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# 中国灯彩

Chinese Lanterns

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ZHONG GUO DENG CAI

闫东东 编著

出版人：任耕耘

责任编辑：司雯 侯雷

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中国的灯彩，又称“花灯”、“灯笼”，既是一种照明器具，又是传统节日的应时之物。在民间，每逢节日或婚寿喜庆之时，人们都要张灯结彩，以示庆贺。这种光与美术结合的灯彩艺术，既可装饰、美化建筑物，又能起到渲染气氛的

Chinese lanterns are used as lighting fixtures and seasonal decorations for the Chinese traditional holidays and festivals, or in the celebrations of weddings and birthdays. Also known as “flower lanterns” or “lighting balloons”, Chinese lanterns stand out as a unique art form combining the functional with the aesthetic, providing beautification





作用，具有独特的实用功能和审美价值。从远古时期人类钻木取火，到各类精美灯具的出现，再到五彩缤纷的灯彩的产生，中国人将灯与火完美地结合在一起。

本书从对中国古代灯的描述开始，逐一阐述了灯彩的起源与发展，详细介绍了中国最具特色的灯彩种类，各地灯彩的特色，以及灯彩与剪纸、绘画、书法等中国民间传统艺术的关系，向读者展示了灯彩的民间艺术魅力。

for building structures and also evoking a lively and festive mood. From ancient times when fire was made from frictions of wood pieces to the emergence of exquisite lamps and colorful lanterns, the Chinese people created these illuminating works of art with a perfect integration of fire and light.

This book begins with Chinese ancient lamps, explains the origin and development of lanterns, and introduces in detail some of the most unique styles, various local features and connections between the Chinese lanterns and other Chinese traditional folk art forms such as paper-cutting, painting and calligraphy. The book will lead readers on an exploration of the Chinese lanterns' delightful characteristics.





## 灯彩概述

An Overview of Chinese Lanterns..... 001

中国古代的灯

Ancient Lamps of China ..... 002

灯彩的起源与发展

Origin and Development of Lanterns ..... 010

## 灯彩的种类

Lantern Varieties..... 029

宫灯

Palace Lanterns ..... 030

龙灯

Dragon Lanterns ..... 038

走马灯

Revolving Lanterns ..... 046

座灯

Lantern Sets ..... 050

冰灯

Ice Lanterns..... 053

其他灯彩

Other Types of Lanterns..... 057





## 各地的灯彩

Lanterns of Different Regions ..... 073

北京灯彩

Beijing Lanterns ..... 074

上海灯彩

Shanghai Lanterns ..... 083

江苏灯彩

Jiangsu Lanterns ..... 087

浙江灯彩

Zhejiang Lanterns ..... 093

福建灯彩

Fujian Lanterns ..... 100

广东灯彩

Guangdong Lanterns ..... 104

青海灯彩

Qinghai Lanterns ..... 112



## 灯彩与其他艺术

Lanterns and Other Art Forms ..... 117

灯彩与剪纸

Lanterns and Paper-cutting ..... 118

灯彩与绘画

Lanterns and Paintings ..... 123

灯彩与书法

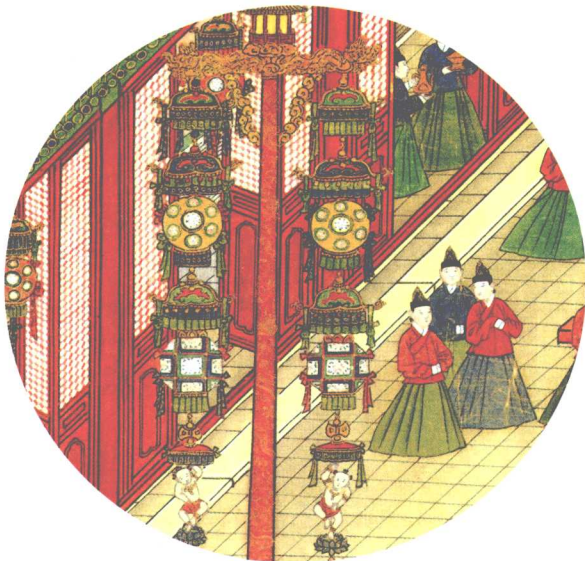
Lanterns and Calligraphy ..... 128

## 灯彩概述

## An Overview of Chinese Lanterns

“正月里正月正，正月十五闹花灯”，这是流传在中国民间的一句歌谣。农历正月十五元宵佳节闹花灯，是中华民族的传统习俗。自汉代起，每逢佳节，中华大地上就会张灯结彩，熠熠生辉。

It is a Chinese tradition to display lanterns in celebration of the Yuanxiao Festival (Lantern Festival) on the 15th of the 1st lunar month every year. As early as in the Han Dynasty, cities and towns all over China were decorated with illuminating lanterns during holidays and festivals.







