

鐘鼎茗香

榮齋宣爐清賞



刘锡荣 著

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榮齋宣爐清賞



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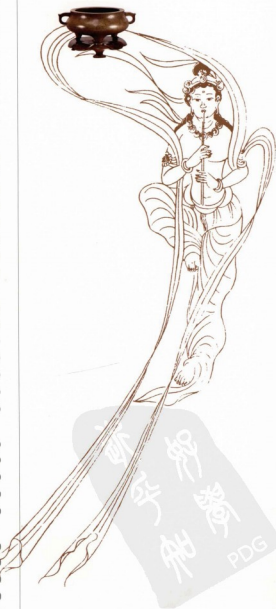
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序

中国人对铜的认识自明朝宣德年间发生过一次飞跃。在元朝之前，中国的铜不讲究纯粹，多是一种含锡含铅的合金，习惯上称之为青铜。大约从夏代起，青铜器作为中国古代社会标志性成就，使我们告别了石器时代，跨入青铜文明。

青铜文明对中华文化影响至深。国人在很漫长的时间内，对青铜文化顶礼膜拜；甚至进入铁器文明后，仍未能割舍对青铜的情感。东汉以后，青铜文化日衰，仅剩铜镜一支独秀；进入北宋，国人第一次回顾历史、注重收藏时就著有《考古图》（吕大临著）、《宣和博古图》（宋徽宗敕撰）等专业青铜书籍，将青铜文化推至不可逾越的高度。那时，藏家对铜器的乐趣还停留在红斑绿锈之上。青铜由于耐腐蚀性差，常常锈迹斑斑，甚至面目全非，侥幸的遗存成为精神上的寄托，让国人知道了“礼之用，和为贵”。

跨过了元朝游牧民族铁骑横扫的年代，明朝又回到了农耕文化的安逸文明。大明永乐船队远航的风帆，将所到之处的风土人情带了回来。暹罗国王在宣德三年进贡大明国风磨铜数万斤，拉开了中国铜器“文艺复兴”的序幕。

在此之前，中国人从未见过如此精良的铜，精炼若干次，灿若黄金。宣德皇帝高兴地下令将宫廷礼器全部重新铸造，仿照《宣和博古图》的式样，首批铸造各式香炉18000个，以示对宋代文化的尊重。这本身是一种无声怀念，目的在于续燃汉文化生生不息的香火。“大明宣德炉”在这样的文化背景中诞生，名噪六百年，从未间断，延续至今。

中国的青铜文化至此逐渐走远，黄铜以其优良品质登上历史舞台，宣德炉作为名角功不可没。自宣德起，宣德炉的铸造与仿造竟成了千古之谜，那些铸造精良，皮色优美，声音悦耳的香炉美轮美奂，迷住了一代又一代藏家。

刘锡荣先生偶然与宣德炉相遇，一发不可收拾。不仅收藏，还深入研究，著书立说，续写了宣德炉的童话。这么多精美优良，形状各异的宣德香炉，在分散后又聚在一起，聚在一起又成书遗爱，让人相信世间凡事都要有缘分。锡荣先生与宣德炉缘分不浅，我一饱眼福在先，欣赏之余，写下赘言。

谨以为序。

马书都

2009.8.20夜



荣斋自序

读书藏书，平生所好。敬赏宣炉，实则缘分。

吾之幼时，受业于父。尝闻明宣德皇帝，曲尽铜炉之妙。吾奇而问之，父颇为不屑，以“玩物丧志者”诫。然则尝有“钟鼎之家”云云，吾终不得其详。

时光荏苒，家父仙逝。今逢盛世，至于“玩物丧志者”诫，亦作古而去……

吾原本喜瓷，觉“琮”式方瓶，当为瓷中之重器，因其源于上古之“玉琮”也。寻访有年，诸如“宋龙泉青瓷八卦”、“康熙孔雀绿八卦”、“光绪大黄底青花八卦”瓶等，集之百尊，本欲付梓。然未遂，何也？

