

ODA Topics 4

Looking Back over 40 Years of ODA to China

Since 1979 when Japan began providing ODA to China, it has created a robust foundation as one of the key pillars of Japan-China relations, as well as been used mainly for resolving the infrastructural bottlenecks in Chinese coastal areas, environmental measures, improvements in the field of fundamental needs in life such as health and medical care, and human resources development, and contributed to the maintenance and promotion of China's reform and opening-up policies. Thanks to the stable development of the Chinese economy through the development of economic infrastructure via ODA from Japan, the investment environment in China has been improved, and thereby boosted the advancement of Japanese companies into China. This resulted in progress in private-sector economic relations between the two countries. Furthermore, efforts such as technical cooperation by Japan have enabled countermeasures against problems including cross-border pollution and infectious diseases, which also have negative impacts on Japan. In this way, ODA to China has been implemented in a form that benefits Japan as well.

In the area of infrastructure, large-scale projects have been steadily implemented, including the Beijing-Qinhuangdao Railway Construction Project (ODA loan) and Qinhuangdao Port Expansion Project (ODA loan), which contributed to coal exports to Japan by facilitating the smooth transport of coal from the coal-producing region of Shanxi Province to coastal areas, the Beijing Subway Line 1 Construction Project (ODA loan), which crosses approximately 13km in the center of Beijing including Tiananmen East and West Stations, the Shanghai Pudong International Airport Construction Project (technical cooperation and ODA loan), which broke the 70 million passenger mark in 2017, and the Beijing Sewage Treatment Plant Construction Project (ODA loan), which accounts for 40 percent of the total amount of sewage treatment in the city of Beijing.

In the area of environmental measures, the Sino-Japan Friendship Center for Environmental Protection (grant aid and technical cooperation) has become the base for countermeasures against the cross-border pollution problems of acid rain, yellow sand and PM 2.5, while the Afforestation and Forest Conservation Project (ODA loan, technical cooperation and grant aid) focused on 13 provinces and autonomous regions contributed to the improvement of forest coverage in China (from 16.7% in 1990 to 22.2% in 2015).

In the area of health and medical care, the China-Japan Friendship Hospital (grant aid and technical cooperation), which is supplied with as many as 1,300 beds and was selected as one of the "Top 100 Hospitals in China" is exhibiting its presence by being chosen as the designated hospital of the Beijing Olympics, and being appointed as the hospital for receiving the most serious cases during the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic. Other projects in this field include infection countermeasures (technical cooperation, grant aid and ODA loan), which contributed to the elimination of polio and addressing pandemics, and the China-Japan Strategic Cooperation Project on Measures for the Aging Society (technical cooperation) under which Japan shared its experience with China, which has been rapidly becoming an aging society since the year 2000.

In terms of human resources development, youth training (technical cooperation) was implemented, under which a total of approximately 5,100 young Chinese were accepted with the objective



Activities by the Japan Disaster Relief Team after the Sichuan Earthquake (Photo: JICA)

of developing personnel, who will be responsible for nation-building in the future, as well as more than a total of 430 exchange students (grant aid) were accepted with the purpose of strengthening the ability of Chinese young government officials to formulate and implement social and economic development policies.

In addition, with regard to the field of disaster prevention, the dispatch of disaster relief team and the provision of emergency relief goods and reconstruction support (technical cooperation) was implemented in response to the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake. In terms of the area of justice, support was provided in areas such as enacting antitrust law, a companies act, reform of the civil procedure law, and enactment of general civil law, with the objective of supporting the smooth business activities of Japanese companies while maintaining economic order in China. In this way, ODA to China was targeted at a wide range of areas, and amounted to a total of approximately 3 trillion 600 billion yen to date.

On the other hand, as China has developed, the scale of ODA to China has gradually reduced, with General Grant Aid being terminated in 2006, and new provision of ODA loans ending in 2007. Accordingly, during Prime Minister Abe's visit to China in October 2018, the termination of ODA to China was announced, based on the idea that a new dimension of Japan-China cooperation should be promoted with China as an equal partner, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of China's reform and opening up policies. With the ongoing technical cooperation projects all set to conclude by the end of FY2021, ODA to China is going to finish playing its role.

In response, China stated that Japan's ODA to China played an active role in the country's reform and opening up, and in the building of its economy. During Prime Minister Abe's visit to China, a photograph exhibition was also held, which reflected upon the economic cooperation between the two countries, including the ODA to China to date, and was attended by Prime Minister Abe and Premier Li Keqiang. Going forward, consideration of new cooperation projects between Japan and China will be pursued, including dialogue and personnel exchanges in the area of development, as well as cooperation on global issues like SDGs, climate change and marine plastic litter.