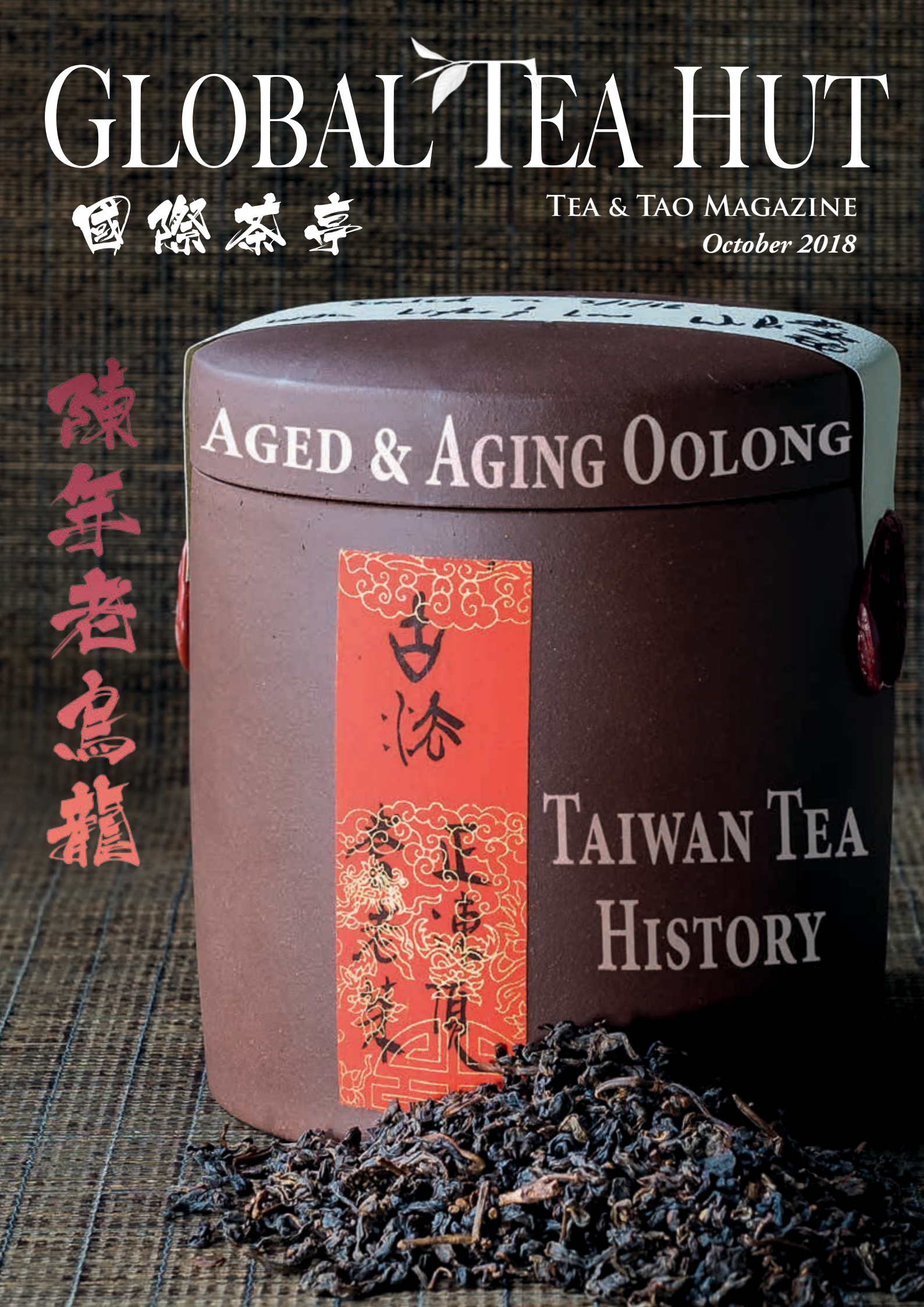
GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

Tea & Tao Magazine

October 2018

陳年老烏龍



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TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

UNDYING LAMP

Aged oolong is one of the most underrated types of tea, offering incredible sensual and energetic experiences. We are very excited to focus in on Taiwanese tea history, as well as aged and aging Taiwanese tea, as the start of a journey through aged oolongs in this and future issues. This is a seminal issue!

Love is changing the world bowl by bowl

FEATURES

TRADITIONS

不朽的燈

From the editor

In October, the weather is cool and perfect in Taiwan. We can begin to drink tea outdoors if we wish. Around here, we start drinking aged oolongs and Cliff Tea, as well as tasting all our own Light Meets Life teas in their finished form. We also start breaking into aged sheng puerh and occasionally blending a Five Element tea or two. For a tea lover, the autumn is a great time: all of this year's teas are available, the weather is great for tea drinking indoors and out and the changing seasons draw more of our attention to Great Nature, reminding us who and what we are.

As you are reading this, I am in Spain conducting our third annual Zen & Tea Retreat at the Casa Cuadrau in the small village of Vijo, located high in the Pyrenees Mountains. This epic ten-day course is a silent retreat embracing rich hikes through the gorgeous surrounds, lots of deep meditation and, of course, tons of tea. If you haven't yet attended one of these retreats, mark it on your calendar as they are truly life-changing, due to the power of the mountains, the wonderful hospitality (and food) at the Casa Cuadrau and the great teas we share as well. May our efforts and the merits we generate cultivating ourselves be shared with all of you, our beloved tea community.

Our Light Meets Life tea and teaware is amazing this year. We have several cakes of dian hong, two shou puerhs and one sheng. We also have two different aged Liu Bao teas in gorgeous duanni clay jars shaped like Liu Bao baskets. We have also gone to great lengths to create all the teaware you will need to begin or advance your tea journey, including kettles and burners, sidehandle pots in three sizes and bowls for all your bowl tea needs, as well as Yixing purple-sand pots, trays and boats, and porcelain cups for gongfu tea. Of course, all the proceeds from this tea and teaware will be used to build our future, bigger and better Center, which we call "Light Meets Life (光壽無量)." All of our courses fill quickly here at Tea Sage Hut, and there are often long waiting lists as well. We, therefore, need a bigger Center to host larger courses, so that it is easier for you to come. Also, as of now, we just have two types of courses—Intro to Cha Dao and Old Student courses. When Light Meets Life is built, however, we will introduce many types of courses throughout the year, including various levels of gongfu tea, tea and meditation retreats like the one in Spain going on now and much more…

There is a lot of joy in offering you a complete array of teaware to begin your journey. Aside from raising money to build our future Center, we long to start more people out in tea, helping facilitate peace and harmony throughout this world, bowl by bowl. Whether you love bowl tea or gongfu tea, we have tried to create a lot of affordable yet still well-made and useful teaware for all the brewing methods in our lineage, from sidehandle brewing to boiled tea.

This issue is very exciting. It is the first in what we hope to be a series about Taiwanese tea history. We will start by exploring the early days of Taiwanese tea and then get further into more recent times in a future issue. We have also wanted to cover aged and aging oolong tea for quite some time. The issue has always been that aged oolongs are rare and often quite expensive, so we have been unable to find a good candidate to send along with an issue on the topic. Thanks to the great generosity of Mr. Xie Yuan Zai (謝元在), who once again has shown up for this community in a powerful way, we have an aged oolong to drink this month as we discuss aged oolong, how to age oolong tea and, of course, Taiwanese tea history. Also thanks are due to Huang Yi Jia (黃怡嘉), who let us translate part of her beautiful book *The Stories of Formosa Tea* (黃怡嘉) for this issue. We also have one of the most stellar Expansion Packs we have ever made, offering some other great aged oolong teas to "expand" your knowledge and experience of the genre. I hope your kettle is already steaming!

Aside from Taiwanese tea history, there is herein a lengthy discussion on aged and aging oolong tea, with a focus on aged and aging Taiwanese tea. We feel like aged oolong is the most underrated type of tea, even though the best teas on earth fall into this category, and even though so many of you would be much better off aging oolong than puerh due to the climate where you live. Aged oolong is amazing: it ages faster than puerh and black teas, and when you choose the right tea and age it properly, it rewards on all levels. The flavor and aroma are exquisite, and the energy is deep and profound. We cannot overstate the fact that aging oolong is one of the greatest joys of a tea lover, or should be. In this issue, we will explore this issue deeply, including everything you will need to start aging your own oolong tea.

–Further Reading–

This month, we recommend rereading the September 2016 Extended Edition issue that was all about Taiwanese tea, as you will gather some amazing insight into all aspects of Taiwanese tea! Also, make use of the search function in the brand new archive of .html and .pdf, which includes all our past issues!

TEA OF THE MONTH

Our Tea of the Month, Undying Lamp, is a brilliant aged oolong from the storehouse of our very own Mr. Xie Yuan Zai (謝元在), whom we have discussed so often in these issues, including last month. Every visitor to our Center who comes to a ten-day course gets to meet Mr. Xie, as we take them to his farm to harvest and process some tea so they can be around tea plants and experience how hard the work is. Mr. Xie has been a dear tea friend to us over the years, helping out in so many ways. He shares his wisdom, time, tea and open heart with us, elevating this community through knowledge and healthy, environmentally-sound tea. This month he has shown up like never before, offering this community an unprecedentedly expensive tea. Like previous months when have shared old Liu Bao and other teas we could never afford, this month we are once again blessed by a great generosity. Raise a cup or a bowl to Mr. Xie, as we drink this month's exquisite tea, as we would not have been able to send this tea without his love of kindness.

Undying Lamp is an aged oolong from Mingjian, Nantou dating back to the late 1990s after Mr. Xie made the switch to organic. Like many organic farmers, he had difficulty selling his tea at first; he had to learn better farming methods and new processing skills to deal with the oxidation caused by insect bites. His journey into more traditional processing skills took some time, so a lot of his tea from those early days didn't sell out. He sealed it up well and stored it in large plastic bags, which were then boxed and sealed shut. Though the tea may not have had a niche at the time, the last twenty years have certainly been kind to the tea: it is incredible!

Storage is an important issue when it comes to any aged tea, and oolong is no exceptions. As we will discuss in our "Deeper Session," starting on the following page, the rise of greener, lightly-oxidized oolong in the 1970s and 1980s rendered aging Taiwanese oolongs unpopular, since that kind of tea is not a great candidate for storage, as the moisture content is too high. This means that the art of intentionally aging Taiwanese tea all but died, only preserved by those who really love tea. Therefore, most aged Taiwanese oolong was not intentionally stored. If the tea was put into the warehouse of the farm or storage room of the shop because it didn't sell, the usual reason why is that it was low-quality tea and customers just weren't buying it. There are exceptions to this, like our Tea of the Month, but usually aged Taiwanese oolong was leftover, low-grade tea. Our tea is an exception, as it wasn't selling because it was organic, which is a good thing. Sometimes the market turns towards things that have no intrinsic value and great things are overlooked. This is certainly rare in aged tea. It was a decent tea even at birth, but the market at the time wasn't willing to pay extra for "organic," and Mr. Xie couldn't bring himself to sell it for too cheap, as he worked so hard to make it. He says that he did eventually sell some off cheaply to help feed his family, but kept some in storage hoping he could sell it later in the year.

Since most of this tea was casually put away and wasn't selling, which means the farmer or shopkeeper themselves would start to disregard it, these teas are almost always stored improperly. As we said, the tradition of aging oolong wasn't popular in this period, so many tea farmers and shopkeepers didn't even understand basic principles like sealing the oolong to prevent oxygen and humidity from getting in, which certainly impacts the flavors, aromas and Qi. But Mr. Xie was hoping to sell Undying Lamp later in that year, so he packed the tea up super tight, using a vacuum-sealer to remove all the oxygen from the bags, which were then boxed and put up on a second floor. The cardboard absorbs moisture, which is also lessened by being one story up. As a result, this tea was stored immaculately, resulting in a very pristine mid-age oolong. (This tea would also be a great candidate for further aging.)

Undying Lamp is a delightful tea and demonstrates quite clearly how wonderful aged oolong can be. It is very aromatic, with deep nutty flavors, the aroma of dates and hints of pleasant Chinese herbs in every cup. It is very patient, making for a long session with many, many cups of bliss. We recommend setting aside ample time to enjoy this glorious tea; it is worth a whole afternoon of bliss, indeed. It is very uplifting, un-grounding the senses and spirit for a dance through the clouds, riding the back of the "black dragon (烏龍)."

Undying Lamp (不朽的燈)

Mingjian, Nantou, Taiwan

Aged Oolong Tea

Han Chinese

~500 Meters

老烏龍茶 傳統製程

A Deeper Session

Further Exploration into Our Tea of the Month

Over the course of this month, we are exploring Taiwanese tea history. And the best kind of history is the kind you can drink! When tea is aged properly, it is always amongst the highest quality. Technically, all tea can be aged, though there are certainly better teas to age. In this deeper exploration, we will discuss all aspects of aged and aging oolong, while we drink our amazing aged oolong tea. Before we start aging our tea, however, we should review oolong tea in general, starting with the foundation of what oolong tea is. With such an understanding of oolong as a genre, as well as its history and processing, a conversation about aging oolong will make much more sense.

Oolong is the richest and most refined of tea chests, filled with so many varieties and kinds of tea that you couldn't explore them all in a lifetime. It is technically defined by the fact that it is semi-oxidized, but that barely sketches an outline of this huge genre of tea—especially since "semi-oxidized" can mean everything from ten to seventy percent. When you add to that all the different mountains oolong tea comes from, the varietals of trees and variations in processing, you have a huge map, spanning Taiwan, Chaozhou and Fujian mostly. We'd truly need the "black dragon" this tea is named after to fly through the rich heritage, history and variety of oolong. But what a journey that would be!

When talking about genres of tea, it is always important to remember that the typical understanding of "all tea is one plant and the differences are in the processing" can be very misleading, indeed. There is some truth in that statement, but authors who use it rarely qualify it as much as they should.

Different processing methodologies were developed locally over time and are as much a part of the terroir as the rain, sun or soil composition. And these regional variations in processing grew alongside certain varietals of tea. The masters that lived and worked with these leaves were listening to them, and that conversation was often responsible for the evolution of any given processing methodology. In other words, oolong processing was developed over time to suit certain varietals of tea because that is what brought out their greatest potential. The farmers mastered their craft by processing the tea the way it "wanted" to be—for lack of a better word, we use "want" to describe the nature of the tea. Just as water "wants" to flow downhill, these leaves *wanted* to be oolong. In that way, oolong is as much in the varietals of tea as it is in the processing. And that is true for most of the other seven genres of tea, as well (red and black teas can be exceptions to this rule, but not always). While you could process tea leaves from Wuyi mountain like a green tea or an artificially fermented black tea (not red!), they would not be nearly as good as green tea from such a varietal or Liu Bao black tea. Furthermore, they wouldn't be as nice as the oolong made from the same leaves!

