

漢字的奧秘

巡迴展覽

Mystery of Chinese Writing Roving Exhibition

漢字是中華文化的根脈，是記載、保存和傳承中華文明的重要載體，是箇中中華民族共同體意識的文化紐帶。漢字作為最古老的文字之一，自產生以來始終綿延不斷、沿用至今。

歷經幾千年的風霜，漢字不斷，中華文明才能綿延不絕。今天，漢字作為聯合國六種正式工作文字之一，是世界上最多人使用的文字。

《漢字的奧秘》巡迴展覽由康樂及文化事務署轄下的弘揚中華文化辦公室及中國文字博物館聯合策劃，講述漢字的起源、發展和傳播的歷史歷程，展示漢字書寫藝術的神奇魅力。

Chinese characters are an important root of Chinese culture and an embodiment of Chinese civilization. They serve as a cultural link for building the sense of community for the Chinese nation, being one of the oldest written languages. Chinese characters have been in use to this day.

Throughout thousands of years of development, the use of Chinese characters has never been ceased, so that Chinese civilization continues to flourish. Today, as one of the six official working languages of the United Nations, Chinese character as a written language is the most widely used in the world.

Jointly organized by the Chinese Culture Promotion Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the National Museum of Chinese Writing, the 'Mystery of Chinese Writing' roving exhibition introduces the origins, development and dissemination of Chinese characters, and showcases the charm of Chinese writing.



弘揚中華文化辦公室
CHINESE CULTURE PROMOTION OFFICE

源遠流長的中華文化博大精深，融合多元族群的特質，賦予我們共同的價值觀和生活方式。我們將透過展覽、活動、交流、合作和推廣，讓社會大眾體會中華文化的精髓，增強對國家認同和文化自信。

Chinese culture, with its long history, vast scope and profound depth, is characterized by its diversity, diversity and inclusiveness. It has shaped the values and way of life we share. We will explore the essence of Chinese culture through exhibitions, activities, exchanges, cooperation and promotion to enable young people and the public at large to appreciate the essence of Chinese culture and enhance their sense of national identity and cultural confidence.



中國文字博物館
National Museum of Chinese Writing

中國文字博物館是有國語——漢語文字為主題，以書法文物保護、集刊圖書、學術研究、社會教育與文化交流為一體的國家一級博物館，是中華漢字文化的科學中心。

The National Museum of Chinese Writing is the only national language museum in China that integrates heritage conservation, exhibition, academic research, social education and cultural exchanges on the theme of characters, and is the scientific center of Chinese character culture.



甲骨文

Oracle Bone Script



甲骨文是中國現存最早、體系較為完整的文字。刻寫在龜甲和獸骨上，用於記錄占卜的內容和結果。其時代大略在公元前14世紀至11世紀的殷商時期。主要發現於河南安陽殷墟。距今已有3000多年。迄今出土甲骨共約16萬片，總計單字字數約5000個，可釋字約1500個。甲骨文把中國的歷史向前推進了約1000年。

Oracle bone script is the earliest surviving and relatively complete system of writing in China. It was inscribed on turtle shells and animal bones, and was used to record the contents and results of divination. It dates from the Shang Dynasty (14th century BC – 11th century BC), more than 3,000 years ago. About 168,000 pieces of oracle bones have already been unearthed mostly at Yinxu in Anyang, Henan Province. There are about 5,000 single characters identified on the oracle bones, and nearly 1,500 characters could be interpreted. The oracle bone scripts have pushed the recorded history of China forward by about 1,000 years.

殷商時期的甲骨占卜，內容十分豐富，如：祭祀、戰爭、田獵、氣象、生育、車馬等。殷人無論大小事都要進行占卜，以求得祖先和神靈的保佑。

Divinations through oracle bones in the Shang Dynasty cover almost every aspect of daily life, such as rituals, wars, hunting, weather, reproduction and accidents, etc. The people in the Shang Dynasty would perform divination for everything to seek blessings and protection from their ancestors and deities.



在甲骨上面刻出深而細的凹坑。
Drill a deep and round hole on the bone.



在凹坑的一側刻出雲梯形的槽。
Carve a jagged, ladder-shaped groove along the hole.



用燃燒的木棒在雲梯處灼骨，甲骨就會出現「卜」形兆紋。
Put a burning branch along the hole and groove and the bone cracks.



根據兆紋判斷吉凶，並把要卜問的事刻在兆紋附近。
Decipher the cracks and write down the interrogations nearby.



