

A
FRAGRANT
LEGEND

尋香記

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香料自古以來都是珍貴物質，其廣泛用於宗教儀式、醫藥、飲食、

祭典等。正如耶穌誕生之傳說中，遠道而來東方三博士送上的乳香和末藥就擁有等同黃金的價值，象徵著尊貴和神聖。古埃及人用乳香和末藥作保存屍體之用，而中國人把樹脂和動物香料入藥更是古來傳統智慧的展示。至於人類對香料的應用和加賦予之象徵意義是否源於香味對人類嗅覺的刺激而產生的種種不同社會文化行爲，我想這不可能在三言兩語之間盡述。不過，對於香料作為物質文化的一類，人類學家很早已經留意到不同的社會環境各自擁有多樣而且豐富的香文化共存於飲食、性別、信仰、族群、消費等領域中。

Since the ancient times, incenses are precious substance ubiquitously used in religious ceremonies, medicine, cuisine, liturgies and so on. In Nativity, the three wise men from the Orient presented to baby Jesus frankincense and myrrh, which were as valuable as gold and were symbols of honour and holiness. Ancient Egyptians used frankincense and myrrh to embalm dead bodies. For thousands of years, gum and animal essence were often used in Chinese medicine. The sensations given by various kinds of scents and aromas can be the reasons for their applications, meanings and all sorts of social behaviour so derived- but this is a deep issue to ponder. As a kind of material culture, anthropologists have well noted the diversity and complexity of incense in areas of food, gender, religion, ethnicity, consumerism and many more.

香文化和人類學 Incense culture & anthropology

中國製香技術歷史源遠流長，在宋、明年間更有明顯的突破，今天傳世作品如：《香譜》(宋)，《陳氏香譜》(宋)和《香乘》(明)等更是其中表表者。當時的香品以香餅和香丸為主，當中加入多種香木(木香、沉香、檀香等)，藥材(川芎、白芷、蒼術等)，香料(桂皮、丁香、茴香等)，樹脂(乳香、安息香、龍腦等)，甚至麝香和龍涎香等動物香料以配合不同社會階層的需要。有別於今天我們常見的綫香、玉香、盤香和塔香，以焚燒的方法使其香氣散發在空氣之中，香餅和香丸(日本人稱之為塗香)是以煎焙的方式達到熏香的效果。後世更以上等沉香木為主，以不同溫度使其樹脂揮發出不同層次不同特色的香氣，是香文化的重要發展過程。

就作者在亞洲各國的基本考察中，發現單是沉香在印度、日本、中國和中東地區的歷史和應用已經有著複雜的社會文化關係：正如印度傳統以沉香油用作按摩可以醫治痛症，中國人以沉香入藥據說有舒緩胃部不適之療效，日本人把沉香用於香道使其重歷古人對自然的體驗和表達，而阿拉伯人就把沉香用於宗教活動和社會身份的表達。歐美社會製造的香水也會用到沉香油，但基於文化的差異，亞洲社會對香氣在精神層次上的追求跟歐美社會把性和慾望投射在香水的選擇上的理解正是兩種明顯的分別。

China has a long history of making incense, the technology of which had great improvements during Song (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) dynasties. Ancient books on making incense such as "Recipe for Incense" (Song), "Chen's Family Recipe for Incense" (Song) and "Historical Records of Incense" (Ming) are handed down for generations till today. In the past, incense was usually made into forms of cakes or pellets. The major ingredients included fragrant wood (e.g. costus, agarwood, sandalwood), medicinal plants (e.g. Sichuan lovage, Angelica dahurica, black atractylodes rhizome), spice (e.g. cinnamon, clove, star anise), gum (e.g. frankincense, benzoin resin, camphor/Dryobalanops), and even animal ingredients such as musk and ambergris. Depending on their ingredients, the price of incenses varied so that people of different income or social classes could afford. In contrast to the burning of incense sticks of an array of sizes and shapes today, in the past incense cakes and pellets were baked in low heat to emit fragrant fumes. In later centuries incense tree became the main ingredient for making incense products, which gave slightly different scents at different temperatures. The extensive use of incense tree was a milestone in incense culture.



