



The Lasting Glory of Chu: The Excavation of the Tomb of King Kaolie

The 5th Tang Special Annual Lecture in Archeology

Friday, April 3, 2026 | 1:00 – 6:00 PM | 403 Kent Hall
Columbia University | 1140 Amsterdam Ave (W. 116th St.)

The excavation of the tomb of King Kaolie of Chu 楚考烈王 at Wuwangdun 武王墩 in 2020-24 represents one of the most important archaeological discoveries in recent years. Although the burial chambers had suffered looting damage from the Tang dynasty through as late as 2015, impressive quantities of artefacts have been recovered from the tomb including 154 bronze vessels, two sets of bells, numerous jade objects, oracle shells, and about 200 bags of plant remains. The wooden chambers are exceptionally well preserved and bear ink writings on many structural components. This is the only scientifically-excavated Chu royal tomb, located in the eastern suburb of the last Chu capital, Shouchun 壽春 in Anhui Province. The entombed King Kaolie (r. 262–238 BCE) is well-known for his conquest of the state of Lu and for his leadership in the alliance of the eastern states to resist Qin in 241 BCE. The discovery raises important questions about the society and culture of the highly volatile late Warring States period (480–221 BCE).

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Gong Xicheng

Senior Researcher, Anhui Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology
“The World of the King of Chu: An Overview of the Archaeological Findings at Wuwangdun”

Lu Guoquan

Professor of Archaeology, Shandong University
“Excavating Wuwangdun: Technology, Conservation, and Interdisciplinary Research in Archaeology”

COMMENTATORS

Jenny So

Independent Scholar; Professor of Fine Arts, CUHK (retired)

Constance Cook

Professor Emerita, Chinese, Lehigh University

Lothar von Falkenhausen

Distinguished Professor of Chinese Archaeology and Art History, UCLA