

GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

June 2017

GONGFU RED TEA

QIMEN

HISTORY, LORE & PROCESSING





RED SUN RISING

On our recent trip to China we learned a lot about Qimen red tea. This is the perfect opportunity to learn more about rare gongfu red tea as a genre, as well as about the history of this rich tea-growing region. Of course, we'll be sipping as we read; this time it's a rare Qimen red tea, delicate and bold as an early red sunrise.

*Love is
changing the world
bowl by bowl*

FEATURES

15 A JOURNEY THROUGH QIMEN CULTURE
By Luo Yingyin

21 QIMEN: ONE LEAF, THREE TEAS
By Luo Yingyin

37 QIMEN TEA: FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE
By Deng Zengyong

紅太陽



TRADITIONS

03 TEA OF THE MONTH
"Red Sun Rising" 2016 Gongfu Red Tea
Qimen, Anhui, China

27 GONGFU TEAPOT
"Tea-Aware,"
By Wu De

33 EXPANSION PACK III
Gongfu Red Tea

45 CHAXI CHRONICLES
"A Valiant Steed Tethered to a Thatched Hut,"
By Shen Su

53 VOICES OF THE HUT
"Art of the Month,"
By Lee Ann Hilbrich

57 TEAWAYFARER
Lee Ann Hilbrich, USA



紅太陽
升起



© 2017 by Global Tea Hut
All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission from the copyright owner.

From the Editor

In June, our teas have all started rolling in and we are drinking lots of young sheng puerh samples, green teas (including new, first flush, organic sencha from Japan called “*shincha*”) and also the occasional gongfu red tea in the morning. The weather is hot in Taiwan at this time and these cooling teas are wonderful. We serve sun tea this month and next when we go out to serve roadside tea, propping up fake blue flames under the iced kettle we use to boil and ladle out tea the rest of the year. We steep the tea in a large glass jar from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on a sunny day, letting the sun extract the essence from the tea. This can be done with red, green, white tea or young sheng puerh. We then fill the clay *kama* from the large glass jar with a pitcher, adding ice from a cooler every half hour or so.

June is the zenith of the year, halfway round the Global Tea Hut calendar. It is a great time to evaluate the year, learn and grow and make plans to improve throughout the second half. We have already achieved a lot this year: expanding membership, touring and offering courses, our fourth annual trip, another issue in our Classics of Tea series, a new printer that has improved the quality of our magazine, and the realization of our long-standing goal to include more authorship in these issues by translating Chinese tea experts and thereby providing more scope and depth to each issue of Global Tea Hut. A goal we hope to realize in the coming year is to include more journalism, traveling to rare tea mountains to find amazing organic farmers and exciting teas for you to try.

The biggest news is, of course, the launch of our Global Tea Hut app. More than a year of effort, time and money has gone into this. Like all the work around here, it was done with tons of love. Lots of people helped out, but none more than our very own Jared Krause. We should all raise a bowl to our brother this month. He has served this community in countless ways since its formation. Please help us by investing time in the app: adding to your profile, connecting with other members, creating local gatherings and more. The more everyone invests in the app, the more rewarding it will be to use. We hope that it brings this community together and creates more tea ceremonies and gatherings around the world. We hope travelers find a place to stay at Global Tea Hut houses and that your tea sessions have more guests from further afield!

The second important announcement this year is that we are starting our third annual photography contest. So far, the two years have been filled with so many inspiring entries from all over the world. Like before, we will be offering prizes to the most tea-inspired photography—measuring success by how strongly we feel inclined to go put the kettle on. The same rule applies as with previous years: there is a limit of one submission per person. The winners will also be published in these pages. The contest will close in August.

As you are reading this month’s issue, I am continuing my world tour to the Big Apple. This will be the first time we have ever conducted tea ceremonies in NY. This whirlwind year of travel has afforded me the chance to have tea with more of you, which helps inspire me to work hard on the magazine and at the Center. I love making new friends through tea, as well as celebrating the old. It has been a very busy, but very exciting year so far. The first half has taught me so much. I look forward to sharing more tea.

This month we are going to dive deeply into the topic of gongfu red tea, exploring the highest potential of what red tea can be. Red tea is often best when simple, like dian hong or Elevation from Sun Moon Lake. But red tea can also be very fine and delicate, produced with as much mastery as any genre of tea. Gongfu red tea is red tea produced exclusively from buds, and with great attention to detail and focus on quality. The best raw material is used, so the tea must be made with skill to warrant the premium price that using only hand-plucked buds demands.

This month’s tea comes from Qimen—from the farm we visited on our 2017 Global Tea Hut Trip, which we will cover in great detail in the July issue. Seeing how much care and love goes into this amazing red tea has left us all stunned. As we always say, we make a concerted effort to bring you all with us on our annual trips, and since we are sharing this tea from Qimen this month and another beautiful tea we made ourselves next month, it feels like we really will be sharing this amazing place and wonderful experiences with all of you. This issue will be educational, and a great chance to taste the best red tea has to offer.



—Further Readings—

This month, we recommend taking the time to read through the March 2016 issue of Global Tea Hut. It is all about red tea in general. The whole issue is full of red tea wisdom that forms a great background for this issue. You can read it on the “Past Issues” section of the website.

TEA OF THE MONTH

 ver the course of this month, we are rising to the heights of all red tea production. Over the years, we have shared a lot of red tea in this community. We have drunk some fine and unique dian hong teas, published a guide to dian hong in February of this year and we have also drunk Sun Moon Lake “Elevation” every year since Global Tea Hut began, but these are simple, earthy red teas. These are red teas that are drunk rough and raw, leaves in a bowl or sidehandle. They are malty, musky and full of strength. They are masculine. This month, we’re turning to the finer side of red tea: the delicate, “tippy” (lots of buds) red teas are made fine, with skill. They are yin, with a floral sweetness that is light on its feet and gentler on the system. And such a fine, delicate tea as this month’s, calls for some history, as each sip finds us more and more lost in past times—times when names like “Queen of Fragrance” make sense again.

The Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) saw many developments in tea processing, including oolong tea, flower-scented tea and red tea. Later, in the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), many of the teas developed during this age of innovation evolved further. There are many legends about the beginnings of red tea, and several regions lay claim to the first-ever red tea. In reality, red tea was probably made centuries or even millennia ago by aboriginals, though never commercially.

As oxidation is a natural process, it is likely that it occurred, perhaps even accidentally, at some point long ago. However, most tea scholars think that red tea originated in Fujian, near where Cliff Tea comes from.

As we read about in our April issue of this year on Ming Dynasty tea, the first Ming emperor Taizu outlawed the production of powdered, cake tea. At that time, Wuyi and the surrounding regions were amongst the greatest, most famous of all tea-producing areas, offering tribute tea since the Song Dynasty (960–1279). The shift in taste, and the new laws affected local tea production, drastically reducing the amount of tea produced since the locals had only made powdered and caked tea for generations. Though many of the big houses, famous for their Dragon & Phoenix cakes, shut down, the monks continued making tea and drinking it in ceremony and meditation, using simple, loose-leaf green tea. After some time, travelers from Anhui taught the monks pan-fired green tea processing

techniques that greatly improved the teas they were making. They had some of the best trees and one of the best terroirs for tea, after all. They say that as the monks learned this new technique of pan-firing green tea to arrest oxidation, they slowly learned that the tea responded to semi-oxidation in a magical way and oolong tea was born. This innovation probably was part trial and error, part insight and skill and part connection to the Leaf. As the leaves got redder, it would only have been a matter of time till the oxidation levels were pushed into “red tea.”





Red Sun Rising



Qimen, Anhui, China



2016 Gongfu Red Tea



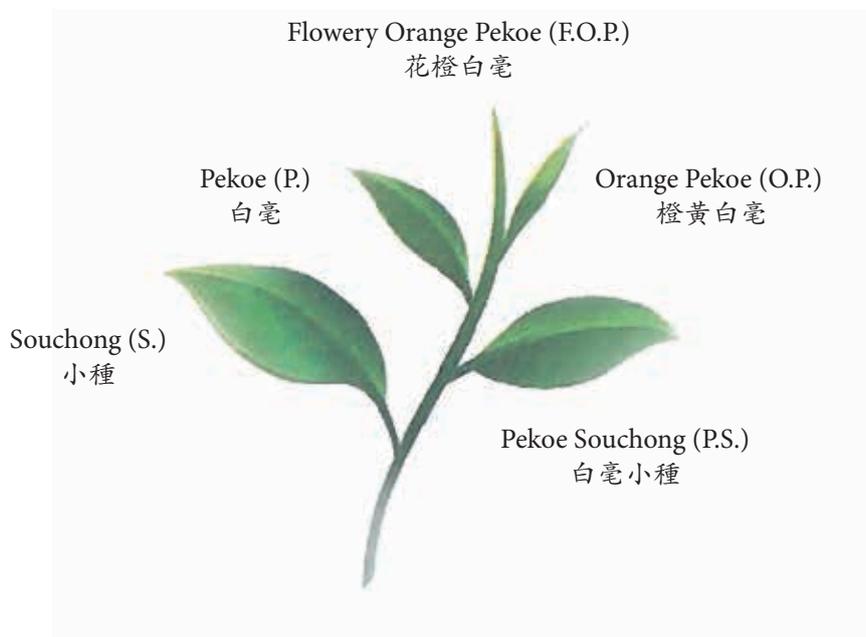
Han Chinese



~700 Meters



TRADITIONAL WESTERN LEAF GRADE STANDARDS FOR RED TEA



- SFTGFOP1** Super Finest Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe (First Grade)
- SFTGFOP** Super Finest Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe (Standard Grade)
- TGFOP** Tippy Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe
- GFOP** Golden Flowery Orange Pekoe
- FOP** Flowery Orange Pekoe
- OP** Orange Pekoe
- P** Pekoe
- S** Souchong

國際紅茶等級
金毫標準

They say that a victorious army was passing through Fujian after quelling a rebellion in Jianxi. They camped in a village near the tea gardens, where they were graciously hosted by the locals, who served a feast to the soldiers. This held up tea production for a day as they camped and the tea was left to wither much longer than the tea farmers were used to. Legend has it, that some of the soldiers slept on the soft piles of withering tea, rolling around in the night and bruising the leaves. They left behind piles of limp, reddened leaves that had been highly oxidized. The farmers decided to dry the tea anyway, rather than wasting Nature's precious bounty. One bright farmer suggested they try smoking the tea dry over a pine-wood fire to accelerate the process.

And thus, they say, the first red tea was born, called "*Lishan Xiao Zhong* (立山小種)" or "Lapsang Souchong" in the West, which is a corruption of the Fu Zhou pronunciation. They say that this first-ever red tea was a gift from the gods for their hospitality. Less poetic authors claim that this kind of "Bohea" tea ("Bohea" is the local Minnan word for "Wuyi") got its smokiness from innovative tea producers who used pine smoke to speed up production and increase yield for export.

Red tea is really just the "last station on the oolong train," as Wu De often says. Some authors describe red tea as "fully oxidized," but this is not really possible. It is, however, the most oxidized kind of tea. Red tea is really just a furthering of the oxidation pro-

cess used to make oolong, mostly by increasing the duration of withering and rolling, which is why it was a natural extension that was bound to arise. In the early Ming, almost all teas were all bud, and therefore "unoxidized" green teas (actually, it is not possible to stop all oxidation, so "lightly oxidized" would be more accurate) or semi-oxidized oolongs. At what point the "semi" reaches what we call red tea is hard to tell, as there are lighter red teas and very oxidized oolongs, like Eastern Beauty.

Starting in the early 1800s, the export markets in Europe, the American colonies and the Middle East couldn't get enough red tea. Some attribute the international popularity of red tea in particular to red tea's shelf stability.



茶 Traditionally, “tippy” meant that the tea had more buds. The Orange Pekoe leaf grading system is purported to have Chinese origins, but it is little used outside the West. The origin of the word “pekoe” is also uncertain. Some say it is a corruption derived from the Xiamen Amoy dialect word “pen ho (白毫)” which means “white down,” referencing the white fur which is found on the buds of tea varieties in Fujian, especially Fu Ding. Sir Thomas Lipton is credited with popularizing (maybe even inventing) this system of classifying red tea. The “orange,” which symbolizes a higher grade of leaf, is probably a reference to the coppery color of a fine, tippy red tea. Other scholars suggest it may have to do with the royal color of the Dutch. There are actually other sub-grades we haven’t shown here, including “Broken Orange Pekoe” for bits and even “F” for fannings. Typically, an Orange Pekoe red tea was above average grade, though there never was a true standardization of these terms. The whole grading system was based on the amount of buds and the brokenness of the leaves. Higher grades are therefore made from young, terminal buds with one, two or three of the youngest leaves, all of which are completely intact. Larger leaves or broken bits will result in a lower grade and price.

Above are the leaf sets used to make our Tea of the Month. In this classification system, they would be FOP. Our Tea of the Month is made from a special varietal called “chu ye (桴葉種),” which is long and spear-like, with a robust but fine tea liquor that is very unique in flavor, aroma and Qi. You could say that they are on the large side of small-leaf, or the smaller side of medium-leaf. There is further sorting, or “refinement,” in the processing of the tea, but we chose a tea with some “Pekoe” and “Pekoe Souchong” leaves to give our Tea of the Month a boldness we appreciate in red tea. Bud sets are indeed sweeter, but sometimes lack the depth of a red tea that includes some leaves as well, especially with dian hong or other unique varieties like chu ye. (If you are interested in trying other grades of gongfu red tea, you can get this month’s expansion pack, which includes a gongfu red tea from Wuyi Mountain and one from Yixing.)

Others suggest that the popularity of red tea has more to do with the compatibility of the bold flavor profiles of red teas with the cuisines of Germany, England, France and other nations where red tea has become the default tea type (mistakenly called “black tea”).

It was this popularity that led to large-scale production of red tea in China, and to the eventual theft of tea seeds, tea plants and tea production techniques, which were taken by Scottish and English adventurer-entrepreneurs and transplanted to India and other colonial territories (such as modern-day Sri Lanka and Kenya). These entrepreneurs took their limited knowledge of tea production and used it to fashion machines to replace the handmade aspects of tea processing. The availability of cheap red tea fueled its popularity as a tea type further, making it the most popular category of tea in the West to this day.

Today, red tea is produced using this machine-driven approach in many countries, including Brazil, India, Indonesia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. More recently, machine-made red teas have appeared in Japan (where they are called “*Wakocha*” or “Japanese red tea”), and machine-made red tea has even made its way back to China. (We visited a large industrial factory on our trip.)