几年前，于“合一阁”见一冲耳铜炉，炉不大，仅盈手，却大气沉稳。皮作墨色，朗润滑腻，莹光内敛，双耳窈窕，壁薄矮扁。四字刻款，刀锋犀利。余盘玩于掌，不忍释手。得主人首肯，恭敬捧归。

自此敬赏宣炉，缘也！

吾本行外。大凡专家之考据，行家之论证，藏家之品评，商家之衡度……均非吾之擅长。吾之集炉成书，纯属斯文之好也；又因幼时之情结，“冲耳炉”之缘分，方入炉境。好在京城古玩颇多，常去寻访。造访贤达，查经问典，眼力日进，人气渐旺，便时有佳器入吾藏中。

小器蕴大象，光素显高洁。

经年，见广识多，便有觉悟。于是日趁文房清供，对素炉之质朴无华、沉稳静雅之境界，肃然起敬。

常思宣德帝，为吾制宣炉。

焚香却闲事，一阅圣贤书。

以至所集之炉，以文房素炉为主，殿堂大器为辅，实用佳器次之。

吾之造炉，崇尚精净。倘遇佳器，微残亦求，凡能救治者，即遍访高人，精微治理，力求复原。此举吾谓之曰：善莫大焉！且专设一室，备齐工具：炭、烛、香、裹帕、鹿皮、支架、托盘、锤钳、铜棒、竹皮刀、象牙剔。亦常为一炉，去锈、除垢、炼炉，不一而足。经宵达旦，神寄意痴，人物合一，见其日臻：

盘抚温情著，凝神入清凉。

不觉夜半时，敬焚一炉香。

余每得佳器，必施礼仪，礼成而后藏。

择与炉相宜之日，相应之时，沐浴更衣。将炉置于案首，依照方位，恭敬安置。选相宜之“香”，取绒绳点燃；再湖上好龙井，静肃端坐炉前。俟柔柔香云袅袅升腾，萦回于空中，方端起“紫砂”轻呷，遍体舒畅。然目光却追随那冉冉清烟，心神驰骋于陶公“悠然南山”之前。

或曰：

南山飞雨过，堂前乳燕归。

同耕阡陌里，相携有无中。

自敬赏宣炉，再不及他物。夫君子之好，专也。

吾尝静夜思之，炉之灵性，古人所赋；炉之所倚，人之所寄。唯贤者识之，爱之，护之，敬之，藏之，传之；更有智者以诗文颂之，责也。宣炉之诞生，几六百年矣，所经“十厄”，非他物可比。迄今，所剩寥寥，以至“真宣”之辨，始无定论。此大不幸也。所幸其后各代，各高堂，乃至各人，多有“仿宣”传世，吾等后来，得以敬赏。则又万幸之至。

集炉经年，小有规模，便欲帅之而阅。

初时，奉炉于几案，参差排列，依形成伍，蜿蜒如龙，吾洋洋然。

此后，据色分列，由浅及深，归类五宗，规矩有序，初成方阵，然退而观之，竟成“五行”，奇非天意乎？

再之，论“耳”为组，中空外环，呈辐射状，吾诣中环顾，良久观之，忽觉灵光隐见，然稍纵即逝，终不成思。至夜半，据中移位，忽为一炉所震，乃“鎏金八卦”筒炉，光影之下，闪烁夺目。顿萌“伏羲作八卦，文王演周易”之意念。吾大喜，旋至圈外，依卦象再列，“八卦”成矣！又将一藏经色原座冲耳大炉、一黑栗色原座冲耳大炉置中，不禁大呼：“壮哉，阴阳备，乾坤全，真宣炉之大蕴大境也……”

吾之赏炉，时日尚短，至研而有限，功力待高，何况宣炉文化，博大精深，尚待吾等勤勉研学耳。本书之不足，自然难免，乞望贤达指正也。

吾之赏炉，明清皆好，无论真器后仿。好形、好色、好质、好音、好款，尤好其“素

风”。自觉入门以来，颇为尽心尽德，尽力尽财也。诚与众炉友交流，敬向先贤者请教，进益之中，与友同乐。诚然，本书中关乎贤达友人之文、之言，一旦付梓，改之难矣。吾实诚善，万望海涵也。故本书集成之际，吾由衷长揖：

