

A New Approach to the Twenty-First Century —World Expo 2005 in Aichi

By Takashima Nobutaka

"Japan, Japan, Japan,...Canada, Canada,...Japan, Japan,..." went the voice of Ambassador Ole Philipson, president of the Bureau of International Exhibitions, as he began to count the votes of 81 countries cast in the 121st session of the B.I.E. General Assembly in the International Conference Hall in Monaco late in the afternoon of June 12, 1997.

I, and the other people present from Aichi Prefecture, Japan, who had the duty and luck to be present at the final moments of this international selection campaign, either wrung our hands or kept note of the count being conducted by this senior Danish diplomat, serving as chairperson, to catch the 41st call by him of "Japan" or a declaration that we had obtained majority support in this

assembly against our worthy competitor Calgary, Province of Alberta, Canada.

As early as October 1988, we initiated our campaign to obtain the authorization of the B.I.E., within the framework of the International Exhibition Convention of 1928, to sponsor Japan's fifth international exposition, in Aichi.

We voiced our desire to be host, stating, through our proposal, that we intended to use this industrial and cultural exchange system of international exhibitions as a vehicle to highlight the promise of the 21st century. With our experience of EXPO 1970 Osaka, '75 Okinawa, '85 Tsukuba and '90 Osaka Floriade, and participation in many B.I.E. exhibitions over recent decades, we can understand

the pessimism on the part of officials of member governments concerning the future of this century—old international framework of B.I.E. exhibitions: With the development of T.V. broadcasting technology, the mass media and other telecommunications systems in the second half of this century, as well as the end of the Cold War between the "East" and the "West," the cost-effectiveness of participation by B.I.E. member countries appears to have diminished to such an extent that the EXPO departments of many countries are experiencing difficulty securing sufficient budgetary resources to formulate really worthwhile public relations presentations at every B.I.E. exhibition. (See Notes 1 and 2)

From the initiation of our campaign in 1988 till the formal Cabinet decision by the Japanese Government in December 1995 to propose the project formally to the B.I.E., we had asked for ideas not only from exhibition experts but also from ordinary young citizens inside and outside Japan.

What was accumulated as a result of these endeavors forms the essential contents of the Japanese Government proposal of April 1996, approved by Cabinet decision: (1) an opportunity for participating countries to explore new possibilities in the fast-growing East-Asian and Pacific-rim markets, and for all the participants to showpiece their culture and the traditions on which they have constructed their societies today, and (2) to devise future policies for coping with common problems associated with economic and cultural



Moment of decision: The crowd cheers as Aichi is chosen to host EXPO 2005

development i.e. adjustment of industrial progress and environmental improvement in respective countries and regions, food and energy supply, peaceful and positive exchange and harmonization between civilizations, etc.

The very basis for our proposal lies in the advantages inherent to the host region of Aichi Prefecture, located in the middle of the Pacific-coast region of the Japanese archipelago. The prefecture can boast that it has been at the top of Japan's 47 prefectures in terms of the shipment value of its manufacturing industries during the last two decades; the main bulk of which comprises automobiles, machinery and equipment, aircraft and space rockets, textile goods and foodstuffs, which cover most of Japan's leading industrial goods.

From a historical point of view, Aichi is located in the eastern region inhabited by ancient Japanese society, and we can trace two of the six main classical complexes of the Japanese ceramic industry to the prefecture. (Seto city, the proposed site of EXPO 2005, is known to the rest of the country by the name "seto-mono," which literally means "Seto products" but in practice means "ceramics." It has, therefore, enjoyed a role as an indispensable part of Japanese cultural development, located next door to the internationally well-known areas of Nara and Kyoto. It has also been the birthplace and home of many of the political and industrial leaders of modern Japan, including the family of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The present chairman of Keidanren, the Economic Federation of Japan, and his predecessor, are both from the prefecture. Toyota Motor Co. was established here and most of its factories in Japan are in Aichi; one of the founding fathers of Sony Corporation, Mr. Morita Akio, is the son of an Aichi

brewer. On the basis of our rich social history, we believe we can confidently call for the support of our friends worldwide for our plan to promote the social and economic enrichment of the global community in the next century.

The proposed main theme of "Beyond Development: Rediscovering Nature's Wisdom" sums up this basic idea. Two sub-themes under this main theme will elaborate its practical contents: (1) Eco-communities and (2) the Art of Life.