鼠 牛 虎 兔 龍 蛇 馬 羊 猴 雞 狗 豬

Mouse Ox Tiger Rabbit Dragon Snake Horse Sheep Monkey Rooster Dog Pig



「庚戌」是占卜的日期，「陸」是商人（商代進行占卜的神官）的名字。這版刻辭一是問商王糧食豐否有好年成；二是問「龜」這個人應否向商王進貢牛。

'Geng-xu' refers to the date of divination while 'Lu' (陸) is the name of the *chan ren* (a spiritual officer who performed divination in the Shang Dynasty). The inscription aimed to divine whether there would be a harvest if *mù* (粟) was grown and whether *Hu* should send an ox as a tribute to the Shang king.

(一) 庚戌卜，陸貞：王受禾，受年丁。
Divination performed on the 10th day of the 7th month, asking whether there would be a harvest if *mù* (粟) was grown.

(二) 貞：龜與牛？
Should *Hu* send an ox as a tribute to the Shang king as a divination?

金文

Bronze Inscription



金文是商周時期（公元前17世紀—前221年）鑄或刻在青銅器上的文字，用於記錄祀典、賞命、徵戰、盟約等事件，以及對祖先及王侯們功績的頌揚。商周時期的青銅器大多是祭祀用的禮器，由於古人把銅稱作金，這些文字被稱為「金文」。

Bronze inscription is the writing cast or carved on bronze vessels in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties (17th century BC – 221 BC) to record ceremonies, decrees, battles, treaties and the exploits to imperial ancestors and nobility. Most of the bronze vessels in the Shang and Zhou Dynasties were ceremonial vessels. Since the ancients called copper and bronze gold, the bronze inscriptions are therefore literally known as 'gold writings' in Chinese.

司母戊鼎（又稱后母戊鼎）

Simuwu Square Cauldron (Ding)
(or Housimu Square Cauldron)

商代晚期，1939年河南安陽武官村出土。

Late Shang Dynasty, unearthed in Wuguan Village of Anyang, Henan Province in 1939.



該鼎是目前已知中國古代最重的青銅器。鼎腹內壁鑄有「司母戊」三個字，「戊」是器物主人的廟號（中國君王死後在廟中被供奉時的名號），此鼎可能是商王武庚奉祀母親戊而鑄造。由於甲骨文及金文中有不少反寫的例子，有學者認為「司」應為「后」，代表器物主人生前的地位。

This cauldron is the heaviest bronze cauldron from ancient China ever discovered. There are three characters "司母戊" (Si Mu Wu) engraved inside the vessel of which "戊" (Wu) refers to the temple name (a name given to a deceased Chinese emperor for ancestral worship in temple) of the owner, suggesting that it was probably made by King Zujing of the Shang Dynasty in honour of his mother. Since there are many examples of reverse writing on oracle bones and in bronze inscriptions, some scholars suggest that the character "司" (Si) should be "后" (Hou, literally "empress"), instead, representing the status of the owner during her lifetime.

利簋

Li Gui

西周早期，1976年陝西寶雞出土。

Early Western Zhou Dynasty, unearthed in Linzi, Shaanxi Province in 1976.



號（武王）征商
King Wu conquered Shang

內底鑄銘文32字，是記載有關武王滅商這一重大歷史事件的唯一文物遺存。簋是盛放黍、稷、稻、粱等飯食的器具。廣東地區流行「九大簋」之說，意思是豐盛的飯菜。

There are 32 words cast inside the vessel Li. It is the only extant info recording the significant historical event of King Wu's conquest of the Shang troops. Gui is a food utensil for keeping rice and millet, etc. In Guangdong, a popular term, "Nine Big Gai", refers to a sumptuous meal.

小篆

Small Seal Script

春秋戰國時期（公元前770年—前221年）諸侯割據，字形、讀音各有差異。秦統一六國（公元前221年）後實行「書同文」的措施，把秦國原來使用的大篆修改成為小篆，統一了全國的文字，推動了社會經濟文化發展。

During the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (770 BC – 221 BC), feudal lords ruled the country, and the Chinese characters have different forms and pronunciations. After the unification of six states by Qin (221 BC), the measure of 'writing in the same script' was implemented. Small seal script was created as the common writing in the whole country to replace large seal script which was formerly used in the state of Qin, promoting social, economic and cultural prosperity.