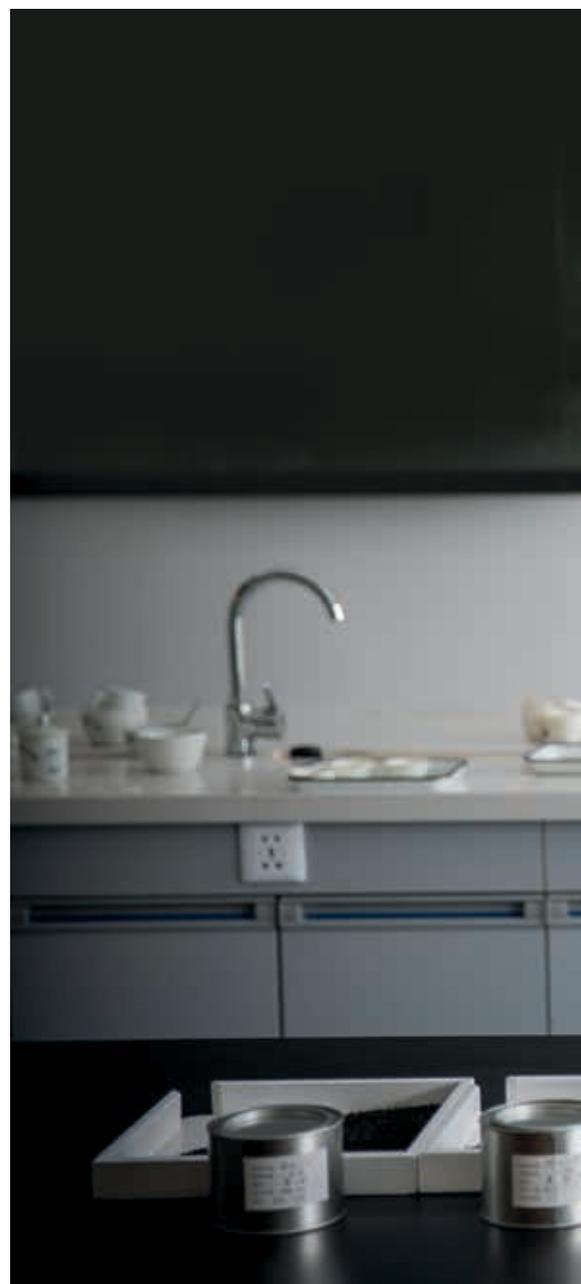
In recent years, the interest in handmade and more traditionally made red tea has seen a resurgence in China, Taiwan and elsewhere, resulting in a wider availability of handmade red teas from China and Taiwan (including our Tea of the Month). For this and other reasons, the characteristics that red tea drinkers in China and Taiwan prefer tend to be different from the typical tea drinker in the West. Instead of looking for a dark color in the infusion, or boiled liquor, and a bold flavor that can handle milk and sugar, these tea lovers seek out beautifully shaped leaves and infusions that are best savored without any additives. Also, while most red tea drinkers steep their leaves only once, those opting for more traditionally made red teas prefer to let the leaves open up gradually with many short infusions, savoring the tea’s patience and inner spirit, rather than gulping from a to-go cup while eating a pastry on the way to the office.

As we’ve explained in previous issues, different tea types are processed differently. While processing is not the sole differentiating factor (indeed, varieties, terroir, harvest seasons and many other factors can make substantial differences!), processing often makes the most profound difference in how a given leaf’s liquor will look, taste and feel by the time it reaches your teapot or bowl. The genres of tea are not “all in the processing.” The reality is far more complicated than that: each genre of tea is as much a terroir and the local varieties of tea, as it is the processing methods used there. In fact, some authors include culture and processing methods in the very term “terroir,”

which is an insight that we appreciate since it acknowledges and celebrates the very natural part that humans play in Nature and in Tea. If the tradition of tea processing is indeed evolving and improving based on the idea that “better” processing is tea-making that brings out the natural highlights of the trees and leaves, then you could say that farmers who do so are as naturally a part of the life cycle of that tea as the sun or rain. There are also deeper and subtler implications of including processing methods in the word “terroir,” beyond just climate, weather and soil, since doing so testifies to the fact that humanity *is* Nature. These days, we feel disconnected from the world,

杯中真理
 浸泡一個故事

茶 Our hosts at the Sun River Tea Factory (祥源茶) showed us all their grades of Qimen red tea, including one made from a Maofeng varietal. They taught us that there are three criteria for a fine Qimen red tea: first, there should be golden tips, signifying a high amount of buds in the tea; second, the leaves should be black and shiny, not gray and lackluster; and, finally, a fine Qimen red tea should have thin, needle-like leaves that resemble spears. We tasted all the grades to see if we could discern the differences in the cup.



even though we are as ingrained as any species of *Thea*, and our influence can be just as natural and harmonious, or as destructive, as any other force of Nature. So, it is worth repeating that the differences are *not* all in the processing. The next time someone tells you white tea, oolong or puerh is a processing method, you should raise a finger in “wait a minute” doubt.

Oftentimes, Western authors mislead us by saying that all tea is the same plant and only differs in processing. Actually, of the seven genres of tea, this is really only true of red tea, which happens to be the most consumed tea in the West, which helps explain some of the confusion. The other six genres

of tea are as much a varietal as they are a processing methodology. But you can process *any* tea as a red tea, and usually with nice results. Of all the seven genres of tea (white, green, yellow, red, black, oolong and puerh), red tea is the only one that is truly “all in the processing.” In other words, you can take tea from any varietal and terroir and process it like a red tea. And it is often nice. We’ve had great Taiwanese high-mountain oolong (*Ching shin*, 清心, varietal) processed like red tea, the “gongfu reds,” like our Tea of the Month, are essentially all-bud green teas processed like red and puerh raw material processed like red tea, called “dian hong.”

Knowing that any varietal can become red tea is also valuable when it comes to understanding just how the misinformation that differences in tea are all in the processing became so widespread in the Western world. Red tea, as we mentioned earlier, is the most consumed and produced tea in the West. Almost everyone in the Western world who drinks tea, drinks red tea. And since it is true that “the difference is all in the processing” for red tea, you could see how this would be mistakenly applied to other kinds of tea, assuming that this principle is as true for green or oolong tea as it is for red (which it clearly is not). Only red tea is truly just a processing method.



One of the characteristics used to evaluate red tea is its clarity: finer red tea does not have any cloudiness in the liquor, so it is important that we have taken a few bowls' worth of time to clear up all this misunderstanding. As we travel further into our session, we'll have to do so with the understanding that red tea is unique amongst all kinds of tea since it has no terroir or varietal(s) to call home. This means that a discussion of any given red tea will have to include the varietal that is used to make it. This month, our discussion is about gongfu red tea, which is usually made of green tea varietals.

Gongfu Red Tea

Traditionally, gongfu red tea was called “congou” in the West, which was an attempt to transcribe the Hokkien pronunciation of “gongfu (工夫),” which is “*kang hu*.” The most expensive and well-known version of this red tea back in the day was called “Panyang Congou,” which was also a corruption of the Chinese “*tanyang* (坦洋).” *Tanyang* is a varietal of tea from Fujian. Gongfu red tea is not named after the brewing method, though both refer to the same term, which means “mastery through self-discipline.” The reason such red tea is called “gongfu red tea” is because it is produced from high-grade tea, and with much more attention to production and skill. Traditionally, most places where gongfu red tea is made would reserve the buds for green tea and the lower grades (second flushes, larger leaves, etc.) for red tea. Gongfu red tea, on the other hand, is made completely of first flush bud and leaf sets, and therefore represents the highest grade, most valuable tea the farm produces. Ordinarily, red tea production is simple, but such valuable tea requires attention and focus, since it will have to be sold at a premium price. Though such tea is not named after the brewing method, we certainly try our best to prepare it that way since it is so valuable. Just as the farmers worked hard to make such fine tea, we should brew it to its highest potential.

Red tea has been produced in Qimen, Anhui since 1875. They say a scholar named Yu Ganchen (余干臣) learned red tea production from Fujian

and brought it to Anhui, which was at that time making Maofeng green tea. The tea's very unique fragrance of orchids, slightly smoky and sweet, won the hearts of tea lovers throughout China and eventually throughout the West, where it was (once again) mispronounced and called “Keemun.”

Many varietals are used to make red tea in the Qimen area, including Maofeng green tea (祁門毛峰). Another is called “*chu ye* (槲葉種).” These larger yet tender leaves result in a robust but fine tea that is very unique in flavor, aroma and Qi. You could say that they are on the large side of small-leaf or the smaller side of medium-leaf. *Chu ye* is a very unique varietal, with long, thin, spear-like leaves that roll up very thin. The leaves are robust and full-bodied, which is good for a red tea, but also delicate and fine, resulting in a bold yet sweet liquor that is unique amongst red teas.

Red tea processing generally follows the same simple steps: The tea is picked, then goes through a heavy withering. This step involves piling the tea in woven trays or in large troughs, with fans to circulate air and remove moisture as it evaporates. The withering process reduces moisture content and initiates oxidation. With most red tea, this withering is very long, often twelve hours or more. Then the tea goes through rolling by machine or by hand for up to ninety minutes. (In the case of CTC, “Cut, Tear, Curl” tea, rolling is combined with additional steps in which the leaves are chopped up, causing them to quickly oxidize, and then rolled into pellets as the tea is further oxidized and dried.) This breaks down the cell walls and releases their essential oils, allowing the air to interact with otherwise trapped chemical components, furthering oxidation. Some kinds of red tea are then piled and oxidized a second time, which entails additional exposure of the leaves' essential oils to oxygen. It involves letting the tea sit for up to a few hours, before the oxidation is halted with heat. This additional oxidation results in further changes in the tea's flavor, aroma, color and Qi when drunk. Finally, the tea is dried, usually by baking it for short durations to halt oxidation and dry the tea for storage. Sorting out broken bits (often with a winnower) and packaging follow the drying.

Qimen gongfu red tea follows these same basic steps with some more care. What really makes a red tea “gongfu” is the care and skill used in the processing, though the steps are much the same. Traditionally, leaves are picked in the spring, though many farms nowadays also do a summer harvest. Only the bud and three leaves are chosen, as with many kinds of tea. One of the differences between gongfu red tea and other kinds of red tea is in the sorting, called “refinement.” Qimen red tea, and other gongfu red teas, are separated into many grades, sometimes before and after processing. In the past, only the best leaves were picked and then sorted during withering. This refined picking and more skilled processing, with an attention to detail is what makes this tea “gongfu.” Firm and tender leaves with a dark luster, subtle fragrance of honey or orchids, as well as a bright red liquor that is deep and sweet, are the result of finely crafted gongfu red tea, like our Tea of the Month. “*Xin Ya* (新芽)” and “*Hao Ya* (毫芽)” are some of the many higher grades of Qimen red tea.

茶 A retired, sixty-year-old tea master, Min Xuan Wen (閔宣文), kindly demonstrated hand rolling for us. The rolling is done in a heated wok, to keep the tea leaves warm as they are rolled, further oxidizing them and breaking down the cells to make a richer, redder liquor.

手工
讓一切不同



Red Sun Rising

Red Sun Rising is an amazing example of beautiful Qimen red tea. As we have often discussed, each step in tea is more important than the next, as it will determine all that follows. The varietal will determine the harvest time, which will determine how it is withered and so on. This means that the first and most important factor in a tea's quality is the terroir. The climate, rainfall, sun, soil and ecology will all cooperate to make the leaves, so a fine terroir is the most important foundation for a fine tea like this. And this is where our Tea of the Month shines brightly, for the farm this tea came from is an "ecological farm (生態)," which goes beyond just organic. It is a "rainforest protected" area, due to the number of species that are protected over the vast area this farm represents, including many rare birds, lizards, frogs and insects. All of this biodiversity plays a huge role in the health of the land, the trees, and, of course, the leaves used to make this precious tea. It was amazing to walk amongst the healthy hills, breathing fresh air, and to find such healthy and happy tea trees thriving in such glorious surroundings. Bending over, you could see that there was a teeming world beneath each tree, covered in moss and mold, insects and plants, all of which create the necessary biodiversity needed to make vibrant tea. We hope your cup fills you with such visions, each sip a breath of such clean mountain air.

We were also very impressed by the farmer's dedication to organic farming. He told us that they had formed a local cooperative much like the one that Mr. Xie has formed, training farmers to use organic methods and then helping to sell some of their tea cooperatively after they have received certification. Our guide proudly pronounced that more than three hundred farmers have joined the cooperative so far!

Another unique thing about the farm where this tea was sourced is that all of the tea trees are seed-propagated, which is incredibly rare in this day and age. It is much easier for farmers to use cuttings, allowing for a uniformity that makes the farm easier to maintain and the leaves simpler to process. But as we have discussed in many issues, something natural, essential and deep is lost when the trees are not allowed to reproduce in a natural way—cross-pollinating, which creates a more vibrant, natural expression of the tea's energy. As we walked amongst the trees, it was easy to see the result of this seed-propagation, since each and every tree was different: some had mutated to have reddish leaves, and they all were unique in size and shape as well.

The liquor of Red Sun Rising brews deep and red like its namesake. It is bold yet sweet, powerful like a dian hong, with much less strength and power, and an added delicacy and refinement that bring grace to the table. Most red teas are best enjoyed in large cups or bowls, but this tea is to be sipped, much like an oolong. The Qi is like a morning breeze—fresh and rising up the way a fine oolong does. Perhaps you taste Golden Thread in this tea. That's because we had Red Sun Rising shipped to Taiwan in bamboo baskets like Liu An. This tea is best drunk on a clear and clean morning, with birdsong and a clear sky.



Sidehandle

Gongfu

Water: spring water, gathered or bottled

Fire: coals, infrared or gas

Heat: hotter, fish-eye, roughly 90-95 ° C

Brewing Methods: gongfu or sidehandle (gongfu is better)

Steeping: longer, to taste

*long, one flash, then progressive, if gongfu

Patience: ten to twenty steepings

茶 Use a taller zisha pot if possible, with thick walls. This improves the long steepings of red tea.

Brewing Tips

Most red tea is simple—easy to make and easy to brew. But our Tea of the Month is a gongfu red tea. When teas are made with such heart and skill, they demand a brewing method that honors the work that went into them. After all, a tea that was made with tremendous effort and skill would be disrespected by casual brewing that failed to highlight its quality. For that reason, we have suggested that you brew this tea gongfu. If you don't have gongfu teaware, you can also brew this tea in a side-handle pot, of course, which also results in some beautiful bowls that emphasize the tea's vibrancy and boldness, though some of its delicacy and grace will be lost.