And this evolution continues on in every tea growing season, even now. If you travel to Wuyi, for example, and watch a true master make oolong tea each year, you would see a lot of variation from year to year. The overall methodology used to describe oolong production is as general and rough a sketch for what actually happens as any basic understanding of an artistic process is. In any art, the basic formula is always a very abstract and simplified explanation of what the practitioner knows much more intimately, subtly and with complex discrepancies. Similarly, when a beginner watches a master brew gongfu tea, he or she tries to grasp the basic steps of pre-warming the cups, showering the pot, steeping the tea, showering the pot again and so forth. But to the master, there are great and very important subtleties that change these steps from tea to tea, like how high you pour water into the pot, which is different for different teas.

The master farmers are changing the way they make tea each and every season. Everything from when they pick (what day and which time of day) to how long they fry the tea to de-enzyme it will change based on the weather and season and how the tea looks and feels to them. This means that their processing must suit their trees and terroir, and not just in terms of some fixed methodology, but rather a changing and adaptable process that, like any skill, requires them to intuit and then modify their processing to suit the current leaves. In that way,

also, oolong is as much the terroir and trees as it is the processing methods.

Oolong tea requires the most refined and complicated of all tea production, requiring the greatest skill that can refine or ruin a tea. Each kind of tea finds its quality in some ratio between three things:

茶 The trees and the environment

茶 The farming methods, viz. organic or not, fertilized or not, irrigated or not

茶 The processing of the tea leaves

With puerh tea, for example, the quality is almost exclusively in the first of these—the trees and the environment. When producing a fine oolong, however, all three are equally important. It's not enough to have great teas in a nice environment, for the complicated processing will have as much to say as Nature. This is true of all teas, as a manifestation of Heaven, Earth and Man energies, but none as profoundly so as oolong tea.

The basic steps that make up all oolong production are harvesting, withering, de-enzyming, rolling and roasting. But these steps are a part of most all tea production. A big part of what sets oolong apart is the withering. Because oolong is a semi-oxidized tea, it is withered in a very particular way—both indoors and outdoors. Oolong is mostly withered on big, round bamboo trays that are stacked on shelves, allowing for airflow underneath. But production in larger quantities, as well as a movement towards more modern production means that it is also often withered on large tarps outside on the ground. As we discussed earlier, there are infinite subtle variables in the withering of fine oolong tea. We have even seen a master lick his thumb to feel the humidity during indoor withering, and then ask his sons to bring a can full of charcoal to place in the back-right corner of the room since he felt the humidity was too high there.

During the withering, oolong tea is also shaken. This shaking is the most distinctive feature of oolong tea processing. It helps to bruise the cells and further the oxidation of the tea. When you see a master pick up one of the big round trays and dance the leaves around with grace, you may think that it looks easy—until you try it and toss all the leaves onto the ground (or in your face). Like all stages of fine tea, this too takes great skill. The best shaking will just bruise the cells at the edges of the leaf, which will be apparent when you brew the tea. When the shaking is done masterfully, there is a redness only at the edges of the tea, all around each leaf. Nowadays, most stages of tea processing are done with machines (in a world of quantity over quality). The shaking is done in a large machine that turns around on an axis and tumbles the tea, bruising it, but not with the precision that a master can do by hand. You cannot automate character and skill. And a machine has no spirit...

Oolong tea is either ball-shaped or striped, depending on how it is rolled. The rolling is done to further break down the cells in the leaf and to shape the tea as well. Striped teas are rolled flat across large, ridged bamboo mats. Ball-shaped oolongs, on the other hand, are rolled in twisted-up bags. You can tell a lot about a tea by looking at the shape of the balls or stripes. Hand-processed teas, for example, will have a variety of shapes, sizes and twists in the balls or stripes, whereas machine-processed tea will be much more uniform.

After withering/shaking, the second most important part of oolong processing is the roast. If a farmer is roasting the tea, they will usually just roast the tea dry—to arrest oxidation and stop the processing—until all the tea is finished that year. They don't have the time to keep up with all the tea coming in, and rarely sleep during harvests. After the picking and initial processing of *maocha* is done, they will then roast the tea slowly and with care, knowing this is one of the most crucial stages in the production of fine oolong tea.

Traditionally, all oolong tea had higher oxidation and roast than what you see these days. The range of oxidation that defined the genre of oolong was much smaller for the first few hundred years of its development. Most old-timers can't stand the lightly-oxidized, greener teas that are popular these days. Some say that "if it looks like a green tea and smells like a green tea, then, well…"

The Processing & Aging of Taiwanese Oolong

臺灣烏龍茶製程和熟成

That trend began in Taiwan in the late 1970s, or more predominantly in the 1980s. And the shift towards greener oolong was also to do, in part, with terroir and varietal.

As we discussed in previous issues, the majority of Taiwanese oolong tea is produced from Qing Shin (清心) trees, which were brought to Taiwan from Wuyi. They are very sensitive trees, which get sick easily. As Taiwan started to develop infrastructure, culture and prosperity in the 1970s, tea culture grew in popularity and farming started to increase, with a trend of moving towards higher altitudes where Qing Shin trees thrive. Higher altitude farms receive less sunlight and the tea leaves, therefore, respond well to such light oxidation. Again, the innovations in processing were a result of changes in terroir. This can't be stated enough, especially since so many authors mistakenly promote the idea that all tea is one plant and that the differences in kinds of tea are just based on the arbitrary decisions made by farmers who choose to process their tea as white, red, black, oolong, etc. And if you are reading between the lines, as good teawayfarers, you can perhaps see the more profound truth hiding between the rows of tea trees: *there is no tea tree by itself.*

Saying that there is no such thing as a tea tree in itself seems obvious to state, but necessary. We so often forget to connect the dots, because our rational mind is all about dissection and analysis, fragmentation and exploration of conceptually cut-up parts. There is no tea tree. Not really. Tea is an environment. Tea is the soil, the weather, the water, rocks and mountains. Oolong tea is not a formula in a textbook. (Show me a farmer that uses a textbook to process his tea!) Neither is it in the leaves alone. *Oolong tea is a certain terroir*, one that includes a particular processing methodology that suits the environment, trees and leaves of that place. It is also the culture and heritage that has developed, refined and passed on that processing wisdom from generation to generation.

And so, you can understand how traditionalists might not see tea in such simple categories as "oolong," especially when the whole industry is so radically transformed in a single generation. The switch to lighter, greener oolong teas, however, is a bit of a chicken-egg scenario, as there is a strong economic factor that may have influenced the predominance of certain varietals, or vice versa. Traditional oolong tea is very difficult to produce. It can take decades to master the production. The family we study with in Wuyi has just handed supervision of production over to the next generation after thirty to thirty-five years of work. In other words, it took thirty-five years of practice before the father was confident enough to hand the factory over

How Oolong Got Its Name

烏龍名字何來

烏龍傳奇

Oolong tea gets its name from an old folktale about a lazy son who was nicknamed "Black Dragon" because he was always so tan from falling asleep in the tea fields during the day. Though he was a great hunter, his father didn't seem to notice. After so many poor harvests, the old man had had enough and told Black Dragon to come home with a full basket or not at all! Black Dragon was clever, though, and worked vigorously to fill his basket with tea leaves by midday so he could take a nap. After some time, he saw a rabbit and chased it down, forgetting that his basket was still strapped to his back. When he got home, he discovered that half the leaves had flown out in the pursuit. His father was furious and kicked him out of the house.

Several days later, the elders of the village came to see the old father, saying that the tea he brought in that day was the best they'd ever seen. They all went to the forest to find Black Dragon and ask him where he'd gotten the tea. When he showed them that it had come from the same trees it always came from, they were confused. They asked him to tell them everything that had happened that day.

One of the wiser elders quickly realized that the difference in the tea had something to do with Black Dragon chasing the rabbit. After some experimentation, they realized that it was the result of shaking the leaves on his back, which bruised the edges of the leaves and furthered their oxidation.

From that day, all their tea was named after its founder, who became one of the village chiefs. And even now, all oolong tea is shaken during the withering to bruise the leaves red around the edges!

Black Dragon became a hero and was known far and wide as the creator of this amazing tea, which soon rose up in the tea world to be the best tea in the land. As a chief, Black Dragon renounced his lazy ways and began working hard to help his people master their new tea craft, bruising the edges of each and every leaf.

to his son. Traditional oolong also has a narrow margin of error, meaning that a higher quantity of tea is down-sorted, and it is more challenging to achieve fine tea. Finally, traditional oolong can be challenging to brew, requiring at least basic skills to bring out the best in its flavors, aromas and energy.

When Taiwan boomed economically in the 1970s, as everything in the West was "Made in Taiwan," the way it now is in China, tea became popular. When a country prospers, culture follows. Tea shops and tea houses opened all over the island, and the tea culture here flourished like never before. As a result, small, artisanal farms were bought, and new, bigger plantations were created to supply a growing demand for Taiwanese tea. They needed a tea that could be processed easily—to train employees in weeks, not years, and to create machinery to expedite the process. They also needed a tea with a broader margin of error, so less leaves would be lost in sorting. Finally, of course, they needed this tea to reach the mainstream, and therefore be easy to brew: in a bag, cup, mug or even bottle. For this, they turned to green tea and the Baozhong in the north, and began producing lightly-oxidized oolong. This lightly-oxidized tea is easier to producer and prepare, and now represents the majority of Taiwanese oolong, which has also influenced tea-growing regions on the Mainland, like Anxi.

The shift to lightly-oxidized oolong was one of the biggest and most influential changes in the tea world. It is also relevant to aged and aging oolong.

From Dark to Light, Light to Dark

As Taiwanese lightly-oxidized tea grew in popularity, the trend of aging oolong tea decreased, as this tea is not the ideal candidate for doing so. Also, marketing pushed freshness. The push to consume quicker is, of course, in part a ploy to encourage tea lovers to drink their tea faster and buy more. It is also not environmentally sustainable. This starts at the farm: traditional oolong tea, oxidized from 40-70%, evolved to allow for bug bites, which begin oxidation on the tree (you can see the red rings around the bites since the inside of the leaf is now exposed to air). While you can create lightly-oxidized oolong using organic farming techniques, it is more challenging, and so as this kind of tea grew in popularity, so did the use of agrochemicals. The "freshness" aspect of this kind of tea also introduced all kinds of plastic-based packaging and machinery, including the still-popular vacuum sealing. And this packaging and machinery industry which surrounds this type of tea causes environmental problems of its own.

Nowadays, some vendors and online tea resources mistakenly report that aging Taiwanese tea is a "modern trend." This is because of this shift to lightly-oxidized tea that began in the 1970s and 1980s. Since this tea is not ideal for aging, which we will discuss later on, intentionally aging tea certainly slowed down and was not discussed much, especially in the mainstream. However, aging oolong tea is as old as the genre itself. Sometimes old trends resurface and newcomers then think that the trend is new, when in fact it is a rekindling of old traditions. This happens in fashion all the time. Two important factors have pushed aged and aging oolong back into the forefront of tea culture in Taiwan.

First of all, the rise of aged sheng puerh has influenced the entire tea world, from white tea to oolong. Nowadays, you can find almost every kind of tea compressed into discus shapes (*bing*, 餅) to get associated with the puerh boom. In the 70s and 80s when Taiwan shifted to lightly-oxidized oolong, local tea teachers did not appreciate this new kind of tea and began looking elsewhere for fine tea. They started delving into puerh, and sharing it with their friends and clients. Slowly, aged puerh took off in Taiwan. And it was the perfect time to do so. At that time, aged sheng was very cheap relative to now, and even cheaper because most of it was in Hong Kong, which was liquidating due to fears over the 1997 return to Mainland control. Beijing offered the people of Hong Kong little information about what the take over would entail, and what the economy would look like. As a result, most businesses were trying to liquidate to cash, and some people were even moving overseas. At the time, tons of puerh moved to Taiwan (literally). The subsequent quick growth of the puerh industry from the 90s to the present has influenced Taiwanese oolong and been a contributing factor in the re-popularization of aging oolong tea.

The second factor in the recent re-popularization of aged oolong tea in Taiwan has to do with a different trend: altitude. In the 1980s, it became popular in Taiwan to associate altitude with quality—and ultimately Taiwan tea became known as "high-mountain oolong." There is some truth to the idea that higher-altitude farms produce unique tea, but the marketing of this is, of course, highly exaggerated. Lots of other factors go into the quality of an oolong tea, like the health of the ecology, the age and type of trees and the skill of the one processing the tea. A chemical-laden tea from a higher altitude is not as good as one grown in a thriving ecology, like Master Gao Ding Shi's (高定石) tea, which we discussed in last month's issue. His tea gardens are not very high, but the ecology, coupled with his incredible skill, makes some of the highest quality tea in Tai-

9/ Undying Lamp: Aged Oolong Tea (不朽的燈老烏龍茶)

wan—both in terms of quality and price. Nevertheless, as the popularity of "high mountain oolong" grew, older, lower regions lost their market share. The classic example of this is Dong Ding (凍頂), the oldest tea-growing region in central Taiwan. Dong Ding is relatively low-altitude, especially compared to places like Li Shan (梨山), and history wasn't enough to feed the farmers there. Farmers are resilient, though, and regions like Dong Ding have made a comeback in recent years. They have found a new niche in the market—actually two.

Places like Dong Ding have started becoming competitive again by switching to organic, eco-farming, traditional processing or both. This new trend of traditionally-processed oolong is the second reason that aging and aged tea has grown in popularity in the last twenty years. Traditionally-processed oolong was almost always aged back in the day, though usually for only a short time. In Wuyi, this was traditionally done from spring (April/May), when the teas were harvested and processed, to Chinese New Year of the following year, when the teas reached market. This was to allow the roast to mellow, and the flavors to develop through continued, slow oxidation. Nowadays, our teachers in Wuyi have decreased this time, and tea comes to market in September or October. But they often recommend allowing it to sit for longer. Long ago, tea lovers often aged their oolong tea. Oolong tea wasn't sold in vacuum-sealed packages, and "drink it while it's fresh" wasn't a part of the marketing at the time. Traditionally, oolong tea was wrapped in paper, and vendors as well as tea lovers knew how to wrap and re-wrap their tea. They would keep it in the paper or put it in a jar, and then drink it at their own pace, knowing that it would just get better over time. Traditional oolong has other qualities as well.