沉香木在英語中又稱「鷹木」，主要是因其外貌特徵所致。

Agarwood is also called "eaglewood" due to its distinctive appearance.



人類學家近年就物質文化的探討，明顯地有別於早年單從物件的外貌型態或其交換價值作出的分析，而是強調物件在輪流承轉過程中出現的社會文化多樣價值性。而且，每當這些探究對象的流向出現於跨國或跨族群文化脈絡上的時候，我們可以從中了解到的社會政治關係和文化全球性現象也就來得更豐富。

本文作者近年對製香行業和沉香木材貿易的課題產生興趣，而且希望從而探討香港以至中國製香的歷史源流和沉香木材貿易在東南亞地區的發展和現況，從而反思我們對文化遺產的傳承的意義和傳統產業跟自然保育之間出現的矛盾。至於沉香是甚麼？為何在亞洲各國擔當著重要的文化角色，以下，我想從香港的沉香木說起。

越南的奇楠是沉香中的極品，奇楠在日本香道（以志野流和御家流兩大流派為主）中更是越南沉香的代表，稱之為伽羅——在梵文中是黑色的意思。

Aquilaria crassna from Vietnam is the jewel of all agarwood. Japanese incense art (of which Shino School and Oie School are the main schools) claims *Aquilaria crassna* the classic of Vietnamese agarwood and refer it as "kyara", which means black in Sanskrit.

In my field studies among a number of Asian countries, the history and application of incense is intertwined with the socio-cultural relations of India, Japan, China and the Middle-East. For instances, traditionally Indians alleviate pain by massaging the aching areas with agarwood oil; Chinese put agarwood in medicine to soothe stomachache; Japanese practice incense art (kodo) to relive the ancestor's yearning for nature; and Arabians apply incense in religious rituals and to express their social status. Agarwood oil is also used in perfumes manufactured in European and Western countries. Due to cultural difference, perfume in Asian communities is largely associated with spirituality instead of sex and desire as in the West.

Anthropological discussions on material culture in recent years emphasize more on socio-cultural diversity demonstrated through the passing-on of the object, which differ from those decades ago when the focus was on the analysis of the appearance of the object or its exchange value. When the studied object appears in multi-country or multi-ethnic cultural network, the socio-political relations and globalized cultural phenomenon revealed are more complex and fruitful.

My interest in incense making and agarwood trade has grown over the years. I hope to investigate the history of incense manufacture in Hong Kong and even China and the development of agarwood trade in Southeast Asia, and from these investigations we may rethink the contradictions between preserving cultural heritage and industry, and nature conservation. So what is incense? Why is it so important culturally among Asian countries? Let's start from a story about agarwood in Hong Kong.



印尼耶加達的沉香協會收藏了各式各樣的沉香
Various kinds of agarwood displayed in
Indonesia Agarwood Association In Jakarta

香港與沉香 Hong Kong & Agarwood

沉香是瑞香科樹木因外傷結脂而成的一種香料，而瑞香科植物生長於從東印度以至西巴布亞的熱帶低地，而今天出口世界各地的沉香木和油仍然是以越南、泰國、柬埔寨、印度、馬來西亞，印尼等為主，中國的廣東、廣西和海南島以內銷為主。

香港名稱的由來，正和沉香有關。根據羅香林教授早年的考証，早於宋、明年間在南中國一帶出產的莞香木從香港島的石排灣（今天的香港仔）出口國外，所以「香港」就藉此得名。雖然清代以後莞香木材出口貿易絕跡，但香港的製香行業在上世紀初期仍然是重要的輕工業之一。正如香港英國殖民地秘書駱克在其新界報告也曾指出，在十九世紀末，打製檀香木香粉是利用流水的天然動力推動水車進行，而且在荃灣的曹公潭一帶，正是使香港製香行業的重要後勤基地，用檀香木香粉製成的香品大量出口和分銷於國內和東南亞華人社區。當時進口的檀香分別有印度的真香和澳大利亞的老山檀香為主。但後來因為曹公潭上游河水受到染布業帶來的污染，沒法繼續。其後打製檀香木粉的工序也逐漸機械化，水車打香粉的傳統

Agarwood, also known as aloeswood, eaglewood, gaharu, jinko or oud, is a dark, resinous heartwood of the family Thymelaeaceae native to tropical lowland from East India to West Papua. Today Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, India, Malaysia and Indonesia are major exporting countries of agarwood and its resins, whereas those yielded in Guangdong, Guangxi and Hainan of China are mainly for domestic consumption.

