

Sanctuary of Mahjong Culture
- Only One in the World
Collected Mahjong History
of 1000 years



Mahjong Museum
Chiba, Japan

<http://museum.takeshobo.co.jp>
E-mail: museum@takeshobo.co.jp

東 nederlands mahjong
bond



Open European
Mahjong
Championship

Nijmegen, the Netherlands

Program of the Open European Mahjong Championship 2005

Concert Hall 'de Vereeniging', Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Friday, June 24 18.00-20.00 h	Keizer Karel Foyer/ ING Room	Registration of players, followed by a welcoming party. Presentation of the movie <i>Mahjong in Holland</i> . Performance of the folk-dance groep Richeldiene.
Saturday, June 25 08.45 h	ING Room	Opening of the Championship. Welcoming words of Mr. Hideo Okuma (JMOC) and Mr. Martin Rep (Nederlandse Mahjong Bond).
09.00-10.30 h	ING Room	Session 1
11.00-12.30 h	ING Room	Session 2
12.30-14.00 h	Café ground level	Lunch
14.00-15.30 h	ING Room	Session 3
16.00-17.30 h	ING Room	Session 4
19.30-22.00 h	Restaurant ground level	Official dinner
Sunday, June 26 09.00-10.30 h	ING Room	Session 5
11.00-12.30 h	ING Room	Session 6
12.30-14.00 h	Café Ground level	Lunch
14.00-15.30 h	ING Room	Session 7 (last session)
16.30 h	ING Room	Award Ceremony and official closing of the tournament

Referees

Désirée Heemskerk	Netherlands (<i>chief referee</i>)
Marianne Croeze	Netherlands
Elsbeth Heijna	Netherlands
Ma Prem Sohana	Netherlands
Anders Labich	Denmark
Uwe Martens	Germany
Gao Yuting	China (<i>advisor to the referee team</i>)

Organizing team

The OEMC is organized by the Nederlandse Mahjong Bond, with support of ACM (Advanced Conference Management). We would like to thank the following members of the organizing team:

Marianne Croeze
Désirée Heemskerk
Chris Janssen
Martin Rep
Rika Strik (ACM)
Sjef Strik

Nederlandse Mahjong Bond (Dutch Mahjong Association)

Secretary: Lingestraat 60, 2987 CG Ridderkerk, the Netherlands. Telephone: +31 (0) 6 2078 33 41.
Internet: www.mahjongbond.nl. The Nederlandse Mahjong Bond is registered with the Chamber of Commerce Utrecht, number 30198455.

for a while in Holland

the playing rules.' So the Dutch people were, with regards to Perry & Co, already under the spell of mahjong when Joseph Babcock established an office of his Continental Mah-Jongg Sales Co in Amsterdam. Babcock sold his sets in four varieties. The most expensive set (prices can't be traced anymore) was hard to distinguish from ivory. The set was accompanied by the *Red Booklet* of J.P. Babcock. The booklet was also separate available in the bookstore. The playing rules of Babcock however differed a little from those of Perry. That is how the Netherlands also became acquainted with different playing rules. Although the differences were not extreme, they were big enough to spread confusion in a country where churches tear apart because of jots and titles. What were the true rules?

In November 1924 Babcock instituted legal proceedings against Perry

& Co and had the Perry handbook and its accompanying counting table confiscated on account of the copyright law. Babcock claimed that the mahjong playing rules were his intellectual property. He had studied the game thoroughly in China. It was so complicated that it could not be understood by a non-Chinese, but Babcock had transformed the game in a way it became accessible for western people. Furthermore, the lawyer declared, Babcock designed a counting system and he devised the name 'Mah-Jongg'. But Perry's lawyer stated that F.L. Verster, one of the managing directors of the department stores, wrote the handbook 'after extended study of the game and the treatise about it, received from China, America and England'. He handed the judge a series of booklets, which all contained mahjong rules and none were written by Mr. Babcock.

The judge put Babcock in the wrong and declared that he would never have had the Perry booklets confiscated if he had known the arguments of the American beforehand. The confiscation

was lifted and Babcock was sentenced to pay the costs of the trial. After that Perry advertised with triumph: 'At the moment we again have our series in the well-known boxes.'

