

Part I
Asian Museums Today

Museums in Myanmar: Brief History and Actual Perspectives

Nu Mra Zan

Abstract The history of Myanmar museums from the earliest such as ancient palaces and Pitaka libraries, through museums established before independence such as Bagan Archaeological Museum, to the most recent-days is described. The establishment of the Ministry of Culture in 1952, 4 years after regaining independence, led to construction of the first National Museum (Yangon) and several other museums. Currently, Myanmar museums under the Ministry of Culture can be classified as national museums, archaeological museums, regional cultural museums, and memorial museums. Other kinds of museum are now appearing under other ministries and in the private sector in Myanmar. There is an urgent need for collaboration between these different museums to form a nation-wide museum organization, in order to work together for the improvement of Myanmar museums, and to facilitate international cooperation.

1 Introduction

The Cultural Policy of Myanmar aims to raise national prestige and integrity through the preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character. According to the Cultural Policy, the mission statement of the Ministry of Culture is to “Honor the State with Culture” (Department of Cultural Institute 2000: 8).

Myanmar has an abundant and diverse cultural heritage in both tangible and intangible forms. This heritage is mainly preserved in the National Museum (Yangon) and Bagan Archaeological Museum together with other regional cultural museums and other archaeological museums under the Ministry of Culture.

Museums under the Ministry of Culture can be classified as national museums, archaeological museums, regional cultural museums as ethnological museums, and memorial museums. Not only under the Ministry of Culture but also some religious museums, private museums, and historic houses under other institutions are undertaking the duties and tasks of preserving the cultural heritage of Myanmar.

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Nowadays, other types of museum are appearing more frequently under other ministries and the private sector in Myanmar.

2 History of Museum Establishment in Myanmar

2.1 *Earliest Museums*

2.1.1 Ancient Palaces and Pitaka Libraries

The ancient palaces of successive periods and Pitaka libraries can be defined as the earliest museums of Myanmar. Arimaddanapura Zeyabon Palace in Bagan, Kamboza Thardi Palace in Bago (Fig. 1), Myanan Sankyaw Palace in Mandalay (Fig. 2), and Shwebonyadanar Palace in Shwebo (Fig. 3) are some examples while Bagan Pitaka Library of King Anawrahta and Chron-Kite Pitaka Library of Mrauk-U are other examples of the earliest museums, which are the only first-generation collection-centered type of museum.

2.1.2 The First Museum: Phayre Museum

After the end of the Second Anglo-Burmese War in 1852 came the colonial period in Myanmar, and a museum appeared honoring Sir Arthur Phayre, namely the Phayre Museum, based on the collection of Sir Arthur Phayre, Bago Division commissioner and owner of the collection (Min Naing 1978: 5).



Fig. 1 Kamboza Thardi Palace in Bago



Fig. 2 Myanan Sankyaw Palace in Mandalay



Fig. 3 Shwebonyadanar Palace in Shwebo

The Phayre Museum was built in the gardens of the Rangoon Agri-Horticultural Society in 1871, and it was later dismantled to make way for the Rangoon General Hospital (Taylor 1924:3). After dismantling it, a museum that could be converted into the Phayre Museum in Rangoon (now Yangon) did not appear till 1952 although it can be said that establishment of the Phayre Museum first shaped the Myanmar National Museum.

2.2 *History of Museums Established in Myanmar Before Independence*

2.2.1 **Brief History of the Bagan Archaeological Museum**

Myanmar was annexed by the British in 1885 and before independence, very few site museums were established. Among them, Bagan Archaeological Museum was the first. The first Bagan Museum (Fig. 4 upper left) was established in 1903 near the famous Ananda Temple and was newly constructed in 1937–38.

After the 1940s, to avoid destruction in the Second World War, all artifacts of Bagan Museum were buried very safely in the earth. When Myanmar regained her independence, the Ministry of Culture, which was established in 1952, arranged to unearth the artifacts and reopened the museum to the public in 1954 (Min Naing 1978: 8, 9).

Museum collections increased year by year and a new octagonal-shaped museum building was built in 1979 (Fig. 4 upper right). As that building also became full of artifacts, the present big four-storied building was established in 1995 and opened to the public on April 17, 1998 (Fig. 4 lower) (Department of Archaeology and National Museum 1997: 2).



Fig. 4 Bagan Archaeological Museum: The first museum (now storage) (*upper left*); the second museum (now storage) (*upper right*); the present museum (*lower*)

2.2.2 Brief History of the Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum

One of the most important earliest museums of Myanmar, established in Hmawza Village in Pyay (Prome), was the Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum. In the 1900s, the Epigraphy Department explored and collected antiquities within the area of Sri Ksetra and, to store them, a small building called Thayet Taw Museum was established near the ancient palace site of Sri Ksetra between 1907 and 1910. After it was burnt down in 1915, Kyaukka Thein was constructed as the first museum of Sri Ksetra in 1915.

The current museum building near Kyaukka Thein Museum and the Monastery Museum was built in 1960–1961 and opened to the public 1 year later (Min Naing 1978: 10).

2.2.3 Brief History of Other Early Museums

One of the earliest museums in Myanmar is Mrauk-U Archaeological Museum (Fig. 5) located in Mrauk-U, the last capital of Rakhine Kingdom and now an ancient city of Rakhine State, which was established in 1904. The museum is located just next to the site of the House-of-Jewels on the terrace of the Mrauk-U Palace site (Min Naing 1978: 11).

Another early museum was established in Shwebo in 1904. At first, the Indian government provided subsidies but later it was difficult for it to stand permanently. It has now been substituted by the Shwebonyadana Palace Museum, built in 1994



Fig. 5 Mrauk-U Archaeological Museum

and opened in 1999. Another early museum was located in Mandalay. It was established in 1905 in Mandalay Palace City and called the Mandalay Palace Museum. It is totally different from the present Mandalay Palace Museum, because its collection, comprising objects related to the Palace and various other artifacts, was destroyed by fire because of bombing during the Second World War (Min Naing 1978: 11–13). Today, there is the Myanansankyaw Palace Museum, which was opened to the public in 1996.

Not only were these regional museums opened and governed by the government, but religious museums were also opened by the trustee boards of the pagodas. Among them, the most famous one is the Shwedagon Pagoda Museum whose establishment started from around the 1900s. The present-day Shwedagon Pagoda Museum building was constructed in 1992 (Min Naing 1978: 14).

2.3 History of Museums Established in Myanmar After Independence

Four years after regaining independence, the establishment of the Ministry of Culture in Myanmar in 1952 saw the birth of the first national museum in Myanmar (Min Naing 1978: 5).

2.3.1 Background History of the National Museum (Yangon)

After regaining independence, the National Museum was opened at the Jubilee Hall Building on the Shwedagon Pagoda Road in June 1952. The collection gradually increased and in 1957, the Royal Lion Throne was moved from the President's Residence to the National Museum and exhibited there. In 1968, it moved to a building in Pansodan Street, which was a former private bank, and it was opened to the public on February 8, 1970 with six exhibition rooms.

Twenty-five years later, the National Museum moved to its present location on 66/74 Pyay Road, Dagon Township in Yangon, and was opened to the public on September 18th, 1996 (Fig. 6).

2.3.2 Brief History of Regional Cultural Museums in States and Divisions

According to the policy guideline of the Ministry of Culture, a project to establish regional museums and libraries in some areas of Myanmar was conducted in 1955. After Cultural Councils were organized in respective regions, state or divisional museums appeared in Mandalay for the Mandalay Division (Fig. 7), Kyauk Pyu for the Rakhine (Arakan) Division and Mawlamyaing for the Taninthayi (Tanessarim) Division in 1955. In 1964, these museums were governed by the Ministry of Culture and Rakhine State Museum moved to Sittwe (Akyab), the capital city (Fig. 8).



Fig. 6 National Museum (Yangon)



Fig. 7 Regional cultural museums in Mandalay: Mandalay Cultural Museum (*left*); Mandalay Palace Cultural Museum (*right*)

Mawlamyaing Cultural Museum (Fig. 9) became the regional museum of Mon State in 1974 (Min Naing 1978: 16).

In the Ayarwaddy Division, the history of the Patheingyi Cultural Museum (Fig. 10) is different from other regional museums. It started as the Bogyoke Aung San Library in 1960 and 3 years after its establishment, it was handed over to the government and became the Ayarwaddy Division Museum and Library (Min Naing 1978: 17).

Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Fig. 11), where General Aung San lived with his family from 1945 to 1949 till he was assassinated, was opened to the public in 1963. Bogyoke Aung San Residence Museum, where he was born and lived with his parents till he passed matriculation in Nat Mauk, also became a memorial museum in 1972 (Min Naing 1978: 20).



Fig. 8 Sittwe Cultural Museum



Fig. 9 Mawlamyaing Cultural Museum

Kachin State Cultural Museum (Fig. 12) in 1963 in Myitkyina, Kayah State Cultural Museum (Fig. 13) in 1967 in Loikaw, Kayin State Cultural Museum (Fig. 14) in 1955 in Hpa-an, Shan State Cultural Museum (Fig. 15) in 1956 in Taung Gyi, and Chin Special Divisional Museum (Fig. 16) in 1963 in Haka were established by their respective state governing bodies and handed over to the Ministry of Culture in 1972, and became government-run regional level cultural museums (Min Naing 1978: 17, 18).



