The Japan Pavilion has been nicknamed Zi Can Dao, meaning “purple silk worm island.”

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 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 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 to 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 cities where populations are concentrated.

In the cities of the future, we can 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 interact with one another. The exhibition space 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 improving 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 Zì 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
Chinese: http://shanghai.expo-japan.jp/cn/

Close Up 2: Logo
The Japan Pavilion logo is called “Smile to Smile” and was designed by Okamura Ken from Hakuhodo 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, Kawaii, 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 by 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 opportunity 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