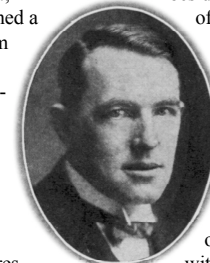
Faster than ever before, the mahjong sets and the booklets were sold from the Perry stores. The Dutch people enjoyed themselves utmost with the exotic game. 'The game of the thousand wonders is in many circles a welcome pastime beside the game of bridge', Perry & Co cheered. 'In contrast with this last game, everyone plays its own game with mahjong. Less skilful players do not spoil your hand!'

But still the confusion about the playing rules occurred in the Netherlands. Ever since the judge declared that Babcock's rules were not the only truthful ones and there were also other rules to play mahjong, a perfect Babel of tongues aroused. Even the Dutch Mah-Jongg League could not play a role of importance. When even more new rules arrived from mahjong-crazy America,

the confusion became bigger and bigger. They spoiled the joy of the game. Many mahjong players changed to bridge. The mahjong sets were banished to the attics and the Dutch Mah-Jongg League died a silent and inglorious death.

In November 1925 a leading Dutch newspaper wrote cynically: 'Do you remember the mahjong craze of a year ago? That who was not orientated towards winds, characters and flowers, did not really count in a conversation? It lasted months and then all at once it was over. Completely over. No one is interested in mahjong anymore and who purchased a box full of ivory scrolls and flourishes for a lot of money, can put it aside with a unperturbed conscience. Nobody will give a penny for it. Mahjong is dead.'

Excerpt from: *The Great Mahjong Book*, soon to be published by Tuttle Publishing, Boston, Tokyo, Hong Kong



J.P. Babcock

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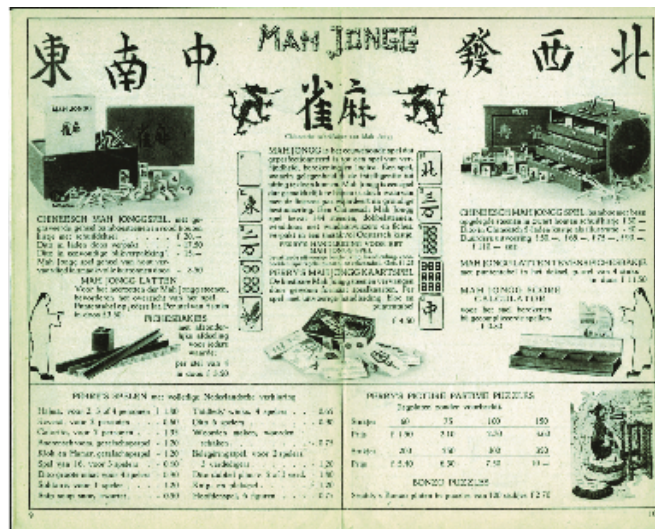
Eastern restaurant Fu-Hing Varsseveld
www.fuhing.nl

How mahjong was dead

Early 1923 a certain J.P. from Amsterdam inquired with the editor of a Dutch news magazine 'whether the Chinese game Mah-Jongg, which as he understood has been played for hundreds of years in China, is also known in Europe'.

Jelte Rep

THE EDITOR was not able to state an answer. 'It is said to be a game of ivory and bone tiles on which Chinese symbols are engraved, looking somewhat like domino', the editor declared, but the game was not known here. 'Does any of our readers perhaps know where this game is available?', the magazine asked. Perry & Co in Amsterdam immediately took the challenge. The department store had good connections in the United States and always sold the latest American products in its Dutch branches. So even before Mr. Joseph Babcock – he was the one who introduced mahjong in the Western world – had discovered the Netherlands on the world map, the new game was already displayed in the windows of Perry. They introduced



The Perry 1924 catalogue with an abundance of mahjong presents for 'Sinterklaas'.

