

THE ORAL HISTORY OF ALISHAN FOREST RAILWAY STAFFS IN CHIAYI JHUCI

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ABSTRACT

Alishan was built by Japanese colonial government during the Japanese colonial period. The purpose was for resources of the forest. It is indirectly caused cultural landscape and settlement scene along the forest railway. After National Government of the Republic of China take over this land for 70 years ago, Alishan Forest Railway is still an important symbol in the history of Taiwan. The time scope of this research is from 1946 (The 35th year of Republic Era). The main purpose is to study staffs of Alishan Forest Railway who live in Jhuci, Chiayi. The interview survey is used to know the operations, technique, and maintenance task of the railway. Also the census record (1906-1945) which established by Japanese with its “occupation” and “registration required” is discussed in this research. These related people who living with the railway is less mentioned in the history of conservation. This research attempts to construct the history of the forest railway from dictation of practitioners and census data. In other words, to fill the gap of history by these people.

Fieldwork and interview survey is executed with the Jhuci Station as a center. Jhuci Station is the starting point of Alishan Forest Railway’s mountain route. Residents in Jhuci and this railway are coexisting and survive together since hundred years ago. This makes much family join in this occupation with several generations. Due to this, the goal of this research is summarized as below:

- To know the operation of railway and staff’s life of Alishan Forest Railway though interview,
- To analyze the context of occupational history, according to the census record in the Japanese colonial period.

The expectation of this research is to record what these staffs paid for this precious heritage, and create memories for all citizens in Taiwan.

KEYWORDS: Jhuci, Staffs of Alishan Forest Railway, Alishan Forest Railway, Census Record

INTRODUCTION

MOTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH

Motives

Alishan Forest Rail is generally called Alishan Forest Railroad, Alishan Forest Rail, or Alishan Train (hereinafter as “Forest Rail”). It is the only high mountain Forest Rail system¹ that is still in operation in Taiwan. During Japanese Colonial Period, this railway was an industrial railway that was particularly constructed for transporting forest resources. In recent years because more and more debates in relation to cultural preservation are brought up and also due to Bureau of Cultural Heritage’s strategy to promote the concept of World Heritage, books in relation to associated analysis and

technology are published. However, previous investigation of Forest Rail mostly oriented at railway's construction technology and its landscape. There are still limited researches touching on topics such as humanity or even Forest Rail worker's history and life.

After the Japanese Colonial Period, the National Government took over the forestry business and continued the lumbering business until 1963 (the 52nd year of the National Government). At the time, the railway was no longer used to transport logs and instead transformed into a sightseeing business. However, the railway's history wasn't fully recorded because it was hard to keep and preserve the record just after the war time. Thus, Alishan Forest Rail for Taiwan people has only the function of sightseeing. And the old memories regarding to railway's staff are mostly neglected.

The past Forest Rail related documents only focused on the railway's engineering technology and the management by the public government. However, there was no clear record showing the historical context and operating memories in relation to its technology inheritance, operation and management. And yet, the most important factor to operate the railway was the face of "human". Forest Rail and "human" constructed many stories in the history and, moreover, influenced Forest Rail's relation with its staffs and their families for generations. In addition, if we look at the face of "technology", the technological and managerial differences between the Japanese Colonial Period and the National Government Era also a direction that is worth to discuss. This research tried to obtain Forest Rail's development context by in-depth interviews with the old "Forest Rail Worker" (Past employees of the Alishan Forest Railway, and hereinafter call as "Forest Rail Worker".) And filled in the blank memories in relation to the interaction between the railway and "human" in its history. The oldest document in this area always presented the interaction between "human and human" or "human and railway, and "nature" with official statistics, which lacked of emotional expressions. The project adopted the method of "oral investigation" to re-appear old memories and techniques of the Forest Rail and this became an important motive for this research.

Purposes

Through document analysis, this research planned to clarify the forestry worker's residential area, living environment, and related changes in the human phenomenon resulted from Forest Industry in Zhuqi Area during the Japanese Colonial Period. Through ethnographic chronicles and field trip investigations, the research added supplemental information to the development of humanity history in this area and organized, analyzed and then summarized into related information regarding how the Forest Industry affected Zhuqi area from post-war time to today. Besides, this research also tried to understand the context of Forest Rail people and railway's life phenomenon, according to the memories of Forest Rail's factory worker' in order to discuss the technological changes in railway engineering and the development of the related career and humanity. Therefore, the purposes of this research are summarized as below:

- To construct the genealogy for Forest Rail Staff's inheritance in Zhuqi: from the preliminary investigation, the research found that there are a lot of people that resided in Zhuqi working for Forest Rail for generations. The was a very important historical information for Forest Rail's developmental history.
- To preserve Forest Rail's technology and map out professional worker's technological changes in the past: it was hoped by interviewing senior Forest Rail staffs and through resources investigation to know the old management and maintenance mechanism, the Forest Rail's maintenance skills can be recorded and furthermore the traditional

technology can be inherited for generations.

