

# A NEW KOREAN CANDLESTICK

by John Kynor  
4404 14th Ct. NW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107

Shown in the photograph is a beautiful candlestick showing many hours of work by a miner, blacksmith or silversmith. The stick was noticed in a local junk shop, and since it was not in my field of collecting, I gave it a quick look and walked on. Later, I recalled that the stick had a date and also had some sort of engraving on it. I was bothered by this until I returned to the shop and looked at the stick again.

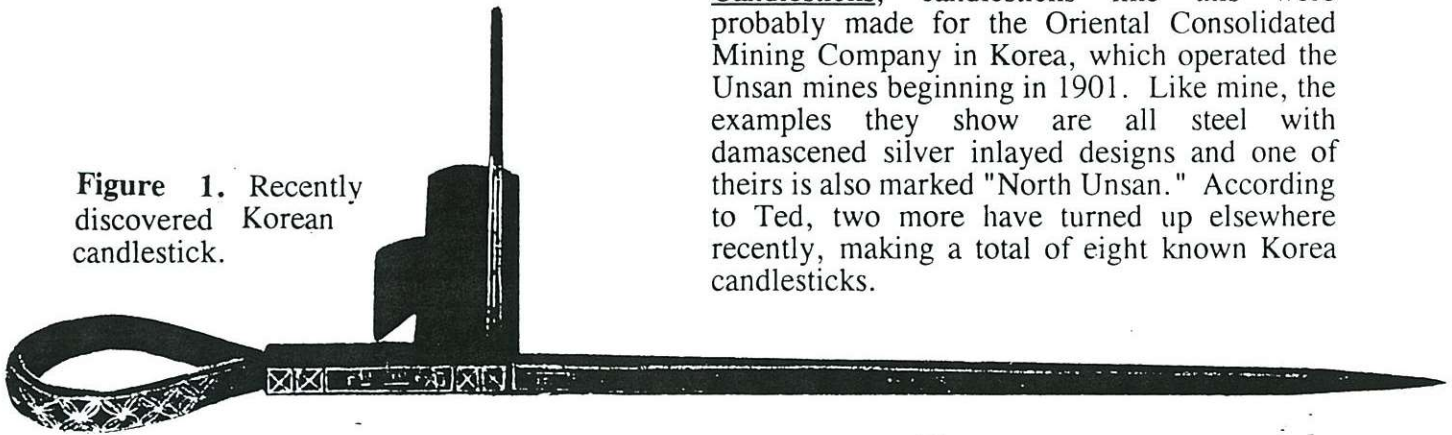
This time I noticed what I thought were Chinese characters--ah ha!--maybe a name? Not knowing Chinese, and less about candlesticks, I thought I better take a gamble on this one.

Once home, I cleaned the stick in a couple of spots and determined that the markings were done by silver inlay. Additional cleaning revealed a very fine inlay pattern that covers the

entire stick. With help from Leo Stambaugh, the stick was thought to be Korean, not Chinese. The 1906 date on the stick matched with the information that Leo had found.

I then contacted an elderly Korean gentleman who cooks at one of my favorite eating spots. He advised me that the characters on the stick were indeed Korean and a type of writing that has not been used for about 100 years. After studying the writing on the stick, he advised me that he could translate the writing on the top of the stick (not shown in the photo), but that he could not put the other writing on the side of the stick into English words. What he could translate was: "North Unsan." According to Wendell Wilson and Ted Bobrink's (1984) Collector's Guide to Antique Miners' Candlesticks, candlesticks like this were probably made for the Oriental Consolidated Mining Company in Korea, which operated the Unsan mines beginning in 1901. Like mine, the examples they show are all steel with damascened silver inlaid designs and one of theirs is also marked "North Unsan." According to Ted, two more have turned up elsewhere recently, making a total of eight known Korea candlesticks.

**Figure 1.** Recently discovered Korean candlestick.



**Figure 2.** Similar candlestick illustrated in Wendell E. Wilson and Ted Bobrink's A Collector's Guide to Antique Miners' Candlesticks,

