Weihan and the Municipal Reform Movement in Modern China

被低估的贡献：当代学术界对张维翰与近代中国市政改革运动关系的理解

Wang Chunkai <sup>a, \*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of History and Culture, Southwest University, Chongqing 400715, China

## KEYWORDS

*Zhang Weihan; Modern China; Municipal Reform Movement; Contemporary Academia*

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## ABSTRACT

Zhang Weihan not only proposed the idea of "municipal strengthening of the nation" but also presided over the municipal reform practice in Kunming, involving the improvement of urban grassroots organizations, the establishment of traffic police, the demolition of old city walls, the improvement of street transportation, the rectification of water and electricity facilities, physician training and food hygiene inspections, the organization of custom improvement associations, the promotion of compulsory education, the construction of modern parks, and many other aspects. These efforts not only vigorously promoted the development of Kunming, but also played a significant role in other Chinese cities such as Chongqing. However, when examining contemporary academic understanding of Zhang Weihan and the municipal reform movement in modern China, it is not difficult to find that research in this field still has many deficiencies. Most of the existing relevant works are limited to brief narratives of his local content during his time in Kunming, while his contributions to the municipal reform movement in modern China have been relatively underestimated by contemporary academia. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to break through the inadequacies of previous research and conduct a more systematic study on this issue.

## 1. Introduction

In traditional Chinese society, there was no strict division between urban and rural areas in terms of administrative management. However, since modern times, the impact of foreign forces and the changes in the ideologies of people from all walks of life in the context of the national crisis have objectively promoted the difficult start of urbanization amidst social turmoil. But in this process, "the structure and functions of many cities have changed, and a large number of problems different from traditional cities have emerged".<sup>[1]</sup> Therefore, improving the management of

modern cities has become the general trend of China's social development. The outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution established a republican political system in modern China and also introduced new elements into the local administrative system from top to bottom, with various provinces following the example of foreign cities and establishing urban management institutions. Although the "Municipal Self-Government System" stipulated that "municipal administration" was handled by urban self-governing bodies, this was nearly an empty promise during the chaotic military and political period of the Beiyang Government. At that time, the concept of "municipal administration" was broader than the contemporary concept, which refers solely to

\* Corresponding author. E-mail address: [jersj@foxmail.com](mailto:jersj@foxmail.com).

the infrastructure renovation of urban roads, bridges, and pipe networks. It actually referred to the comprehensive urban management work carried out under the leadership of local authorities, encompassing various affairs such as planning and construction.

Urban history researchers generally believe that there was a vigorous municipal reform movement in China during the 1920s to 1940s. Undoubtedly, the introduction and reflection on foreign advanced municipal theories by elite scholars such as Liang Qichao, Dong Xiuja, and Zhang Weici constituted the mainstream of the development of municipal disciplines in China during this period. However, political and business figures also had many words and deeds regarding municipal issues. Unlike the more theoretical discussions of modern scholars, a group of Republic of China political figures familiar with municipal theories and holding municipal authority, such as Kunming Municipal Supervision Director Zhang Weiha, vigorously carried out various practices. Their efforts were not only prolonged but also achieved remarkable results, forming an important demonstration effect in the modern municipal reform movement. At present, contemporary academia has produced many results in the overall study of the modern municipal reform movement in China, and the research level is gradually deepening. However, scholars have paid little attention to Zhang Weiha, a political figure who vigorously promoted this process, and there is still no monograph for systematic exploration.

In summary, examining the relevant historical materials of Zhang Weiha's participation in municipal affairs, clarifying its development context, and objectively evaluating his contributions to the municipal reform movement in modern China is a research with both academic and practical significance. In terms of academic significance, Zhang Weiha's thoughts and practices laid an important foundation for the development of Kunming's municipal administration and also contributed to the modernization of Chinese cities. However, previous studies on the modern municipal reform movement in China have mostly focused on analyzing the specific practices of a certain city or the specific thoughts of a certain scholar. Therefore, this paper selects Zhang Weiha, a political figure who had a significant impact on the modern municipal reform but has long been neglected by contemporary academia, as the research object to explore the development characteristics of his municipal thoughts in the process of modernization