Oftentimes, we are taught to enjoy the stronger, early steepings, and then to be disappointed as the high notes and most noble flavors and aromas start to dissipate, feeling like the tea is losing its essence. For this month, we would invite you to start to correct this way of thinking in all your tea brewing.

Instead of feeling like a tea is losing its quality in later steepings as it gets lighter, learn to enjoy each cup as it is, without comparing it to the boldness of the early steepings. There are actually other subtle beauties and wonders that underlie the

stronger flavors and aromas, which are much more pronounced when the stronger flavors and aromas have dissipated. These secondary and tertiary nuances are available to the sensitive drinker in early steepings as well, but often become much more enjoyable in later steepings. Only enjoying the early, stronger steepings, and then watching the later brews in terms of a loss, is much akin to the potentially destructive habit—promoted by the mainstream media—of only recognizing beauty in youth. Of course, there is a beauty worth admiring in young people, both in their physical appearance and their youthful vigor, but it is not necessary to view the aging process as a loss of this. Then we fight against the very natural process of growing old, instead of celebrating all the beauty and wonder in our later years.

Oftentimes, the later steepings of any tea take us closer to the environment the tea was grown in, with mineral flavors of the earth in which it was grown. One of the best brewing tips we could ever offer is to learn to enjoy these later steepings in their own right, and see the movement from strong, bold liquor to sweet, mineral water as a graceful and wonderful transformation, thereby finding so much more enjoyment in your tea!



Qimen

祁門
安徵

家中三寶

Anhui





A JOURNEY THROUGH QIMEN CULTURE

茶人: Luo Yingyin 羅英銀

Qimen is rich in history, gorgeous nature, tea and tea culture. It is home to three famous teas: gongfu red tea, Maofeng green tea and Liu An. We start our journey through this rich tea heritage by surveying Qimen's natural beauty and heritage. With old houses, bridges, poetry and tea sessions under willow trees, Qimen and its tea inspires a nostalgia for the times when people walked slowly and spent their evenings sharing old stories that involved the stars. Tea is left by the roadside for travelers like us, in the spirit of kindness and hospitality. Follow us into the mountains of Anhui...

The horizon draws a crisp line between the blue sky and the green forest; spring has arrived right on time in Qimen County. Beneath the March skies, the green hills keep company with soft white clouds, the clear water reflects the trees, the fragrance of tea wafts above the fields, and in the quiet villages, the old houses silently narrate their stories...

There's a faint chill in the air, and the leaves have begun to yellow; announcing itself with glorious colors, autumn keeps its appointment. On Qimen's White Dew nights in mid-autumn, the tranquility of the mountains is underscored by the gentle rustling of streams; the glow of moonlight settles across the fields, and Liu An tea leaves lie silently outdoors, spread on their mats, waiting to encounter the night dew and absorb its gift of moisture.

My journey in pursuit of Liu An tea led to two visits to Qimen County in Huangshan, Anhui Province, once in the spring and once in the autumn. In the tranquility of the springtime, the crisp air was so calm that it seemed to solidify, so that one almost forgot to breathe in the still of the moment. In the autumn, the romantic mountain

scenery carried the eye across the landscape, linking forest and peak like the words of a poem.

Qimen's natural charm doesn't just manifest itself in the forests and mountains, but also in the tea plantations nestled among them, nourished by the earth. Qimen is located in a region recognized the world over as the "golden belt" of tea production. Stretching across China at a latitude of 30° north of the equator, the teas produced around this area include not only those from Qimen itself, such as Qimen (Keemun) red tea, An tea and Huangshan Maofeng, but also a variety of other famous historical teas, such as West Lake Longjing, Dongting Biluochun, Junshan Silver Needle, Mengding Ganlu, Lushan Clouds and Mist and Taiping Houkui. The region's unique geographical landforms, abundant rainfall and sunlight, and rich biodiversity all come together to make it a veritable paradise for tea plants.

More than 90% of the total area of Qimen County is made up of mountainous terrain, which gave rise to a local saying: "nine mountains, half a lake and half a field." About 85% of the county is forested, with trees grow-

ing over all sorts of unusual landforms. Most of the region's tea plantations are situated in the densely forested hills and valleys. Also located here is the national AAAA-rated Guniujiang Nature Reserve, dubbed "Eastern China's last primeval forest." To truly experience Qimen's scenery, you really must visit the ancient forests of Guniujiang. They say that the pine trees here are even more uniquely twisted than the renowned crooked pines of Huangshan and the waterfalls are even more elegant than the famous ones at Lushan.

Guniujiang, with its ethereal scenery, is located near Likou Village, in the northwest of Qimen County. The name "Guniujiang (牯牛降)" literally means "descending bull"—it's named after a large black rock on one of the peaks, which from afar looks like a bull sitting peacefully, having just landed from the sky. These mountains are part of a range that branches off from Huangshan and extends toward the west. The landscape here is built of stone; the mountain peaks are pointed and craggy, with steep slopes that extend straight down to the gloriously lush valley floor.





茶 The waters of Guaniujiang are marvelously green, reflecting the surrounding forest. Hikes through the bamboo groves at the foot of the hills lead into a dream.

茶 The Huizhou architecture around Qimen is characterized by “horse-head” walls that have tiers and gables that resemble a horse’s head. The carving in the wood is a lost craft.

Rocks of strange and wondrous shapes are dotted across the landscape like stars in the sky, adding to the magic of the scenery.

There’s a saying that goes: “The mountain gets its life from the water, and the water takes on the serenity of the mountain; the more beautiful the mountain, the more graceful its waters.” The waters of Guniujiang are clear as crystal and green as jade, and quite moving to behold. Pure, clean, clear and bright, spotless as the fabled Peach Blossom Spring, the area is covered with springs and creeks, pools and streams, all beautifully clear and turquoise-green. The green pools quietly reflect the forest trees; the whole effect is just like standing in a real-life painted scroll.

If, as they say, a mountain gets its life from the water, then the mountains of Guniujiang are lively indeed—its waterfalls are pure motion, cascading over clifftops like long strings of

pearls, each droplet sparkling. As the water descends from the sky and crashes into the valley below, a mist of spray rises; lit by the sun’s rays, it naturally forms a rainbow, painting an enchanting many-colored brushstroke across the landscape.

If you follow the streams down into the valley, you’ll end up deep in the forest. At the foot of the mountain, the broad-leaved evergreen forest is a deep green, a steady green; if you look up toward the midslopes, the brushwood forest becomes brighter, the translucent green of jade; look up further still, and the forest atop the mountain forms a verdant line against the sky, a shining green, a fresh and vibrant green. Sprinkled across these layers are flowers of all colors, dots of brightness to complement the greens, raising their petals with joyful abandon to the sun.

As well as mountain flowers that brighten the village, the yellow oilseed flowers bloom in early March to herald

the arrival of spring. In the distance, mountain ranges form a many-layered background, and rows of tea trees cover the slopes; the tea trees in the village itself are lush and green. Against this backdrop, it looks just like the yellow-green flowers were scattered across the fields from the heavens. The green of Mother Earth sets off their delightful color, and the farmhouses between the criss-crossed paths bring a warm, familiar feeling to the flowering fields. Every year, when the flowers open, the area attracts many photography enthusiasts, hoping to capture this fleeting spring feeling.

In Qimen, the most beautiful scenery is to be found in the countryside. Qimen’s simple mountain villages, nestled among overlapping mountain ranges, afford a quite different view than urban areas. Amid the landscape, the old black-and-white farmhouses have stood there for generations, between the Earth and the Sky.



Among the meandering hills, the green waters wind along, the swaying shadows of the trees slowly changing with the sunlight from dusk till dawn. When the sun emerges from the lingering clouds and mist at dawn, or after a rainstorm, the black-and-white houses are suddenly lit up brilliantly; it's a special moment, a feeling that you'll only experience in the Anhui countryside.

These houses, with their white walls and black roof tiles, are typical of Anhui Province and represent one branch of traditional Han Chinese architecture. You can find this style of architecture throughout the six counties in the Huizhou District of southern Anhui, namely She, Yi, Wuyuan (which today is a part of Jiangxi Province), Xiuning and Jixi counties, along with the destination of our visit, Qimen County. The houses, ancestral temples and memorial archways are the most famous types of buildings in this style, and are celebrated as the three won-

ders of traditional Huizhou architecture. A notable feature of this style is its "horse-head walls (馬頭牆)," a style where the top of the wall has a series of tiers ending in upturned gables, which shape is reminiscent of a horse's head. The buildings in Huizhou style are often decorated with murals or intricate carvings.

A trip to Qimen County would not be complete without visiting Tao yuan ("Peach Spring") Village, named after the ethereal village depicted in the classic work *Peach Blossom Spring* (桃花源記) by poet Tao Yuanming. (In the story, a fisherman discovers an unknown village, a beautiful and harmonious utopia, which has had no contact with the outside world for centuries.) This real-life Peach Spring village lies between mountains on one side and a river on the other, and naturally follows the slope of the mountain. This layout is typical of alpine villages in Huizhou, and shows the importance

placed on *feng shui* (Daoist geomancy) in local Huizhou culture. The river in front of the village is named Rabbit Ear Creek. It encircles the village like a band of jade, chattering and murmuring as it flows by. The ancient forest behind the village, on Lai Long ("The Coming of the Dragon") Mountain, stands in peaceful silence.

Across Rabbit Ear Creek, in front of the village, the villagers have built a covered bridge, a necessity for life by a river. In Huizhou's traditional mountain villages, a bridge was often built across the outlet of a river (where the water flows away from the village) to act as a sort of "lock" for the *feng shui* of the area. Beside the bridge, people would build pavilions, dams and embankments, and would plant plants; all these were intended to preserve the balance of *feng shui*, ensuring prosperity and peace. Our ancestors thought much more about the design of their villages.

After crossing the bridge to the village, you will encounter the buildings of the village, their “horse heads” held proudly aloft. Wandering among them, you’ll come across whitewashed walls both high and low, roofed with rows of black tiles; you’ll marvel at the intricate carvings of the wooden window panels, meander down alleyways paved with gray stone, and quietly take in the grand and solemn ancestral temples with their drum-shaped stone statues. The whole village has a feeling of serenity and history, as if time has stood still here. The streets are all paved with stone, and the cobbles, lit with the steady glow of the sunlight, have been worn smooth with years of footsteps. The streets are so narrow that it’s almost impossible for two people to walk side-by-side, and are criss-crossed with a veritable maze of small, winding alleys. The old walls, with their mottled whitewash and many doors and windows, stand in secluded tranquility.

The neighboring township of Zhukou is also home to several old villages. When visiting the area, you

must pay a visit to Zhenyi Temple (貞一堂), known as “Huizhou’s First Shrine of the People’s Republic of China.” This grand ancestral temple was first built in the Ming Dynasty and has since undergone two fires and two periods of rebuilding. It is built with fine materials and decorated with intricate carvings. The temple faces south on a large area of land, and has three wide halls. Inside the main hall there are 108 pillars, alluding to the saying: “Thirty-six heavenly stars, and seventy-two evil stars.” (This comes from a Daoist tradition in which the constellation known in English as “the Big Dipper (Ursa Major)” represents the balance of fate. According to the legend, this constellation was made up of 108 stars, each home to a god; thirty-six of them were benevolent, protective spirits, while seventy-two were malicious.)

The courtyard in front of the temple is lined on either side by eighteen pairs of impressive stone steles. It’s said that in the early days, members of the Ni clan whose offspring successfully passed the imperial examinations with

a certain rank were allowed to erect a pair of stone poles in front of the ancestral shrine, to pass down the family honor to future generations. One might well wonder how these stone monuments made it through the Cultural Revolution undamaged; the answer is that the people of the Ni clan transported them all down the river, to the front of the village and buried them under silt, to safely preserve them throughout the revolution.

Learning of this history left us to contemplate the power behind this vast cultural legacy. Deep in thought, you will wander through Zhenyi Temple, paying a visit to the old residence on the left, toward the back of the hall. The residence is known as “One Government, Six Counties,” and is also known among locals as the “new house” and the “imperial palace.” It is representative of Qimen residences from the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The name “One Government, Six Counties” describes the architectural layout of the residence and refers to the six counties that were under the ju-



懷舊寺廟

茶 The Zhenyi Temple was built in the Ming Dynasty, though it has been repaired several times since. It is massive, with many halls, each boasting amazing architecture, stunning steles and a significant 108 pillars in the main hall. There is also a connected residence, which belonged to the Ni family (imperial servants).

jurisdiction of the Huizhou government. Mansions of this type had a large courtyard with one “government” hall and six “county” halls. The “government” hall was the main reception hall, used for receiving guests and holding banquets. The “county” halls were the day-to-day living quarters of the family. The mansion was built in 1884 and covers an area of 1,600 square meters. It was the residence of Ni Wangzhong (倪望重), who passed the highest imperial civil service examination during the reign of the Qing emperor Tongzhi. Ni Wangzhong was a prefectural magistrate of Zhejiang Province, while his younger brother, Ni Wanglong (倪望隆) was a county head magistrate in the south of Jiangxi Province. The two brothers lived together in the one, big mansion. Since the family had officials at both the prefecture and county level, this gave rise to the “One Government, Six Counties” name.

The whole mansion is splendid and elegant. Each of the county halls is exquisitely decorated, with rooms off to the side, verandas for ventilation and

light, and multiple stories above the main hall. The walls, from both inside and out, are decorated with breathtakingly ornate carvings. From the beams to the archways, from the pillars to the windows, the historic charm of the residence greets one’s eyes at every turn. The features surrounding the verandas—the eaves, stone walls, partition screens, lotus gates and pillars—are all made of the finest brick, wood and carved stone. There’s a saying that goes: “Every hall has its veranda, and no dwelling lacks carvings.” This mansion certainly exemplifies the saying and offers us a window into classical life and culture in Huizhou.

The old houses and residences in Qimen’s villages are an embodiment of Huizhou culture, with a distinctive style that is quiet and understated. The passing time has brought a sense of age and history to the area, and the stones, wood, pillars, roofs and windows are all subtly imbued with the echoes of their cultural legacy, inspiring nostalgia for lost ages. You will walk through time in these places.

So, on our cultural journey through Qimen County, we’ve seen old residences, ancient trees and elegant pavilions. We’ve passed by houses and crossed little bridges over rushing streams; we’ve admired the natural beauty of Guniujiang with its mountains and jade-green waters. All of this exploration paints a vivid backdrop to the history and culture of Qimen’s teas: the fragrant and flamboyant Qimen red tea, the Liu An tea of Luxi with its rich history and the traditional Maofeng green tea of the villages. Brimming with countless stories and endless enchanting landscapes, this fascinating region really is an earthly echo of the fabled Peach Blossom Spring.





