



THE ORIENTAL CERAMIC SOCIETY OF HONG KONG

Dear Members

30 November 2005

OCS Newsletter - Winter 2005

We are pleased to enclose the fourth in our new series of Newsletters, that for Winter 2005. The aim is to keep you in touch with the Society and provide a diary of OCS events and other news at home and overseas. The contents are as follows:

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Please let us know if you have any comments on the Newsletter and any suggestions for activities to be included in the programme. We would really welcome your input.

The autumn season is in full swing and there is an interesting programme planned for the coming period. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the **Annual General Meeting** at the Hong Kong Club on **December 5 at 6.30 pm** and at our forthcoming activities.

The social gatherings held for Life and Ordinary Members in September and October 2005 were popular and helped to increase our membership, a trend we shall strive to maintain. Reminders for membership renewals for 2006 will be sent out shortly.

The new **OCS Bulletin Number Thirteen (2002-mid 2005)** is hot off the press and copies are being circulated to all Members. It contains a host of scholarly material to refresh the jaded palate and we hope you will enjoy it!

Sincerely yours

Malcolm Barnett
President

OCS NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2005

1. Executive Committee

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2. 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, we would encourage you to *put them in touch with the OCS* and *bring them along to our next event*.

In the interests of speed, economy and environmental concerns, postal communications are being phased out, so, if you have not already done so, *please supply an e-address (failing which a fax number)* for receipt of Newsletters and circulars.

3. Recent Events

September 13: “**Patterns of and Symbols in Early South Western China Ethnic Weavings**”. Lecture by Eric Boudot jointly presented with the Textile Society of Hong Kong at the Helena May. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

September 27: “**Paintings of Luohan Figures**”. Lecture by Catherine Maudsley jointly presented with the Friends of the HKMA at the HKMA Lecture Room. (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

September 28: **Social Gathering for Life Members** at the Hong Kong Design Centre, Kennedy Road (the former JLG headquarters) with a solo zheng recital and an address by the President to launch fund-raising for the forthcoming OCS exhibition “**Art and Imitation in China**”.

October 21: **Social Evening for Members** at the Bloomberg Auditorium with a cocktail party and membership drive. This was followed by a lecture by Chris Buckley on “**Tibetan Furniture: Painted Designs**” (*See details in Section 9 Highlights below.*)

October 22: **Sotheby’s Auction Preview and Handling Session** at Pacific Place led by Nicolas Chow.

- October 29:** “Elegance in Relief: Carved Porcelain from Jingdezhen of the 19th to early 20th Century”. Gallery tour at the Art Museum of the Chinese University led by Tony Miller, who is one of the exhibitors.
- November 11- 20:** **Thai Loy Krathong Tour.** *(See details in Section 9 Highlights below.)*
- November 25:** “Rescuing a Heritage: Masterpieces of Chinese Lacquer from the Mike Healy Collection”. Lecture by Julia White at the Helena May. *(See details in Section 9 Highlights below.)*
- November 26:** **Christie’s Auction Preview and Handling Session** at the HK Convention Centre led by Rosemary Scott and Pola Antebi.

4. Diary for December 2005

- December 3:** “Chinese Paintings from the C P Lin Collection”. Gallery tour at the HKMA from 10.30 to 11.30 am led by Raymond Tang.
- December 5:** **OCS Annual General Meeting** at the Hong Kong Club at 6.30 pm. This will be followed at 7.30 pm by a lecture by Kai-Yin Lo on “House, Home, Family: The Chinese Way of Living and Being”, and at 8.45 pm by dinner.
- December 13:** “Song and other Ceramics - Show and Tell” at the HK Club from 6.30 pm through dinner. A ceramics appreciation evening with Henry Howard-Sneyd and K Y Ng at which Members are warmly invited to bring along pieces for discussion and vetting.

5. Diary for January 2006

- January 21:** “The Silk Road: Treasures from Xinjiang”. Gallery tour at the Hong Kong Heritage Museum, Shatin from 11am to 12 noon.

The exhibition showcases 115 sets of treasures on loan from the Xinjiang Cultural Heritage Bureau. These include rarely seen gold ornaments, bronze wares, wooden slips with Kharosthi script, textiles, and funerary items such as well-preserved mummies and a wooden corpse, exhibits that uncover the mystery of the region’s ancient burial practices.