in China, as well as the limitations and deficiencies of his municipal practices. Although in recent years, some works on the history of Kunming have briefly mentioned Zhang Weiha. In summary, the examination of this issue helps to provide a unique perspective for contemporary academia to understand the development process of Chinese cities through the study of individuals' municipal thoughts, which has strong academic significance. In terms of practical significance, the wave of the modern municipal reform movement cultivated many professionals for the development of Chinese cities at that time. However, in the 1950s and 1960s, municipal science was once regarded as a "pseudo-science" and was neglected by people at that time. It was not until the 1980s that municipal research was re-emphasized by the academic community after long-term appeals by scholars. There is an undeniable historical inheritance relationship between modern urban morphology and modern urban development. Zhang Weiha and others' reflections on municipal administration are precious legacies left by modern Chinese history, and many of their insights still have non-negligible enlightenment for today. Kunming is currently in an important stage of rapid urban development, with new city expansion and old city renovation proceeding in parallel. It urgently needs to refer to relevant historical experience and comprehensively explore the path forward for municipal administration in China today. Therefore, the research on this issue has important practical significance.

## **2. Zhang Weiha's Significant Contributions to the Modern Municipal Reform Movement**

Since the late Qing Dynasty, with the entry of modern foreign forces and the opening of the Yunnan-Vietnam Railway, Yunnanfu, the provincial capital of Yunnan Province located in the southwestern border ethnic region of China, has achieved initial development. However, with the advancement of urbanization, urban problems also emerged. After the Chongjiu Uprising, the military government abolished Yunnanfu, stipulating that the urban area was administratively subordinate to Kunming County, but its various specific affairs were handled by the provincial police department. Qin Guangdi, the director of the department, and others had proposed the rudiment of an urban renovation plan, but it was not implemented due to war. In 1919, Tang Jiyao first established the Yunnan Municipal Office, a specialized urban management institution. Li Zonghuang, the first

director, although he had personally visited Japan to inspect municipal administration, did not play a significant role due to the turbulent situation during his tenure, which coincided with Gu Pinzhen's overthrow of Tang Jiyao. Therefore, Zhang Weihan, who took over as director in August 1922, shouldered the mission of continuing to promote the development of Kunming.

In the wave of the modern municipal reform movement, Zhang Weihan's thoughts and practices were always closely related to the political and economic conditions of the time, making them highly representative at that time. Born in 1886 into an official family in Dagan County, Yunnan Province, he devoted himself to the Chongjiu Uprising and the Protectorate Movement in his early years. He also briefly administered Yanxing and Gejiu. During his tenure, he was eager to rectify the administration, strive to improve medical and health conditions, strictly prohibit local factories from employing child labor, install electric lights, ensure safe production, and make preliminary attempts to improve local undertakings.

However, the political movements he participated in did not end China's chaos and backwardness, which led Zhang Weihan to gradually form the idea of "municipal strengthening of the nation" during his three visits to Japan to inspect municipal administration. After returning to China, Zhang Weihan presided over the compilation and research of numerous foreign municipal publications after taking office as the director of Kunming Municipal Administration and was determined to build Kunming into an ideal "garden city".<sup>[2]</sup> From 1922 to 1928, Zhang Weihan conducted numerous statistical survey activities and put the blueprint of his reform ideas into large-scale practice on this basis, specifically manifested in improving urban grassroots organizations, establishing new traffic police, demolishing old city walls, improving street transportation, implementing unified measurement tools, rectifying water and electricity facilities, conducting physician training and food hygiene inspections, expanding public medical institutions, organizing custom improvement associations and horticultural research associations, promoting compulsory education, building new modern parks, and hosting flower and horticultural exhibitions, among many other initiatives.<sup>[3]</sup> At that time, this renewed the city's appearance and greatly promoted the optimization of Kunming's urban management. After the Kunming 26th Army Mutiny, social unrest occurred, and Zhang Weihan led the police to maintain urban security. Although Zhang

Weihan resigned as the director of municipal administration after 1928 and no longer directly managed municipal affairs, the construction work during his administration in Kunming laid a solid foundation for further reforms in Kunming and was inherited by his successors such as Ma Yi and Pei Cunfan. Zhang Weihan's various efforts in this historical process, coupled with Yunnan's unique geographical location connecting inland China and Southeast Asia and its diversified ethnic cultural ecology, make it an important sample for observing the path of local municipal reform.