Fig. 10 Patheingyi Cultural Museum

Now, all of their buildings have been newly constructed in large compounds during the military government’s time. Most of the regional cultural museums acquired ethnic materials together with some archaeological finds, found in their regions.

Memorial museums have collections that are different from those of regional cultural museums; they house the belongings of the person remembered, for instance, the clothing, furniture, books, utensils, and documents of General Aung San and U Thant. At present, U Thant’s House Museum is also established by a private sector in Yangon.

2.3.3 Brief History of Archaeological Museums

Three ancient cities, namely, Sri Ksetra, Beikthano, and Halin are now in the World Heritage List. Among them, Sri Ksetra Museum (Fig. 17) is the one of earliest museums, established in the 1900s before independence.

Beikthano Archaeological Museum (Fig. 18) was established in 2008 and opened to the public in September 2009. It was built on a grand scale with the characteristics of Beikthano Pyu.

Halin Archaeological Museum was established in 2012 and opened in January 2013 as the last established archaeological museum by the Ministry of Culture to date.

There is not only Sri Ksetra, Beikthano, and Halin, but also other new site museums such as Tagaung Archaeological Museum (Fig. 19) (Department of Archaeology and National Museum 2014: 2).

Fig. 11 Bogyoke Aung San Museum (Yangon)



2.3.4 Brief History of the National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw)

After moving the capital city from Yangon to Nay Pyi Taw in 2006, the government decided to establish a new national museum in Nay Pyi Taw. The construction works started in 2011 and it is now nearly finished (Fig. 20). Display work has now started and the museum is intended to open to the public phase by phase at the end of fiscal year 2014–2015 (Department of Archaeology and National Museum 2014: 4).



Fig. 12 Kachin State Cultural Museum



Fig. 13 Kayah State Cultural Museum

3 Actual Perspectives on Myanmar Museums

3.1 *Actual Perspectives on the National Museums of Yangon and Nay Pyi Taw*

In fact, the situation at the beginning of the National Museum (Yangon) can be identified from a report of Dr. Nihar-ranjan Ray as “a poor nucleus of such a museum exists in the Jubilee Hall at the present moment, consisting of a small



Fig. 14 Kayin State Cultural Museum



Fig. 15 Shan State Cultural Museum



Fig. 16 Chin State Cultural Museum



Fig. 17 Sri Ksetra Museum



Fig. 18 Beikthano Archaeological Museum



Fig. 19 Tagaung Archaeological Museum



Fig. 20 National Museum (Nay Pyi Taw)

collection of objects of arts and crafts and of ethnology and archaeology. But attempts are being made to acquire representative objects of real value and a good sum has been budgeted for the current year, for the purpose.” However, ancient palm leaf manuscripts and paper parchments, royal epistles and seals, musical instruments, ancient coins, royal costumes, royal furniture, ethnological items, and Myanmar traditional handicrafts were on display in different sections.

From that situation, the collections increased gradually and over 3,840 items were collected and exhibited from 1952 to 1962, one decade. In 1957, the Royal Lion Throne was moved from the President’s Residence to the National Museum and exhibited there. Since 1962, the National Museum changed into a type of historical museum and exhibitions of the twentieth-century history of Myanmar and related exhibits were highlighted. In 1968, after moving to a building in Pansodan Street, the historical museum changed its type again to a national museum. In 1969, one exhibition room for culture of nationalities was extended. At that time, there were only six exhibition rooms, i.e., Royal Lion Throne and Royal Regalia, Stone Age, Pyu Period, Bagan Period, Arts and Crafts, and Performing Arts (Department of Archaeology and National Museum 1996: 4). There was also an art gallery, with the aim of establishing a new and separate national art gallery. The National Museum’s collection is mostly based on donations by local people and transfers from archaeological departments.

According to this background history, the National Museum (Yangon)’s display is a combination of the themes of history, archaeology, art, and ethnology. However, because of the inappropriate architecture, historical exhibition rooms are out of sequence. Moreover, due to the lack of location space, storage areas and conservation

areas, which are highly important, are very limited and difficult to extend. Mismanagement by the ministerial authorities has also made the National Museum smaller than before by placing other departmental branches in the same building.

But, we can conclude that “something is better than nothing,” because after 25 years, the National Museum was able to move to its present place, with some space for landscaping and car parking, the likes of which it has never owned before, although the area is becoming smaller as the number of visitors is increasing. And we would also like to thank our government for having the chance to change the displays of the exhibition rooms by providing budget. We have started to implement the reform project since the 2013–2014 budget year, and the reception hall, ticket counter, and Myanmar Epigraphy and Calligraphy exhibition room are completely finished. In 2014–2015, this budget year, the Myanmar Art Gallery is nearly finished and the Myanmar Historic Period exhibition room has even changed title to “Myanmar Civilization” by adding Pyu period objects from the Myanmar Protohistoric Period exhibition room. The Myanmar Civilization exhibition room is now divided by partitions from the Myanmar Regalia exhibition room and new installation works are being undertaken.

Successful work has been rental of the audio guide system in four languages, Myanmar, English, Japanese, and Chinese, for visitors. A Japanese company (Miyashita Co. Ltd.) donated 42 sets of the audio guide system to the National Museum (Yangon).

The appearance of one new national museum in Nay Pyi Taw has been commented on by some outsiders and foreigners but it should be welcomed as a high-standard national-level museum in Myanmar. It is also now at a serious stage trying to open at least six exhibition rooms at the end of this budget year.

However, we need to change the organizational strength of both national-level museums. Another weakness is that the volunteer system cannot be practiced here like in foreign countries. All strength is mostly full-time staff, and only very few persons like cleaners and garden workers are part-time staff. The major constraint is a lack of technicians in museum function areas like exhibition and conservation. They have basic knowledge on museology through the Diploma in Museology courses and foreign short courses on general museology but are not experts in specialist areas. So, the staff needs more long-term training on particular museography subjects from developed countries.

Although the National Museum (Yangon) can stand as the leading museum in museology in Myanmar, our training courses are mostly based on theory. Because of a lack of facilities and budget constraints, Diploma in Museology classes cannot provide practical and experimental work on museography, especially in the area of conservation.

Another weak point is we cannot form any national organization on the museum community. The weakest point is we are still not a member of ICOM.

3.2 Actual Perspectives on Archaeological Museums, Regional Cultural Museums, and Other Types of Museum

At the present time, almost all of the museums under the Ministry of Culture are changing their displays gradually one by one. For example, Mon State Cultural Museum (Mawlamyaing), Kayin State Cultural Museum (Hpa-an), Ayawaddy Region Cultural Museum (Patheingyi), Pakhangyi Archaeological Museum, Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum, and Beikthnong Archaeological Museum have reformed their displays within the last 5 years. At the same time, some new museums appeared such as the Halin Archaeological Museum and Northern Shan State Cultural Museum (Lashio).

Among other types of museum, many religious museums of pagoda trustees want to change their displays with the technical assistance of museum experts from the Ministry of Culture. Shwedagon Pagoda Museum in Yangon and Mahamuni Museum in Mandalay are good examples.

I am trying to help them not only with the display areas, but also with systematic documentation and staffing. However, the trustee board members began willingly to cooperate with the museum experts. This is one of the achievements. In Nay Pyi Taw, the new Upartasanti (the replica pagoda of Shwedagon Ceti) museum was established since 2010.

At the moment, the new Military Museum, Gems Museum, Planetarium, Railway Museum, the small Aquarium, National Landmark Garden, and Safari Park are open to the public in Nay Pyi Taw. In Pyin Oo Lwin, the Fossil Museum and the Butterfly Museum are being extended by the private sector. In Yangon, private museums will soon appear.

The most important weak point is the need for strong museum law and regulations on how to establish a new museum. We would welcome many new museums appearing with momentum. It shows that Myanmar local people have begun to take an interest in museums.

4 Conclusion

The museums not only under the Ministry of Culture, but also from other ministries and other institutions including the private sector, need to collaborate to organize one national museum organization to work together for the improvement of the Myanmar museum world. Moreover, developed nations' support and aid are welcome for Myanmar museum development.

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The Current Status of Mongolia's Museums: Changes Taking Place in the Practical Activities of Museums Since the 1990s

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Abstract From the middle of 1920s to the 1990s, the museum affairs of Mongolia were dominated by communist-socialist ideology, demolishing the culture of the exploiter class and creating the culture of the exploited class. The democratic movement since the 1990s brought a big change in the field of culture, particularly for the protection and conservation of historic and cultural heritage, and for the museum activities. It was necessary to improve working conditions in museums, train professional staff, and to participate in international cooperation between museums. New museums were set up as to replace dissolved museums, and other museums were established anew including those under private ownership. Mongolia's museums have achieved much in the implementation of their goals, but much remains to be accomplished.

