

# Henan Museum

## History



河南博物院前身河南博物馆（1927——1961）

In the summer of 1923, Li Rui, a gentleman from Xinzheng county, Henan province, drilled a well, unwittingly dig out an ancient tomb, and unearthed more than 100 bronzes. After hearing the news, the commander of the 14th Division of the First Republic of China Army reported to general Wu Peifu. then Wu Peifu ordered the division commander to transport the unearthed cultural relics to Kaifeng city for safekeeping for a long time. In order to better preserve this batch of cultural relics, the Henan Museum was founded in July 1927 under Feng Yuxiang's strong suggestion. It was planned to be built on the site of Henan Province Law School and the Governor's Hill in Kaifeng city.

In 1961, along with the move of the provincial capital to Zhengzhou, it moved to its current location. In 1991 that museum was remodeled and in 1999 the official reopening was held.



The Henan Museum's buildings are spread out symmetrically in middle-high and low flank side low arcs, based on the earliest surviving observatory site in China, the Mongol Age Observatory in Dengfeng. After artistic exaggeration, it is interpreted as a pyramid shape wearing a hat. There are nine overall buildings in total. The symmetrical layout of the center of traditional Chinese architecture is adopted, which has the implication of nine Ding setting the Central Plains (means the ruler controls the whole country in Chinese).



Henan is situated in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. Its ancient name is Zhongzhou(中州), it's meaning central region in Chinese. It is one of the important areas for the rise of the Chinese people's early civilization. In the history of the Central Plains, more than 20 dynasties once established their capitals here. Because of this, exhibitions in this museum are mostly related to the ancient history and culture of the Henan region, including objects, historical traces, ancient architecture, archaeological discoveries and arts and crafts, prehistorical relics, bronze ware of Shang Dynasty and Zhou Dynasty, jade ware and porcelain of the various dynasties in Chinese history, and music show featuring mock ancient Chinese instruments thousands of years ago. In addition to its collection of human history, the museum is also home to many relics of natural history including dinosaur bones and fossils.

## Operations

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Henan Museum's present building, which opened in 1997, occupies an area of more than 100,000 square feet, with a total floor space of 78,000 square feet.

The management structure of the Henan Museum is dominated by the government. The museum is open to everyone free of charge. Since tickets are free, in order to maintain the operation of the museum, They organized some cultural performances to generate income. The museums, as a public institution, more often, the revenue of museums mainly comes from government financial appropriations.







# Public Relationship

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The museum often invites nearby schools to come for group visits, which helps children learn about historical events and establish enlightenment artistic aesthetics, and inspire them to challenge more artistic innovations.

The Henan Museum is not only a building for storing antiques but also a spiritual cornerstone for local residents to help each other. Just two months ago, Zhengzhou City suffered an urban waterlogging caused by a heavy rainstorm. The huge main building became the ark for the citizens to avoid the flood, The citizens rescued the trapped people during power outages and food shortages. After the flood subsided, the residents gathered in the square to discuss how to cooperate in disaster relief. And the museum organized donations for supplies to save those who lost their living supplies or became homeless in the disaster. At this time, the museum is more like a town hall.

## Collections

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It has a collection of more than 130,000 pieces of cultural relics through the ages. Let me introduce some famous collections.

- jiahu lake bone Flute —— Neolithic



This is a flute from ancient times. It was unearthed from the Neolithic site of Wuyang Jiahu Lake in the upper reaches of the Huai River. Made from the hollow ulna of cranes, You can play music similar to the seven-sound festival, and its unearth has rewritten the origin and history of Chinese music.

- Lotus and Crane Square Pot —— Spring and Autumn Period



The pot is a kind of bronze wine utensil, and also one of the important types of bronze ritual vessels. The ancients used this vessel to offer sacrifices to gods and ancestors and feast on guests. As a kind of bronze ware with great vitality in the Bronze Age, the shape of the bronze kettle is constantly changing and developing. The lotus and crane square pot is a peerless treasure from the Bronze Age, and it is also one of the earliest collections of the Henan Provincial Museum, the predecessor of the Henan Museum.



- Snake head jade ornament —— Spring and Autumn Period



The jade ornament with human head and snake body is the first to be seen in jade artifacts unearthed so far, and the image carved on it is probably related to the legendary ancestor Fuxi and Nuwa. There are two jade ornaments in the shape of a flat oval ring, the same size, and thickness. Both jade ornaments are made of sideways human figures, with slightly different patterns on the front and back. The one with the ring on the ear is male, and the other is female.

- Ru kiln sky blue glaze carved gooseneck vase — Northern Song Dynasty



The glaze color of Ru kiln sometimes has the saying that “sky blue is precious, powder blue is still precious, and sky blue is precious”. This sky blue glaze engraved gooseneck vase has a small mouth and a large bottom, and the body outline is a smooth “S” curve. The glazed surface is bright, with a faint lotus pattern under the glaze layer, which is unprecedented in Ru kilns.

## Overall

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This is a story about a museum in my hometown. Obviously, this is not the whole story. The most important meaning of this museum to me is the historical objects within reach. This inspired me to be curious about the culture and art of my ancestors, and appreciate their skills and creativity. Despite poverty and disasters, they still did not give up their love for life.