6. Diary for February 2006

- Feb 18-March 3:** **Indian Tour of Delhi, Bhubaneshwar, Kolkata, Benares and Khajuraho.** *(See details in Section 9 Highlights below.)*

This may be our last opportunity to be join a tour accompanied by the redoubtable Mrs. Malathi Ramaswamy, who is a walking encyclopedia of the cultural, archeological, sociological and religious life of India, and is not to be missed!

There are still places available and the cut-off date set by the airline is December 3. If you are interested to join please contact Barbara Park **soonest** on 90340201 or by e-mail at bpark@plant-a-park.com .

7. **Forthcoming Events**

March 29 2006: **The Ip Yee Memorial Lecture** on the dating of Imperial Wares during the Kangxi Reign will be given by Mr. Peter Y. K. Lam, Director of the Art Museum, Chinese University of Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Club (a circular with further details will be sent out nearer the time).

Autumn 2006 **The K. S. Lo Memorial Lecture** will be given by Mr. James C. Y. Watt, Chairman of the Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (a circular with further details will be sent out nearer the time).

Autumn 2006: **“Art and Imitation in China”.**
The OCS exhibition will be held at the Hong Kong University Museum and Art Gallery from **6 October to 10 December 2006**, with sponsorship by **HSBC**. **Mr. Antony Lin** will be curator and various international scholars have agreed to contribute to the catalogue. This provides a special opportunity for Members to display their treasures to the public.

8. **News from overseas**

December 15 2005 Auction: Asian Art, Christie’s, South Kensington, London

Until 30 Dec 2005: “Celadon: Ceramic treasures of China (11th century BC – 14th century AD”. An exhibition at Musee Cernuschi, Paris.

Until 5 Jan 2006: “Sounds of the Silk Road: Asian Musical Instruments”. An exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

Until 9 Jan 2006: “Art Treasures from Vietnam: Sculptures from Champa”. An exhibition at Musee Guimet, Paris.

Until 15 Jan 2006: “Pearls of the Parrot of India: The Emperor Akbar’s Illustrated Khamsa 1595-8”. An exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Until 22 Jan 2006: “Shadows, Masks & Music: Aspects of Performing Arts in Asia”. An exhibition at the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco.

10-19 March 2006: TEFAF International Art and Antiques Fair at Maastricht, Netherlands.

Until 17 April 2006: “China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795”. An exhibition from the Palace Museum Beijing at the Royal Academy of Arts, London.

Until Sept 2006: “Taj Mahal”. An exhibition at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

9. **Highlights**

“Patterns of and Symbols in Early South Western China Ethnic Weavings”.

Lecture by Eric Boudot jointly presented with the Textile Society of Hong Kong at the Helena May on September 21.

Eric Boudot spoke about the ancient designs which have been preserved by the minorities of southwest China. Many of the minorities of southwest China had originally lived further north but had moved south to the more remote parts of China, as the Han Chinese occupied the more fertile plains. In their remote villages, the minorities had preserved designs similar to those of the Han or earlier periods. For example Boudot said that the early dragon design was more snake-like than the later dragon which was a symbol of the Emperor. He showed a snake-like dragon on a tujia bed cover which is very similar to the dragon on a 4th century textile excavated near Changsha. He also showed other early designs which have continued in minority textiles such as confronting birds and the eight-pointed star.

“Luohan Figures in Paintings”. Lecture by Catherine Maudsley jointly presented with the Friends of the HKMA at the HKMA Lecture Room on September 27.

Well-known to local audiences, Catherine Maudsley enthralled us with a survey of Chinese Buddhist paintings of *luohan*, enlightened individuals who possessed deep spirituality. She explained that paintings of this genre reached a peak in the 11th century in China and that similar paintings were featured in Tibetan Buddhist art. This provided infinite scope for comparative study. With a fine collection of pictorial images, she showed us a number of examples of artistic and cultural exchange between China and Tibet, all in the context of these Buddhist works.

“Tibetan Furniture: Painted Designs”. Lecture by Chris Buckley at the Bloomberg Auditorium on October 21.

A resident of Beijing, Chris Buckley became enamoured of Tibetan carpets and furniture on a visit there some years ago, and gave up his career in the pharmaceutical industry to concentrate on this new abiding interest.

