

International Motorcycle Economic Development Forum in China ~ Opposition Voiced to Chinese License Plate Regulations ~

The International Forum on Economic Development of Motorcycles in China was held during August 25~27 in Jiangmen City in China's Guangdong Province. The gathering was jointly sponsored by the China Agriculture Film & Television Center (CCTV-7), the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers (Motorcycle Branch), the Society of Automotive Engineers of China (Motorcycle Committee) and the Municipal Government of Jiangmen in Guangdong Province.



The Forum attracted participation by about 120 representatives of motorcycle manufacturers, research institutes and related industries from both inside and outside of China. The event was held to discuss the future, overall direction, market environment, international cooperation and exchange, technical innovation, branding and other key aspects of China's motorcycle industry from a broad range of pertinent perspectives.

China's motorcycle industry has recorded rapid growth from the 1990s, with the nation's annual unit production of these vehicles leading the world for the past 13 years. The Chinese domestic market for motorcycles is also the world's largest, with the swift expansion in ownership also resulting in the problem of a sharp rise in related traffic accidents.

Under these conditions, there has been a surge in the number of Chinese cities choosing to place limits on motorcycle license plates (issuing and traffic restrictions) as one solution to the mounting problems. While at the end of 1998 about 30 cities had adopted such regulations, it is currently estimated that the number has risen to over 170 cities.

For the August forum, JAMA responded to a request from CAAM by providing a talk on theme of "Motorcycle Road Safety Administration in Japan." This address was delivered by Mr. Takehito Hayashida, leader of the JAMA Urban Traffic Environment Improvement Working Group, who outlined the approaches and experiences that have contributed to promoting motorcycle road safety in Japan. This talk was also designed to earn the understanding of the Chinese that success in raising safety awareness through education and enlightenment programs for motorcycle users holds the key to further raising the status of motorcycles as safe, comfortable and economical means of transportation.



The forum opened with an address from Mr. Jing Bo, director of the CAAM Motorcycle Branch, who issued the following appeal: “The license plate restraints currently implemented in the majority of large- and medium-size cities are seriously oppressing demand for intermediate and luxury-class motorcycles in these districts, and are also curbing progress and innovation in motorcycle technology. For the motorcycle industry, these controls are the single most critical factor restricting our development today.”

Jiangmen City, the site of the forum, is one of the leading cities in the Pearl River Region, a district focused on Guangzhou City in Guangdong Province. Jiangmen is located in the central southern part of Guangdong Province in the western region of the Pearl River Delta, and has a total area of 9,541 square kilometers. It lies about a one-hour drive from Guangzhou, and can be reached from Hong Kong in around two and a half hours by ferry. In 2005 the city’s GDP grew by 12.7% over the previous year to 80.2 billion Yuan, posting its highest year-on-year growth rate in the past 10 years.

A total of four province-level development zones have been established in Jiangmen City. These precincts are positioned to attract automobiles, motorcycles, information technology and other focal industries, with investment projects being energetically advanced. The key industries for Jiangmen today include motorcycles, synthetic fiber, consumer electronics and other sectors. The motorcycle industry here is particularly renowned, with the Dachangjiang Group, one of China’s major motorcycle manufacturing powers, engaged in local production.

The central district of Jiangmen is the site of large numbers of motorcycle shops, with the heavy presence of motorcycles on the roads here further underscoring the firm roots that motorcycles have established here as a means of everyday transportation.



Safety education and enlightenment and other traffic safety oriented programs targeting motorcycle riders are indispensable not only for achieving removal of license plate controls, but also for ensuring the healthy development of the motorcycle industry at large. In this sense, JAMA has keen hopes that effective traffic safety measures will be advanced not only in China but in all other motorized countries as well.

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