



盆栽

Master visits Sydney

Mr Masashi Hirao is a 32-year-old bonsai artist who has been appointed a Japan Cultural Envoy by the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs. Australia is one of the countries he will be visiting as part of an international tour to share his knowledge and love of bonsai.



A native of Tokushima Prefecture, Mr Hirao has travelled overseas over the past five years to introduce his art. He seeks to promote bonsai by passing on techniques to lovers of bonsai and bonsai artists, and explains how to appreciate and enjoy bonsai as well as the importance of interacting with plants.

While in Sydney (16-27 August), he will give several demonstrations, including each day at a bonsai exhibition in Terrey Hills on 17 and 18 August. This exhibition will include more than 80 beautiful bonsai by local bonsai artists, including Australian trees, for visitors to enjoy.

Since 2003, the Agency for Cultural Affairs www.bunka.go.jp has been appointing "Japan Cultural Envoys". This program aims to deepen the international community's understanding of Japanese culture, and to build and strengthen cultural networks between Japanese and people in other countries who are active in the cultural arena.

Bonsai—a brief background

Bonsai is the art of a creating a miniature tree, and great time and patience are required to master the basics. Indeed it has been said that it takes three years to master watering!

To appreciate a bonsai, it is important to consider the tray or low pot in which the plant grows. In fact, the word bonsai is made up of the word for tray 'bon' 盆 and plant 'sai' 栽.

Bonsai came from the art of miniature landscapes (bonkei) transmitted from the Asian mainland centuries ago. It became widely popular in Japan during the Edo Period (1600-1867). A well-cared for bonsai can last for several hundred years, and traditionally bonsai has evoked a sense of timelessness or immortality.

Bonsai is gaining new followers in recent years, with keen bonsai artists overseas.

To learn more about bonsai in Australia, see:
bonsai.org.au

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Candidate City

Excitement must be building among the members of the Tokyo 2020 Bid Committee as the announcement of the 2020 host city draws near.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) Evaluation Commission issued its report on Tokyo's bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the Tokyo 2020 Bid leadership was 'extremely pleased' with the strong report Tokyo's bid received.

The report was a technical assessment of the fourteen themes included in the Bid Candidature file and it confirmed that Tokyo 2020 is capable of hosting an excellent Games.

Mr Tsunekazu Takeda, IOC Member and President of Tokyo 2020 and the Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC), said, "The report clearly identifies the advantage of our ultra compact Games plan, which puts the athletes first with 85% of venues within 8km of the Olympic Village, and fully integrates the Games in (the) heart of Tokyo's safe and exciting city centre".*

He was also pleased to note the strong public support among Japanese people: IOC polling showed 70% public support in Tokyo.

A number of areas were highlighted by the IOC Evaluation Commission as being particular strengths. In short, these included: • well-organised and safe Games, • Tokyo's promise of a compact, city-centre celebration, • Tokyo's financial strength, • Tokyo's "robust" existing transport network, and • Tokyo's legacy plan.

Mr Takeda said that the IOC's feedback was highly valuable and that the Tokyo 2020 committee would continue to review areas for additional improvements.

Discover Tomorrow is the theme of Tokyo 2020. This not only alludes to the innovation and creativity to be found in Japan's dynamic capital city; it refers to the plan to deliver a Games that will inspire future generations and "help keep Olympism at the heart of our rapidly changing world".*

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will elect the 2020 host city at the 125th IOC session in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on 7 September 2013.

Good luck to the Tokyo 2020 Bid Committee!

* Tokyo 2020 Bid leadership 'extremely pleased' at strong Evaluation Commission verdict
<http://tokyo2020.jp/en/news/index.php?mode=page&id=844>
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