

苏州博物馆



历代碑志

Ancient Tablet Stone Collected by
Suzhou Museum

苏州博物馆 编著



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苏州博物馆系列丛书总序

一位学者说：“苏州，是一座用文化打造起来的城市，唯有用文化才能使她挺直腰杆。”一位官员说：“文化，是苏州最大的魅力；文化，是苏州最强的竞争力。”

江南水乡、人间天堂的苏州，地处长江三角洲的核心地带，扼守太湖水网和京杭大运河的要津，风物清嘉，人文荟萃，是中华文明的重要发祥地之一。

悠久的历史积淀和传承，赋予了古城苏州独特的整体文化景观。刻于公元一二二九年的宋《平江图》碑，是当今世界所能看到最早的城市平面图。古城苏州“水陆并行双棋盘格局”至今仍然存在，以小桥流水、粉墙黛瓦为特征的古城风貌，使人在这古今和谐的东方水城空间环境中，处处感受到一种纤巧秀美的柔性文化魅力，感受到一种宁静婉约的优雅文化氛围。

丰厚的吴地文化遗产精华，秀外慧中，包容了千年古城、水乡古镇、园林胜迹、街坊民居等丰富多彩的物化形态，也体现在昆曲、苏剧、评弹、桃花坞木刻、吴门书画、丝绸、刺绣、工艺珍品等门类齐全的艺术形态，更表现于苏州人才辈出、群星灿烂的文脉传承。人文资源的博大、文化底蕴的深厚、文化心理的成熟和文化氛围的浓重，使苏州成为活着的文化遗产，也使苏州成为享誉中国乃至世界的魅力城市。

博物馆是展示城市魅力和竞争力的重要舞台。苏州博物馆是展示苏州地方历史文化的综合性博物馆，作为一座地域性政府主导体制下的公益性的重要文化场所，它依托全国重点文物保护单位——太平天国忠王府作为博物馆文化遗产保护和发展的基础，在苏州地区各类博物馆中，建馆最早、综合实力最强，具有举足轻重的地位。苏州博物馆现藏各类文物约三万余件，以出土文物、明清书画和古代工艺品见长，不少器物从质地到器形，既有本地特色，又有与周边文化交流的痕迹。

作为收藏、保护、研究、展示人类文化遗产的公共文化设施，博物馆体现的是一个城市和地区的文明风貌和个性，是对文明记忆的一种汇聚、凝练与传承，反映一个城市的品味、内在风格和历史文脉。当今，博物馆已经成为各国、各地区一种普遍性的文化表达方式，为社会和社会发展服务是其宗旨。在现代化和全球化背景下，博物馆和文化遗产的重要性日益凸显，它不仅担负着文化传承、文化认同的重任，是现代人高素质的精神和美感生活不可或缺的组成部分，同时也日益成为国家和地区的文化、经济与社会发展的重要支撑点。

在苏州建城二千五百二十年之际，由著名建筑大师贝聿铭担纲设计的苏州博物馆新馆，已经露出了崭新的雄姿。新馆以其大胆和意味深长的精准选址、体现继承和创新的“中而新，苏而新”的设计理念、追求和谐适度的“不高不大不突出”的设计原则、精益求精的高标准建设，成为一座既有苏州传统

园林建筑特色、又有现代建筑艺术利落的几何造型、精巧的布局结构，以及完善的设施功能，并且在各个细节上都体现出丰富人文内涵的现代化综合性博物馆。新馆建筑充分利用空间资源来倡导文化，充满着古今文化传承、艺术表现以及科技进步的和谐美感和传神意韵，具有不朽和传世的经典意义，她和毗邻的拙政园、忠王府、狮子林等传统园林建筑珠联璧合，交相辉映，形成了一条丰富多彩的历史文化长廊。苏州博物馆新馆是贝聿铭先生建筑生涯中的封刀之作，它不仅是当今苏州的一个标志性公共建筑，更是中国建筑文化从传统通向未来的一座桥梁，成为中国建筑发展创新的一个标记。同时，它把古城苏州的文化遗产保护事业推上了一个新的平台，也为苏州博物馆翻开了全新的一页。