QIMEN

ONE LEAF, THREE TEAS

茶人: Luo Yingyin 羅英銀

Spring in Qimen County is filled with fragrance. It's the liveliest season of the year, and everywhere you go, the delicate perfume of tea is faintly present on the breeze. The green tea plantations stretch across the slopes under clear blue skies; the fingertips of the tea farmers move in a constant rhythm. At the tea markets, the ever-present aroma of tea wafts above the bustle of buying and selling; it accompanies the tea makers in their farmhouses at night, or in their small workshops and tea factories. The towns of Qimen in April are tranquil yet lively, just like villages from a story.

Qimen's natural beauty unfolds abundantly in its forests and mountains, and the tea plantations nestled among them also benefit from the nourishment of the local environment. Over the years, as this historic region has undergone economic and cultural changes, one variety of leaf has evolved into three distinct styles of tea: green tea, red tea and black tea. (Here, it may be useful to recall the distinction between Chinese red and black teas: red tea is what is commonly referred to in English-speaking countries as "black" tea, while black tea refers to a dark, "post-fermented" style of tea, such as puerh and An tea).

Qimen has been known for its tea production since the Tang Dynasty. Tea production techniques have also evolved over several dynasties, from earlier methods of rubbing and kneading the leaves to the more recent pan-firing method used to produce green tea. Up until the time of the Qing emperor Guangxu, Qimen had always produced green tea. It wasn't until 1875, when Yu Ganchen (余干臣), a native of Yi County in Anhui, returned home from his of-

ficial posting in Fujian Province to become a merchant, that this began to change. Yu admired the Fujianese red tea, often known as "Min Hong (閩紅)" or "Fujian Red," for its rich flavor and popularity on the market, so he began to produce red tea locally. The next year, he set up a tea shop in Shanli Village in the west of Qimen, and thus began the success story of Qimen red tea. At the same time, a Qimen native by the name of Hu Yuanlong (胡元龍) was also starting the "green to red" trend, and set up the successful Rishun Tea Factory. From that time on, red tea production in Qimen continued to grow and flourish, making Qimen one of China's major red tea producing regions. Qimen red tea is known as "Qi Hong" in Chinese (祁紅, literally "Qimen Red"), and is also known in English as "Keemun" tea, after an older anglicization of "Qimen."

This "green to red" phase in Qimen's tea history was largely motivated by changes in the international tea market. At the time, the overseas demand for red tea (or "black" tea, as it was called outside of China) was growing rapidly, which directly spurred the

growth of red tea production in China. Fujian Province's three main types of *Min Hong* gongfu red tea were not being produced in anywhere near a large enough quantity to satisfy demand. So, red tea production expanded to the north and took root in provinces such as Jiangxi, Hubei, Hunan and Anhui. Qimen in Anhui and Ningzhou in Jiangxi were known for producing the finest teas.

Meanwhile, in the United States in 1875, Chinese green teas were already not selling as well as their Japanese counterparts; this, along with the sudden increase in demand for red tea, presented a challenge for the green tea export market. Qimen, which had always produced green tea, began to feel the influence of the international market, so shifting toward red tea was the most prudent response to the changing circumstances. Thus, Qimen burst forth onto the international red tea market, and since then, the export market has been the main driver of red tea production in the area.

The tea industry continued to develop along these red tea lines, up until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1911.



寶之增

佛法僧



When the planned economy era began, all purchasing and marketing of tea was controlled by the State. Several decades later, in 1984, the State Council announced policy changes, easing market restrictions; with the exception of tea sold directly across China's borders, all tea for the domestic and export markets could now be freely bought and sold. The changing tides of policy led to a reversal of the trends in Qimen, and a "red to green" phase began to emerge. This was because red tea was mainly produced for the export market; now that the State no longer bought and sold tea on their behalf, many small rural private enterprises in Qimen didn't have the ability to sell tea for overseas export. So, they

turned to green tea, which was popular on the domestic market and which they could easily harvest, process and sell by themselves.

At present, Qimen County governs seven "townships" (an intermediate administrative division) and eleven villages. Of those, only two produce mainly green tea: Fufeng Village in the southeast and Anling Township in the north. The green tea produced there is mainly Maofeng tea. If you ever have the chance to visit a rural Qimen family in their home, you'll be welcomed warmly with a cup of green tea—surprisingly, though, it isn't Maofeng, but rather a simple homemade green, fired in their own pans. The raw leaves for green tea are generally picked in

March, in early spring, when the leaf shoots have just begun to sprout; the leaves for red tea are harvested later, during the second wave of growth.

The Revival of An Tea

Red tea still accounts for the largest volume of tea output in Qimen, with green tea coming in second. Out of the eighteen towns and villages in Qimen, Luxi Village is the only one that produces An tea (a variety of black tea in the Chinese sense, also known as Liu An). During the reign of the Qing emperor Guangxu, before red tea gained popularity, An tea



茶 Baskets for picking tea.

was produced throughout a large area of Qimen and sold well on the export market. An tea production ceased in the mid-1930s, and the tea remained very obscure until the mid-1980s, when policy reforms opened up the market. Around this time, the China Tea Fund in Hong Kong sent a basket of old Liu An to Qimen, along with a letter expressing how much Chajin of the older generation throughout Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan and Southeast Asia had missed An tea over the last half-century. Their fondest wish was that this tea might start to be produced once more. After a few attempts at recreating the production techniques, An tea was finally reintroduced to the market in 1992.

As the market was still finding its feet, it wasn't until a few years later in 1997, that Liu An Bamboo Rain Hat Tea (named for the bamboo baskets it is packaged in) began to be produced steadily once more.

At present, Liu An tea is mainly produced in Luxi Village and Dianbu Tan, and there are about four companies that make it. The three varieties of tea—red, green and An tea—are all harvested in the exact same area. In March, when spring arrives, the first wave of shoots are mainly used to make Maofeng green tea; while the leaves used for An tea are not harvested until after the Guyu (“Grain Rain”) solar term, which runs from late April to early May.

Qimen red tea is known throughout the world for its fragrance; while the charm of Liu An tea is fondly remembered by older Chajin in Guangdong, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Qimen green tea's clear, sweet flavor makes it a favorite on the market. Altogether, the harvesting period for these three tea varieties only lasts for about two months in the spring. So, as soon as the first tea shoots start to appear, people across the whole countryside pour all their energy into the business of tea. For the tea farmers, it's a constant race against time, and a lot of tea trading goes on during this period too. All three of these amazing teas (red, green and black) all fly their colors on the roads and in homes everywhere.



The Bustling Tea Trade

In the vast Jindong tea market, the voices of merchants and customers rise and fall in a constant hum from dawn till dusk; at its busiest, it's reported that more than ten thousand people do business here in a single day. Early each morning, the latest batches of newly finished green tea are shipped in from all over the county, and the trading floor soon becomes a bustling hive of activity. The market is housed in two large sheds, with many tables laid out inside—with these simple facilities, the trading can commence. The busiest time in the trading halls is not during the day, but instead, is in the evening, particularly between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m. at night, which is when the most deals are made.

When you enter the market, you'll notice that every single person appears to be a tea connoisseur: they only need to pick up a handful of tea leaves to assess the fragrance and the shape of the leaves. The region where the leaves were grown, the time of year they were picked and the plumpness of the tea shoots all factor into the price of the

finished tea. Everyone is busy trading, with their expressions focused on the task—it doesn't pay to display too much emotion, even when such an array of deep green, subtly glossy tea leaves is spread before your eyes!

Apart from the large city tea market, you can also see tea trading going on at all sorts of smaller locations throughout Qimen County. Every afternoon, from around 3 or 4 p.m., many tea farmers finish harvesting for the day and come down from the mountains. They all gather at a makeshift tea market at the village entrance to sell the tea leaves that they've just picked that day. The locals refer to these fresh, newly picked tea leaves as "tea grass (*cha cao*, 茶草)."

From the hustle and bustle of the markets to the quiet tranquility of the gardens, spring in Qimen is infused with tea. Whether it be the bright character of Qimen red, the elegance of An tea or the delicate sweetness of Maofeng, the subtle fragrance of tea will quietly accompany you wherever you go.



茶 Being around this magical tea for a whole day was one of the marvelous highlights of our annual trip. Qimen tea gardens are indeed tranquil, filling the soul with tea joy!







Longfu Teapot

功夫茶壺

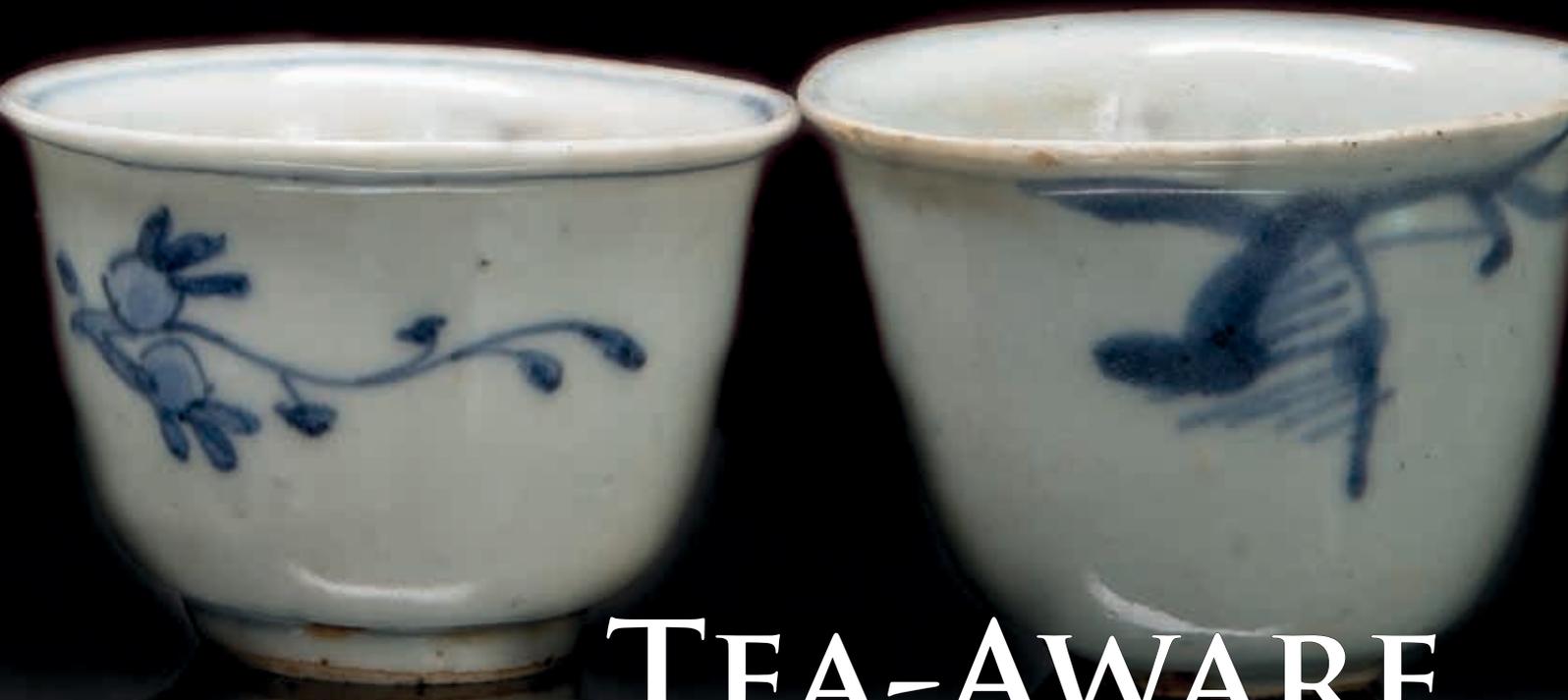
There really is something to the old saying “they don’t make ‘em like they used to.” There is an elegance and sophistication that comes with sipping one’s tea from a Qing or Ming Dynasty cup, brewing some old puerh in one’s favorite Early Republic or Qing Dynasty Yixing or even just using a Ming bowl as a tea sink. Moreover, this kind of teaware is often a bit like aged and wise leaves, imbuing more energy to the teas we drink. Almost any tea drinker can tell the difference between modern and antique teaware, often from appearance alone. It is difficult to assess which factors make them antique, but it’s not that hard to notice the difference they afford one’s tea. Much of the reason why antique teaware works so much better is still a mystery.

I recently conducted an experiment while serving tea in the West by allowing some people, who had never before had the chance, to try using antique tea cups. About midway through a session of some excellent vintage puerh, I washed and passed a single Qing Dynasty cup around to everyone, letting each participant in turn try drinking from their “normal” modern cup and the Qing one at the same time. All of them testified to me that they couldn’t believe the difference was so great—“noticeably so” being perhaps the most modest of their answers.

There are many possible factors that all contribute to the difference between antique and modern teaware, like the clay composition and processing, production and firing methodologies, etc. Perhaps another time we

could talk about the effects of wood-fired kilns on reduction, or the difference in clay processing that we know about when producing porcelain paste or Yixing stoneware; but for now, I’d like to discuss two more philosophical reasons why older teaware is better, both relating to the craftsmen themselves.

The first reason is to do with the changes in the modern world, and is not completely something we can correct in teaware production. We could, however, clean up the environment and return to a world where everyone eats organic food, has clean air and water, etc. Teaware makers were simple people back in the day, as they often are now. In fact, craftsmen in Asia rarely signed their name to their work, often putting the name of an-



TEA-AWARE

茶人: Wu De

We are often asked why we prefer antique teaware. This is a deep question, and requires several articles over the coming issues. We thought we would start with some of the general philosophical issues that make bygone teaware special before moving on to the practical specifics.

cient masters they honored instead. But they did eat organic food, drank alcohol their neighbor fermented and also lived simply. They never went to school to learn extraneous information that was not directly used in their craft. From birth, they would have been devoted to teaware and apprenticed at a very early age, sweeping the floor, then helping with clay and finally starting to produce in their teens. Their whole life was devoted to teaware.

Nowadays, teaware makers are as complicated as anyone else in the world. They eat unhealthy, processed food that unsettles the heart. Their work is interrupted by cellphone calls, and they spend their formative years at school, straining to memorize data that has nothing to do with their craft, losing years of practice. Of course, this

is not a black-and-white issue, as there are many positive aspects to schooling, including offering children more opportunities to explore careers different from their parents'. But the simplicity of life, the unspoiled character of the environment, and the lifelong devotion to teaware craft in those times is the first relevant reason that antique teaware is better.

