

Dalian Environmental Demonstration Zone Project

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This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the 1979 friendship-city agreement between Kitakyushu, Japan, and Dalian, China. Among a variety of exchange areas, environmental issues have been central throughout the years, and many cooperative projects have been completed or are under way.

The “Dalian Environmental Demonstration Zone” project has at last emerged as a result of long, down-to-earth, cooperative environmental efforts made by both cities. The objective of the project is comprehensive know-how for improving the environment, through intensive implementation of various improvement measures in the model district by 2010. The know-how acquired there will subsequently be applied all over China.

To bring the plan to a successful conclusion, it is imperative to establish an environmental master plan, based on the various environmental projects that will be carried out in a harmonious and comprehensive way. The Chinese government regards the formulation of the master plan as one of the priorities among its national development projects and applied to Tokyo for official development assistance (ODA). In February 1996, it became the first-ever ODA grant for the groundwork of a city-level cooperation project.

To make the most of the track records of both cities, in environmental cooperation initiatives and in the know-how Kitakyushu possesses, the study is under way as a joint project of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Kitakyushu Municipal Government. This is the first attempt at such an international groundwork project, and this joint effort is therefore attracting considerable attention, both abroad and at home, as a hint at what ODA should be in the future.

The groundwork started in December 1996. The planned programs are almost in place, and the project is scheduled for completion in March 2000. Subsequently, the environmental measures worked out by the program should be put in action in Dalian, one by one.

In the meantime, Dalian, Chongqing, and Guiyang have been selected as model cities in the Japan–China Environmental Development Model City Program. Under this program, the Chinese and Japanese governments are cooperating in intensive environmental projects in these cities, to produce an effective model that can be applied to extensive environmental projects all over China. With Dalian chosen as a model city in the program, and with a yen loan

awarded to its environmental project, the Dalian Environmental Demonstration Zone Project has taken big strides toward realization.

Nevertheless, transforming an environmental plan into reality is not easy. Hardware may be updated, but if software support is lacking, the project might not turn out to be cost effective. A harmonious combination of hardware and software will be a key to a successful environmental project.

Furthermore, any environmental measure has to lead to the development of society. Kitakyushu developed a low-pollution production technology, called “cleaner production technology,” while overcoming its once notorious pollution problem. Two opposing concepts—an increase in productivity and a reduction in pollution—are made compatible by this landmark technology. This achievement will make sustainable development a reality and is expected to play a role in future environmental measures.

Kitakyushu has an abundance of businesses and engineers with strong environmental technical knowledge and experience. The municipal government is committed to global environmental conservation efforts and to making the city a base for international environmental cooperation in Asia.