做好新馆硬件和软件建设两方面的工作，打造苏州博物馆精品品牌，是发展文化生产力，满足人民群众日益增长的文化需求的客观需要；是建设文明苏州，实现苏州经济社会文化和谐发展的具体实践；是时代赋予我们的历史责任。为了让更多的人了解苏州博物馆的历史与文化的发展，认识苏州博物馆的藏品和展览，提升博物馆的学术水准、社会声望和荣誉地位，充分彰显博物馆的社会价值和社会文化功能，我们将陆续出版一批有关苏州博物馆藏品以及与之相关的保护和研究方面的系列丛书，以满足广大人民群众的需求。

烟雨江南，如诗如画。面对着现代化建设的高歌猛进，古城中那随处可见的古色古香，那丝丝缕缕古意的静谧，清冷而美丽着。坚守文化的精神家园，保护、传承和光大这份弥足珍贵的文化遗产，不仅是博物馆人的工作和义务，更是生活在这片土地上的人们的崇高责任。

陈 嵘

2012年10月

Preface

A scholar said that the city of Suzhou is built by the culture and only the culture can straighten her back; an official said the culture of Suzhou is the most charming and competitive.

Suzhou, called the waterside city and the paradise on earth, is located in the core area of the Yangtze River Delta.

It holds the network of Taihu Lake and the key post of Grand Canal. The richer land fosters more talents. It is one of the birthplaces of Chinese civilization.

The cultural accumulation and inheritance in a long history endows a unique and integrated cultural landscape to Suzhou. The Stele "Map of Pingjiang" of Song Dynasty, engraved in 1229, now is the earliest city ichnography in the world. The layout of Suzhou "the lands and rivers lying like the double chessboards" does not change greatly up to now. The scene of "the whitewashed wall with dark gray tiles" and "the water flowing under the small bridges" let the people everywhere feel a kind of gentle cultural charm and elegant cultural atmosphere in the space of an oriental waterside city. It is peaceful and harmonious.

The rich heritage of Wu culture, beauty with connotation, not only contains the substantial forms such as the 2,500-year-old waterside city, the classical gardens, the old streets and houses, but also the art forms such as Pingtan Opera, Kun Opera, Su Opera, Taohuawu Woodcut, Calligraphy and Painting of Wumen School, Silk, Embroidery and Craftwork etc. Suzhou is full of talents from ancient to today. The rich human resource, the profound cultural foundation, the mature cultural mentality and the strong cultural atmosphere let Suzhou become the living cultural heritage and the charming city in China, even in the world.

The museum is an important stage to show the charm and competition capacity of the city. Suzhou Museum, led by the government, is a comprehensive museum concerning the local culture and history. It is the earliest museum and has the strongest comprehensive strength in Suzhou. On the basis of the protection and development of the Residence of Prince Zhong of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (National Priority Preservative Unit of the Cultural Relics), the status of Suzhou Museum is pivotal as a significant public cultural place. Suzhou Museum collects over 30,000 cultural relics and is expert in the unearthed relics, ancient craftwork, calligraphy and painting of Ming and Qing Dynasty. Some cultural relics, from her texture to shape, not only have the local characteristic, but also have the evidence of the cultural exchange with the surroundings.

As the public cultural establishment for the collection, protection, research and exhibition of the human cultural heritage, the museum reflects the civilization and character of a city, reflects the taste, connotation and history of a city. It is the concentration and inheritance of the civilization memory. Today, the museum already becomes a kind of cultural expression universally in the nations and regions. Its purpose is to serve the society and the social development. With the background of modernization and globalization, the significance of the museum and cultural heritage is highlighted increasingly. It shoulders the important task of the culture Identity and inheriting. And it is indispensable to the modern people for pursuing their high-quality spiritual life. The museum, simultaneously, increasingly becomes the important support to the cultural, economic and social development of the nations and regions.

In the 2520th anniversary of the establishment of Suzhou city, the New Suzhou Museum, designed by Mr. I.M.Pei who is a famous architect, begins to show her new appearance. The innovative design concept is "Chinese style with innovation, Suzhou style with creativity" and the harmonious design principle is "not high, not large and not projecting". Through the bold and meaningful site choice and the high-quality construction, the new museum becomes a modern comprehensive museum with the humanism connotation. It not only has the character of Suzhou classical garden, but also the simple geometric form of modern art, the exquisite structural layout and the complete function.

