



Xi'an - Imperial Power in the Afterlife
Burial Goods and Temple Treasures from China's Ancient Capital
Results of the German-Chinese Cooperation in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

21 April - 23 July 2006
Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany

This exhibition presents recent archaeological discoveries from the vast necropolis surrounding the city of Xi'an in today's Shaanxi province, the very cradle of Chinese culture and capital of China through thirteen dynasties. Taking the unification of the empire under China's First Emperor Qin Shihuangdi as its starting point, the exhibition focuses on the Qin, Han and Tang dynasties (221 BC – 907 AD) and showcases around 200 magnificent objects from the sumptuous funerary complexes and rich temple furnishings of the emperors and the aristocracy. An impressive computer-aided display (in two sections) allows a glimpse into the as yet unopened burial chambers of two imperial tombs. Employing the latest technology, the exhibition introduces the public to the area around China's ancient capital and highlights the outstanding importance of this world heritage site. A comprehensive book on the archaeology of Xi'an is published in conjunction with the exhibition, and an international conference will bring together the leading scholars of the field (21 – 22 April 2006).

Xi'an - Imperial Power in the Afterlife marks more than fifteen years of cooperation between Germany and China in the domain of the preservation of the cultural heritage supported by The Federal Ministry of Education and Research. For the first time outside of Asia, one of the famous terracotta warriors of the First Emperor Qin Shihuangdi is shown with its original colouring. The Bavarian State Conservation Office in Munich has developed, in cooperation with a number of Chinese research institutes, a technique to preserve the colour of the life sized terracotta figures found in the First Emperor's tomb. The Roman-Germanic Central Museum in Mainz has for example restored the metal objects from the treasure of the Famen Temple, one of the most significant discoveries of the post-war period from the Tang dynasty (618 – 907), and is also working on the extensive documentation of the Tang era imperial tombs.

Sections of the exhibition

1. The topography of the ancient capitals Xianyang (Qin dynasty) and Chang'an (Han and Tang dynasties) on the territory of today's Xi'an in Shaanxi province

Exhibit at the entrance: life sized terracotta figure of an official in kotow position from the Huiling mausoleum of the posthumous Emperor Li Xian (Tang dynasty, 618 – 907)

2. Palace and state: The second section starts with a historical introduction to China's unification under the rule of Qin Shihuangdi (around 221 BC)

Exhibits: e.g. standard weights, standard coins, standard script tablets, and architectural elements from the capital Xianyang

3. The hidden universe: The mausoleum of the First Emperor Qin Shihuangdi (Qin dynasty, 221 – 206 BC)

- A computer-aided display developed by Chinese and German scholars from the Darmstadt University of Technology reconstructs the as yet unopened tomb according to archaeological data and historical documents.

Exhibits:

- The terracotta army: For the first time a terracotta soldier in its original polychrome shape will be presented in the exhibition together with ten different life sized figures, including a horse. The extremely complex method of colour preservation was developed by Chinese and German conservators from the Bavarian State Conservation Office, Munich. An original stone armour and several weapons will also be displayed in this context.
- This exhibition aims to show the real dimension of the huge tomb area, introducing life sized terracotta figures from other parts of the mausoleum: two officials, an animal keeper from the imperial stables, and an acrobat.
- Four life sized bronze birds, which were restored by conservators of the Roman-Germanic Central Museum in Mainz, and two terracotta musicians were found in yet another pit of the mausoleum shaped like a river landscape.

4. The tomb of Bin Wang (Han dynasty, 206 BC – 220 AD)

- Exhibits: Complete installation of original wall paintings of a tomb chamber. These wall paintings have been preserved by conservators of the Roman-Germanic Central Museum in Mainz and have never been presented outside of China before.

5. Two imperial mausoleums of the Han dynasty (206 BC – 220 AD)

- The fifth section introduces the Yangling mausoleum of Emperor Jingdi (r. 156 – 141 v. Chr.) and the Maoling mausoleum of Emperor Wudi (r. 140 – 87 v. Chr.)

Exhibits:

- Yangling: Tomb installation with 20 human and 20 animal figures reduced to 30% of life size, one single terracotta figure of a female dancer, reproduction of a chariot
- Maoling: a gilt horse bridle

6. The multicultural city of Chang'an during the Han and Tang dynasties (206 BC – 907 AD)

- Exhibits from recent excavations: e.g. bronze mirrors, jewellery, gilt belt ornaments, jade pendants, coins, miniature stirrups, and various mythological terracotta figures

7. The tomb of Princess Li Chui (Tang dynasty, 618 – 907 AD)

- Exhibits: e.g. the gilt crown of Princess Li Chui with pearls, turquoise, and other precious materials, bronze mirrors, ornamented silver boxes, a silver tripod, terracotta animals, and a stone tablet with inscription. All items have been preserved by conservators of the Roman-Germanic Central Museum in Mainz and have never been

displayed outside of China before.

8. The Zhaoling mausoleum of Emperor Taizong (Tang dynasty, 618 – 907 AD)

- A computer-aided display developed by Chinese and German scholars from the Darmstadt University of Technology reconstructs the as yet unopened tomb according to archaeological data and historical documents.

Exhibits: A high-quality reproduction of one life sized stone horse from the famous group of the six favourite horses of Emperor Taizong (r. 627 – 649), two original life sized stone envoys, 20 colour glazed ceramic figures, among them a group of camels evoking the significance of the Silk Road.

9. The treasures of the Famen Temple (Tang dynasty, 618 – 907 AD)

- The Famen Temple received an extraordinary gift from Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690 – 705) during the Tang dynasty, a treasure which was discovered in 1987 in a hidden chamber beneath the main pagoda that had collapsed in 1981. The treasure consists of numerous precious gold and silver objects, rare porcelain and glass, and fragile silk textiles.

Exhibits: 20 items of this outstanding temple treasure will be exhibited, among them a magnificent gilt pagoda, religious utensils made of gold and silver, a *mise* glazed porcelain vase and a blue glass plate, as well as three silk fragments.

10. Early contacts to the West – The Silk Road

- Exhibits: A choice of exquisite exhibits from European collections traces the period of time when China encountered the West on the various routes of the Silk Road.

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