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# A Basic Survey on the Issue of Rebuilding the South Manchuria Railway Company Workers' Residential areas in Shenyang, China

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## ABSTRACT

This paper aims to consider the issue about rebuilding of the South Manchuria Railway Company workers' housing complex and the change of residential environment at north district of Shenyang City in Liaoning Province, China. Based on the review of the development history and present conditions, we'll argue some points to improve of socio-physical environment and try to provide forward ideas for the assignment. However, the population of the residential areas is very centralized, and the retired elderly people and young children take a certain proportion of the residents today. While most residents are satisfied with the present building and the quality itself, without elevators and other assistant equipments in the high-rise building force elders and children to endure on daily behavior. Furthermore, according to some commercial tenants moving into this area, the number of crimes such as theft, robbery or violence is increasing because the security and safety are not entirel

y enough. These problems have been becoming serious now. We consider that comparing with the resent rebuilding the large-scale public housings in Japan as ageing society with a declining birth late could be meaningful academic study.

**Key words:** rebuild, condominium, community, south manchuria railways, shenyang, china

## 1 Purpose and background

South Manchuria Railways Company (Manchuria Railways for short) was founded in 1906, after the Russo-Japanese War. As a special corporation of Japan, it had been existed in the northeast China till the World War II. Owing to the change of Russia's southward policy since the second half in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Manchuria (now the northeast of China) witnessed a rapid development. The government office was founded in Shenyang, the centre of the area, so as to rein the three provinces in northeast China. And at the

beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Japan inherited the land which had been transferred to Russia by China and owned the monopoly administrative right of the attached land of the railway. Manchuria Railways not only was a single railway enterprise, but also was a large scale comprehensive corporation. It also managed mines, workshops and etc, besides building ports and urban districts. With operation Manchuria as a core, it extended its business in a large scope. Therefore, taking the northeast China as the base, Manchuria Railways established great urban planning and improved the residential environment.

Taking the workers' housing of Manchuria Railways in Shenyang city, Liaoning Province as its object, the paper reviews the residential environment change after rebuilding and the future study. Shenyang, as the capital of Liaoning, is the center of economy, society and culture, meanwhile, it is an important military base and an industrial base with developed steel, aviation, armament articles, railway transportation and so on. Manchuria Railways had improved the infrastructure such as water pipe, gas supply, school, hospital, library and etc. With development of railways, Manchuria Railways owned more than 80 enterprises in its heydays. Then, the population of Shenyang increased rapidly, and the problem of lacking housing became worse. In order to settle this problem, Manchuria Railways built some workers' housing (including employees' housing). Among them, a workers' housing named "Xiaoshezhai" was built in the north of Huanggutun Station in Shenyang. Therefore, by mastering the residential environment after rebuilding and comparing change of residential environment with that in previous days, we can make clear that the great change of environment exerts great influence to society, from which we can know how to improve the quality of rebuilding the collective housings in China's cities.

## 2 The datum 1941 about housing lacking in Manchuria

On the base of the datum of "the investigation report for housing residences of 27 cities in Manchuria" which was establish by the Manchuria Construction Bureau in October, 1941, this chapter arranged and studied these data. The government surveyed the housing and living condition in 27 cities around Manchuria in order to master the housing situation at that time.

Figure. 1 shows the housing situation of families and single persons, of which unit is Japanese and Chinese. The amount of Chinese families is 4 times more than that of the Japanese, while the amount of Chinese single persons is twice more than that of Japanese. The amount of housing owned by both is almost the same. The amount of families is more than that of the single person. Furthermore, the percent of the person without housing to the total population is not too large.

Table1-1 and 1-2 show the condition of single persons with housing Table 1-1 shows the situation of the persons with housing. Among the Japanese and Chinese families, the amount of the renters is more than 50, and the renters account for 70% of the families with housing. It could be seen clearly that there was acute shortage of housing at that time.

Table 1-2 the living situation of the singles with housing. Table 1-1 shows the living situation of the persons with housing. The renters are more than 30,000 accounting for 30% of the singles with housing. It

could be seen clearly that shortage of housing for singles was very serious.