The construction of the new museum makes full use of the space resource to advocate the culture, harmonious with the heritage, art expression and technological development. The new museum is adjacent to the classical gardens such as the Humble Administrator Garden, the Residence of Prince Zhong and The Lion Forest Garden. They enhance each other's beauty and become a varied historical and cultural gallery. The New Suzhou Museum is the last work of Mr. I. M. Pei in his career and will be an immortal and classical construction in the world. The new museum is not only a symbolic public construction in Suzhou, but also becomes an innovative mark, which bridges the Chinese architectural culture from the tradition to the future. The new museum, simultaneously, pushes the career of the cultural heritage of Suzhou to a new stage and turns a new page of Suzhou Museum.

Improving the hardware and software, and creating the cultural brand of Suzhou Museum is the need of developing the cultural productivity and satisfying the increasing cultural requirement of the people; it is the concrete practice of the civilization construction and the realization of the harmonious development of the economy and culture in Suzhou; It is also the historical duty endowed by time. We will successively publish a series of books about the collections of Suzhou Museum, their protection and research. Let more people know the collections, exhibitions, and historical and cultural development of Suzhou Museum. It also can promote the academic research, exalt the social reputation and status, and fully embody the social value and cultural function of Suzhou Museum.

Suzhou in misty rain likes a painting or a poem. Under the background of the modernization, the antiquity still can be seen everywhere in the ancient city. It is quiet, clear and beautiful. Not only the people of the museum, but also the people living in the land have the duty to hold the spiritual homeland of the culture and have the responsibility to protect, inherit and spread the valuable cultural heritage.

Chen Rong
2012.10

前 言

古代石刻，以其历史与艺术的兼容并包、世俗同宗教的和谐共存，成为中华各民族文明记忆的重要载体，亦是保存传统文化的珍贵资料。刻有各种语言各体文字的古物石制品，大致可分为立于地上的石碑和埋在地下的墓志。石碑是在作为纪念物的标志性竖石上勒刻文字以期垂诸久远者。墓志则是埋放在墓葬内，刻录亡者姓名籍贯、宗族世系、生平履历的铭刻文字，滥觞于秦汉，成型于南朝，盛行于隋唐。志主生平以及志铭中的撰文、书丹、篆盖、刻碑者官衔姓名等内容，是研究当时史实的第一手资料。

自北宋赵明诚撰《金石录》起，历代考古学家一直对古物上文字的传拓与研读乐此不疲。清乾隆年间，文字狱钳锢了自由性灵，知识阶层转而投身名物考据，加上学界急欲摆脱赵孟頫、董其昌馆阁体帖学对书法的束缚，师法古人碑版铭刻的碑学因此大行其道，热心搜剔古代石刻文字渐成风尚。这股掘藏摹拓之流风，最终在19世纪末石印、珂罗版等摄影印刷术的冲击下宣告式微。近百年来，伴随着考古发掘出土，大量石刻墓志重见天日，为探寻历史提供了丰富的实物资料，具有不可估量的学术研究和历史文物价值。

苏州历来为学林重镇，清季的潘祖荫、吴大澂都是金石收藏考据名家，民国时侨寓吴下的辛亥元老李根源，其“曲石精庐”中亦度藏唐代稀见墓志多方（尤以《王之涣墓志铭》最具盛名）。苏州博物馆收藏历代石刻文字均为1959年以后所得，包括历次考古发掘、名人藏家捐献和征集收购，总计一百四十余方。内容以墓志为主，时间跨度上迄北朝北齐文宣帝天保元年（公元550年）、下截新中国成立后的1962年，其中不乏大家撰书的精品佳构，更有名门家族墓志相互印证，既能补郡邑志乘文献之阙，又有裨益于历史艺术方面之探研。

苏州博物馆藏石刻资料以明清两朝居多，然早期石刻亦不乏精品。如北齐文宣帝天保元年（公元550年）僧惠□造像题记等五方造像记，用笔峻朴神茂、通舒蕴拙，散发出中国书法嬗变期的高古风骨气韵。唐代墓志铭大行其道，体例成熟，法度完备，如唐高宗永隆二年（公元681年）济度寺比丘尼法灯墓志铭，志主系梁武帝萧衍五世孙女，其父为隋太子太保、宋国公，萧氏姊弟四人同出三界遁入空门。唐代宗宝应元年（公元762年）朝散大夫颍州刺史张府君墓志铭，志主张万顷，官拜泗、颍二州刺史，安史之乱时曾有忠勤之效。该志由河南褚湊书，全篇结构雍容舒徐，点划遒雅厚劲，与同时代八分大家徐浩姿态横生的隶书如出一辙。