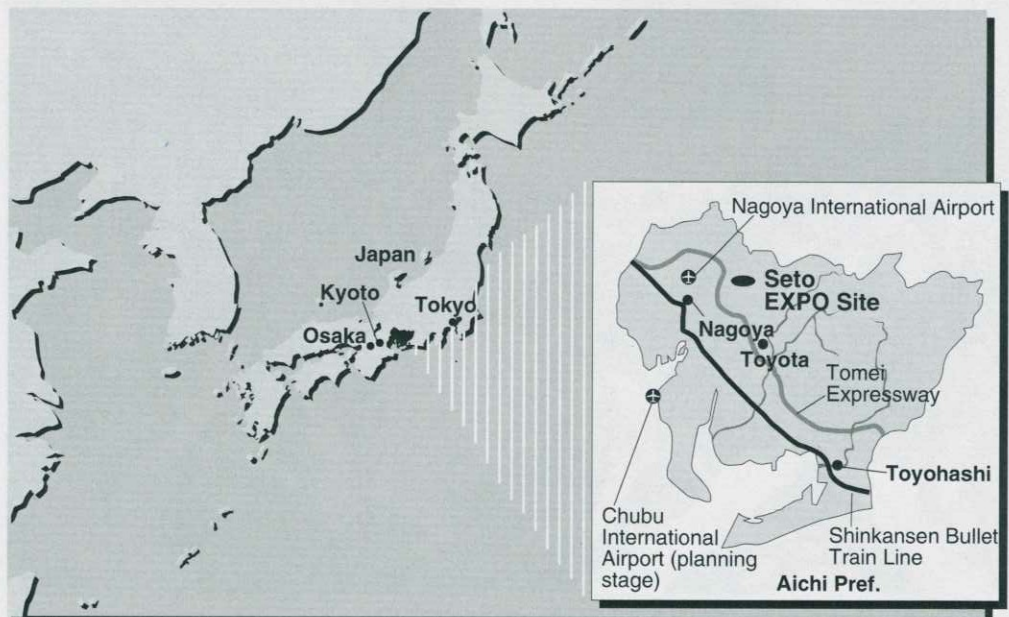
The main theme refers not only to the problems and solutions to industrial and social development in the history of various civilizations up to 20th century modernization, but also those we do and will have to cope with today and in the next century. Reflecting on how human activities have harmed Mother Nature in recent centuries, our EXPO project would re-examine our respective traditions and cultural histories to explore new possibilities and wisdom to find new dimensions to growth and culture in keeping with desirable ecosystems.

Thus, Eco-communities refers to the integration and advancing of

technologies in essential areas such as energy utilization and recycling; developing and refining the hardware and software necessary for these purposes, i.e. architectural and lifestyle renovation, much of which will be incorporated in the urban planning at the exhibition site. We expect solar and other new energy utilization systems, recycling, waste management and ecosystem restoration installations in their most advanced forms to be exhibited and operated at the site, so that people will begin to understand the type of social changes which will be required in order to integrate these new systems into their daily lives.

In contrast, the Art of Life is intended to be a sub-theme under which participants are invited to highlight the merits of particular lifestyles so that people from other cultures may understand them and consider incorporating them in their own lifestyle; for example, the appreciation of elegant simplicity, and lower consumption of energy in the traditional artisanship of pottery, woodworking or cooking, etc.

The underlying aim of these proposed



themes is to offer an international framework for information exchange to facilitate the technological development of all communities on our planet and diminishing as much as possible the probability of conflicts between peoples and civilizations due to a lack of understanding of and respect for others in the various fields of human activity; economic, cultural, scientific, etc.

In pre-modern times, Aichi Prefecture was already a major agricultural region, with animal species, farming instruments and know-how imported and adapted from continental Asia. On the basis of these preceding developments, the ceramic industry, cotton cultivation and weaving have flourished since the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The affluence which resulted made this area one of the centers of Japanese cultural activities from as early as the 18th century. One particular cultural development, the movable puppet theater on wheels, provided the technological basis for speedy adaptation of newly imported European mechanical inventions; i.e. the essential structures required for fine puppet movement were effectively fused into the precise designing of clocks and watches and later expanded into the component parts of the products of Toyota Automatic Loom Works, one of the leading equipment-machinery makers in the world today.

This technological development of crankshafts, as you can easily imagine, formed the basis on which Toyota Motor Co. was founded as a subsidiary of Toyota Automatic Loom Works, and is also a reason why a major portion of Japan's aircraft and spacecraft production originates here.

The most important of our proposals is our intention to present a B.I.E. exhibition in an entirely new form; as an effective forum for inter-community and inter-civilization information



EXPO in hometown "Seto": Citizens of Aichi parade in the streets

exchange to help engender new sources of information, focusing on important universal problems which demand quick responses for their solution.

Thus, at the beginning of the next century, it is our strong desire that the project we propose be a worldwide forum for discussing the protection and restoration of nature, in harmony with endeavors to develop and enrich human life throughout the world.

At this point, readers may be wondering why we appear to be neglecting the traditional and essential purpose of international exhibitions: to serve as a forum for information exchange with a view to international trade possibilities among participants. In fact, we have neither neglected this aspect nor relegated it to secondary importance. We intend that our project will also serve as a new channel for developing new international trade opportunities, especially between fast-growing East Asian economies and the rest of the world. East Asian countries have been achieving

remarkable economic and industrial growth. While this growth was based mostly on their traditional and historical culture, it was, however, assisted by the importation of foreign finance, methods and technologies. Because of this, conflicts and difficulties have inevitably arisen in these societies in their attempt to harmonize their native social framework and with the values and requirements inherent in these imports so as to make the best use of them.