We love some lightly-oxidized oolong teas, and so long as they are sustainably produced, we support the farmers who produce them. We drink them in the late spring and early summer when it gets hot in Taiwan. They offer a splendid bouquet of aromas, from floral orchids to sweet hibiscus and even milk. However, they also lack body, depth and Qi. Most of the time when a group of tea lovers sit down to have a tea session and the host offers a lightly-oxidized oolong, no one is satisfied and we always end up drinking another tea afterwards, like a puerh or Cliff Tea. Lightly-oxidized oolongs are delicious, but they are delicious appetizers, like a plate of olives put out before a group of hungry people. There are exceptions, but this is often true.

For many reasons, lightly-oxidized oolong is just not that great a choice for aging, which brings us to our next topic of discussion: choosing a tea for aging.

Candidates for Aging

We all have limited budgets, space and only one lifetime, which is a very important place to start when contemplating the possibility of aging some tea (unless you intend to selflessly age tea for future generations). We have to develop a standard for choosing candidates to age. Otherwise, we will waste our tea-storing budget on less-than-ideal teas. And along with budget, we only have a certain amount of storage space in our home. If we spend our money and fill our tea cabinet with teas that won't age well, we will waste our money, space and time. It is, therefore, incredibly important to have some strategy.

We need to make something very clear: *all tea can be aged.* All tea improves with age, without exception. But this doesn't mean all teas should be aged. The best teas on earth are all aged teas. Nothing really compares to them. Sadly, one of the reasons that aged teas represent the pinnacle in the tea world is that they come from a time when the tea-growing regions were completely clean and pure. There were no agrochemicals, or very little, in tea-growing regions. When these toxins were introduced differs from place to place, but a part of what makes aged teas from before that time so special is that the ecology was healthy and thriving, and the tea that we call "living." This makes choosing a tea to age more difficult these days.

Before we discuss the type of tea for aging, we must go to the source: Nature. Remember, the previous step is always more important than the following one in tea production, in part because it informs what happens next: the land/terroir decides the varietal, then these two factors determine harvest time, which governs withering, etc. The conclusion of this is that the terroir/ecology is the most important factor in tea quality. And choosing a candidate for aging should always start with quality. Of course, aging will improve tea, so a low-quality tea may be better for aging, but relatively speaking, junk that is aged is just old junk. Normally, we don't like to refer to any tea as "junk," or even "low quality," as it is never the fault of the tea. The low quality is always a result of human interference: either the tea was grown with chemicals in a way that favors industrial yield over quality, or the processors lacked the skill to craft a fine tea. If you leave tea alone in a forest, it turns out just fine.

Consequently, when choosing a tea to age, *always start with quality.* And quality always begins with tea grown in healthy environments with healthy trees; a thriving, diverse ecology; no agrochemicals and a farmer that has a philosophy of quality based on a love for tea ("living tea," in other words). Great tea becomes even better when aged, and results in the pinnacle of tea. Since our budget and space is limited, it is important to remember to age the teas that are worth aging! Don't get confused and think lots of junk is better than a small amount of quality tea! It never is. Try to find a balance of supremely-awesome teas to age—the top shelf, best of the best—and some teas that are more affordable, but still come from healthy farms with good quality processing. That way, when your tea is mature, you will have no junk, lots of day-to-day goodness and some excellent teas for special occasions. This is a good recipe for new teas we drink, as well. Just don't get caught up in the idea that time is going to magically turn your junk into treasures.

After assuming that one understands that only quality tea is worth aging, the next factor in choosing a tea to age is the type of tea. The most obvious types of tea that people ask about are light teas, like green tea. These teas can indeed be aged, but they aren't great candidates because you will, first of all, lose the fresh, spring vibrancy of them when they are new; and then, second of all, and more importantly, these teas will take a long time to age, which is due to a high moisture content. We will get to moisture in a bit, but again, space is limited. Unless you want to experiment with aging some green tea in a small amount, which we recommend since you can then learn that all teas improve with age, we suggest sticking to the traditional teas for aging: red tea, white tea, black tea, puerh tea and oolong. Obviously, each of these categories has centuries of history, and there are issues and issues worth of information on aging each of these teas. In fact, we have covered aging puerh in multiple issues (see September 2015 and June 2016, for example). This issue is about oolong, so let us focus in on choosing an oolong for storage. And since this month is also all about Taiwanese history, let us narrow our discussion down further and talk about choosing a Taiwanese tea to age. (Believe it or not, even aging oolong is too broad a stroke for one article, as that would include Dancong, Cliff Tea, Tieguanyin and much more.)

The tradition of aging oolong is as old as oolong Herself. As with other types of tea, oolong was quickly recognized to improve with age (especially in the long run). As mentioned above, Cliff Tea is traditionally aged for a while before it is drunk, and other areas of China have also intentionally and unintentionally aged oolong over the years. Today, aged oolongs are increasingly revered in Taiwan, where you can find oolongs over one hundred years old on occasion and more than a few decades old with relative frequency. Here, some oolong teas are marketed as "aged" after as few as six years, but most tea connoisseurs consider an oolong to be truly aged once it's about thirty, and we've savored a few Taiwanese oolong teas that have been around for one-hundred-something years. Unless they're stored in poor conditions, most oolongs will become incredible if you simply wait long enough to drink them.

Aged oolongs cover a broad spectrum, from teas that were forsaken for years up to teas that won awards and sold for enormous sums before they were aged with the utmost care for thirty years or more (in their sealed, original canisters no less). There are certain factors which influence the quality of the tea at the end of decades of waiting, and one of these factors is undeniably the quality of the tea at the start of the aging process. Great tea becomes great aged tea!

The best Taiwanese oolongs are always made from a traditional style of rolled semi-balled oolong. All other factors being equal, this style of tea (and other traditionally-processed, darker roast oolongs in general) has an advantage over the greener oolongs when it comes to aging. By "traditional processing," we mean higher oxidation and/or roast. One of the keys to choosing an oolong for aging, as we discussed earlier, is moisture content. Traditional roasted oolongs only have about two percent moisture content in the leaves (compared to five percent or more in greener, less roasted leaves), so they change and ferment more gradually and predictably. They are less likely to crumble into dust before their time or require re-roasting to keep them from going all musty and moldy. (We will discuss re-roasting during aging later on.)

In order to have low enough moisture content for stable aging, oolong tea needs a longer final roast during its initial processing. This is a natural part of traditional oolong processing in Taiwan, and it is still practiced in some parts of China, too. This is why oolong traditionally didn't require vacuum-sealing or all that extra machinery and wasted packaging. A stable roast meant the tea could be wrapped in simple paper and preserved that way indefinitely.

The instability of oolong teas (and other light teas like green teas) that are not roasted enough is why many people say that they are not ageable. Since they are instable, their flavor, aroma and Qi will fluctuate drastically over the first ten or even twenty years of aging, often passing through awkward phases. Eventually, Time stabilizes all things, including awkward tea (and teenagers), but for some time, the tea will not be as nice. This is actually true of all green teas, certain puerhs and other teas that you would not ordinarily think of as good candidates for aging.

The Science of Change

Before we wrap up this wonderful conversation on aging oolong, we should put another kettle on and discuss some of what we know about aging oolong tea. It should be noted, though, that there are still more questions than answers. Not enough research has been done into aged and aging tea, and as these teas grow in popularity, this will surely increase, as will our understanding.

Aside from new and exciting areas of scientific inquiry waiting to be explored, there is also the spiritual approach to this, which will always be mysterious. In other words, the whole is always more than the sum of the parts. Just understanding the chemical changes in tea as it ages does not mean we fully understand aged or aging tea any more than understanding the chemistry of our bodies means we understand human life, love, music or meditation. From a more spiritual perspective, it is, in fact, a great analogy to think of aging tea as retreat. Just as humans change in meditation over long periods, tea similarly gathers wisdom and power—medicinal efficacy and Nature wisdom. How those changes occur is ineffable, and can only be understood in the drinking of aged teas and listening to their stories and wisdom. There are so many subtleties

13/ Undying Lamp: Aged Oolong Tea (不朽的燈老烏龍茶)

to the energetics of aged teas that we can literally spend a lifetime listening to their sutras, and what a life that would be! We just wanted to be sure to include the living, breathing, growing wisdom of aged and aging teas—the wondrous mystical transformation of these energies over time—before we discuss the science we do understand so far, starting with the work of our own Global Tea Hut member and contributor, Robert Heiss:

"First, let's define oxidation: Oxidation is a biochemical, enzymatic activity during which oxygen is absorbed by and subsequently causes changes to the host physical matter. In the case of freshly plucked leaf for tea, this is plant matter. Oxidation can be spontaneous or controlled and cause positive or negative change. A familiar example of spontaneous negative oxidation is what happens when one cuts an apple or banana and leaves the cut side open to the air. The exposed cells absorb oxygen, soften and turn brown. This is a very simple form of oxidation that most people have witnessed. Left undisturbed, the fruit may simply air-dry or it may rot, depending on the atmospheric conditions present in the room. Similarly, cutting an apple into slices and drying these in a dehydrator is an example of controlled oxidation, occurring within the process of drying. The browning of the cut surfaces is not considered aesthetically pleasing in the marketplace, so sulfur compounds or citric acid are sometimes used to mitigate the color change, but oxidation occurs in this situation even without a visible change in color. The oxygenation of the polyphenols stimulates them to start the series of chemical reactions that ultimately yield the flavor components and cup characteristics that we expect in red tea. During the first and most important period of the enzymic oxidations, the enzymes polyphenol oxidase and peroxidase act on other polyphenols to produce theaflavins. These red-orange compounds then react with more polyphenols to produce thearubigins, the chemicals responsible for changing the leaf's color from green to golden, coppery or chocolate brown. The thearubigins, meanwhile, are also busy reacting with some of the amino acids and sugars in the leaf, creating the highly polymerized substances that develop into the various and distinctive flavor components that we expect in red tea.

"Fermentation is an important component in the fabrication of puerh and black teas like Liu An or Liu Bao. Therefore, any discussion of fermentation in tea manufacture ideally focuses on—and is well illustrated by—the manufacture of puerh. So let's examine what fermentation is and why careful, expert fermentation is so integral to the manufacture of traditional, high-quality puerh. While it is one of the oldest and simplest forms of tea production, the world of puerh is complex and exacting, to the extent that volumes have been written on the subject by Asian tea experts. However, we will not examine the specific complexities of the different types of Puerh manufacture here, as this article seeks only to offer a more general description of fermentation and oxidation.

"Fermentation is microbial activity involving one or more types of bacteria, molds and yeasts. By definition, fermentation occurs most readily in the absence of oxygen, though exposure to some is ideal for aging raw puerh.

Though Yixing purple-sand clay is better for puerh and black tea, as it breathes, it can also be used for oolong. The benefits of the clay outweigh the porousness and slight oxygen that gets in, especially in dry climates. You can mitigate this by wrapping the whole jar up in a cloth as shown to the far left.

It is a great idea to seal the jar with wax, inserting a string into the wax as you go around, which will make the seal easy to break later on. As we were sealing the celadon jar to the far left, we spilled some wax and decided to go crazy with it, making it a decorative element of this jar of tea set aside for aging. You could also stay neat and place the wax between the lid and body. We use the kind of wax people use to seal envelopes.

These days, many porcelain jars come with very tight seals, using aluminum to force the lid in airtight. Pewter, laser -cut lids are the tightest we have found on earth. If you use a metal jar, however, the metal can impart a metallic flavor to your tea over time and constrict the tea energetically (metal disciplines wood in Chinese cosmology), so line the jar with paper like we do with our Global Tea Hut tins. This has been done for centuries. In ancient times, it was hard to create ceramic jars with a tight seal, so pewter or tin was used. But these pewter jars were always lined with rice paper on the inside so that the tea was not touching the metal, detracting from its flavor, aroma and energy.

The leaf that is being transformed into puerh must be exposed to bacteria (or have bacteria present inherently) in order for fermentation to occur.

"As is the case with the fabrication of traditional 'hard' cider or Roquefort cheese, the bacteria necessary for microbial activity to commence is present naturally, in the atmosphere and/or on the interior surface(s) of the chamber in which the fermentation occurs (the cider-house or cheese-curing cave). In the case of puerh, the bacteria required to both initiate and maintain fermentation are potentially present during several aspects of its production."

Puerh and black teas ferment and oxidize both as they age, whereas oolong tea just oxidizes. But that is the whole of what we understand regarding changes in oolong tea. There is also hydrolysis, which is the release or breakdown of chemicals due to a reaction with water. As we discussed earlier, all oolong tea has some moisture content after processing. We discussed that this was better when it was lower, which is a truth that is evident by the differences in the same tea processed as lightly-oxidized oolong and then traditionally-processed (high oxidation and/or roast) aged side by side, which we have done and which we encourage you to experiment with. The traditionally-processed tea will age much better, be more stable and have much greater vibrancy and fidelity, not to mention better fragrance and flavor. Understanding some of the chemistry of hydrolysis in oolong tea as it is aging hasn't yet explained why lower moisture content is better, though, save perhaps the assumption that these changes happen slower and maybe more consistently.

In the tea leaves, there are many compounds that are part of glycosidic bonds or linkages, which are a type of covalent bond joining sugar molecules to other groups, usually another carbohydrate. These aromatic compounds are often sweet and floral, and the bond means that they are not detectable; this explains why some teas are so much more aromatic after being brewed in hot water, which breaks these bonds. It is possible that the moisture content in tea leaves is also affecting the oolong as it ages in this way as well, breaking these bonds and releasing more sweet, aromatic fragrances as time goes on. Certainly, aged oolong is more aromatic, sweet and delicious.

Another aspect of the chemistry of oolong tea changing over time is the Maillard reaction, which is a reaction between amino acids and sugars that are being reduced by heat, often causing cooked food to turn brown and have a distinct flavor and fragrance. This is what gives roasted oolong its toasty flavors and what causes onions to "caramelize." Normally, this reaction requires heat, but in the aging of oolong tea, the sugars and theanines transform over time through degradation of the molecular chains. These complex changes of amino acids create aromatics like pyrazine that we perceive as nutty, roasted flavors and fragrances (most of what we "taste" in tea is actually aroma-based).