秦文字與六國文字的對比

Comparison of Writings in the Qin State and Other States

馬

秦 Qin 《官印》0027
guan Yin 0027

馬

楚 Chu 郭店楚簡8
guo dian chu jian 8 by Guo Dian

馬

燕 Yan 匱象 0050
ai hu 0050

馬

齊 Qi 《集解》11131
ji xie 11131

馬

晉 Jin 貨系 1708
huo xi 1708

嶧山刻石

The Stele of Mount Yishan

秦始皇二十八年（公元前219年）李斯立，是小篆的代表作，內容為頌揚秦始皇功績。

Written by Li Si in the 28th year of Emperor Qin Shihuang (219 BC), this stele is a prominent example of small seal script that extols the achievements of Qin Shihuang.



皇帝立國，維初在昔，嗣世稱王。

The emperor founded the country in the beginning, and his successors were called the kings.

隸書

Clerical Script



隸書起源於戰國晚期，到漢代成為主流字體。隸書將小篆圓轉的線條改為方折並簡化，書寫起來更為方便。自此，漢字的象形性消失，筆畫逐漸定型。由小篆發展至隸書的過程稱為「隸變」，是漢字由古文字進入今文字階段的分水嶺。

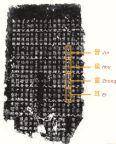
Clerical script originated in the late Warring States Period and became the mainstream writing in the Han Dynasty. It simplified and transformed the round strokes of small seal script by replacing them with squares and folds, making it easier to write. Since then, the pictographic nature of Chinese characters disappeared and the strokes of characters gradually formed. The development from small seal script to clerical script is the watershed from the ancient to the modern stage of Chinese characters.

正始石經

Zhenshi Stone

刻立於三國魏正始二年（公元241年）。因碑文數字皆用古文、小篆和隸隸三種字體刻寫，也稱三體石經。刊刻石經的主要目的是弘揚儒學，也有校正文獻內容的作用。

Carved in the 2nd year of the Zhengshi reign of Wei in the Three Kingdoms Period (241 AD), this stone is also known as the three-script stone because each character of the inscription is written in three forms including ancient characters, small seal script and clerical script. The main purpose of the inscription was to promote Confucianism and standardize the contents of literature.



楷書

Regular Script

橫書形體方正，筆畫平直，可作範模，故名楷書，加上筆畫簡潔，便於印刷，使楷書成為最標準化的書體，也就是我們今天通用的標準字。楷書始於東漢（公元25年—220年），至隋朝時期（公元581年—907年）趨於成熟。

The regular script is characterized by its square structures and upright strokes, making it a model for writing. Hence, the name of regular script was given. Additionally, its simple and clean strokes are convenient for printing, making regular script the most popular style of writing and the standard characters we commonly use today. Regular script originated in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25—220 AD) and matured during the Sui and Tang Dynasties (581—907 AD).



九成宮醴泉銘

Inscription on the Li Spring at Jucheng Palace

唐貞觀六年（公元632年）刻立。唐代楷書石刻，隸體橫文，歐陽詢書，記述唐太宗在九成宮避暑時發現醴泉之事。

Erected in the 6th year of Zhenguan of Tang Dynasty (632 AD), this stone of Tang Dynasty bears an inscription in regular script written by Ouyang Sun. The content composed by Wei Zheng records that Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty found the Li Spring when he summered at the Jucheng Palace.



中國文字博物館



中國文字博物館

神奇的造字法

The Magical Formation of Chinese Characters

「六書」是古代關於漢字構形分析的理論，包括：象形、指事、會意、形聲、轉注、假借。一般認為前四種是造字方法，後兩種是用字方法。從構字方法上看，早在甲骨文時期就有象形字、指事字、會意字，而且還出現了形聲字。

'Li Shi' (six principles of Chinese characters composition) is an ancient theory on the structural analysis of Chinese characters' formation. The six approaches are pictographs, indicatives, ideographs, pictophonetic compounds, derivative cognates and phonetic loans. It is generally agreed that the first four are methods of character creation while the remaining two are methods of character usage. In terms of character formation, pictographs, indicatives, ideographs and pictophonetic compounds came into existence during the period of oracle bone script.

造字方法 How Characters Were Formed

象形 Pictographs

這組單字是由最基礎的图形、象形字及其他造字法所組成。

Combining pictographs to depict the physical attributes of objects. Pictographs are the basis for other word formation methods.

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
日：象太陽之形。 Sun: Character represents the shape of the sun.	
	
月：象月之形。 Moon: Character represents the shape of the moon.	

形聲 Pictophonetic Compounds

以事物或聲音作為形旁，再以讀音相同或相近的字作為聲旁。

Combining a pictographic component (representing the category) with a phonetic component (representing the sound).

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
治：由「水」和「台」組成。「水」表示此字和液体有關連。「台」表示讀音。 Treat: Composed of the character 'water' (氵) and 'speech' (台). 'Water' indicates the character's association with liquids, and 'speech' indicates pronunciation.	
	