1 Particulars of Museum Activities in Mongolia Prior to the Period of the Democratic Movement

With the victory of the People's Revolution in 1921, a new period of development started in the political and social spheres of Mongolia. In November of 1921, the People's Government issued a resolution to start preparations for the establishment of a museum within the structure of the Institute of Sutras and Scripts (currently, the Academy of Sciences). The Institute of Sutras and Scripts immediately started implementing this important decision of the Government of Mongolia. First of all, the Institute of Sutras and Scripts issued an official request to the chanceries of aimags (khanates) and khoshuuns (banners), by which they ordered the sending to the institute of information relating to historic and cultural artefacts and interesting things that was available or known in their local areas and territories. In addition, researchers from the Institute of Sutras and Scripts started working in rural areas

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and local territories to collect exhibits for the museum. This way, collection of museum exhibits started in Mongolia. As a result of intensive work conducted by the Institute of Sutras and Scripts in the collection of older books and sutras in the rural countryside, 2100 books in foreign languages, 600 older books and sutras in the Mongolian language, 250 books and sutras in the Tibetan language, and about 1400 books and sutras in the Japanese and Manchu languages were collected (Sereeter et al. 2003: 30). In 1924, the People's Government approved the "Rules for the Protection and Conservation of Antiques." This document was the first legal act for the protection and conservation of historic and cultural artefacts, and for the conducting of museum activities. Upon the approval of this legal act, many achievements have been made in respect of finding items with museum significance, registering those items at an archive of the museum, documenting and organizing preservation and conservation activities, and conducting researches of and putting items of the museum into scientific circulation. However, the Institute of Sutras and Scripts that was set up anew at that time encountered a number of challenges including lack of experience managing museum works, limited possibilities regarding registration and documentation of museum artefacts and pieces, lack of museum buildings that were specially fit for preservation and conservation of museum items, and lack of professional employees.

To overcome the above obstacles, the signing of an agreement between the Institute of Sutras and Scripts and the Russian Academy of Sciences was an event of important significance. With this agreement starting 1923, it became possible to work in Mongolia for the Mongolia and Tibetan Research Unit organized by the Russian Academy of Sciences. This research group was led by a noted Mongolia studies scholar and among the participants were A. D. Simukov and V. I. Lisovskii who later became renowned scholars of Mongol studies (Konagaya et al. 2007: 51). The research unit while working in Mongolia for over a period of 3 years actively participated in the preparations for setting up a first museum in Mongolia, collecting museum artefacts, registering and documenting museum items, organizing preservation and conservation, and providing museum employees with practice and experience of museum works (Konagaya et al. 2008: 89). The research group led by P.K. Kozlov conducted an archeological excavation at Noyon Uuul (150 km northeast of Ulaanbaatar) and found a number of interesting findings relating to economics, as well as artefacts with material and cultural significance of the early Khunnus. The archaeological excavation at Noyon Uul and the findings there created a real sensation among the world scientific community at that time. A temporary exhibition, with findings of this archeological excavation at that time, was like a new page in the cultural life of Mongolia. Currently, most of the findings are kept in the storage facility of the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg of the Russian Federation. A few of them are kept at the National Museum of Mongolia. Around the time when the P.K. Kozlov led research group worked in Mongolia in May 1925, a cooperation agreement was signed between the Institute of Sutras and Scripts and the American Museum of Natural History. With the signing of this agreement, it became possible for the third Asian expedition led by Roy Chapman Andrews, American scholar and Central Asian student, to work in southern Gobi.

Fig. 1 O. Jamiyan,
Chairman of the Institute
of Sutras and Scripts and
of the museum



This research unit had excavated an area named Erin Davst located near the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan Mountains of Umnugobi Aimag and found a number of very rare findings in large quantities. This excavation caused a great stir among the world scientific community at that time. In accordance with the agreement signed with the Institute of Sutras and Scripts, this research unit left most of its findings in Mongolia. Currently, these very rare findings are kept in the storage facility of the Mongolia Natural History Museum. However, this research unit led by R.C. Andrews took with them a number of its findings without leaving them in Mongolia (Tsendsuren 2014: 29). Currently, these findings are kept in the storage facility of the Natural History Museum in New York.

These measures organized by the Institute of Sutras and Scripts in the mid-1920s were of great importance in the establishment of a museum in Mongolia. Thus, a first modern day of exhibition started in Mongolia on December 25, 1924. At the beginning, O. Jamiyan (Fig. 1), chairman of the Institute of Sutras and Scripts, co-chaired the museum. The People's Government on April 1, 1926 decided to transfer the Palace and goods and items utilized by VIII Bogd Javzandamba Khutgat to the possession of the museum. In the period of 1929–1930, confiscation of feudal property, goods, and items having museum significance was organized as the largest political campaign and these were during this period transferred to the museum stores. Owing to these measures, the newly set up stores of the museum were enriched with a great number of artefacts and items of museum significance.

However, the large-scale political campaigns that progressed in Mongolia from the middle of the 1920s showed a greater negative impact on the activities for pres-

ervation and conservation of historical and cultural memorial items. The Third Congress of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP) took place in 1924. The MPRP was the sole governing political force at that time. All issues relating to politics, economics, and social life were fully determined by the policy and decision of this party. The Third Congress of the MPRP approved a document that went into history as the "Party's Course Line" (Lkhamsuren 1985: 53). This document determined the future developmental direction of Mongolia as a "non-bourgeois development path." It was the beginning of domination and rule of communist-socialist ideology in Mongolia. What is communist-socialist ideology? It is worth giving a few words regarding this ideology. Since the creation of private property, human society has been divided into two antagonist classes called the "exploiter class" and the "exploited class." An unreconcilable struggle has been taking place between these two classes. Karl Marx, founder of Marxist thought, wrote that the history of humanity is the history of class struggle. Culture is also differentiated into the "culture of the exploiter class" and the "culture of the exploited class." In terms of content and form, the culture of the exploiter class and the culture of the exploited class cannot be reconciled with each other. The culture of the exploiter class has always protected the interests of the exploiter class. Because the culture of the exploiter class will interfere and hamper the construction of a new society, it should be demolished. Instead, a new culture that protects the interests of the exploited class should be created. This is one of the main goals of socialist revolution. Destruction of the culture of the exploiter class, creation of a new socialist culture that protects the interests of exploited class and that expresses its worldview, and creation of a new socialist culture can be attained only through a cultural revolution. Therefore, any country that aims to create and establish a socialist society must necessarily implement a cultural revolution. Founders of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine teach that without cultural revolution, it is not possible to build rightful prospects for humanity, that is, a communist and socialist society. This is the main idea of communist-socialist ideology. Following the Third MPRP Congress, the immediate start was to implement its decision in actuality. Starting at this time, the cultural heritage of the Mongolian people, which had been created by many generations, was treated as the culture of the exploiter class and the culture of the exploited class in accordance with communist-socialist ideology. Thus, a cultural revolution started in Mongolia. Beginning this time, wearing of national clothes and use of decorations made of gold and silver were banned. In addition, Buddhist activities began to be banned. By the middle of the 1930s, large campaigns were organized against Buddhism; during this period, many hundreds of temples and monasteries were demolished and burned and senior monks were executed. Also, a number of historic themes, for instance, the history of the Great Mongol Empire, the history of the Golden Horde, and the "Golden Kinship" of Chinggis Khan, were banned from undergoing any research work. Studies in the above research fields must be made and examined as well as evaluated from the position of Marxist-Leninist teachings. Any kind of advocacy (a literary work, movie, drama, song, poem, fine art, museum exhibition, etc.) in the above themes was banned. No preservation or storing in museum stores was allowed for productions and works from the culture of the exploiter class. There was the trend

that works from the culture of the exploiter class were not considered as cultural heritage. This way, it opened the channel to losing the cultural products created by the Mongols, and many historical and cultural heritages created by many generations of Mongol nomads began their passage over the Mongolian border. Many historical and cultural heritages that illegally left this country at that time are currently kept in the museums of European countries such as Britain, France, Finland, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, and Russia (Konagaya and Lkhagvasuren 2014: 76). The authority of communist-socialist ideology in Mongolia continued up to the 1990s. As dictated by this ideology, the main directions of museum activities in Mongolia dealt with the praising of social revolution and socialist society being built anew. Clear examples of museums with communist-socialist ideology were the Lenin Museum and the Museum of Revolution, established with the investment of many millions in the Mongolian national currency—the tugri—of the state budget. The Lenin Museum, which did not have even a single original exhibit, had forced visits by many dozens of persons each year. Even now, Mongolia is not fully rid of the influences of this ideology. In particular, the impact of communist-socialist ideology still clings tenaciously to the life of cultural and museum affairs.