A 2011 Chinese study of aged oolong, reported in the January edition of the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, found that "Significant differences were observed between the volatile compounds in fresh and old oolong teas. This observation suggested that long straight chains of alcohols and acids were putatively decomposed while shorter-chain acids, their amide derivatives and many nitrogen-containing compounds were generated during the tea conversion processes. The overall patterns of volatile compounds observed in five different preparations of old oolong tea were fundamentally identical… Characteristic aroma nitrogen-containing compounds, including N-ethylsuccinimide, 2-acetylpyrrole, 2-formylpyrrole and 3-pyridinol, were consistently found in the examined old oolong teas. These compounds might be regarded as typical constituents at least for a certain kind of old oolong tea."

This quick introduction of some of what we were able to research in the changes of oolong tea over time only represents the tip of the iceberg. Future research will uncover deeper levels to the chemistry of tea leaf transformation over time. Also, we should end where we started by saying that the chemistry does not fully explain why aged oolong is so great—not on the level of flavor/aroma, nor on why aged tea has such a profound effect on our consciousness. For that, you will have to drink aged tea. And since aged tea is so expensive, that means storing your own.

點亮自己不朽的燈

歲月的魔法使茶陳化成純淨的黃金

How to Store Oolong Tea

If you want to be abundant, age tea. You will thank yourself later. Having aged teas to share with others will bring you great joy later in life. Aside from being ideal in most of the places where you, our beloved tea community, live and drink tea, aged oolong is incredible. It is the most underrated, undiscussed tea in the Western world, we find. But we cannot exaggerate how wonderful an aged oolong is. Most of you live in places that are too dry for storing puerh or black teas, which as a result will never reach their full potential. They need humidity and other factors, since they are fermenting and oxidizing both, which means bacteria, yeasts and fungus—all of which come from a rainforest. Don't worry, this doesn't mean your puerh is all going to go bad or "die." The drying out of puerh is very slow, and so long as you are drinking the tea regularly, it will be fine for you to finish it over years. But it won't age well long-term in a dry location. Oolong, however, will.

Oolong tea doesn't require moisture or oxygen to store, like puerh does, so you can age it anywhere. Puerh really is best stored in humid environments, especially if you plan to age it for longer periods of time, but oolong will happily transform wherever you live. Oolong also ages much, much faster than puerh or black tea, changing in what we call "oolong years," which, like dog years are about seven to one. This means that in five to ten years, you can already have a magnificent, glorious tea to drink. And this isn't just about flavor and aroma. Aged oolong can also be powerful energetically, and transform any day into a special one. If you have tried some aged puerh, which is also wonderful, of course, and want to compare, you should try our special Expansion Pack on p. 33. We hope that more of you who live in dry, cold places stop fighting the place you live, and trying to store teas in unnatural, artificial ways, which will never result in teas that will reach their full potential, and maybe think instead about the equally rich, vibrant and varied world of aging oolongs. (While this is an issue on Taiwanese tea, we feel compelled to tell you that aged Cliff Tea, especially when the tea was very fine to begin with, is, in our limited experience, the best of all teas on Earth, and we devote almost equal storage space to it as we do to puerh. Trust us, you want some aged Cliff Tea!)

To age oolong tea, you will need a jar. Traditionally, these were sometimes made of good pewter, as such jars offer a much tighter seal than ceramic. If you do find high-quality pewter, you will need to line it with rice paper, like we do with the Global Tea Hut tins, as metal and tea do not do well together. Usually, it is ideal to use a glazed jar so it cannot breathe. We hope to slow down the oxidation and prevent any moisture or humidity from getting into the tea, so porcelain or other glazed jars with a tight seal are often ideal. The exception, of course, is authentic purple-sand (*zisha*, 紫砂) clay from Yixing. (You can read our September 2017 issue to learn more about "authentic" Yixing clay.) This clay has a magical effect on all tea and can make up for the fact that it does breathe slightly. We have done comparisons, and more is gained than the loss in tight seal. Nowadays, you can sometimes get lucky and find a Zisha jar with a laser-cut pewter lid, which is super ideal. If you cannot find an authentic Yixing jar, choose glazed ceramic with as thick a glaze as possible and a very tight lid.

Simply fill the jar to the brim, which reduces oxygen in the container, and seal it with wax. You'll want to put a string in the wax so it will be easy to open. If you want to check on it more regularly, you can forgo the wax, but remember that every time you open the lid, you are exposing it to unwanted air and moisture—disturbing the tea's meditation. Checking on the tea like this will reduce its quality by a little every single time you open the jar. We recommend leaving the tea alone for as long as possible. This includes moving the jar itself. We dust our jars without moving them or disturbing the tea inside. Remember, energetically, the tea will always be more powerful the longer it is still—and that goes for the aging of all types of tea.

Although a solid final roast and good storage are enough to keep the tea aging well for many years, many tea lovers also like to re-roast the tea to keep the moisture content low during aging. Some do this several times a year, every five years or at other intervals, and it's common to light up the charcoal fire pit or switch on the electric roaster upon discovery of an accidentally aged tea. However, we are amongst another school of oolong aging when it comes to roasting. More specifically, we don't re-roast our oolongs at all. We find that it makes aged oolongs taste more like roast than aged tea, and that the tea doesn't respond well to the inconsistencies of roasts (which are often done by different people using different roasting techniques over the years). This technique of re-roasting the tea destroys the aged flavors that are grow-

位置是储存茶的一切
Location, Location, Location

Different teas age well in different locations. It is important to understand where you live and which teas will age well in your home. Using space to age teas that won't age well in your location is a waste of money, time and space. We often hear people say that their puerh tea, for example, has "changed over time," in essence accepting any positive change as a good one. But you wouldn't be happy with a stock that earned you only fifty dollars after ten years, especially if it was a return from a one-thousand-dollar investment. In other words, that same tea aged in the right location would be way better, so much so that a tea lover might change their mind and see that they might be wasting storage space. You can always store a tea where you live and trade it for other kinds of tea later one (we have discussed making a communal forum for trading in this community in years to come), or perhaps sell it and use the money to buy another kind of tea. You could also learn to appreciate the tea that ages well where you live. Also, your teas won't go bad overnight. It takes years. This conversation is more to do with long-term storage. If you are drinking your teas, don't worry. They will be fine as you drink them.

In general, black teas and puerh are much more sensitive to location as they are fermenting and oxidizing as they age, which means there is a living, breathing colony of bacteria, yeast and fungus that comes from a rainforest and therefore needs humidity, along with many other factors like temperature, to age well. (We recommend checking out the June 2016 issue for more information on that.) Most red teas age well with only a slight degree of humidity, unless it is dian hong (which is essentially puerh, since it is made from puerh raw material). Dian hong requires less humidity than puerh, but still needs a relatively high humidity. Along with red teas, white teas and oolong are excellent candidates for drier locations. With white tea, like red tea, a bit of humidity and some air (much less than puerh) is okay. But oolong loves dry, oxygen-free environments. It also ages much faster than black teas or puerh. Aged oolong is also incredible. We cannot overstate the fact that aged oolong can be stunning (try this month's Expansion Pack, offered on p. 33, to find out).

If we lived in a dry place we would be aging tons of oolong tea: Dancong, Cliff Tea and traditionally-processed Taiwanese tea. We would also put aside some nice red tea and white tea as well, as these will probably turn out great where you live. Utilize your budget, space and your time well and create extra fine teas for later on.

We have an amazing opportunity to help get you started on your oolong storing journey on p. 59. We hope that this issue, the Tea of the Month and the Expansion Pack all turn you on to the limitless possibilities of aged oolong so that so many of you do not feel stuck when it comes to aged and aging tea where you live, especially since puerh and black tea are so location sensitive and aged versions of those teas are also so expensive. Oolong is an affordable and equally magical way to start aging tea, and they have just as much to offer as any other kind of aged tea.

ing over time, leaving only the flavors of the compounded roasts. It is also often used as a technique to sell a tea as older than it really is, since you cannot taste the age under all the roasting.

In quality tea production, each stage in the processing should be done in a way that it enhances the tea without leaving a trace of itself. If you can taste the kill-green, in other words, that kill-green wasn't done well. The same is true of the roast. If a tea has strong roast flavors, it was either roasted improperly, or this was done to cover up other flaws in the quality of the raw leaf or processing. In Wuyi, for example, Cliff Tea is often heavily roasted when it is low-quality or down-sorted tea, blended tea or tea grown outside the park. If you buy four different kinds of Cliff Tea and they all taste the same (like roast) and you cannot taste the distinctions in the varietal, those are low-quality teas, or teas processed without skill, or both. As we discussed earlier, Cliff Tea was usually stored from spring until Chinese New Year of the following year to let the roast mellow so that the tea would mature and the fire mellow out, leaving no trace of itself. Roasting and re-roasting over time is a multiplication of this issue, especially since the roaster cannot possibly keep every roast consistent, making the layers all of different frequency, not to mention the movement and disturbance to the tea's meditation.

That said, we're not opposed to a roast just before it's time to drink an aged oolong. Re-roasting the tea before brewing may dissipate some of the "off" flavors that accumulated during aging, refresh the overall character of the tea and warm the tea up energetically, if it is done with skill. Roasting aged oolong shortly before drinking it is relatively common amongst tea lovers in Taiwan, and it's easy to find small, earthenware oolong roasting sets for home use here. Nonetheless, this takes some practice and skill and may harm your tea, so you may want to try it out on simpler teas first. It is also not necessary, and many well-aged teas don't need this. We only do this for teas that are not well-aged, which is very common in Taiwan. In general, however, this is not really necessary, and naturally-aged oolong teas turn out better. As with most things, Nature does a better job!

Since the 1970s, when lightly-oxidized tea grew in popularity in Taiwan (as we discussed in detail earlier), aging oolong has slowed down. For this reason, most aged oolongs of the past thirty to fifty years were not intentionally aged—they are just teas left in the back of some farmer's house or a shop, etc. This means that they may not have been great teas to begin with, or else they would have sold. Also, this means that they were not aged in ideal conditions, which we will discuss in a bit, meaning they often have off flavors and/or aromas—"storage flavor (*chang wei*, 陳味)," in other words. Such teas benefit from a short roast within an hour before brewing.

This is actually a principle that can be applied to aging all tea, which is that the less interference there is, the better the tea will turn out. Remember, fermentation and/or oxidation are natural processes.

A fine aged oolong often has a clear surface and a color like amber, notes of prune and Chinese medicinal herbs in the flavor and aroma, and a balancing, powerful Qi. It feels silky in the mouth and smooth in the throat. It has *huigan* (回甘, a minty-cooling sensation in the mouth and throat after swallowing) and a sweetness that lingers almost as if it is being exuded from the throat. Although thick-walled purple clay *Yixing* teapots are generally preferred for aged oolongs, a thin-walled, purple clay Yixing pot is said to be ideal for brewing an aged oolong from Dong Ding (the home of this month's tea), as it will elicit more aroma and Qi from the leaves. But you'll know when you're brewing it well because the leaves will begin to murmur to you of their past, present and future, speaking kindly of their many years spent circling the sun, all the while whispering hints of the illusion of Time...

Content with a simple tea,
Some old leaves in a cracked bowl,
I couldn't help but glance over
At the special jar
I was aging
To reward my life's practice.

Should I see how it's going?
Just a bowl or two?

Then I recalled
The light of past moons
Reflected on the River's turns—
The water flowing, pausing, twirling & crashing
Beneath the Buddha's "Undying Lamp,"
And I remembered
That a pillow is for more than sleeping on...

–Wu De

Brewing Tips 沖泡技巧完成好茶

This month we are drinking an aged oolong. Such teas were made to be brewed gongfu. Gongfu tea brewing evolved, in part, due to the development of oolong tea. They are a match made in Heaven. This tea will only truly, deeply shine if it is prepared gongfu. However, do not let that discourage you if you do not have any gongfu teaware or haven't yet started a gongfu practice. You can also brew this tea leaves in a bowl, or sidehandle, though we would recommend leaves in a bowl if you are going to make this tea in a bowl.

In gongfu tea, temperature preservation is the key to unlocking a tea's fragrance and flavor (actually most of what we taste in tea is actually aroma, so it is the more important of the two). With proper temperature control, our tea is also more patient, meaning we can get anywhere from fifteen to forty steepings depending on the quality of the tea. As we have reminded you before, we remind you again: develop an appreciation for later steepings; it will make your tea journey so much more enjoyable. Later steepings aren't worse than the more fragrant ones at the beginning; they are just different. In oolong teas, the later steepings often taste of the mountain minerals the tea is founded upon. It can taste and feel like you are closer to the Earth in these steepings. In fact, we like to boil a nice aged tea like this month's after we have steeped it for a second session.

Gongfu tea brewing means brewing with skill—bringing out the best in any tea. It means listening to the tea and preparing it in a way that takes it to its highest potential. Skill in brewing (gongfu) is akin to cooking: when we give a chef some veggies and some basic ingredients, they can bring out the natural flavors and aromas of the food in a way an unskilled cook cannot. They combine and nourish the ingredients to their highest potential, depending upon their skills (gongfu). Similarly, when brewing gongfu tea, we listen to the tea and brew it the way it "wants" to be brewed, as opposed to how we want to brew it. We must therefore know the tea, know our teaware, water and fire and how to bring it all together with grace and harmony. At first, we practice this using a formula we are taught—the way a chef uses a recipe to start off—but then we must transcend the method and work spontaneously, freely, trusting in our skills to adapt and flow with the steeping before us.