mahjong as 'a game that's been played for centuries, brought to perfection into a game of delicacy, calculation and logic. Mah-Jongg is easy to learn, but one can esteem the sophistications only after a thorough study.' The department store sold different kind of sets. They offered sets with bone tiles and bamboo backs for a price somewhat between 10 and 30 dollars, sets of only bamboo somewhat between 4 and 6 dollars and for a complete wooden set in a nice carton box one had to pay 2,50. Perry & Co also supplied a Dutch instruction book with it. Pretty soon mahjong was so popular that sets were difficult to

get. Thousands of copies were sold. In Amsterdam the Dutch Mah-Jongg League was founded. They arranged demonstrations of the new game in crowded cafés. In living rooms and clubhouses, the sober Dutch surrendered themselves to the magic of the exotic mahjong. Tennis players joined the clubs during their winter stop and changed topspin and volley for 'chow' and 'mahjong'. The press was utterly amused with the new craze and came to take photographs. 'Mahjong', the newspapers wrote, 'has become like an infectious disease. Everyone wants to play.' Also in the Dutch colonies, mahjong was

played by the Dutch with devotion. According to the newspaper 'Indische Post', the presence of Chinese servants gave cause to many amusing scenes: 'Boy, who had to serve the players, forgot his work while looking with full attention at the game. He let a glass full of cool drink deflate in the neckline of her ladyship, when he couldn't resist to ask her attention for a stupid move. Gone prestige. 'O missie you are too muchy stupid'. And the ladies played their game full of ardency with the servants in order to excel during the next mahjong drive and to be able to rely on Chinese sources during possible disputes about

A present for you

I have played mahjong in many countries. One of the greatest events was the World Championship in Mahjong, which took place in November 2002 in Tokyo. For the first time I experienced a real international mahjong community, where people from all over the world met in a friendly atmosphere, not only playing mahjong but also discussing the amazing new international rules. For the first time we could play our favorite pastime with people from other countries without extensive discussions about the house rules.

So when, back in Europe, the idea came up to organize a European Mahjong Championship, I did not have to think very long. Because I wanted to give all those mahjong players the same wonderful present that the East had given me. That is: being able to be part of this great international community, and at the same time playing against some of the best players of the world. In this way, OEMC 2005 is like mahjong heaven.



Martin Rep
President of the Nederlandse Mahjong Bond

The first of many



It has been wonderful to witness the enthusiastic responses when the idea of a European mahjong championship was first put forth by Dutch and Danish players after the tremendous success of the first ever mahjong world championship in Tokyo, Japan, 2002. With keen interest I have followed the steady progress of the concept developing into a real event thanks to the Dutch Mahjong Association. It is thrilling to envisage the presence of well over 100 mahjong players from around the world getting together in Europe for the first time. I am sure the event will unfold in a sportsmanlike atmosphere, and that we will all take home with us the gift of many new mahjong friendships. In order to keep this ball of mahjong enthusiasm rolling, we shall found a European Mahjong Association with membership open to two representatives from each European country, thus ensuring the continuation of large-scale tournaments at regular intervals. May Nijmegen 2005 be the first of many memorable European mahjong championships.

Tina Christensen
on behalf of the European Mahjong Association
(to be founded)

Developing International Mahjong

The World Championship in Mahjong held in Tokyo in October 2002 ended successfully through the cooperation from various countries. Since the successful tournament, mahjong competition organizations have been established in many countries, spreading the network throughout the world.

We are happy that the global mahjong competition under the international official rules of mahjong is to be held aggressively and continuously.

The "Open European Mahjong Championship" to be held in the Netherlands under the sponsorship of OEMC will greatly contribute to the development of mahjong in the future, and it will be a very meaningful competition that mahjong fans in the world are paying attention to and putting their hopes on.

We wish the players from various countries good luck.

Japan Mahjong Organizing Committee



Hideo Okuma



Yoichi Ishimoto



Hiroaki Kinoshita



Keizo Tanabe



Kyoichiro Noguchi

2002年10月、東京で開催した世界麻雀選手権大会は、各国の協力を得て成功裏に終わることができました。その大会成功を機に世界各国で麻雀競技組織が確立されるようになり、さらに各国間のネットワークも広がって、国際公式ルールのもと世界規模の麻雀競技会が積極的かつ継続的に開催されようとしていることは大変喜ばしいことです。

このたびOEMC主催によりオランダで開かれる「ヨーロッパ麻雀選手権大会」は、新時代の麻雀発展に大きく寄与するものであり、世界の麻雀ファンが注目と期待を寄せる意義深い競技会です。各国選手のご健闘をお祈り申し上げます。

日本麻雀競技組織委員会
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常任理事 石本洋一
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When the OEMC will be just a memory...

