WHAT COULD BE more joyous than our East-West coverage of chiming clocks for our March-April 2013 magazine. Reminiscent of Christmas, in December, with their colourful decorations, bells and chimes. Timing for our print production for this second issue of 2013 had to be held over to commence on the press after the Chinese New Year holidays, which fell due this time on Sunday February 10th, following with Monday 11th to Wednesday 13th. So if overseas subscribers receive their March-April bimonthly copies of the magazine a little later than they have been used to, they will know the reason why.

I can still remember when Arts of Asia was set up in 1970 in Kowloon. With myself publisher and editor on an upper floor of Metropole Building at 57 Peking Road. This is still one of the most active neighbourhoods for banking, shopping, hotels and restaurant areas of Tsim Sha Tsui.

My office was staffed with my personal secretary and an editorial assistant. Adjoining, with a larger office, was my near-retired architect husband and his practice. By 1979, we had moved to the newer built office building, Kowloon Centre in Ashley Road. The office building is a turning off Peking Road within short walking distance.

Nearby, once a delightful, almost rural setting, with massive 19th century banyan trees lining the boundary of the former army barracks, is now a delightful park, with an open gallery of local artist sculptures, swimming pools and aviaries. Today, it throbs with many categories of restaurants, including Western, Indian, Chinese, Korean and Japanese. Our office building is just short of forty years old, but an unusual benefit though small to the crowded city is the well-attended piazza it faces at the far end of Ashley Road, planted with transported trees which are by now well grown.
Anthony J. Hardy, longtime Hong Kong resident, distinguished Chinese art collector and Chairman of the Hong Kong Maritime Museum (HKMM), welcomes Arts of Asia readers to visit HKMM at its “spectacular location of Pier 8 on the new Hong Kong Harbour Waterfront. It could not be a more central, relevant or prestigious location.” Some two hundred special guests from America, Austria, Australia, China, Denmark, England, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Singapore and Taipei attended the pre-opening celebrations on Friday February 1st, 2013 from 3–6 pm and there were various programmes for out of town visitors on Saturday. It was a very unique and enjoyable occasion amongst friends who have supported HKMM since its early success at Murray House in Stanley.

In charge at Pier 8 is Museum Director Richard Wesley leading a team of over twenty staff. He said, “The museum has been driving hard towards its official opening on February 25th by Hong Kong’s Chief Executive, Mr C.Y. Leung. Everybody gathered here today I am sure understands how difficult it is to create a not-for-profit cultural organisation and then to provide the necessary resources for it to flourish. Such endeavours require leadership, long term commitment, thorough planning and above all vision. We are standing here today because the leadership team over the last ten years has possessed these qualities.”

Supported by leading figures in government, the maritime industry and the Legislative Council, the museum was granted a ten-year lease and some HK$115,000,000 for the redevelopment of the precious 4400 square metres site. Designed by P&T Architects and Engineering Limited, the museum is now a hi-tech centre of heritage and learning with thirteen permanent galleries, interactive displays and two special exhibition areas. Its Maritime Resource Centre also provides opportunities to debate and discuss how we as humans interact with the great oceans of the world. The museum contains collections covering a wealth of topics ranging from early local watercraft to modern large commercial and passenger ships, from the struggle against piracy to the developments in search and rescue, and from trade to water sports. HKMM is a memorable destination for the young and old, students and collectors alike. For more information visit www.hkmaritimemuseum.org.

“Defining Excellence in Art”: At TEFAF Maastricht, one of the world’s greatest art fairs, collectors can buy masterpieces of art, antiques and design from over 260 of the world’s most prestigious dealers. Taking place from March 15th to 24th, 2013 at Maastricht Exhibition and Congress Centre (MECC) in the southern Netherlands, the Asian art dealers include Luis Alegria, Gregg Baker Asian Art, Cohen & Cohen, Gisèle Croës, Malcolm Fairley Ltd, Michael Goedhuis, Ben Janssens Oriental Art Ltd, Littleton & Hennessy Asian Art Ltd, Marcel Nies Oriental Art, Priestley & Ferraro, Rossi & Rossi, Grace Tsumugi Fine Art, Vanderven Oriental Art and Jorge Welsh Oriental Porcelain & Works of Art. Of course there are also
wonderful galleries for Western paintings, art and furniture (Mallett from London and New York), 19th and 20th century sculpture (Robert Bowman Gallery, London) and fine jewellery (Chopard). This is an event that should not be missed!

