

Title: Attempt of Harmonious Removal —— Discussion and Thinking About Removal Voting of Beijing Jiuxianqiao

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Abstract:

On Jun. 9, 2007, the transformation project for dangerous & worn houses of Jiuxianqiao in Chaoyang District, which was the largest single removal project in Beijing city since the People's Republic of China was founded having attracted widespread attention from media at home and abroad, held the voting of residents for the removal proposal. To this day, the voting result has already been released, but there is not yet any evidence of immediate implementation of the removal and transformation project for dangerous & worn houses of Jiuxianqiao. However, it seems that the broad discussion and in-depth thinking arisen from the "democratic voting" for removal of Jiuxianqiao have exceeded the significance of the project itself to some extent. So far, the discussion on the transformation of dangerous & worn houses of Jiuxianqiao mainly covers three voices as follows:

1、 Praise: The attempt for democratization of house removal is worthy of affirmation.

The biggest highlight of the removal project of Jiuxianqiao and the important reason why it has attracted widespread attention from throughout the country is that it has chosen the "democratic voting" mode to decide the schedule of the removal project for the first time in the history of house removal of our country. Not a few viewpoints of affirmative evaluation think that this is a positive and kindly attempt to realize standardization and rationalization of urban removal pattern. In contrast to the past administrative decisions or compulsory orders unilaterally made by government and the simple, rough and even high-handed removal behaviors of developers, its significance of innovation and progress is above suspicion!

2、 Suspicion: Private properties are not applicable for democratic voting.

However, such a "democratic experiment" with the nature of exploration is faced with the suspicion from residents, media, experts and all social circles, and the suspicion focuses on: property right is a basic human right of a citizen, and democracy has no right to intervene private rights of a citizen such as life, property and marriage etc.; private properties are not applicable for democratic voting, the properties of the minority of people cannot be decided by the majority of people through voting, otherwise, it is possible for appearance of tyranny of the so-called "majority of people". Further, some people think that, facing complicated removal situation, the voting by residents is a means chosen by the removal units to avoid interest game and pass on the contradiction and dispute to residents.

3、 The third voice: The key is how to resolve the problem of appropriate settlement.

Apart from praise and suspicion, there is another viewpoint that the biggest problem of Jiuxianqiao removal is not the result of democratic voting but the problem of appropriate settlement. Democracy must first be established on the basis of fairness, the removal work of government will be unfair even if only making one family homeless, which cannot be called a successful democracy. Some experts put forward that our laws, regulations and policies on compensation for removal should be more detailed and make clear different compensation criteria for concrete contents including houses with use right, lease houses and houses with different sizes and areas.

Aiming at the above three viewpoints, the author has expressed his own thought: How to give equal attention to both efficiency and fairness?

The removal voting of Jiuxianqiao has left us the reflection, that is, when urban house removal become a more and more complicated puzzle, how to give equal attention to both efficiency and fairness, more carefully and thoughtfully to implement removal works in a human-based way, research and explore really feasible, scientific, rational and artistic operation method and balance interests and mentality of all parties? In the process of energetically pushing forward democratization of removal, how to avoid blindness and irrational case of the masses' will and control it within the extent reasonable and acceptable for national resources to realize effective communication and interest balance of all parties at the same time of making the masses positively join, fully express their own appeals and use well their own rights as much as possible?

In this sense, we should applaud for their exploration, innovation and courage no matter what result of the transformation project for dangerous & worn houses of Beijing Jiuxianqiao. "Jiuxianqiao" will inevitably become an important chapter in the history of house removal of China. For this kind of attempt, constructive opinions will be more valuable and significant than blind suspicion and criticism. Only in this way, it can be possible for realization of harmonious removal.

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