## > 中国古代的灯

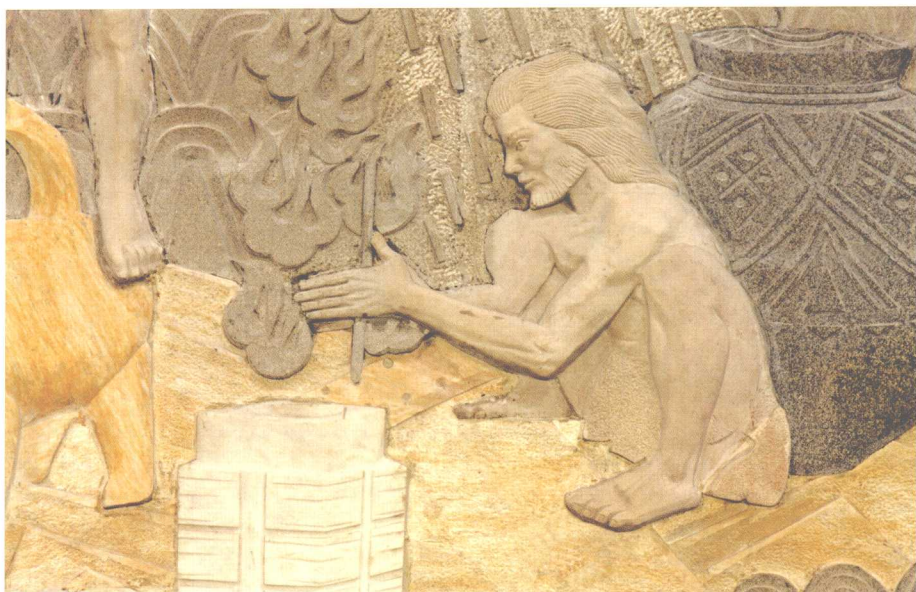
在没有发现火之前，原始人过着茹毛饮血的生活。一百多万年 前，人类通过钻木取火的方式第一次获得了火种，并通过燃烧木材的方式保留火种，使之不会熄灭。这时，人们学会了利用火取暖、照明和烤熟食物等。

据考古发现，距今四千多年的新石器时代就有火烤的遗迹。在中国古代，人们通过木燧、阳燧、火石三种工具进行取火。西周时期（前1046—前771）的典籍《周礼·秋官》中就有关于夫遂取火的记载：“司烜氏，掌以夫遂，取明火于日。”司烜是周代时宫廷设立的专门管火的官员，而夫燧则是取火的用具。汉代（前206—公元220）时，人们普遍使用携带方便的

## > Ancient Lamps of China

Before the discovery of fire, people in the primitive society lived on raw meat from hunting. Over a million years ago, humans for the first time could obtain fire by rubbing wood sticks and later retain the wood-burning fire for heating, lighting and cooking.

Archaeological discoveries have shown evidence of hearths about 4,000 years ago in the Neolithic Era. In ancient China, people obtained fire from frictions of wood pieces, sunlight and flint. The historical records of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046 B.C. -771 B.C.) documented how an imperial official responsible for fire control used a special apparatus to make fire from the sunlight. In the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- 220 A.D.), it was very common for people to carry a convex bronze mirror to get concentrated sunlight to ignite fire on



• 钻木取火（石雕）（图片提供：全景正片）  
Fire by Friction (Stone Carving)

阳燧取火。阳燧是一种铜镜，能聚集太阳光点燃木头，这是利用凸面镜的聚光原理。魏晋时期（220—420），出现了敲击火石取火的方法。敲石取火，就是用铁片与石相撞，点燃“火绒”（用艾蒿、棉花或纸加以硝水制成，揉搓变软，极易起火），便可轻松取火。清代（1644—1911）末期，西方制造的火柴被引进中国，中国人称其为“洋火”。现在，火柴、打火机等

woods. The use of flint began in the Wei and Jin dynasties (220-420). When struck against steel, a flint edge would produce sparks on tinder made from a mixture of mugwort, cotton and paper in saltpeter water, a method proven to obtain fire easily. In the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) matches were imported to China from the West. The Chinese called them “foreign fire” (*Yang Huo*). Matches and lighters are commonly used in people’s daily life today.