A related project, involving the construction of a new international airport in Nagoya Bay (to enter service in the early part of 2005), in addition to a new highway network in and around this region, together with further advances in information technology from now to the opening of the exhibition, should provide participants and visitors to the site with excellent opportunities to develop future business activities in this very promising market.

The Government of Japan expects

that EXPO 2005 will have 25 million visitors during its six-month duration from spring to autumn 2005, with at least 10% of this figure from abroad. (We in the prefectural government

consider this figure to be very conservative, since Osaka EXPO '70 was visited by 64 million people, though it was the first B.I.E. exhibition not only in Japan but in Eastern

Eurasia in an era we did not have the benefit of such highly developed media systems as we do now.)

The Japan Association for the 2005 World Exposition, authorized and



created by the Government of Japan in October 1997 in accordance with the B.I.E. Convention Article 10, has already started multi-faceted operations to work out plans for materializing aspirations conceived in the main theme. A committee for establishing a framework for an environmental assessment of this project is to report at the end of March. We expect that this assessment will be duly implemented by the end of 1998, and essential elements of the site plan and thematic implementations will be discussed and proposed by other expert committees sponsored by the association and composed of scientists, business experts in various sectors of related fields of activities, e.g. sociology, cultural history, religion, physiology, biochemistry, etc., as well as activists in the local volunteer movements, who are to report during the course of 1999. Meanwhile, the Japanese Government is compiling necessary budget funds to solicit ideas, requests and comments on these matters, not only from the governments of B.I.E. member countries but also from citizens from all over the world, to make our plans as attractive as possible and worthy of inclusion in EXPO 2005.

Through such procedures, we intend to attain the two above-mentioned strategic goals. The first, let me repeat, is to construct a model of a B.I.E. exhibition in the new century as a new media capable of recognizing universal problems and proposing ways and methods of cooperation to solve them, in the sense described above.

The second is to make the area (see Maps 1 and 2 with its Note 3) in and around the site a geographical core of scientific and technological developments of related natural and social sciences. The Aichi Prefectural Government has a long-term policy to make 2,000 hectares of this suburb of the capital city Nagoya (population: 2.2 million), a new research complex.

We can succeed in these two endeavors if we receive enough help and participation not only from the authorities but also the citizens of other countries from the planning stage to the

so-called after-use of the legacy of the 2005 event.

(Note 1)

The Bureau of International Exhibitions was created in 1932 by the Convention of International Exhibitions of 1928.

The concept and practical regime of international exhibitions were formulated and developed on the basis of the Great Exhibition held in Hyde Park, London in 1851. This Great Exhibition, which was realized through the efforts of the British authorities headed by Prince Albert, Prince Consort of Queen Victoria, served as a large-scale showcase of the fruits of the Industrial Revolution and the socio-political development of the Anglo-Saxon world. It was closely studied and its style of presentation has been used frequently since then, mostly by European countries and the United States.

(Note 2)

Convention Relating to international exhibitions signed at Paris on Nov. 22 1928, and supplemented by Protocols of Nov. 30, 1972 and Amendment of May 31, 1988.

Part 1—Definitions and Objectives Article 1

1. An exhibition is a display which, whatever its title, has as its principal purpose the education of the public: It may exhibit the means at man's disposal for meeting the needs of civilization, or demonstrate the progress achieved in one or more branches of human endeavor, or show prospects for the future.

2. An exhibition is international when more than one state is invited to take part in it.

(Note 3)

The basic principle of our site construction plan rejects the traditional approach, in which either the host or the participant government constructs temporary pavilions to be torn down upon closure of the exhibition, and replaces it with the new concept

whereby the host government constructs and rents to the participants housing structures and public facilities which are designed to be fit for exhibition and long-term development in the "post-event" era. Aichi Prefecture has a long-term policy to develop the site and the surrounding 2,000-hectare area as a Research and Development Zone in the woodlands of Central Japan.

Practical particulars of the idea are, accordingly, that the center Zone A of the Map 2 "Eco-City" will be designed as a high-density urban setting. It will be equipped with zero-emission energy systems, water and emission gas treatment facilities, security command centers, etc. The upper-floor portion will be used for international pavilions or as space for participant governments, and the entire structure will be covered with as much soil, rushes and greenery as possible after its completion.

The EXPO PARK, ECO-PARK I and II areas will be used to accommodate participating international organizations, theme pavilions, the event theater for a variety of festivals, national-day programs, symposiums which may very likely be emulated after the exhibition. The Art and Craft Village, inhabited and operated by craftsmen from various parts of the world would also be constructed in this area.

Zone B, where we have found several valuable species of fauna and flora, will be kept as intact as possible, but will be used to conduct experimental methods for its ecological conservation and improvement.

Zone C is an area we also plan to use mostly intact as a natural park surrounding the actual international exhibition area of Zone A. It may also accommodate nature observation decks, as well as small camping and restaurant areas.

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