- To record Forest Rail's memories and the space changes of those old industries along the railroad: it was hoped that the overall information can be further worked into more value-added information such as literature publication, fundamental information preservation, etc... And is able to present local residents' memories and skills in relation to the Forest Rail, and for a further step to ponder on how to stimulate old industries and skills along the rail line in order to re-construct the transition of Forest Rail in the facet of living space.

RESEARCH AREA AND METHODS

Area

Two third of the Forest Rail from the start to Fenqihu Station belongs to Zhuqi Township. During Japanese Colonial Period, Zhuqi Station (Picture 1) was a very bustling place. All the collected documentary films and information recorded that this station was the place where the inhabitants of the mountain took a train to for purchasing domestic goods or where merchants conducted sugar's trade business or other transaction at. Thus, Zhuqi Station of the Alishan Railway was quite famous at the time. Hence, the researchers chose Chiayi's Zhuqi area as the main investigation area to construct Forest Rail's historical context in the area through historical records and household registration information and to analyze topics in relation to local humanity's history, environment, and space changes through the constructed information. This also means that all Forest Rail related areas were the main content of this research to probe into.



Figure 1: Zhuqi Area

Method

Through document collection, field investigation, household registration information investigation and oral interviews, the research discussed the remained humanistic basis and history from the development of Forest Rail and its relation to "people" and "area". In the meantime, the research also discussed the influences of Forest Rail to Zhuqi starting from the topic of people and railway to construct Forest Rail's historical context and its influences on Chiayi's development in the facets of society, economy, and space changes, as well as to develop the region's own cultural connotation, that was especially linked to Alishan Forest Rail's historical development after the war. In addition, it was hoped to compile a "Zhuqi Cultural History" for piecing up important memory contexts for Forest Rail in Zhuqi area.

Research methods submitted in this research included (1) narration of the history; (2) filed investigation; (3) document analysis to re-produce Forest Rail related memories.

RESEARCH CONTENTS

Household registration information is also called census information (Picture 2). The Japanese started to rule Taiwan in 1895 (the 28th year of Emperor Meiji). They carried out the first time household information investigation in Taiwan in 1905 (the 38th year of Emperor Meiji). In the beginning, the Japanese adopted two systems, including local government's Household Register and the police's Household Investigation Booklet to manage the census information. The development of Taiwan's household registration information started in 1896 (the 29th year of Emperor Meiji). The No. 8 Correspondence, "Rules to Conduct Household Investigation for Taiwan Citizens", was released and specified that starting from September 1896 (the 29th year of Emperor Meiji) to December 30th of the same year, household information including name, age, and relationship of all the families within the jurisdiction should be recorded in the Household Registration Booklet (Taiwan Governor's Office, 1898) according to the rules on No.8 Correspondence. In October 1905 (the 38th year of Emperor Meiji), the official first time provisional household investigation, "Taiwan Household Investigation", was carried out. In the same year, the No.39 "Household Rules" and No.225 "Household Investigation Schedule" were also released. Within Japanese Colonial Period, the Japanese held 7 times of household investigation in Taiwan and modified the household investigation forms twice. The household information was recorded in two different types, the "Permanent Residence Registration" and "Lodging Registration". The information was recorded with the unit of every household (picture 2). The main recorded information included the head of the household's family information and the relationship among all the family members, his/her domicile of origin, moving history, criminal history, and races. Such information was a record to keep main family member's information.