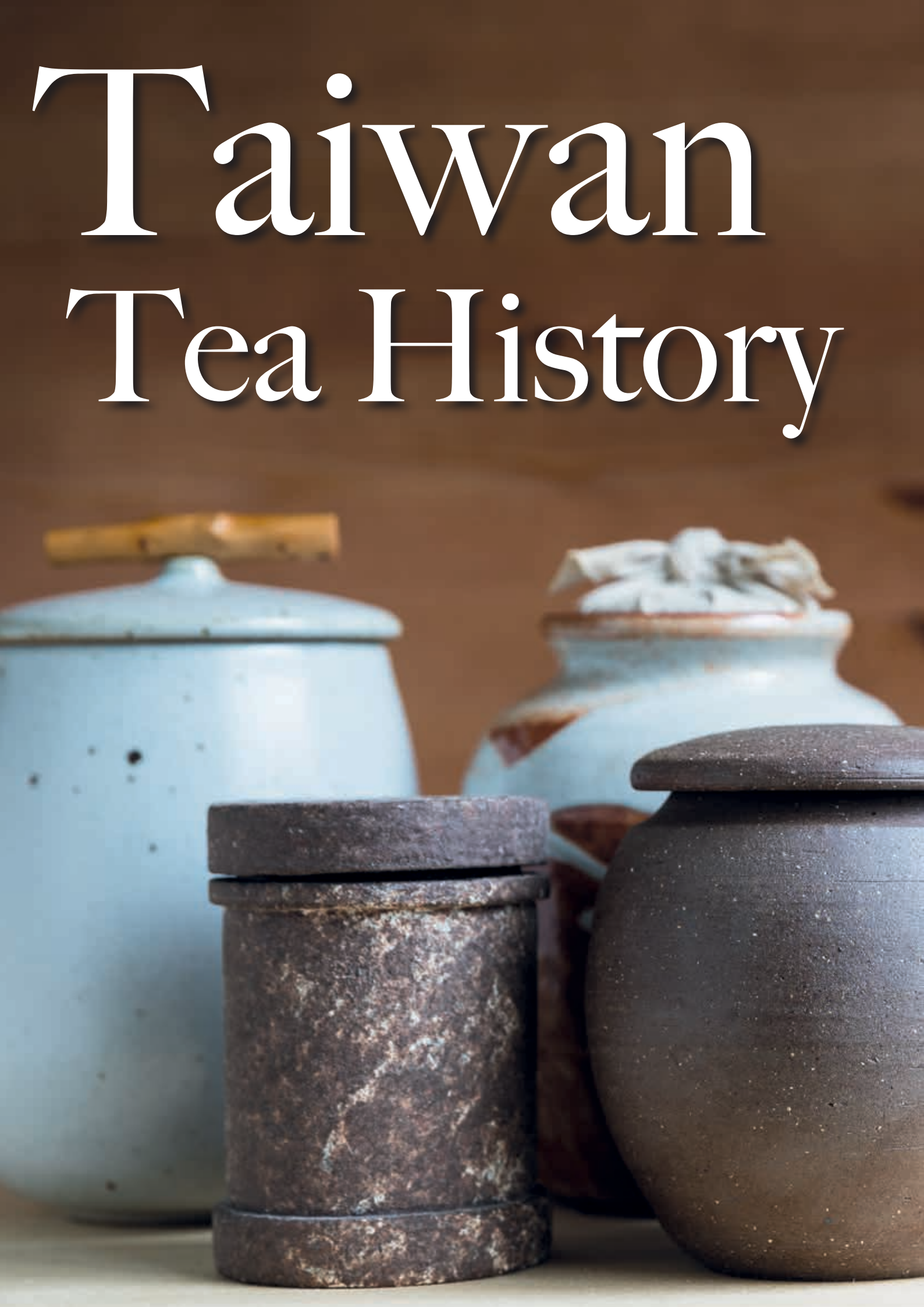
Heat is always expanding and rising, so when you do not shower the pot both before and after the steeping, the temperature difference disturbs the structure of the tea liquor, as well as the tea's absorption in the water, which makes each and every steeping drastically different. In that way, the tea is constantly disrupted and is quickly exhausted. If the temperature remains constant, on the other hand, the fragrant oils in the tea are released slowly from steeping to steeping, and the tea is smoother and lasts much longer. Try experimenting with showering your Yixing, *zisha* (purple-sand) pot and not shower, only before, only after and then both. We have discussed this experiment in past issues, which a quick search of the brand-new archive of past issues on the site will reveal!

Gongfu *Leaves in a Bowl*

Water: *spring water or high-quality bottled*
Fire: *coals, infrared or gas*
Heat: *crab-eye; 90–95°C*
Brewing Methods: *gongfu or leaves in a bowl (gongfu is much better)*
Steeping: *flash, flash, flash and longer*
A few balls in a bowl if brewed that way
Patience: *15 to 20 steepings / 7 pours in bowl*

茶 ***Make sure to shower the pot both before and after brewing a tea gongfu. This can reduce the difference between the inner and outer temperature of the pot from ten degrees down to one, which is huge.***

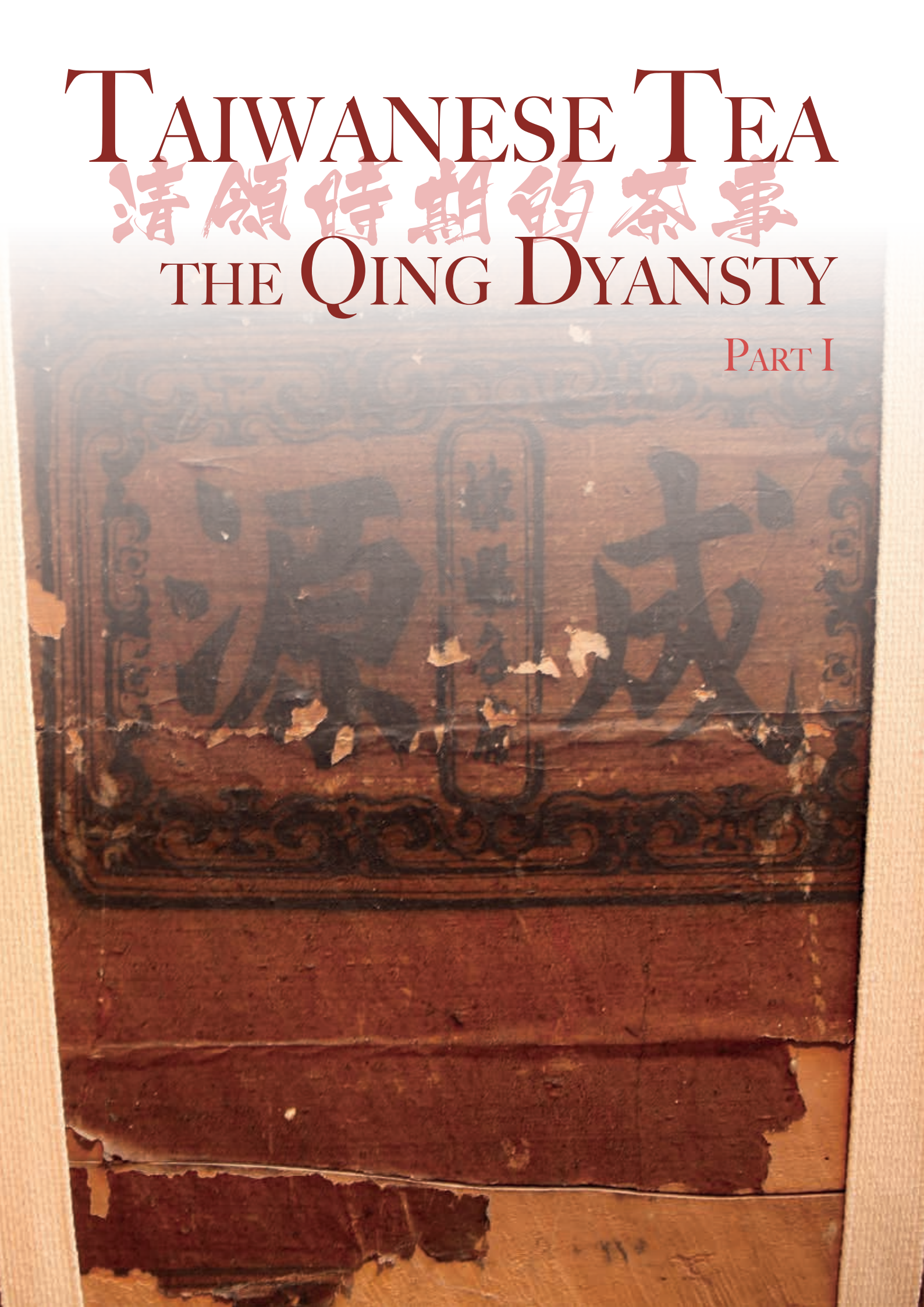
Taiwan Tea History



台灣茶文化

Taiwanese Tea
清領時期的茶事
the Qing Dyansty

Part I



One of Taiwan's lead tea scholars, Huang Yi Jia (黃怡嘉), released a seminal work this year, "The Stories of Formosa Tea (黃怡嘉)," covering the history of the island's tea in more comprehensive detail than ever before. This work is the result of decades of research and is an incredible contribution to the tea world. We hope to translate more of it in future issues as well, but thought that for this month we would focus on Taiwanese tea in the Qing Dynasty, from 1644 to the Republic in 1911. However, this survey, which we have divided into two parts, covers from 1684 to 1895.

茶人: *Huang Yi Jia (黃怡嘉)*

Section One: Wild and Introduced Tea

In 1684, the 22nd reign year of the Kangxi Emperor, Taiwan officially became part of the territory of the Qing empire and was designated as Taiwan Prefecture, under the jurisdiction of Fujian Province. The Qing court sent the Zheng family's soldiers back to the Mainland and enacted a policy of passive governance in the name of "governing Taiwan to protect Taiwan." This entailed a number of measures aimed at restricting immigration, such as limiting the cultivation of new land and prohibiting passage to Taiwan from the Mainland. At this time, there weren't many people of Han descent living in Taiwan. As an example, in 1685, Shen Shaohong (沈紹宏) called for people to come and cultivate the wild land, describing its vast expanse of fields, but nobody came to cultivate it. A work from 1688 entitled *The Changing State of Chinese Emigration* (華夷變態) records that prior to Qing Dynasty rule, there were tens of thousands of Han people in Taiwan; after Qing rule began, there were only one thousand, which resulted in a significant drop in the production of sugar and deerskin. In the 1697 *Pihai Travel Journals* (裨海紀遊), author Yu Yonghe (郁永河) reports that the areas north of Chiali were entirely occupied by the Pingpu peoples, with barely any sign of Han Chinese.

So, all these records confirm that the number of Han people in Taiwan prior to Qing rule was very low. The population that the Qing court focused on appeasing were largely native Taiwanese peoples; in the descriptions of the locals written by members of the court, we find some mentions of tea. For example, the National Palace Museum collection in Taipei houses a document from 1734 entitled *A Report on the Aboriginals of Taiwan Crossing Over to the Provincial Capital to Deliver Wishes for Longevity* (奏報臺灣土番渡海赴省城叩祝萬壽摺), which contains the following extract: "Local officials were dispatched to accompany the foreigners to the teaching venue and have them watch from the sidelines to instruct them in the established customs. This complete, they were rewarded with tea and a meal... Every one of the foreigners kowtowed with gratitude and trembled with fear at the might of the army." This description paints a picture of the indigenous Taiwanese people being offered food and tea when they visited the Qing court on the Mainland. Another report, this one from 1746, is entitled *A Report on the Joint Inspection of the State of the Land and Naval Battalions in Tainan and Taipei* (奏報會同閱看臺南臺北水陸營伍情形), and contains the following: "We passed through about twenty of the natives' settlements, and in each settlement we handed out to the people such things as tobacco, cloth, tea, paper, brushes, ink, alcohol and flatbreads; to the native women we gave such things as red cloth, needles and thread. Every one of them was greatly pleased and heartened." From this extract we can see that during the early period of Qing rule, the government used tea as a gift to appease the people, and the locals evidently greeted these gifts with much enthusiasm.

However, due to the high population and shortage of arable land, life was not easy in Mainland China's coastal regions of Fujian and Guangdong, and despite the ban, there was still a lot of illegal immigration to Taiwan. During the 212-year period of Qing rule in Taiwan, while the Kangxi Emperor was in power, fewer than 20,000 people immigrated to Taiwan. Later, from the eras of the Kangxi and Yongzheng Emperors through to the early years of the Qianlong Emperor, the number of illegal immigrants from Fujian and Guangdong surged, and by 1811 (the 16th reign year of the Jiaqing Emperor), the Han population was over two million, and the total population of Taiwan had increased almost tenfold over a period of one hundred years.

Taiwan's Han immigrants were largely farmers, laborers and unemployed people who were struggling back home and risked the illegal crossing in search of a new life; among them, men outnumbered women. In the early days they were subject to many legal restrictions. Among the immigrants, there were also scholars and investors who came to clear new farmland; these people later became local leaders during the early period of immigration to Taiwan.

Since the writing of this book, some of the wild trees of Taiwan were researched by biologists and found to be a whole other species of Camellia, which they are calling "Camellia formosensis." This tea is commonly known as "shan cha (山茶)."

There were also bureaucrats sent over by the Qing court, who formed the upper echelons of society. In the early days of Qing rule there was no gentry in Taiwan; later, as a result of the imperial examination system, an upper social class gradually developed. The officials and scholars who made up the gentry brought their personal tea-drinking customs with them to Taiwan, which had a certain guiding influence on Taiwanese tea culture.

The Discovery of Wild Tea in Taiwan

When did locally-grown tea first appear in Taiwan? A Dutch publication from 1645 entitled the *Bavaria City Records* (巴達維亞城日記) contains an entry describing the wild tea growing in Taiwan, but it does not state a location. In addition, the section on "Tea" in the *Zhuluo County Annals: Produce Records* (諸羅縣志物產志) from 1717 contains the following excerpt: "There is none growing along the northern road. In the mountains of Shui Sha Lian, there is a variety with a unique flavor, that can alleviate summer heat. The Wuyi and Songluo varieties all come from the Mainland." The "Miscellaneous Records" section of the same book contains another mention of tea: "There is tea in the inner mountains of Shui Sha Lian which has a unique flavor and a green color like that of Songluo. The mountain ravines are steep; (the tea) has cooling properties and can alleviate heat and swelling. Han people do not dare go there to harvest it for fear of the dangerous roads and the local barbarians; they are also not well versed in the methods of tea-making. It seems they have been able to make teas of the Wuyi variety by buying and processing the tea leaf picked by the locals; it has a very good fragrance." So, we can see that there wasn't any tea grown in northern Taiwan at that time; all the Wuyi and Songluo tea drunk there was grown on the Mainland. However, in the central regions surrounding Puli and Yuchi, there was wild tea growing from very early on. The Han people didn't harvest it due to its remote location, the presence of the local people, and their lack of tea-making knowledge; however, we can infer that they likely purchased raw leaf picked by the indigenous people and had it processed by Wuyi tea makers, which resulted in tea with a great flavor.

