Sunspot

Sunspot is one form of solar activity. These dark blotches can last several months but most disappear in 10 days or less. Sunspot normally occurs in group. Individual spot can measure thousand of kilometers across. Sunspot looks dark because its temperature is 1,500 degrees cooler than the rest of photosphere which is caused by strong magnetic field effect. A black and white photo of the sun showing sunspots is shown in Fig. 1.

Figure 1: Black and white picture of sun showing sunspot

Back in 400 BC, Chinese recognized that sunspot was a surface characteristic of the sun. It was not until 16 century AD that scientist in the West recognized that it was a sun activity. The picture in Fig. 2 illustrated the sunspot taken from the book "Strange Activity in the Sky" written in 1425 AD during Ming Dynasty.

Figure 2: An ancient Chinese picture showing existence of sunspot