

30 Most Famous Chinese Handicraft Art Masterpieces You Really Need to Know

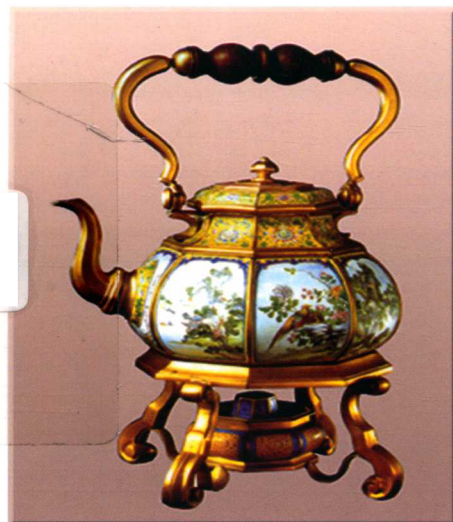


**Classics  
Appreciation of  
Chinese  
Visual Arts**



# Arts and Crafts

Editor *Jeng Xiaobo*  
Translator *Wang Rong*



The Yellow River Publishing & Media Group Co., Ltd  
Ningxia People's Publishing House



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# SI MU WU *DING* (COOKING VESSEL)

**Creation Year:** the Shang Dynasty      **Material:** bronze  
**Size:** overall height of 133 cm, horizontal length of 110 cm, width of 78 cm, weight of 875 kg  
**Unearthing Place:** the tomb of the late Shang Dynasty in Yin Ruins, Anyang, Henan  
**Collection place:** National Museum of China



Si Mu Wu *Ding* (Cooking Vessel) is a valuable bronzeware used by the royal family in the late Shang Dynasty. It is said that this craftwork was cast by Wuding (King of the Shang Dynasty) for his wife (it is also said that it was cast for Wuding's mother). Its inner wall is cast with "Si Mu Wu", hence it is named after. It shapes majestically. Two standing ears are higher than the body, and rectangular abdomen is very vigorous. Four feet are hollow, while animal mask pattern and are cloud and thunder pattern are two kinds of decorative patterns outside the upper foot and both standing ears. Si Mu Wu *Ding* (Cooking Vessel) is the largest and heaviest bronzeware as found in China at present. Its shape, decoration and technology reach a high level, which is the masterpiece in the peak period of the Shang Dynasty bronzeware culture.

## Quick Link

### Bronzeware and Bronze Era

See Page 4 of *Classics Appreciation of Chinese Visual Arts: Sculpture* in this series.

## Anecdote

### Legend of nine *dings*

According to the legend, after the success of Dayu combating the flood, the ancient China was divided into nine prefectures, and a bronze *ding* was cast in every prefecture as a souvenir. From then on, nine *dings* became the symbol of national power, and monarchs of ancient dynasties did all best to possess them.

After the Shang Dynasty replaced the Xia Dynasty, nine *dings* moved to the capital of the Shang Dynasty. After King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty annihilated the Shang Dynasty, he sent troops of 810,000 soldiers to transport nine *dings* to the capital of the Zhou Dynasty (Haojing, which was located in today's southwest Shaanxi Xi'an). During The Spring and Autumn Period, King Zhuang of Chu Kingdom wanted to dominate China, and asked about the whereabouts of nine *dings* with ulterior motive. In the Warring States Period, after King Huiwen of the Qin Kingdom failed to lead soldiers to grab nine *dings*, King of Qi Kingdom seized nine *dings* with military force. Unexpectedly, nine *dings* actually fled into Sishui (in today's Si River, Shandong) and disappeared. After the First Qin Emperor unified China, he immediately sent people to salvage nine *dings* in Sishui. But when nine *dings* came out, the cable was snapped by the Dragon King and nine *dings* fell into the river again. After that, people never could find trace of nine *dings*.

Although nine *dings* disappeared, the phrase of "Jiu Ding" maintains for a long time. For example, the Chinese idiom "Yi Yan Jiu Ding" adopts "Jiu Ding" to describe the heavy weight of promise.

## Showcase Window



### *Ding*

*Ding* was originally tableware, which was fired with the clay, and later it evolved into ritual object as a symbol of state power, which was cast with the bronze. It is mostly three-legged round shape, as well as four-legged square shape.

In ancient China, *ding* was representative of nobility. It is recorded that in the Zhou Dynasty, the emperor could use nine *dings*, marquises could use seven *dings*, senior officials above the level of scholar could use five *dings*, the mid/low-level officials could use three *dings*, the general nobles could use a *ding*; and ordinary civilians couldn't use *ding*, otherwise they would face up to fatal disaster.

After the Spring and Autumn Period, with the decline of royal family of the Zhou Dynasty, marquises greatly increased their power. Usage system of *ding* also collapsed.

Outer surface of standing ear is embossed with pattern of a tiger eating human head, and the side is decorated with the fish pattern.

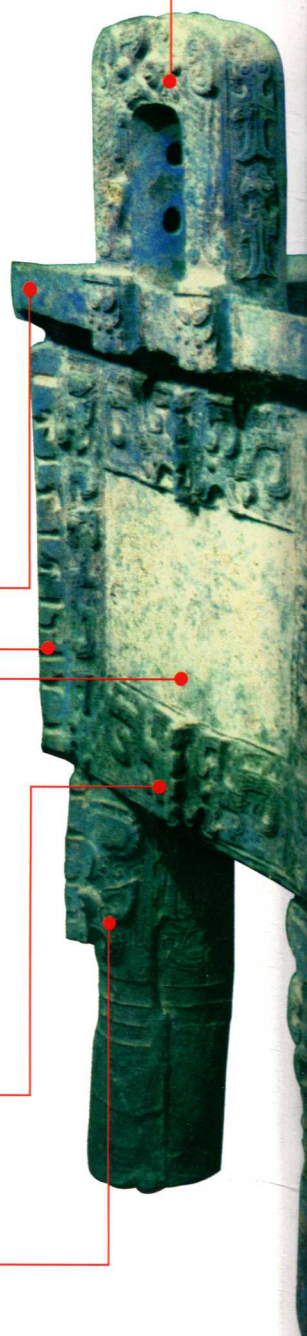
The edge is arranged around upper tip of *ding* body.

Junctions of four sides are decorated with opening edge. Opening edge is painted with pattern of ox head, and lower part is decorated with *Taotie* pattern.

The undecorated rectangular blank strip is in middle of four sides of *ding* body.

Blank part is surrounded with a ring of *Taotie* pattern as the main decoration.

Four hollow cylindrical legs see square upper tip, which are decorated with cloud and thunder pattern.







## Several common patterns on the bronzeware

**Tiger pattern:** The ancients believed tigers could make great wind, and help the wizards communicate with the heaven and the earth. So the ancients cast this kind of pattern on utensils.

**Taotie pattern:** Taotie is a legendary ferocious and greed beast. Ancient bronzeware adopts its head shape for the purpose of decoration.

**Cloud and thunder pattern:** Continuous convoluted lines are usually used to set off the main decoration. Round pattern is generally referred to as "cloud pattern", and square pattern is generally referred to as "thunder pattern".



Tiger pattern



Taotie pattern



Cloud and thunder pattern



Lower tip of the leg is cylindrical and cast with three string patterns, on which animal mask pattern is decorated.



Outer surface of standing ear is cast with two tigers representative of theocracy and King's power. Tiger is deliberately exaggerated, and tiger ear is unusually large. Tiger mouth is opposite each other. In the mouth, there is the pattern of human head opening terrified eyes.