Within some days, the first Open European Mahjong Championship will be over. But you can have memories for life of this cheerful event.

In the Mahjong Shop in De Vereeniging, exclusive mahjong sets will be on sale. These sets have been specially made in China for Mr. Dragon Shiang-Yu Chang from Chinese Taipei. In the sets, the ordinary flower tiles have been replaced by tiles with icons of the Netherlands. The tiles represent not only the famous Dutch tulip or the Dutch cheese, but also images of the Waal Bridge of Nijmegen, and 'De Vereeniging', the venue of the championship.

The sets come in three versions:

All bamboo	€65
Plastic	€75
Bone/bamboo	€85

Since only a limited number of these sets has been made, make sure you get your copy as soon as possible. At the shop you can buy many more things, amongst which lovely mahjong bracelets, which everyone should wear during the tournament. They cost just €5, and they come with a little bag that can be used to put the bracelet in.

Order your OEMC-DVD

A very fine and exclusive memory of the OEMC is the DVD with two videos that are made by a professional movie team. The first video, *Mahjong in Holland*, will be shown during the welcoming party of the championship on Friday, June 24th. It is an introduction to the Netherlands, and the way mahjong is played here. The second movie is a reportage, which will be made on the spot during the two days of championship. The videos will be made by well-known Dutch television director Mr. Bram van Erkel, and television writer Mr. Jelte Rep. During the championship, you can order your copy of the DVD at the Mahjong Shop. After the OEMC, it will be sent to your home address. The video movies are sponsored by the Mahjong Museum in Chiba, Japan, and they will also be shown in the museum.

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A selling agency : **MECHATRONICS JAPAN, INC.**

ACM: Taking Care Of Business

Right from the start, Ms. Rika Strik and her company Advanced Conference Management (ACM), have been involved in the organization of the Open European Mahjong Tournament. Advanced Conference Management provides services which are related to all aspects of meeting management. You want to organize an event, a congress, international convention, a symposium, or a seminar for your clients; or you need to organize a press conference, you would like to attend an exhibition or need to arrange meetings for a product launch. Of course this has to be a professional product and you need to meet the expectations of your clients. However, there is a lack of time. Or



Rika Strik (middle), Vera van der Kwast (left), Monique van Tol and Marius Kloos of Advanced Conference Management.

maybe you do not exactly know where to start. Now you need an experienced partner. A partner who will organize your

event from A until Z. Or who will take care of parts of the organization. Since 2001, ACM has specialized in organizing

events and congresses both in the Netherlands and abroad. As a professional conference organizer, Rika Strik takes well over 13 years of experience, combined with a strong network of both buyers and planners within the event branch. ACM works with professional and highly competent male and female staff and experienced temporary assistance. They all have only one goal: making the best of your event.

ACM offers its services on a modular basis. Based on a first introduction a draft proposal will be offered to you. ACM handles a transparent, customized, offer method. We appreciate if we could work together to make a success of your event.



www.congresevents.nl

Before you start to play...

The ACM team welcomes you at this championship. Our purpose is to support you during the tournament. We appreciate if you could read the below instruction with full attention. In case you need more inquiries, do not hesitate to contact us at the registration desk. You can recognize our staff in the black/white outfit.

* During the two tournament days, please report at the registration desk in time, if possible at least 30 minutes before the start of the games. This is very important for the organization in order to know if all players are present. If someone should not show up, we have to call up a substitute player immediately.

* Wear your name badge quite visibly, combined with the pin for that day. We regret that it is not possible to attend the championship without a valid badge.

* Upon registration on Friday June 24th, you will receive a player number. The 'walking scheme' that goes with it, will not be handed over to you until Saturday morning at the registration desk. On the walking scheme you will see what tables you will play at during the OEMC.

* As a player at the tournament, please be prepared that journalists and cameramen may want to take photographs and video movies. The organization asks you to co-operate with the press. Of course we will take care that during the tournament you will be able to concentrate fully on the game. Martin Rep is in charge of the press contacts; so if you have any questions, please ask him.

Good luck!