- 双凤双狮花鸟铜镜（唐）

Bronze Mirror of Double Phoenixes,  
Double Lions and Flower-bird Designs  
(Tang Dynasty)



- 蟠螭纹铜镜（西汉）

Bronze Mirror with Hornless Dragon  
Patterns (Western Han Dynasty)



- 阳燧（唐）

Convex Bronze Mirror (Tang Dynasty)



工具则是人们日常生活中普遍使用的取火工具。

人类历史上燃烧的第一根火炬就是人类的“第一盏灯”。然而火炬并不能被确切地称做“灯”。西汉典籍《礼记·曲礼上》中有“烛不见跋”的记载。郑云注：“跋，本也。”孔颖达为此注作疏：“本，把处也。古者未有蜡烛，唯呼火炬为烛也。”可见当时的烛就是火炬。“烛”是灯的前身，人们为了保持“长久的烛”而产生了灯。中国现存最早、使用最普遍的

The first torch in the human history might be considered “the first lamp” of mankind. But a torch could not be called a lamp. Tang Dynasty (618-907) scholar Kong Yingda explained that the mentioning of “a lamp without a base” in the historical records of the Western Han Dynasty actually referred to a torch because ancient people didn’t have lamps, so they called torches lamps. Fire was a predecessor of lamps, which emerged as a result of people’s desire to keep the fire on for a longer period. The very first and the most popular lamp in China was the *Dou*-shaped oil lamp in the Warring States Period (475 B.C.-221 B.C.). A *Dou* was a small flat disk for food in ancient China, which gradually transformed into a lamp with a wick placed in the animal fat used as the fuel source.

The earliest Romantic poet in China Qu Yuan (approx. 340 B.C. -approx. 278 B.C.) mentioned in his work *Verses of Chu* that animal fat mixed with fragrance had been used as the fuel source for lamps. According to legends, the Chinese master carpenter Lu Ban once made palace lanterns when he was building the imperial palace. During the reign of Emperor Wen of Han, the Yuanxiao



• 黄釉陶瓷豆形灯（汉）  
Pottery *Dou*-shaped Lamp with Yellow Glaze (Han Dynasty)





灯具出于战国（前475—前221），名为“豆形灯”。这种灯以动物油脂作为燃料。“豆”是古时用来盛食物的圆盏盘，后来逐渐演变为盛放灯油、配上灯芯用于照明的灯。

中国最早的浪漫主义诗人屈原（约前340—约前278）曾在作品《楚辞》中写道：“兰膏明烛，华容备些。”兰膏，就是加入香料的动物油脂。据传说，中国木匠的祖师鲁班在修建宫殿的时候，就曾经制造过宫廷里用的宫灯。汉文帝时期，元宵节的习俗逐渐形成了，全国各地到了这一天张灯结彩，宫灯的制作工艺从宫廷内传到了民间。民间灯彩的形式各异，当时有一种用竹子编织框架，以纱葛、纸张做罩，其内点燃油脂所制的灯彩，便是如今传统节日里常见的灯笼。

不过，由于动物油脂过于昂贵，直至三国时期（220—280），也只有少数富贵人家才能点得起油灯。魏晋时期，人们发现了“蜡”这一物质，并以其为原料制成了蜡烛。到了唐代，人们用蜂蜡作烛，称之为“蜜炬”。当时的诗人李商隐有诗写道：“春蚕到死丝方尽，



• 青铜鸟柄豆形灯（汉）  
Bronze Dou-shaped Lamp with a Bird-shaped Handle (Han Dynasty)

Festival gradually became a tradition. On the day of the festival colorful lanterns and streamers were hung up everywhere. Subsequently the lantern-making techniques from the imperial palace began to spread to common folks, who then created a variety of lantern styles. The most common type of lanterns in the Chinese traditional festivals today consists of a bamboo armature covered by colored paper or silk with a fuel cell inside.