The second important change that has happened in the teaware industry is that the producers themselves have stopped drinking tea. Without a deep understanding of the preparation of tea, it is very difficult to make nice teaware. And craftsmen today are not the "unknown craftsmen" of yesteryear; these days, everyone is striving earnestly to make a name for themselves. This inspires creativity and

unique design, which is a good thing if it is coupled with an understanding of tea drinking. Otherwise, the desire to create new things without an understanding of their function results in lots of teaware that is completely aesthetic and very often dysfunctional. In Yixing, for example, it is not the art of crafting teapots that has been lost, but rather the relationship between the clay and tea liquor.

In the late 1980s, a teacher I know attended a large teapot convention in Yixing itself. Many famous master craftsmen were gathered there, including the Grand Master of a government factory. Many of these names would go on to make Yixing history, creating the artistic pots that would come to be worth the great fortunes that they are today.

At the end of one speech, with all the artists as a panel, there began a question and answer session. The teacher I know stood up and politely asked, “For years now I have been trying to solve a mystery and I know that if anyone in the world can help me, it would be someone in this room. The stone ore mined to produce Yixing clay is billions of years old. For these long eons, it has rested beneath the mountain. What I can’t figure out, therefore, is why the pots of the Qing Dynasty make tea so much better than the ones made today? Is it the way the clay is processed? Have secrets been lost?” One of the well-known artists responded, “Oh, but you’re wrong. Our craft and skill is better than ever before. Now we have the science to break down the clays and analyze them, mixing and adding what we need. And we have electric kilns to reach the perfect temperature. The teapots back then were just teapots—now we make pieces of art!” Though this didn’t help this teacher to find the answers he sought about Yixing clay, it did provide insight into another issue that affects all modern teaware.

This teacher realized that one important difference between these masters and their predecessors was that they didn’t really love tea, and thus didn’t understand its preparation. What the artist had said was true, and all the others on the panel had nodded in agreement: they had improved their precision in firing and their ability to create synthetic clays and mix natural ones in ways never dreamed of before. But, as the artist had himself said, they were making pieces of art—decoration—not teapots. The teacher I know felt differently. He felt that those old Qing pots were “just teapots,” and perhaps that was a factor in why they not only make better tea, but appeal to him more, through their simplicity, even if the craftsmanship was more quaint and rough. Had function been sacrificed to form?

There were then, and continue to be, exceptions on both sides: the occasional modern teaware artist who understands tea, and antique artists who made pots for decoration, especially in the late Qing and Early Republic periods. Even today, in all aspects of

teaware, I know artists who love tea and drink it every day. They understand a life of Tea, and strive to create pieces that not only function well in practical use, but fit into the aesthetic that develops as one progresses in Tea—Weng Ming Chuan’s bamboo carving, Chen Qin Nan’s kettles, Deng Ding Sou’s teapots and Petr Novak’s wood-fired ware are all examples that quickly come to mind, though there are others who have also played a role in my own understanding of tea. However, for the most part, I turn to the craftsmen of yesteryear for all my teaware.

Taiwan has its own pottery city, called Yingge, and any tea lover living here of course is happy to frequent the city. It is wonderful on the weekends, as the old city is blocked off from cars and the cobblestone streets are full of pedestrians, food stalls and, of course, tons of shops with pottery and teaware. In meeting so many of these artists, both to buy teaware and to interview them professionally for Global Tea Hut and other magazines, I have come to the same conclusion of the aforementioned teacher:



these days, so few of them actually love and drink tea, let alone understand it—despite the fact that they earn their living by, for the most part, making teaware. They try to create unique pieces aesthetically and distinguish themselves artistically, but since they don't really love tea and drink it every day, they can only cater to those who are either very casually into tea or looking for a piece more for its beauty than function. There is nothing wrong with that. Please don't misunderstand my point: while others may conclude from this that modern teaware makers are inferior, I do not share that assumption. I am merely helping to explain why antique teaware makes better tea than its modern counterpart. The aesthetic value of a piece, on the other hand, is relative to each of us, and there may be many people who prefer the newer ones, especially since the antiques are so much more expensive.

That said, you still can't help but wonder if something has been lost in the simplicity of teaware being made by tea lovers—those who love and drink tea every day, and have learned

how to prepare it. Sometimes, something is so obviously missing from a tea set you wonder how it could have been missed. But then, you're a tea drinker. Years later, you find the very thing you were looking for and when you investigate, you find out that the artist is a tea lover like you and came to the same obvious conclusion that you did about the practicality of such a piece.

Using Weng Ming Chuan, the famous bamboo artist who carves gorgeous tea utensils, as an example might illustrate this point better. For years I wondered why all the tea scoops and other utensils, while beautiful, were covered in stains, paints and lacquers. It seemed obvious to me, and most tea drinkers in my circle, that we wouldn't want such chemicals dipping into our tea leaves—too obvious. I saw some tea drinkers solve this by using sticks or stalks of bamboo from their gardens as spout cleaners and flat pieces of natural wood for scoops—brushing the tea leaves into the pot, rather than scooping or pouring them. Then I met Weng Ming Chuan, and found that he had come to the same conclusion years

ago and started carving bamboo utensils without any chemicals as a result. He even came up with a method of staining the pieces with red tea when he desires a darker color.

If the independent artists who make teaware have lost the love for tea, which then inspires one to begin learning how to brew tea and how to live a tea life, what could be said for factory production? Back in the day, even the factories that made pots and cups were full of simple potters who drank tea themselves and loved it, let alone the masters who designed the production lines where teaware was produced.

茶 Deng Ding Sou, Chen Qi Nan and Weng Ming Chuan are examples of modern teaware producers who also love drinking tea and understand function. (Our own Petr Novak is another.) They design teaware that innovates in function, not just in aesthetics, and is born of tea spirit and wisdom.



There may have been exceptions, but for the most part, they were tea lovers and understood tea preparation. Today, when a porcelain factory designs cups, as well as the paste that will be used to manufacture them, they consider factors like beauty and cost efficiency, rather than focusing on how the shape will affect the tea liquor or how the different minerals in the paste will affect the Qi of the tea. The same could be said for Yixing pots, as so many potters are busy trying to make a pot shaped like a baseball or a dog, rather than one that pours properly and influences the tea leaves in the way that married Yixing clay to tea so long ago.

About ten years ago, another of my teachers initiated a program to fix some of this. He himself has since then been traveling to Yixing five to six times a year to teach a small group of potters who are interested. Of course, he's not teaching them how to make pots, as they could obviously educate him in that regard; but rather, having found that they truly do love tea and wish to learn, he is teaching them how to prepare tea. Just by loving tea and learning about all the factors that make a better cup, they are progressing to the point at which their own inherent creativity will produce teaware made for tea preparation.

There is no denying that aesthetics play a role in tea preparation. I myself have written that it is often okay to choose a piece that functions a bit worse if it is aesthetically pleasing to you. This will affect the most important aspect of any tea session, which is not the leaves or teaware, but the people. This is also why restaurants spend as much on ambience as they do on the menu. However, we can never completely sacrifice function for beauty if we are to truly appreciate the tea leaves. If the teaware is a piece of art in and of itself, that is fine. But if, on the other hand, it is intended to make tea, then it must be judged mostly, or completely, on its ability to function in that regard.

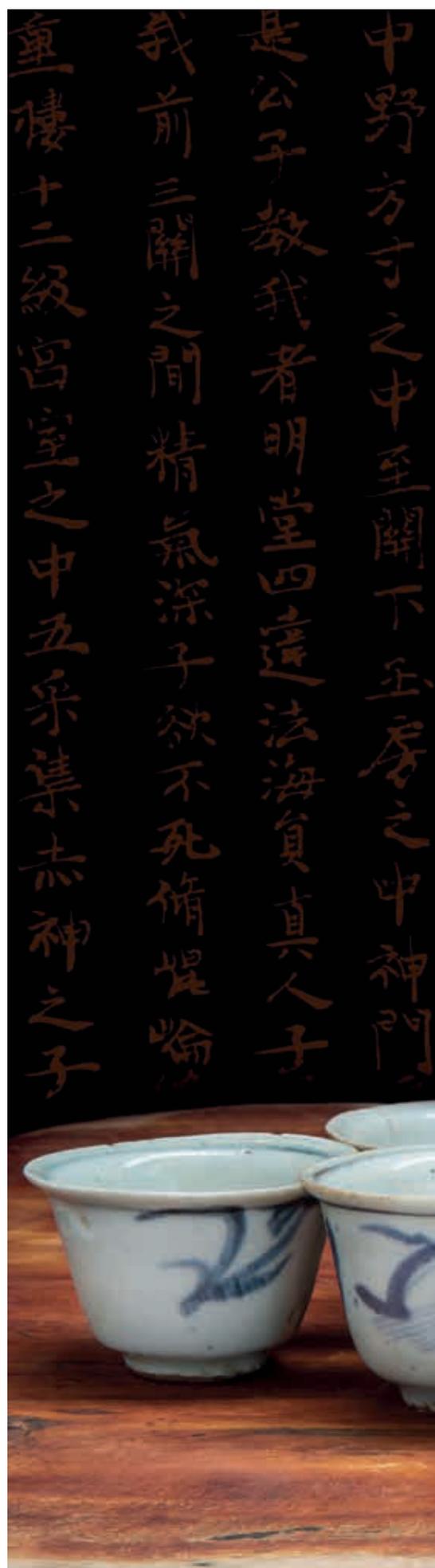
In the end, there is a solution for those with initiative. We can encourage the artists who are interested in tea to explore tea preparation and apply their wonderfully creative skills to the development of pieces that are unique in function and form. Also, even those artists or factories who have profit as a

bottom line still respond to what is ordered by their customers, and can often be convinced to create new production lines or adapt old ones to fit the needs of tea lovers. In the end, nice teaware produced in this era will come through teaware makers who love drinking tea and understand the ins and outs of the brewing process. We may not be able to return to a healthy environment, free from distractions, where craftsmen can devote their whole lives to teaware; but we can inspire a love of tea and tea-drinking that will bring spirit and function back to the teaware industry.

The love of tea explains why my master makes better tea than I do. For a long time, I thought it was technique, but when I asked him, he'd always answer that he "just loved tea." Slowly, over time, I grew to understand that it was that simple. This applies to teaware as well, and helps, in part, to explain the difference between modern and antique pots, cups and utensils. When you love tea, you love the vessel it's prepared in, and you know that after you've created the piece, some tea lover will take it home and appreciate it as you have, as much for its beauty as for its ability to improve his or her tea. I personally always hope that it will be thus with my paintings—that they will help inspire some tea space, somewhere. And as I grow in my understanding of Tea, life and a life of Tea, I more and more find my sense of beauty in the simplicity of function—a teapot for tea, leaves and water.



☘ *These are the Four Treasures of gongfu tea: Zisha pot (here, a late Qing Dynasty pot), the tea boat (here, a Qing plate), the cups (here, Ming Dynasty cups) and the stove/kettle (here, from the Qing).*





生固志不
居中外相距之神
爐之中
衣關
之中結
雅氣管受精符急固子精以自持
士常衣絳子能見之可不病橫理長
其上子能守之可無恙呼喻廬間以自
守完堅身受慶方寸之中謹蓋藏精
還歸老復壯佚以流幽關流下竟養子
今可仗至道不煩不旁迂靈根臺通

Global Tea Hut Expansion Packs

EXPANSION III: GONGFU RED TEA

We've developed a new and exciting way to expand your tea education. If this trial run works and you find these expansions fulfilling, we plan to offer three or four of them a year. Each will come with two or more teas that expand upon the topics we are covering in that issue, allowing you to taste more, rarer and sometimes higher quality examples, in order to learn more about various genres of tea.

We have received some amazing and very positive feedback over the last few months, expressing that you really enjoy these expansion packs, as they offer the chance to learn more about particular genres of tea. As we have mentioned, finding tea that meets the budget of Global Tea Hut and can be partially or completely donated is a difficult job and there will always be so many examples of tea we won't be able to share with you, as they are too rare or expensive to share in this form. These expansion packs are an attempt to expand your understanding of tea in the best possible way: by drinking more and varied samples!

Unlike our Light Meets Life fundraiser cakes, these expansion packs are not designed to raise support for our current or future Centers, but rather to offer affordable access to teas that expand your appreciation for whatever topic we are exploring when they are offered. For that reason, these expansion packs will not be released on a schedule, but rather whenever we can

find an array of the kind of tea we are sending as the Tea of the Month that helps provide something unique from the Tea of the Month, like a difference in kind or quality.

For each expansion pack we will keep our cost to around \$40 and offer a flat shipping rate of \$15, which makes the process easier for a very busy and over-worked Center full of volunteers. Due to packing materials and the varied cost of shipping, we will keep the minimum donation at \$50. Any extra proceeds will go towards improving Global Tea Hut. The only exceptions we can foresee with regards to the consistency of this pricing would be if we decide to send some more rare or aged teas one month.

Traditionally, there are several kinds of gongfu red tea: *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong* (正山小种), *Qimen*, *Yixing* red tea, *zheng he* (政和), *bailin* (白琳) and *tanyang* (坦洋). As we were setting out on our fourth annual Global Tea Hut trip, we realized that we would also be traveling to one of these regions (Yixing), and

knew we'd have access to some very nice red tea while there. Then, days before we left, a good friend of ours in Wuyi called and asked if Wu De could travel there at the end of the trip for a few days to help out with a CCTV film and brew at a large tea gathering. Wu De immediately realized that we would then be able to offer an expansion pack of two more gongfu red teas, worried that the *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong* would make this impossible, as it is one of the most expensive teas produced on Earth.

Though there is some dispute, most scholars agree that red tea production began in Wuyi. This red tea was traditionally called "Bohea" in the West, after the Minnan term for the area that sailors heard in the south of Fujian. (Actually, locals in Wuyi speak Minbei natively). This tea is often called "Lapsang Souchong," which is a mispronunciation of the Cantonese version of this tea, which is "*Lishan Xiao Zhong* (立山小种)" in Mandarin. (Such corruptions were common in the early days of Western trade.)



“*Xia Zhong*” means “sub-variety” in Chinese, which is a reference to the special trees that are used in Wuyi to make this unique gongfu red tea. “*Souchong*” was also a certain leaf grade in Western tea classification.

In the Tea of the Month article at the beginning of this issue, we discussed one version of the traditional story for how red tea began in this area, in which passing soldiers disturbed a tea production and what was intended to be oolong over-withered. Not wanting to waste the tea, the farmers processed it anyway and discovered red tea in the process.

Most of the steps in making *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong* are the same as for other kinds of red tea: it is picked, withered, rolled for a long time, piled and oxidized again and then dried. Like our Tea of the Month, Red Sun Rising, this tea also is refined and sorted more stringently, and when it is made well, there is a much greater attention to detail than with most kinds of red tea. The finest grades, like the tea in this expansion pack, are made only of thin, delicate buds, which produce a very sweet, refined and dewy liquor that can be transcendent.