Figure 2 shows the living condition in which the renters were classified as the ones without housing. At that time, 700,000 houses were lacked. Moreover, the amount would be larger if the renters were classified as the ones without housing.

Figure 3-1, 3-2 show the percent of the families with or without housing and the singles with or without housing. The families without housing accounted for 70% among all families, while the singles without housing account for 50% of all the singles, from which, we can see that there is acute shortage of family housing and single flat supported for singles.

Table 2-1, 2-2 show the percent of cadres, company staff and other persons. As showed in the table 2-1, the amount of Japanese cadres and the amount of Chinese cadres that had housing were almost the same, but the Chinese acted as cadres contributed a little proportion among the total population. The table 2-2 shows that the amount of Japanese families without housing was nearly the same as the amount of singles. Meanwhile, the amount of Chinese families without housing was the same as the amount of the singles. But the Chinese without housing were twice more than their Japanese equivalent.

Figure 4 shows the attribute of the labourer class. Seen from the attribute of labourers, of all the labourers, Chinese families occupied the largest part, and in turn were single Chinese, Japanese families and single Japanese.

Figure 5 shows the situation of the labourer class without housing. The Japanese labourers were less, about 5000. While the Chinese labourers accounted for 90% the most. And nearly 450,000 had not housing, accounting for 50% of the total surveyed number. We can learn that the condition of lacking housing was very serious.

With the development of Manchuria Railway, the serious situation of lacking housing could be seen from the data. The following information can be get from the data.

This investigation is the first about housing condition for Manchuria and has enough reliability.  
The Japanese in Manchuria were for 20% of all the population.  
At that time, the problem of lacking housing was very serious.  
Labourers were for 80% of all the population.

Almost all labourers were Chinese, among which 80% did not have housing.

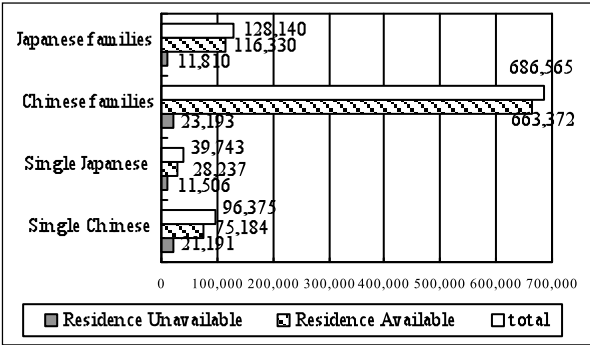


Figure 1. The whole housing condition

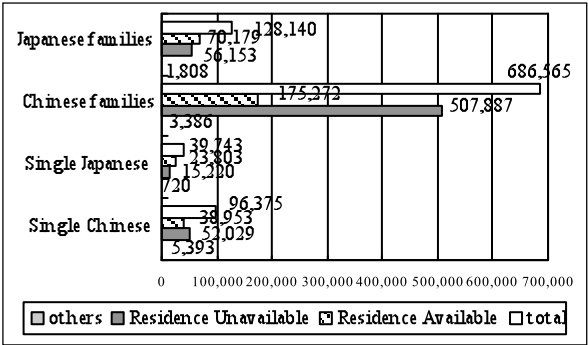
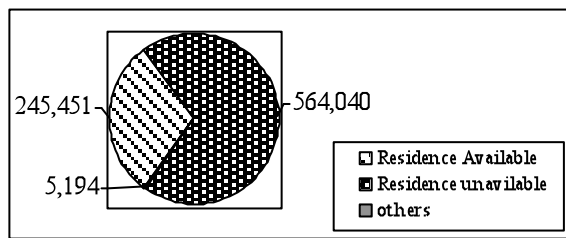
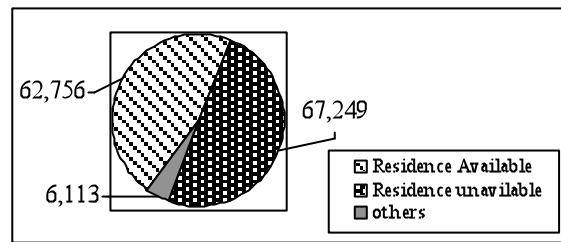


