

Exchanges between Local Governments in Japan and China

(Summary)

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1. Awareness of Problems

Progressive countries, such as European countries and Canada, are trying to adjust themselves to the new era through multiple diplomatic relations, which promote the participation of people in the diplomatic field. These countries are strengthening their comprehensive diplomatic power as nations by reflecting people's will. They are encouraged to actively participate in international cooperation in cooperation with international organizations, local governments and NGOs.

The Japanese have tended to think that international exchanges by local governments are weak. However, this has been changing recently. Among international exchanges made by local governments, exchanges between Japan and China have experienced dynamic changes. This relationship between Japan and China led by local governments is playing a significant role in international exchange and cooperation, and is acting as a part of diplomatic policy. In this article, the current situation, the achievements of and movements by local governments, which are important factors in the process of the diversification of diplomacy, are discussed by looking at the relationship between Japan and China.

2. Exchanges between Local Governments in Japan and China

Since the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China in 1972, particularly since the 1990s, exchanges between local governments in Japan and China have been rapidly developed. As of April 1, 1998, 39 prefectures and 832 municipalities out of 3,300 local bodies in Japan have sister-city affiliations with 1,304 municipalities in 58 countries in the world. The number of affiliations with municipalities in the United States is 393 (30% of all), which is the largest, followed by 252 with China (19%). Then, Australia is in third place with 89 (6%) and the ROK is in fourth with 74 (5%), which is rapidly increasing. This indicates the diversification in the Asia-Pacific region. The number of sister-city affiliations with China was 261 as of March 1, 1999, which is the largest number at the prefectural level and second to the United States at the municipal level.

Looking at this from the viewpoint of China, Japan's percentage is even higher. As of the end of 1999, the total number of sister-city affiliations of China was 937, in which the number of affiliations with Japan is the largest at 203 (21.4%), followed by the United States with 134 (14.3%), Russia with 49 (5.2%), the ROK with 48 (5.1%) and Australia with 42 (4.4%). At all levels, Japan is the first. For local governments in both Japan and China, the bilateral relation of both countries is becoming the most important part of international relations.

Characteristics of international cooperation projects

by local governments between Japan and China are as follows: 1) these projects have begun to bear technology and know-how transfer of "public goods" in the areas of local government, such as environmental protection, agricultural technology, city planning and cultural asset protection; 2) cooperation in physical aspects, such as the construction of facilities and expensive machinery, is mainly on a small scale; 3) also, different from ODA, many cooperative projects for mutual benefit, such as joint research in the agricultural field, have been implemented.

A concrete example is the "the Dalian China Environmental Model District Concept" between Kitakyushu and Dalian, as a creation of an environmental protection plan. The establishment of the "Research Center for Acid Rain" for research on air pollution and monitoring by Hiroshima Prefecture, Hiroshima City, Sichuan Province and Chongqing City, is an example of a cooperative project on the physical aspect of environmental protection. Also, there are many joint research projects in the agricultural sector. An example is a project for improving paddy rice, soybeans, and spring wheat, conducted by Hokkaido, Heilongjian Province and Alberta Province in Canada.

3. External Relations Activities of Local Governments in China

Regarding the external relations policy of Chinese local governments, the following is an example from a policy of Liaoning Province in relation to Japan. The goal of their policy in relation to Japan in 1998 was to promote industrial adjustment through international exchange. There are three major points. 1) To promote industrial structural adjustment by researching the processing industry, which has limitations of production activities inside Japan, and trying to attract them to the province. 2) To implement reform of state owned enterprises' management and technology by researching Japanese enterprises, which have an interest in the Chinese market, and promoting joint ventures. 3) To implement technology training and measures for labor power surplus simultaneously by exporting labor, such as technicians of enterprises.