### Do You Know?

#### Chinese ancient bronze art

The so-called "bronzeware" mainly refers to vessels cast with copper, tin and lead alloy in the Shang Dynasty, the Western Zhou Dynasty, the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, including tools, weapons, cooking vessels, food vessels, wine vessels, water vessels, musical instruments, chariot ornaments, bronze mirrors, belt hooks and scales, etc. They not only have the practical value in life, but also can be displayed for art appreciation, with aesthetic value.

In different development periods, the bronzeware manufacturing formed different styles. "Bronze art" refers to the style features of bronzeware casting technology, modeling and decorative patterns. Since bronzeware became popular in the Shang Dynasty, shape, decorative patterns and casting technology continuously developed in combination of painting, sculpture, arts and crafts and other elements, which laid the foundation of the plastic arts of ancient China.



## FOUR SHEEP SQUARE *ZUN*

**Creation Year:** the late Shang Dynasty

**Material:** bronze

**Size:** height of 58.3 cm, mouth rim length of 52.4 cm, weight of 34.5 kg

**Unearthing Place:** Yueshanpu, Ningxiang, Hunan

**Collection Place:** National Museum of China



*Zun* is a kind of wine vessel with special shape, which was prevalent in the Shang Dynasty and Western Zhou Dynasty. As some *Zuns* simulate animal shape, they are also known as "bird-animal *zuns*". Four Sheep Square *Zun* features square mouth rim and long neck. Carved sheep pattern on four edges follows from the shoulder to the foot, with projected body forward. Curved horns and refined rolling cloud pattern on the body are detailed and realistic. Banana leaf pattern and *Kui* pattern are main decoration patterns carved below mouth rim, on the shoulder and on the ring foot, which are extremely refined and vivid.

Four Sheep Square *Zun* is cast by means of separate casting method, and its molding and casting processes are very complex. Four Sheep Square *Zun* is the outstanding representative of bronze casting process in the Shang Dynasty.

### The production of bronzeware

Step 1 "molding": making mud sample with clay, which is as like as two peas compared with casting object, and then engraving decorative pattern.

Step 2 "making model": using fine mud to make mud sheet attached outside the model, drying the model, dividing into several blocks according to shape characteristic (i.e., "outer model"; and then adopting the same method to make "inner model".

Step 3 "combining model": combining inner model and outer model together (the distance between inner model and outer model is the thickness of object wall).

Step 4 "pouring": pouring copper liquid into the space between the models.

Step 5 "removing model": removing inner model and outer model after cooling of copper liquid.

Step 6 "grinding": grinding and refined processing for cast object.

Brief Background



Sheep's head are carved in high relief. Sheep horn is curved inwards to form a beautiful arc, on which loop lines are engraved. With protruding eyes and slightly open mouth, the sheep seems chewing grass and bleating. A row of curly hair flows from the neck to chest. Over the sheep body, large and small regular rolling cloud patterns are dotted, representing the curl wool.

Big mouth rim outwardly extends like a square bugle

There is dragon scale pattern on the shoulder. Dragon head is interspersed in the middle of sheep heads, topped with two towering horns.

Winding high-relief dragon has claws, and dragon scales are visible.

Four sheep are located at four corners of this *Zun*, and their horns are inwards curved.

Sheep leg is attached to the high ring foot, decorated with long crown phoenix pattern. Sheep hoof levels up to bottom foot.

Ring foot between sheep hoofs is decorated with inverted *Kui* pattern.



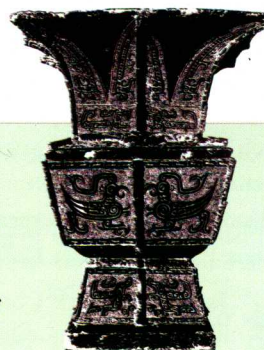




## Showcase Window

### Zun

*Zun* is a kind of wine vessel with special shape, which was prevalent in the Shang Dynasty and Western Zhou Dynasty, which can fall into *Beast Zun*, *Elephant Zun*, *Zhuo Zun*, *Pot Zun*, *Tai Zun* and *Shan Zun*. They were mainly used in the sacrifice and the reception of guests. Different Zuns received different guests to express respect from the hosts. Later, although *Zun* was no longer in use, the character "*Zun*" is preserved with meaning of "respect", "honor" and "noble", which become a honorific for the people.



Bird Pattern *Zun*

## Quick Link

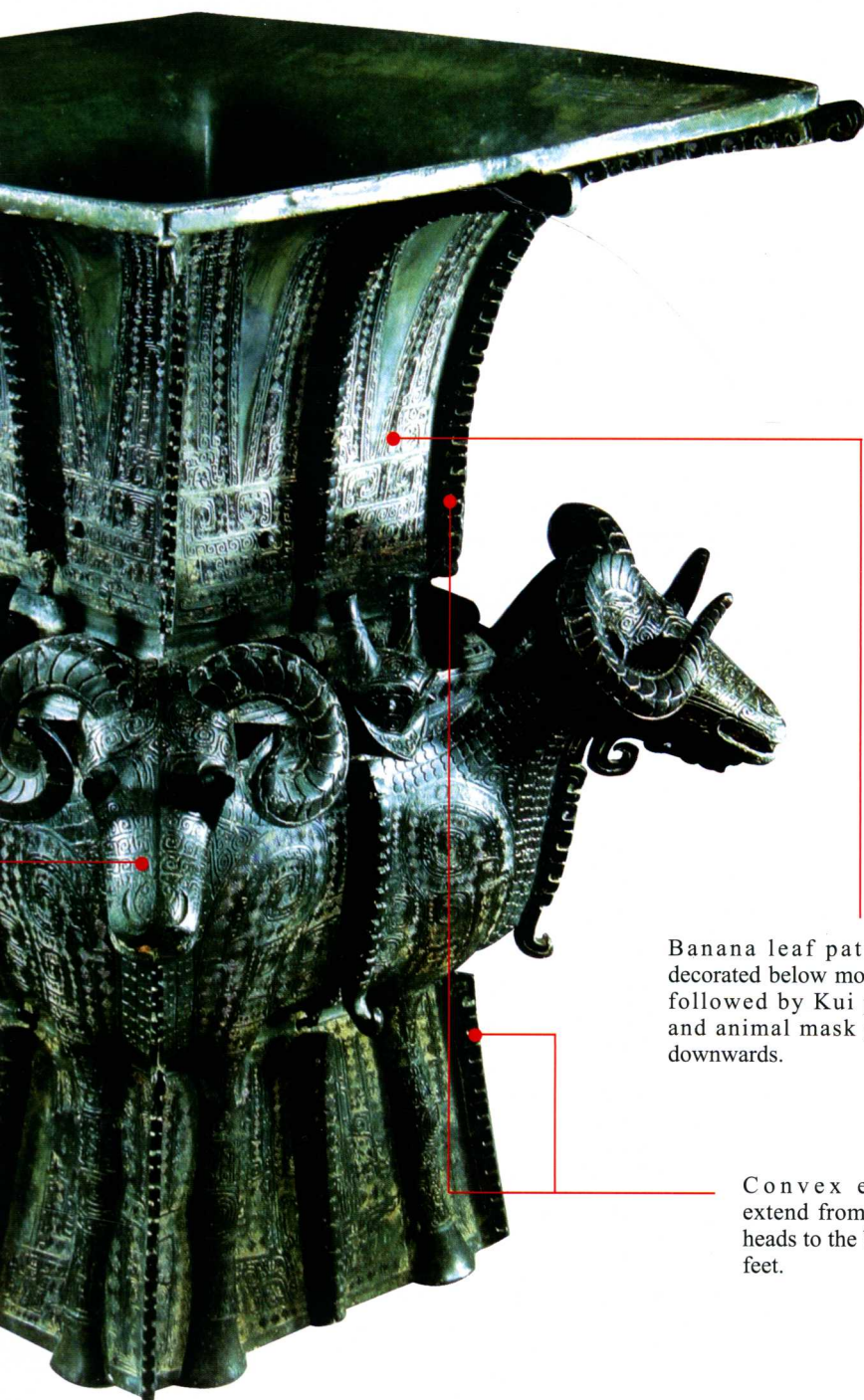
### Relief

See Page 23 of *Classics Appreciation of Chinese Visual Arts: Sculpture in this series*.

