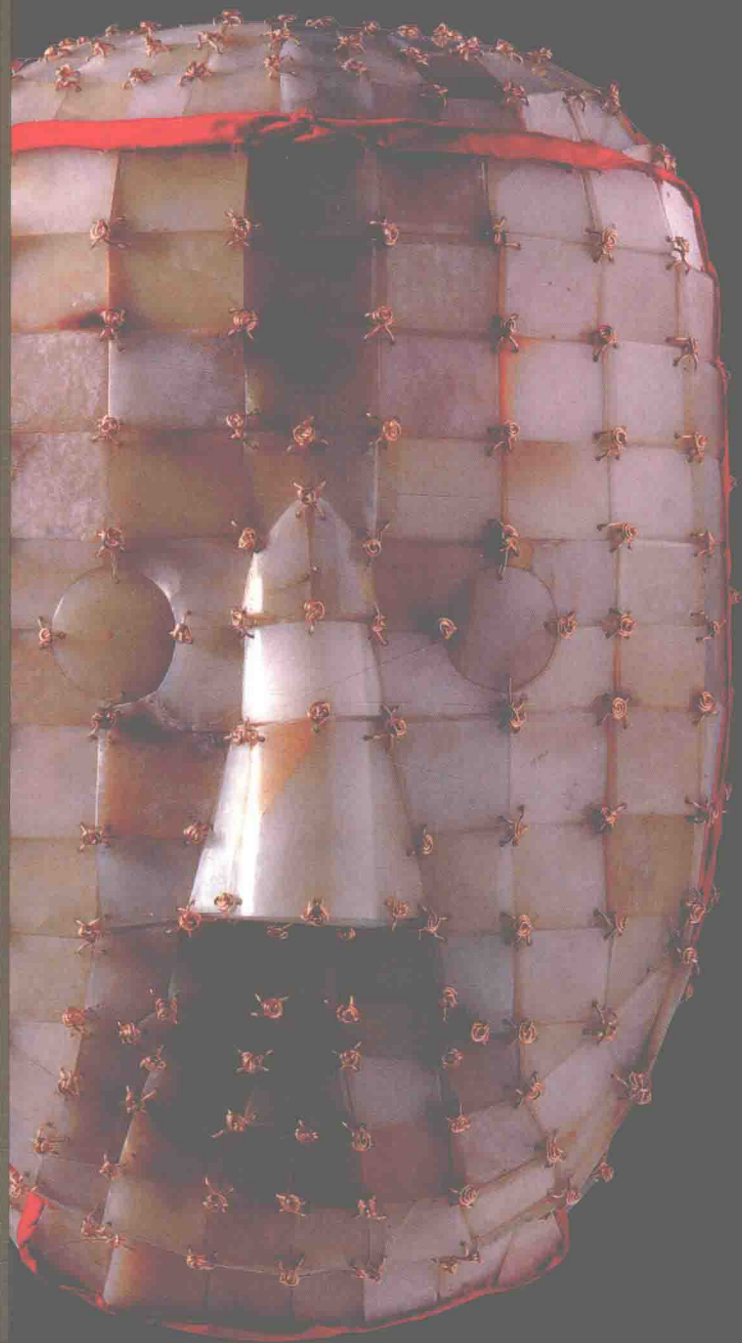


DREAMS OF THE KINGS

A Jade Suit for Eternity

Treasures of the Han Dynasty from Xuzhou



楚王梦—玉衣与永生
徐州博物馆汉代珍藏

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Edited by Willow Weilan Hai

Li Yinde

With additional essays by Wang Zijing, Colin Mackenzie, and Gen Di

China Institute Gallery / Xuzhou Museum

2017





This catalogue was published to accompany the exhibition

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Treasures of the Han Dynasty from Xuzhou

Organized by the China Institute Gallery and the Xuzhou Museum

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Kansas City, MO 64111

(816) 751-1278

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Chinese text is Romanized in the pinyin system throughout the text and bibliography except for the names of Chinese authors writing in Western languages. Chinese names or terms cited in Western-language titles remain in their original form and have not been converted to pinyin. Dimensions are given as height (H.), width (W.), and depth (D.) for most three-dimensional objects. Measurements of length (L.), diameter (Diam.), and thickness (T.) are given where appropriate. Explanatory comments and interpolations added by the English editor to the translated Chinese essays and catalogue entries have been enclosed in brackets.