The Liaoning government is working hard on infrastructure improvement, such as the construction of international airports, international seaports, highways and international industrial parks to realize the above mentioned external relations policy. The most noteworthy point is that the Liaoning government also considers improvement on the "soft" side, such as the expansion of international information exchange, as important. The following are major policies towards Japan for 1998: 1) a special organization under the direct control of the Vice Governor of the province conducts hearings with

representatives of foreign companies and deals with their troubles to improve administrative services for foreign companies; 2) each department of the provincial government tries to develop and maintain individual relations with Japan and the Liaoning government holds business talks for investment and discussions about external relations projects with local governments by dispatching large scale economic and trade missions to Tokyo, Osaka, Kanagawa and Toyama; 3) also for local enterprises, the government supports the systematic expansion of exchange with the Chamber of Commerce, industrial bodies and friendship organizations to promote exchanges among the same sectors with foreign enterprises.

A characteristic of external policy towards Japan in Liaoning Province is an attempt to reform local industries' structures in cooperation with industrial structural adjustment in Japan. Policy towards Japan and policy for local industries form an industrial policy in Liaoning Province. Through this strategy, Liaoning Province has been successful in introducing foreign investment. The accumulated number of investments at contract base was 18,181, and the invested amount totaled US\$30.8 billion in 1998 (US\$1=¥130). Investments are increasing by more than 1,000 every year at present. The number of investments from Japan is 2,818, and the amount invested is US\$5.1 billion, both of which are 15 to 16% of the total. Liaoning Province is in second place in terms of investments for Japanese enterprises, next to Shanghai City.

4. Comparison of Organizations for International Exchange between Japanese and Chinese Local Cities

Why can Chinese local governments form and implement external relations policies individually? The main reason could be the fact that power is devolved to local governments, because China adopts socialism. However, another reason is because of the status of the intellectual infrastructure in the region. As it can be seen from the distribution of research institutes and universities, organizations for external relations are concentrated in the Tokyo area in Japan. However, in the case of China, these are relatively dispersed.

Looking at the distribution of the "intellectual infrastructure" for exchange in Northeast Asia (Russia, China, the DPRK and the ROK) in Niigata City, Toyama City, Kanazawa City and Fukui City in the Hokuriku-Shinetsu Area in Japan, and Shenyang, Changchun, Harbin and Dalian in the Northeast area of China, the area of "intellectual infrastructure," in which cities in China

have a relative advantage is in the number of research institutes for international relations, universities and local libraries. There are 2 ~ 18 times more international expert research institutes, 1 ~ 8 times more universities for undergraduate and graduate courses than in Japanese cities in terms of the number of organizations. Also, provincial libraries in China have 3 ~ 5 times more books than prefectural libraries in Japan. Moreover, these Chinese libraries have several ten thousand to one hundred thousand foreign books written in Russia, Korean, etc. while Japanese libraries are somewhat lacking in such books. On the other hand, Japanese cities hold an advantage in the number of NGOs. Other areas are almost the same or incomparable. In terms of quality exchanges, the subject country for Japanese organizations tends to be China, while a rather small number deal with the DPRK and the ROK. On the contrary, in this respect, Chinese organizations have more balance.

Local governments in China form an external relations policy by utilizing this intellectual infrastructure. There are 12 expert research institutes for international relations in Chinese cities, but there are only 2 or none at all in Japanese cities. Local governments in China involve these institutes in policy making through study meetings, contracted research, etc. When local government is to research and study external relations policy, the number of research institutes and researchers is very different between Japan and China. This is a factor causing differences between them.

5. Conclusion

Exchange between local regions in Japan and China has been rapidly developed in the 1990s. The relationship between Japan and China has been the most important bilateral relationship for local governments in terms of both quality and quantity. Since intellectual infrastructure has improved in both countries, local cities have reached a level where they can develop various international activities by themselves. They already have equal partners with strong mutual interests. In the current situation, significant effects can be expected, not only in international exchanges, but also in international cooperation. However, having assumed that the absolute factors to decide the scale of intellectual infrastructure are population and economic power, the possibility that Japan will be able to increase the number of intellectual infrastructural organizations to the same level in each city is small. Therefore, Japanese cities need cooperation with neighboring prefectures and surrounding countries in order to raise the scale of intellectual infrastructure and the quality of services.