河：由「水」和「可」組成。「水」表示此字和液体有關連。「可」表示讀音。 River: Composed of the character 'water' (氵) and 'can' (可). 'Water' indicates the character's association with liquids, and 'can' indicates pronunciation.	

轉注 Derivative Cognates

屬於同一個造字法上讀音相同或相近的字，其字義可以互為解釋。

Characters belonging to the same method of forming the same shape or sound have similar meanings, and their meanings can be explained by each other.

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
考：與「老」、「考」屬同一部首，是「老」的異體字。小篆中「考」與「老」同形。 Examine: Belongs to the 'old' (耂) radical. It is a variant form of 'old' (老). In the Small Seal Script, 'Examine' and 'old' share the same form.	
	
耂：與「考」、「考」屬同一部首，是「考」的異體字。小篆中「耂」與「考」同形。 Old: Belongs to the 'old' (耂) radical. It is a variant form of 'old' (老). In the Small Seal Script, 'Old' and 'old' share the same form.	

指事 Indicatives

一類是純粹抽象的記號，另一類是在象形字的基础上添加象徵性的符號。

One type is purely abstract signs, and the other type is based on pictographs, adding symbolic characters with relative signs.

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
上：刻劃符號表示「上」。 Up: A character drawn above the character 'one' (一) to indicate 'up'.	
	
末：在「木」上加一橫劃，表示樹木的末端。 End: A character drawn above the character 'tree' (木) to indicate the end of the tree.	
	
旦：在「日」上加一橫劃，表示日出時分。 Dawn: A character drawn above the character 'sun' (日) to indicate the time of sunrise.	

會意 Ideographs

把兩個或以上的象形字組合在一起，創造新的字義。

Combining two or more pictographic characters to create a new word.

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
休：由「人」和「木」組成。表示人在樹下休息。 Rest: Composed of the character 'person' (人) and 'tree' (木). It indicates a person resting under a tree.	
	
林：由「木」和「木」組成。表示兩棵樹。 Forest: Composed of two 'tree' (木) characters. It indicates two trees.	
	
休：由「人」和「木」組成。表示人在樹下休息。 Rest: Composed of the character 'person' (人) and 'tree' (木). It indicates a person resting under a tree.	

假借 Phonetic Loans

借用已有字形來表示新的字義，這種有音無字的現象。

Borrowing existing words with the same or similar pronunciation to represent new words, which have no characters.

甲骨文 / 金文 Oracle Bone Script / Bronze Inscriptions	小篆 Small Seal Script
	
自：原意是「目」，眼睛的象形。後來借作「自己」。 Self: Originally a pictograph of an eye, it was later borrowed to mean 'self'.	
	
自：原意是「目」，眼睛的象形。後來借作「自己」。 Self: Originally a pictograph of an eye, it was later borrowed to mean 'self'.	
	
來：原意是「來」，表示來往。後來借作「來」。 Come: Originally a pictograph of a person, it was later borrowed to mean 'come'.	

漢字的藝術：書法

The Art of Chinese Characters: Calligraphy

中國書法是一門古老的書寫藝術，反映了人們在書寫漢字活動中的美學追求。中國書法以漢字為依托，伴隨漢字的演變，在每一個歷史階段都產生了為數眾多的藝術精品。

Chinese calligraphy is an ancient art of writing that reflects people's aesthetic pursuits in the art of writing. Rooted in Chinese characters, Chinese calligraphy has presented numerous artistic masterpieces at every stage of development of Chinese characters.

篆書 Seal Script

結構整齊，字形修長，線條勻稱，運筆圓轉。

It is characterised by the neat and narrow structures of characters, evenly proportioned lines as well as smooth and rounded brushstrokes.

《三體石經》卷一，李陽冰
The Rubbing of Three Steles by Li Yangping of the Tang Dynasty



隸書 Clerical Script

字形方扁，橫畫長而豎畫短，筆畫有波蕩，並有波勢挑法，講究「波挑雁尾」及「一波三折」。

It features square and flat character shapes, with long horizontal strokes and short vertical strokes. Its brushstrokes are straight rather than curved, often incorporating pronounced wave-like strokes while emphasising rightward or downward diagonal ones.

《張遷碑》卷一

A rubbing of the Zhang Qian Stele of the Han Dynasty



草書

就是草寫的隸書，形成於漢代，為書寫簡便而演變出來，字體結構隨書、筆畫連綿，有草草、今草、狂草之分。

Cursive script is a simplified cursive form of the clerical script, developed during the Han Dynasty for the sake of convenience in writing. Its character structures are simple and its brushstrokes are continuous. There are three forms of cursive script, including clerical cursive, cursive and highly cursive.