The name of Hong Kong is closely related to agarwood. According to the earlier investigation by Professor Lo Hsiang-lin, a renowned historian and researcher in Hakka culture, Shek Pai Wan (nowadays Aberdeen) of Hong Kong Island was already a vibrant hub of *Aquilaria sinensis* (a kind of agarwood available mainly in South China) trade during Song and Ming dynasties where this fragrant wood source was exported to other regions. Hong Kong - "fragrant harbour" - was thus named. Although the trade of *Aquilaria sinensis* had ceased for more than 200 years, incense making remained an important light industry of Hong Kong for sometime. Sir James Haldane Stewart Lockhart, who served as Register General and Colonial Secretary of Hong Kong during 1895-1902, also pointed out in his report on the New Territories that the villages at the foot of Tai Mo Shan were key supply bases of Hong Kong's incense making industry. Till the end of the 19th century, incense powder were ground by watermills. Hill streams gave power to watermills of the villages of Tai Mo Shan, such as Tso Kung Tam.



印尼耶加達康達街的香水店
Perfume shop on Jalan Condet, Jakarta, Indonesia

就相應在香港絕跡。加上租金上升和跟國內的競爭，香港製香行業從八十年代開始，可算是名存實亡；品牌仍是老字號，但生產工作都是在國內進行。雖然今天經香港出口到東南亞的香品數量，遠比台灣和國內的產品少，但當我在星加坡和印尼採訪時，得悉香港品牌的香品仍然有良好口碑。

除了宋、明年間莞香木的轉運和清末的製香業之外，香港在六、七十年代的檀香扇製造又曾經是香港輕工業的一環。據說當時的檀香扇莊出產的檀香扇不但是在本地出售，而且出口世界各地。今天，香港和沉香木貿易的關係，除了一些轉口到日本和南北行一帶中藥進出口的活動之外，似乎無法和新加坡相比。主要原因是新加坡之地理和文化環境上之優勢，使它成了東南亞出產國和中東地區主要買家的中樞地。



Large amount of incense products made from finely ground powder were exported mainland China and Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. Later, the upper course of streams of Tai Mo Shan were polluted by dyeing, and grinding incense powder was soon left off. At the same time, the process of grinding incense powder was mechanized, and watermills in Hong Kong gradually vanished. In the following decades, with increasing rent and keen competition from mainland China, incense making industry in Hong Kong was literally stamped out. Many Hong Kong incense brands still exist, yet all manufacturing processes were completed in mainland China. Although incense products that are exported via Hong Kong to Southeast Asia are way less than those from Taiwan and mainland China, during my field investigation in Singapore and Indonesia, Hong Kong incense brands still enjoy a very good reputation over there.

Apart from transporting incense products centuries ago and incense making in the last century, Hong Kong was famous for making sandalwood fan in 1960s and 70s. Fan-making houses sold quality sandalwood fans in Hong Kong and overseas. Today, Hong Kong has only scant amount of agarwood trade with Japan or with the Chinese medicine shops in Central District and Sheung Wan. Singapore has taken over Hong Kong as the major transit port of agarwood due to its geographical and cultural advantages with Southeast Asia and the Middle-East, where the buyers are.