## General Knowledge

### Kui pattern

*Kui* pattern is one of the decorative patterns on bronzeware. Dagon is an animal according to the ancient legend. Its image originated very early, but it first appeared in the Shang Dynasty as the bronzeware ornamentation. The ancients used the dragon to symbolize God of Water, therefore, the image of dragon mainly appears in the bronzeware water vessels. Such image can roughly fall into crawling dragon pattern, curling dragon pattern, crossing dragon pattern, twin-head dragon pattern and double-body dragon pattern. Kui is a one-legged monster like dragon according to ancient legend, which was believed by the ancients that "a storm is bound to come out after Kui swims in and out the river".



Banana leaf pattern is decorated below mouth rim, followed by Kui pattern and animal mask pattern downwards.

Convex edges extend from sheep heads to the bottom feet.



# JADE OPENWORK COMBINED *Bi* WITH *Chi* AND TIGER PATTERN

**Creation Year:** the Warring States Period

**Material:** jade

**Size:** diameter of 7.6 cm, thickness of 0.4 cm

**Collection Place:** the Palace Museum of Beijing



Jade Openwork Combined *Bi* with *Chi* and Tiger Pattern is outstanding representative of jade craftworks in the Spring and Autumn Period. At that time, development of jade craft reached the peak. Openwork (engraving penetrating patterns or words on objects), relief and other decoration techniques were used widely. In addition to tiger pattern, decorative patterns included bird pattern, phoenix pattern and dragon pattern.

Jade Openwork Combined *Bi* with *Chi* and Tiger Pattern features oblate body, the same pattern on both sides, a circle of string pattern in inner and outer edges and orderly arrangement of *Guding* pattern in the middle. The middle hole sees the openwork of animal which opens mouth and raises chest and head high. The front half of the dragon body is "*Chi*" (i.e., dragon without horn according to the ancient legend)", while rear half of the dragon body is "Tiger".

This jade *Bi* consists of two halves separated by axis, which is a token for closing and combining. Hence combined *Bi* is named after.



## General Knowledge

### Jade in ancient China

In ancient China, the concept of "jade" was very broad, including not only the true jade, but also serpentine, turquoise, malachite, agate, crystal, amber, ruby and beryl, etc. During the Warring States Period, "jade" became the main body of ritual object. At the same time, high officials and the intelligentsia had popular custom of wearing delicate small jade ware on the body. There was a saying that "noble man should not remove jade for no reason" (i.e., noble man should not let jade leave the body). This links jade ornaments with human's spiritual world, behavior and moral cultivation together, demands people to embrace clean quality like the jade, bind themselves in lie with jade quantity, and restrain their conducts.



Openwork carving jade accessory with many sections (Warring States Period)

## Jadeware production

Jadeware production must go through sawing, grinding, perforation, carving, polishing and many other processes. Jadeware is produced with at least ten days or half a month and even over the years. In the Warring States Period, the mining volume of jade materials greatly soared, and the number of jade craftworks rapidly increased. Iron tools were widely used for jade carving, perforation and other processes. Production technology of openwork and live ring chain greatly improved. This makes the jadeware not only more exquisite and smart with refined patterns, but also shows a sense of layers through the changes in thickness and evenness of lines.



## Brief Background

Jade Openwork Combined *Bi* with *Chi* and Tiger Pattern is made of green jade material. Except local brown dipping spots because of old age, this craftwork is crystal and moist, which radiates a kind of clean and pure beauty.

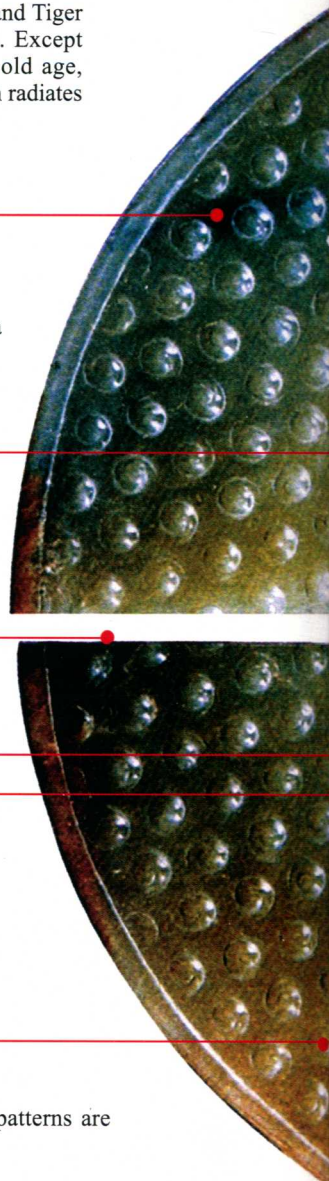
The front half of *Chi* body has only a dragon's claw.

*Bi* shows round ring shape, split into halves from the middle.

Tiger tail is curled up.

The rear half of tiger body stands with two legs.

Slightly convex *Guding* decorative patterns are dotted between string patterns.