Figure 2. The living condition in which the renters were classified as the ones without housing



**Figure 3-1.** The integrated families housing condition



**Figure 3-2.** The integrated housing condition of singles

**Table 1-1.** The inhabitation condition of Japanese and Chinese families with housings

**Table 1-2.** The living condition of the Chinese and Japanese singles without housing

|                             | Japanese families | Chinese families | total   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------|
| own housing                 | 5,814             | 122,493          | 128,307 |
| official or company housing | 64,365            | 52,779           | 117,144 |
| rent                        | 44,343            | 484,694          | 529,037 |
| others                      | 1,808             | 3,386            | 5,194   |
| total                       | 116,330           | 122,493          | 779,702 |

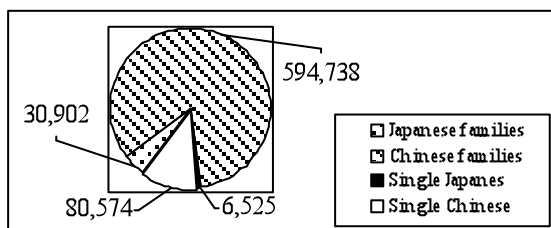
|                             | Single Japanese | single Chinese | total   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------|
| own housing                 | 471             | 3,607          | 4,078   |
| official or company housing | 6,208           | 4,787          | 10,995  |
| single housing              | 17,124          | 30,559         | 47,683  |
| rent                        | 3,714           | 30,838         | 34,552  |
| others                      | 720             | 5,393          | 6,113   |
| total                       | 28,237          | 75,184         | 103,421 |

**Table 2-1.** The percent of persons of different posts with housing

**Table 2-2.** The percent of persons of different postswithout housing

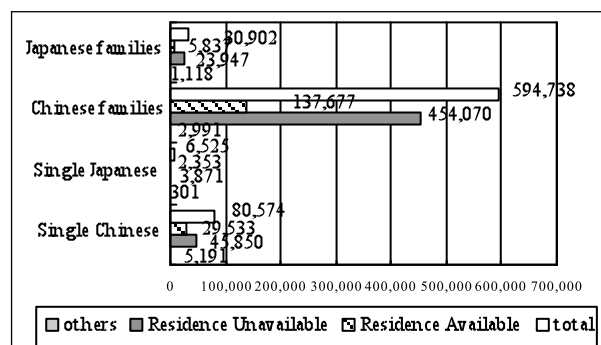
|                      | total   | cadres | company staff | other persons |
|----------------------|---------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| Japanese with family | 116,330 | 21,839 | 66,825        | 27,666        |
| Chinese with family  | 663,352 | 34,035 | 54,124        | 575,213       |
| Single-Japanese      | 28,237  | 4,374  | 19,714        | 4,148         |
| Single-Chinese       | 75,184  | 2,429  | 9,328         | 63,327        |

|                        | total  | cadre | company staff | other person |
|------------------------|--------|-------|---------------|--------------|
| Japanese with families | 11,809 | 1,943 | 6,631         | 3,236        |
| Chinese with families  | 23,193 | 949   | 2,719         | 19,525       |
| Single-Japanese        | 11,506 | 1,773 | 7,356         | 2,377        |
| Single-Chinese         | 21,190 | 368   | 3,576         | 17,247       |



**Figure 4.** The attribute of the labourer class

**Figure 5.** The housing condition of the laborers class



### 3 The transition of workers' housing

During the Russo-Japanese War (1904—1905) , the Japanese built the Xin-feng Railway and

Huanggutun Station. Then, the business districts and residential districts were formed around the railway and the station. The object of the study is the workers' housing formed at that time. In the year of 1925, in order to strengthen its rein to China, Japan built the Huanggutun Motor Repair Workshop on the west side of Huanggutun Station, and built workers' housing on the north of the Workshop. Then, the large scale of Huanggutun Station, and built workers' housing on the north of the Workshop. Then, the large scale residential district began to be formed (now it is near the Kunshan West Road in Huanggu District). In 1939, South Manchuria Railways Company was founded. And after the founding of PRC in 1949, the Huanggutun Motor Repair Workshop was renamed as Shenyang Locomotive & Rolling Factory of China (now it is the Chinese Northern Locomotive & Rolling Stock Industry Corporation), so the workers' housing was renamed "the company housing of Locomotive & Rolling Factory".

