

## DEMOGRAPHIA



### TIANJIN: PHILADELPHIA OF CHINA

FAST FACTS		Similar To
Metropolitan (Labor Market) Population	10,000,000	Chicago, Istanbul
Urbanized Area* Population	4,500,000	Toronto, Houston, Milan
Urbanized Land Area: Square Miles	129	Sendai, Kitchener, Copenhagen, Canberra, Brasilia, Singapore
Urbanized Land Area: Square Kilometers	335	
Population per Square Mile	34,800	Beijing, Mexico City, Lagos
Population per Square Kilometer	13,400	
Capital of China 11 <sup>th</sup> largest urbanized area in the world		
*Continuously built up area		

13 October 2003

I had been met at Beijing International Airport by municipal officials from the nearby city of Tianjin. I had presented them a seminar on privatization in the United States 18 months before.

Like Beijing, Tianjin is a city-state. Some years ago, Beijing, Tianjin, Chongqing and Shanghai were established as municipalities with virtually the same powers as provinces. Tianjin itself is a metropolitan area of approximately 10 million, and only 60 miles from Beijing --- closer than New York and Philadelphia. But there is much more open space between the two Chinese urban areas.

On the road to Tianjin I noticed trucks carrying coal. It was then that I had my first real appreciation of the role played by freight rail in the United States. Virtually all of the coal that is moved by freight railroads could be moved by truck. The result has been a number of papers and presentations on the role freight rail plays in holding down traffic congestion, especially in the urban areas that coal laden trucks would have to pass through.

When we arrived in Tianjin it was snowing lightly. Here, and in Beijing, the snowstorms bring people out to clean residential roadways off with brooms. The snow continued through the night.

I wanted to buy some authentic Chinese tea, so my hosts took me to a local market. There, with the usual American over-consumption, I bought a number of varieties, if not kilograms of tea, much of which I still have. Taxi drivers in China drink tea all day, constantly adding water to the leaves in their jars. It is a good practice that I engage in even when not driving a taxi.

I was treated to the finest traditional northern Chinese dinner in Tianjin that night. Things were placed before me that I would be just as pleased if they were not again. But, unlike Mexico City, none of it made me sick. It was just a little unusual.

The next morning my hosts gave me a tour of Tianjin. Thus, as in Beijing, this was not a rental car tour --- though at least in this case I was given a tour by friends who knew the city well.

Tianjin was a treaty port, under western domination until World War II. There is a surviving neighborhood of former western consulates and housing. The city is modern, though does not appear to be so prosperous as Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou. There is a small metro system, but most public transport is by bus. Some of it is now private bus. There are large hotels, office buildings and shopping centers.

The parents of my associate Professor Jean Claude Ziv at the Conservatoire National des Arts et Metiers (CNAM) in Paris lived until just before 1950, having moved from St. Petersburg when other events overtook them some years before. I had a very nice discussion about these years with Jean Claude's father Grigor outside Avignon last winter.

I had always been fascinated by Tianjin while growing up, not because I knew anything about it, but rather because its spelling was fascinating "Tientsin." Like St. Petersburg, the Matterhorn and Buenos Aires, these were places I wanted to visit.

Because the weather was bad my hosts did not want to drive me back to Beijing. So they put me on the train. It was a nice ride. The train was full. It was one of those double deck trains similar to what is run by the national railway system of the Netherlands.

As suggested above, Tianjin is to Beijing as Philadelphia is to New York (or as Milwaukee is to Chicago). It will necessarily always be in the shadow of its larger, more influential neighbor. But it is an important urban area, and well worth the visit.



Author and Tianjin Official Xu Yingwu at the Great Wall



Tianjin Delegation Leader Li Xiao Fang at the Great Wall



Banquet in Tianjin. Author in the Middle



Old Western Residences with New Commercial Building Behind



New Commercial Building



Modern Commercial Core



Commercial Core

By Wendell Cox

Return: [www.demographia.com/rac-ix.htm](http://www.demographia.com/rac-ix.htm)

Home: [www.demographia.com](http://www.demographia.com)