## returning *Bi* intact to Zhao Kingdom

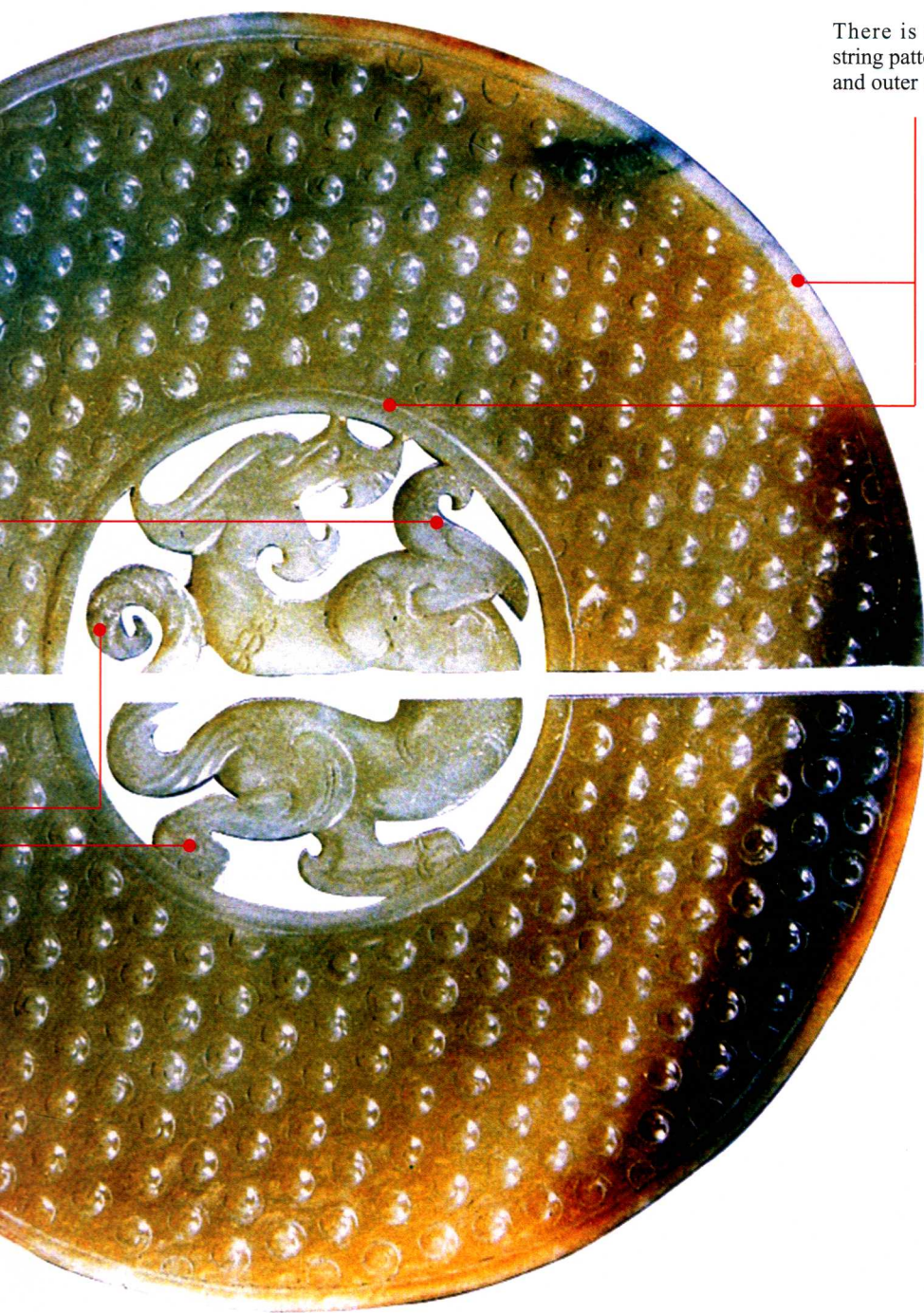


"Heshi *Bi*" was a famous jade in ancient China, which was collected by Zhao Kingdom in the Warring States Period. King Zhaoxiang of Qin Kingdom wrote to King Huiwen of Zhao Kingdom to express the willingness of exchanging 15 cities of Qin Kingdom for Heshi *Bi*. At that time, Qin Kingdom was much stronger than Zhao Kingdom. King Huiwen of Zhao Kingdom doubt that was a fraud, but he was afraid to offend the Qin, and had to sent minister Lin Xiangru to take Heshi *Bi* and visit King Zhaoxiang of Qin Kingdom.

At the first sight of Heshi *Bi*, King Zhaoxiang of Qin Kingdom liked it very much but didn't mention 15 cities. Lin Xiangru showed resourcefulness in an emergency, and lied to point out a fault on Heshi *Bi* and took back it. Then he put Heshi *Bi* high over his head, and said: "If Qin Kingdom makes treachery and robs this jade, I would rather let it and my head smashed in the column of this palace!" Finally, Lin Xiangru took advantage of tremendous courage and wisdom, who not only let this jade safely return to Zhao Kingdom, but also maintain the dignity of Zhao Kingdom.

This is the famous story of "returning *Bi* intact to Zhao Kingdom" in history.

There is a circle of string pattern on inner and outer edges.



### Showcase Window

#### *Bi*

*Bi* is a kind of jade ware, with oblate shape and central hole. In the pre-Qin period, jade was generally used for the following purposes: 1) worship objects dedicated to heaven, mountain, sea stars and rivers; 2) ceremonial or ritual objects or symbols of different identity; 3) pendants for wearing; 4) a weight used for a measure of the weight of an object; 5) burial objects (the ancients believed that *Bi* could exorcise evil spirits and avoid decay of the deceased. In all jade works used as ritual objects, "*Bi*" enjoyed the highest status, which was often used as offering sacrifices to gods and diplomatic gifts. Its position was only second to "*Ding*".



Changle Jade *Bi* (Eastern Han Dynasty)



# ZENG HOU YI CHIMES

Microscope



**Creation Year:** the early Warring States Period

**Material:** bronze and wood

**Size:** overall length of 10.79 meters, height of 2.67 meters, weighs of about 5 tons

**Unearthing Place:** Tomb of Zeng Hou Yi, Leigudun at suburban area of Suizhou, Hubei (1978)

**Collection Place:** Hubei Museum



Zeng Kingdom was a small marquis kingdom in the early Warring States Period, and its monarchs enjoyed grand dukedom of "Hou" conferred by emperors of the Zhou Dynasty. "Zeng Hou Yi" refers to monarch named "Yi" of Zeng Kingdom. This set of chimes is funerary object in his tomb, which is known as "King of Chime in Ancient China".

This set of chimes consists of a total of 65 chimes. Among which, 64 chimes hang in wooden bell shelf on three layers, and a chime (Xiong Zhang Bo Chime for King Hui of Chu Kingdom) hangs in the middle of lower layer in wooden frame. Every chime body is engraved with inlaid gold inscription in seal script, which was popular art font at that time. The characters on the chime back record many musical terms and prosodic knowledge, which are the precious literature for Chinese musicology in Pre-Qin Period.

Zeng Hou Yi Chimes enjoy wide range, good sound quality and accurate sound production, which can still be used to play difficult music works.

■ This is Xiong Zhang Bo Chime for King Hui of Chu Kingdom. During the Warring States Period, Zeng Kingdom was a vassal of Chu Kingdom, and two kingdoms sat adjacent with each other. In 433 BC, King Hui of Chu Kingdom specifically made ritual object, i.e., bronze Bo Chimes for monarch named "Yi" of Zeng Kingdom. Inscriptions of chimes record close relations between the two kingdoms. The monarch named "Yi" of Zeng Kingdom hung this set of chimes in the most prominent position of chime frame in ancestral temple to demonstrate important political significance. After his death, Bo Chime was buried in the tomb of monarch named "Yi" of Zeng Kingdom.



The central 33 chimes are arranged from small size to big size by three sections.

Round pier-shape base at the foot of bronze figure is decorated with relief *Pan Chi* pattern, and lower rim is surrounded by a ring, which is used for penetrating cords.



## General Knowledge

### Matching number of chimes

Chime has many kinds of matching systems. In the Shang Dynasty, 3 chimes or 5 chimes composed a set. In the mid/late Western Zhou Dynasty, 8 chimes composed a set. In the Eastern Zhou Dynasty, 9 chimes mostly composed a set. A set of 13 chimes also existed. During the Warring States Period, Zeng Hou Yi Chimes consisted of a total 65 chimes.

