

Expo 2010 Shanghai China: The Japan Pavilion

From May 1 to October 31, 2010, Shanghai in China will host this year's World Expo. What will be the message behind the Japan Pavilion at the Expo? We asked Commissioner General of the Japanese Section **Tsukamoto Hiroshi**.

TJJ: First of all, tell us about the theme of the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai.

Tsukamoto Hiroshi: The overall theme at Expo 2010 Shanghai will be "Better City, Better Life," with a focus on leading ideal lives in ideal cities in the future. China is hosting this year's World Expo as part of its transition from quantitative expansion in line with economic growth to qualitative expansion, with the aim of creating a harmonious society in which people all live successful, well-balanced lives, in rural areas as well as cities. The theme of the Japan Pavilion at Expo 2010 Shanghai will be "WA—Harmony of the Hearts, Harmony of the Skills," with a clear emphasis on harmony [*wa*]. When we look to the future, technology obviously has an important part to play. As human emotions always come first however, it is equally important to ensure harmony between "hearts" and "skills." It is through harmony that we will be able to build the ideal future. That is the main theme behind the Japan Pavilion.

Is the outside of the Japan Pavilion going to be very distinctive?

The outside of the Japan Pavilion will be a shade of light purple called *benifuji* in Japanese, a harmonious combination of red, symbolizing the sun, and blue, symbolizing water. After a general call for suggestions, the Chinese nickname selected for the pavilion was *Zi Can Dao*, meaning "purple silkworm island." The name was chosen based on the fact that the shape of the pavilion resembles a silkworm's cocoon and the fact that the process of spinning silk thread from

silkworms was imported from China, thereby symbolizing ties between Japan and China (see **Close Up 1**).

The Pavilion will incorporate environmental technology throughout, capturing the essence of a "harmonious future." For example, the pavilion itself will be made from a lightweight structure and will be covered all over in a membrane that will generate electricity from solar energy. The pavilion will also use technology designed to harness the power of nature in other ways, including an eco-tube system that will circulate light, water and air to cool the interior of the pavilion.

The color of the pavilion will change depending on the light outside and lighting inside, with the pavilion fully illuminated at night. Visitors will get to experience a living, breathing venue that uses natural energy just like any other living organism, sending out the message that harmony with the environment is essential in order to create



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a harmonious future.

As it will be summer during the middle of the event, there will also be a cooling mist and an air curtain at the entrance to the pavilion that will use evaporation heat to cool the body temperatures of visitors waiting to enter the pavilion and stop them from over-heating.

What was the thinking behind the Japan Pavilion's message "Connect for a Harmonious Future"?

In order to resolve the various environmental issues currently facing humanity, it will be crucial to form "connections between people" out of concern for the future of the earth, humanity and our children. With this in mind, the message is intended to inspire people to come together and achieve "harmony of the hearts" so as to ensure peace of mind and create a more comfortable future. The Japan Pavilion logo is based around the same concept of "connectedness." Called "Smile to Smile," the logo is designed to symbolize "connections between people through smiling faces" (see **Close Up 2**).

The theme of the 1970 Osaka Expo, which attracted a record 64 million visi-

tors, was "Progress and Harmony for Mankind." The theme at the Aichi Expo five years ago was "Harmony with Nature." So clearly, harmony has always been a key theme. No doubt it will continue to be a crucial theme for the future of humanity.

What form will this harmonious future take in terms of the actual exhibition?

The exhibition inside the Japan Pavilion will consist of three zones, representing the past, present and future. Japan has learnt a great deal from China and has benefited extensively from Chinese culture. The theme for the past zone will be "Wonders of Connections." Visitors will rediscover the "information connections" that have been established between Japan and China over time and see how Chinese culture and technology brought to Japan after much hardship by our ancestors, not least Japanese envoys to the Tang Dynasty, has taken root in modern Japan in various different ways.

Next is the present zone, the theme of which will be "From 'Connections of Knowledge' to 'Connections between People'." We are facing a range of universal issues that extend beyond national borders, not least in terms of the environment. Overcoming issues such as these depends not only on technology but also on each of us as individuals. We need to think about the future and act in unison on a day-to-day basis. Focusing on universal issues facing all cities, including water and global warming, the exhibition will examine what can be done to ensure that forward-looking initiatives founded on connections among people are a success.

By the time the event gets underway, we are planning to install an additional zone between the past and present zones that will enable visitors to experience the four seasons in Japan and Japanese living spaces that commune with nature.

The theme of the future zone will be "Balancing 'Connections between People' and the Future." The exhibit will express hopes and dreams, showing that we can achieve a harmonious future by creating "connections between people" based on concern for the future

of the earth, humanity and our children. It will feature a musical drama that tells a story about once lost natural habitats and living organisms, symbolized by the Japanese crested ibis, and how they can be brought back to life through connections based on people's commitment to the future, effectively expressing a message through song, dance and film.

Is the Japanese crested ibis also supposed to represent cooperation between Japan and China?

Indeed, the Japanese crested ibis is symbolic of cooperation between our two countries. Although the crested ibis died out in Japan, China provided a number of birds that were almost identical genetically, paving the way for an artificial breeding program on Sadogashima island in Niigata Prefecture. This has proved so successful that the birds are now ready to be released into the wild. Exchange and cooperation between Japan and China in relation to the Japanese crested ibis is still ongoing, with Japan assisting with crested ibis breeding programs in China and even returning some of the birds hatched and raised on Sadogashima. I hope that cooperation such as this, revolving around natural ecosystems and symbiosis with nature, will help create a better future not just for Japan and China but also for humanity as a whole.