According to the difference of the type of work and level, the housing were divided into cadres' housing and workers' housing (Xiaoshezhai). In the cadres' housing, the household appliances, coal gas, tap water, etc. are installed; while the latter were all the continuous single story buildings built by red bricks, and the per capita living area was only 3.5 square meters. The workers' housing was enlarged by the company in 1950, its total area was added up to 500,000 square meters with 12 blocks in 1995. However, these buildings have become too old for use because of without enough protection and maintenance. Hereinafter, the article unitedly records as the company housing.

#### 4 The status quo

In the workers' housing, kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, single dormitories, infirmaries, hospitals, stores, libraries, cinemas, theaters, police stations, firehouses, greenbelt and so on were founded designedly, which can supply with the lives by itself. The workshop provided employees with housing, health and education services, etc. By the end of 1994, the employees in the workshop (including employees of subsidiary company and retirees) had exceeded 25,000, and the total area of workers' housing was added up to 520,000 square meters, with 13,000 families. The per capita living area was only 3.5 square meters, and even there were 2,000 young couples without housing. Facing such crisis of housing lacking, the company housing was rebuilt from 1994 to 2005. Although the little economy support from the Ministry of Railway, the company adopted the method of raising money from multi-direction to settle the housing problem, including implementing the system to provide the temporary housing subsidy, purchasing bonds and agreeing the accumulation fund of housing, etc. The gratis system was changed to paid ones and the migration was proposed. In China, the redevelopment of the cities is usually implemented by the government, so, such rebuilding is unusual. The workers' housing were rebuilt in a large scale way, the high layer complex housing were built from east to west in the construction land, and even a block of privately-owned flats and commercial tenants, etc. were built too. The total area of the rebuilding plan was about 360,000 square meters, and about 13,000 housing were updated. The residential layout included the parallel-aligned and encirclement-type, in which the buildings of 7-8 floor were

overwhelmingly.

Most of the former residents worked in the factory, but now it is said that there are 70% of the factory workers living in this area because of the block of privately-owned flats and new residents from other places. In the past time, the houses were distributed according to the position, while now they are allotted in accordance with the number of family members. So, compared with the former times, the per capita living area increased to 5-10 times, and the material environment has been improved greatly through the rebuilding plan. And the community service such as clinic and housekeeping has been improved to provide residents with convenient living.

The Chinese government started to discuss the distribution system on reformation of public housing in 1980. It successively implemented the privatization of housing in this district. It is said that the thought that house is private belongings has been popularized. Therefore, there are many people in the business to trade or lease the housing. After moving back, many new residents having joined, so there are some strangers. The increasing of the number of crimes such as theft in the district brings lots of uncertain factor in life.

In addition, nowadays, the population of the workers' residential district are centralized, the retired senior citizen and children increased. It is hard to step the stairs for both the old and the young, so they seldom walk out. And because of the rebuilding, the neighbors changed and their communication became more indifferent. It is said that some people never met their neighbors although they had lived near for several years. Especially, lacking elevators and other assistant equipment brings heavy load to the daily behavior for the senior, the children and the disable that live in the 7-8 floor high building.

## 5 Conclusion

Compared with the situation before rebuilding, not only the residential environment is improved, but also the problem of the updating of residential district is defined, which needs to study the rebuilding planning by combining both of them. Nowadays, owing to large population, it is easy to first consider the number of residents when the planning is established. However, considering the ease and safe residential environment, it is necessary to establish the plan which should be based on the residents' attributes and life stage when housing are developed. Furthermore, we consider that the comparison between the regeneration of large-scale public housing and the aging society with a declining birth rate in Japan could be a key academic study.

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