

Dalian Friendship Memorial Building

This brick, stone, and wood structure was built in 1994 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of a friendship agreement between Kitakyushu and Dalian, China, which marked a positive turn in their complex history. The city of Dalian, known in English as “Port Arthur,” passed between Chinese, Russian, and Japanese control several times between 1895 and 1955. Moji was a key port connecting Japan to Dalian, particularly during the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895).

The second floor is a public space with displays of artworks and materials related to Dalian, including an introductory video in Mandarin and Japanese.

Authentic Construction

This building is modeled on a Dalian railroad office that was designed in 1902 by German architects hired by Russian city administrators. The building’s architecture reflects its multinational roots. There are clear Russian and German elements, such as the high-steeped tower roofs and half-timbered walls, and the Chinese-style roof has rows of interlocking curved tiles rather than Japanese-style overlapping plates.

The railroad office was chosen for its aesthetic appeal, rarity, and historical value, and considerable efforts were taken to recreate the design as exactly as possible. The original blueprints had been lost, so the architects traveled to Dalian and took careful measurements of the existing building. Bricks and stone from the original quarry were imported from Dalian for the construction. The project required close cooperation between the two cities and nations, and the recreated building is a symbol of amity despite the complicated histories of the two cities.