中国古代石刻书法的辉煌至两宋王朝渐趋尾声，但仍保有相当高的水准，且不乏史料价值。馆藏北宋仁宗嘉祐八年（公元1063年）职方员外郎胡公墓志铭，志主胡献卿，宋真宗大中祥符八年（公元1015年）乙科进士，才华声名耸动都下，与北宋名士庞籍、范仲淹等均有交游。又如南宋光宗绍熙元年（公

元1190年)济阳翟秀夫人李氏墓志铭,志主李妙香,乃宋仁宗驸马李玮后裔,其父李昌在靖康之难中抗金捐躯,其夫勇于拒敌累获战功,夫妻所生二子亦精忠报国屡建奇勋,尤以长子翟安道为著,深得宋孝宗赏识,堪谓忠勇义门。此志虽未署书丹者姓名,然字态丰腴,转掣圆润,结体宽稳,风神疏朗,颇具颜鲁公遗韵。

宋代以降,苏州社会经济、文化日渐繁荣兴盛,一时名家辈出,海内外文人荟萃,为后人留下了丰富的石刻资料。苏州博物馆藏元惠宗至正二十五年(公元1365年)郑国公墓志铭,志主赵德懋,通州(江苏南通)人,宋太祖三弟魏王赵廷美后裔,年轻时居乡里,常从张士诚游。至正十三年(公元1353年)张起兵反元时,赵德懋首率长子元明等居麾下,随同征战,后病逝于高邮。至正二十五年,张士诚已定都平江,自称吴王,遂追封赵德懋为郑国公。明神宗万历四十一年(公元1613年)光禄大夫少保兼太子太保吏部尚书建极殿大学士王公墓志铭,志主王锡爵,嘉靖四十一年(公元1562年)礼部会试第一、廷试第二,官至宰相,性刚负气,抗言直谏,风节凛凛。此铭由其好友申时行所撰,两人同科中第,同为苏州人,当朝共事七年,申时行任首辅时,王锡爵是内阁成员,一刚一柔,互补并济。此铭为上、中、下三栏布局,格局较为罕见。清仁宗嘉庆二十三年(公元1818年)敕授文林郎华亭县教谕候选国子监典簿王君墓志铭,志主王芑孙,长洲(江苏苏州)人,明文渊阁大学士王鏊十世孙。芑孙久困场屋,终其一生仅在乾隆五十三年(公元1788年)召试行在被赐举人。但他的才华名声却响彻大江南北,当时海内士大夫以诗古文名者,不过寥寥数家,而王芑孙“以诸生拔起东南,虽终其身只一为校官,晚岁杜门连蹇以歿,而其名横骛一世,光气照耀,不可掩抑,世之人称之无异辞”。此铭由乾隆五十五年(公元1790年)状元石韞玉书丹,著名学者潘奕隽篆盖。

苏州博物馆藏历代家族墓志同样颇具特色,长洲俞氏家族墓志,含明成祖永乐十四年(公元1416年)俞处士墓志铭、明宣宗宣德五年(公元1430年)先妣太恭人圻志、成化十一年(公元1475年)俞钦玉墓志铭,涉及俞士悦及其父克和、母陈氏、子钦玉,尤以俞士悦一人之荣迁谪戍,牵动整个家族的兴盛衰落。俞士悦为永乐十三年(公元1415年)进士,明英宗正统十四年(公元1449年)迁都察院右都御史,当年七月发生“土木堡之变”,留守京师的俞士悦和兵部侍郎于谦等拥立朱祁钰登基,是即景帝。俞士悦被加升光禄大夫、太子太保兼刑部尚书,其父母、祖父母、曾祖父母皆获诰赠封赐,所遇恩宠一时无两。然宫廷争斗云谲波诡,景泰八年(公元1457年)“南宫复辟”,徐有贞等拥英宗重夺帝位,于谦被杀,俞士悦亦遭坐成铁岭达八年之久,连累其子俞钦玉不获入仕,后乞补国子监生,客死京城。唐氏祖孙墓志,含明宣德元年(公元1426年)武略将军苏州卫千户唐公(贤)墓志铭、明孝宗弘治六年