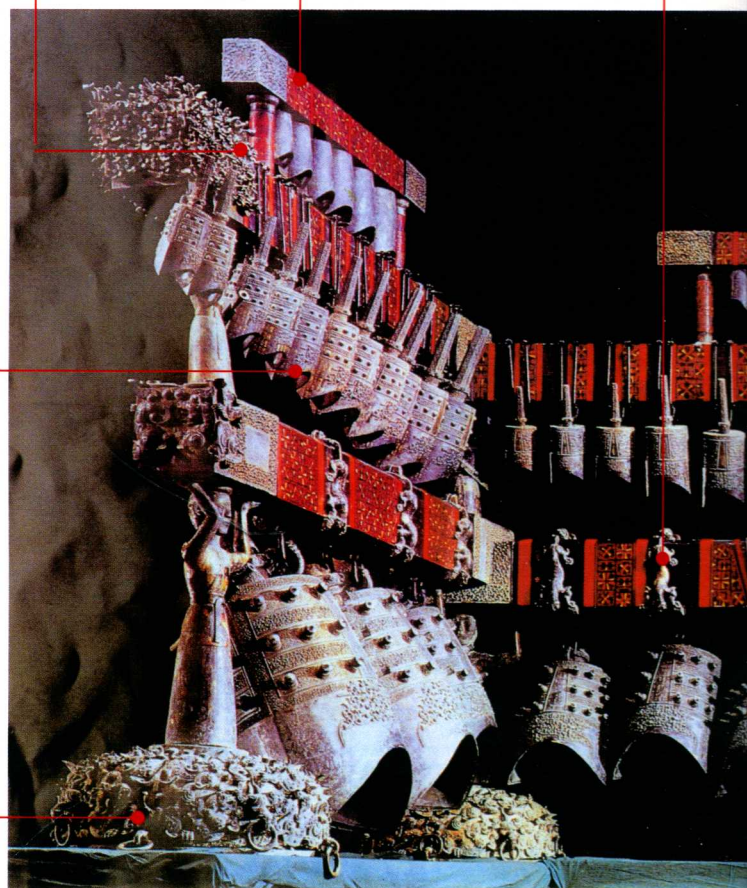
## The scale system of chime

According to the acoustics research, scale structure of Zeng Hou Yi Chimes is identical to modern international universal C Major Seven Pentatonic Scale, which also presents the changes in tone and the complete chromatic scale. It not only contains the ancient *Gong*, *Shang*, *Jue*, *Zhi* and *Yu*, but also variable *Gong* and variable *Zhi*. Between seven tones, there are five intermediate tones, thus forming a complete Twelve Tonal Serialism. Zeng Hou Yi Chimes range over five half octaves, which can be used to play a variety of difficult music works.

Three upper beams hang 19 small chimes.

Chime frame is L-shaped. Its beam is decorated with painted pattern. Bronze sleeves with embossed and engraved dragon pattern or petal decoration stand on both sides, which have reinforcing effect.

Bronze tiger is decorated on chime frame.





## Brief Background

### Gold inlaying

Gold inlaying is also known as "inlaid gold and silver" or "gold and silver inlaying", which is a kind of special bronze decoration process. The operation process is specified as follows: firstly embedding gold and silver wires or gold and silver sheets to form various patterns or characters on bronze objects, and then using inlaying stone to grind such objects to make them smooth.



Gold-inlaid inscription on the chimes

The bronze figure is a part of bell frame, and its head and raised hands support the horizontal beam. Bronze figure is clothed, takes sabre, and shows serious facial expression and painted body. This painted figure is a rare bronze portrait masterpiece.

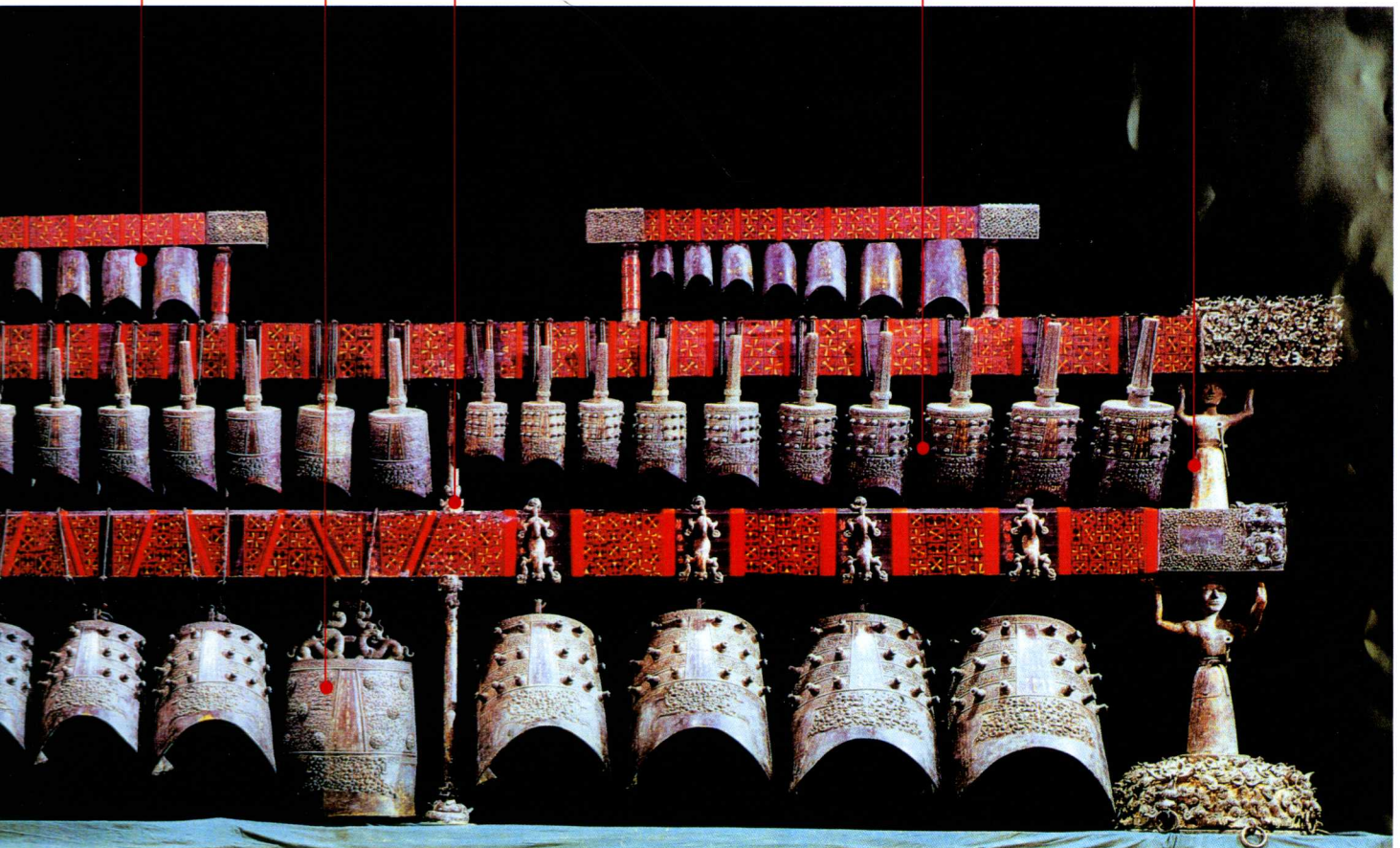
Xiong Zhang Bo Chime for King Hui of Chu Kingdom hangs in middle of the lower layer.

Two copper columns support horizontal beams in the middle and have reinforcement role.

On mid/lower layers, there are total of long-handled 45 Yong Chimes with the noses. Their obverse sides are inscribed with five characters "Zeng Hou Yi Zha Shi".

The mid/lower layers are supported by three bronze figures as the pillars. The heads and hands of bronze figures support the weight.

Various parts of chimes are decorated with relief patterns, with inlaid gold inscriptions in narrow font.



## Chimes

"Chime" was a musical instrument of the Warring States Period. Composed of several component chimes, chime hangs on the frame according to the size, which is beaten with small mallet or stick when playing. The sound is similar to the ringing bell, which is clear, euphonic and durable. So it is suitable for playing pentatonic music in the East.

In the ancient Chinese music history, chime enjoyed the extremely important status. It used to be made of pottery before the Shang Dynasty, which was made of copper after the Shang Dynasty. There are many kinds of chime. Zeng Hou Yi Chimes are relatively larger in terms of size.