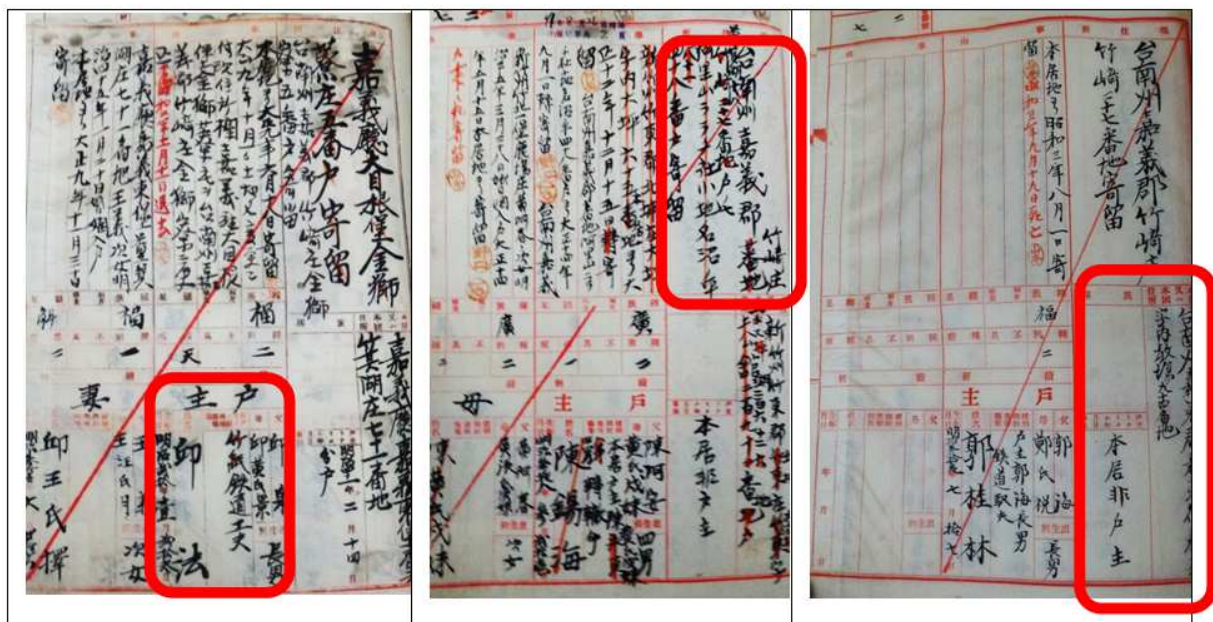


Figure 2: Household Registration Information Investigation

The "Permanent Residence Registration" recorded the head of the household's family information, family members, lodging status, or hiring information. The form, with black table, was for local permanent residences or resident

that moved to the area. The “Lodging Registration” mainly recorded the head of the household’s family information. The recorded content was similar to the contents of “Permanent Residence Registration” besides it was in red table and added the information to the address in the domicile of origin. Based on the recorded title in the “Career” field in Chart 2 Information about Zhuqi Area’s Household Information, the research investigated and constructed Forest Rail’s worker’s work contents, skills, and context, and also used the area registration information in the household document to analyze the residence distribution of the Forest Rail Worker

Objects of this Study

From field resources investigation, the research developed “Forest Rail’s professional skills, to preserve the memories of Forest Rail.” Through staff’s contextual investigation and interview, the research developed the origin of important resources for investigating history in the directions of skill, management, and maintenance. The researchers used check over method to find research objects in order to carry out history narrations. From staff record provided by the Forestry Bureau and Taiwan Railways Administration, the research locked on staffs that resided in Zhuqi Township as the prioritized interview objects. In fact, there were a lot of workers here that have been employed by the Alishan Forestry, Alishan Rail, or other Alishan related businesses. Therefore, those all became the main objects to carry out the in-depth interview within this research. And the research gave a general name to those interviewees as “Forest Rail Worker”.

Forest Rail Staff and the development of Alishan along with other nearby businesses interacted with each other and co-existed together in the area. The history included people, and people created the history. Therefore, the researchers chose Forest Rail workers to conduct an interview with, investigated into the obtained historical information, and developed the historical research for Alishan Forest Rail. It was hoped by understanding Alishan Forest Rail’s past and now in different facets, the research was able to describe the history at the last phase (2).

Zhuqi Station was the investigated area in this research, and keys to construct information in this research included narration and interviews, as well as traces of activities that were recorded in Zhuqi’s “Forestry Staff’s household registration information”. The research contents included work titles of Forestry and Railway Staff. To unify the information in this research and in the documentaries, wording on the household registration record that was developed by the researcher was used for interviews and narrations. Work title registered on Household Registration record (Table 1) in Japanese Colonial Period, including “Machine Armor”, “Machine Helper”, Switch Worker”, Charcoal and Water Supplying Worker”, “Railway Worker”, “Railway and Rail Line Worker” were used to clarify terminological differences on related documents and research works.