Cover illustration: Detail, jade burial suit with gold thread (cat. no. 39)

封面插图：金缕玉衣，局部（图录 39）

Back-cover illustration: Details, *Wanqunhou Yi* gold seal with tortoise knob (cat. no. 29) and

Liu Zhu silver seal with tortoise knob (cat. no. 30)

封底插图：“宛胸侯弼”龟钮金印局部（图录 29）；“刘注”龟钮银印局部（图录 30）

Frontispiece A: Detail, jade burial suit with gold thread (cat. no. 39)

扉画 A：金缕玉衣，局部（图录 39）

Frontispiece B: Detail, jade ornament with coiled dragon design (cat. no. 49)

扉画 B：蟠龙纹玉饰，局部（图录 49）

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Message from the Xuzhou Museum

The Han dynasty was an extremely important era in Chinese history. "A great wind rose up and the clouds soared in the sky" describes Liu Bang, who, clad in commoner's clothes, overthrew the newly unified Qin empire. He established in its place the Western Han dynasty, a truly unified and stable empire. The effects of this event were pervasive and lasting.

Liu Bang was raised in a farming society, so it is no surprise that he retained a deep affinity for his hometown. "Now that my might extends to the seas, I return to my old home." "I long for that hometown I have left behind. Although I have made my capital at Guanzhong, my soul will pine for Pei long after my death." Words such as these, as well as Liu's decision to place Feng County and Pei County under his personal jurisdiction and to exempt their residents from both taxation and the corvée, demonstrate the nostalgia felt by the emperor for his hometown. Even more importantly, Liu enfeoffed one of his closest stepbrothers, Liu Jiao, as King Yuan of Chu, giving him control over the wealthy, strategically-important eastern lands—the area surrounding Pengcheng, the ancient city of Xuzhou—where both Xiong Xin, who ruled as King Huai of Chu during the end of the Qin dynasty, and Xiang Yu, the Hegemon King of Western Chu, had made their capital. He continued to heap favor upon these lands, initiating the most glorious chapter in Xuzhou's extensive history. All the mausoleums of the Chu kings are enormous subterranean palaces. Although the vast majority of these tombs had been looted of their treasures several times, the relics that remain are still more than sufficient to make today's visitors gasp in wonder!

Essential examples of these cultural relics from the Western Han dynasty Chu kingdom are exhibited in *Dreams of the Kings: A Jade Suit for Eternity*, giving viewers a window into the radiant culture and glorious prosperity of the Western Han empire. This exhibition was conceived in 2009, and preparations lasted for nearly nine years—it may have been one of the longest preparation periods of all time for an exhibition. I am proud to say that I attended the same university as Director Willow Weilan Hai, who graduated a year before me. She is an artistic director with an archaeology background and a unique perspective, carefully

selecting pieces that have rich significance and that tell remarkable stories. I am confident in my expectation that American viewers will appreciate and delight in the innovative ability and artistic appeal of the Han people more than two millennia ago.

This exhibition can be considered an example of faultless cooperation between two museums, one Chinese and the other American. It is an achievement resulting from close collaboration between two former classmates, both of whom have become museum directors. Even more, it is an outstanding contribution made possible by the sincere cooperation and tireless effort of the teams at these two museums. Here I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the team led by Director Willow Hai, the team at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art led by Dr. Colin Mackenzie, and to my colleagues at the Xuzhou Museum!

May the exhibition be a complete success!