新加坡阿拉伯街的香水商店展示
Display of a perfume shop in Arab Street, Singapore

沉香木在東南亞 Agarwood in Southeast Asia

今天，在香港常見的沉香木大多是越南和印尼的品種，兩者氣味特性有異；越南沉香比較清甜而印尼沉香比較濃厚，香港人大都視前者為佳品。不過，印尼群島地大物博，單是不同地區如蘇門答臘、加里曼丹、爪哇、蘇拉威西（又俗稱香料島）和巴布亞出產的沉香木材都因應品種和等級的不同，在市場上價錢各異。就以品種來說，印尼出口的沉香有三大種類（*Aquilaria malaccensis*, *Aquilaria filaria*, *Gyrinop spp.*），數量更是世界之冠。根據作者在印尼的採訪得悉，印尼出口的沉香木材佔世界銷量的七至八成，而數量大約是六、七百噸左右。加上近年鄰近國家如馬來西亞已經把雨林大量開發成棕櫚林用以生產棕櫚油，這更使印尼的沉香出口成為一支獨秀。

至於當下印尼出口的沉香和早年其它東南亞地區有何分別，筆者想藉去年暑期在印尼訪問到一位馬來西亞華僑商人的資料，給大家作一參考。這名商人提到早年在婆羅洲，沉香木一般是由當地原居民普南人在熱帶雨林中收集，然後買給其他原居部落的加央人和根雅人，再買到當地中國人手上，因為在雨林中收集到的都是枯樹或從樹上脫落的部份，所以數量有限，特別珍貴。但自從八十年代中東地區因出產石油致富，沉香有價，便造成大量採伐，不論含油脂量多少的沉香樹木，只要通通放在煉油爐內提出來的是有市場價值的沉香油都不放過。這種「殺雞取卵」的做法已經成為國際間關注的議題。

近日從報張看到中東阿聯酋的沉香木進口量在四年間增加了三倍，雖然不是最新數據，但單看從二零零四年進口的五十六噸激增至二零零七年的一百六十二噸，數量



印尼伊里安查亞（即現在西巴布亞省）的巴布亞沉香木。圖中的沉香是在沼澤中耙出來的小木片。

An Irian Jaya (now West Papua) Papuan agarwood from Indonesia. The agarwood pieces were collected from a swamp.

Most of the agarwood you see in Hong Kong today are species from Vietnam and Indonesia, each with their distinctive aroma. Vietnamese agarwood is crispy while the Indonesian species is richer. People in Hong Kong prefer Vietnamese agarwood more in general. There is a wide range of price and grade of agarwood from different parts of the Indonesian archipelagoes, such as Sumatra, Kalimantan, Java, Sulawesi and Papua. Indonesia exports mainly three kinds of agarwood - *Aquilaria malaccensis*, *Aquilaria filaria*, *Gyrinop spp.* The export amount tops the world. According to my field investigation, Indonesia exports the world's 70% to 80% of agarwood, which amounts to 600 to 700 tonnes per year. In recent years Indonesia's agarwood export numbers further stand out as neighbouring countries like Malaysia turn rainforests into palm plantations to produce palm oil.



印尼耶加達的沉香批發市場
Agarwood wholesale trade in Jakarta, Indonesia

印度沉香木，顏色比較黑。
圖中的沉香是木心變壞後結脂所成。
Indian agarwood is darker in colour. This
piece of agarwood is a resin embedded heartwood.



的龐大，無不使人擔心。根據國際環保組織 TRAFFIC 對沉香木用途和貿易的研究報告，清楚指出近年中東的阿聯酋和沙地阿拉伯是世界最大的沉香進口國，遠勝日本和台灣等傳統市場。而在作者在印尼的採訪中，得知中國近年對沉香的需求有增無減。對於印尼以出口原材料為主的國家來說，無疑是一大顧客；但從環境資源開發的角度來看的話，國際社會擔心的便是持續發展和雨林保育相關的議題。正如廣州康王路一帶，過去是華南地區主要的玉器市場，近年也開始見到沉香專門店陸續出現，不難想像在今日中國經濟發達的沿海地域，沉香木已經靜地成了有暇一族的新玩意。

But the way agarwood is gathered in Indonesia nowadays is quite different from what it was like in other Southeast Asian regions decades ago. During a field study last summer, a Malaysian Chinese merchant told me that earlier last century in Borneo, agarwood was mainly collected by native Punan tribes, who then sold the agarwood to other native tribes like Kayan or Kenyah, and from them local Chinese would buy. These agarwood pieces were gathered from fallen branches or barks in the rainforests. They were limited in amount and were very precious. Since 1980s the Middle-East became rich because of oil output, and they soon became the main purchasers of agarwood. The huge demand for agarwood prompted extensive logging of trees to extract resins. This is literally killing the goose that lays the golden egg, and has aroused much concern internationally.