Up to the Three Kingdoms Period (220-228) only a small number of wealthy families could afford oil lamps due to the high cost of animal fats. In the Wei and Jin dynasties wax was



蜡炬成灰泪始干。”蜂蜡比动物油脂更加便于携带，而且干净清洁，是一种常见的照明材料。后来，人们又逐渐将植物油、虫蜡等用以照明。

在中国古代农业社会，灯还未被普遍使用时，人们过的是“日出而作，日落而息”的生活。而随着油灯、蜡烛的广泛应用，灯的种类也变得越来越丰富。按其质地可分为陶灯、青铜灯、青瓷灯等。灯也从实用性的照明工具，逐渐发展成具有观赏性的节庆装饰，各种样式的灯彩随之进入人们的视野。

discovered and used to make candles. In the Tang Dynasty, people began to make candles out of beeswax and called them “honey candles”. Candles became very popular because they were easier to carry and much cleaner. Later people also used plant and insect waxes as fuel sources for lighting.

In the ancient agricultural society without lamps people woke up at sunrise and went to bed at sunset. The popular use of oil lamps and candles generated a rich variety of lamps made from different types of materials such as pottery, bronze and porcelain. Gradually lamps developed from practical lighting fixtures into decorative lanterns for holidays and celebrations. Lanterns finally caught people's attention.



• 青瓷莲花座烛台（南朝）

Celadon Glaze Porcelain Candle Holder with Lotus-shaped Base (Southern Dynasty)



- 人形铜灯（战国）

Bronze Figure Holding a *Dou*-shaped Oil Lamp (Warring States Period)



- 长信宫灯（西汉）

宫灯通体鎏金，因曾放置于窦太后的长信宫，故名。其设计十分巧妙，灯体为一神态恬静、双手执灯跏趺坐的宫女造型，分别由头部、右臂、身躯、灯罩、灯盘、灯座六个部分铸造组成。头部和右臂可以组装拆卸，便于清洗灯具。宫女一手执灯，另一手隐在袖中，似在挡风，这一手袖实为虹管，油烟经过虹管后沉积在底盘内。

#### Changxin Palace Lamp (Western Han Dynasty)

The gilded bronze lamp was placed in Empress Dou's Changxin Palace. Therefore, it was named after the palace. It was cleverly designed to allow adjustments in the directness and brightness of the light. The entire piece is a maid-servant holding the lamp with both hands. There are six components including the head, the right arm, the body, the shade, the lamp plate and the lamp holder. It seems that she uses one arm to block the wind and the other arm serves as a tube to trap the lampblack in the bottom plate.



• 扶桑树形铜灯（西汉）

灯可分为无檠灯、有檠灯两种，檠是指托灯盘的立柱。有檠灯又依据檠的长短分为短檠灯和长檠灯。此灯属于长檠灯。

**Hibiscus Tree-shaped Bronze Lamp  
(Western Han Dynasty)**

Ancient Chinese lamps consist of lamps without stands and with long or short stands. This lamp is a long stand lamp.

• 云纹铜牛灯（东汉）

**Bronze Ox-shaped Lamp with Cloud  
Patterns (Eastern Han Dynasty)**



## > 灯彩的起源与发展

民间灯彩最初是由皇宫里的宫灯发展而来。宫灯则是源于汉代元宵节时皇宫里的张灯活动。五彩缤纷、喜气洋洋的灯彩为元宵节增添了浓厚的节日气氛。后来，这种张灯活动走入了寻常



• 民间灯彩邮票  
Stamps of Folk Lanterns

## > Origin and Development of Lanterns

Folk lanterns originally evolved from palace lanterns, which emerged from the lantern display in the Han imperial palace during the Yuanxiao Festival. These colorful and joyful lanterns added a jubilant mood to the festival. Later this kind of lantern celebrations spread to common people's homes. Today displaying and enjoying lanterns every year on the Yuanxiao Festival is an important Chinese tradition to celebrate holidays and festivals.

The 15th day of the first lunar month is known as the Yuanxiao Festival, the Lantern Festival or the Shangyuan (upper lord) Festival. The Yuanxiao Festival was derived from the word *Yuan* meaning the first lunar month and the word *Xiao* meaning "night" in ancient Chinese. The 15th of the first lunar