In 1931, Zhang Weihan had a dispute with Lu Han and others and left Kunming to take a position in the Nanjing National Government. However, his reform ideas did not fade away. He still repeatedly called on urban and rural residents in domestic newspapers and magazines to ban smoking and foot binding and improve social customs. After the July 7th Incident, as the anti-war situation became increasingly severe, the importance of the southwestern rear area was deeply recognized by people at that time. As a member of the Planning Committee for the Construction of the Provisional Capital, Zhang Weihan also put forward his own insights on the municipal administration of Chongqing, the wartime provisional capital, advocating that Chongqing should be "transformed from a metropolis into many small towns"<sup>[4]</sup> to reduce the excessively high population density in the urban area during wartime, solve the urban problems brought about by this, such as overcrowded housing, litter everywhere, and prevalent infectious diseases. At the same time, this plan could also effectively reduce casualties during Japanese bombings, which further demonstrated the continuity of Zhang Weihan's municipal thoughts. In addition, during the Anti-Japanese War, Zhang Weihan also inspected local administrations in Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Gansu, Shaanxi, Qinghai, and Ningxia.

After the victory of the Anti-Japanese War in 1946, Zhang Weihan was appointed as the Supervisor of the Yunnan and Guizhou Provinces of the National Government Supervisory Office and returned to Kunming, where he had previously carried out reforms. "Initially, the hall of his private residence in Kunming was temporarily used as the Supervisor's Office. Every Monday, a commemorative week was held to explain historical events to the public, strengthen moral character, and attract many people outside the office as well as school teachers and students to listen".<sup>[5]</sup> In an interview with reporters, Zhang Weihan believed that Yunnan cities should take the following measures

to restore social livelihood after eight years of war: "First, establish schools extensively to popularize general national education, especially in border areas; second, complete the provincial highway transportation network and railways such as Xushu-Kunming and Kunming-Wuzhou; third, develop the upstream of the Jinsha River and the water resources of the Niulan River and the Nujiang River; fourth, develop underground minerals and develop inherent commerce (such as copper, tin, tung oil, tea, etc.); fifth, improve agriculture, build rural areas, pay attention to reclamation, and advocate afforestation; sixth, provide relief for the unemployed and victims".<sup>[6]</sup> These numerous measures fully demonstrated Zhang Wei-han's reform ideas, which continued to be inherited and developed even more than a decade after his departure.

### 3. Contemporary Academic Understanding of Zhang Wei-han and the Modern Municipal Reform Movement

By reviewing and organizing the academic history and sorting out the changes and deficiencies in this field in recent years, it helps to lay a solid research foundation. The current understanding of Zhang Wei-han and the modern municipal reform movement in academia can be understood from the following three aspects.

#### 3.1 Research on Zhang Wei-han as an Individual

Overall, current academic research on Zhang Wei-han as an individual is still limited, and there are even fewer research results in mainland China compared to Taiwan. An earlier work is Tao You-qian's "Random Thoughts on Zhang Wei-han's Revision of the Dagan County Chronicles," which introduces Zhang Wei-han's 48-year academic history from initiating the revision of the "Dagan County Chronicles" based on his love for his country in 1931 to finally completing it before his death in 1978. At the same time, from the research perspective of local chronicles, it provides a relatively objective evaluation of the structure and content of this chronicle<sup>[7]</sup>.

At the same time, some recent works on modern Kunming municipal administration also briefly mention Zhang Wei-han's deeds. For example, Zhang Tian-jie and Zhang Yu-qian's "Natural Landscapes and Pastoral Delights: A Study on the Planning and Construction of Modern Parks in

Kunming" points out that while following the traditions of traditional gardens, Kunming's modern parks were also deeply influenced by foreign cultures. Among them, the foreign municipal publications compiled by Zhang Wei-han and others provided an important medium for spreading new ideas such as the Garden City theory and zoning planning.<sup>[8]</sup> This article has a certain enlightening effect, but its focus on the construction of modern parks is only one component of Zhang Wei-han's municipal thoughts in Kunming's municipal practices. It involves less in other areas such as education, health, relief, public security, changing social customs, and infrastructure. At the same time, the number of local chronicles and related newspapers and magazines in its references is obviously insufficient, and more systematic and holistic research still needs to be carried out on the basis of continuous in-depth excavation of historical materials.

