

New Member of ODP

China Joins International Ocean Drilling Program

May 1, 1998 The People's Republic of China is the first nation to join the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP) as an Associate Member. ODP is an international geosciences program which enables scientists and research institutions to explore the evolution and structure of Earth. The Memorandum of Understanding between the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Chinese State Science and Technology Commission was completed mid-April.

"We're extremely pleased to have the People's Republic of China join ODP as the first Associate Member in response to our efforts to include the full global community of Earth scientists," said Don Heinrichs, Division of Ocean Sciences, National Science Foundation, "We look forward to the new viewpoints, enthusiasm and expertise Chinese scientists will bring to ODP which will complement our existing capabilities."

The centerpiece of the ODP is the drill ship, *JOIDES Resolution*, which measures 143 meters long and 21 meters wide with a derrick that towers 61.5 meters above the water line. A computer-controlled positioning system maintains the ship over each drill site. The ship drills and retrieves sediment, rock samples and geophysical data from the layers beneath the seafloor.

Next year, ODP has planned an expedition of particular interest to the People's Republic of China. The expedition, referred to as Leg 184, will examine the East Asian monsoon and its connection to climate change. By drilling in the South China Sea, scientists will be able to document the evolutionary development and variability of the East Asian monsoon. Knowledge of this monsoon system is important for understanding global climate change and its influences on the history of the human species and ancient cultures. A climate change expert, Dr. Pinxian Wang from the State Education Commission, Laboratory of Marine Geology, Tongji University in Shanghai, China has been named co-chief scientist. Leg 184 will take place 13 February - 11 April, 1999 and end with a port call in Hong Kong.

The annual budget for ODP is approximately \$45 million US with the annual fee for full members at approximately \$2.9 million US. China's participation as an Associate Member (1/6 level) will be approximately \$490,000 US annually. Benefits for an Associate Membership include: participation of two scientists per year on ODP expeditions; invitations extended for co-chiefs proportionate to their contribution level; full voting membership on two panels with the right to have non-voting observers at all JOIDES meetings; and access to engineering plans, data, research results, publications and other information.

The Ocean Drilling Program is funded principally by the National Science Foundation, with substantial contributions from its international partners. These include the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, the Australia/ Canada/ Chinese Taipei/ Korea Consortium for Ocean Drilling, the European Science Foundation Consortium for Ocean Drilling (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey) and now, the People's Republic of China. The program is managed by Joint Oceanographic Institutions, a consortium of 10 US institutions, with Texas A&M University responsible for science operations. Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory is the operator for downhole logging.

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