敬：宣德帝及众臣工，历代仿者、藏者、著书者，

盛世国泰民安之予吾人，

北京这一中华文明集粹之都，

友人之见教交流与支持。

吾更长揖于九泉下之父母。

附：关于书名《钟鼎茗香》

一 源于幼时父教“钟鼎之家”之古训。

二 “钟鼎”者，为商周以来青铜彝器之统称。至汉魏以降，青铜器日趋衰微，至元明黄铜器起而代之，明清两代更开创了铜器文化之新高峰——宣炉及宣炉文化。

三 “宣炉乃文房首器”（明文震亨语），实用燃香，香气萦回，修身养性。赏炉吟诗，当邀三五知己，而朋友聚，必以香茗佐之，闻香、赏炉、会友、吟诗，四美聚而佳境至美。然余以为，赏炉至境者，必得音律相伴。故抚琴者，须先于净手，次焚香。凝神静气，形神合人。方可操琴，宣炉款中亦多见“琴友”等字款，此之谓也。作为书名，“钟鼎茗香”四字铿锵，将抚琴、赏炉之至高之境，贯于全书，吾之愿也！谨愿此书如呈君案首，若求得指正，访遇知音，则本书付梓之意足矣，书名全矣！



PREFACE

Reading is my favorite hobby. Collecting Incents Burners is my destiny.

My father taught me how to be a man when I was a child. He also told me the story of Emperor Xuande which was crafting Incents Burners during the Ming Dynasty, and by pure curiosity, I wanted to learn more about it.

But my father had always refused to teach me more about Incents Burners, warning me by declaring that "A person who would spend too much time playing around would lose his ambition".

During my youth, I was fascinated by families collecting antics like old watches, funeral bronze tripods, and cauldrons. They represent my childhood, and evoke memories from my Father, but never knew the reason why my Father always stood against it.

Time has its reason, and my Father passed away. This fascination grew in me, and I became ambitious.

I was previously interest in ceramics, faiences, and discovered that Cong vases were made of Jade in ancient times. After years of collecting them, I got hundreds of Congs like "Long Quan" from the Song Dynasty, Green Glazed Congs from Kangxi, Qing Dynasty, Blue and White Congs from Guangxu, Qing Dynasty. I once thought of writing a book about them; I still wonder why I have never done it...

A couple of years ago, I came across an Incents Burner from Heyi Ge, it had a nice sound, was made of a darker color, showing a marking with four characters, not very large but covering the palm of my hand, it was well balanced and beautiful. I was immediately attracted, embraced it for a moment to finally take it home.

I then started to collect Incents Burners; this has become my mission in life. I am not a professional collector, nor do I work in the field of antiques. I don't claim to be an expert in research, nor an evaluator of antiques. My reasons for collecting Incents Burners and publishing my findings are simply my enthusiasm for Chinese culture, memories of my childhood, and the revelation my first Incents Burner from Heyi Ge.

Fortunately, there are many antiques in Beijing, China's capital. By scouring antique shops, consulting experts and constantly reading around the subject, my knowledge and my collection of Incents Burners have increased.

I have concentrated on collecting Incents Burners which were originally made to use in the study; they conjure up an idea of quiet elegance in the time of Emporer Xuande. I also have a secondary collection of Incents Burners which were made for The Royal Palace, and a still smaller collection which were intended for domestic use.

When choosing an Incents Burner for purchase, I pay particular attention to the elegance of design, sometimes even buying a slightly damaged specimen if it particularly appeals to me. I will then sometimes seek the opinion of experts to see if such a piece can be restored to its former glory. If it can be restored, I am happy; I feel that the little piece deserves this act of kindness!

I organized a little atelier where to clean and repair my Incents Burners. Dedicating my heart and soul, I often worked all nights long. I put all my heart and soul into restoring Incents Burners; embellishing them, my emotions were growing, my spirit lighting up, and so concentrated that I would realized the sun at its zenith on the following day. I would then and only, lit an incense in my newly restored Incents Burners.