(公元1493年)千户唐(弘)德广墓志铭两种。唐氏原籍常州宜兴,唐贤之父唐兴本是张士诚部将,后归降朱元璋,唐家得以世袭苏州卫左所千户之职。唐弘墓志由比他小两岁、与他同朝为官的文林(文徵明之父)撰文并书丹,全文方正端肃、风骨刚健,透逸出武士般肃然正气。且两碑均系苏州刻工世家章氏精镌,前者为章敬刊,后者为章浩刊。章浩与乃兄章昶、子章文、孙章藻都是刻碑圣手,章文还是文徵明的门客。沈周夫妇墓志,含明弘治元年(公元1488年)沈启南妻陈氏墓志铭、明武宗正德七年(公元1512年)石田先生墓志铭两种。沈周为吴门画派巨擘,性格冲淡,画风朗润,夫妻友爱,鹣鹣情深。二铭分别由李应祯撰祝允明书(两人既是翁婿又是师徒)、王鏊撰章浩刻,具有相当的观赏价值,又可补正史之阙。

那些由杰出书法家精心写制的志铭,本身就是令人过目难忘的艺术佳构。明弘治十三年(公元1500年)怡庵处士施公悦墓志铭,由金石学家都穆撰文,一代才子唐寅书丹,行笔豪放率性,随意挥洒,稳健流美,与其常见书风大异其趣。明世宗嘉靖十六年(公元1537年)薛翁墓志铭、嘉靖二十二年(公元1543年)诰封太宜人薛母颜氏墓志铭、嘉靖十四年(公元1535年)顾西谿墓志铭,均由明四家之一文徵明书写,其中前两种还是他包办撰文书法,乌丝栏格内小楷翩翩,中宫紧致,出锋娴雅,笔势瘦硬通神,方圆自若,深得褚河南真意。清宣统二年(公元1910年)处士金心兰墓志铭,由海派巨匠、西泠印社首任社长吴昌硕撰文并篆盖,清末著名画家陆恢隶书书丹。志主与吴、陆都是一时艺林翘楚,交游数十年,情同莫逆,豪爽无间,此铭篆盖及铭文金石韵味浓郁,婉丽苍雄,开阖间有扛鼎之力,好似金心兰笔下浑厚孤秀、冷香高洁的梅花。

远离喧嚣浮躁的尘世,当你面对这些无声的石刻,仿佛打开了神奇的穿越之门,时光电影院重新播放着过去的一幕幕历史画面,那些已经随风飘逝的人和事再度鲜活起来,这一瞬,所有的生命与记忆都是永恒的。

苏州博物馆学术委员会

2012年8月

Foreword

The ancient stone inscriptions, because of their integration of history and art and the harmonious coexistence of secular and religious motifs, became important carriers of the memory of the civilizations of all of the ethnic groups in China, and invaluable repositories of the traditional cultures. The ancient stone inscriptions in various scripts and styles could be roughly classified into the steles erected on the ground and epitaphs buried underground. The steles are the memorial stones with inscriptions engraved in order to last for a long time. The epitaphs are gravestones with inscriptions recording the name, hometown, genealogy, personal history, and so on. The epitaph appeared in the Qin and Han Dynasties, matured in the Southern Dynasties and popularized in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. The contents of the epitaphs and the names and titles of the author, the transcriber and the epitaph lid inscriber of the epitaph are also primary materials for the studies on the history of that time.

Since Zhao Mingcheng's composing of *Jinshi Lu* (Records of inscriptions on bronzes and stones) in the Northern Song Dynasty, the archaeologists and epigraphers have been interested in transcribing, copying, glossing and studying of the inscriptions on the ancient artifacts. In the Qianling period (1736-1795) of the Qing Dynasty, the "Wenzi Yu (literary inquisition)" shackled the free thinking and the literati turned their interests to the collations and interpretations of the details in the classical works; moreover, because the academic field at that time was urgent on casting off the restriction of the "guange ti (examination hall style, a stereotyped and stiff calligraphic style used in civil service examination and official documents)" promoted by Zhao Mengfu and Dong Qichang in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties, the imitating and emulating of the calligraphic styles of the ancient stone inscriptions became a fad, which also brought about the fever of seeking and rubbing of the ancient steles and epitaphs. As late as at the end of the 19th century, this fever became abating under the impact of the lithography, colotype and other modern reproducing techniques. In the recent one century, along with the archaeological excavations, large amounts of ancient stone inscriptions with inestimable academic meanings and historic and cultural values are unearthed, which provided rich textural and physical materials for the historic researches.