I understand that the Japan Pavilion will be showcasing sustainable urban living for the twenty-first century. What about the issues of urban concentration and urban sprawl in emerging countries and other parts of Asia?

Urban concentration will no doubt continue for the time being. What we need is to come up with new ways to improve the environment and conditions within the cities where populations are concentrated.

In the cities of the future, we can



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expect to see the concept of eco-housing becoming more common and transport infrastructure being improved to make it more environmentally friendly.

It is also important to have spaces that are free from vehicles, in which people can come and go and interact with one another. The exhibition spaces at the 2005 Aichi Expo were all connected by the "Global Loop," an aerial walkway that was built and structured based on the natural lie of the land so as not to impact on the environment. It also served as a space for people to interact with one another in various different ways.

In the future, living spaces will need to do more than merely connect to the high-tech world. It is becoming increasingly important to create soothing urban spaces that also put people's minds at ease. Shanghai is working on improvements to its underground network in the run-up to Expo 2010 and plans to use electric vehicles within the Expo site. In addition to exhibitions in the Urban Zone, I believe that it is important for visitors to experience futuristic living spaces in which people interact with one another so that we can all try to make that a reality in the future.

Close Up 1: Pavilion Name

The Japan Pavilion has been nicknamed Zi Can Dao, meaning "purple silkworm island." The name was selected from roughly 3,600 entries submitted by members of the public in Japan and China in response to a general call for suggestions.

The name was chosen for a number of reasons, including the fact that purple, the color of the pavilion's exterior, is regarded as an elegant color in both countries, the fact that the shape of the Japan Pavilion resembles a silkworm's cocoon and the fact that silk thread spun from silkworms is symbolic of cultural ties between Japan and China. From a more general point of view, the name was selected as an expression of nobility and a sense of expectation with regard to growth in the future.

Source: Expo 2010 Shanghai Japan Pavilion official website
 English: <http://shanghai.expo-japan.jp/en/>
 Chinese: <http://shanghai.expo-japan.jp/cn/>

Close Up 2: Logo

The Japan Pavilion logo is called "Smile to Smile" and was designed by Okamuro Ken from Hakuodo Design Inc.

The Japan Pavilion logo, "Smile to Smile," expresses the importance of "connectedness," which is one of the key concepts behind the Japan Pavilion's message, with a particular emphasis on "connections between people." Made up of connected smiles, the logo is



designed to bring out feelings of kindness at a glance, in both adults and children. The color of the logo is the same as that of the Japanese crested ibis, which is featured in the Japan Pavilion as a symbol of friendship between Japan and China.

The logo was selected as a result of a design competition for young designers.

Source: Expo 2010 Shanghai Japan Pavilion official website

Close Up 3: Other Exhibits

Urban Zone (Urban Best Practices Area)

Representing Japan, Osaka Prefectural Government and Osaka City will be erecting an exhibit based on the theme of water. In addition to effectively harnessing water for trade purposes, making it Japan's biggest commercial city, Osaka has also tackled the issue of water damage and successfully dealt with air pollution and other forms of pollution. Having pushed ahead with environmentally friendly urban development to create an environmentally advanced city built on water, Osaka can now showcase itself as a successful model city.

Japan Industry Pavilion

Overseen by General Producer Sakaiya Taichi, who successfully planned the 1970 Osaka Expo, the Japan Industry Pavilion is designed to demonstrate everything Japanese industry has to offer based on the theme "Better Life From Japan," focusing on the concept of "J-Sense," as symbolized by the words "Kirei, Kawai, Kimochi-ii" (clean, cute and comfortable). Breathing new life into a disused Shanghai shipyard, the Japan Industry Pavilion will include features such as video footage, live-action human dramas, robot performances and machine-based dance.

Specifically, what do you want visitors to feel and enjoy about Japan?

To reiterate what I was saying a moment ago, the foundations of culture in Japan originated from China. Those foundations then developed into something uniquely Japanese, underpinned by harmony between nature and humankind and connections between people. This is encapsulated in *omotenashi*, the Japanese concept of hospitality, which is based on the spirit of interacting with and welcoming other people. The same is true of the culture of tea, one of the most representative forms of Japanese culture. We will of course be showcasing the culture of tea at Expo 2010

Shanghai, but more importantly, we intend to run the Japan Pavilion in such a way that visitors get a real taste for *omotenashi* hospitality, from attendants and all other members of staff.

Finally, what are your main hopes for Expo 2010 Shanghai?

With lots of African nations taking part, there will be as many as 240 pavilions from around the world at this year's Expo. A great many seminars, symposiums and other events are also scheduled to take place over the course of the event. The Expo site will no doubt act as a huge forum for exchange between people from all over the world. It will also be an op-

portunity to showcase futuristic technology via the Japan Pavilion and other Expo venues, hopefully enabling us to expand intellectual exchange with people from around the world and do our bit to work towards global harmony. As close to 70 million people are expected to visit the event, it is also a tremendous opportunity for the Chinese public to get to know other countries, potentially ushering in an era of mass exchange as large numbers of Chinese people start traveling to destinations around the world.

I hope that as many people as possible will come to Expo 2010 Shanghai and visit the Japan Pavilion. 

Interview by CHIBA Hitoshi, *The Japan Journal*