

## Great Hall Of The People: A Former Resident Of Qianfu Hutong Recalls

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'在现在天安门前人民大会堂那片地方，原来有一条前府胡同。从1900年起，我们家就住在那条胡同里。那是一百多年前修的一幢古老房子，一共十二间。房子看来还不小，从外面看是砖盖的，可是里面却完全是碎砖头同泥糊起来的，过去普通北京人住的房子大都就是这样的房子，每逢天阴下雨就怕塌房。就这样一直过了六十年。现在把我们那个破房子拆了，我自己住上了新大楼，国家也在短短的时间里在我们原来住的那片地方修好了人民大会堂。这真是对国家，对自己都有好处。搬了家还没有多久，人民大会堂一下子就盖起来了。10月6日那天给我们发了一张参观票，专门招待原来住在那里的老住户去参观。参观那天，原来说是最好的不要带孩子去，因为那天人很多，孩子太小，怕他们在里面乱跑乱跳，不好管；可是大家还是把全家都带去了。这样一来，大人、小孩、老太太……那个乐劲儿，那就不用说了。大家边看、边议论，每处都留恋着不愿很快离开，从下午一点钟进去，一直走到六点钟才出来，可是一点也不觉累。大伙都说，这是全国人民的大礼堂，是我们的大家庭…这样的大会堂，要不是大跃进，从哪儿来？'

'I lived in what was Qianfu Hutong in front of Tiananmen, which is now the Great Hall of the People. My family lived there from 1900. That was in a house with 12 rooms that was over 100 years old. The house didn't look small, and from the outside looked as though it were made of bricks. But the inside was made of broken bricks stuck together with mud. In the past most of the houses that people in Beijing lived in were like this. Every time it rained, we were afraid the house would collapse. We lived like this for sixty years. Now that house has been demolished, and I live in a new building, and in a short time, the country has constructed the Great Hall of the People on the place where I used to live. This is really of great benefit for the country, and for me. Shortly after I had moved house, the Great Hall of the People was finished. On 6 October, we were given a visitor's ticket to take those of us who had lived there to see it. On the day we went for a visit, they told us that it would be best not to bring children because there were many people on that day, and they were afraid that little children would run and jump about. But everyone took their whole family along. So, adults, children, old ladies [...] enthusiastically, Ah, it's not necessary to say. From when we entered at one in the afternoon until we left at six in the evening, everyone lingered long in each place, looking and commenting, but we were not tired in the slightest. Everyone said this is the auditorium for the all the people in the country. It is our big family [...] How would this Great Hall of the People be possible without the Great Leap Forward?'

### TITLE

Low buildings turn into tall buildings, a paradise built on earth (Aifang bian dasha renjian jian tiantang 矮房变大厦人间建天堂)

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#### DESCRIPTION

This extract describes a visit by a former railway worker to the Great Hall of the People soon after its construction.

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