



Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum Newsletter

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Museum opens 11 May 2005

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN Ceramics Museum had a soft opening, with some 150 invited guests, on Wednesday 11 May 2005 at 3-6 p.m. It is now open to the public.

Guests arrived at 3 p.m., and at 3:30 the president of Bangkok University, Thanu Kulachol, gave a short welcome speech. Next came Museum Director Dr. Roxanna M. Brown. Mr. Surat Osathanugrah, the founder of Bangkok University and primary patron of the museum, then talked about his experiences with ceramics before officially opening the exhibition area with three strikes on a ceremonial gong.

At present, the exhibits are presented in a single large gallery in five types of display settings. The most important display uses data from shipwreck excavations to present a chronology for Thai Sukhothai and Sawankhalok ceramics. This is the first time the chronology, which is based on Dr. Brown's research, is being visually presented ever, anywhere.

Bangkok University students, who have already been visiting in small groups, especially like a long display cabinet with hand-holes. A student film that intro-

duces the university on TV advertising spots features a student caressing a Sukhothai coconut-shape bottle through one of the holes. Elsewhere a 'waterfall' of storage jars cascades down one wall. Three open sandpits with mixtures of trade ceramics from about AD 1400, 1500, and 1550 give an idea about the array of types seen at typical archaeological sites from those time frames.

The museum has the largest collection in Thailand of ceramics from the Tak-Omkoi sites of western Thailand. These sites from the 14th-16th centuries, which were unearthed in the 1980s, yielded an astonishing variety of trade ceramics both from Thailand and abroad.

An annex to the museum is already under construction, and it will offer lecture and meeting rooms, more storage, and space for a major shard archive. Donations will be welcomed!

The three speakers at the opening ceremony (from above): Surat Osathanugrah, primary patron of the museum; Thanu Kulachol, president of Bangkok University; and Roxanna Brown, museum director.



Letter from the editor

It's been a lot of work, and now the museum is open. The idea of founding a museum for ceramics began turning into reality when the Bangkok University set aside a construction budget in 2000. Its first staff member was Pariwat Thammapreechakorn, who had been curator of Surat Osathanugrah's private collection since 1985. Educational Officer Burin Singtoaj also joined the staff in 2000, and I myself came in September 2002. We gained a secretary, Ms. Utaiwan Chatuporn, in 2004. Three other persons make it all work smoothly: Somkiat Singbang, Yupin Nootrungruang, and Sukon Siha-arj. Our initial Thai web pages are now available from Bangkok University's opening page at www.bu.ac.th. Much more will be added, including an English version, and an archive of our newsletters. This is our sixth issue. The first was sent out in September 2004. There are many more to come, and I hope to see more contributions from readers.





1. Surat Osathanugrah accepts a gift from university president Dr. Thanu Kulachol.
2. Surat addresses members of the Bangkok University administration and guests.
3. About 150 invited guests attended the afternoon festivities.
4. The doors were formally opened with three strikes on a gong.
5. Curator Pariwat Thammapreechakorn explains a display.
6. Bangkok University teachers, including Pattira Changpinij (left), handle ceramics in the hand-holes display.
7. Dr. Ian Glover (foreground) and Robert McLeod examine masterpieces from the collection.
8. Charoen Kanthawongs, Phutorn Bhumadhon, Jiranan Pitpreecha, Surat Osathanugrah, and Bhujjong Chandavij admire the AD 1400 'sandpit' display.
9. Nearby a model of an ancient kiln, guests sample refreshments in the forecourt before the opening speeches.
10. A delegation of teachers from Buriram, a province where ancient Khmer kilns are found, made a special visit.
11. Surat and his wife Chorpeepop admire a display of Sukhothai-era architectural ceramics.
12. The 'Ming gap' (*circa* 1352-1487) is illustrated with blue and white ceramics recovered from the Tak-Omkoi sites of western Thailand.
13. Mathana Santiwat, Vice-President for Academic Affairs (left) and Museum Education Officer Burin Singtoaj near a sandpit display.
14. Museum secretary Utaiwan Chatuporn, helps register the guests on their arrival.

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum

The museum houses an initial collection of 2,050 ceramics donated by Mr. Surat Osathanugrah. With few exceptions, these ceramics were all found in Thailand. There is pottery from as early as about 3,000 BC and as late as the 19th century.

There are ceramics from production centers in Thailand as well as ceramics that were imported in olden times.

Khmer ceramics from old kilns presently located within Thailand are represented. There are also Vietnamese ceramics, a great variety of Chinese ceramics, Burmese, Lao and Japanese ceramics.

Display galleries show all the types of ceramics found in Thailand and the technology involved in local Thai production. The museum collections include kiln site wasters and fragments that are essential for teaching ceramics dating and identification.

It is also home to one of the largest collections of ceramics from the 14th-16th centuries Tak-Omkoi sites of western Thailand.

The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 9- 4 p.m. except public holidays.

Interior museum views



The displays seen here show (upper left) a variety of storage jars (upper right) an outline chronology for Thai trade ceramics (lower right) the mixture of Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese ceramics made about AD 1400.

The Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum is located at the Rangsit campus of Bangkok University.

Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum
Bangkok University, Rangsit campus
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Continued, more photographs



Surat Osathanugrah (right) and Othman Yatim, museum director, University of Malaya.



Left to right: Phutorn Bhumadhorn, Sumit Pitiphat, Surat Osathanugrah, and Bhujjong Chandavij.



Guests visit ceramics in the university library adjacent to the museum.



Surat and guests at the jars wall.



Peeraya Hanpongpanh, Public Relations Dept, introduced the speakers.



Sagiem Ratanapopphun, Vice-President Financial Affairs (left) and Pavinee Choy-sunirachorn, Financial Affairs assistant.