An Olympic thought

To participate is more important than winning. The Olympic thought also goes for the first European mahjong championship. Even though mahjong is not an Olympic sport, it brings people together from all over the world, to meet each other and to compete in a sportive atmosphere.

Mahjong is a recreation for body and soul. In Asia it is often used to help elderly people stimulate their brain and their muscle activity. For young people it is a fascinating way to beat each other in the field of intelligence, intuition and calculation. Today, young and not so young people from all over the world are gathered in the Netherlands for a sportive competition, which emphasizes the meaning of mahjong as a cultural gateway between East and West.

Whatever country you are from, whatever culture or whatever background you have - I wish you all a very fine tournament.



Erica Terpstra

President of the Dutch Olympic Committee / Dutch Sports Federation
Member of the Committee of Recommendation of the OEMC

A confession

I spent a number of wonderful years in Japan. The experience gained there have profoundly impacted my life. The Japanese and other Asians are admirably successful in preserving their cultural inheritance and in integrating it in the fast moving and much demanding life of today. I have, however, to make a confession. While in Japan, I was too busy to learn playing mahjong, the game that fascinates many Asian people and attracts an ever growing number of enthusiasts in the West. As this game is thus evolving into a cultural bridge between West and East, I gladly decided to accept the invitation to become a member of the Committee of Recommendation for the first ever international mahjong competition to take place in Europe. This tournament may become an event where East and West, the twain, will finally meet.



Foto Do Vissert / De Gelderlander

Mr. Andreas van Agt
Former Prime Minister

Member of the Committee of Recommendation of the OEMC

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Croeze Coaching has been a consultancy office since 1997. Marianne Croeze is specialized in interim-management in non-profit organizations. She is registered with the Netherlands Mediation Institute (NMI) as a mediator. Also she has much experience in the coaching of managers, conducting re-integration projects and questions about careers.

croeze@bart.nl



avenant

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Daja Mahjong

if the closest mahjong shop is just too far away for you. On the internet, Daja Mahjong is never more than a few mouse clicks away. Order here everything in the field of mahjong: from sets to bracelets, from jewelry to toys.

At the OEMC we will have our own stand where you can buy the special OEMC mahjong sets and all other stuff.

Komai, Yasuo	Japan	Neve, Anita	Netherlands
Koyama, Takuya	Japan	Oorschot, Gerda van	Netherlands
Nishimura, Fumiaki	Japan	Ouderkerk, Frederike	Netherlands
Wakabayashi, Noboru	Japan	Poel, Hans van der	Netherlands
Berkt, Sandra van de	Netherlands	Rep, Dicky	Netherlands
Bij, Ida van der	Netherlands	Rijnders, Ton	Netherlands
Boer, André	Netherlands	Rijnders, Wim	Netherlands
Broeder, Ingrid	Netherlands	Roquas, Frans	Netherlands
Broers, Eveline	Netherlands	Scheffler, Chris	Netherlands
Croeze, Jaap	Netherlands	Scholte, Piet	Netherlands
Daanen, Betsie	Netherlands	Schouten, Arthur	Netherlands
Davies, Gertjan	Netherlands	Vegt, Gert van der	Netherlands
Deege, Paul	Netherlands	Viergever, Rien	Netherlands
Demmer, Maurice	Netherlands	Wong-Chung, Rudie	Netherlands
Demmer, Marjan	Netherlands	Glimne, Dan	Sweden
Ehlers, Ydo	Netherlands	Rittmalm, Linn	Sweden
Geffen, Adrie van	Netherlands	Morris, Ryan	United States
Heemskerk, Yvonne	Netherlands	Sloper, Tom	United States
Heide, Yvonne van der	Netherlands		
Horn, Jacobine van der	Netherlands		
Janssen, Leni	Netherlands		
Jong, Zeger de	Netherlands		
Kal, Harry	Netherlands		
Ketzer, Jan	Netherlands		
Kniest, José	Netherlands		
Korntner, Franz	Netherlands		
Kösters, Anton	Netherlands		
Kuppeveld, Wiepy van	Netherlands		
Litjens, Mathijs	Netherlands		
Mallee, Annemiek	Netherlands		
Meijer, Jeroen	Netherlands		
Meijer, Wil	Netherlands		