Brussels-based antique dealer Gisèle Croës has opened her gallery for more than thirty years with the aim of promoting a better understanding and appreciation of high-quality Oriental art. Over the years she has been dealing with important collectors, foundations and international museums. She met at her elegant early 20th century townhouse gallery as well as at major international art fairs in Paris, New York, Shanghai and Maastricht. For this Maastricht 2013 edition she has acquired a private collection of archaic bronze vessels which have not been seen publicly for twenty years and will undoubtedly create interest. To illustrate the power and richness of Chinese culture I selected Gisèle’s bronze taotie mask and ring with green and brown patina from the Spring and Autumn period.

Art lovers will surely be attending Asia Week New York, March 15th to 25rd, 2013. I recommend picking up a copy of the Asia Week New York 2013 printed guide at any participating dealer or auction house location, or downloading a PDF copy of the guide from www.asiaweekny.com. This will help you to navigate a non-stop schedule for this nine-day extravaganza of Asian art throughout metropolitan New York with exhibitions, auctions and special events presented by forty-three leading international Asian art specialists, five major auction houses, and seventeen museums and cultural institutions. The events commence with an opening reception at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, followed by the much-anticipated Open House Weekend (March 16th and 17th), where participating dealers open their doors to the public.

“This is the largest number of galleries that have participated since the inception of Asia Week New York nearly five years ago, and represents 25% growth over last year”, says Henry Howard-Sneyd, Chairman of Asia Week New York and Sotheby’s Vice-Chairman for Asian Art. “As more and more Asian art dealers recognise that New York is the place to be in March, we are able to select a broader and more diverse group of specialists eager to exhibit here. This confirms just how vital Asia Week New York has become as a destination for international Asian art collectors, curators and scholars.” Unfortunately it is not possible to include every art event in my Editorial, however to whet your appetite I am pleased to mention the following highlights that will be of interest.

The exhibition “Song Dynasty Ceramics: The Ronald W. Longsdorf Collection” at J.J. Lally & Co. showcases elegant vessels with subtly coloured glazes. Beautiful ceramics produced by Chinese potters during the Song dynasty are highly appreciated in the West. The Longsdorf Collection was formed by an American who began collecting Chinese ceramics more than thirty years ago and chose to concentrate on the wares of the Song dynasty as the epitome of ceramic art. He travelled widely in Europe and in the Far East, and acquired ceramics from dealers, collectors and auction houses in America and around the world, including examples from some of the most famous kilns of the Song dynasty. The Longsdorf Collection includes a tall blue-glazed Junyao bottle vase of meiping form which is very rare. This slender high-shouldered shape is an innovation of the Song period and prized by collectors.

Carlton Rochell will present an exhibition of twenty-five sculptures and paintings from India, Tibet, Nepal and Cambodia, from 2nd century AD to the 18th century. These works hail from prestigious private collections in both America and Europe. An intricately cast Cambodian bronze finial is an example of fine metalwork from the 12th century (Angkor Wat period). During that time, this decorative element would have been used on a Khmer chariot as a symbol of strength and depicts a fierce-looking garuda (mythical bird), raising his chest in a stance meant to intimidate, atop a multi-headed naga (serpent) who looks poised to attack.

Susan Tosk of Orientations Gallery and Mr Kazuo Kuwbara of Oriental Treasure Box will be sharing exhibition space in the Nippon Gallery of the Nippon Club at 145 West 57th Street, March 14th to 25th. Their exhibition “Imperial Court Artists and Living National Treasures: Art from the Meiji Period to Present Day, Celebrating 150 Years of Exquisite Japanese Craftsmanship” is supported by the Consulate General of Japan in New York. On display will be artworks of the highest quality by recognised and accomplished artists in the fields of cloisonné enamels, ceramics, metalwork, ivory and wood carving, and textiles. They are also delighted to announce that a lecture will be held during the course of the exhibition on Monday, March 18th at 4 pm. Hollis Goodall, Curator of Japanese Art at Los Angeles County Museum of Art, will be in town to give an illustrated talk at the Nippon Club that should be on the itineraries of Asia Week attendees.

Finally to complete my Editorial, the whole Arts of Asia team wish all our friends and readers around the world the a very happy, peaceful and successful Year of the Snake.