

## 奇貨異物：從歷史虛擬和科技創新談宣德爐

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宣德爐，簡稱宣爐，是明清以來某種銅合金香爐的總稱，狹義指的是明代宣德年間（1426-1436）官方鑄成的香爐。前者雖為後代器物，通常刻有「大明宣德年製」等年號款識。儘管如此，其初期歷史仍為迷團。十六世紀中葉始有文獻證實其存在。

此後，在明清社會傳布的各種故事對宣德爐的來歷都有不同解釋。譬如：內府發生火災，各種寶物液化而融合成神異合金，此乃宣爐的原料。另有故事說，明宣宗躬親督監煉冶，不惜工本，以致創造世所未見而不能再得的材料，用以鑄爐。據清代中葉以來廣泛流傳的《宣德鼎彝譜》等資料，其原料包括暹羅國王所貢奉洋銅三萬九千六百斤等物。該書影響巨大而實為清人所偽造，絕不可靠。此類故事之所以大量出現，部分原因在於宣德爐的主要材料是黃銅，而黃銅是明清消費者不完全理解的一種新穎物質。技術上來講，黃銅是比較先進的一個合金，其必備的成分包含鋅，而煉鋅工藝極為困難。

到了嘉靖年間（1522-1567）鍊鋅技術有了突破，黃銅不久之後成為平價而普遍的物質。因此，手工藝人和鑑賞家得以通過宣德爐探索黃銅的視覺性和觸覺性。陳說宣德爐來歷的不同版本，雖屬虛構，竟能將工業流程說成美學體驗。

## **Exotic Materials: Innovation and Imagination in the Creation of the Xuande Censer**

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“Xuande censer” is a general term for a large category of copper alloy vessels from the Ming-Qing period, used as incense burners; more narrowly they refer to cast by the state in the Xuande era (1426-1436). Although they commonly bear a mark dating them to the Xuande era, there is no reliable evidence that they existed before the mid-Ming.

Over time, many stories developed to account for them: one tells of a fire in the palace that fused precious materials into a striking new alloy, others suggest that Emperor Xuanzong personally oversaw the intensive and expensive refinement of the copper. According to the widely-circulated Register of Vessels of the Xuande Era indicates that the raw material was a tributary gift from the King of Siam, but this text is a Qing dynasty forgery. One explanation for this variety of remarkable stories is that the material from which many of the vessels were actually made, brass, was a novel substance that was not fully understood by consumers in Ming-Qing China.

It was technologically advanced, in that zinc, one of its ingredients, required a special refining process, but in the Jiajing era (1522-1567) became inexpensive and widespread. At the same time, its novel aesthetic properties were explored by artisans and collectors in the medium of the Xuande censer. The various accounts of their origin legitimated this engagement with industrial craft by framing it as the collection of antiquities.

### **主講人簡介：**

阮思德，加拿大籍，現任加拿大英屬哥倫比亞大學（University of British Columbia）亞洲學系副教授。阮教授係英屬哥倫比亞大學學士，美國加州大學洛杉磯分校（UCLA）歷史博士。曾任美國史丹福大學（Stanford University）博士後、康乃爾大學（Cornell University）亞洲學系助理教授。著有《文學批評與經典詮釋：詩經學的歷史結構》（*Critics and Commentators: The Book of Poems as Classic and Literature*），明代《杜騙新書》選本的合譯（*The Book of Swindles*）等。研究領域包括經學史、明清學術史以及文化史。本年獲得漢學研究中心獎助，來臺灣研究主題為「宣德爐的多次再造」。