Another relevant record appears in a work published in 1736 entitled *Journal of an Envoy to the Taiwan Strait* (台海使槎錄), written by imperial censor Huang Chujing (黃叔璥) who was sent to Taiwan in 1722. In the third volume of the work, "Notes on Chikan," Huang writes that "Shui Sha Lian tea is found deep in the

帝國時期福建橫過海峽地圖

茶 ***Imperial Map of the Provinces: Map of Fujian, 1693–1722***

After Qing forces defeated the Zheng family, there was much discussion within the Qing court regarding what to do about the island of Taiwan; it wasn't until April of 1684 that they finally decided to incorporate it into Qing territory. On this map of Fujian from the last year of the Kangxi Emperor's reign, we can see that Taiwan is marked as belonging to Fujian Province. The waters of the Taiwan Strait were a dark, inky color thanks to the Kuroshio current (also called the "Black Tide") that flows through the region, which gave the strait the nickname "the black gutter." Because of the current's northward flow, the people of Fujian and Guangdong would often meet with misfortune at sea when setting out toward the east, which made the crossing very dangerous. Much like pilgrims leaving for the new world, early immigrants braved these seas to start a new life amongst sometimes violent natives on the island, bringing tea trees as well as farming processing and tea drinking culture with them. Slowly the island's tea culture came into its own over the centuries.

mountains. The tea trees are hidden away in the dense forests and concealed by heavy fog and mist; at dawn and dusk, no light can reach them. The tea is green like Songluo and has cooling properties, most effective for soothing a fever. Every year, the interpreter meets with all the locals to discuss going up the mountain to process and roast the tea." This journal gives us a more detailed description of the environment that Shui Sha Lian tea grew in, as well as confirming the evidence in the *Zhuluo County Annals* that Han people had already begun making tea from wild leaf in the mountains at that time.

These records tell us that it has been over three hundred years since the discovery of tea plants growing in Taiwan and the earliest attempts to manufacture tea from them for drinking. However, this early tea was largely native Taiwanese mountain tea (*Camellia sinensis* (L.) O. Kuntze f. *formosana* Kitam), and was only produced for domestic consumption rather than export. It was largely drunk for its medicinal properties, namely alleviating summer heat and fever, and was very different from the tea that was later planted for commercial purposes. The tea that has really had an influence on Taiwan's tea cultivation and processing over the last two hundred years is Wuyi Mountain tea, an introduced varietal from Fujian Province.

Origins of Tea Planting in Taiwan

According to the research of Liu Zemin (劉澤民), the *Compilation of Records from the Taiwanese Governor's Office* (臺灣總督府公文類纂) contains three land contracts from 1792 relating to the planting of tea. The first is the "Hu Boyong Property Allocation Certificate," which details the distribution of property between three brothers and mentions that "Bobin will receive the tea garden planted at Luntou." The "Zhan Zehui Irreversible Sale Contract" contains the following record: "There is one thatched cottage and two other houses of ten rooms in size, and there are tea trees, fruit trees and other plants growing there… None of these tea and fruit trees and other plants will remain." The third document, the "Lai Lian Irreversible Sale Contract," contains the following: "The fields and mountain gardens, with their tea and citrus, are to be divided up… the mountain gardens, fields, tea and other sundries are the property of (the owner) himself, and are not connected to the uncles, brothers or nephews." The land concerned in these three contracts was located at Wanshun Liao (modern-day Shenkeng district) and Tudi Gong Keng (modern-day Wenshan district, in Taipei County).

These records tell us that tea was already being grown in northern Taiwan in the late 18th century. It's a pity that none of the aforementioned land contracts mentioned anything about the variety of tea that was being grown, nor about the scale or methods of production.

One of today's most commonly cited works is *A Comprehensive History of Taiwan: Agricultural Records*, published between 1908–1918 and written by Lian Heng (連橫, 1878–1936). It contains the following passage: "Taipei has produced tea for nearly one hundred years. During the era of the Jiaqing Emperor, a man named Ke Chao returned from Fujian and began planting Wuyi tea at Yujie Yukeng, where it grew very well. He sowed two *dou* of tea seeds; the harvest was abundant, and the tea was gradually spread around and planted elsewhere. It covers the land around Taipei; with the area's frequent rain, there are four harvests every year, with spring and summer being the best in quality. The best tea is from Shiding township in Tamsui (淡水) and Erbao in Wenshan, and the next best is from Benbao, Bali township. The tea from Hsinchu is called Pu (埔) tea, and has a modest color and a very reasonable price." So, this tells us that larger-scale tea planting in Taiwan began during the Jiaqing era. In *A History of Taiwan's Tea Industry During the Ming & Qing Dynasties* (明清兩代臺灣茶業發展史研究), researcher Yang Yinong (楊逸農) estimates that this tea planting began around 1810, and also recounts the story of Ke Chao introducing the tea from Mount Wuyi in Fujian and planting it at Yujie Yukeng in northern Taiwan.

In short, introduced tea from Fujian was already being grown in northern Taiwan from the 19th century at the latest, and by mid-century tea gardens were flourishing all over the mountains. A wealthy person of the era named Lin Zhanmei (林占梅, 1821–1868) wrote a poem in 1853 called "Passing through the Nankang Tea Mountains (過南港茶岩)" which contains the following description: "The cattle's horns form the shape of the character 'eight' against the walls; the horses leave their forked hoof-prints along the road. Solemnly, we reach Chong'an Road; the hills are covered with tea, to the north and to the south." Another poem, "Passing through a Village at Neihu (過內湖莊)" goes, "Most of the flat land is planted with rice, and half of the mountains are planted with tea. Winding through the forest, the sandy shore is far away; near to the river leans a tilted bamboo fence." The places described in these poems, Nankang and Neihu, are located in the area around modern-day Nankang and Muzha in Taipei city; the descriptions in the poems paint a scene of mountain tea gardens covering the whole landscape, reflecting the scale of tea growing in Taiwan during that period.

The Early Days of Tea Export in Taiwan

Taiwan's geography was very well suited to growing tea, which brought abundant harvests. Taiwan's tea farmers started making *maocha* (semi-processed "raw" tea leaf) as a secondary source of income. In the early days, Taiwan's tea was only sold and consumed locally. According to J. H. Klaproth's 1824 *Mémoires relatifs à l'Asie* (*Memoirs Relating to Asia*), "in 1824, Formosa was exporting a significant volume of tea into China." In his *Description de Formose* (*Description of Formosa*), he also writes, "Taipei has been producing tea for around a hundred years… in fact, it was only sold locally. During the Daoguang era, it was shipped to Fuzhou." So, from these records we learn that during the Daoguang era, from 1821–1850, the Wuyi tea produced in Taiwan began to be shipped to Fuzhou in Fujian Province.

In the *Tamsui Government Records* (淡水廳志) from 1871, we find mention of the following: "The residents of Shiding, Quanshan and Erbao in Tamsui are largely tea growers by trade. During the Daoguang era, all the merchants shipped their tea to Fuzhou for sale. They had to pay two yuan of import tax on every picul of tea to be allowed to sell it." In addition to this two-yuan import tax levied in Fujian on every picul (approximately 50 kilograms) of Taiwanese tea, further regulations were later put in place that required each merchant to obtain a permit, for which they were subjected to frequent checks. So, it's evident that these policies put Taiwanese tea merchants at a competitive disadvantage when trading in Fujian in those early days. These records also reveal that by this period, tea production in Taiwan had already reached a certain scale, and trade with Fujian had become quite frequent.

The 1891 *Knowledge of Taiyang* (台陽見聞錄) also mentions that "I have investigated the area of Tamsui in Taipei; this area has been producing tea for a long time. During the Xianfeng era, merchants shipped tea to Fuzhou to sell it there, all of it rough *maocha*." So, we can see that the Taiwanese merchants of the era did not have the ability to carry out the "refining," or secondary tea leaf processing stage, so they had to ship the semi-processed *maocha* to Fujian to undergo refined processing before being sold overseas. In other words, the development of Taiwanese tea was very limited in the early days. Aside from this, the Taiwanese tea of that period was of inferior quality to Fujian tea. Due to factors such as the unfair competition caused by the taxation system and the opposition of the Qing court to expanding overseas trade, it seemed that there was no need for refined tea-making techniques to cross the straight to Taiwan, and Taiwanese tea was overlooked as a candidate for international export.

茶 *Due to the flourishing tea trade involving Fujian and Taiwan, there were frequent sea journeys between the two, especially by tea makers and other tea workers, many of whom had to brave the dangers of the "black gutter"—the Taiwan Strait. Because of this, many of them prayed for blessings and protection from the sea goddess Matsu (媽祖). Later, Matsu was welcomed into Taiwan from Fujian, and a shrine dedicated to the goddess was established on the tea street at Da Daocheng, where people would make offerings of incense. Today, there is a shrine to Matsu at the Taipei Tea Merchants Association, and a day of celebration is held in honor of Chajiao Matsu ("Matsu of the Tea Districts") on the birthday of tea saint Lu Yu, the 22nd day of the 9th month in the lunar calendar. (This is our altar at the Center.)*

Section Two: The Opening of Taiwan's Ports

In 1684, after the beginning of Qing rule in Taiwan, although the Qing court established Taiwan as an administrative district with a local government, they enacted a closed policy and cut off Taiwan's frequent trade with Japan, the Netherlands, Spain and Great Britain. By the mid-19th century, this closed policy was challenged by the Western powers, and after several military defeats, China eventually signed a number of trade treaties. In particular, after their defeat by the Anglo-French allied forces in 1858, the Qing court was compelled to sign the Treaty of Tianjin (Tientsin) by Great Britain, France, the United States and Russia. The treaty stipulated that Taiwan would be opened as an international treaty port; the treaty signed between China and France also stipulated the opening of the port at Tamsui (then also called Huwei). That year, Anping in Tainan was the first port to open up, and staff were sent from Hong Kong's Jardine, Matheson & Co. to purchase semi-processed *maocha* in Taiwan.

Two years later, conflict arose once again when England's intentions to change the terms of the treaty were obstructed; the Anglo-French allied forces once again defeated Beijing, and the Convention of Peking was signed in 1860. It wasn't until this point that the conditions named in the Treaty of Tianjin were actually implemented. From that point, the ports of Keelung and Takao (modern-day Kaohsiung) became affiliated with Tamsui and Taiwan Prefecture (Tainan), and were successively opened as trading ports to the world.

The establishment of Taiwan as an international trading port in 1860 represented a turning point for Taiwan's overall economic development. Before the ports were opened up, Taiwan was completely integrated into the economic system of Mainland China, and most of its trade interaction was with China's coastal provinces, forming a regional division of labor. After the ports opened, a succession of foreign traders arrived in Taiwan to establish international trading firms, re-integrating Taiwan's trade activities into the international economy. This changed the history of Taiwan forever, even unto the modern day. Taiwan quickly became a hub for European and American traders, creating relationships that have even influenced the modern history of Taiwan.

The Pioneers of Taiwan Tea Export

During the reign of the Daoguang Emperor, Taiwan had already been exporting semi-processed *maocha*, while the local people drank tea imported from the Mainland. In 1861, following the opening of the port at Tamsui, foreign merchants came to Taiwan to set up import–export firms. International trade flourished, driving the development of Taiwan's tea industry. Below is a brief outline of some of the major figures who had a significant influence in terms of promoting tea export in Taiwan.

Robert Swinhoe

Robert Swinhoe (1836–1877) was appointed by Great Britain as vice consul to Taiwan and was the first foreign consular representative in Taiwan. He arrived in Takao (today's Kaohsiung) in July 1861 from Xiamen, traveling overland to reach Taiwan Prefecture. He noted that the coastal inlet of Taiwan Prefecture's capital was obstructed by silt and would hence be difficult to establish as a trading port, while the commercial prospects of Tamsui looked more promising. So, in December of the same year, he moved the consulate to Tamsui, and within a year he had set up its office and residence in a loading vessel belong to Jardine, Matheson & Co. However, Tamsui was quite far away from the Chinese officials in Taiwan Prefecture, making communications with them quite inconvenient, so Swinhoe eventually moved the consulate back to Takao in southern Taiwan, handing over the management of the northern consular post to George C. P. Braune. In 1861, Swinhoe was promoted to the post of consul in Xiamen and left Taiwan.

Although Swinhoe was not stationed in Taiwan for very long, he made an innovative contribution to Britain's diplomatic affairs in Taiwan. In addition to his consular work, he made full use of his training as a biologist, collecting specimens of many new plant and animal species and sending them back to England. In this capacity, he made a significant contribution to the study of Taiwanese tea. After arriving in Tamsui, Swinhoe noticed that Taiwan had been exporting a certain amount of roughly processed *maocha* to China. He sent some samples of this locally-produced *maocha* to tea specialists for inspection. The resulting verdict was that "this tea has a very fine flavor; its only fault is that the processing and packaging methods are rather too coarse." He also professed that "the tea mountains are not far from the port; if an enthusiastic businessman were to go there in person to observe the mountains and make the

appropriate arrangements, this (problem of quality) would not be difficult to rectify." He believed that thanks to the climate and geography, there was good potential for tea growing in northern Taiwan.

However, after a later comparison, Swinhoe concluded that Taiwan's tea was not as good as Mainland Chinese varieties, and was only suitable for sale and consumption within the island of Taiwan. He also discovered that China's tea merchants were in the habit of mixing the Taiwanese leaf in with tea from Fujian in order to make an exorbitant profit. Taking all the relevant factors into account, Swinhoe concluded that the current state of Taiwan's tea meant it was only suitable for export to China's ports in an attempt to make some profit; aside from the potential markets in China, Singapore and Australia, he did not think Taiwanese tea would be competitive on the international market. So, although Swinhoe didn't become a major advocate for Taiwanese tea export, he did make some profound observations about the general situation of Taiwanese tea in the mid-19th century, and his influence set the stage for the century of tea export that followed the opening of Taiwan's ports.

John Dodd

British businessman John Dodd (1838–1907) left his homeland for Hong Kong in 1850, and in 1860 he visited Taiwan for the first time before returning to Great Britain. In 1864 he returned to Hong Kong as head of Tait & Co. Hong Kong and agent for both Jardine, Matheson & Co. and Dent & Co. At that time, Dodd's main purpose in visiting Taiwan was trading in camphor on behalf of Dent & Co., and when he first arrived in Tamsui, he paid a visit to Swinhoe to ask his advice on doing business in Taiwan. Swinhoe thought that camphor and coal had better prospects for growth, and advised against going into the business of Taiwanese tea; this may be one of the reasons that Dodd didn't get into the tea trade until later. In July 1865, the Qing court declared new regulations on foreign camphor and opium traders, forbidding them from anchoring at any ports other than Tamsui and Keelung. This policy no doubt had a big impact on Dodd and Dent & Co. Because of this, Dodd set out for Tamsui to evaluate the possibilities of trading his camphor. He also carried out a further investigation of Tamsui's local produce, and happened to notice the tea grown by farming households around Keelung and Monga (today's Wanhua). Dodd bought all the tea he could get his hands on, shipped it to Macau and sold it at a good profit, thus discovering the commercial potential of northern Taiwan's tea.

