

Speech by Ms Priscylla Shaw, Chairman, Asian Civilisations Museum at the Launch of the Exhibition and Catalogue “Chinese Snuff Bottles From The Sanctum Of Enlightened Respect” on 11 July 2007, 7.00 pm, at the Asian Civilisations Museum

Good evening,

Guest-of-Honour Professor Tommy Koh, Chairman, National Heritage Board; Denis and Seok Eng; Your Excellencies; Distinguished guests; Ladies and gentlemen.

A very warm welcome and thank you for coming to the launch of the Exhibition, and the Catalogue of the Exhibition: *Chinese Snuff Bottles - from the Sanctum of Enlightened Respect, the third.*

ACM is proud and privileged to hold this exhibition of 355 exquisite snuff bottles of renowned Singaporean collector, and my fellow Board Member, Mr. Denis Low. Mr. Low has been collecting snuff bottles for close to 30 years, and he now has one of the world's leading collections of snuff bottles, numbering about 1300 bottles. He is a Director and Patron of the International Chinese Snuff Bottle Society, and the Patron of the Singapore Chinatown Snuff Bottle Society. This exhibition of 355 bottles is the third exhibition that we have had the pleasure of holding. The first exhibition, at ACM in Armenian Street, was in 1999, and it featured 250 bottles. The second exhibition was at ACM Empress Place, here, in 2002, and that featured 333 bottles. Both those exhibitions were accompanied by catalogues, entitled Treasures from the Sanctum of Enlightened Respect, and More Treasures from the Sanctum of Enlightened Respect. The second of these catalogues was authored by Mr. Low.

Why 'Sanctum of Enlightened Respect'? some of you must be wondering. Well I asked the author. His explanation is that 'Sanctum' is a standard term used to describe a collection. 'Enlightened Respect' is the English translation of Mr. Low's Chinese name. So, the title of this evening's newly-launched catalogue describes - the THIRD Collection of Mr. Denis Low's snuff bottles. We have learned something special tonight!

Mr. Low was persuaded to serve on the ACM board in 2003, and since then, ACM has kept him fully engaged in the broad spectrum of what goes on behind the scenes at ACM – some aspects of its day-to-day operations, exhibitions, programmes and fund-raising events. Tonight's event combines the exhibition, the book launch and a fund-raising effort by Mr. Low and his fund-raising committee.

The exhibition has been very kindly sponsored by PIN International, donor-friends of Mr. Low. The publication of this book has been fully sponsored by Mr. Low. A good 4 months has been spent by Mr. Low writing, overseeing the layout, editing and photography for Sanctum No. 3. The ACM is pleased to have another beautiful specialist publication to its name. All proceeds of sales from the book will accrue to ACM. In conjunction with the exhibition and catalogue launch, Mr. Low and his team have also initiated a fund-raising drive for acquisitions for our Chinese collection. Besides the sum of \$130,000 which PIN and Mr. Low have donated for the exhibition and publication, Mr. Low and his team have raised an additional sum of over \$170,000, with more donations on the way. Mr. Low has therefore seen this exhibition and book through from ground level to launch. I warmly congratulate Mr. Low on his book, and say a big thank you to him and his committee: Mr. Patrick Han, Mr. John R Knight, Mr. Jackson Tai (all ACM board members), and Mr. Vernon Khoo and Mr. Jaya Prakash for their time and effort for the ACM.

Now 5 years old, ACM continues to gain ground as a world-class museum, and is regularly mentioned in Newsweek, the International Herald Tribune and other international press, as a dynamic museum of Asian cultures that is a "must-

see” in Singapore. We have been praised for our bold, contemporary displays, our sensitive treatment of Asian themes, and our niche collections. In common with museums large and small, we continue to rely on donors, of funds and artifacts, word-of-mouth, and support from visitors. So, thank you to all who have supported Mr. Low’s appeal, and thank you to all who have supported the catalogue sales.

For donors who donated \$5,000 and above, these donors also received an **acmfriends** temporary membership. **acmfriends** is the ACM’s membership circle, which we started to provide an avenue for any supporter of ACM to get even more out of the museum, and to meet other like-minded members through the activities organised for members and their guests - talks, music, and dedicated afternoon programmes for the young and very young. Please consider joining – brochures are on the stands and all the information about **acmfriends** is found in them.

It leaves me now to thank our Guest-of-Honour for gracing this event, Mr. Low and his team, and all of you again, for coming to support this double launch. I wish you-all a pleasant evening.

.

Ms Priscylla Shaw

Chairman

Asian Civilisations Museum