Development of Public Housing in the Rapid Economic Growth Period: Focused on Yanaga Municipal Apartment Complex in Fukuoka City

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Fukuoka City serves as an international gateway to Japan as it is located close to the Asian Continent. When the Second World War ended, the city faced a serious shortage of housing not only because dwellings had been burnt down by air raids but also because approximately 1.4 million Japanese had returned from former colonies.

Supported by the Japan Housing Corporation established in 1950 and the Act on Public Housing enacted in 1951, a number of public houses and apartments were constructed. Still, Japan remained a million units short of meeting the housing demand of 19,570,000 households in 1960. A municipal housing advertisement for tenants attracted tens of times more people to apply than available units. In Fukuoka, 14,020 units of housing had been built by the municipal government and 19,417 units by the Japan Housing Corporation as of 1973.

During the rapid economic growth period, Keyagō in the Minami Ward of the city witnessed the construction of Keyagō Municipal Apartment Complex in 1960, Kamikego Municipal Apartment Complex in 1961, and Keyagō Collective Housing built for sale in 1963. In addition to these housing development projects, Yanaga Apartment Complex was planned and constructed under the first Five-year Housing Development Plan launched in fiscal 1966.

The development program of Yanaga Housing Complex consisted of the construction of Yanaga Municipal Apartment Complex in Fukuoka City and the house and lot development in Kasuga Town as well as the establishment of urban infrastructure in the neighborhoods. Comprising two-bedroom units with a kitchen-cum-dining room, the housing complex was home mainly to young nuclear families (parents in their twenties or thirties and their children) but also to elderly households over sixty-five years old (accounting for approx. 4% of the Type I units and approx. 12% of the Type II units) and three-generation families.

Although the two-bedroom unit with a kitchen-cum-dining room was intended to separate dining and sleeping spaces as well as parents and children’s sleeping spaces, many families regularly took meals not in a dining room but at a low dining table in a tatami room. According to statistics, about 30% dined and slept in the same room, and only about 47% separated dining and sleeping spaces as well as parents and children’s sleeping spaces in the public housing complex.
As for the attributes of the residents, craftsmen, factory workers, and manual laborers account for a high share (approx. 28%). The most numerous residents are the junior high school- and high school-educated, followed by the college-educated. Many of the households are dual income. There are also many fatherless and low-income families. People living in public housing are sometimes looked down on. In Area II, 53 households have lived since the completion of the public apartment complex, accounting for 18.3%.

Key words: Public apartment complex, two-bedroom unit with a kitchen-cum-dining room, separation of dining and sleeping spaces, separation of parents and children’s sleeping spaces, housing shortage