

Peru-Yale Partnership for the Future of Machu Picchu Artifacts

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One of the exhibits in the UNSAAC-Yale International Center for the Study of Machu Picchu and Inca Culture is this diorama depicting Yale researcher Hiram Bingham's expedition to Machu Picchu in the early 1900s.

Yale University and the Government of Peru reached a historic accord in November 2010 for the return to Peru of the archaeological materials excavated by Hiram Bingham III at Machu Picchu nearly a century earlier.

Yale was pleased that President Alan Garcia had requested that the Universidad Nacional de San Antonio Abad del Cusco (UNSAAC) be the home of the collection, and the University looked forward to an agreement with UNSAAC for a new museum

and research center that would carry out programs of research, educational exchanges, and public exhibitions.

In February 2011, Yale and UNSAAC signed an agreement establishing the UNSAAC-Yale International Center for the Study of Machu Picchu and Inca Culture in Cusco. The center is dedicated to the display, conservation and study of the Machu Picchu archaeological collections curated by Yale at the Peabody Museum since their excavation by Bingham in 1912.

Richard C. Levin, who was president of Yale at the time, said the partnership agreement with UNSAAC “fulfills one of Yale’s primary missions — the collection and dissemination of knowledge. This agreement ensures the expanded accessibility of these Machu Picchu collections for research and public appreciation in their natural context and with the guidance of two great universities.”

Yale began in March 2011 to send its collection of artifacts from Machu Picchu to Peru, in accordance with the UNSAAC-Yale agreement.

The initial shipment included intact objects suitable for museum display along with pottery fragments and other materials. The shipment meant that the artifacts would be in Peru for the July 2011 centennial anniversary of the discovery of Machu Picchu.

The following September, the Government of Peru honored Levin for his significant contributions to the historic agreement between Peru and Yale. Harold Forsyth, ambassador of Peru to the United States, awarded Levin the Order “The Sun of Peru” in the Grade of “Great Cross” for his distinguished service to Peru. The presentation of the award, which is the highest honor bestowed by Peru, took place at the Embassy of Peru residence in Washington, D.C. Forsyth cited the “good will” and “cooperation” between Yale and Peru in reaching the agreement, which he called “a remarkable example of how to solve a controversy.”

Yale officials attended the opening ceremony for the UNSAAC-Yale International Center for the Study of Machu Picchu and Inca Culture in Cusco, Peru in October 2011. Then-Provost [Peter Salovey \(http://president.yale.edu\)](http://president.yale.edu), who is now Yale’s president, and Yale Professor [Richard Burger \(http://anthropology.yale.edu/people/richard-l-burger\)](http://anthropology.yale.edu/people/richard-l-burger), the

eminent anthropologist and archaeologist, joined Susana Baca, Cultural Minister of Peru; Victor Raul Aguilar, rector of UNSAAC, and other officials at the new Center in Casa Concha, a historic Inca palace.

“Yale is very pleased to be UNSAAC’s partner in this project, and is delighted by the progress we have made together so far,” Salovey said. “We expect Yale faculty and students to travel often to the museum for research projects involving these objects, and we are very impressed by the beauty of Casa Concha and the way the objects will be housed and displayed there.”

Following the shipment of artifacts to Peru in March 2011, the remaining collections were transported to Peru in December 2011 and November 2012.

As part of the agreement between Yale and UNSAAC, Yale organized advanced archaeological workshops during the summers of 2013 and 2014 for the faculty and advanced students of UNSAAC’s archaeology program. A third course at UNSAAC focusing on the preservation and conservation of archaeological sites is planned for this coming summer.

The Museo Machu Picchu in the Casa Concha has been a tremendous success with the people of Cuzco, for whom admission is free, as well as with national and foreign travelers en route to Machu Picchu. With generous support from the CARTAGO Foundation, an outreach program directed by Yale archaeologist Lucy Salazar has brought rural children to the museum from the villages of Urubamba and Pisac for tours conducted by docents from the University of Cuzco.

- [Announcement of Peru-Yale Accord \(/2010/11/21/statement-yale-university-regarding-machu-picchu-archaeological-materials\)](#)
- [Yale-UNSAAC Agreement \(/2011/02/11/yale-and-unsaac-create-center-promote-study-machu-picchu-and-inca-culture\)](#)
- [Recognition by Peru of President Richard C. Levin \(/2011/09/16/peruvian-government-honors-levin-its-highest-award\)](#)
- [UNSAAC-Yale International Center for the Study of Machu Picchu Opening \(/2011/10/06/peru-yale-center-study-machu-picchu-and-inca-culture-opens\)](#)

Memoranda of Understanding

- [Memorandum of Understanding: Spanish \(/2015/06/04/universidad-nacional-de-san-antonio-abad-del-cusco-la-universidad-de-yale-memor-ndum-de-e\)](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding: English \(/2015/06/04/universidad-nacional-de-san-antonio-abad-del-cusco-yale-university-memorandum-understandi\)](#)

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