I would make a special ceremony after purchasing a high quality Incents Burner. Choosing a proper time during a specific day, I would shower and wear new clothes. Displaying the Incents Burner on my desk, and facing a special direction, I would also choose the perfect flavor and light it with wool. I would then seat peacefully, facing it with respect, and enjoy a cup of Longing Tea in total peacefulness. Until the smoke rises and circles in the atmosphere, I would sip my tea, enjoying a true sense of relief and happiness. Smoke from the incents would then carry away my sight, dreams, and my sought would follow the legend of "The Memoire of the Peach Blossom".

"Glossing is the rainbow of the southern mountain,
Coming back are the pair of swallows in front of the hall.
Let's cultivate in the field together,
Let's help each other in the daily life."

I have never collected any others things besides Incents Burners, for I think that a man should honor and dedicate himself to one and one only passion.

My nights have quite since I have been collecting Incents Burners, and this because these antics hold in them souls from their long gone owners.

This is what burners are, they represent people's mediations. Educated people understand Incents Burners, love them dearly, and pass them on from one generation to another. Poems are even dedicated to Incents Burners.

Incents Burners have been made for over six hundred years, and not others antics have experienced such dilapidations. Nowadays, it is extremely difficult to find originals. It is unfortunate to say that there is not true explanation to what is a real Xuande Incent Burner; however, and since the Ming Dynasty, many workshops have been recreating them. Thankfully, people and men like myself have been able to identify a few, and to collect them.

The fact is that we almost lost this Art of Making. How to experience emotions, how to identify our personal being, what would have happened without these dedicated workshops from the Ming Dynasty?

After years of collecting, I now have enough to display them for the public.

At first, I displayed all my Incents Burners all over my place using many different surfaces including my tea table and the floor, and they immediately took the shape of a dragon. I felt satisfied but not totally pleased.

I then grouped them by colors, from light to dark, and in five different groups.

Stepping back for a better view, I realized that my display had the shape of "Wuxing", a symbol from "Bagua". And was it just a pure coincidence?

Later on, I decided to classify them following the shape of their handles, and

displayed them in a radial geometry. I stood in the empty center, and observed silently but without been able to create the perfect display.

Midnight passed, and I was still checking different angles when suddenly sparkling under the light the perfect symbol of the "Bagua" took form.

I jumped out of the circle, and displayed a golden incense burner together with a black incense burner inside in the middle of the "Bagua" symbol.

I was speechless, realizing that it was accomplishing the Ying and Yang, the Qian and Kun, a true definition of Xuande incense burners.

I haven't been collecting incense burners for a long period, and still have lots to learn.

Xuande incense burners are complicated to study as well as to understand, and I hope that you will be able to correct or add more to them.

My unique collection is about Ming and Qing Dynasties.

I pay attention to their shape, color, sound, quality and craftsmanship, and I trust that I have totally devoted myself at collecting them.

I give many thanks and with respect to:

Emperor Xuande and its court; collectors and writers from all over the world and for centuries; the prosperity of my country; Beijing, China's capital, which is also at the center of our Chinese culture; to all my friends that have been supporting me over the years; and finally to my Father.



冲天耳炉

冲天耳三足大乳炉

规格 高二寸六分，耳高一寸一分，足高八分一厘。

口径五寸七分，重二斤十四两。

形仿 仿宋宣冲天耳三足乳炉款式。

技法 十二炼精铜铸造，赤金盪裏、作覆云祥、涌祥云二色。另有作棠梨色者。

款识 炉底楷书六字：“大明宣德年制”。

数量 四座。

放置 乾清宫贞一斋东便殿、西便殿各二座。

释名 明·吕震等《宣德鼎彝图谱》之卷六。

荣斋释文

冲天耳炉者，亦名“朝天耳炉”。为宋瓷炉式，为明清铜炉之中最为多见者也。原本宣德皇帝置于乾清宫之物，相伴朝议，乃庄严之器也。其形独特，意蕴“敬天法祖”。宫廷、文房、宫观、寺院、宗祠、殿堂等广为用之。余以为其形制：“素风卓越”，乳足沉稳，线形优雅，意蕴深广，堪为宣炉之首也。后世数量多，普及广，优劣并存。