



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

Autumn Newsletter, September 2008

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Our two most recent events, Dr Marianne Wong's *Han Pictorial Art* talk in September and Dr. Maggie Wan's *Auspicious Words on Sixteenth Century Porcelains and Lacquer Wares* talk in July, brought a refreshing point of view and highlighted the work of two young, up-and-coming scholars. Both talks were well received and we hope that the speakers will share their knowledge with us again.

As we move into the autumn, we have Sotheby's preview on October 4 and

Christie's preview on November 29. Looking at upcoming lectures later in the season, we are pleased to have the expertise of a number of overseas experts.

The Wuhan trip in May was thoroughly enjoyable and enlightening. Our next trip, this time a weekend, will be to Guangzhou from November 28 –30.

We look forward to seeing you soon at these events.

Catherine Maudsley
Newsletter Editor

Save the date:

Julian Thompson Lecture
October 9

K.S. Lo Memorial Lecture
by Dr. Jay Xu
November 6

Ip Yee Memorial Lecture
By Dr. Simon Kwan
November 18

Christie's guided preview
November 29

OCS
Annual General Meeting
& Lecture by Dr. Wei Wenbin
December 3



Qianlong Imperial Seals from the Estate of Émile Guimet and Emperor Qianlong's Review of the Grand Parade of Troops



Émile Guimet (1836-1918)

Sotheby's Auction Preview, October 4

Sotheby's Hong Kong upcoming auction of Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art, titled *Legacies of Imperial Power* gathers together objects reflecting the Qianlong Emperor's power and legitimacy. With approximately 35 lots, the sale includes massive Imperial seals, large Imperial handscrolls, as well as objects of military authority.

Of great interest to Oriental Ceramic Society members will be the sale of the Imperial seals from the estate of Émile Guimet (1836-1918), founder of the celebrated Guimet Museum in Paris. One is a white jade "dragon" seal and the other is a massive Khotan-green jade "dragon" seal. In 1876, when Guimet travelled to Japan, China, Indochina and India, the celebrated humanist, philanthropist and visionary French collector received many gifts and also purchased entire collections.

While the bulk of his collection was gifted to the State with the establishment of the Guimet Museum in 1889, Émile Guimet continued to collect works of art privately. The collection of Qianlong Imperial seals, from this private group, comes from his direct descendants.

Two exceptional Qianlong scrolls will also be on view. The *Emperor Qianlong's Review of the Grand Parade of Troops* (*Dayue Tu*) is a huge scroll measuring 68 cm x 15.5 m, showing a vast panoply of military figures. The *Compilation of the Lanting Xu Imperial Collection of Documents woven in kesi* ("cut silk" tapestry) is a testament to one of Emperor Qianlong's most ambitious cultural enter-

prises – the exhaustive search for all remaining versions of Wang Xizhi's seminal *Lanting Xu* (Preface to the Poems of the Orchid Pavilion) calligraphy. At more than 17 m long, it is an exceptionally large and fine 18th century *kesi*.

This event is fully booked.

**Upcoming Events,
October 2008
Past Events, July-
September 2008**



Han dynasty tomb mural



**The Jiajing Emperor (reigned
1522-66) and blue and white**

Mr. Julian Thompson Lecture *Later-Decorated Chinese Porcelain*, October 9

The purpose of the talk will be to look at enamelled Ming and Qing porcelains where the decoration was added at a different time or location from that of their manufacture.

The areas covered will include Ming imperial porcelain with decoration added in the Ming dynasty at non-imperial kilns at Jingdezhen, also Ming pieces with Qing and Minguo period

decoration, and with Japanese decoration. The main subject will be Qing imperial wares which have been enamelled in the Minguo period, with an examination of the features of these pieces which can lead to their detection as 'later decorated'.

These will include signs of re-firing and 'skinning', also anomalies in the details of the painted decoration when comparison is made with other examples of the

same pattern.

Julian Thompson served as chairman of Sotheby's U.K and Sotheby's International from 1982-87, and was the member of Sotheby's board responsible for Sotheby's Institute. He was Chairman of Sotheby's Asia until his retirement from the company in 2004. He is now an independent consultant and researcher working principally in the field of Chinese ceramics.

Dr Marianne Wong Pui Yin Lecture *Han Pictorial Art*, September 9

In her beautifully illustrated talk on Han Pictorial Art, Dr. Marianne Wong Pui Yin discussed various decorated pictorial images excavated from tombs, including omens, celestial, cosmological or immortal scenes; figures or episodes from classical history; daily life scenes, such as carriage procession, central pavilion and homage, banquets and entertainments.

While some of the material was familiar to mem-

bers, much of the information was from recently published archaeological sites in China from areas as diverse as Inner Mongolia and Sichuan. While some of the depictions were from the interiors or on the outer doors of burial tombs, other designs were applied on funeral objects. In each case, Dr. Wong discussed the Han burial system and how it reflected the cultural ideology.

She strongly emphasised and illustrated the differ-

ences between the Western and Eastern Han dynasties, the former focusing on cosmological issues while the latter depicted everyday events such as banquets and entertainment.

