

COLLECTOR OF JIOU-ZHI POTTERY EXPLAINS THE BEAUTY OF IT

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One of the events celebrating the 54th anniversary is the Jiou-zhi pottery exhibition at the Carrie Chang Fine Arts Center starting from November 5. Its opening ceremony was held at 10:30 a.m. of that day inviting the leading collector, Chuang Wu-nan, and the exhibitors/artists, a couple, Liu Ming Wu and Lung Chiu-Mei. Liu gave a live demonstration of the making of the pottery winning all round applauses.

Most of the works on display are from Chuang Wu-nan's personal collection. He is an eminent pottery painter whose works can be seen at the Sansha Masters Temple, on the doors of Taipei National Museum of History, Fu-you Temple and Lung-shan Temple in Tamsui. Through his work at various temples, he has been able to purchase antique pieces, which would have been discarded otherwise. With such efforts foresight, this exhibition at the Center was made possible.

He reminded the audience at his opening speech that Jiou-zhi pottery used to be very expensive to make and could only be commissioned by rich temples or private people. The raw materials, the clay and glaze for the pottery then were very different from the modern ones they become smoother and shiner with time. The skills used to craft the figurines were extremely vivid, delicate and are nearly impossible to emulate.

The artist, Liu Ming-wu, who demonstrated the making of the pottery, began his career in temple restoration at the age of 17 and is second to none in this field. His skill is so impeccable that 8 pieces of his works were confiscated at the Keelung Customs on their way to France, mistaken to be stolen genuine national treasures. They were later relayed to the National Palace Museum for expert verification but to no avail. Finally, fingerprinting technology was employed to identify Liu Ming-wu as the true

creator to solve this mystery. His fame reaches even far beyond Europe—the president of Argentina, considers him to be the Michelangelo of the East. His genius once again spelt its magic on the audience when he finished a statute playing the violin in twenty minutes at the opening ceremony. It was immediately glazed and fired as a present to TKU' s President, Flora Chang. A group of German high school students who happened to be there were flabbergasted by his speed, precision and perfection in executing his work. They will surely tell their folks back home about the wonder of a Chinese artist—apparently there is no better advertisement for Taiwan than this one.