2 Changes and Innovations That Started in the Museum Field

At the beginning of the 1990s, Mongolia had about 50 museums with the status of “state museum,” “local country museum,” and “specialized museum,” and over 200 museums with the status of “local country study chamber” (Fig. 2). They house over

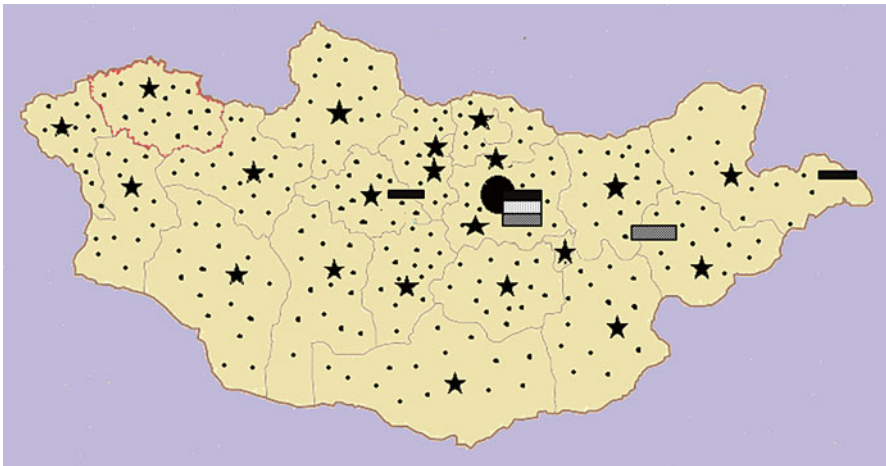


Fig. 2 Map of Mongolian museums (2015): local country study chambers (●), local country museums (★), state museums (■), specialized museums (▨), and the Authority for Museums (▩), Ulaanbaatar capital (●)

a total of 270 thousand museum pieces and artefacts. There were no privately owned museums in Mongolia at that time. The Authority for Museums under the Ministry of Culture managed the activities for state and local country museums (Burnee 1994: 32).

The democratic movement has spread in Mongolia since the 1990s, and the larger changes were brought about in the field of culture, particularly the preservation and conservation of historic and cultural objects as well as in the activities of museums. First of all, the activities of museums needed to be freed from the influences of communist-socialist ideology. The aim of activities of museums was to find historical and cultural objects, register such objects into the museum collections, organize works for the preservation and conservation of museum objects, draw these objects into the cycle of scientific research, and promote public advocacy of museum goals. It was required to improve the working conditions in museums (i.e., setting up special buildings for museums), to innovate the equipment and furniture of currently operating museums, and to prepare professionals for the museums. In addition, it was required to actively participate in international cooperation between museums, and to expand the former international relations that were restricted only to the museums of socialist countries. In contrast, it was required to establish direct contact with many museums of other nations. Another goal put forward during this period was the creation of possibilities for setting up museums under private ownership. In order to implement these goals, it was required to take many measures in due order while not losing time.

In order to implement all of these works, the new democratic government started its job by the dismissal of the Authority for Museums in 1992. The Authority for Museums under the Ministry of Culture was in the first place created in order to coordinate activities for the state and local country museums. However, with time, this institution had gained strong control over the activities of museums by exercising communist-socialist ideology and made museums lose their autonomy and created a great number of obstacles in their activities. People were strongly critical of the functions of this institution and urged for its dismissal. With the dissolution of the Authority for Museums, the Ministry of Culture started conducting direct management of museum activities.

The second important decision implemented by the Ministry of Culture was the dismissal of some museums established in the first place in harmony with communist-socialist ideology. Within the frame of work, in the first order, the Museum of Revolution, State Central Museum, and Lenin Museum were targets for dismissal. In respect of the Lenin Museum, without the status of state museum, it functioned under the affiliation of the MPRP—the governing political party at that time. At the beginning of 1991, the Steering Council of the MPRP requested the Ministry of Culture to accord the status of state museum to the Lenin Museum, and to change its affiliation status from the MPRP to the Ministry of Culture. However, the Ministry of Culture gave a negative reply to this request. As to the replacement of dissolved museums, the Ministry of Culture decided to establish the Museum of Natural History (1991) and Museum of National History (1991). In addition, it was decided to establish a number of museums anew that include the Fine Arts Gallery



Fig. 3 Museum of Noyon Khutagtu

(1991), Museum of Theatre Arts (1991), and Museum of Choijin Lama Temple (2000). Later on, the Museum of Kharakhorum (2009) and Museum of Khushuu Tsaidam (2010) were also set up anew. A decision to establish the Museum of Dinosaurs was issued in 2013 and preparatory works are currently underway.

Since the 1990s, the goal of establishing museums under private ownership started for the first time in Mongolia. Currently, a number of museums under private ownership are conducting their activities. These include the Museum of International Intellectuality, Museum of Noyon Khutagtu (1991) (Fig. 3), and Museum of the Heritage of Chinggis Khan (2006).

2.1 The Museum of Natural History

With the dissolution of the State Central Museum in 1991, to replace it, it was decided to set up a Museum of Natural History. The State Central Museum was first established in 1956 and consisted of two sections: the Natural History Section and the History and Ethnicity Section. By the way of expanding its Natural History Section, an independent Museum of Natural History was established. A collection of exhibits for the Natural History Section had already started from the middle of the 1920s. The very rare paleontological findings by the third Asian expedition led by R. Chapman Andrews, American scholar and researcher on Central Asia, findings of flora and fauna, minerals, items, and museum pieces, themed naturalistically and collected by the researchers of Institute of Sutras and Scripts, were housed



Fig. 4 The Museum of Natural History

in this museum. In 1991, when the State Central Museum was dissolved, its Natural History Section was storing over 8,000 museum pieces and artifacts.

The newly set up Museum of Natural History made large changes in the ways of displaying museum exhibits and in the way of arranging the museum halls. Prior to the 1990s, photos were mainly used as exhibits in the planning of museum halls, and original objects and exhibits were rarely used. The newly established Museum of Natural History aimed to use predominately original objects and museum pieces in the arrangement of exhibits in the museum halls. Currently, the museum halls are divided into eight main themes: (1) Hall of Physical Geography of Mongolia; (2) Hall of Geology and Mineral Resources of Mongolia; (3) Hall of Birds of Mongolia; (4) Hall of Flora of Mongolia; (5) Hall of Insects and Amphibians; (6) Mammals of Mongolia; (7) Hall of Paleontology; and (8) Hall of Human Origins. About 37% of all collections are shown as exhibits in the halls of the museum (Myandas 2014: 287).

Currently, this museum is conducting its activities in the building of the State Central Museum that was dissolved earlier (Fig. 4). This building was first built as a special professional school in 1954. The State Central Museum has been functioning in the same building since its opening in 1956 and until its dissolution in 1991.

2.2 The National Museum of Mongolia

With the dissolution of the Museum of Revolution in 1991, it was replaced by the National History Museum. The History and Ethnicity Section from the dissolved State Central Museum has been joined with the Museum of Revolution and by way of such expansion, a new National History Museum was created. A collection of exhibits for the History and Ethnicity Section of the State Central Museum had already started from the 1920s. The very rare and interesting collections of museum

pieces and artifacts relating to Mongol history and ethnicity and gathered by researchers from the Institute of Sutras and Scripts were housed at this museum. In addition, some findings by the Mongol and Tibet expedition organized by the Academy of Sciences of the Russian Federation were also kept at this museum. The dissolved Museum of Revolution first established in 1971 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the People's Revolution presented itself as museum of pure political ideology. The museum had been working with the goal of advocating the progress of socialist construction after the victory of the 1921 People's Revolution in Mongolia, and publicizing the achievements of socialism and educating the youth to become trustworthy citizens with the ideals of communism and socialism.

In 1991, when the Museum of Revolution was dissolved, a total of 13,000 museum pieces and artifacts were kept at the museum. The newly set up Museum of National History is the first full-scale independent museum on Mongolian history and ethnicity. Prior to this, Mongolia did not have an independent museum relating to Mongolian history and ethnicity. The MPRP considered that the setting up of a full-scale and independent museum on Mongolian history and ethnicity would not conform to communist-socialist ideology. The newly established Museum of National History consisted of two sections: the Mongolian History Section and the Mongolian Ethnicity Section. This museum had completed large changes in the way of organizing the museum halls. Currently, this museum arranges its museum halls into 10 themes of Mongolian history and ethnicity: (1) Ancient Mongolia; (2) Period of Early States Created in the Territory of Mongolia; (3) Period of the Mongolian Empire; (4) Mongolia during the XVII–XX Centuries; (5) Mongolia during the Period of 1911–1921; (6) Mongolia during the Period of Socialism; (7) Mongolia at the Start of the Democratic Movement; (8) Mongolian Traditional Economy: Livelihood, Animal Husbandry, and Agriculture; (9) Mongolia's Traditional Material Culture: *Ger* (apartment), Board and Lodging; and (10) Mongolia's Traditional Textiles and Decorations (Saruulbuyan 2009: 7). Currently, over 50,000 museum pieces and artifacts on Mongolian history and ethnicity are housed at this museum.

