

17 Working Together for Better Techniques

— Assisting Metal Press Techniques in Mexico —



The years 2009-2010 celebrate the 400th anniversary of Japan–Mexico Relations. Since Japanese and Mexicans met in Onjuku, Chiba 400 years ago, the two countries have continued exchanges and have built friendly relations up to the present. Mexico is one of the major producers of such natural resources petroleum and silver in the world, abundance of which has led the country to its economic growth .

For Japan, Mexico is also a hub for strengthening exports to the Americas, and major Japanese manufacturers of automobiles, electronics, communications equipment and so on have plants there. Mexico’s economy is growing, but it has not developed supporting industries such as small and medium enterprises to produce the necessary parts for manufacturing plants, so it relies on many of these parts being imported from overseas. Thus, it is a challenge for Mexico to foster parts industries such as metallic materials. The development of such industries will generate employment, and this will help to address the problem of Mexican migrant workers to the United States and other countries.

Japan is supporting Mexico’s efforts to tackle such issues. Mexico’s mold press work techniques are dependent on the import of extensive metallic materials, so with the inclusion of goods produced in Mexico, standards are not shared. There are also the issues of press work being unstable and accidents and disasters occurring related to press operation. Japan has been dispatching experts in metal press work techniques to Mexico since 1997. Mr. Shohachi Kurihara, who is one of these experts, has been involved with Mexico in the area of press work technologies for over ten years.

Mr. Kurihara was born and raised in Gunma Prefecture, Japan, and he has been working as a metal press work engineer since graduating from school in 1950. He started his career in a major manufacturer before providing technical assistance in South Korea, and since 1989, he worked

for dissemination and improvement of Japan’s metal press work techniques in Southeast Asia as a JICA expert. Mr. Kurihara has been involved with Mexico since the latter half of the 1990s. He had been sent to Mexico seven times as a short term expert. Since the 2006 programs, he has been dispatched for a scheduled period of three years to a research institute, the Center for Engineering and Industrial Development (CIDESI) in Queretaro, about 200 km to the north of Mexico City.

Mr. Kurihara, as a member of CIDESI, has been working to disseminate metal press work techniques and proper ways to use press machinery through visits for consultation services, and seminars to small and medium enterprises in Queretaro. He is impressed with the passion and attitude of the Mexican staff at CIDESI, saying, “They do not accept talks about experience that are groundless and without well-defined reasons, and they show interest in talks about technologies that are scientific and reproducible.” As an expert, Mr. Kurihara sufficiently meets the needs of Mexican engineers who are highly knowledgeable about techniques, and the Mexican side highly praises the techniques that he has spread for their usefulness in terms of safety and productivity in the manufacture of metallic materials. Mr. Kurihara is also putting his effort into Spanish translations of press technical terms, and he is working together with Mexican engineers to make a compilation of technical terms in order to assist the spread of press techniques in the future. Of these efforts Mr. Kurihara says, “I worked hard with the Mexican people.” He reflects, “My struggles with them on various activities have served to bring us closer together, and we have built a good relationship.” Mr. Kurihara also aims to create advanced metal press work machinery with his Mexican colleagues. He continues to spend his days working hard with his colleagues to build better quality products.



Mr. Kurihara giving a seminar in Queretaro. (Photo: Koyu Shimizu)



Mr. Kurihara giving guidance on the assembly of press machinery. (Photo: Koyu Shimizu)