

Hong Kong Museum of History to display early Chinese photography collection donated by Moonchu Foundation (with photos)

The Hong Kong Museum of History (HKMH) has received a generous donation of more than 24 000 invaluable photos of a Chinese photography collection from the Moonchu Foundation. Most of the donated photos were taken in the late Qing and the Republican period and feature a wide range of contents and subject matters, which form a rare and comprehensive collection of Chinese photography. It is also the largest donation of a Chinese photography collection received by the museum. The HKMH will stage the exhibition "In Retrospect: The Early Chinese Photography Collection of Moonchu Foundation" starting tomorrow (October 23), displaying over 500 selected photographs from the donation.

As an expression of gratitude to the Foundation, the HKMH will name its Special Exhibition Gallery the "Moonchu Historical Images and Culture Gallery", which will feature exhibitions from the Moonchu collection and exhibitions related to Chinese history and culture.

The ceremony of the Moonchu Collection donation, gallery naming and opening of the "In Retrospect: The Early Chinese Photography Collection of Moonchu Foundation" exhibition was held today (October 22) at the HKMH. Addressing the ceremony, the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, said that this valuable and extensive collection of rare and complete images was collected by the Moonchu Foundation over the years in different places. Driven by their passion for Chinese culture, they specifically donated this collection to the HKMH, allowing these precious artifacts to be permanently preserved on Chinese soil. This donation not only significantly enriches the collections of the HKMH, but more importantly, provides excellent materials for studying modern Chinese society and increasing the public's understanding of Chinese history from a century ago. He hopes that the selfless donation of the foundation and the enthusiasm for promoting Chinese culture will encourage more people to donate cultural relics related to Chinese history, telling good Chinese stories through these artifacts.

Moonchu Foundation representative Mr Chang Tsong-zung said that the "Moonchu Historical Images and Culture Gallery" and the donation are made possible through the dedicated efforts of the curators and staff members of the HKMH over the years. Their commitment to passing on the torch of history and benefiting society is both admirable and deserving of appreciation.

Other officiating guests included representatives from the Moonchu Foundation, Mr Chang Chi-wei and Mr Chang Tsong-zung; the Chairman of the

Museum Advisory Committee, Professor Douglas So; the Acting Director of Leisure and Cultural Services, Miss Eve Tam; and the Museum Director of the HKMH, Mr Terence Cheung.

Most of the selected photographs in this exhibition have never been publicly displayed before. The contents cover major historical events such as the Second Opium War, the Self-Strengthening Movement, the First Sino-Japanese War, the Invasion of the Eight-Nation Alliance and the Russo-Japanese War. There are also photographs depicting the urban landscapes, historic buildings and people's livelihood during the late Qing and the Republican period, as well as specimens of different photographic materials and formats which reflect the development of early photography.

Highlight exhibits include the image of Praia Grande Bay, Macao, which was taken 180 years ago and is one of the earliest photographs of China in existence today; the works of Chinese and foreign photographers, such as the stereoscopic photos taken by American photographer James Ricalton in 1900; landscape photographs taken by famous Chinese photographer Lai Fong; photos known as "Cartes de visite" in the size of a calling card, which were popular for exchanges in social gatherings during the 19th century; as well as some glass negatives; other stereoscopic photographs and hand-coloured photographs; photo albums, and more.

An interactive area is featured in the exhibition. Visitors can use stereograph viewers to view stereoscopic photos and create their own photo album with selected old photographs. There is also a comparison of old and new photos on aerospace, infrastructure, agricultural development and people's livelihood, illustrating how China has developed by leaps and bounds in the past century.

The exhibition is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and organised by the HKMH and the Moonchu Foundation. In collaboration with the Chinese Culture Promotion Office, it is one of the activities in the Chinese Culture Promotion Series and also one of the events of the 4th Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival. The exhibition will run until February 3 next year. Admission is free. For more information on the exhibition, please visit hk.history.museum/en/web/mh/exhibition/Moonchu-Exhibition.html or call 2724 9042 for enquiries.

Established in 2007, the mission of the Moonchu Foundation supports culture and education-related research, publications and talks. The Foundation hopes that the donation could enrich the HKMH's displays and enhance research on historical images and history education, allowing members of the public to learn more about the traditional culture and the development of modern China through the research and display of the early Chinese photographs.

The LCSD has long been promoting Chinese history and culture through organising an array of programmes and activities to enable the public to learn more about the broad and profound culture of China. For more

information, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html.