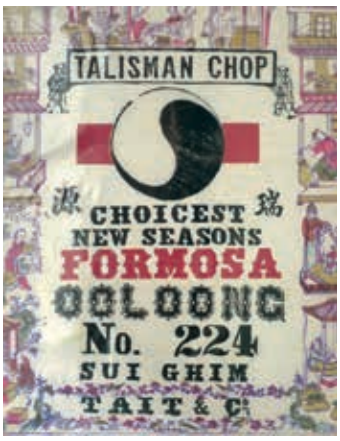
Left is a Kangxi-Era Taiwan Map, an artifact of national significance, showing the Shui Sha Lian (水沙連) region, finished in 1699-1704

This Copy of Kangxi-Era Taiwan Map uses traditional Chinese painting techniques to depict the geographical and cultural features of western Taiwan, from north to south. North is to the right of the map; west is at the bottom. The Shui Sha Lian community appears surrounded by mountains in the upper middle part of the map, quite far from the west coast. This certainly matches historical descriptions such as "The mountain ravines are steep" and "deep in the mountains"—making it difficult for Han people to go up the mountains to make tea.

Robert Swinhoe (1836–1877)

John Dodd (1838–1907)

This 1871 illustration from a western newspaper depicts the flourishing business of refining tea in Tamsui, northern Taiwan, before it was shipped off for export to the United States. The tea was sorted into various grades, bargained over, packaged and then sealed into chests for shipment. The far right picture is a Tait & Co Taiwanese oolong tea chest label from 1870–1900. One wonders how such tea would compare to today's oolong, especially since it was all so clean. No doubt, it was lower grade, but maybe still great.



However, the quality of Taiwan's tea still wasn't as good as Fujian's. From 1855 to 1856, Dodd sent his comprador, Li Chunsheng (李春生), to Anxi in Fujian to bring back a large quantity of tea seedlings, and assigned him to coordinate the associated arrangements. They provided loans to the tea growers and encouraged growers in the region surrounding Tamsui, Sanhsia and Tahsi to start planting the tea, and also provided technical guidance.

In 1867, Dodd made another foray into selling Taiwanese tea in Macau, and it once again fetched a good price, bringing a healthy profit for both the exporter and the producers. That year, Dent & Co. was approaching crisis point due to cashflow problems, so Dodd had to rely on his position as agent for Jardine, Matheson & Co. at Tamsui, whose tea business was steadily growing. In July, Dodd founded his own company in Tamsui and Keelung; in English, the company traded under Dodd's name, while in Chinese it continued to use Dent & Co.'s Chinese trading company name of Baoshun (寶順). Thus began the company known to later generations as Dodd & Co. or *Baoshun Yanghang* (寶順洋行); Dodd himself officially went from being an agent to being the head of his own agency.

The Taiwanese tea that Dodd & Co. sold was of fine quality and made a rich profit, with the result that in 1868, Dodd opened Taiwan's first tea refining (secondary processing) factory at Monga (Wanhua). He employed tea-making masters from Fuzhou and Xiamen (then called Amoy) to be in charge, thus beginning the refining of Oolong tea in Taiwan. Later, because of the silted-up river port at Monga and some incidents reflecting anti-foreigner sentiment in the area, he moved the factory premises to Da Daocheng (the area around today's Yanping North Road).

In 1869, the finished Taiwanese tea produced by Dodd & Co. was shipped from Tamsui for sale in New York, where it met with an enthusiastic reception. This successfully opened up a new export market for Taiwanese tea, and the Formosa Oolong Tea brand gained international recognition. Because of this positive reaction on the international market, the price and sales volume of Taiwanese tea increased substantially. This drew the attention of the foreign merchants who had originally been buying Taiwanese tea leaf in Xiamen, and they flocked across the straight to Taiwan to establish their own companies, factories and warehouses in order to be able to export locally refined Taiwanese tea. Gradually, Taiwan had no more need for Fujian's tea processing factories. By 1872, at least four other companies had successively established a presence in Da Daocheng in addition to Dodd & Co.: Tait & Co., Elles & Co., Brown & Co. and Boyd & Co. This marked the beginning of a period of unprecedented success for Taiwanese tea exports—a golden age for trade in Taiwan.

In addition, Li Chunsheng also assisted Liu Mingchuan (劉銘傳), the inspector-general of Taiwan from 1885–1891, in his negotiations with foreigners. In 1889, Li also worked on a tea business in partnership with a tea merchant, Lin Weiyuan (林維源). Together they constructed residences and offices to supply to the foreign tea merchants at Da Daocheng's Qianqiu Street (the middle and southern part of today's Dihua Street) and Jianchang Street (today's Gui De Street), an area designated as a residential zone for foreigners. With its collection of foreign firms and its bustling tea trade, the area around Da Daocheng was a picture of flourishing prosperity.

Li Chunsheng (李春生)

Li Chunsheng (1838–1924) came from Xiamen in Fujian Province, and acted as a representative for Chinese tea merchants of the period. At the age of twenty-one, he was employed as a comprador for British company Boyd & Co. In 1865, at the introduction of Mr. Elles of Elles & Co., Li became the comprador of the agent of Dent & Co. stationed at Tamsui: John Dodd.

In 1865, after Dodd had noticed Tamsui's suitability for trading in tea, Li Chunsheng quickly displayed his talent for business, playing a significant role in helping Dodd expand the tea trade in northern Taiwan. The *Tong'an County Annals* (同安縣志) contain the following record: "First, the British Dodd began dealing in tea at Tamsui, encouraging the farmers to plant it and training them in processing techniques. Thus Taipei's tea has become known in Taiwan and abroad, with great assistance from Chunsheng." Throughout the development of Taiwanese tea during the period of Qing rule, Li was involved in many parts of the process in the northern Taiwan tea region: promoting the planting of Anxi tea, granting loans, establishing factories and refining the tea. He vigorously threw himself into the business of tea production, making a considerable contribution to improving the quality and manufacturing standard of Taiwan's tea. His work forever changed the landscape of Taiwanese tea in the world, making it amongst the most well-known teas to date.

Lin Weiyuan (林維源)

Lin Weiyuan (1838–1905) was born into the Lin family of Banqiao. During the period when Liu Mingchuan was the acting inspector-general of Taiwan, Lin Weiyuan was involved in implementing a set of policies entitled "enlisting the aboriginals, eliminating internal conflict, cultivating native land, expanding territory." In 1886 he established the Taiwan Pacification and Reclamation Bureau at Tahsi and promoted tea planting on the land occupied by native people along the mountains of Taipei, as well as collecting tea taxes which were used to support the needs of the bureau. Lin Weiyuan seized the initiative in response to Liu Mingchuan's plans for the tea industry, and thus the Lin family went from a traditional farming family to a large financial group, making Lin Weiyuan's Jianxiang tea firm the largest and most prosperous in all of Taiwan.

茶 *Qing Dynasty tea export merchants doing business in Guangzhou from around 1825*

In the bottom left of this painting we can see a western tea trader talking with his Chinese comprador, while the tea workers in the background pack tea into chests. The tea chests are stamped with the tea names, including Yuqian (雨前), Xichun (熙春), Huaxiang (花香), Xiaozhong (小種) and Baozhong (包種). Yuqian and Xichun were names of green teas from Huizhou in the Jiangnan region, while Huaxiang and Xiaozhong were high-quality Fujian Wuyi teas. These are referred to in chapter 19 of the 1751 Mount Wuyi Records (武夷山志) written by Dong Tiangong (董天工): "[Wuyi tea] varieties include Xiaozhong, Huaxiang, gongfu and Songluo; when brewed they have a naturally authentic taste, and are not red in color."

茶 *Qing Dynasty tea making drawings*

The left painting depicts an early tea-rolling method involving trampling the tea with one's feet. The right shows that packing tea leaves by treading on them was a common task in early tea markets. The tea chests are marked with the names of the tea: Baihao (白毫) and Liu An (六安).

Global Tea Hut Expansion Packs

Expansion VIII: Aged Taiwanese Oolong

We've developed a new and exciting way to expand your tea education. We offer three or four of these expansions 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 samples, in order to learn more about various genres of tea. This month, we explore the wonderful world of aged Taiwanese oolongs!

This month's expansion is a living testament to all the reasons we began this Expansion Pack project in the first place. It is the perfect example of how a variety of types and qualities within a certain genre or topic of tea can expand the tea lover's knowledge and wisdom by leaps and bounds. When this Global Tea Hut experience was still in its dream days, and we were brainstorming the very first issue (which was more like a newsletter than a magazine), we immediately realized that we had to include tea each month, even if it represented much more work. After all, one cannot learn about tea simply by reading articles (even great ones), not without drinking it. In fact, we think a student would be better off drinking tons of tea qualities and varieties than just reading lots of articles. Of course, the ideal tea education is a balance of both.

The tea world is incredibly vast. Even after almost thirty years of exploration, Wu De is always saying he is baffled all the time because he thinks he has reached a plateau of understanding, turns a corner and finds a whole world yet left to learn. He always says: "The only Zen masters are those who have died. The rest of us are students of Zen. Stop calling me a 'tea master!' I am a master of nothing. If you want to call me that, wait until I'm dead. Until then, I am a student of the Leaf!" This beginner's mind keeps us humble, encourages growth and also fosters continued enthusiasm over the years so that we never grow bored with our practice. Like a long-term healthy marriage, we find new and exciting things to explore in and through each other, as well as new paths to walk together, falling deeper and deeper in love over the years. Hopefully, this magazine, the Tea of the Month each time and the community behind Global Tea Hut help keep you in a beginner's mind: receptive and open to learning as well as excited and enthusiastic to explore all the new tea lands out there!

To some of you, twelve teas a year may seem like a lot, but in the vastness of the tea world, it is really such a small amount. Of course, if you feel like twelve teas is a lot and that is where you comfortably learn and grow, please do not feel any pressure to get one of these expansions until you are ready. But for those who want to try more of a tea in a way that is curated to the reading topic of that month, we created these expansion packs. When you have three or even six teas, including the Tea of the Month, as well as the magazine to read, you have a powerhouse of experience and knowledge that can promote deeper and more productive learning.

Variety is also not the only factor behind these expansions. There is also quality. Our Tea of the Month is always partially or completely donated, and budget is ever and always a factor in our choice, as well as the generosity of so many tea lovers and farmers, including Mr. Xie's amazing gift this month, which is one of the most generous gifts ever offered to this community. Occasionally, when such donors are extremely gracious, we can offer higher-end teas, but not always (though all our Tea of the Month teas are "high-end" in environmental terms). Sometimes, even if a farmer or tea lover is feeling generous, they cannot donate certain teas because the quantity is not there (Oh how this community has grown!). When we create these

Darker Mingjian tea from 1990s

Cloudgate, 1988 Alishan tea

seventy-year-old tea

1970s Muzha Tieguanyin

1980s Pinglin Baozhong

Expansion Pack experiences, on the other hand, we never, ever compromise due to budget or rarity. We brainstorm which teas here in Taiwan, China or Hong Kong that we have access to through a huge network of friends who will best support a learning experience in relation to each month's topic, viz. aged and aging oolong. These expansions are pure education *expanded*, in other words, and often fill in the gaps in the knowledge of the articles in an issue, offering actual drinking experience to Global Tea Hut readers.

Finally, we also do not tack on hardly any profit. These expansions are *not* fundraising for Light Meets Life, in support of this magazine or our current Center, Tea Sage Hut. They are a gift. Each is marked up ever so slightly because we offer them at a flat shipping rate, and a small markup covers the differences in shipping to various countries as well as the packaging costs of bags, boxes, etc. that are required to get them to you.

This month we offer an incredible tour of aged Taiwanese oolongs, which may open a doorway to whole new worlds for some of you. We have five different teas, all with very different raw material, aging conditions, energy and feel that, along with our Tea of the Month, will sketch in a lot more details of the history of Taiwanese tea, as well as the nature of aged Taiwanese oolong—one of the richest categories of tea on earth, and one every Chajin should know and love. Also, this may inspire you to store some Taiwanese oolong yourself!

天空中騎龍

This Expansion Pack comes with:

- **25g of another aged oolong from Mingjian (darker)**
- **20g of 1970s Muzha (木柵) Tieguanyin**
- **20g of 1988 Ali Shan (阿里山) tea, "Cloud Gate"**
- **20g of 1980s Pingling, Baozhong tea (包種)**
- **10g of seventy-year-old Taiwanese oolong tea!**

This Expansion Pack is $65 + $15 shipping

www.globalteahut.org/expansions

Gongfu Teapot

功夫茶壺

Martial Arts & Gongfu Tea

It's always important to remember that drinking tea is an aimless activity. No matter how we brew our tea, if we feel joy and connection through the process, then the most important "goal" has been achieved. Experiments shouldn't get in the way of that, and, in fact, should enhance our overall experience of drinking tea so long as we remember this. Tea is not a means to an end, but for those of us who want to explore some of the subtler qualities in a cup of tea, experiments cast an illuminating light when we maintain perspective on what's most important. Bringing out the most a tea has to offer by learning how to prepare fine tea *is* the intention behind this experimentation. Gongfu tea, in one sense, is about brewing the finest cup of tea possible. To experiment and learn how to brew tea to its fullest potential is an honor to Tea Herself. A lot of energy from humans, the Earth and the sun went into the production of such a fine tea, and it deserves to be brewed with that in mind, with a skill equivalent to the energy used to create it.

Though many experiments focus on specific teaware, *the brewer* is always the most important element, for without her, who would brew a fine cup of tea? All the silver kettles, antique cups, Yixing teaware, and purest spring water in the world can't make fine tea without a Chajin. In this experiment, you will play a more significant role than usual in our benevolent effort to learn more about tea. Whereas many experiments focus on the differences created by pots, cups, clays, kettles, method, etc., this experiment will focus on your physical posture, stance and groundedness as you brew tea!

Like all good tea experiments, this one highlights a historical lesson. Let's first remember that gongfu tea is a regional local tradition from Chaozhou in southern China. It arose in the early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), influenced by three main factors: (1) martial arts practitioners, (2) the quality of simplicity/frugality and (3) oolong tea. These three main factors were what gave rise to the gongfu tea brewing method. In this lineage, we refer to this as traditional gongfu tea, which is important because nowadays "gongfu tea" is seen in many forms, and often refers to any brewing technique using a small pot and cups. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it is important to clearly define what we are talking about it so "traditional gongfu tea" is not confused with the menagerie of methods under the broader use of the term, most of which are very modern. And many are motivated by other factors, cultural and economic, rather than self-mastery and brewing the finest cup of tea.