The compilation and publication of chronicles and commemorative anthologies reflect the importance attached by Taiwan in the 1980s to the study of Zhang Wei-han as an individual. The "Chronicle of Mr. Zhang Wei-han" compiled by the History Committee of the Central Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang is based on Zhang Wei-han's memoirs, Kuomintang archives, and other related materials, recording the detailed activities of the subject from his birth in 1886 to his death in 1979. In addition, it also includes precious writings of the subject such as "Proposed Letter of Opinions on Revising the Sino-French Commercial Treaty" in the appendix, which provides an important basis for researchers to quickly consult the situation during Zhang Wei-han's administration of Kunming according to time.<sup>[9]</sup> The "Collected Works of Mr. Zhang Wei-han" published at the same time as the chronicle includes as widely as possible the writings of Zhang Wei-han in various periods, covering issues such as the Chongjiu Uprising, the Protectorate Movement, inspections to Japan, municipal reforms, the Anti-Japanese War, official supervision, international relations, and other aspects, providing authoritative original materials for understanding the full picture of Zhang Wei-han's thoughts.<sup>[10]</sup> The centralized publication of the above literature has greatly facilitated further exploration by the academic community.

Other works on Zhang Wei-han in Taiwan are mostly conducted with the overall study of his personal deeds as the main line. Li You's "Biography

of Mr. Zhang Chun'ou" <sup>[11]</sup> and Zhang Guozhu's "Biography of Mr. Zhang Weihan" <sup>[12]</sup> are two representative works that introduce the life of the figure in a concise manner. Within a few years after Zhang Weihan's death in 1979, more than a dozen works on Zhang Weihan emerged in the academic and political circles in Taiwan. Sorted by publication time, the important ones include Zhang Dingzhong's "Crying for My Father on an Autumn Night: In Memory of My Late Father, Mr. Chun'ou" <sup>[13]</sup>, Shen Qingbi's "High Mountains to Look Up To, Only Sighing at the Fragrance" <sup>[14]</sup>, Jian Erkang's "A Model of the Nation's Scholars, Forever Living in People's Hearts" <sup>[15]</sup>, Ruan Yicheng's "In Memory of Mr. Zhang Weihan" <sup>[16]</sup>, Zhu You's "Recalling Mr. Zhang Chun'ou and Talking About His Poems" <sup>[17]</sup>, and Pei Cunfan's "Remembering Mr. Chun'ou".<sup>[18]</sup> These are all works of remembrance by Zhang Weihan's relatives, friends, and colleagues during his lifetime. They also recall the deeds between themselves and the deceased from different perspectives, mainly focusing on his experience after moving to Taipei in 1949, but also scattered with contents related to Zhang Weihan's presiding over Kunming municipal administration and inspecting local internal affairs.

Ding Zhongjiang's "Mr. Zhang Weihan and the Yunnan Uprising," <sup>[19]</sup> Wang Wen's "A Great Man Who Protects the Nation and Loves His Hometown" <sup>[20]</sup> start with first-hand materials such as Zhang Weihan's diaries and sort out his deeds in the Chongjiu Uprising and the Protectorate Movement, pointing out that Zhang Weihan's love for his country and nation during the national crisis in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China was an important reason for his active participation in these activities. Ma Rongzhu's "Collaborating Conscientiously on Municipal Administration" introduces Kunming's municipal administration, focusing mainly on the deeds of Zhang Weihan's successor Ma Yi, but also involving Zhang Weihan's municipal achievements and pointing out that he laid the foundation for Kunming's urban development. <sup>[21]</sup> Shen Yunlong and Xie Wensun's "Interview Record with Mr. Zhang Weihan" is an oral history material compiled based on a face-to-face interview with Zhang Weihan in 1960, which provides more detailed information about Zhang Weihan's early improvements to local public utilities in Yanxing and Gejiu and his family life compared to other materials.