《自敘帖》卷一，懷素

Autobiography by Monk Huaisu of the Tang Dynasty

行書

介於楷書與草書之間的一種書體，為彌補楷書的書寫速度太慢和草書的難於辨認而產生。楷法多於草法的叫「行楷」，草法多於楷法的叫「行草」。

Running script is a writing style that lies between regular script and cursive script. It was created to address the slow writing speed of regular script and the difficulty in recognising cursive script. Styles that are inclined to regular script are called running-regular script, while those with more cursive elements are called running-cursive script.



《蘭亭序》卷一，王羲之

Preface to the Poems Composed at the Orchid Pavilion by Wang Xizhi of the Jin Dynasty



漢字的藝術：印章

The Art of Chinese Characters: Seals

印章歷經三千餘年，逐漸發展成為集書法、章法、鑄造、刀法於一體的獨特藝術。早期主要鑄在泥板上，風乾後便硬，便可作信物之用，後來發明了紙張，才鑄於紙上。於方寸之間、紅白之中，印章創造了漢字各種美的結構和形式。

Seals have a history of over 3,000 years and have gradually developed into a unique art form that combines calligraphy, layout design, casting and carving techniques. Initially, seals were used on clay blocks which were dried and hardened and could serve as a means of authentication and security. With the invention of paper, seals began to be applied to paper as well. Within the limited space of the seal and the interplay of red and white, seals create a variety of aesthetically pleasing structures and forms of Chinese characters.

先秦璽印 Great Seals of Pre-Qin Period

璽印是用以昭明信用的憑證。中國璽印最早出現在商代晚期，春秋戰國時期得到普遍使用。

Seals have been used as a symbol of credibility. The earliest Chinese seals appeared in the late Shang Dynasty and became widely used during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period.

楚國印

Seals of the State of Chu



肖白之印
xiaobai zhi yin



王季子璽
wangji zhi yin

齊國印

Seals of the State of Qi



平璽
ping yin



史公（史）璽
shi gong zhi yin

燕國印

Seals of the State of Yan



北夷璽
beiyi zhi yin



東方璽
dongfang yin

三晉印

Seals of the States of Zhao, Wei and Han



公孫上璽
gongsun shang yin



東漢璽
donghan yin

兩漢印章

Seals in the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties

兩漢璽印文字行文整齊，結構平直方正，風格嚴謹典重。漢印之風興盛，書體為後世推崇。

The scripts on seals during the Western and Eastern Han Dynasties feature neat characters and upright structures, exuding a stately and dignified style. The flourishing seal style of the Han Dynasty was highly regarded by later generations.

西漢官印

Official Seals of the Western Han Dynasty



漢將軍璽
han jiangjun yin



文華行璽
wenhua xing yin

新莽官印

Official Seals of the Xin Dynasty (AD 9-23)



新莽官印璽
xin wang guan yin yin



新莽官印璽
xin wang guan yin yin

東漢官印

Official Seals of the Eastern Han Dynasty



東漢官印璽
donghan guan yin yin



東漢官印璽
donghan guan yin yin

漢代私印

Private Seals of the Han Dynasty



杜康之印
du kang zhi yin



張氏璽
zhang shi yin

明清篆刻

Seal Carving in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

明代中葉起流行篆刻藝術，多以金文或篆書入印。印章應用於書畫藝術之中，可增添作品的古拙趣味。篆刻到了清代得到更大發展，漸至繁瑣，成為專門之學。

From the mid-Ming Dynasty onward, the art of seal carving became popular, often incorporating bronze inscriptions or seal scripts. The use of seals in calligraphy and painting added an ancient and rustic charm to artworks. Seal carving further developed during the Qing Dynasty, branching into multiple schools and becoming a specialized field of study.



文彭
軒窗花開天地為客
Wen Peng
Gathering Outside in Front of Flowers
and the Sky is a Guest by Wen Peng



黃昌碩
我輩宜讀本無注
Huang Changshuo
We Ourselves Should Read This Without Notes by Huang Changshuo



鄭石如
江流石出千尺
Zheng Shiru
The River flows, the Mountain stands a thousand
Chi high on the shore by Zheng Shiru



趙之謙
為五斗米折腰
Zhao Zhiqian
Bow for Five Bunches of Grain by Zhao Zhiqian



中國文字博物館
Chinese Character Museum



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