## Showcase Window



# BRONZE CHARIOTS AND HORSES IN MAUSOLEUM OF THE FIRST QIN EMPEROR

**Creation Year:** the Qin Dynasty      **Material:** bronze  
**Size:** length of 328.4 cm, overall height of 104.2 cm, weight of 1241 kg

**Unearthing Place:** Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, Lintong, Shaanxi (1980)

**Collection Place:** the First Qin Emperor's Terracotta Army Museum, Lintong, Shaanxi



Bronze chariots and horses in Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor are all funerary objects. A total of two chariots were unearthed, i.e., "An Che" and "Li Che". They are arranged in the front and rear, with similar shape and painting. Each of them has the one-second size of the real chariot.

"An Che" completely simulates the real structure of special carriage for the First Qin Emperor. Chariots and horses see painted pattern with dominative dragon and phoenix pattern and cloud pattern. An imperial officer figurine sits before the chariot for driving, and its head and clothes are painted. The whole craftwork features realistic modeling, accurate proportion, complex craft and ornate decoration, which represents the highest manufacturing level of the ancient Chinese bronzeware. It is praised as "Champion of Bronzeware".



## Celebrity Profile

### The owner of bronze chariots and horses

The owner of bronze chariots and horses is the First Qin Emperor. He was the first emperor of the Qin Dynasty (the first feudal empire in Chinese history). He unified China, made great achievements, and claimed to "the first emperor" ("emperor" was originated by him). But he was also very cruel so that common people of the Qin Dynasty suffered from his oppression. After the death of the First Qin Emperor, he was buried in Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor.



The two horses on both sides are called as "Can Horses". Horse head slightly outwardly tilts, which is ready for starting off.

The two horses in the middle are called as "Fu Horses".

The horses feature white color, round body and plump waist in high spirit.

## Quick Link

### Pottery Sculpture Process of the Qin Dynasty

See Page 10 of *Classics Appreciation of Chinese Visual Arts: Sculpture in this series.*

## Story Corner

### The First Qin Emperor on "An Che"

From 220 BC onwards, the First Qin Emperor toured across the country five times. He rode such "An Che". One day, when a large fleet was moving, suddenly a big iron block fell from the sky. Although "An Che" avoided, auxiliary chariot behind "An Che" was destroyed to become debris. Emperor was frightened, and quickly ordered the capture of the assassin. Be escorting soldiers searched for the assassin in the bush for a long time, they found nothing.

In July 210 BC, on the way returning to the imperial court after the fifth successful tour, the First Qin Emperor felt sick and died in his way. His youngest son Hu Hai wanted to succeed to the throne, who closely controlled information, and ordered stepping up to return to the imperial court. This happened in a hot summer. "An Che" was covered tightly, and the emperor's body inside the chariot soon began to rot. Eunuch Zhao Gao quickly placed a lot of abalone with fishy smell to cover up the odor of carrion. In this way, noble and beautiful "An Che" hastily returned to Xianyang City with "hidden secret".



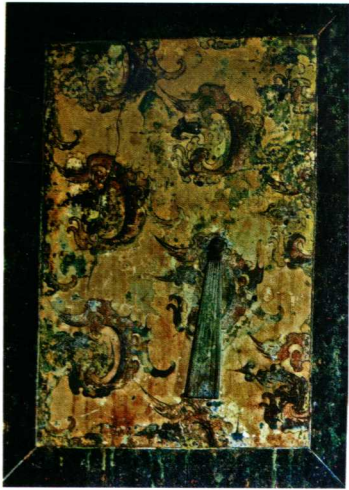
The horse chest is decorated with a string of brass wreath.

The horse wears gold and silver bridle, and gold and silver choker and gold and silver bridle rope are tied around the neck.

A pendant hangs at the tip of each axle head, which is a symbol of noble status.

The windows in front part and on the left and right sides are engraved into rhombus plaid pattern.





■ The compartment door plate of bronze chariot is painted with a group of beautiful deformed dragon and phoenix pattern. Patterns are kept intact with fresh colors such as white, red, green, blue, brown and black colors. Each kind of color has different shade. The pigment is made of resin so that the color of "An Che" is richer so as to fully demonstrate noble and luxurious style of imperial chariot.



■ The frontoparietal middle of "Can Horse" is cast with semi-spherical copper base. 16 small gold bubbles are inlaid around, on which a copper rod stands with height of about 20 centimeters. This is the sign of imperial chariot.

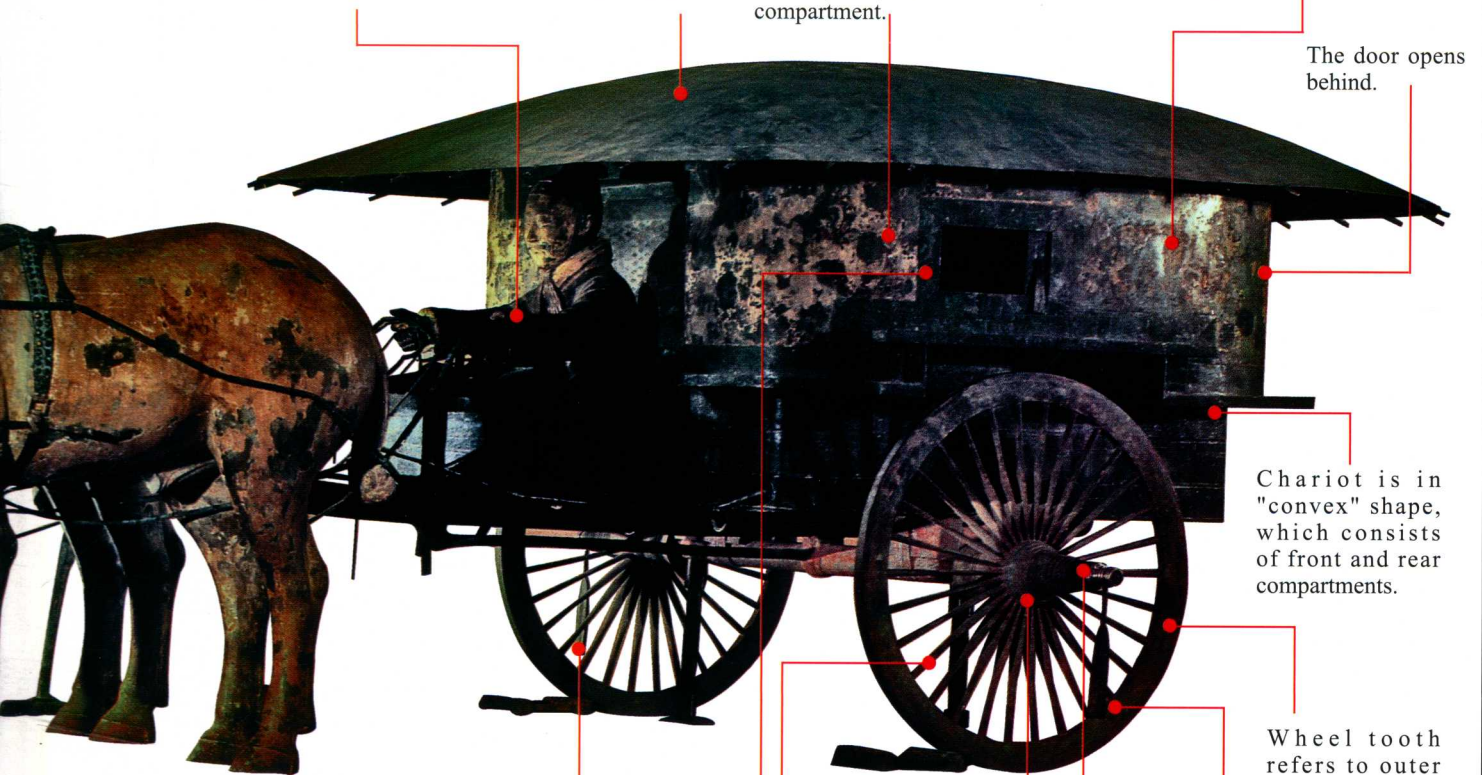
Imperial officer figurine wears cap and crown, wears lapel robe, takes sword, extends both arms, holds a bridle cable and looks respectful.