Dr. Wong is currently a senior course tutor at the Chinese Civilisation Centre at the City University of Hong Kong. She holds doctoral degrees from the Mainland's Institute of Archaeology at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and SOAS.

Dr. Maggie Wan Lecture *Auspicious Words on Sixteenth Century Porcelains and Lacquer Wares*, July 29

The Jiajing Emperor was a faithful Taoist disciple, and Taoist motifs, such as the Eight Taoist immortals, the Eight Trigrams, and cranes in clouds were widely used in the decoration of porcelain.

Official porcelains and lacquer wares of the period display a variety of auspicious words, such as *fu* (Good fortune), *shou* (Longevity), *yongbao changchun* (Stay young forever), and *wanshou qing-*

ping (Myriad longevity, pure and peaceful).

However, as Dr. Maggie Wan so eloquently explained during her talk, the true innovation was the "organic form" auspicious word design, which was invented during the Jiajing reign. By exploring auspicious word designs through their underlying ideas, cultural significance and relation to the visual culture of the Ming court, Dr. Wan amply demonstrated how

the Emperor's religious devotion, pursuit of immortality, fascination with alchemy and the divination practice of spirit writing were catalysts for the "organic form" auspicious word decorative scheme.

Dr. Wan, who obtained her D.Phil. from the University of Oxford, is currently teaching at the Department of Fine Arts, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

A Guangzhou Weekend, led by Tina Yee-wan Pang November 28-30, 2008

Led by Tina Yee-wan Pang, OCS Executive Committee member, curator at the University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong and an honorary assistant professor in the University's Department of Fine Art, the highlight of this weekend will be a visit to the Mausoleum of the King of Nanyue. It was discovered intact in 1983 with over 1000 cultural relics ranging from jade carvings, musical instruments, bronze vessels, clothing, gold and silver dating to the Western Han period (206 BCE–CE 25). The burial chamber of the mausoleum contains the finest examples of fresco wall painting found so far in southern China. There will also be a visit to the site of the Southern Yue kingdom's Palace and Garden, which was discovered in 2000. The palace site was designed with a stone pond and brook, and is one of the oldest examples of a royal garden that has been preserved. Its discovery is an important addition to knowledge of royal gardens of the Qin and Han periods, as well as architectural design.

The Southern Yue kingdom was a vassal state of the Han empire and its artefacts demonstrate uniquely southern cultural characteristics. Altogether three sites associated with the Southern Yue kingdom have been discovered in Central Guangzhou, and their preservation is considered the successful integration of modern urban development and heritage conservation. The sites have been submitted to

the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for consideration as sites of Outstanding Universal Value.

As time permits, we also plan to visit other Guangzhou sites of interest:

The Guangdong Provincial Museum with its recently refitted galleries featuring Chaozhou wood carvings.

The five-storey Zhenhai Tower, also known as the Guangzhou Museum, in Yuexiu park. The Tower was originally built in 1380 but has since been rebuilt five times. Inside is a slightly fusty chronological display of Guangdong artefacts dating from the Han dynasty to the period of its occupation by British and French troops during the Opium War. It does, however, have magnificent views over the city and Baiyun Mountain.

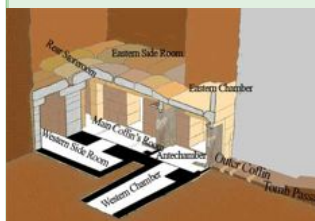
The Chen Clan Academy (Chen's Ancestral Temple) built in 1890. It is now a showcase of Guangdong folk art but is itself a beautifully-preserved example of late Qing architectural carving. Originally it was intended as a place in which different branches of the Chen family could come and prepare for the imperial examinations.

The Huaisheng si mosque was founded when Guangzhou became an important and trading centre in the Tang dynasty (608–907). This could be combined with a visit to the old moslem burial ground at the Orchid Garden, and the tomb of the Prophet's uncle, the builder of the mosque.

The Liurong Temple (Six Banyan Tree temple) was originally built in the sixth century to house the ashes of the Buddha in its pagoda, and the Guangxiao Temple. While the main buildings date to the last rebuild of the 1830s, there are two important pagodas behind the main hall dating to the Tang period.

Tina Yee-wan Pang is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London in Chinese language and Chinese art & archaeology, and has an MPhil in Ethnology and Museum Ethnography from the University of Oxford. Prior to joining Hong Kong University's University Museum and Art Gallery, she lived and worked Beijing and New York. Tina has published on steppes bronzes, sixth-century architectural ceramics and contemporary Chinese art. Her interests also include the art of the China Trade, museological issues and Hong Kong art.

Costs will include accommodation in a five star hotel, all meals, ground transportation, local guide and entrance fees. The tour will depart Hong Kong on the afternoon of Friday, November 28, and return to Hong Kong on the afternoon of Sunday, November 30. Further details and a booking form will be sent to OCS members in due course.



Mausoleum of the King of Nanyue



Zhenhai Tower



Chen Clan Academy

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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.

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.