The defining feature of *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong* is the drying, which is done with pinewood smoke. Most tea scholars agree that this began because the houses in Tongmu Village (桐木村), the area where this tea is

produced, were traditionally built alongside small roads in the mountains with little space surrounding them. For this reason, the locals learned to wither the tea in lofts above their living spaces. There are pine forests all around, so of course, these villagers would cook all their food, heat their water for drinking and bathing, and warm their homes with pine fires. The smoke from their daily lives would then drift up through the rafters to the tea that was withering in the lofts above. Tea is very sensitive to aromas, and will absorb whatever is around it. In Yunnan, camphor trees were often planted near tea trees and the tea tastes of camphor as a result. Tea leaves are also scented with flowers in the same way. As a result of this, *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong* developed a smoky flavor, which was surprisingly appreciated by the market, including Western tea drinkers. After commercial production began, the tea was processed in a building called a “*qing lou* (青楼),” a three- or four-story building with a large fireplace for smoking.

A lot of *Xiao Zhong* is smoked in ovens these days, or very casually, and not made in the traditional way. The highest grades, however, are still processed by hand in the old ways. Our tea comes from an organic farm with seed-propagated trees and was completely processed by hand. Such high grades of *Xiao Zhong* are amongst the most expensive teas produced in the

world. Only aged teas rival it. For that reason, we thought we wouldn’t be able to get a nice version to share in an affordable expansion pack. Very generously, the farmer agreed to donate more than half the cost for this amazing tea so we could all get the chance to drink more gongfu red tea this month.

Red tea production probably came to Yixing from Qimen in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. There were already many kinds of green tea produced in the area, so using bud sets to make red tea was a natural shift. Most local potters drink Yixing gongfu red tea over and over all day, rarely sampling any other tea.

Our tea offered here is from a wild, organic farm up in the hills beyond some of the other gardens and plantations. Since it is wild, it is bolder and far less delicate than most Yixing red tea, but also much more unique, offering a depth of forest that the tea you drink in local shops over teapot discussions will never have.

You can get yours on the expansion pack page of the website under the “Tea & Teaware” tab. They are limited, so you may want to check the site soon. There is also a forum for discussing each of the expansion packs, in which we will participate, making conversation more lively. We hope everyone who participates will join us with comments about the teas or questions you have after drinking them!

THIS MONTH’S EXPANSION PACK IS

茶 25 grams of fine, superior-grade *Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong*

茶 25 grams of wild *Yixing gongfu red tea*



茶 Zheng Shan Xiao Zhong

茶 Wild Yixing gongfu red tea





QIMEN TEA

FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE

茶人: *Deng Zengyong* 鄧增永

Qimen County, in the Wan'nan mountain region of Anhui, is one of the six counties that was under the jurisdiction of the historic Huizhou District. Qimen County was established during the Tang Dynasty in 766 CE, and was named for two neighboring places: Qishan to the northeast and Changmen to the southwest. Thanks to its three famous teas—Tun green tea, An tea and Qimen red tea—the county enjoyed a period of great prosperity. Today, the tea growers of Qimen are keeping their tea dream alive by introducing Qimen tea to even more tea lovers around the world.

China is the birthplace of tea; in ancient times, the ancestors of today's Chinese people discovered tea plants and learned how to harvest and process the leaves to brew tea. As people continued to consume tea over a long period of time, the early tea industry was born. As Lu Yu (陸羽) said in his *Tea Sutra* (茶經): "Tea as a drink was first discovered by the legendary God of Farming, Shen Nong, as recorded by Duke Zhou of Lu."

According to historical records from before the Six Dynasties (220–589 CE), the earliest tea industry originated in Bashu, which is now modern-day Sichuan. During the Han (206 BCE–220 CE), Wei (220–265 CE) and Six Dynasties, the tea industry had already attained a certain scale, and tea production in Sichuan continued to grow. Tea gradually spread toward the southeast and other areas, forming a large-scale tea-producing region. Though industry began in Sichuan during this time, it had been cultivated and consumed from wild trees by local aboriginals since the early Neolithic period (ca. 10,000 BCE–2,000 CE).

Tang & Song Dynasties: Growing Industry, Flourishing Culture

After several thousand years of development, it wasn't until the Tang Dynasty that China's tea industry really began to thrive. At that time, tea was being planted across a large area around Qinling and the Huai River, and the region was rapidly developing into what would form the beginnings of today's tea region. Many famous teas emerged and made a name for themselves; lively tea markets were everywhere and business was thriving. The business of buying and selling tea began to split off from rural tea production, and became an important part of society and the economy. The traditional tea-growing areas of Bashu enjoyed new prosperity, and the area of Jiangnan, encompassing several provinces south of the Changjiang (Yangtze) River, became an important center for growing and trading tea.

During the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), as tea became commercialized and trade with other areas increased, a large-scale tea market began to take shape across the whole of China, which in turn contributed to a development boom in important tea-producing areas. The mainstream was introduced to tea through the thriving Zen monasteries. In his *Revised Records of Changmen Creek, Qimen County*, Tang Dynasty writer Zhang Tu (張途) vividly describes the bustling scene of a tea merchant arriving in Qimen to buy tea: "More than 5,400 households live in the area; the village has many mountains and few fields; the waters are clear and the soil fertile. The mountains are planted all over from top to bottom with tea; for a thousand miles all around, almost everyone is employed in the business of tea. To feed and clothe themselves, to pay taxes, for all of this, the people rely on tea. Qimen tea is yellow and fragrant; the merchant haggles, asking unreasonable prices. Every year in February or March he comes bringing silver coins and silks to trade; the locals arrive and crowd around to eagerly examine the goods, rubbing shoulders and stepping in each other's footprints."

神農



Shen Nong

As tea trading increased throughout the Tang Dynasty, numerous tea distribution centers of all sizes sprang up; the most famous was at Fuliang. Fuliang has been immortalized by the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi (白居易) in his long poem *Song of the Pipa Player* (琵琶行), which contains the lines: “Merchants will gladly leave in search of a profit; last month they went to sell tea in Fuliang.” Fuliang tea, described as “one hundred times more beneficial than Bashu (Sichuan) tea,” was bought by merchants and ferried great distances along the Huai river, as far as northern China and Taiwan to the south. A saying from the time goes: “Tea from Fuliang in Shezhou is in demand across the world.” During the Tang Dynasty, before Qimen had become an independent county, villages in the west and south of modern-day Qimen were a part of Fuliang.

In the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), the center of tea production shift-

ed south, and the trend was to steam the tea leaves and shape them into balls and cakes. The finest example of the art of making tea cakes in the Song Dynasty was Jianzhou Beiyuan tribute tea cakes. In his *Broad Treatise on Tea*, the Song emperor Huizong wrote: “The dragon rounds and phoenix cakes of the yearly tea tribute from the Jian River area are famed throughout the land.” The Song Dynasty was a critical period for the development of the tea economy in China, with production expanding rapidly and the art of preparation refining. A text of the time contains the following excerpt: “The care in harvesting, the craft of processing, the quality of grading, the subtle skill of cooking, all these contribute to the quality of the tea.” The tea-growing region during the Song Dynasty encompassed areas such as Huainan, Zhejiang, Jiangnan, Jinghu, Fujian, Guangnan, the Chengdu Prefecture, Zizhou, Lizhou and Kuizhou.

 *Qing Dynasty water-powered rolling machine for processing red tea.*



祁門茶行業的演變

Ming & Qing Dynasties: A Multitude of Tea

The Ming and Qing dynasties marked a period of innovation and development in Chinese tea-making techniques, and pan-fired green tea became very popular. Using this technique as a starting point, many new varieties emerged: yellow tea, black tea, white tea, red tea, and oolong tea. So, by this point, the “big six” basic types of tea had all emerged. Fujian’s Wuyi tea and Yunnan’s puerh enjoyed great popularity and became renowned both in China and abroad.

During the reign of Ming emperor Longqing, monks and scholars used pan-firing techniques from Suzhou, an area which at the time represented the height of skill in Chinese tea making, and added a refining process to that method, thus inventing Song Luo tea. Song Luo tea rapidly conquered

the market with its superior quality, and instigated a widespread change in tea-processing methods from the previously favored steaming method to the new pan-firing technique. The Song Luo name became famous, and the name came to be used collectively for any tea produced in Huizhou; it was also frequently considered representative of green tea in general. In the 1870s, Qimen (or Keemun) red tea was first created. In 1915, at the Panama World Expo, Qimen red tea won the Gold Prize, cementing its reputation both in China and abroad.

The Evolution of the Qimen Tea Industry

Prior to the Tang Dynasty, steaming the tea leaves was the most common processing method. Qimen tea has a long history, and was already well

known by the Tang Dynasty. In those days, all the tea produced in Xiuning, Qimen and She counties was distributed via Fuliang. The Tang Dynasty *Records of the Imperial Kitchen Director* by Yang Hua (楊華) contains the following excerpt: “Tea from Shezhou, Wuzhou and Qimen is exceptionally fine; merchants admire it so much that they will travel a thousand miles to obtain it.” From this, we can surmise that Qimen was already considered an important center for tea production in the Tang Dynasty. In Huizhou at that time, steaming the tea to shape it into balls or cakes was the most common method, while in Shezhou there are records of other types of tea products. Merchants traded goods for tea along their trading routes, until the tea reached the Changjiang (Yangtze) River and was transported to northern China. From there, tea would spread to the homes of commoners and nobles alike.

茶 *Everyone got to try their hand at rolling in the old way.*





茶 Red tea being traded to the Western world.

From the Ming Dynasty onward, the pan-firing method of tea processing became popular. The true rise of Huizhou tea came about after the invention of Song Luo tea in the Ming Dynasty. This method introduced the advanced Suzhou pan-firing technique, combining nature with skilled craft, and led to Huizhou tea gaining recognition among the world's top teas. As described in Ye Mengzhu's (葉夢珠) *Writings about the World* from the early Qing Dynasty, "Of all Huizhou's teas, Song Luo tea is the most famous; it is praised as the finest among all teas."

After its success in the market, Song Luo tea gradually began to spread throughout other tea-growing regions, including Hunan, Fujian, Zhejiang and Jiangsu. During the reign of Shunzhi, the second Qing emperor, an official by the name of Yin Yingyin (殷應寅) was serving as the county magistrate of Chong'an. He began recruiting monks from Huizhou's

Huangshan to come to Chong'an and make tea using the Song Luo method. They also started packaging the tea in small tins, the same way that Song Luo tea was packaged in Huizhou.

The Song Luo production method involved pan-firing the tea leaves, and was superior to the earlier steaming method. As Song Luo spread throughout Fujian, Zhejiang, and other nearby areas, the pan-firing technique gradually replaced steaming. With the invention of Song Luo and the prevalence of this new technique, China saw a proliferation of new teas with distinct fragrances and flavors. People began to place a greater importance on the aroma of their tea, which in turn fueled the growing popularity of the new methods.

The emergence of Song Luo tea in the late Ming Dynasty spurred on the development of the tea industry in Anhui Province's Xiuning County. Tunxi District controlled the area where the

Lu River flowed into the Heng River coming in from the north—this area provided the water source for both Xiuning and Yi counties, so it was of great importance to the tea plantations. Hence, Tunxi became a natural center for the tea produced in both Xiuning and Yi counties, and leaves were all transported there for the refining process.

Because all the green tea produced in southern Anhui passed through Tunxi for processing and export, Anhui green tea became known as "Tun green" (*tun lü*, 屯綠), and the name has continued to be used today. It's also sometimes known as "Mei Cha" (眉茶), or "Eyebrow Tea," after the shape of its leaves. Tun green first emerged in the Qing Dynasty during the consecutive reigns of the Jiaqing and Daoguang emperors, and was created based on the Song Luo tea refining method. Tun green was mainly produced in the four counties at the foot



of Huangshan: Xiuning, Yi, She, and parts of Qimen such as Dongxiang. As early as the reign of the Qing emperor Guangxu, Tun green had gained some reputation within China, and was even being exported to Europe and North America.

In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties came the advent of An tea. An tea is commonly known as “soft-stalk” tea, and is a style of black tea (in the Chinese sense). It undergoes two phases of processing: initial processing and refining. An tea is mainly produced in Luxi village in the southwest of Qimen, and in its heyday was also grown in parts of Pingli, Qihong and Zhukou villages. An tea has over two hundred years of history and enjoys a stellar reputation—it has even been praised with the name “Holy Tea.” In his *Overview of Anhui Tea History*, Xu Zheng (许正) writes: “Prior to the reign of Qing emperor Guangxu, Qimen originally produced green tea for

sale in Guangdong and Guangxi; it also produced a tea similar to Liu An that was called “An tea,” which was very popular in Guangdong and the surrounding areas.” The *Qi and Chang Records*, compiled during the reign of the Ming emperor Yongle, contain a reference to “soft-stalk” tea: “The tea generally has soft stalks and includes the buds; it enjoys quite a lot of support among the people.” Soft-stalk tea was originally produced throughout Huizhou, but after it evolved into An tea, it was only produced in Qimen County. By 1932, the southern villages of Qimen were home to no less than 47 brands of An tea.

Prior to the reign of the Guangxu emperor, and before the appearance of Qimen red tea, An tea was produced over a large area of Qimen. As it was a good seller and a key export variety, it was produced in all four of the main tea-growing villages and was especially successful in the southwest.

After Qimen red came on the scene, the An tea producing area shrank significantly and became concentrated around the southwestern villages of Luxi and Rongkou, especially near Dianbu Tan. Small-scale manufacturers could be found here and there in the villages of Pingli, Qihong and Zhukou, but there was no trace of An tea anywhere else.

In the late Qing Dynasty, during the reign of Emperor Guangxu, Qimen red tea was created. Up until then, Qimen had produced mainly green tea. Thanks to its outstanding manufacturing techniques and its lively fragrance reminiscent of fruit, flowers and honey, Qimen red was soon recognized as a bright new talent in the world of red teas. Along with India’s Darjeeling and Sri Lanka’s Ceylon Uva tea, it was named as one of the world’s three most famous fragrant teas. (At that time, it was known in the English-speaking world as Keemun tea, which was an early anglicization of “Qimen.”) At peak production around 1911, over three thousand tons of Qimen red tea were produced each year and the production area spilled over into neighboring regions. At the 1915 World Expo in Panama, Qimen red tea took home the main award as well as many other medals.