Li Yinde

Xuzhou Museum, Director Emeritus

致辞

汉代是中国历史上一个非常重要的时代。“大风起兮云飞扬”，布衣刘邦取代了刚刚统一全国的秦王朝，建立西汉王朝，成为真正统一稳定的帝国，产生了极其深远的影响。

农耕社会的刘邦也不免有故乡情结，无论是“威加海内兮归故乡”，“游子悲故乡，吾虽都关中，万岁之后吾魂魄犹思沛”；或是将沛、丰县作为自己的汤沐邑，免除全部赋税徭役，都是乡情的最好注解。更重要的是将秦末楚怀王熊心和西楚霸王项羽的都城、富庶的东方战略要地——彭城一带，分封给与自己关系非常亲密的异母弟楚元王刘交，并且尊宠优渥有加，开创了徐州历史上最辉煌的篇章。楚王的每座陵墓都是巨大的地下宫殿，虽然填满其中的宝藏累遭盗掘已十不存一，但是些许的子遗也足以使今人惊叹不已！

“楚王梦：玉衣与永生”展现的就是西汉楚国的文物精华，从中更可以窥见西汉帝国的璀璨文明和强盛辉煌。展览从2009年开始酝酿，历时9年，也许是筹备时间最长的展览之一。令我自豪的是海蔚蓝馆长是我大学高一届的同窗，这位考古专业背景的艺术总监具有独特的视角，精心的遴选使每件展品都内涵丰富，背后都有精彩的历史故事。期待并也相信美国观众能够欣赏、陶醉于两千多年前汉人的创造才能和艺术魅力。

展览是两个同窗博物馆馆长之间密切合作的成果，更是两馆展览团队精诚合作、辛勤劳动的贡献，堪称中美博物馆之间完美合作的范例。在此我谨向海蔚蓝馆长领导的团队、纳尔逊-阿特金斯艺术博物馆马麟先生领导的团队、我的徐州博物馆同行表示衷心的感谢！

祝展览圆满成功！

李银德

徐州博物馆名誉馆长

Preface

Even though the rising and setting of the sun and the waxing and waning of the moon are laws of nature, humankind's dream of eternal life is enduring and ever new.

Such ardent hopes for eternal life is revealed in Chinese culture possibly more than ten thousand years ago at Zhoukoudian, Beijing, in the burial place of the Shanding cave man (known to the West as Peking Man), which was surrounded in all directions by red iron mineral powder. In the 1970s, there was the astonishing discovery of the Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–8 CE) tomb of the Marquise of Dai. That “old woman”—whose corpse was wrapped in more than twenty layers of silk, cotton, and linen and then placed in a special tomb of nested coffins layered with charcoal and mud—had been preserved for two thousand years. Now, with this exhibition, showcasing the highest ranking and finest quality gold-threaded jade suit excavated to date, it is as though we are talking about the dream of this kind of eternal life.

The expectation of eternal life is not exclusive to the Chinese. Egyptians, as early as six thousand years ago, invented a special way to preserve the human corpse and created their now world-famous mummies. Most recently, the idea appears in the projections of Ray Kurzweil, a writer, inventor, computer scientist, and Google's leading futurist. In his 2006 book, *The Singularity is Near*, Kurzweil says that in the near future, technology will enable the human being to be smarter and healthier, and it will greatly transform human life. He believes that at the proper time, a moment known as “the Singularity,” human beings will make eternal life become true with the assistance of technology. He predicted such a date is not far away but somewhere around 2045.

The dream of eternal life in ancient China also relied on the assistance of technology and materials, that is, specialized tomb construction, burial methods, and use of jade, the most beloved of Chinese materials. It was believed that jade was formed by the refined essence of heaven and earth and thus contains a special mystical power. The stone has been cherished by the Chinese people since the Neolithic period, several thousand years ago. Xu Shen (ca.58-147), a scholar of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–221), wrote in his ground-breaking etymological dictionary, *Shuowen jiezi* (Explanation of written characters), that Jade, one of the loveliest stones, is possessed of five precious merits: its warmth, emanating

from smoothness and moistness, signifies the merit of compassion; its surface peacefulness generated from within, the merit of righteousness; its soothing and sonorous sound, the merit of wisdom; its unbending nature and endurance, the merit of courage; its purity free of sharpness, the merit of fortitude. (Translation by Ben Wang)

In fact, the five merits of jade had already been applied to humans. Therefore, as stated in the "Quli" (Rules of propriety) section of the ancient Zhou dynasty (ca. 1100–256 BCE) text *Liji* (The Record of Rites): "A gentleman should always, without cause, carry the jade on his person." For the same reasons, there is a Chinese folk saying that, "Jades can nurture humans, and humans can nurture jade." It is believed that the constant wearing and handling of jade can remind one to cultivate moral character and that by doing good, one would accumulate happiness and live longer.