Suzhou has been an important academic center for many centuries; Pan Zuyin and Wu Dacheng in the late Qing Dynasty were famous antiquarians and connoisseurs of ancient bronze and stone inscriptions; in the Minguo Period, Li Genyuan, who was one of the founders of the Republic, also stayed in Suzhou; his "Qushi Jinglu (Curving Boulder Studio for Masterpieces)" was famous for the collection of many rare epitaphs of the Tang Dynasty (the most celebrated one was that of Wang Zhihuan, a well-known poet). The stone inscriptions of all of the periods collected in Suzhou Museum are all obtained after 1959, including the steles, steles, tablets and other inscriptions got from archaeological excavations, donations by famous connoisseurs and private collectors and acquisitions and purchases, over 140 items in total. Most of these stone inscriptions are epitaphs, the earliest ones of which is composed in the first year of Tianbao Era (550 CE) in the reign of Emperor Wenxuan of the Northern Qi Dynasty and the latest, in 1962 after the foundation of the People's Republic. Among these stone inscriptions, there are many masterpieces of famous calligraphers, and the contents of the epitaphs of the famous family's members could be referred to each other, which made up the insufficient records in the local histories and provided favorable materials for the researches on the art history.

The stone inscriptions collected in Suzhou Museum are mainly that of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, but the masterpieces from earlier periods are not too few. For example, the five Buddha image tablet donation inscriptions of the Northern Dynasties represented by that of Hui X, a Buddhist monk in the first year of Tianbao Era (550 CE) of the Northern Qi Dynasty are written in plain, strong and smooth style, showing the vigor and rhythm of the Chinese calligraphy during the transitional stage. In the Tang Dynasty, the epitaph developed to its mature level with complete format and strict regulations. For example, the epitaph of Fadeng is that of a Bhikkhuni (Buddhist nun) of the Jidu Temple who was the fifth-generation

great-granddaughter of Xiao Yan, the Emperor Wu of the Southern Liang Dynasty; her father was the taizi taibao (grand guardian of the heir apparent) and the Duke of the Song State of the Sui Dynasty and she and her three brothers and sisters all converted to the Buddhism and became Buddhist monks and nuns. The epitaph of late Mr. Zhang, the chaosan dafu (grand master for closing court) and the cishi (prefect) of the Sizhou Prefecture, is that of Zhang Wanqing, who was the cishi of Sizhou and Yingzhou Prefectures; he has reinforced the court to suppress An Lushan's Rebellion. This epitaph transcribed by Chu Cou from Henan Commandery has an elegant but relaxed structure and sinewy and elaborate style, which was similar to the artworks of Xu Hao, who was a calligraphy master of the Tang Dynasty good at lishu (clerical script) style.

Down to the Song Dynasty, the glorious age of the stone inscription calligraphy of ancient China was going to an end, but in this period, there are also many high-level masterpieces emerged, which are also valuable as historic materials. The epitaph of Mr. Hu, the yuanwailang (deputy director) of zhifang (bureau of operations) of the Ministry of War died in the eighth year of Jiayou Era (1063), is that of Hu Xianqing, who was jinshi (metropolitan graduate, the scholar passed the highest-level civil service examination) in the eighth year of Dazhongxiangfu Era (1015) and famous for his talent and learning in the capital and had good friendship with Pang Ji, Fan Zhongyan and other celebrated scholars. The epitaph of Zhai Xiu's wife (nee Li) in Jiyang died in the first year of Shaoxi Era (1190) of the Southern Song Dynasty is that of Li Miaoxiang, who was the descendant of Li Wei, the son-in-law of Emperor Renzong of the Northern Song Dynasty; her father, whose name was Li Chang, died of honor in the battle against the invasion of the Jurchen Jin Dynasty; her husband was awarded many times of military merits because of his bravery in the war resisting the enemies; their two sons, especially the elder one named Zhai Andao, also did great deeds for the nation, so they were very appreciated by Emperor Xiaozong of the Southern Song Dynasty and could be regarded as the loyal family. The transcriber did not leave his name on the epitaph, but the script was fleshy and smooth, the structure was stable and even, showing the style of Yan Zhenqing, the famous calligrapher of the Tang Dynasty.