This museum is now conducting its activities at the building of the Museum of Revolution dissolved in 1991. This Museum of Revolution was first built on the occasion of 50th Anniversary of the People's Revolution in 1971. This is the first building in Mongolia built specially for the purpose of a museum. By the decision of the Ministry of Culture, the National History Museum has been renamed the National Museum of Mongolia (Fig. 5).

3 Changes Taking Place in Museum Collections

Prior to the 1990s, the main goal of enriching the museum collection was to advocate and publicize those changes that took place in politics, economics, and social life during the period of the socialist revolution, and the achievements during the construction of a socialist society (Baarai and Tumur-Ochir 1975: 8–14).



Fig. 5 The National Museum of Mongolia

At that time, work for the collection of museum pieces and artifacts was performed in two forms at the state and local country museums: (1) Employees of the museum would buy items or goods with museum significance in line with predetermined themes of revolution. With that purpose, collection of items with museum significance was organized for a certain period in certain local areas, towns, and settlements; (2) Institutions and private individuals would donate museum items with museum significance (Yadamsuren 1968: 10–16).

Buying of new items and goods with museum significance for the museum collection, particularly in Ulaanbaatar, was organized under the control of the Authority for Museums, Ministry of Culture. The Authority for Museums would buy items and goods with museum significance and they were distributed to individual museums in accordance with themes. It was certain that the Authority for Museums used socialist-communist ideology as guidance when they bought museum items for the museum collections. About 75–80% of all new items and goods coming into the state and local country museums were items and goods related to the themes of revolution.

Since the dissolution of the Authority for Museums in 1991, the museums have started individually deciding on new items and goods that they buy for their collections. In 1995, by a resolution of the Minister of Culture, the “Rules for Finding Historic and Cultural Items and Conducting their Researches” were approved. With the approval of these “Rules,” a “Commission on the Purchase and Pricing of Exhibits” was set up under each museum. Activities under these commissions were supervised by directors of museums, and museum employees were in the composition of the commission. These commissions had the authority to purchase new items for the museum collection. With such a change, a museum could purchase museum items that would fit the main theme of the museum’s activities. As mentioned above,

starting from the middle of the 1920s, wearing the Mongolian national *deel* (clothing) and decorations made of gold and silver was prohibited. Because self-use was prohibited and even giving them to museums was not welcomed, some private persons used to store articles or items made of silver or gold in their homes. It is now possible for a museum to purchase those goods and items with museum significance that were stored at hands of private persons with the approval of the “Rules for Finding Historic and Cultural Items and Conducting their Researches.” It also came to be in the interests of individuals to sell to a museum those items that have lost the value of their earlier utility. Thus, Mongolia’s museums started obtaining some items that were previously impossible to acquire due to ideological barriers during socialism.

After the 1990s, another new form of enriching museum collections appeared. In 1995, a resolution of the Minister of Culture approved the “Rules for Conducting Archaeological Researches and Excavation.” In accordance with the former Rules, the Ministry of Culture would provide a permit for the undertaking of archaeological studies and performing of archaeological excavations only to professional scientific institutions. By these new Rules, museums with state status such as the National History Museum and the Museum of Natural History were allowed to undertake independent archaeological excavation. In addition, according to the new Rules, archaeological findings were to be transferred to the State Treasury Fund as well as to museum collections. With the approval of the new Rules, the National Museum of Mongolia was able to take part in all archaeological excavations conducted by the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia. For example, the National History Museum has successfully taken part in a number of archaeological excavations such as Orkhony Khushuu Tsaidam (2005), the ruins of the capital of the Mongolian Empire – Kharakhorum (2008), and Kherlengiin Khuduu Aral (Erdenebat 2012: 211–216). Findings of these excavations were transferred to the collection of the National Museum of Mongolia. In addition, the Museum of Natural History has taken part in fieldwork studies as well as excavations conducted by the Institute of Paleontology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. No such possibilities were presented to any museum that was functioning prior to the 1990s in Mongolia.

From the 1990s, the financial capacity for enriching museum collections has significantly declined due to the economic crisis in Mongolia. At this time, owing to financial constraints, museums had a policy of buying few items and only those with great museum significance. Although the financial capacity of museums decreased during this period, museums were continuously enriching their collections. For example, the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts bought 700 items that were consistent with its profile of activities over the period last 20 years. About 60% of these new items the museum bought through its own Commission on the Purchase and Pricing of Exhibits (Uranchimeg 2014: 218). Figure 6 shows how the enrichment of museum exhibits was conducted at the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts Gallery. In 1998, there is a temporary decrease in the number of collection because the Museum of Contemporary Art became independent from the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts.

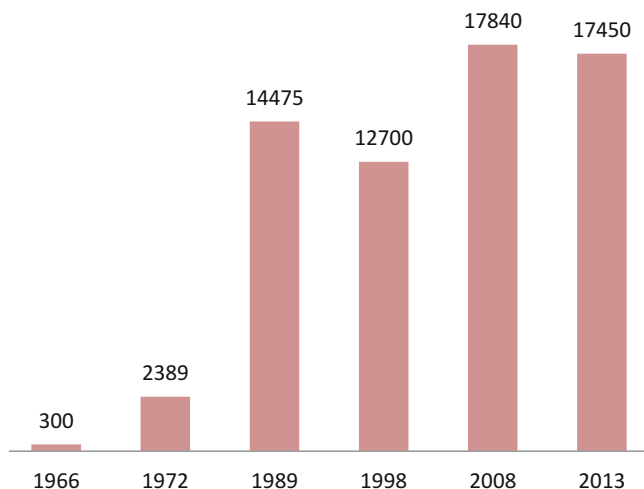


Fig. 6 Collection of the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts since 1966

In addition to financial difficulties, there was an additional factor influencing the decrease in new museum items and artifacts being obtained by the state museums. In 1994, a resolution of the Minister of Culture approved the “Rules on Purchase and Exchange of Historical and Cultural Items.” With the approval of these Rules, antiques sales started all over the country through antiques shops. Prior to the 1990s, antiques sales were banned in Mongolia. Under a permit issued by the Ministry of Culture, private individuals and companies were entitled to run an antiques business. With the start of antiques sales, private individuals who possessed pieces and items with museum significance have significantly reduced transferring or selling these pieces and items into the possession of state museums. The large discrepancy between the prices offered by museums and those by antiques shops in the purchase of historic and cultural pieces and items has certainly had an impact on the above situation. In addition, with the start of antiques sales, there were apparently many negative activities. Also, it was apparent that there were cases where individuals and companies who had no permit to conduct antiques business from the Ministry of Culture started selling antiques. A chain of illegal international antiques businesses started working in Mongolia. There were cases of selling pieces and items from a museum collection through illegal chains of antique businesses. For example, there was a case of a museum piece that was stored in the collection of the National Museum of Mongolia being sold through a chain of illegal antique businesses. Owing to this, Mongolian legal institutions later established that a total of 13 billion tugrik (according to the exchange rate of that time, the loss was equivalent to USD 13 million) in loss was incurred by the National Museum of Mongolia. This was a single largest organized crime in the modern history of museums.

Not only were museum pieces and items sold but there were also cases of non-museum items having been sold through this chain of illegal businesses. For example, non-legal paleontological excavation was organized in the southern part of Mongolia and a large number of findings from the excavation were sold through a transborder deal. The skeleton of a *Tarbosaurus bataar* that was found in southern Mongolia and obtained through a transborder purchase was in a New York auction in 2012 and was sold at the auction for about USD 100 million. At the request of the Mongolian side, the auction transaction was voided and a US district court issued a decision to return the *Tarbosaurus bataar* skeleton to Mongolia. The US court decided to return to Mongolia not only the *Tarbosaurus bataar* skeleton, but also the skeletons of 22 other dinosaurs that left Mongolia illegally in the 1990s (Tsendsuren 2014: 77–78).

Just recently, the world press and media informed us that a Green Tara created by Undur Gegeen Zanabazar was put up for auction and sold for three million euros. Since 2001, by a decision of the Government of Mongolia, all arts of Undur Gegeen Zanabazar and of his school have been ranked as “Unique and Priceless” historical and cultural memorials. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Mongolia expressed its protest against this auction in Paris although the organizers of this auction sale did not receive a complaint from the Government of Mongolia. Currently, it is not known when this artwork of Zanabazar left Mongolia. By now, however, there are no conditions under which similar crimes could possibly be repeated in the future.

As I have mentioned above, starting in the middle of the 1920s, Mongolian historical and cultural memorial items illegally left Mongolia to go abroad. Starting only in the 1990s did the Ministry of Culture raise the issue of returning to Mongolia those historical and cultural objects that left the country illegally. However, implementation of this issue has yet to be started. There are a variety of reasons, both dependent and independent, on the Mongolian side. First of all, the Mongolian audience expresses the opinion that the raising this issue is not well prepared when Mongolia's museums are not well organized and the conditions for the secure preservation and conservation of museum pieces do not meet the required standards.