He described the designs in paint and gesso which adorn the surfaces of the furniture, and traced the influences of these designs. He also gave us some hints on the dating of the furniture based on the style, particularly of the method in which the dragon design was applied. The lecture focussed on the paramount influence of Yuan and Ming dynasty silk textiles from China on Tibetan painted furniture designs. The lecture was illustrated with excellent slides taken from the speaker's own collection, and he showed examples of parallels between silk textile designs and Tibetan furniture, including some actual examples of antique Chinese silks that were once owned by Tibetan temples.

We have since learned that Mr. Buckley's book “Tibetan Furniture” has reached the New York Times Christmas Bestseller List. A rare achievement for a first-time author.

Thai Loy Krathong Tour which ran from November 11-20.

There are few pleasures in life more enjoyable than rolling along the Thai countryside in a comfortable bus, high above the other traffic on the road, and savouring the splendid passing scenes. Twenty-two members of the OCS enjoyed such a memory-making tour from 11-20 November. Those members joining the tour were Helen Anderson (Tour

organizer), Malcolm Barnett (OCS President), Jan Beards, Chris Hall (OCS Honorary Treasurer), Lana and Jim Kinoshita, Elaine Koo, Nina and Ian Lansdown, Helen and Joseph Lee, Susie Liang, Marina Lo, Grace Luk, Jacqueline Muller, Barbara Park (OCS Honorary Secretary), Peter Gray, Josephine Shaw, Maisie and Henry Wong, and Virginia and Wellington Yee.

Our tour began on a high note. Dawn Rooney, OCS member and Bangkok resident introduced Professor William Klausner who was our speaker of the evening. He regaled us with incidents he has experienced in his everyday dealings with the Thais. He also knew Jim Thompson well and was able to add something of interest about the legendary American.

We were up early the next morning for one of many busy and rewarding days. We visited the 14th-18th century Thai capital of Ayutthaya, and learned much about Thai wat architecture from the brilliant talks by Khun Euayporn Kerdchouay, our accompanying lecturer. He explained some early Chinese influences found there, notably wall paintings with Chinese characteristics and amulets with Chinese inscriptions found among the jewels.

In the late afternoon we visited the new Museum of southeastern ceramics at Bangkok University where we were met by Dawn Rooney who showed us some of the masterpieces of the collection; and an impressive one it is. Not yet officially opened, the Museum Curator welcomed us as special guests in the absence of Dr. Roxanna Brown who has catalogued the collection.

The next day we drove south along the Gulf of Thailand to Chantaburi to visit the Museum of underwater archaeology. Housed in the remains of an old 19th century fort, it shows an interesting assortment of ceramics excavated from the surrounding waters since 1975. Of special interest were the many Chinese ceramics found. They are of 2 major types: firstly the so-called Kraak porcelain which was made in the kilns at Jingdezhen; and secondly the coarser ware known as Swatow ware made in kilns near the Chinese city of that name. The day ended with a night at a comfortable hotel on the beach at Rayong, a small town set amid orchards and tall palm trees.

Charming Chiang Mai produced some beautiful memories of its own. Here are found strong Burmese influences on architecture, dress and foods. We were treated to a dinner of Northern Thai specialities at the home of John and Pat Shaw. John, a renowned collector of Thai ceramics, shared his extensive collection with us as well as some interesting anecdotes about the perils of collecting antiques today. We enjoyed the company of several expats, including the American consul and her husband. These interesting people added to our contemporary knowledge of the city and its resident hill tribe community.

None of us will ever forget the spectacle of Loy Krathong in old Sukhothai, the place where Thailand became an entity in the 13th century. We launched our "Krathongs" in the lotus pond under a full moon and in the shadows of the Buddhist temple spires and then watched a spectacular "sound and light" show which dramatized the historical development of the kingdom. The fairytale airport in the city certainly produced a lingering sense of delight. One member was heard to wish she could just stay there instead of in the hotel!

Also never to be forgotten are the majestic old Khmer ruins on the Korat plain. We visited Phnom Rung, Muang Tam and Pmai, each very different and memorable, reflecting, as they did, strong elements of Angkor with which they were contemporaneous. Built between the 9th and 13th centuries, they show both Hindu and Buddhist influences. Pimai is the only Buddhist temple while both Phnom Rung and Muang Tam were dedicated to the Hindu god,

Shiva.