Round hood cover symbolizes the "Heaven", which is arch-shaped.

Square compartment symbolizes the "Earth", which consists of front and rear compartments separated by the central window. The horseman sits in front compartment, and the owner is in rear compartment.

Shelter is side plate of compartment.

The door opens behind.



Radiating wood strip is called as "Fu". A total of 30 "Fu" strips symbolize the light of the sun and the moon.

Central part of the wheel is called as "Gu" (i.e., hub), which carries the weight.

Decorative part covering both ends of the axle, which is cylinder-shaped.

Chariot is in "convex" shape, which consists of front and rear compartments.

Wheel tooth refers to outer wheel.

Wheel symbolizes the sun and the moon.



## How many parts are there in bronze chariots and horses in Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor?

Bronze chariots and horses in Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor have a total of more than 3,400 parts. Large parts are 4 mm thick, and small parts are only 1 mm thick, which are firstly cast and molded and then assembled together by means of various techniques. Flexible components after assembly can also move freely up to now. For example, two wheels can rotate, door and window can flexibly open and close, and even the horse bridle cable can be free for traction. How extremely delicate this masterpiece is!



# CHANGXIN PALACE LANTERNS

**Creation Year:** the Western Han Dynasty

**Material:** copper gilding

**Size:** height of 48 cm

**Unearthing Place:** Ling Mountain, Mancheng County, Hebei (1986)

**Collection place:** Hebei Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics



This lantern with unique style is metal craft masterpiece of the Western Han Dynasty. It shapes up the image of a court maid holding lantern: She holds lamp holder with her left hand, and covers the sleeve on the lantern with right hand, who seems to hold the lantern for lighting. This craftwork is gilt with gold on whole body, which is dazzling. Over its body, nine inscriptions respectively record lantern capacity, weight and its owner. Due to the characters "Chang Xin", hence "Changxin Palace Lantern" is named after. This craftwork features beautiful image, exquisite design and the whole body consisting of six detachable parts (i.e., head, body, right arm, lamp holder, lamp panel and lampshade). Its brightness and direction can be adjusted. This is a treasure integrating artistry and practicality in one.



## Showcase Window

### Lanterns

Lantern is lighting apparatus. During the Warring States Period, people started using copper lanterns for lighting. In the Han Dynasty, lanterns were widely used. The Han Dynasty was the heyday of copper lantern production. In the Han Dynasty, bronze lanterns fell into plate lantern, siphon lantern, rolling lantern, walking lantern and hanging lantern. Changxin Palace Lantern is siphon lantern. Such lantern has body with rainbow tube, and lamp holder can be filled with water. With use of siphon, the smoke can be absorbed into the holder so that the smoke is dissolved in water to avoid air pollution. Siphon lanterns show animal shapes, such as ox-shaped lantern and wide goose-shaped lantern. Bronze lanterns of the Han Dynasty boast rich and colorful shapes and beautiful body, which are fit for users' demand and conforms to the scientific principle. The lanterns can be used for lighting and furnishings, which achieve the practical and aesthetic unity.



Silver-inlaid bronze ox-shaped lantern



## Anecdote

### Owner of Changxin Palace Lantern

Changxin Palace Lantern is unearthed from Tomb of Prince Zhongshanjing's Wife. It was ever placed in Changxin Palace of the Western Han Dynasty. Changxin Palace was the residence of Empress Dowager Dou, grandmother of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty.

Later, Empress Dowager Dou presented this lantern to Dou Wan, Prince Zhongshanjing's Wife. Prince Zhongshanjing was elder brother of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, while Dou Wan was grandniece of Empress Dowager Dou.

The right arm is hollow and links with the lantern top to form the flue.

The right arm is raised upwards. The cuff flows downwards to form pagoda-shaped lampshade. The lampshade can be opened and closed.

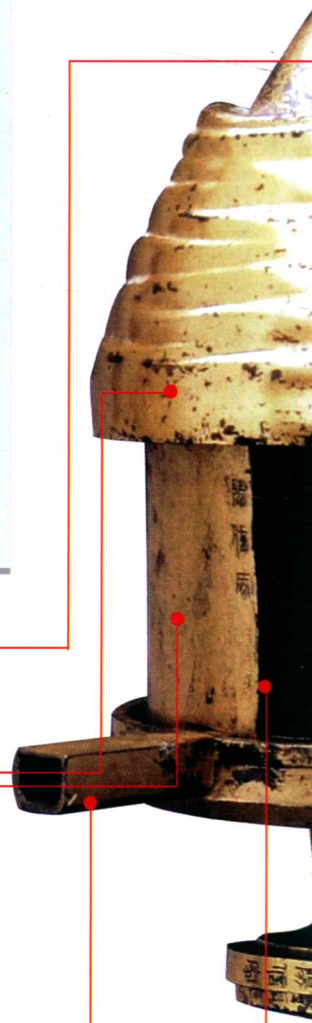
The periphery of lantern plate sees two arc-shaped panel, which can adjust lighting amplitude and direction along with the rotation of long handle.

The lantern plate has a rectangular handle with rotten wood inside. The middle of lantern plate can be inserted with candle.

The lantern body is hollow. With cuff as siphon, the soot is absorbed into the body so as to keep the indoor environment clean.

Lantern holder shapes like *dou*, with short handle which can also rotate.

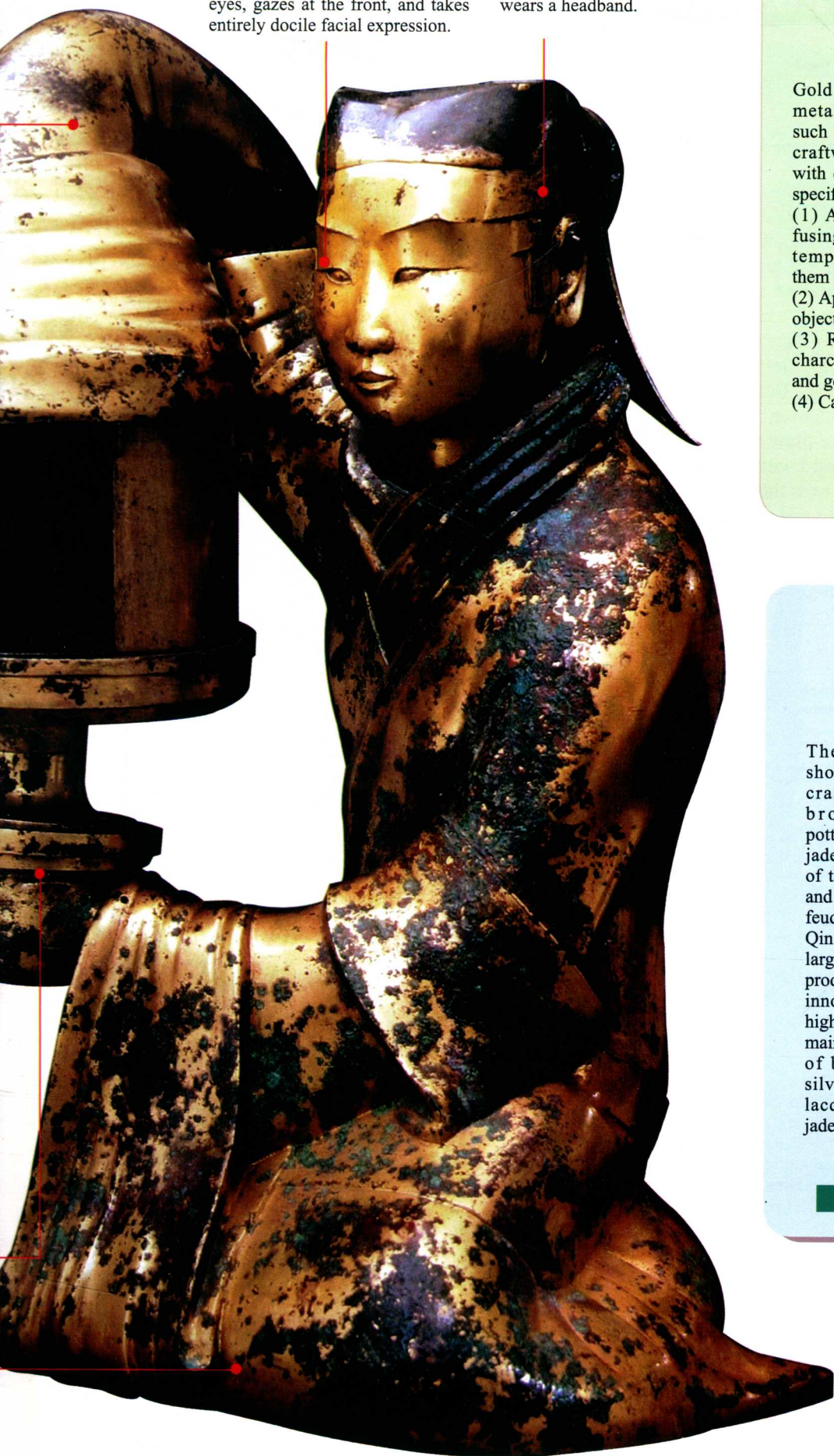
With knees on the ground, the court maid sits up and carries lantern with elegant kneeling dance.