Amongst new items that have replenished Mongolia's museum collections since the 1990s, the percentage of items and museum pieces with themes of revolution has been significantly reduced. Although no statistical data are available in respect of the percentage of newly arrived museum items associated with revolutionary themes, there is a belief that it has been significantly reduced. In this connection, it must be said that no similar museum statistics are available in Mongolia. With the dissolution of museums such as the State Central Museum, Museum of Revolution, and Lenin Museum, which had conducted their museum activities under revolutionary themes, it is evident that this greatly influenced the decrease in the percentage of revolutionary content amongst the total number of newly arrived items in the scale of the entire country.

4 Issues and New Trends in Respect of Registration and Documentation of Museum Collections

Prior to the 1990s, the proper registration and documentation of museum collections in Mongolia was a neglected task. During that period, a registration card was filed for a museum collection piece. The content of the registration card was approved by the Ministry of Culture and it was required for all museums with state or local country status. The registration card contained a photo of the museum piece or item, name, purpose, reason for being kept in the museum, and its scientific description. However, there was no information regarding size, form of the museum piece, or materials that it was made of. However, most of the museums did not file registration cards at all and if did do so, they did not do it well. There are many reasons for this. A major reason is that the museum itself did not conduct any research work and museum employees were non-professionals. Therefore, among the museum pieces, there were many indeterminate questions that not just anyone could answer easily: what it is, what it is called, who, when, and for what purpose was it made, and when and why it entered the collection.

Starting in the 1990s, innovations have started in the ways of registration and documentation of museum collection items. In 1994, the “Law on Conservation of Historical and Cultural Artifacts” was approved. The Law had a provision for creating a “State Registration and Information Database on Historical and Cultural Artifacts.” Following this, the “Rules for the Creation of State Registration and Information Database on Historical and Cultural Artifacts” were approved by a resolution of the Minister of Culture. With the approval of the Rules, innovation of registration cards for museum collections has started all over the country. The Ministry of Culture has approved the State Registration Card of Historical and Cultural Artifacts of Mongolia (Form No. 1) and has ordered all the museums of Mongolia to compile the card. After that, the Ministry of Culture decide to create the Center of Cultural Heritage by expanding the composition and structure of “Reconstruction Artistry for Museum Exhibits.” Within the newly established Center of Culture Heritage, it has been decided to set up a State Registration and Information Database. At the beginning, the registration card for museum collections was compiled in two copies: one to be retained by the museum itself and the other to be sent to the newly established Center of Culture Heritage. However, this work has encountered a number of difficulties and is progressing quite slowly. Starting in 2005, Mongolia’s government began implementing the “Program on Digitalized Storage of National Cultural Heritage Information.” Within the frame of this program, based on the registration card for museum collections compiled for all museums, a software program called RCH or Registration of Cultural Heritage 1.0 was designed. State and local country museums have been provided with the RCH or Registration of Cultural Heritage software program along with computers and the other required technical equipment. A total of 38 museums with local country status that conduct their activities in 21 aimags have been included in this project. Starting in 2010, a revised version of the RCH 2.0 software program was implemented into practice.

5 Issues for the Preservation and Conservation of Museum Items

One of the main functions for any museum is the preservation and conservation of museum collections employing scientific methods and methodology. About 90% of all museums functioning prior to the 1990s conducted their activities in buildings that were not specially designed for museum purposes. Amongst the museums with state status that were functioning in Ulaanbaatar at that time, the Museum of Revolution functioned in a special museum building. Another museum functioning in a special museum building was the Lenin Museum. However, this museum did not hold state status but was functioning under the MPRP—the governing political party at that moment in time. With respect to local country museums, the situation was no different to that above. Although there were some cases of local administration building new buildings for their local country museums, these cases were only very few (Lkhagvasuren and Konagaya 2007: 65). For museums not located in specially designed museum buildings, it is clear that the ways of preservation and conservation do not meet the conditions and requirements of safety standards for specific museum pieces and items. For museums of that period, the following general flaws were evident:

1. Rooms for museum collections were small, and had no shelves or special boxes designed for safe storage of museum pieces.
2. No registration of museum pieces was done in respect of themes or materials and all museum pieces were stored all along together.
3. Temperature, relative humidity, and air content of rooms, where museum pieces were stored, were not controlled or regulated at all.
4. Insecticidal procedures for rooms in which museum pieces were stored were hardly ever done.
5. Museums never conducted any reconstruction activities for museum pieces and items.

These obligatory jobs that should be conducted in the storage rooms of museum pieces were almost never done; as result, occurrences of damage, color loss, and infection with insects were quite commonplace. Since the 1990s, the first steps were taken to fix the above situation. The Ministry of Culture approved a number of documents: “Bylaw for Museum Collections of Mongolia” in 2005, “Requirements for Museum Affairs: The Standard of Mongolia” in 2006, “Bylaw for Local Country Museums” in 2009, and “Instructions for Registration and Documentation of Museum Collections” in 2012. The main goal of all of these documents was to improve the conditions of conservation of museum pieces and elaborate the registration documents of museum pieces. Before this time, Mongolian museums did not classify the museum pieces by materials from which the given museum pieces were made; rather, they classified museum items as “made of soft material” and “made of hard material.” After the issuance of the above documents, the largest state museums start classifying collections of their museums in accordance with themes. For

example, collections of the National History Museum were classified into three main themes: (1) Collection of Precious Items (items made of gold and silver and items with religious themes); (2) Collection of History and Archaeology; and (3) Collection of Ethnology. Items under each collection started being stored separately from each other. After classifying the museum items in accordance with the corresponding themes, within each collection, items started being classified in accordance with the materials from which they were made. For example, items made of hard materials were classified as items made of metal, stone, and wood; each of them were separated and started being stored separately. In addition, items made of soft materials such as cotton started being considered as one group and stored separately. Metallic shelves and wooden boxes were placed to store museum pieces individually. Measures were taken to protect items placed on the shelves from dust (for instance, some items were covered by a sheet of cotton). Most museum pieces were placed inside carton boxes and put on metallic shelves. In addition, in each collection room, each metallic and wooden shelf inside the rooms was numbered. After this numbering, measures were put in place to easily understand and locate which items are kept in which rooms and on which shelves. Lately, there is the apparent trend that the materials of museum pieces are classified as being made of “organic-quality” and “non-organic-quality” materials. UNESCO projects have been implemented at some museums such as the Zanabazar Museum of Fine Arts and conditions of storage of museum pieces have significantly improved (Uranchimeg 2014: 218–228). Some museums have started utilizing room air-conditioning and room air relative humidity regulation equipment that were produced in such countries as Germany. However, insecticidal procedures are lagging rather far behind. In accordance with the “Law on Conservation of Historical and Cultural Artifacts,” which was approved in 1994, historical and cultural artifacts were graded as “Unique and Priceless,” “Precious,” and “Ordinary” (Enkhbayar 1996: 83). Along with this law, the “Rules of the Professional Council for Determination of Grade and Price of Historic and Cultural Memorial Items” were approved. According to these Rules, the Professional Council for Determination of Grade and Price of Historic and Cultural Memorial Items was set up. The composition of this Council consisted of specialists from the Institute of History, Institute of Archaeology, Institute of Geology, Institute for Culture and Arts, Archives Administration, and Center for Cultural Heritage of Mongolia. After the approval of the “Law on Conservation of Historical and Cultural Artifacts,” museums with state or local country status reviewed all of their museum collections and determined each of their museum items in accordance with grades of “Unique and Priceless,” “Precious,” and “Ordinary” and started paying due attention to the storage conditions of those items. Currently, there are 250 museum pieces graded as “Unique and Priceless” that are stored at the museums with state or local country status. Mongolia’s museums are conducting quite a lot of work for the proper preservation and conservation of museum pieces but this work has still not yet reached the required standard.

6 International Cooperation of Museums and New Trends

Since the 1990s, Mongolia's museum institutions have been actively engaged in cooperation with international museum institutions. Relations that were active only with museums of former socialist countries, particularly those of Eastern European and those of the former Soviet Union, have now been expanded further and new opportunities have opened to establish ties with museums of many other nations. During this time, the Mongolian Museums Union was established to become a member of international museum institutions such as ICOM and ICCROM. Opportunities opened for Mongolia's museum employees to regularly take part in international seminars and meetings organized by these international museum institutions. In addition, opportunities have opened for Mongolia's museum employees to regularly take part in training at museums in Germany, Denmark, Finland, and the USA to upgrade their professional skills and qualifications and learn from their experience.