In general, in recent years, domestic research on Zhang Weihan as an individual has experienced a short-term peak in the number of works published around the year of his death in 1979 and the centenary of his birth in 1986. However, it has gradually subsided in recent years and has mostly focused on the publication "Yunnan Literature" issued by the Yunnan Fellowship Association in Taipei, with certain limitations in academic nature and research depth. In terms of content, although Zhang Weihan's participation in the field of municipal administration is involved, most of them only focus on his administration period in Kunming, ignoring the evolution of his thoughts after leaving Yunnan.

### **3.2 Overall Research on the Modern Municipal Reform Movement**

#### *3.2.1 Research on the Thoughts of the Modern Municipal Reform Movement*

An earlier study on the thoughts of the modern municipal reform movement is Qiu Hongmei and Liu Binbin's "On Dong Xiujia's View of Municipal Management and Its Characteristics," <sup>[22]</sup> which takes Dong Xiujia, who has high academic achievements in the history of municipal disciplines in China, as the target of investigation and attempts to explore the impact of his municipal thoughts on the municipal reform movement. Zhao Ke's "Municipal Reform and Urban Development" points out that modern intellectual elites, mainly overseas students, have continuously advanced the cause of municipal management in modern China by introducing foreign municipal thoughts and strengthening urban planning. <sup>[23]</sup> Yu Haiyi's "Viewing the Status of Zhang Jian's Urban Planning Thoughts from 'The Complete Works on Municipal Administration'" believes that Zhang Jian's urban planning thoughts were earlier than the domestic mainstream academia's exploration of foreign planning thoughts, and were in the transitional stage between traditional Chinese urban management thoughts and the introduction of foreign thoughts since the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China. <sup>[24]</sup>

Representative research results on the thoughts of the modern municipal reform movement in recent years mainly include Wang Hui's "The Understanding and Application of the Garden City Theory by the Urban Planning Commu-

nity in the Republic of China Period," which argues that many Chinese scholars simply interpreted Howard's related theories and introduced them, so that most Chinese municipal works related to the "Garden City" in the 1920s were only partial paraphrases of Howard's original works. [25] Wang Yanan and Zhao Yongge's "The Introduction of Modern Western 'Municipal Reform' Thoughts and the Discussion on the Development Direction of Beijing" analyzes the unique views of modern municipal scholars on the development direction, spatial structure, and administrative management of Beijing. [26] Gao Lu's "Exploration of 'Urban China': The Pursuit of Social Elites for the Path of Urban Modernization in the Early Republic of China (1912-1937)" points out that while Chinese "social elites" actively drew on foreign advanced municipal theories, the trend of thought aiming to coordinate urban-rural relations by "going to the countryside" was also gradually emerging. [27] Fu Shulan's "The Budding of Planning Thoughts in the Early Modernization Construction of Local Cities — An Interpretation of the Historical Process of the Formation and Development of the Municipal Concept under the Framework of the 'China Road Construction Association'" combs through the many foreign municipal theories introduced by the China Road Construction Association based on the practical needs of urban construction, which were then developed and spread through the "Complete Works on Municipal Administration". [28]

Overall, research on the thoughts of the modern municipal reform movement has works published in both humanities and social sciences such as history and urban and rural planning, architecture, and other science and engineering disciplines, covering many contents of various cities, periods, and aspects. Researchers generally believe that the introduction and transformation of foreign advanced theories by modern scholars played an important guiding role in the municipal reform movement and still have non-negligible practical significance for today's municipal practices. However, their municipal thoughts were mainly built on the basis of foreign urban theories, lacking in-depth understanding of China's actual situation. Coupled with the objective political environment of military and political chaos at that time, their municipal ideals could not be fully and thoroughly realized. In addition, current research on the thoughts of the modern municipal reform

movement mostly focuses on the examination of modern academic figures, and research on political figures including Zhang Weihan still needs to be further strengthened.

