



THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG LIMITED 香港東方陶瓷學會

Spring Newsletter, May 2008

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When you receive this newsletter, the OCS trip to Hubei province to visit the new Provincial Museum in Wuhan and Wudang Mountain will be underway

After its initial publication, the trip quickly became fully subscribed and the Committee is discussing possible future trips to museums elsewhere in China. Our thanks go to Professor Jenny So for taking time away from her busy schedule to accompany us and to committee member Barbara Park for

so capably organising the event.

If you have any suggestions about specific destinations you would like to visit, please feel free to get in touch any of the committee members, whose contact details are listed on page 4.

Since the beginning of the year, OCS events have been varied and have included an auction preview, an appreciation evening and a number of lectures.

As always, we welcome suggestions for events you would like to see added to our monthly programs.

Catherine Maudsley
Newsletter Editor

Upcoming Events, Christie's guided preview, May 24

The OCS is fortunate to have the excellent guidance of Rosemary Scott and Pola Antebi to preview objects in the Christie's May auctions.

On view are: *Elegance and Artistry: Treasures from a Private Collection*; *The Imperial Sale: Important Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art*; *Magnificent Clocks for the Imperial Court from the Nezu Museum*; and *Im-*

portant Chinese Rhinoceros Horn Carvings from the Songzhutang Collection.

Treasures from a Private Collection comprises just a handful of pieces, foremost of which is a Mughal-style inscribed white jade cup dated 1774. Also from the Qianlong period (1736-1795) and from the same private collection are a pair of enamelled turquoise ground *famille rose* vases.

The Imperial Sale features an Imperial blue and white "Dragon" vase with a Qianlong six-character seal mark, an Imperial gilt-bronze "Dragon" temple bell, an Imperial cloisonné enamel ice-chest, both from the Qianlong period, and an early Ming copper-red-decorated *kendi* ewer from the Hongwu period (1365-1398).



Carved archaistic rhinoceros horn libation cup at Christie's



Ming dynasty jewel-embellished gold tripod vessel at Sotheby's

Past Events, Sotheby's guided preview, April 6

Members were expertly guided through Sotheby's offerings of Chinese ceramics and works of art, three private collections and a theme sale, *Splendours of the Qing Court*, by Edie Hu and Olivia Wang.

The Leshantang Collection was formed over the last thirty years and included a number of pieces from outstanding Shanghai collec-

tors. The highlight was an Imperial *Jun* ware flower-pot. *Two Song Treasures from a Japanese Collection* featured a Zen painting and a *Guan* ware mallet vase.

The Jiansongge Collection comprised thirty natural rock formations, all excellent examples of the "abstract sculpture" appreciated by the scholar, while

Splendours of the Qing Court included a selection of objects made for the court of the Qing Emperors, ranging from Imperial glass to jade, cloisonné and furniture.

Many participants also scrutinised a Ming dynasty jewel-embellished gold tripod vessel.

Past Events Jan-April 2008



Ceramic Pillows from the collection of Mark Lam



Woodblock print of "Pictures of Tilling and Weaving" inspired by painting of the same theme



Amber container with mandarin ducks in lotus leaf motif Liao period, 11th century

Mark Lam and Kam-Chuen Ho *Appreciation Evening: Chinese Ceramic Pillows,*

Participants joined Mark Lam, Chinese ceramic pillow collector and connoisseur, and Kam-Chuen Ho, Hong Kong Museum of Art curator for an evening of Chinese ceramic pillow appreciation.

Mark Lam gave a detailed powerpoint overview of ceramic pillows, looking at production techniques, shapes, glaze colours, decorative techniques,

artistic styles and cultural content. In their early phase, the majority of pillows were funerary, but later were for daily use. The pillows provided great scope for the ingenuity and creativity of potters, resulting in superb glazes, innovative decorative technique and poetic inscriptions, and the overview showed specific examples of each.

Mark Lam generously brought many examples from his collection of over

100 pillows, carefully selecting different glazes and shapes to provide a wide range.

Chris Hall brought along some superb examples of pillow covers from his textile collection, greatly adding to our enjoyment and education during this informal evening. .

Dr. Roslyn Hammers *Working for an Ideal Society: The Song-dynasty "Pictures of Tilling and Weaving",* March 28

In approximately 1145, Lou Shu (1090-1162) painted the "Pictures of Tilling and Weaving" (Gengzhitu).

This new type of painting comprised a pair of handscrolls, one depicting men growing grain in twenty-one steps, the other presenting women producing silk fabric in twenty-four processes. Each stage of the activities was accompanied by a poem.

The "Pictures of Tilling and Weaving" portrayed farming men and women at work in an ideal community.

In the paintings the workers employed the latest, most advanced technological equipment to generate silk and rice, crops used to pay taxes to the central government. While historians of science have explored the "Pictures of Tilling and Weaving, documenting the historical development

of agrarian technology, Dr. Hammers addressed the larger cultural, political, and literary contexts of the representations of men and women at labour.

Drawing on the iconography of the paintings and the content of the poems, she evaluated the appeal of depicting working men and women in the Song dynasty, convincingly demonstrating that the pictures were potent instruments of social change.

