TAIWAN HOLDS FIRST SYMPOSIUM ON ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY

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THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL PULP AND PAPER INDUSTRY symposium in Taiwan was held April 25-27, 2000 at the Taiwan Forestry Institute International Conference Center, Taipei. A post-conference tour to Cheng Loong Company's Ta Yuan mill and Taroko Gorge was offered.

The symposium was preceeded on the afternoon of April 24 with a roundtable forum entitled "Paper industry in a green Taiwan." Representatives from various government agencies, universities, social action groups, and paper industry professions gathered for the occasion. The discussion helped convey a favorable impression of the paper industry's contribution to the environment in general. Specifically, the industry's active utilization of domestic wastepaper (OCC in particular) helps society shed the onus of treating up to 3 million metric tons of organic waste annually, while extending the life cycle of paper and board and reducing carbon dioxide emissions. These efforts also lessen the demand for harvesting standing timber. The roundtable was deemed a resounding success in fostering a new image of environmental friendliness for the paper industry.

On the evening of April 24, a pre-symposium reception and the IAWS (International Academy of Wood Scientists) dinner were held at the Executive Club of the Lai-Lai Sheraton Hotel Taipei. The exquisite Chinese banquet was hosted by Kuan-Yuan Hsieh, CEO of the Kuan-Yuan Paper Company in central Taiwan. A young lady played ku-cheng (Chinese zither) to entertain the guests at the beginning of the banquet. Her marvelous deftness with the instrument quite intoxicated the guests. The banquet provided an opportunity for the symposium organizers to meet and know their guests from abroad.

On the morning of April 25, the symposium opened at the International Conference Hall of the Taiwan Forestry Research Institute's new Forestry Conservation Building. Opening remarks were given by the hosts, government officials, TAPPI Executive Director Wayne Gross, and Kiyoaki Iida, Executive Director of Japan TAPPI. Jean Renard then presented a keynote speech on environmental impact assessment of paper recycling, stressing the postive aspects of high domestic wastepaper recovery. Lung-Sheng Chang, president of the Association for Sustainable Development Council, presented a second keynote speech regarding sustainable development strategies in Taiwan, again praising the paper industry's performance in recycling, conserving water and energy, and attaining ISO 14000 status. The morning session concluded with the IAWS lecture by Gyosuke Meshitsuka of the University of Tokyo on "Sustainable utilization of lignocellulosics in harmony with the regional environment."

The symposium was conducted in two separate sessions for the next two days, with a total of 64 papers presented. The contents encompassed environmental issues, particularly wastewater treatment and mill closure, wet-end chemistry, new developments in pulping and bleaching, new sources of papermaking fibers, recycling, and forestry biotechnology. Thanks to good organization and preparation, the whole symposium went without a glitch.

On the evening of April 25, the symposium reception was held through the sponsorship of Hercules Taiwan Ltd. and Yie-Lie Enterprise Co. Ltd. at the Club House of the Taipei World Trade Centre Building. The buffet reception was accompanied by traditional Chinese music, with four musicians playing er-hu, sheng, pi-pa, and di-tse. Guests from abroad were also treated to a dim-sum dinner at the Jade Garden of the Lai-Lai Sheraton Taipei on the evening of April 26.

After the symposium, guests boarded two buses and headed to Cheng-Loong Paper Company's Ta-Yuan Mill. Visitors were quite impressed by the kind of poor quality furnish the mill is able to turn into liner and medium, as well as by the outstanding performance of the mill in conserving water and energy. CEO Tsai, who also was co-host of the symposium as president of Taiwan TAPPI, gave every visitor a framed ceramic figurine symbolizing a life of plenty. The company also treated the guests to a traditional Chinese banquet at the Airport Hotel at Chiang Kai-Shek International Airport.

Some of the visitors also embarked on a 3-day post-conference tour to eastern Taiwan. The trip included a visit at the largest integrated pulp and paper mill in Taiwan, Chung-Hwa Pulp and Paper Co., and scenic stops at such sites as the world-renowned marble canyons of Taroko National Park.

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