Since September 1994, Mongolian museum associates have regularly taken part in the international training courses on museology that take place at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka (hereafter referred as Minpaku) under the financial support of JICA—the Japan International Cooperation Agency. Currently, over ten specialists from Mongolian museums have participated in the activities of this seminar. They are (1) D. Tsedmaa—Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (MECS) (1994); (2) I. Lkhagvasuren—National History Museum (1994); (3) Z. Oyunbileg—MECS (1999); (4) D. Enkhtsetseg—Fine Arts gallery (2002); (5) Ch. Natsagnyam—Kharakhorum Museum (2009); (6) B. Ulziibayar—Mongolian Theatre Arts Museum (2009); (7) A. Yanjiv—Culture Arts Committee (2010); (8) J. Myandas—Natural History Museum (2010); (9) Ts. Oyunkhishig—National Museum (2011); (10) D. Narantuya—Culture Heritage Center (2011); and (11) G. Yalalt—Fine Arts Gallery (2011). Most of the specialists taking part in museum training are currently working in this field and it is gratifying to note that they continue adding their contributions to museum affairs and advocating the development of proper preservation and conservation of museum items. In addition, four training seminars have been organized for museum employees in Ulaanbaatar. They are as follows:

- Seminar on “Methodology of Preservation and Conservation of Historical and Cultural Memorials,” from April 1 to April 7, 1996.
- Seminar on “Classification and Generalization of Museum Pieces,” from April 1 to April 7, 1997.
- Seminar on “Registration of Museum Collections and Its Significance,” from April 1 to April 8, 1998.
- Seminar on “Method of Using Digital Technology in the Creation of a Registration and Information Database for Historical and Cultural Memorials and Its Significance,” from July 2 to 3, 2000.

These seminars, which had important implications and significance for the upgrading of the professional skills of Mongolian museum employees, were led and conducted by Professor T. Morita from the National Museum of Ethnology, Japan.

Since the 1990s, Mongolia's museums have actively engaged in the organization of international exhibitions abroad. Formerly, organization of international exhibitions was restricted to only former socialist countries, but from this period, this restriction was further lifted so that organization of exhibitions on Mongolian history and ethnicity as well as on paleontological themes can take place in many countries of the world. The first large-scale exhibition on Mongolian history and ethnology opened in Munich, Germany in 1989. Since then, over ten exhibitions on Mongolian history and ethnology opened in a number of countries such as the USA, France, and Japan. In addition, a thematic exhibition on Mongolian dinosaurs was successfully organized in many countries of the world.

7 Conclusions

The first museum in Mongolia started its activities on December 25, 1924. Starting in the middle of the 1920s, Mongolian cultural heritage, created over many generations, has been treated from the angle of communist-socialist ideology as belonging to the culture of the exploiter class and the culture of the exploited class. Until the 1990s, the museum affairs of Mongolia were dictated and dominated by communist-socialist ideology and advocacy of achievements in the construction of the socialist revolution and praising of a socialist-communist society—the rightful future of humanity—were the main guidelines for the museum activities of Mongolia.

The democratic movement started in the 1990s and the first steps were taken to bring about larger changes in the field of culture, particularly for the protection and conservation of historic and cultural heritage as well as for the museum affairs of Mongolia. First of all, museum activities were to find historical and cultural objects, register such objects into the museum collections, organize work for the preservation and conservation of museum objects, draw these objects into the cycle of scientific research, and promote public advocacy of museum goals. Although Mongolia's museums have made quite an achievement in the implementation of the above goals, there are still many goals that need to be accomplished.

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Policies for National Museum Management: Solutions and Development

Jarunee Incherdchai

Abstract There are 41 national museums in Thailand. Since the Act on National Education of 1997, national museums have been expected to provide more educational services and facilities, but a lack of museum personnel and inadequate budgets remain big problems. Recently the decision was made to reduce the number of national museums, and the small-scale national museums, formerly monastery museums, have returned to being monastery museums. To improve the image of national museums, three pilot projects are undergoing: the first project is establishment of seven national museum storage units – a main central storage unit in Pathumthani Province and six regional national museum storage units –; the second project is renovation of the National Museum Bangkok; and the third project is development of the Kanchanaphisek National Museum which will represent all ethnic groups in Thailand.

1 Background to National Museums in Thailand (Fine Arts Department, 2008)

Looking back to 1874, the first public museum originated at the Concordia Pavilion (Fig. 1) inside the Grand Palace and opened on the occasion of King Rama V's birthday celebrations (Fine Arts Department, 2008). The museum exhibited the royal collections of King Rama IV and other objects of general interest. Afterward, a special exhibition was opened regularly on His Majesty's birthday till 1887. It was transferred from the Palace to the Front Palace or "Wang Na," which had been the Palace of the Prince Successor, and was called the "Royal Museum at Wang Na" (Fig. 2) under the Museum Department, Ministry of Dhammakarn (Ministry of Education) (the former Ministry of Public Instruction, also in charge of religious affairs).

The management of the Royal Museum at Wang Na during the reign of King Rama V was progressive and systematic. The museum opened regularly on Wednesdays and Sundays from 10 am to 4 pm except on those days that shall fall on

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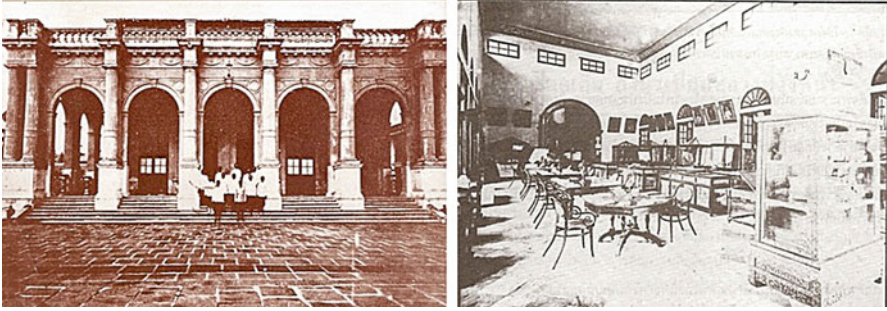


Fig. 1 The Royal Museum at the Concordia Pavilion, Royal Palace, during the reign of King Rama V

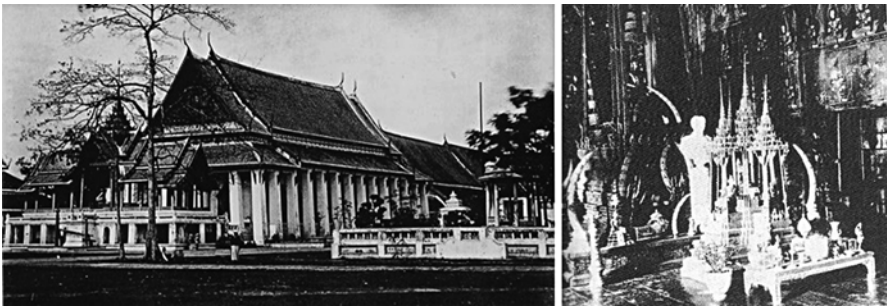


Fig. 2 The Buddhaisawan Chapel, a part of Royal Museum at Wang Na, during the reign of King Rama V

Siamese Sundays or Wan Phras. As the same time, the first museum located in the province was established; this was Ayutthaya Museum, modeled on other museums such as the monastery museums in Sukhothai and Nakhonpathom Provinces.

During the reign of King Rama VI, in 1912, museum was an important organization of the Fine Arts Department, which was under the direct auspices of His Majesty the King. There were more than 20 museums during the period and most of them were monastery museums. Prince Damrongrajanubhap was a key person running museum works until the subsequent reign. The status of museums was an institution to protect and preserve cultural heritage.

During the reign of King Rama VII, in 1925, the Royal Museum at Wang Na was changed to the Museum for Phranakhon (Fig. 3) by expanding the house of galleries inside other buildings of the palace. The public museum was opened formally on November 19, 1926. Under the Act on Establishment of the Museum for Phranakhon in 1926, more monastery museums in the provinces such as the Monastery Museum of Mahathat Phetchaburi, Monastery Museum of Phrathat Hariphunchai in Lamphun Province, and so on were built.

During the period of democracy, in 1934, the next museum act, i.e., the Act on Ancient Monuments, Objects of Art, Antiques and National Museums, 1934, was announced, the Museum for Phranakhon was changed to “National Museum



Fig. 3 Old Palace of Wang Na, as Museum for Phranakhon

Bangkok,” and all museums established both before and after 1934, which were under the Fine Arts Department, now had the status of national museum.

2 Role and Function of National Museums in Thailand

The primary role of the museums was as a “reception hall” showing Siamese civilization to Westerners. Later, museums were a splendid place for appreciation and learning, as was King Rama V’s intention. Anyhow, the protection, including the surveying, gathering, and collecting of cultural heritage, that is, ancient objects, was a major task led by King Rama VI. Museums such as the Royal Museum at Wang Na, Ayutthaya Museum, Lopburi Museum, and Wat Mahathat Monastery Museum in Phetchaburi Province were places for keeping and preserving all national ancient objects.