After the Song Dynasty, the social economy and culture in Suzhou were all getting prosperous, the famous scholars at home and from abroad were gathering here and left rich stone inscriptions for the later generations. The epitaph of the Duke of Zheng State died in the twenty-fifth year of Zhizheng Era (1365) was that of Zhao Demao, a native of Tongzhou Prefecture (present-day Nantong, Jiangsu) and the descendant of Zhao Tingmei, the third younger brother of Emperor Taizu of the Song Dynasty; when he was young, he was a good friend of Zhang Shicheng. In the thirteenth year of Zhizheng Era (1353), when Zhang Shicheng started the uprising against the Yuan rulers, Zhao Demao lead his eldest son named Yuanming to join him. Later, Zhao Demao died in Gaoyou. In the twenty-fifth year of Zhizheng Era, when Zhang Shicheng set his capital in Pingjiang as the King of Wu, he entitled Zhao Demao posthumously as the Duke of Zheng State. The epitaph of Mr. Wang, who was the guanglu dafu (grand master for splendid happiness), shaobao (junior guardian), taizi taibao (grand guardian of the heir apparent), libu shangshu (minister of the Ministry of Personnel) and grand secretary of Jianji Hall and died in the forty-first year of Wanli Era (1613) of the Ming Dynasty, is that of Wang Xijue, the top winner of the highest-level civil service examination and number two of the reexamination held in the court by the emperor in the forty-first year of Jiajing Era (1562). He has been assigned as the prime minister and famous for straightforwardness and honesty. His epitaph was authored by Shen Shixing, who was his good friend, also from Suzhou, passed the civil service examination in the same year with him and worked together in the central government for seven years and cooperated very well. The text of this epitaph is engraved into three registers from top to bottom, which is a rare structure in the stone inscriptions. The epitaph of Mr. Wang, who was assigned as wenlinlang (gentleman-litterateur), the jiaoyu (instructor of the official Confucian school) of Huating County and the candidate of the dianbu (archivist) of Guozi Jian (Directorate of Education) in the name of the emperor and

died in the twenty-third year of Jiaqing Era (1818) of the Qing Dynasty, is that of Wang Qisun, who was a native of Suzhou and the tenth generation great-grandson of Wang Ao, the grand secretary of Wenyuan Pavilion of the Ming Dynasty. Wang Qisun has never passed civil service exams, only was bestowed an honorary juren (provincial graduate) by the Emperor in the fifty-third year of Qianlong Era (1788). However, Wang Qisun's talent was well-known in both the South and North; at that time, the scholars famous for poetry and classical-style prose were very few, but Qisun's reputation as celebrated poet and writer was undisputable anywhere. This epitaph is transcribed by Shi Yunyu, the zhuangyuan (principal graduate, the top winner of the highest-level civil service examination) in the fifty-fifth year of Qianlong Era (1790), and its lid title in seal script style was scribed by Pan Yijun, a famous scholar at that time.