Professor Peter YK Lam *New Studies on Yongzheng (1723-1735) Imperial Porcelain,* February 27; Professor Jenny So *In Search of Northern Song Jades: Archaeological and Other Evidence,* January 30; Lina Lin *From Sitting on Mats to Sitting on Furniture: The Evolution of Chinese Furnishings from the Han-T'ang to Five Dynasties Period,* January 21

In this sequel to his Ip Yee Memorial lecture delivered to the OCS in 2006, Professor Peter Lam grouped Yongzheng pieces chronologically by making references to archival records of the Imperial Household Department, terms of identified kiln supervisors and calligraphic styles of the base marks, while also noting the usual stylistic characteristics.

Professor Jenny So's talk

looked at both jade and amber from the 10th - early 12th centuries exploring issues of cultural and artistic exchange between two political-cultural entities: Qidan-Liao and Northern Song dynasties. She uncovered many of the complex forces at work (religious, cultural, artistic etc.) behind the production of these luxury goods and explained their meaning in the lives of both Chinese and Qidan

owners.

Our January speaker, Lina Lin of the National Palace Museum, Taipei, fascinated with her graphic recreation of the furnishings of the Tang through to the Five Dynasties period. Drawing on a combination of funerary objects and surviving works of ancient paintings she traced the development of form from early functionalism to the flowing lines of Tang style.

Wuhan, Wudang Mountain Trip May 9-14, 2008

With the expert guidance of Professor Jenny So, world-acknowledged Chinese antiquities authority, the OCS will visit the new Hubei Provincial Museum and have access to its storage room to see objects not on display to the public. Professor So received her doctorate from Harvard University and was the Senior Curator for the ancient Chinese collection at the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C., before returning to Hong Kong in 2001 where she is currently Professor of Fine Arts and Director of the Institute of Chinese Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

In 1977, the remarkably rich and undisturbed tomb of the Marquis Yi of Zeng was excavated. Dated to about 433 BCE, its stunning finds included over 15,000 objects including bronze ritual vessels, bronze bells, stone musical chimes, jades, and lacquer. More recently, in 2001, the tomb of Prince Liangzhuang (9th son of the Ming Yongle Emperor) who died in 1441 was excavated with over 1,400 artifacts, including large numbers of outstanding gold objects, jades and blue-and-white porcelains. Our trip will provide ample opportunities to view these objects, with the benefit of Professor So's insights.

The sacred Daoist Wudang Mountain lies north of Wuhan. Its Five Dragon Temple existed as early as the Tang dynasty (618-907) and by the Ming dynasty,

the Emperor sent 300,000 soldiers and craftsmen to build temples, pavilions and other structures. Today there were 36 halls, constituting the largest existing Daoist complex, rich in architecture, sculptures, scriptures and more. As a national park area, the mountain also has flourishing plant life and impressive landscapes. To put the mountain in its religious context, we will have a discussion on sacred geography and there will also be an introduction to *neigong*, the Chinese breathing and meditation disciplines associated with Daoism. On our return from the mountain, we will stop by the excavated Marquis Yi of Zeng tomb site.

Itinerary

Friday, May 9

HK to Wuhan, KA 850 (0925/1120)
Wuhan Airport, Lunch, Hubei Provincial Museum, Marquis Yi of Zeng bells etc, Dinner, Renaissance Wuhan Hotel

Saturday, May 10

Wuhan, Wuhan to Xiangfan
Hubei Provincial Museum – new galleries Ming dynasty Prince Liangzhuang, new lacquer finds, Lunch (under own arrangement), Drive to Xiangfang, Dinner Ammon Hotel

Sunday, May 11

Xiangfan to Wudang and return
All Day Wudang Mountain

Ammon Hotel

Monday, May 12

Xiangfan to Suizhou to Wuhan

City Wall, Lunch, Marquis Yi of Zeng Tomb, Dinner Renaissance Wuhan Hotel

Tuesday, May 13

Wuhan
Hubei Provincial Museum *Special Viewing Storage Area*, Lunch, Wuhan Museum, Dinner Renaissance Wuhan Hotel

Wednesday, May 14

Wuhan to Hong Kong KA 851 (1115/1325)

To take advantage of the Buddha's Birthday Weekend of May 9th, we depart early Friday morning and return on the afternoon of Wednesday, May 14.



Marquis Yi of Zeng set of bronze bells



Zhenwu statue in bronze, Daoist architecture on Wudang Mountain

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The Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong Limited (OCS) is devoted to the study and appreciation of all forms of oriental art and culture.

It is the OCS mission to gather together members whose interest in oriental art and culture is their main enthusiasm, to provide a forum for the lively exchange of ideas and information, to issue educational publications, to present stimulating lectures from distinguished speakers, to organise study sessions and travel programmes, and to encourage collector members to open up their treasures to other members

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OCS Membership

We rely on membership subscriptions and healthy attendance at OCS events.

If you have any friends who share our interests

and are not already members, please **bring them along** to our next event.

Postal communications are being phased out.

For ease, cost-efficiency and expedition of communication, **please supply an e-mail address**, if you have not already done so.

OCS Library

The **OCS Library**, comprising the Society's collection of over 400 books, catalogues, journals and papers on oriental art and culture is available to members at the Art Section on the tenth floor of the Central Library in Causeway Bay.

Over the past few months we have received a number of book donations. A list of their titles will appear in the Summer newsletter.

Material from the **OCS Library** is available for lending to OCS Members on presentation of their OCS Membership card and library card and to other Central Library members for browsing only.