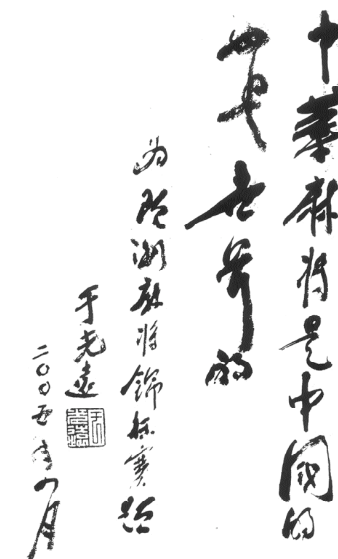
Players at the OEMC 2005

Scheichenbauer, Martin	Austria	Bruns, Margarete	Germany
Scheichenbauer, Alexandra	Austria	Duhme, Stefanie	Germany
Ramsdonck, Linda	Belgium	Gerdes, Erika	Germany
Thomasseti, Jan	Belgium	Gerdes, Friedrich	Germany
Li, Wenlong	China	Jenjahn, Monika	Germany
Liang, Jianguo	China	Marohn, André	Germany
Ma, Yongliang	China	Martens, Ole	Germany
Zheng, Xujian	China	Meier, Marion	Germany
Chang, Lynn	Chinese Taipei	Pünjer, Elke	Germany
Lu, P.H.	Chinese Taipei	Roos, Frauke	Germany
Pan, Moby	Chinese Taipei	Bazzocchi, Marco	Italy
Andersen, Morten	Denmark	Buscarini, Patrizia	Italy
Christensen, Tina	Denmark	Codutti, Paolo	Italy
Hansen, Jesper Willemoes	Denmark	Gavelli, Luca	Italy
Jacobsen, Martin Wedel	Denmark	Hertel, Roberto	Italy
Korreman, Sune	Denmark	Milandri, Marco	Italy
Kragh, Thomas	Denmark	Montanari, Vito	Italy
Krog, Brian	Denmark	Mordenti, Marco	Italy
Leth, Henrik	Denmark	Musacchio, Felice	Italy
Nielsen, Jeppe	Denmark	Natali, Daniela	Italy
Pedersen, Helge Møller	Denmark	Plebani, Angela	Italy
Rasmusson, Allan	Denmark	Rijoff, Stefano	Italy
Therkelsen, Lars	Denmark	Chiba, Masato	Japan
Berthelot, Nicolas	France	Hashido, Hikonoru	Japan
Cazarre, Jean-Marc	France	Hatsune, Mai	Japan
Mahé, Laurent	France	Imaeda, Minoru	Japan
Messi Fouda, Benoît	France	Kajimoto, Takunori	Japan
Parcollet, Roseline	France	Kato, Yoshinori	Japan
Parcollet, Stéphane	France	Kohtari, Yuji	Japan

The Chinese Majiang belongs to China and belongs to the world

*for The Open European Mahjong
Championship*

Honorary President of China
Majiang Championship
Organizing Committee
Yu Guangyuan



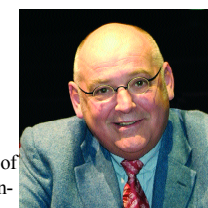
Welcome, mahjong players

Concert hall De Vereeniging is situated in the very center of the old city of Nijmegen. De Vereeniging, built in neoclassic style and richly decorated with art deco motives and beautiful paneling, was build in 1914. At the time it was one of the most beautiful concert halls of the Netherlands, and now, in the twenty-first century, after an extensive restoration, it still is.

Many great orchestras have played here and the most famous directors from all over the world have performed in Nijmegen. And people who like good music had no problems in finding their way to the city. Not only from the Netherlands, but also from Germany, our close neighbor.

But time does not stand still. The demands of people in this modern era are shifting quickly. People are less patient, they want more entertainment, and they appreciate comfort. Therefore, Keizer Karel Podia, the company which is responsible for the exploitation of De Vereeniging, is developing plans for a hotel and a parking garage near the concert hall, so the visitors of the concerts or one of the many activities which take place here, can truly enjoy their visit to Nijmegen. Still, culture remains the main activity of Keizer Karel Podia as much today as it was back in 1914. Therefore, we gladly open our doors for the first Open European Mahjong Championship. A cultural event, which has, I am sure of that, a great importance, not only for the city of Nijmegen but also for whole Europe.