### 3.2.2 Research on the Practices of the Modern Municipal Reform Movement

Regarding the investigation of the practices of the modern municipal reform movement, Xiong Yuezhi, Luo Suwen, and Zhou Wu's "A Brief Discussion on Modern Shanghai Municipal Administration" is an earlier work in this field, arguing that modern Shanghai municipal administration was comparable to any major city in the world at that time. [29] Yang Yongsheng's "Zhu Qiqian and the Urban Construction of Beijing" points out that Zhu Qiqian was the pioneer in transforming Beijing from a dynastic capital into a modern city. [30] Tu Wenxue's "The Golden Age of Early Urban Modernization: Municipal Reform in Hankou in the 1930s" systematically discusses the municipal undertakings in Wuhan during the Republic of China period from the perspectives of imitating foreign countries and national autonomy in urban planning consciousness, as well as the changes in the relationship between officials and civilians, officials and merchants, and the administrative system in the early process of urban modernization. [31] Zhao Chunchen's "A Brief Discussion on the Urban Modernization of Guangzhou during the Late Qing Dynasty and the Republic of China" reviews the course of construction in Guangzhou, which experienced turbulence during the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, and focuses on the promoting role played by Sun Ke. [32]

Representative research results on the practices of the modern municipal reform movement in recent years mainly include He Yimin's "Research on the Development and Changes of Cities in the Rear Area of the Southwest during the Anti-Japanese War" [33], which systematically studies the development and changes of cities such as Sichuan, Xikang, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Chongqing before and after the Anti-Japanese War, pointing out that although the imbalance in the development of the southwestern rear area was widespread, the westward migration of human and material resources from the central and eastern regions during the Anti-Japanese War played a considerable role in improving the municipal construction and social progress of western cities. Luo

Guilin's "The Rise of 'Grassroots' Municipal Administration — Centered on the Fire Brigade in Modern Fuzhou" believes that existing research on modern municipal history has mostly focused on the official level and lacked attention to municipal participation from the folk, while the Fuzhou Fire Brigade is a typical case of "grassroots" municipal administration.<sup>[34]</sup> In addition to the above, there are also representative works such as Shen Songping and Zhang Ying's "Ningbo Merchants and Modern Municipal Administration in Ningbo"<sup>[35]</sup> and Liu Zhiqin's "Viewing the Derivation of Modern Urban Functions from Municipal Construction: Taking Baoding City in the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Republic of China as an Example".<sup>[36]</sup>

Among them, since Zhang Weihan had long administered Kunming, this paper needs to focus on contemporary academic research on modern Kunming municipal administration. Relevant results in this field include the earlier works by Xie Benshu and Li Jiang, "A History of Modern Kunming City," which analyzes Kunming's municipal reform, economic development, and other aspects, and is the first domestic work to comprehensively examine the evolution and development of modern Kunming.<sup>[37]</sup> In addition, the "Long Compilation of Kunming Chronicles" and "A Brief History of Kunming" compiled by the Kunming Chronicles Compilation Committee also briefly elaborate on the basic situation of modern Kunming municipal administration.

Representative research results on modern Kunming municipal reform in recent years mainly include Lv Fuhua's "A New Interpretation of the Inception of Modern Urbanization in Kunming — A Perspective of Human Ecology," which points out that the opening of a commercial port as a key event in the initiation period of urban modernization has had a profound impact on the development of Kunming, a city located in an ethnic border area with relatively backward economy and culture.<sup>[38]</sup> Che Lin's "Urban Water Supply and Municipal Management in Modern Kunming" points out that the authorities' actions in the fields of water supply, flood control, and drainage reflect the relationship between municipal management and water source utilization.<sup>[39]</sup> Han Yanjuan and Li Baihao's "The Practice and Thoughts of Garden City Planning in Kunming in the Early Stage of Modern Municipal Establishment" points out from the perspective of urban and rural planning that

the construction of Kunming's "garden city" in modern times not only had an important impact on the urban environment and spatial layout at that time, but its advanced planning concepts and urban development outlook of inheriting history and respecting nature are still worth continuing to learn from today.<sup>[40]</sup> Wang Mingdong and Xiao Jianle's "An Analysis of the Changes and Impacts of Kunming's Urban Population (1840-1949)" systematically reviews the course of Kunming's population decline due to wars and disasters during the Xianfeng and Tongzhi years, to its population surge during the opening of the port, the construction of the Yunnan-Vietnam Railway, and the Anti-Japanese War.<sup>[41]</sup>

