

# **The Culture of Decoration During the Pingcheng Period of the Northern Wei Dynasty: A Discussion Arising from a Bronze *Hu* in the Collection of the National Palace Museum**

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## **Abstract**

This paper takes a bronze *hu* vessel in the collection of the National Palace Museum as an example for observing and discussing Sanyan elements in the culture of decoration during the Pingcheng period of the Northern Wei dynasty. Comparison of the shape, decoration, and style of the vessel in this study leads to the suggestion that productions by craftsmen in the Northern Yan area during the period between 415 (the tomb date of Feng Sufu) and 484 (the tomb date of Sima Jinlong), but probably in the middle of the fifth century, witnessed a transition from the Northern Yan to the Northern Wei. During the rule of the Dowager Empress Feng, the decorative culture of Sanyan was reestablished in her reign and given new political meaning. It was seen as intimately related to the manifestation of imperial authority and served as a key stage in the development of decorative culture during the Pingcheng period in the Northern Wei dynasty. Over time, the study of this vessel's significance will take on a new level of historical meaning.

**Keywords:** Decorative culture, Northern Wei, Sanyan, Dowager Empress Feng, bronze *hu*, Umehara Sueji