A recent news report revealed that import of agarwood to UAE has tripled over the last four years - from 56 tonnes in 2004 to 162 tonnes in 2007. This is an alarming figure. According to a report on the use and trade of agarwood by TRAFFIC - an international wildlife trade monitoring network, it clearly revealed that UAE and Saudi Arabia have taken over the traditional markets of Japan and Taiwan as the largest agarwood importing countries, while the demand for agarwood in mainland China has also increased significantly. To Indonesia, the demand in agarwood means revenue, but this also worries the international world on the sustainability and conservation of rainforests. Kangwang Road in Guangzhou of China has been a major jade market of southern China. Recently agarwood shops began to appear one after another. It is not surprise that agarwood collection is catching on big in China's affluent coastal cities.



Revelations for transnational heritage

沉香木材的問題不但發生在東南亞國家，我們身處的華南地區也是活生生的例證。正如在九十年代末，東莞發現一片面積多達一千多畝的原始野生莞香群，使地方人民對隱世二百多年的莞香歷史重新認識；加上被稱為廣東四大市的寮步香市和當地明、清年間建築群更引起地方鎮政府的興趣，在去年八月以香文化論壇作為打造香市文化和旅遊產業的起步點。我們希望今後對莞香文化可以作深入了解，但亦需要對天然沉香木資源珍惜和保持其健康發展，兩者的平衡絕對是當下的首選議題，既可以保存天然資源，亦能領會前人留下的香文化。沉香是枯木，它有別於其它香料的地方是燃燒後久存不滅的餘韻，而且沉香的生產和應用正反映出亞洲各國的文化互動及其異同的多樣性。如果我們可以好好利用古人留下來的知識和智慧，對製香技術和品香的領會可以為文化多樣性作出活生生的見證，應該是踏出跨文化理解和世界遺產保護的一大步。❖

The problems of unscrupulous yielding of agarwood are not confined to Southeast Asia, they have also happened here in southern China. In late 1990s, a large piece of wild native agarwood forest was discovered in Dongguan. The interest in the history of agarwood was thus rekindled. The incense market of Liaobu in Dongguan was once one of the four major market towns of Guangdong. There are still a number of well-kept architectures from Ming and Qing dynasties. The township government of Liaobu organized a forum on incense culture to discuss the potential of consolidating the town as an incense-culture tourism destination. I hope that we can understand more about incense culture, and strike a balance between conservation of wild agarwood and the wholesome development of the incense industry. Only by this can we preserve both precious natural resource and cultural heritage. The scent of agarwood is long lasting; and the production and application of agarwood is an exemplar of cultural interaction and diversity in Asia. Ancient wisdom and knowledge on incense making and incense art are living witness of cultural diversity, and they give insights into the context of intercultural relations and preserving world heritage from a transnational perspective. ❖

土沉香於一九九九年在中國被列入《國家重點保護野生植物名錄》，成為國家二級重點保護植物，屬易危品種；二零零零年被列入《世界自然保護聯盟受威脅植物紅色名錄》。土沉香亦受到本港法例妥為保護（包括《郊野公園條例》（第208章）及《林區及郊區條例》（第96章）。如有觸犯，最高可罰款25,000元，以及監禁一年。

In mainland China, *Aquilaria sinensis* is listed as a category II protected plant in the "List of Wild Plants under State Protection" since 1999. The species is also listed in the 2000 IUCN Red List of Threatened Plants published by The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and regulated under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In Hong Kong, *Aquilaria sinensis* has been well-preserved by both former villagers and local legislation, including the Country Parks Ordinance (Cap. 208) and Forests and Countryside Ordinance (Cap. 96). Maximum penalty of violating of the ordinance involves a fine of HK\$25,000 and one year in prison.