Table 1: “Job Title” of Railway Staff recorded in Zhuqi’s Household Registration Information during Japanese Colonial Period

Recorded Title In Japanese Colonial Period	In Taiwanese	Recorded Title In Japanese Colonial Period	In Taiwanese
Machine Armor	Driver	Railway Worker	Railway Officer/Worker
Machine Helper	Assistant Driver	Rail line Worker	Rail line Worker
Switch Worker	Switch Worker	Charcoal and Water Supplying Worker	Charcoal and Water Supplying Worker
Station Officer	Station Officer	Head of Forest Operation Division	Stationmaster

(The source of the information: organized by the researcher)

Timeline

During Japanese Colonial Period, the Chiayi's Forestry Business was quite prosperous. At the time, there were many log processing factories and reservoir and other log processing facilities in Chiayi, where at the time was also called the city of the woods. Starting from 1920 (the 9th year of Emperor Taisho), the Japanese opened up Alishan Forest Rail for tourism purpose and further added the function for Forest Rail with both log transportation and guests visiting purposes. During Japanese Colonial Period, steam train was the main tool for railway transportation. In 1945 (the 34th year of the National Government), the national government took over Alishan Forest Rail after the war. At the beginning, the operation stilled aimed at log transportation. In 1952 (the 41th year of the National Government), tree resources were exhausted, so the Alishan Forest Rail gradually transformed to be sightseeing railway. However, the Alishan Highway opened to traffic in 1982 (the 71st year of the National Government) and deeply impacted the operation of the Alishan Forest Rail. The National Government transferred the operation to a private institution in 2008 (the 97th year of National Government) due to privatization policy, and yet due to poor operation performed, the Forest Administration Bureau took over the operation of the Alishan Forest Rail again. The management and time caused changes (Table2) redefined Alishan Railway after the changes of time, society, and environment. Today, due to the awareness in cultural preservation, Alishan Railway gradually attracted the society's attention.

Table 2: The Transition of Alishan Forest Rail

Era	Time	Details of the Transition
Japanese Colonial Period	Emperor Meiji (1895~1945)	The Japanese planned to develop forest resources. Thus, they built Alishan Rail to exploit precious woods and sent to Japanese as building materials. Alishan Rail started to receive tourists in 1920. The log exploitation during the Japanese Colonial Period was 3.4 times more than the quantity in the National Government Period.
Early of the Recovery Period	From 34 th year to 70 th year of the National Government (1945~1981)	Alishan Rail was administered by the Forestry Administration Bureau. In the beginning, log transportation was still the main function. In 1952, Alishan Rail transferred to sightseeing business. In 1962, diesel trains were introduced in. In 1978, the railway stopped the Forestry Route. The Alishan Highway opened to traffic in 1982 and seriously damaged Alishan Rail's business.
Post-war Time	After the 71 st year of the National Government (1982-now)	Alishan Rail became a sightseeing railway. In 2008, the government signed BOT contract with private enterprise and indirectly forced the old Forest Rail Staff to retire. However, due to bad operation performed, the Chiayi Forestry Bureau took over the operation again in 2010. In 2014, the Taiwan Railways Administration started to administer Alishan Rail on behalf of the Forestry Administration Bureau in 2014.

Contexts

The research obtained the name list of Forest Rail's old stuffs that were still residing in the Chiayi area after visits and investigations. Contacts and interviews were carried out. The preliminary interview showed that in Zhuqi area, there were many families that have members served by Forest Rail for 2 or more generations. Through the experiences participating in community activities, the research initially read through all the 319 booklets of household registration information (including permanent residence, lodging and expelled) that was filed and stored in Zhuqi Household Registration Office and obtained the job title, residing area, and demographic information of forest staffs during the Japanese Colonial Period. The contents of the information were very clear, and through this research, Forest Rail's historical development and contents of the industry structure can be more further developed in a more comprehensive sense.