The family epitaphs collected in Suzhou Museum are also unique. The epitaphs of the Yu Family native to Suzhou included Mr. Yu Kehe's epitaph composed in the fourteenth year of Yongle Era (1416), Yu Kehe's wife in the fifth year of Xuande Era (1430) and Yu Qinyu's epitaph in the eleventh year of Chenghua Era (1475). These epitaphs told us the stories about Yu Shiyue, his father Yu Kehe and mother (nee Chen) and his son, Yu Qinyu, and the ups and downs of Yu Shiyue affected the prosperity and decline of the whole Yu Family. Yu Shiyue became jinshi (metropolitan graduate, the scholar passed the highest-level civil service examination) in the thirteenth year of Yongle Era (1415); in the fourteenth year of Zhengtong Era, Shiyue was promoted to you duyushi (right censor-in-chief). In the seventh month of that year, the "Tumu Crisis" happened and the Emperor Yingzong was captured by the Mongolian tribe and Yu Shiyue and Yu Qian, the deputy director of the Ministry of War, enthroned Zhu Qiyu, the brother of Emperor Yingzong. Because of this, Yu Shiyue was promoted to guanglu dafu (grand master for splendid happiness), taizi taibao (grand guardian of the heir apparent) and xingbu shangshu (minister of the Ministry of Justice), and his parents, grandparents, great-grandparents were also entitled (some were posthumously) and bestowed gifts, which was second-to-none honor and glory. However, in the eighth year of Jingtai Era (1457), Emperor Yingzong was restored and Yu Qian was executed. Yu Shiyue, who was involved in this affair, was exiled to Tieling for eight years and his son Qinyu was stripped of the qualification of taking civil service examinations. Later, Qinyu was enlisted as the student of guozhi jian (Directorate of Education) and died alone in Beijing. The epitaphs of the Tang Family included that of Tang Xian, who was wulie jiangjun (General of Military Strategy), the qianhu (Battalion Commander) of Suzhou Guard and died in the first year of Xuande Era (1426) and his grandson, Tang Hong. The Tang Family was from Yixing County, Changzhou Prefecture; Tang Xing, who was Tang Xian's father, was originally the subordinate of Zhang Shicheng, but later surrendered to Zhu Yuanzhang, the Emperor Taizu of the Ming Dynasty, because of which the Tang Family was awarded the hereditary position of the qianhu of the Left Garrison of Suzhou Guard. Tang Hong's epitaph was authored and transcribed by Wen Lin, his colleague and father of Wen Zhengming (a famous painter and calligrapher). The inscription has the upright and bold style, showing the air of solemn warrior. Both of the epitaphs are engraved by the craftsmen from Zhang Family, which was the famous stone-engraving family, Tang Xian's epitaph was engraved by Zhang Jing and Tang Hong's was by Zhang Hao. The epitaphs of Shen Zhou couple included that of Shen Zhou's wife (nee Chen) completed in the first year of Hongzhi Era (1488) and that of Shen Zhou completed in the seventh year of Zhengde Era (1512). Shen Zhou is the founder of the Wu School of the Chinese painting, and his painting style was graceful and candid; he had relaxed manner and nice temper and he and his wife were a devoted couple. These two epitaphs were authored by Li Yingzhen and transcribed by Zhu Yunming (who were both in-laws and instructor and disciple) and authored by Wang Ao and engraved by Zhang Hao, respectively, so they are not only great artworks but also important historic literature.

The stone inscriptions transcribed by famous calligraphers are unforgettable masterpieces of art. The epitaph of Shi Gongyue, the Hermit of Yi'an Studio, completed in the thirteenth year of Hongzhi Era (1500), was authored by Du Mu,

an antiquarian, and transcribed by Tang Yin, a famous gifted scholar. Tang Yin's handwriting in this work is hasty and unconstrained but stable and elegant, which is sharply different from his usual style. The epitaphs of Mr. Xue completed in the sixteenth year of Jiajing Era (1537), Ms. Yan, who was Mr. Xue's mother and imperially entitled tai yiren (grand lady of suitability, an honorific title granted to mothers of some high officials or celebrated people), completed in the twenty-second year of Jiajing Era (1543) and Gu Xixi completed in the fourteenth year of Jiajing Era (1535) are all transcribed by Wen Zhengming, one of the "Four Great Masters of the Ming" -- Shen Zhou, Tang Yin, Wen Zhengming and Qiu Ying, the four famous painters and calligraphers. The former two were both authored and transcribed by him, whose kaishu (regular script) characters written in square grids are compact and easy-going and the strokes are strong and vigorous, showing the style of Chu Suiliang, a calligraphic master of the Tang Dynasty. The epitaph of Hermit Jin Xinlan completed in the second year of Xuanton Era (1910) of the Qing Dynasty was authored by Wu Changshuo, a master of the Hai School of Chinese painting and the first president of the Xiling Society of Seal Arts and transcribed in lishu (clerical script) style by Lu Hui, a famous painter at the end of the Qing Dynasty. Wu Changshuo also transcribed the lid title in seal script style of Jin Xinlan's epitaph. Jin Xinlan, Wu Changshuo and Lu Hui were good friends and masters in the art circle; they associated together for several decades and had very good friendship. The inscriptions of the lid title and the epitaph all had the tastes of the ancient stone and bronze inscriptions showing both the graceful and forceful styles, like the plum blossoms painted by Jin Xinlan.

Leaving the noisy and impetuous secular world, these silent stone inscriptions bring us into a miraculous time-travel tunnel, in which the historic scenes are flashing back one by one and the passed-away people are reviving and the events are taking place again; in this place and moment, all lives and memories are eternal.

Academic Committee of Suzhou Museum
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