Qimen gongfu red tea, with its refined and complex manufacturing process, came to represent Chinese gongfu red teas as a whole. In 1980, Qimen red received a national award for excellence, and in 1983, it received a certificate of honor for quality in export goods. Qimen red tea’s unique “Qimen fragrance” drifted all over the world, with the tea being exported to many countries and territories, including England, the Netherlands, Germany, Japan and Russia. For the last decade or so, it has also been the preferred ceremonial tea for state affairs in China.

Looking back on the history of Huizhou tea development over the period from the mid-Ming to the mid-Qing dynasties, it’s clear that the pan-firing method of tea processing originating in Suzhou. This method a significant impact on the industry’s development. We can also observe how these changing production techniques triggered economic progress in the region. The complexity and flexibility of the new technique allowed for the birth of myriad unique new teas, each with a flavor and fragrance all its own.

And the competition that ensued served to further promote innovation. Another aspect of these changes can be seen during the late Ming and early Qing, where societal consumption began to drive economic development. The changing economy also led to the division of some of the traditional tea-growing areas, and thus a greater variance in quality among the tea leaves produced by different growers. This in turn meant that tea manufacturers were obliged to turn to complex refining methods to make up for this varying quality. This brought about a period of great innovation and progress in Huizhou's tea production methods.

Qimen Red Tea: The Future Prospects

A cup of tea, on its journey from plantation to teacup, must go through many stages. It's commonly said that a good cup of tea must be planted before it can be harvested or brewed. From the beginnings of tea in China, Qimen has held an important place in tea history. This is all thanks to the foundation created by Qimen's small tea manufacturers, each with unique local characteristics and a strong sense of terroir.

As a region of world-class small tea manufacturers, Qimen has maintained its reputation for over a thousand years. And what is the source of such long-lasting success? For starters, the heavens must have smiled on Qimen; how else could there exist such a perfect paradise for tea plants? All aspects of the local ecology, including sunlight, temperature, humidity, topography, altitude, PH level, nutrients and organisms, come together to create an environment that is wonderfully suited to growing tea.

The most noteworthy characteristic of Qimen's weather is summed up nicely in this saying: "When the weather is fine, mist covers the earth at dawn and dusk; when it's cloudy or rainy, the mountains are wreathed in a sea of clouds." Around 85% of Qimen's area is covered in forest—the terrain is traditionally described using the phrase: "nine mountains, half a river, and half a field." The region is renowned for having one of the richest

ecologies in China. It's precisely this unique climate and ecology, as well as its excellent soil quality, that allows Qimen to distill the essence of mountains and forest; to gather the spirit of the clouds and mist; to absorb the vigor of the spring rains; to bathe in the sweet perfume of the mountain flowers. Add to these precious things a rich knowledge of the art of tea-making and a steady production base, and Qimen's tea makers have all the elements they need to bring their renowned teas into the world.

In China's tea-producing regions, one sometimes hears a reference to "China's golden triangle of tea production." This moniker refers to the area where the production of high-quality teas is most densely concentrated, and covers an area that includes the adjoining cities and districts of Huangshan in Anhui, Shangrao and Jingdezhen in Jiangxi, and Quzhou in Zhejiang. This area is home to many famous varieties of tea, including Huangshan Maofeng, Xiuning Song Luo, Tun Green, Taiping Houkui, Wuyuan Mingmei and Kaihua Longding. Qimen's tea-growing region is right in the middle of this "golden triangle"—one could say it's the nucleus of China's most outstanding tea region. If we compared China's famous tea regions to a string of pearls, then Qimen would certainly be one of the brightest and most lustrous of them all.

With fertile soils beneath it and a rich history behind it, the future of Qimen's tea industry is full of promise. Whichever aspect you choose to focus on, Qimen's tea has great value in terms of history, culture, production techniques and natural environment. These essential elements also provide the foundations for the future development of Qimen.

As for today's Qimen teas—whether we look at Qimen red tea, which has been through centuries of ups and downs and is now enjoying a revival, or An tea, which vanished for half a century only to re-emerge as a "new" tea, or the green tea that still makes up a significant proportion of tea output—the path of their future development will be inevitably linked to the ability to build a strong reputation for the Qimen small-scale tea production region as a whole. As tea lovers we always want to promote sustainability.

This is because, as we've seen from our overview of tea history in Qimen, different styles of tea will always emerge and their popularity will wax and wane with the changing times and market trends. An outstanding natural environment, on the other hand, will never change; the refined knowledge and skill of tea making can be passed down through the generations forever; and the rich history of tea culture in Qimen will not be forgotten.

So, in terms of the planting and management of the local tea plantations, the passing down of skills and the encouragement of innovation, it will be very important to protect the local environment, continually improve production and boost Qimen's reputation as an area that sets the standard for China's tea regions, in terms of both the tea companies and the individual tea varieties they produce. We must continue to build an appreciation for ancient Huizhou culture, history and art, to add to its profound depth and to ensure that our tea production is developed sustainably, preserving the local ecosystem. This will be the path to ensuring that Qimen's tea industry continues to thrive, now and in the future.

Let us all look forward to the continued evolution of Qimen's tea as it floats along down the river of a thousand years of history. Let us take delight in seeing the skill of generations, the rich local culture and the fertile natural environment manifest together in a flourishing tea garden that will carry its legacy forward into the future.



茶 *Master Min Xuan Wen (闵宣文), worked in the Qimen red tea industry for sixty years before retiring. His knowledge and skill were covered by a deep humility and tea spirit. He said he still drinks tea every day.*



Chaxi Chronicles

茶席志



A VALIANT STEED TETHERED TO A THATCHED HUT

茶人: Shen Su

一匹駿馬拴在草屋

Great performances can occur upon a stage and great tales can be told and brought to life before your very eyes. Upon the stage for tea, however, the performance is a little different and perhaps simpler than most. There is only one star on this stage and her name is Tea, though She may play many different roles from white to black and everywhere in between. During this simple performance, which we might call a ceremony, when the elements of the stage come together in harmony, a very simple setting on the outside can aid in a very significant inner experience for the participants in the ceremony. A harmonious *chaxi* (tea stage) is just one of the factors that goes into transforming something very simple, like drinking tea, into something extraordinary, like a tea ceremony. The differ-

ence can be profound. A harmonious tea stage and the elements therein is a topic we've covered in articles before, and yet, like any good *chaxi*, the closer you look, the more details reveal themselves to you. And so, we take a further look into another aspect of designing a balanced and harmonious stage for tea!

As always, it is perhaps most important to consider your guests and the occasion before starting to build your stage for tea. Remember, it is about choosing a tea and designing a *chaxi* that is suitable for your guests and the occasion, not about choosing based on what you want. It is therefore, important to know your teas and the elements of your tea stage. We addressed the elements of *chaxi* specifically back in January 2016. You can ask yourself, who is coming for tea and what does the occasion call for? You will also

want to consider other factors, such as the weather, the time of day, the season of the year and so on. As you quest to answer these questions and more, you will find yourself well on the path towards a fine tea session. The more you put into preparing for your tea gatherings, the more your guests will get out of the experience.

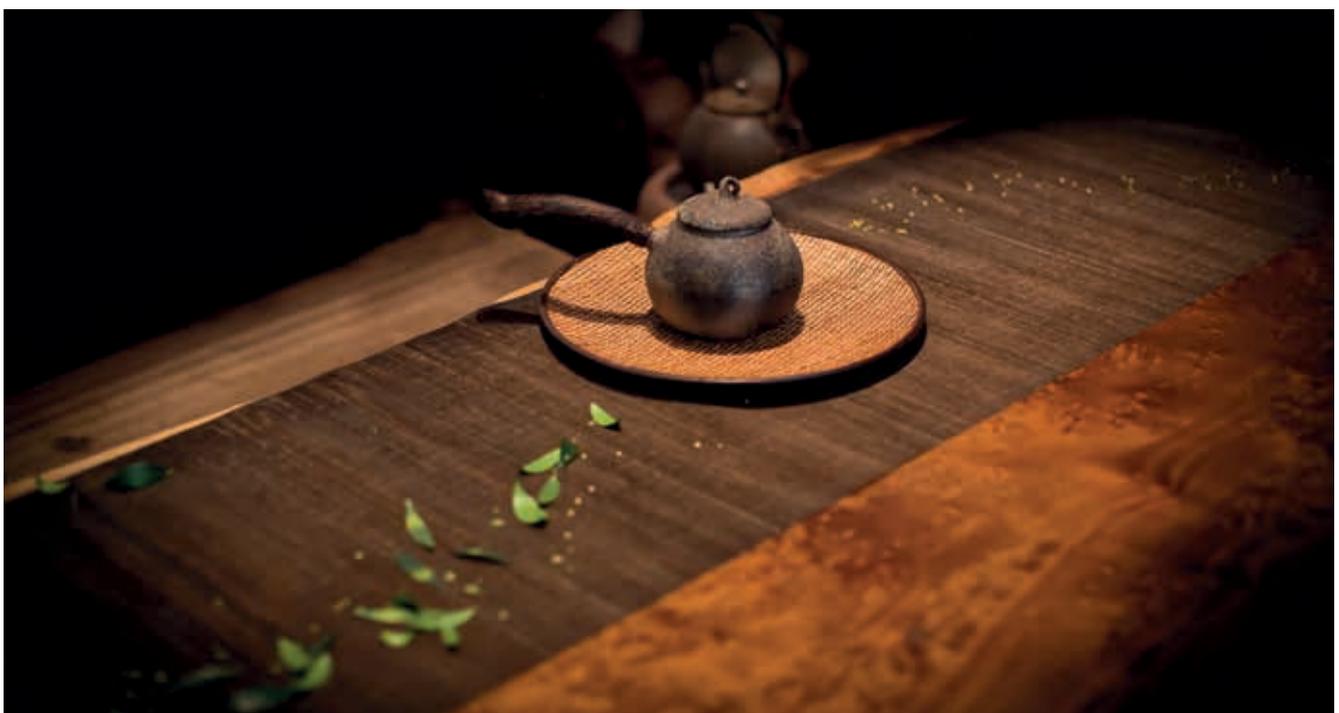
At this point, you might want to ask yourself a new question: should your *chaxi* be rustic or elegant? The elements of a *chaxi*, such as runners, scoops, plates, lid rests, coasters, etc., can quite easily be categorized as either rustic or elegant, humdrum or refined. It's a simple division that opens up an entire new approach to designing your tea stage. There are so many possibilities in each of these kinds of *chaxi*, let alone the myriad combinations of the two that you can create.

Rustic Chaxi: The Hut

What makes a *chaxi* rustic? What comes to mind immediately for me is something more earthy, elements that express natural colors you might find while walking amidst a forest in any season, like dark shades of green and brown or autumn hues of gold and red. Rustic designs tend to be more imperfect, with asymmetric, frayed or weathered edges and boundaries, incorporating elements such as leaves, rocks or flat pieces of driftwood. When I decide to design a rustic-themed *chaxi* I find myself reaching for elements made from bamboo, wood, rattan, woven straw, and other tea things that are less glossy and more matte. Rusticity is probably an easier theme of *chaxi* to work with in the beginning, especially when so many elements from the natural world can be repurposed towards designing your tea stage. A simple walk outside can offer countless options, or simply drinking tea outside in a natural landscape is itself a form of this rustic art. The stage is already naturally designed for you—all you need to do is make time to drink tea! What a great opportunity as well to learn from Nature.



草屋







Elegant Chaxi: The Steed

We might now consider objects with the complete opposite characteristics of the rustic *chaxi*—those full of luster and glaze, vibrant colors and patterns, and metal utensils of bronze, copper, silver and gold! Here we have a greater range of uses for flowers and petals, small statues and even water features, and more aesthetic and stylish elements to really highlight a specific theme. For these designs, I find myself reaching for beautiful cloth runners, porcelain plates, celadon tea pillows, metal tea sticks and glazed or refined scoops made from all types of different materials. Because the Center is abundant in teapots and bowls, I choose from many, like a more stylized sidehandle teapot or our pure white tea bowls with tiny black speckles. The elegant *chaxi* has to be designed more carefully, with even more attention to detail, because each element can have so much strength of style. As always, less is more, and one refined piece of teaware says a lot more than too many, which can cause disharmony, competition for attention, and imbalance, unless perfectly displayed! It is a more complex and difficult stage to build in my experience. Here we have a fancy shell mala that came undone, becoming the perfect decoration in this elegant stage.



英 勇 駿 馬

從裡面發光

微光在最簡單的壺



The Valiant Steed Tethered to the Thatched Hut

Of course, too much of anything is also out of balance. Too much elegance is showy and distracting, whereas too much run-of-the-mill is dull and without definition. One must strive to find the middle way, properly defining the tea at the center of the stage, and in this case, expressing a theme of elegance or rusticity. Remember, there are no neutral elements in the design of your *chaxi*. If it doesn't create harmony and redirect out attention towards the center of the stage, either reposition it or remove it altogether. And so, the question to ask yourself, in the form of a metaphor, is what elements play the role of the thatched hut and the valiant steed in your layout? As you can already imagine, the thatched hut represents the rustic aspects of your design and the valiant steed, the elegant ones. Many tea stages incorporate both aspects to varying degrees. A rustic-themed *chaxi* should incorporate some small elegant detail to achieve overall balance and harmony, and vice versa for an elegant-themed *chaxi*. It is the silver lining, the golden thread within the thatched roof, that feels harmonious, like a single, beautiful flower along an overgrown forest path. The path is naturally chaotic and messy, but the flower isn't out of place. It is momentarily captivating, making you feel as though you're going the right way. It didn't draw you off the path, but shifted your state of mind towards presence and kept you along your way. Sometimes a single element can achieve this balance all on its own, like the golden-rimmed teapot or the pink flower shown in the pictures. Other times you will need to mix and match elegant and rustic elements to find an overall balance. (In the *chaxi* shown here, the flower is literally tethered to the simple bowl of tea and rustic pot.)

As you consider all the factors of a tea gathering and start to lay out the elements upon your stage, be it inside or outside, on a table or in a pagoda, near a pond or beside an old tree, always take a step back and feel where the balance lies. Take note of which elements represent the thatched hut and the valiant steed, and ask yourself if you have brought them into harmony. They should complement each other like the black-and-white circles of the *taichi* symbol, which represents Yin and Yang, not too much of one or the other, and placed just so...