The role of museums was extended to educational service in the following times, together with various national museums being set up, also according to the Act on Ancient Monuments, Objects of Art, Antiques and National Museums, 1934 (Fine Arts Department, 1998). During 1961–1974, national museums in Thailand underwent rapid growth because of the government’s policy. A total 15 national museums together with 10 monastery museums were established in this period. Examples are as follows:

1. Chao Sam Phraya National Museum, Ayutthaya Province
2. Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Sukhothai Province
3. U Thong National Museum, Suphanburi Province
4. New Building in the National Museum Bangkok



Fig. 4 Phanakhonkhiri National Museum, in Phetchaburi Province, old palace during the reign of King Rama V

5. Kamphaeng Phet National Museum, Kamphaeng Phet Province
6. Phrapathom Chedi National Museum, Nakhonpathom Province
7. Khon Kaen National Museum
8. Chiang Mai National Museum
9. Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum
10. Ban Kao National Museum, Kanchanaburi Province
11. Ban Chiang National Museum, Udonthani Province
12. Phimai National Museum, Nakhonratchasima Province
13. Chiangsaen National Museum, Changrai Province
14. Hariphunchai National Museum, Lamphun Province (monastery museum)
15. Mahawerawong National Museum, Nakhonratchasima Province (monastery museum)
16. Inburi National Museum, Singburi Province (monastery museum)
17. Chainatmuni National Museum, Chainat Province (monastery museum)
18. Chaiya National Museum, Suratthani Province (monastery museum)
19. Matchimawat National Museum, Songkhla Province (monastery museum)
20. Phraphutthachinnarat National Museum, Phitsanulok Province (monastery museum)

During 1975–1995, the national museums started treating various different themes.

- Historical or memorial: Phanakhonkhiri National Museum (Old Palace) (Fig. 4), Phetchaburi Province and Silp Bhirasi Memorial, Bangkok.
- Contemporary art: The National Gallery, Bangkok (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5 The National Gallery, Bangkok



Fig. 6 The Royal Elephant National Museum in Bangkok

- Specialized museum: The Royal Barge National Museum in Bangkok, the Royal Elephant National Museum in Bangkok (Fig. 6), and the Thai Farmer National Museum in Suphanburi Province.
- City Museum: Ubonratchathani National Museum (Fig. 7), Surin National Museum, Nan National Museum, Ratchaburi National Museum, Suphanburi National Museum, and Roi-Et National Museum (Fine Arts Department, 2006).

Nowadays, there are 41 national museums over the whole country, caring for national heritage, ancient objects, art objects, and ethnographical objects, of which there are more than 300,000 pieces.

3 Reasons for Developing National Museums

According to the Act on National Education 1997, there are two main points related to museums.



Fig. 7 Ubonratchathani National Museum

1. Museums are informal educational units.
2. A teacher has to lead a student to a museum.

For these reasons, national museums were expected to change their image and develop ways of presentation in the exhibition galleries, adding more educational services and facilities. A few national museums, of large scale, were able to approach the goal, but most of them could not depend on personnel and budget.

The 41 national museums can be divided into three levels or scales: large, medium, and small.

- Large-scale museums are mostly regional national museums: Chiang Mai National Museum, Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, Chaosamphraya National Museum, Somdet Phranarai National Museum, U Thong National Museum, Khonkaen National Museum, Phimai National Museum, Songkhla National Museum, and Nakhon si Thammarat National Museum. There are two national museums in the center: the National Gallery and Kanchanaphisek National Museum. The National Museum Bangkok is considered to be a special level.
- Medium-scale museums are mostly city museums: Ubonratchathani National Museum, Ratchaburi National Museum, Surin National Museum, Banchiang National Museum, Chandharakasem National Museum, Chumphorn National Museum, Suphanburi National Museum, and so on.
- Small-scale museums are all former monastery museums before transfer to becoming national museum units: Mahawerawong National Museum, Matchimawat National Museum, Inburi National Museum, Chainatmuni National Museum, and so on.

The lack of museum personnel is quite a big problem. Nowadays, there are approximately 90 curators working in the national museums. There are three, two,

and one curator(s) for large, medium, and small scale respectively. Thai curators have to be museum manager, exhibitor, educator, and academic maker all at the same time, as well as sometimes conservator, without an academic degree in museum management, exhibition, and conservation. They have learnt by experience, through coaching, training, workshops, and studying by themselves. However, this is not always the case. A few curators “pass an exam,” can run museum work, and approach the goal. Certainly, most curators aim to run their museum as head or director so as to save budget on academic research. That is to say, the Office of National Museums, Fine Arts Department, is nowadays lacking specialists in ancient objects and art objects including museology and museography.

Of course, the next problem is inadequate budget. The main part of the budget for the 41 national museums comes from the central government, through the Fine Arts Department, which is responsible for 26 divisions/offices concerned with preservation and promotion of the artistic and cultural heritage of the nation. In fact, museum operations definitely need a rather large budget for maintenance and modification. Many national museums have never changed their permanent exhibitions after formal opening to the public the first time, even the National Museum Bangkok. A few large national museums, such as Ramkhamhaeng National Museum, have been modified, but more than 15 years ago. Anyhow, there are at least five large national museums modified with new exhibitions, such as the U Thong National Museum, Songkhla National Museum, and Somdet Phranarai National Museum. The Nakhon Si Thammarat National Museum will be completed in 2020. Also, the Chiang Mai National Museum is now undergoing a modification project and planned to open in the next 2 years. It is unbelievable that the Chao Sam Phraya National Museum, in Ayutthaya Province, has never changed its exhibition since being opened to the public in 1963. Including the National Museum Bangkok, the project of renovation started in 2015. The duration of the project is 10 years, for archaeological excavation, reconstruction of monuments, and modification of permanent exhibitions, inside the old palace compound and inside two buildings, the Mahasurasinghanat and Praphat Phiphitthaphan buildings, where sculptural masterpieces of Thailand from the prehistoric period to the Ayutthaya period are housed.

However, more than ten national museums received budget supported by local government because of their uniqueness, such as the Phranakhon Khiri National Museum in Phetchaburi Province, Ban Chiang National Museum in Udonthani Province, and Kamphaengphet National Museum. Moreover, the Suphanburi National Museum is a good example of a museum receiving budget support from local government.

4 Solutions and Development

The solution to museum problems can be divided into two levels: the action level and the policy level.



Fig. 8 Inside of the actual National Museum Storage in Pathumthani Province

Many national museums have attempted to change by themselves under limited conditions: contacting outsourcers, managing a youth museum guide, finding volunteers, creating museum souvenirs, and so on. Anyway, as mentioned before, this depends on each national museum's potentiality and readiness. It is very gratifying that many national museums, such as regional national museums and medium-scale museums like the Suphanburi National Museum, Ban Chiang National Museum, Roi-Et National Museum, Chiangsaen National Museum, and Surin National Museum have been established.

As for the policy level, this current time is very important for national museum management. To solve museum problems, the current Director General of the Fine Arts Department has announced his decision to reduce the number of national museums by transfer and combination. All of the small-scale national museums, formerly the monastery museums, have returned to being monastery museums, such as the Inburi National Museum in Singburi Province, Chainatmuni National Museum in Chainat Province, Matchimawat National Museum in Songkhla Province, Phra Phutthachinnarat National Museum in Phitsanulok Province, and Wat Benjamabophit National Museum in Bangkok.

To improve the image of national museums over the short term, there are three pilot projects. The first one is the establishment of seven national museum storage units to add a greater area for keeping huge numbers of ancient objects and art objects and also to develop storage management of a nearly universal standard. The first central storage unit, together with the Science Conservation Center in Pathumthani Province (Figs. 8 and 9), started this year, 2015, and there will be six more regional national museum storage units in Chiang Mai, Sukhothai, Khonkaen, Surin, Songkhla, and Nakhon Si Thammarat Provinces; of course, the storage buildings must be placed inside the national museum areas.

The second project is renovation of the National Museum Bangkok, following the master plan, for example, renovation of the old Palace Residences since the first Prince Successor and display inside each residence like its original function, and renovation of the permanent exhibition "Thai Civilization" inside these buildings.



Fig. 9 A conceptual construction of a new central national museum's storage in Pathumthani Province



Fig. 10 National Museum Bangkok

Most of the collection comprises masterpieces that are very well known (Figs. 10 and 11).

And the last one is developing the Kanchanaphisek National Museum, the only ethnological national museum under the Fine Arts Department. Some national



Fig. 11 Conceptual design of exhibition inside two buildings, National Museum Bangkok

museums in the provinces have ethnological sections in their gallery, with consideration given to ethnic people in the province and its surroundings. It is planned to intensively tell the story of all ethnic groups in Thailand at the Kanchanaphisek National Museum, under the titles “Window of Ethnology,” “Way of Ethnographical Lives,” and “Ethnographical Identity.”

The museum consists of two buildings (6,000 m²) – central storage nowadays – and an open area approx. of 79 rai (126,400 m²). The action plan for the development of the Kanchanaphisek National Museum, of which I am in charge, is into its fifth year: reconstruction of the old building; exhibition inside building no.1 (now storage for stone and large-size objects); setting up of an open-air “ethnographical architecture” exhibition; and renovation of building no.2 (now storage for ethnographic and religious objects) and exhibition. It is planned to open the museum to the public after the exhibition in building no.1 and the open-air “ethnographical architecture” are finished.

5 Conclusion

In the world of museums everywhere, change is a very regular occurrence, especially changes to the administrative structure. The reduction in number of national museums is not a new matter. However, the changing of national museum management in Thailand during this time is not easy, but I eagerly anticipate these changes.

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