Therefore, the character for "jade," 玉 *yù*, was used in phrases representing all kinds of fine sentiments: the relationship between a person and jade came to reflect the harmony between nature and humankind. The "jade suit" is an extreme demonstration of jade worship. Made of thousands of jade plates measured against the body and sewn into a "longevity garment," it was believed to preserve the corpse eternally. This exceptional method of encoffining the deceased was initiated during the Spring and Autumn–Warring States period (770–221 BCE); it took shape and became fashionable among the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) royal classes. Since 1968, when the first gold-threaded jade suit was discovered in a Han tomb at Mancheng, in Hebei, nine such complete suits have so far come to light. In this exhibition, we have the finest example. With the inclusion of other burial objects and jade items, this exhibition reveals the dreams of the outstanding kings of Chu. While appreciating the works of art from the Chu kingdom, we can also look into the growing awareness of life's meaning and the custom of lavish funerals since the Western Han as well as the concept of "serving the dead as if they were still alive" in pursuing the dream of eternal life.

The idea of this exhibition was conceived nearly ten years ago, when I was considering a jade exhibition for China Institute Gallery. At that time, Prof. Zhou Xiaolu of the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts had told me that the best Western Han

dynasty jades were in the Xuzhou Museum, and then he personally introduced me to its director, Li Yinde. Ten years passed swiftly, and the difficulties of putting together this exhibition goes without saying. Now, at the moment of the project's fruition, I'd like to express my gratitude to Professor Zhou for his introduction and Director Li for following through on his promise and presenting his life-long study and excavation experiences in this exhibition and publication. I would also like to thank Prof. Wang Zijin of Renmin University of China, Beijing, whose essay vividly articulates the history of the Chu kingdom, as well as other scholars who contributed to the catalogue. In addition, Mr. Yin Zhiqiang, a jade specialist, responded to my last-minute call for help, and my teacher Professor Jiang Zanchu, who had led an important excavation in Beidongshan, encouraged me with his great interest in this project. My thanks also go to the deputy director of Xuzhou Museum, Meng Qiang, and the curator of the collection, Zong Shizhen, for their tireless cooperation. Furthermore, I am grateful to Liu Jinsheng, director of Jiangsu Province Administration of Cultural Heritage, and to Han Feng, deputy director of Xuzhou Municipal Administration of Cultural Heritage, for their support.

Both director Li Yinde and I would like to thank Julián Zugazagoitia, director of The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, for taking the exhibition and continuing its presentation into the spring of 2018. I am grateful to Dr. Colin Mackenzie, Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Nelson-Atkins, for recognizing the worth of this exhibition and for contributing an essay in which he shared the fruits of his long-term study of Chinese jade.

I would like to offer a bow of gratitude, first of all, to my dear friend and renowned painter Liu Dan, who was a leader among the many supporters who made this exhibition and catalogue possible. For their support, my sincere gratitude also goes to Mr. Masahiro Hashiguchi, Mr. and Mrs. David Ying; Dame Jillian Sackler; and Mr. and Mrs. William Carey. We are indebted to Confucius Institute Headquarters, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, and New York State Council on the Arts for their funding; to all the sponsors of this project for their contributions; and to all the loyal Friends of the Gallery, who have supported the Gallery for decades. Without such generosity, the mounting of this exhibition would not have been possible.

It has been fourteen years since my first original exhibition borrowed from a Chinese museum in 2003. In that time, China Institute has produced fifteen such "China Exhibitions" that I have curated or organized. *Dreams of the Kings: A Jade Suit for Eternity* will be for various reasons the last one in the foreseeable future.

In concluding this run with "eternity" in the title, I am also expressing the immortal