Q



Voices of the Hut

小亭發聲

ART OF THE MONTH

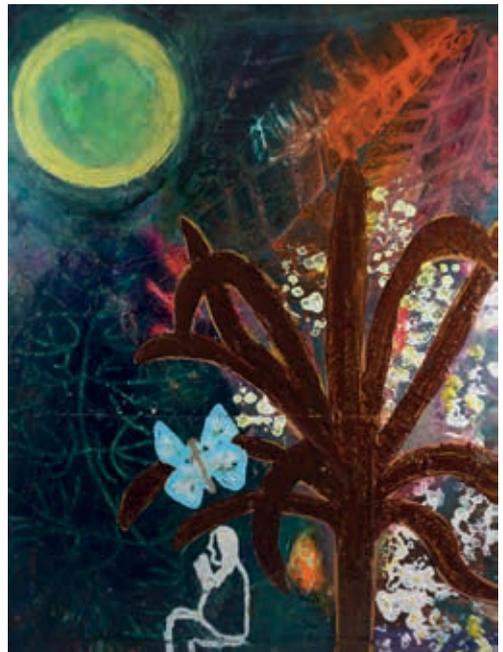
茶人: *Lee Ann Hilbrich*

本月藝術

Since December, Lee Ann has been writing about and painting her impressions of each and every Tea of the Month. We find it so inspiring that our envelopes are behind such creativity each month, and wonder how many of you are also using the crests of these monthly waves to go from the bowl to some kind of artwork!

October 2016: Elevation, Red Tea (活力舒醒)

This was the tea I received in my very first Global Tea Hut shipment. I feel very blessed that this was my starting tea. Since I felt like I was learning a new language and just becoming awake to the way of Tea, reading that I could put the leaves in a bowl to brew and drink was just what I needed. Serendipitously, I had just made a bowl at my first-ever pottery wheel class, something I had always wanted to try. It was harder than I thought and the bowl was a weird size and I almost got rid of it as I had no clue what I would use it for until I discovered bowl tea. Experiencing the tea in that handmade bowl, and reading through the high-quality “Tea & Tao Magazine,” full of poems, artful images and inspiring new ways to think about elevating tea, I was captivated. I never meant to start creating art to go along with the tea each month; it’s just that I was so inspired by the tea itself and the amazing articles and photography in the magazine. I cut out and saved, for later art and inspiration, a few pictures from the magazine that spoke to me—the woman sitting beneath the tea tree and the picture of the butterfly as part of the Chaxi. I was about to begin a painting one day, and those pictures called to me. I ended up creating a painting that was inspired by the pictures, as well as my experience of the tea Herself, that I have seen bloom and unfold under my very eyes in my bowl. I love that the tea leaves took on a life of their own in the painting, stretching out, sheltering, providing. And I love that the woman is before such an expansive, alive tea tree. There is so much she doesn’t know, and she is entering a new magical world. The butterfly—a symbol of transformation, and a personally meaningful symbol to me—tells me I have discovered the right path that will help me spread my wings. Truly, I feel that this tea, so aptly named, has elevated me, and started me on an exciting adventure with Tea. The painting ended up being so meaningful and meditative to me, and helped me truly capture what I learned and experienced from the tea and magazine, that creating art to go along with each month’s tea and magazine just became part of my monthly shipment experience.



November 2016: *Calm Fragrance, Mi Xiang Oolong*

I think because incense came with this tea, it turned into a very tactile and sensual painting experience for me. I used the incense and drank the tea while painting, so both the incense smoke and the tea steam have literally covered this painting. I also christened this piece by rubbing the brewed tea leaves on it, and at the bottom, you can still see some of the original tea paint. For good measure, I added in some of the ash and unbrewed tea as well to the painting. I was so intrigued by this specific tea and how the bugs biting it made the honey fragrance possible. That really spoke to me and, if you look closely, you may see a bug camouflaged as a leaf. The aloeswood incense has a big presence in this piece. I loved learning about the interesting and varied ways it can be produced, and all the unique ways it is categorized by shape, location and quality. Since honey fragrance was associated with both the tea and the incense, I tied the leaf and resin images together by making a honey-colored paint (and mixing in some gold leaf, inspired by the incense balls featured in the magazine) and dripping it from the top of the painting. There is also a honeycomb design layer that is behind both depicted images.



以香入定

December 2016: *Beneath the Pines, Liu Bao Black Tea* (松下)

I was so captivated by the legend of the origin of Liu Bao Tea and I knew immediately I wanted to illustrate that story in my painting. The story of the multi-colored cliffs where the fairies planted the tea seeds and the dog guarded them, and of how the cliffs turned black over time as two majestic, special tea trees grew from the seeds, enchanted and called to me. My favorite part of the story was how the cliffs were once so colorful but then turned black. I used a previous painting as my canvas and it was perfect to help create the colorful hidden magic of the black cliffs by etching. The flowers were already on my canvas, which I thought was serendipitous, as the “golden flowers,” or mold spores, are sometimes associated with this tea. I hope as you look at this painting, you remember your childhood innocence and remember that magic and fairies abound. I hope it inspires you to see the color and beauty in everything. I will never drink Liu Bao, or any black tea again, without thinking of this painting and the majestic tea trees on top of the magical black cliffs that are worth scaling for some wonderful tea. Sometimes things may appear ordinary when they are truly extraordinary.



January 2017: Old-Town Gathering, Shou Puerh (老城聚集)

It wasn't until my shipment tin was almost gone that I started painting. I started painting first with the tea Herself, then with the Lei Cha, and then with acrylic paints, inks and oil pastels. As I started finger painting with brewed leaves across the canvas, I almost wanted to leave the painting simply with just the design the tea had made on the canvas, but I'm not that brave yet. I was also very inspired after learning about the Hakka people and their tradition of serving Lei Cha. This tea felt like that warm welcome I would receive from them as a guest. So I added some Lei Cha to the canvas and then started using my non-tea paints. As I painted with those, I was trying to appreciate what was my final brewing session with Old-Town Gathering, and because I had enjoyed so much of Her before starting painting, I realized that appreciating the qualities of Her in the painting was what I wanted to create on the canvas. So I focused on capturing Her flavor, thickness, smoothness, mellowness, *huigan* and Qi. And I left space for Her to speak for Herself in the middle. I feel that there is almost a painting within a painting. I made a painting, but Old-Town Gathering and Lei Cha did as well, and together we created, hopefully, a magical experience. There are so many layers to our lives, to our experiences, and I want to appreciate and trust each one, knowing we are all built by our connections and dependence upon others. I want to be as generous and hospitable, as warm and welcoming, as both of these lovely teas. I hope as you enter into the magic of this painting, that you truly enter and experience each layer and listen to what it has to speak to your soul and spirit.



精神紅茶



February 2017: Vitality, Dian Hong Red Tea

This piece is entitled "VitaliTea." As February's "Tea and Tao Magazine" was all about tea and meditation, this piece is meant to allow you to meditate on the actual tea leaves and sink deeply into Her rich red tea liquor. I wet the aquaboard canvas with the tea liquor, used gel medium to apply the tea leaves loosely in the center, and then dropped acrylic ink, fluid acrylic paint, ink sprays and rubbing alcohol onto the canvas and tea leaves, and just allowed the piece to take the form she desired. As you allow yourself to enter into the art, listen to what VitaliTea has to say to your heart today. Allow yourself to experience her deep revitalizing powers. What medicine can you receive from her today that you can lovingly apply where you need it? What messages of strength do you experience as you meditate on the love and life she offers you?

March 2017: Golden Thread, Liu An Black Tea

I did a Facebook live video of me opening this month's tea shipment, so I wanted a picture of the brewed tea to also share online. I was drinking Golden Thread in bed one morning, and I asked my husband to take my tea cup and get a good picture of it. He decided to take the cup outside and set it on the edge of our raised garden bed, which was full of overgrown weeds and plants. He brought the picture back to show me and I was in awe—there were dewdrops on the greenery in the garden and I immediately thought of how Golden Thread is so intentionally crafted to take in the magical “white dew” during the largest Harvest Moon. The making of this tea was so inspiring to me—it felt like the leaves were a kind of painting in and of themselves, with the farmers, the artists, using Nature Herself as their medium. I knew immediately I wanted to paint the picture he had taken. The idea came to me to use masking fluid so I could paint the picture, and then rub off the dried mask afterwards to reveal, like magic, white dewdrops.

金寶藏六安



神聖綻放

April 2017: Heavenly Blossom, Green Tea & Tea Blossoms

I love the simplicity of bowl tea, and any opportunity to get to use the ceramic bowl I handmade. I was excited to spend time with Heavenly Blossom and was stunned at how many blossoms there were and how delicately they unfolded when brewed. This tea was such a feast for the eyes that I wanted the painting to capture Her beautiful display. I used an aquaboard, which is a canvas that you wet first, and simply added color with water-soluble crayons. The blossoms were so special that I decided I didn't even want to attempt to paint them, and instead, allowed this painting to have a collage element with the photographed flowers. I ended up giving away most of this heavenly tea to a friend for her birthday. My friend loves green tea and truly appreciates the simple joys of life, and the delicate blossoms reminded me so much of the light and beauty she brings to my life and to the world.



TeaWayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you, in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and Tea are becoming as the Tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of Tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to share glimpses of such beautiful people and their Tea. This month, we would like to introduce Lee Ann Hilbrich.

In 2016, I rediscovered Tea. It was a pivotal year for me, as I started my own business as a holistic psychotherapist and creative artist. I turned to Tea to help me learn to take breaks and care for myself while I was dealing with the stressors of being a new entrepreneur. It became a special self-care ritual for me to use an expensive cast iron tea set I purchased many years ago but never used, along with my old supply of loose-leaf tea. It turns out that Tea was always waiting for me, but it took me slowing down to remember its value and importance. I also began an unexpected journey of listening to, reconnecting with, and feeding my soul. Even though I was clueless as to the history and spirit of Tea that has been moving people throughout history, my wise soul knew just what it was doing as it was calling me to move closer to Tea.

The story of how I found Global Tea Hut, or it found me, is interesting. I follow Rich Roll on social media, and was very inspired by his morning ritual of tea and meditation. When Rich shared in his weekly newsletter that he gets his tea from Living Tea, I knew immediately where I would be ordering tea from when I finished up my current supply. I went to the Living Tea website and while I was ordering, I discovered a link to tea art for sale and an online tea magazine. I was inspired and moved by the soulful and wise images I saw and words I read. I used a quote from someone named Wu De for my own weekly newsletter, as I happened to be preparing an email on tea and meditation as part of a meditation mindfulness series. I also tried to purchase a piece of his art, only to find out, with his kind reply, that I was on an old site and all of the art there was sold. My order from Living Tea arrived shortly, and in it was a card and note about the Global Tea Hut. I was intrigued. I love discovering things (I even named my business "Daring Discoveries"), and I have tried several other monthly box subscriptions, so I knew I wanted to try this Global Tea Hut. What I didn't know was that this wasn't an ordinary monthly subscription. I was so inspired by the artistic quality of the magazine and the articles, poems and information shared in it. I felt connected and thankful for all the sensitive souls in the Hut who supported those taking care of the world with fair-trade, chemical-free tea. I was so grateful for the warm and welcoming environment of the Global Tea Hut. I felt inspired to learn more and grow in my experience of the way of Tea, but in no way felt that I had to have all the right equipment or knowledge. I sensed so much permission to begin exactly where I was, which was the beginning, as I was about to experience my first-ever bowl tea. Nothing would ever be the same again.



 **Lee Ann Hilbrich**

I worried at first when making the bowl tea if the water was hot enough or if I had too many or too few leaves. But then I recalled Wu De had recommended in the magazine using your intuition for brewing Elevation, and I felt a sense of relief come over me. And as soon as I had that first bowl, I knew it was all going to be alright. This experience was not about being perfect or having the right things, it was about being open to what the tea has to give you. This was another way that I could pay more attention in my life and create beauty. I still don't have a gongfu or side-handle pot, and the only runner I have is the one sent with my December shipment, but that is okay. In time, I will add equipment and I will not rush this adventure with Tea. I feel lucky to be on the path and I will trust in the timing and look forward to where Her spirit leads me. Being a part of this Global Tea Hut is truly an experience, and I've had so much fun creating art to go along with each monthly shipment. I'm sure seeing Wu De's art subconsciously inspired me to create my own tea art, even though I hadn't planned on doing it. I'm just listening to my soul, and letting tea work Her magic in my life.

Inside the Hut

COMING SOON TO GLOBAL TEA HUT MAGAZINE

茶主题: *Yixing Teaware*

茶道

茶主题: *Dehong Purple-Bud Red Tea*

茶主题: *Chajin Stories/Biographies*

茶主题: *2017 Annual Trip*



The world lost a very beautiful Chajin recently, and we lost a beloved Global Tea Hut member. Mary Lou Heiss, author and tea expert, passed away. Raise a bowl for her and her husband Robert.



Our app has launched! We have worked very hard on this project. Please help us to use the app by filling in your profile and engaging the community so that it is a worthwhile addition to Global Tea Hut.



Don't forget, we are broadcasting live videos at the beginning of every month on our Facebook & Instagram. This is a great way to connect with us, learn together and ask any and all questions. Check it out!



The photo contest will be starting this month. The last few years have been amazing, with tons of inspiring entries from around the world. We hope you feel as inspired this year. There will be amazing prizes!



Our Light Meets Life fundraiser teas and teaware are going to be showing up any day now. Keep an eye out on the site, as some of the special teaware we are making this year will be very limited, and most likely will sell very fast. The teas are also very exciting!



Help us spread the word. This is our year. If you know of a location where we could put some magazines and people would really read them, we would be happy to send you some copies for free.



Wu De will be in Estonia and Russia in August, conducting workshops. We also have another retreat in Spain this Oct. Check the website for more details and locations: <http://www.globalteahut.org/wudeteachings>

Center News



Before you visit, check out the Center's website (www.teasagehut.org) to read about the schedule, food, what you should bring, etc. Wu De will be traveling a lot in 2017, so check his schedule on the site if you are interested in seeing him while you are here at the Center.



We are switching to a ten-day course schedule at the Center, offering two per month starting in June. This is a great amount of time to get an immersive start in tea ceremony and will help the Center's flow as well.



We are still open to having one or two more long-term residents at the Tea Sage Hut. We are especially looking for those with experience in photography/videography. If you have these or other skills to contribute and can work out your own visa situation, please send us an email for more details.



We are going to host a seven-day tea course at the Center on tea and Qi Gong, starting on September 12th. (We changed to 7 days.)

June Affirmation

I see through

Does my own mental and emotional viewpoint saturate my experience? Do all my actions result from my perspective? I see beyond my emotional and intellectual views. I see the perspectives of others. I rest in the limitless clarity that is beyond me.



www.globalteahut.org

The most gongfu Tea magazine in the world! Sharing rare organic teas, a magazine full of tea history, lore, translations, processing techniques and heritage, as well as the spiritual aspects of Cha Dao. And through it all, we make friends with fellow tea lovers from around the world.

GLOBAL TEA HUT
TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