Table 3: Important Time Line of Alishan Forest Rail in the History

Time Period	Year	Important Incidents
Japanese Colonial Period	1896	The Japanese started to explore forest resources in Alishan.
	1903	Taiwan Governor's Office ordered Dr. Kotaro Kawairo in Forestry Profession to map out the development of Ellison Forestry Industry.
	1906	The railway construction from Chiayi to Zhuqi started.
	1907	The swirly climbing section at Mt. Dali was completed. But due to insufficient funds, the railway construction stopped after completing Liyuanliao Station. The Shay Steam Train was introduced into Taiwan from the U.S. (weight 13 tons per train).
	1910	The railway's flat land section started operation. Imported two 18 tons Shay Steam Trains. Kanno Todororo tower over the construction and development of Alishan Rail.
	1912	Logging business started in Alishan. Procured two overhead cable skidder. Chiayi to an Erwanping line about 41 kilometers officially started.
	1913	The railway further extended to Zhaoping in Alishan; the total length was 71.9 kilometers. Alishan Cypress and red cypress started to export to Japanese.
	1915	The Mianyue Line in Tashan was completed. Logging in Tashan started and logs were transferred to flatland through railway.
From National Government to Today	1945	Japanese unconditionally surrendered. Alishan Forestry Business was in charge of the Forest Bureau.
	1950	The natural log resources in Alishan were exhausted due to excess cut down. Passenger and freight transport were now the major functions of Alishan Rail.
	1953	Imported Mitsubishi's first generation diesel train from Japan.
	1965	Alishan's logging era ended. Alishan officially transformed into sightseeing industry. Zhongxing Express Train officially started operation.
	1972	The main line's steam train officially retired. No. 14 Steam Train was sent to Australia to exhibit and preserve.
	1982	Alishan Highway opened to traffic.
	1986	Alishan Railway and Oigawa Railway became sister railways.
	1988	The Labor Standards Act also applied to Alishan Railway.
	2005	Hungtu Construction Corporation obtained the right of management.
	2009	On August 8 th , the Typhoon Morakot heavily damaged Alishan Rail. Hungtu was unable to restore. All lines were stopped. The Forestry Bureau took back the right of management of Alishan Rail.
	2012	A ceremony was held to celebrate Alishan Rail's 100 year birthday and the release of commemorative stamps.
	2013	Alishan Rail and Kurotetu Rail in Japan became sister railways. The Taiwan Railways Administration of the Ministry of Transportation and Communications assisted in the operation.
2014	The Alishan Forest Rail Preparatory Office restructured and became Alishan Forest Rail Administration Office. Chiayi to Fenqihu section opened to traffic again.	

In addition, through the preliminary document collection and analysis, the research organized the operation of Alishan Forest Rail in the past a hundred years, so that people can see a complete timeline and incidences that happened in Forest Rail over the past one hundred years. Through preliminary interview procedure, the research established basic information about the interview objects and recorded the history narration and interview questions in the aspects of professional skills, environment of the time, memories, influences in the area, and future prospects as the targeted direction for carrying out research works in the next phase. The research also organized the documentary information and summarized it into an important time line table (Table 3) for Alishan Forest Rail as supplemental information to history

narrations. From the timetable, it was found that “the Alishan Highway opened to traffic in 1982” and “Hungtu Construction Corporation obtained the right of management in 2005” were two major incidences that deeply influenced workers of the Alishan Forest Rail, and, meanwhile, privatization of the Alishan Rail was also the main reason resulting in the loss of a clear record of skill inheritance.

CONCLUSIONS

The establishment of history originates from people’s re-interpretation of the past. Interpretation of existing documents, although is important, from the collected colorful memories recalled from local residents and staffs a different history regarding the general life in relation to Alishan Railway can also be pieced up. The purpose of this research was to analyze humanity activities including the railway life, its operation, skills, and activities after the war time through investigation on the past railway staff’s narration and in-depth interviews. The collected information was categorized into job, career, and areas establish a live context for Railway workers respectively. Besides, by tracking back to interview objects’ household registration information recorded in Japanese Colonial Period, the research also established the pedigree information for past staffs that have been worked for Forest Rail for generations. Through document analysis, this research is going to clarify the forestry worker’s residential area, living environment, and related changes in the human phenomenon resulted from Forest Industry in Zhuqi Area during the Japanese Colonial Period. Through ethnographic chronicles and field trip investigations, the research added supplemental information to the development of humanity history in this area and organized, analyzed and summarized into related information regarding how the Forest Industry affected Zhuqi area from post-war time to today. Besides, this research also tried to understand the context of Forest Rail people and railway’s life phenomenon, according to the memories of Forest Rail’s staffs in order to discuss the technological changes in railway engineering and the development of the related career and humanity. Therefore, the results of this research are summarized as below:

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