Back in Bangkok, we were treated to other pleasures. We dined at the Siam Society and enjoyed meeting with its President and his wife as well as members of the Council. Exciting plans for future relations between the two organizations were formulated.

On the last morning, Dawn Rooney accompanied many of the group to the bustling Jatujak weekend market, which provided the final memory of the tour. She is certainly a star in our crown.

Our warmest thanks to Khun Euayporn Kerdchouay who patiently explained so much of the exciting art world of Thailand and to Helen Anderson, our creative and intrepid organizer without whom the tour would not have been possible.

“Rescuing a Heritage: Masterpieces of Chinese Lacquer from the Mike Healy Collection”. Lecture by Julia White held at the Helena May on November 25.

Using wonderful images which reflected the intricate workmanship and glossy finish of the varied lacquer ware in the Mike Healy collection, Julia White discussed the origin of the Collection. Part of the story lies in the perspicacity of the collector who identified, in an auction catalogue, a Yuan lacquer box inlaid with mother of pearl which had been included in the seminal work by Sir Harry Garner on Chinese lacquer. The Collection now spans pieces from the Han through to the Ming Dynasty, with important pieces from the Yuan Dynasty. The collection and connoisseurship of lacquer in Japan also figures as it has enabled the preservation of pieces to the present. Julia White discussed and illustrated the importance of Chinese lacquer in Japan and its incorporation in the tea ceremony using illustrations of national treasures held in Japan and those now in the Healy Collection.

The Collection is currently on display in New York and it is hoped that it will also be displayed in Asia in the future. In the meantime, Julia has very kindly donated to the OCS Collection a superbly illustrated Catalogue of the Collection.

Indian Tour to Delhi, Bhubaneshwar, Kolkata, Benares & Khajuraho to be held from **February 18 to March 3, 2006.**

The Society is delighted to announce another trip to India, to be led by the redoubtable Mrs. Malathi Ramaswamy - this time to Delhi and the states of Orissa, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

Those members who travelled with us earlier this year to Chennai, Mahalapuram, Aurangabad, Ajanta, and Ellora greatly enjoyed Mrs. Ramaswamy's company, and the opportunity to share in her vast knowledge of India. A brief tour outline follows:

Dehli . We arrive in Delhi, flying into India's capital city on Cathay Pacific's direct flight from Hong Kong. As we arrive in the early hours of the morning, we'll stay at a hotel near the Airport before taking a late morning tour. We'll move on to

Bhubaneshwar. Once the ancient capital of the Kalinga empire and now the capital of Orissa. Bhubaneshwar's long and rich history covers 2000 years. Known as the 'Cathedral of the East' owing to its large number of shrines, out of the 7000 temples built in the lavish Oriya style that used to border the Sagar tank, some 500 still survive.

Puri. One of the four holiest places in India, Puri is washed by the sea, and embraced by casuarina - fringed beaches. We'll visit the Udayagiri Caves on the way to the magnificent Sun Temple at Konarak, perhaps the pinnacle of Orissan temple architecture, and one of the most stunning monuments of religious architecture in the world.

Kolkata. Home to ten million people and the largest city in India, Kolkata sprawls along the banks of the Hooghly River. It is the commercial capital of the east, and home to major industrial plants, textile mills as well as financial and corporate headquarters. As the former capital of British India (until 1912) it still bears the influence of the Raj, and we will do our best to cover its wide range of museums, temples, religious missions, the National Library etc.

Varanasi. Known formerly as Kashi or Benares, Varanasi derives its name from the two tributaries of the Ganga - Varuna and Asi - between which it is situated. This Holy city is set on the banks of the river Ganga and is said to have been founded by Lord Shiva. We'll visit Sarnath, only 10 km from Varanasi, where the Buddha first preached his message of enlightenment.

Khajuraho. Khajuraho derives its name from the Khajur (the date palm tree) which is found in abundance in the area – however it's much more famous for its many temples, built between 950 and 1050 A.D. The celebrated sculptures and murals in these temples not only testify to the mastery of their early craftsman, but also to the breadth of vision of the Chandela Rajputs under whose reign these temples were constructed. Of the original 85 temples, some 22 still exist.

Delhi. We return to Delhi, where we celebrate the end of our trip at the glorious Imperial Hotel, leaving a full day to catch up on sites unvisited and shopping.

10. **Enquiries**

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