The court maid slightly opens eyes, gazes at the front, and takes entirely docile facial expression.

She takes orderly hair and wears a headband.



### Gold gilding

Gold gilding is a kind of traditional metal processing technology. With such technology, the processed metal craftworks are luxurious and bright with durable colors. The methods are specified as follows:

- (1) At ratio of 1: 7, melting and fusing gold and mercury under high temperature of 400°C and making them muddy solid after cooling;
- (2) Applying the muddy solid over the object surface;
- (3) Roasting with a smoke-free charcoal so that mercury evaporates and gold is left;
- (4) Carefully polishing.

Brief Background



### Arts and Crafts of the Qin and Han Dynasties

The Qin Dynasty lasted for a short time, leaving few arts and crafts works mainly including bronzeware, lacquerware, potteryware, ceramics, dyeing and jade ware. The early Han Dynasty of the most prosperous era of arts and crafts in initial phase of China's feudal society. On the basis of the Qin Dynasty, creation developed, a large number of species increases, production and materials saw more innovative elements, which made high artistic achievements. They are mainly embodied in the production of bronzeware, goldware and silverware, potteryware, dyeing, lacquer ware, stone carving and jade carving.

Do You Know?





# GOLD-INLAID BOSHAN FURNACE

**Creation Year:** the Western Han Dynasty

**Material:** bronze

**Size:** height of 26 cm

**Unearthing Place:** Tomb of Prince Zhongshanjing, Mancheng County, Hebei



Boshan Furnace was a kind of common incense burner in the Han Dynasty. The furnace cover is high and pointed, which is cast into the shape of overlapping mountains and seems like "Boshan" according to the legend. Hence Boshan Furnace is named after.

Gold-inlaid Boshan Furnace features wonderful skills, which is rare in the world. In the shape of "dou", it is composed of furnace cover, furnace plate and furnace base. The furnace plate and furnace base are respectively cast and riveted together with the nail. With inlaid gold over the body, cloud pattern embedded with gold wire and gold sheet are beautifully delicate, which smoothly stretches. The furnace has two layers. The lower layer is used to burn incense, and the upper layer is used to keep water for steaming the aroma.

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## General Knowledge



### Incense burning customs and Boshan Furnace

Since ancient times, incense burning customs are prevalent in China, namely, using the smoke of burnt herbs to kill the mosquitoes and worms and eliminate bad smell. In the Han Dynasty, "Boshan Furnace" specially designed for the purpose of incense burning, exactly appeared. At that time, people used Boshan Furnace with three main functions: 1) They burned incense and prayed to



Boshan Furnace with Pattern of A Man Riding A Beast

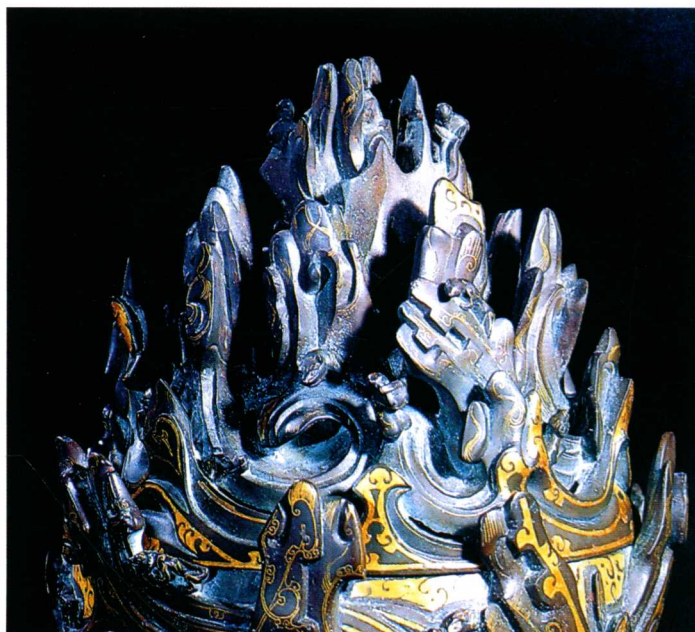
the gods because of superstition; 2) Ancients sat on the floor. Burning vanilla could clean up the rooms and serve for the purpose of dehumidifying and radiating fragrance; 3) High officials and noble lords had habit of incensing clothes and quilts. They used foreign vanilla to incense clothes and quilts to showily demonstrate the nobility.

## Anecdote



### Boshan

"Bo" means "general" and "many". In Chinese ancient myth, "Boshan" refers to three celestial mountains on the East Sea, i.e., "Penglai", "Fangzhang" and "Yingzhou". According to the legend, there are palaces built with gold and silver and the white animals on three mountains. The immortals also live there forever and never die. They not only enjoy leisurely and carefree life, but also refine elixir. Ordinary people who eat elixir can become immortal. "Boshan Furnace" of the Han Dynasty is usually decorated with the winding mountains, on which there are patterns of animals and immortals to introduce the myth and legend.



### Hazy mountain landscape

Boshan Furnace has a pointed conical-shaped furnace cover. Furnace cover shows the pattern of mountain ranges with different peak shapes. Between mountain ranges, there are clouds, figures and animals. At the time of incensing, the incense is ignited into the furnace. Light smokes run through many holes of furnace cover like the shrouding clouds over the mountain, which presents the effect of hazy mountain landscape and gloomy figures and animal. This looks like the legendary mountain on the sea.

Gold-gilt cloud pattern on the cover is elegant and chic like dancing with the wind.

Furnace cover shows figures, animals and other images, which is decorated with gold-gilt cloud pattern.

Furnace handle is engraved gold-gilt wire hollow pattern of coiled dragons. Three dragons rise from roaring sea waves and support furnace plate with dragon heads.

This is round ring foot. Bottom edge of the foot sees gold-background pattern of coiling cloud.