

Los Angeles Times

Ming dynasty finds the stars of 'Royal Taste' at USC Pacific Asia Museum

By Jessica Gelt

The might of the Ming dynasty will be on display at the USC Pacific Asia Museum beginning Feb. 26 in the exhibition "Royal Taste: The Art of Princely Courts in 15th Century China." The traveling show features recent archaeological finds and a variety of lavish decorative arts including jewelry, devotional statues, textiles and porcelain, many of which are being displayed in the United States for the first time.

The new finds were excavated from royal tombs, which harbor significant clues about the ways nobility lived in imperial China from 1368 to 1644, when Ming emperors awarded fiefs to more than 60 princes in different provinces.

The exhibition at the Pasadena museum is divided into three sections: one featuring objects made of gold, silver and jade, a second filled with items related to the lifestyles of the nobility, and another devoted to religious articles with ties to Tibetan Buddhism and Daoism.



Restored ceremonial nine-tasseled crown, 15th century, before 1441. Gold and gemstones. Excavated from the tomb of Prince Zhuang of Liang, Zhongxiang 2001 Hubei Provincial Museum. *Hubei Provincial Museum*



Hairpins in phoenix shapes, mid-16th century. Excavated from a royal tomb of the Jing Principality at Wanxuan, Qichun. *Qichun County Museum*



Gold ingots with inscriptions—Yongle reign (1403-24), 1416 and 1419. Excavated from the tomb of Prince Zhuang of Liang, Zhongxiang, 2001. *Hubei Provincial Museum*



Statue of Celestial Marshal Gou of the Thunder Gate, 16th century. *Wudang Museum*



Gold ewer - Hongxi reign. Excavated from the tomb of Prince Zhuang of Liang, Zhongxiang, 2001. *Hubei Provincial Museum*



Plaque of Panjarnatha Mahakala, 15th century. Excavated from the tomb of Prince Zhuang of Liang, Zhongxiang 2001. *Hubei Provincial Museum*

USC Pacific Asia Museum shines

A prestigious exhibition of rare and exquisite artworks from the Ming Dynasty marks the first significant show under the new alliance between USC and the venerable Pasadena institution. Many of the pieces have never been out of China until now, and this is their only West Coast appearance.



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1. Front row, from left: USC Senior Vice President for University Advancement Al Checcio; Director of the USC Pacific Asia Museum Christina Yu Yu; Ellen Wong; Dr. Tei-Fu Chen; Dr. Oi-Lin Chen; and Gayle Roski, namesake of the USC Roski School of Art and Design
Back row, from left: USC Provost Michael Quick, USC Trustees Dominic Ng and Edward P. Roski



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2. From left: Provost Michael Quick with Dr. Oi-Lin Chen and Dr. Tei-Fu Chen. Pieces from the Chens' personal collection appear in the exhibit.

3. Dr. Christina Yu Yu now serves as director of the USC Pacific Asia Museum, following her tenure as a curator of Chinese and Korean art at LACMA.

4. From left: Gayle Roski, Anne Shih, and USC Trustee Edward P. Roski



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5. From left: Gail Werner, Peter Lai, Dodi Fromson, Mei-Lee Ney, and June Li

6. From left: Peter and Elizabeth Wu, Vivian Chui, Rob Cooper, Allen Katz, and Kenneth Lam



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7. 8. Two pieces from the exhibit

Photos by Kara Frans



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