Albert Krielen
Director Keizer Karel Podia



The Mahjong Museum

‘Only one in the world.’ A visit to the Mahjong Museum in Chiba, Japan.

Martin Rep

THE WHITE, square building that we reach after a bus trip of a couple of hours from Tokyo, looks rather small. Yet, this is the Sanctuary of Mahjong, the temple where the Holy Grail is securely kept: the place where all the wisdom and the treasures of mahjong of ages come together. The Mahjong Museum in Chiba, Japan, is a collective project of the Japan Mahjong Organizing Committee JMOC and publishing house Take Shobo. Here, recreation and science come together. The collection not only contains mahjong sets from Japan, China, Vietnam, the Philippines and other Asian countries, but also from the United States and Europe, and we are shown around by a real mahjong professor who teaches his students in the long, fascinating social and cultural history of mahjong. The museum meets any standard that goes for a museum. It has a large collection – due to its size, only part of it can

be shown at the same time – there is a hard working, dedicated staff and there is a well maintained library. When we enter the museum, there is no way we can take a peek immediately at all the goodies which are displayed here. According to the Japanese tradition, first photos have to be taken of our company. Impatiently we pose on the stairs. But after the last photo, final flash, another last photo and – absolutely – the last one, we are released, and there we go, like children in a candy shop.

There are funny and useless things, like the largest mahjong set of the world, with tiles a grown-up man can hardly hold in his hand. Or the smallest mahjong set of the world, for which you need a magnifying glass in order to distinguish the characters that are engraved on



Playing table chair used by the Imperial Princess.



The building of the Mahjong Museum in Chiba.

it. There is a set with a matching pair of X-ray glasses that enables you to see the tiles that your opponents have – right through the tiles. There is a clock with mahjong characters

instead of ordinary numbers, huge tiles of plaster (donated by brewery Guinness, who mentioned them as the ‘largest mahjong tiles of the world’ in the Guinness Book of Records), and there are weird souvenirs that are only appreciated by the most dedicated fanatics. Which we all are, of course. But we are much more impressed by the history of the game like it is presented in the collection. Especially in the beginning of mahjong history

it seems as if the sets should be as precious as possible. The museum has a set with silver tiles, used by high officials during the Ching-dynasty; a game with

jade tiles, used on the imperial court, tiles covered with gold foil and tiles of Japanese lacquer. The set, used by the last emperor of China, Pu-Yi, is displayed here, as well

as a set – similar but smaller – that belonged to his wife, the Empress.

The richness of the mahjong players is expressed in the luxury of



Pure silver tiles, played by high officials in the Ching Dynasty.

the boxes the tiles were kept in, and the tables where the players used to sit at. There is a round table with figures of ivory and gold foil, and a table with cushions in imperial yellow, which was used by the imperial princess of China and her court-ladies – it looks more like a square sofa than like a table. Not only at the court, but also in the prison, mahjong helped to chase out boredom. Japanese officers, who, after World War II, were locked up as prisoners in the Sugamo-prison, cut wooden mahjong tiles. Thanks to the game they lived through the long days while waiting for their trial. Ten years later, a French POW in Vietnam killed time by making an aluminum set, which he made of garbage. The museum also displays tools that are used to make mahjong sets, just as the moulds in

which modern plastics tiles are made. Sets with a more personal touch are from a more recent date. The Mahjong Museum possesses a set on which 108 generals are displayed from the Shuihuochuan-stories. Also the special memorial set that has Dragon Shiang-Yu Chang from Taipei made for the Open European Mahjong Championship, already is part of the collection of the museum. Time to go again, the driver of the coach decides. But wait! Here is a lovely museum shop which we have not seen yet. We need some cards, some tiny mahjong sets, and well, look at that lovely poster over there –

Mahjong Museum, Chiba, Japan. Telephone: (+81) (0) 470-87-8886, fax (+81) (0) 470-87-8886. Opening hours: daily, 10-16.30h, closed on Monday. Entrance fee: adults 200 yen, students 100 yen. Closed from December 28-January 4.



Mahjong tiles of ‘male set’, specially for men. In use by Pu-Yi, the last emperor of China.