After examining the overall research on the thoughts and practices of the modern municipal reform movement in China, it is not difficult to find that although contemporary academia has achieved fruitful results in this field, among which works on municipal practices are significantly more numerous than those on municipal thoughts, and gradually break through the old situation of focusing on modern large cities, beginning to gradually expand to small and medium-sized cities such as Kunming. However, contemporary academia's examination of municipal practices is still dominated by individual cities, and the overall exploration of the development of modern Chinese cities is relatively limited. Research on the relationship between historical figures and municipal thoughts and specific practices is also relatively weak, and the excavation of these key figures and their contributions is still not deep enough, especially the insufficient recognition of Zhang Weihan's significant contributions to the modern municipal reform.

#### 4. Conclusion

As one of the important promoters of the modern municipal reform, Zhang Weihan not only laid a solid foundation for Kunming's urban development but also provided many development suggestions for the municipal construction of other Chinese cities. However, after the victory of the Anti-Japanese War, although Zhang Weihan still provided suggestions for the development of Yunnan cities, he could no longer put them into practice. In 1949, due to the retreating Nationalist army, Zhang Weihan was forced by the situation to leave the mainland with his family. Afterward, Zhang Weihan served as a member of the

Disciplinary Committee of the Kuomintang Central Committee, the chair of the Presidential Group of the 11th Central Evaluation Committee of the Kuomintang, the vice president and acting president of the "Supervisory Yuan." He wrote many poems recalling Yunnan: "Inviting friends to gather in the thatched cottage on People's Day, looking north towards the divine land and feeling homesick; the color of willows by the leaky bridge stirs one's dreams, and the plum blossoms on the Lingling Pass break one's heart" [42]. His homesickness is evident in every line. He also participated in the establishment and activities of the Yunnan Fellowship Association in Taipei. Zhang Weihan wrote numerous works throughout his life and presided over the compilation of many monographs such as "Chronicles of Kunming City," "English Garden City," "Practical Local Self-Government," "Chronicles of Daguan County," "Proposed Letter of Opinions on the Boundary Affairs between Yunnan and Myanmar," and "Draft History of the Protectorate Movement," covering a wide range of fields such as municipal administration, local chronicles, border affairs, and memoirs. On September 1, 1979, Zhang Weihan passed away in Taipei at the age of 94.

Zhang Weihan's life experience embodies the exploratory spirit of modern Chinese people to "save the nation through municipal administration." His initiatives cover multiple fields such as grassroots governance and transportation and people's livelihood, forming a distinctive municipal reform model. Faced with various difficulties, Zhang Weihan took systematic urban planning as the forerunner to promote the urbanization process in Kunming, breaking through the framework of traditional urban management, creatively localizing Western municipal ideas, and proving that the improvement of urban governance can be a fulcrum to promote overall social progress, injecting important impetus into the modern municipal reform movement in China. However, as mentioned earlier, Zhang Weihan's contributions to the modern municipal reform movement in China have not yet received sufficient attention from contemporary academia.

Therefore, it is very necessary to break through the inadequacies of previous works and conduct a systematic exploration of the relationship between Zhang Weihan and the modern municipal reform in China. This is not only an affirmation of Zhang Weihan's personal contributions but also allows researchers to take Zhang Weihan as a case to provide a new perspective for the overall study of the modern municipal reform movement. At the same time,

it is also very important to focus on collecting local chronicles, municipal books, and personal memoirs related to Zhang Weihan's administration of Kunming and municipal reform. In addition to fully consulting the "Corrected Annotation of Kunming Chronicles," "Long Compilation of the Continued History of Yunnan," and the historical materials of various political consultative conferences used more by previous researchers, efforts should also be made to explore the original archives collected by institutions such as the Yunnan Provincial Archives, the Republican newspapers and magazines such as "Kunming Municipal Monthly," Zhang Weihan's personal writings such as "Records of Inspection in Northern Japan," and the compiled foreign municipal books such as "Garden City" to obtain a deeper understanding through the screening, textual research, and supplementation of the above innovative materials.

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