

The World in Shanghai



by
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BY the time this issue of Jurutera reaches you, I regret to report, the World Expo in Shanghai, China, would be over. This year's World Expo is indisputably the grandest in the series since the first World Expo was held in Hyde Park, London, in 1851, not only in terms of the number of participating countries, but also in terms of the variety of architectural designs for the pavilions.

I made a short trip to Shanghai in early September 2010 for the dual purpose of visiting the World Expo as well as meeting up with my two elder sisters whom I have not seen for more than 10 years. It was a reunion for most of my siblings and our family members.

My wife and I, together with our younger son, spent four days at the World Expo, but alas, we only managed to cover a small number of the pavilions even though we were there early and stayed until closing time everyday.

The expo occupied a very large area of 5.28 sq km straddling the Huangpu River. It was divided into five zones, Zones A, B and C in Pudong (east of the Huangpu River) and Zones D and E in Puxi (west of the Huangpu River). Almost every country in the world was represented. In addition, there were also pavilions according to themes, and by corporate and international organisations.

We, of course, visited our country's pavilion. It was situated in Zone B, sandwiched between the Singapore Pavilion and the New Zealand Pavilion, and directly facing the Brunei Pavilion. The building's Minangkabau roof actually made the Malaysian Pavilion quite outstanding. It was particularly eye-catching after nightfall when the changing lights turn the roof maroon, orange, green, blue and purple in succession. In contrast, the Singapore and New Zealand Pavilions appeared drab and without life.

If you missed the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, a 3-months specialised World Expo will be held in Yeosu, South Korea in 2012. The crowds are not expected to be as large as those in Shanghai, which is good news to visitors because shorter queues mean one will be able to visit more pavilions.

In Shanghai, the total number of visitors to the expo during the 6-months period from 1 May till 31 October 2010 was expected to be at least 70 million, and the extremely long queues outside the more popular pavilions were so daunting that many people were simply turned away. We did not get to visit the main Chinese Pavilion, the German Pavilion, the Japanese Pavilion, the South Korean Pavilion and the Saudi Arabian Pavilion because of the queues. ■