We are very fortunate in this tradition because a pure form of gongfu tea has been preserved and passed down from generation to generation to the point where we can enjoy and learn from it in modern times. It has of course also been adapted and evolved over time as well, but these adaptations have come from a deep connection to the spirit of tea, a connection cultivated over decades of diligent practice, experimentation and reverence for the Leaf. (And, as these experiments show, development is an essential part of any gongfu.) We are also bestowed with the honor and responsibility to practice it in its traditional form and pass it down to future generations.

For this experiment, the most relevant of those three factors is the influence of martial artists. Gongfu means to master a skill through self-discipline. Though it often refers to martial arts, it can be applied to any skill set: cooking, yoga, dance, tea and so on. Gongfu tea, therefore, means to brew tea with skill through self-discipline. The martial artists who developed gongfu tea did so based on the principles of inner harmony and balance of energy and movement, the same principles that guided their worldview. In the same way, they repeated the forms of their martial arts over and over again until they essentially became them, and such repetition was then applied to brewing tea with small pots and cups, cultivating refinement, grace and fluidity. It is no surprise that traditional gongfu tea has no superfluous elements; it keeps everything quite contained around the brewer to reduce movements and conserve energy, thereby preserving temperature and facilitating efficient brewing that extracts the most out of a small amount of leaves. The external harmonious movements used by martial artists to make tea are a direct reflection of their inner harmony cultivated through martial practice and meditation.

As with all martial arts, stance and posture form the foundation of all techniques. It is often said in this tradition that *advanced techniques are basics mastered*. That means we must always review and strengthen the basics in order to lay the foundation upon which the advanced techniques will take form. In martial arts, that means *stance*, and a proper stance results in a loose and agile upper body with strength and groundedness in the legs. Not unlike meditation, there is a balance between tension and relaxation to maintain an upright posture, not overly rigid and not slouched over, but calm and awake... The experiment below will raise awareness around the importance of grounding yourself when pouring tea. It will also root you in "mastery through self-discipline."

The Set Up

Have a pen and notebook nearby for taking notes. This is a very easy experiment, but one many of you may not have tried, and one surely worth repeating. It will require a rather basic gongfu tea setup. The four treasures will do: a purple-sand clay teapot, a tea boat, some porcelain cups and a good heat source and kettle. You'll need the unmentionable treasure as well, a *jian shui* (建水) or waste-water basin in order to pour off the water in your tea boat collected from showering your purple-sand clay teapot. We usually stress the importance of using an authentic purple-sand clay teapot, but if you don't have one and really want to try this experiment, then any brewing vessel will do, especially because the main differences will be caused by your stance and not the teaware. Still, having teaware that facilitates the best tea, such as purple-sand clay, is preferable.

You should use a tea with which you are familiar. It is also quite helpful to use a smaller amount of tea and brew it lighter than usual. The lightness of brewing will aid in your ability to observe any differences, whereas a strongly brewed tea of age and depth will be distracting and too multi-layered to distinguish any subtleties resulting from the parameters of the experiment. It will be necessary to sit in a chair at a table for this experiment. That should be fine for many of you as you likely brew seated at a table anyways. For those of you who sit on the ground to brew tea, you'll need to temporarily use a chair and table for this experiment; anything will do, it need not be fancy.

Procedure

First Infusion

Pre-warm, clean, and prepare your teaware as usual. Pour off the first flash infusion and plant your feet firmly on the ground shoulder-length apart. If it's appropriate in your tea setting, try to brew in your bare feet for this experiment. Feel the connection your feet have to the ground, which is ultimately connected to the Earth. Keep your upper body relaxed with an upright posture. Rest in that sensation for a moment and take a deep breath. You should feel strength and connection in your lower body and relaxation in your upper body. Brew and drink your tea in this way for the first infusion. Record any observations.

Second Infusion

Keeping one leg firmly planted on the ground, lift up the opposite leg and maintain this posture throughout the second infusion. In other words, brew and drink your tea with one leg raised. Record any observations, especially as they differ from the first.

It's important to note here that your observations should only account for any differences you notice. It's not about "good" or "bad." The most important thing is to just write any differences you notice and to use your own words. Stick to your experience; you can't be wrong, but avoid comparative words.

Third Infusion

In the third infusion, raise both legs off the ground, completely disconnecting your feet from the Earth. Be careful, maintaining balance as best you can, and brew and drink your tea in this way. Record your observations.

Conclusion

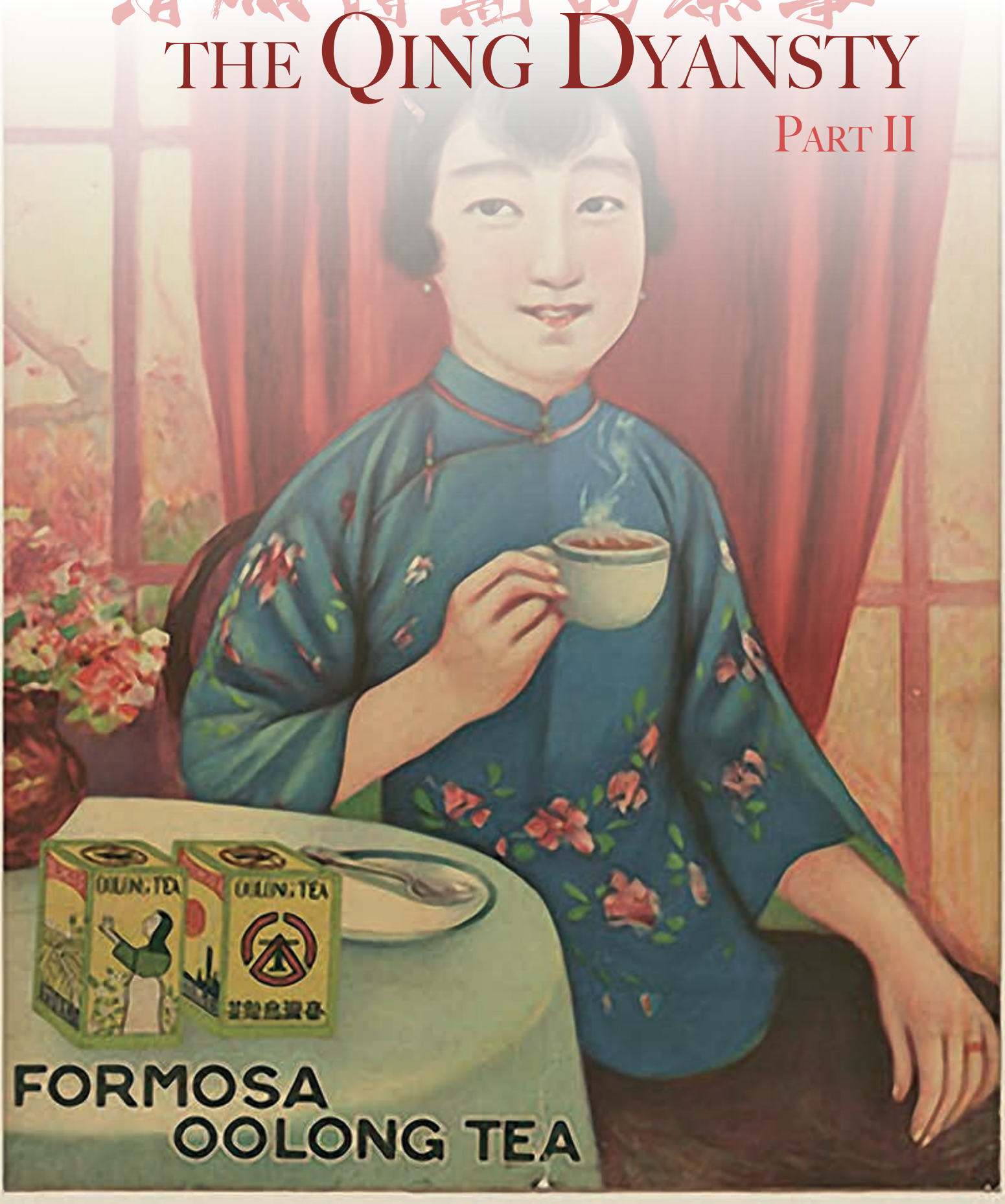
Of course, the conclusion is up to you. This is a fun and interesting experiment, and easy to repeat. Repetition of forms and experiments is necessary to fully understand them and to continue learning from them. One of the most profound insights in the journey of a tea lover is the realization of just how important and powerful an impact *we* make on the tea. This conclusion can result in a tremendous amount of questions, which lead to other experiments that lead to growth. When you understand that you influence your tea in everything from your mind, lifestyle, diet and posture, you get a deeper feel for what we mean when we say that "gongfu tea" means mastery through "self-discipline." This opens up worlds, allowing you to make your tea practice a way of life, a Dao.

There are more experiments that involve the body and brewing tea. See if you can come up with your own, and let us know if you have any questions about this one on the app or website. The ability to create your own experiments and work with them is one of the most important skills of any seeker of truth, as it is of any gongfu tea practitioner. This is why we never share the results of these experiments in the magazine, as they may influence your outcome. A Chajin wants to understand things experientially, on her own, using her own body. We always love hearing from members who are looking to improve their gongfu tea. We hope you enjoy this experiment!

從地上透過水注入

地球根

Taiwanese Tea
清領時期的茶事
the Qing Dyansty
Part II



Let's continue our exploration of Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) Taiwanese tea! In this second section, we explore the unique evolution of Taiwanese tea through this period, as Taiwan begins to define itself in the tea world and find its own character—flavor and aroma, if you will. Huang Yi Jia takes us through the emergence of the teas that Taiwan is known for today to the tea houses and tea house culture that began in Taiwan at this time, influencing Taiwanese tea even today. Finally, we explore tea drinking in this era, which is our favorite part!

茶人: ***Huang Yi Jia*** (黃怡嘉)

Section Three: The expansion of Taiwanese Tea

The period from 1861 to 1875, during the reign of the Tongzhi Emperor, was the most important time in the development of Taiwanese tea. Previously, during the reign of the Xianfeng Emperor, Taiwan's tea did not yet have a fixed name, and most of the teas were simply named after the places where they were produced. But in 1866, the name "oolong tea" appeared, first recorded in a customs report related to the export of tea.

In 1869, Dodd & Co. sent a shipment of this "oolong tea" directly to New York for the first time on two ships carrying 127,860 kilograms of tea. It met with a warm welcome and forged the beginnings of a good reputation for "Formosa Tea." Dodd's success had merchants scrambling to buy Taiwanese tea, and the export market grew rapidly. The export volume of Taiwanese tea jumped from 82,022 kilograms in 1865 to 1,170,811 kilograms in 1872; within a few short years the export value had increased more than tenfold, and Taiwan's tea industry was booming. During that period, the Formosa Oolong Tea brand name could be seen everywhere on posters and tea packaging; the oolong name became more or less synonymous with Taiwanese tea.

Baozhong (Pouchong)

From 1869 onwards, Taiwanese oolong met with wide acclaim and found particular favor with US consumers, so much so that it took over the dominant position previously held by Fujian oolong. However, in 1872, the United States abolished import taxes on tea, and tea from all over the world was soon being imported in great quantities. With supply massively outweighing demand, tea prices dropped steeply, and Taiwan's foreign tea trading firms found themselves facing a serious deficit. In response to this slump in the market, the trading firms became very selective, only buying the finest quality leaf, or in some cases halting purchasing altogether. As a result, the tea factories were all left with large reserves of unsold oolong.

In 1873, faced with this predicament, Taiwan's tea merchants had no option but to change the packaging of their backed-up oolong inventory and ship it to Fuzhou to be scented and made into Baozhong (or Pouchong) tea. It was then sold in Southeast Asia, where it was quite well received. Baozhong (包種) tea, literally meaning "the wrapped kind," was named after the paper bags that were originally used to package small quantities of this tea. *A Comprehensive History of Taiwan: Agricultural Records* contains the following detail: "At every port in Southeast Asia they are selling tea from Fuzhou, and Taipei's Baozhong tea is its closest rival. If it is not scented with flowers, its flavor is not strong, so farmers are encouraged to grow flowers. The more fragrant flowers include Sambac jasmine, Royal jasmine and Cape Jasmine (gardenia); each harvest can bring in more than one thousand *yuan*, which is favorable when compared with tea. Because of this, the area around Mengjia (Monga), Bajia and Dalong is mostly engaged in the flower growing business." The vigorous growth of these flower teas created demand across the whole labor market, which went some way toward solving the problem of vagrancy in Taiwan and attracted a large number of tea workers from Mainland China to Taiwan in search of a livelihood. In short, floral-scented Baozhong tea emerged in 1873 as a solution to the problem of surplus oolong, and from this second chance it went on to become another major player in the Taiwanese tea industry.

From that point on, as the reserves of tea that had resulted from slow US sales were gradually used up, oolong prices recovered and began to look healthier once more. Beginning in May 1874, sales volumes in the US began to surge, and by 1880 export sales of oolong had reached 5,428,553 kilograms. Despite this, Baozhong tea continued to be produced, and tea makers coming from the Mainland also brought processing techniques for other types of tea with them to Taiwan. In 1881, a tea maker from Tongan in Fujian named Wu Fuyuan (吳福源)—also known as Wu Fulao (吳福源) in some sources—came to Taiwan and introduced a refined technique for scenting the tea with flowers. He set up the Yuan Long tea factory, which specialized in the manufacturing and trading of Baozhong tea of various types.

Flower-Scented Tea

花香茶

To make flower-scented Baozhong tea, tea makers selected highly fragrant flowers such as Sambac jasmine, Royal jasmine and Cape Jasmine (gardenia). They made use of tea's ability to absorb scent to naturally blend in the fragrance that the flowers emit. The traditional Baozhong flower tea manufacturing process is very complicated; after the tea leaves have been prepared, several steps are carried out with the right proportion of flowers to tea, including scenting (with tea and flowers in layers), mixing the flowers through, removing the flowers, a final re-scenting with a smaller amount of flowers, re-baking the tea leaf, and spreading it out to cool. To enhance the floral fragrance, the initial scenting phase may be carried out two or three times, or even more, with a progressively smaller ratio of flowers each time. This technique entered Taiwan from southern China toward the end of the Qing Dynasty and has been passed down ever since. This technique is more widely used in Mainland China these days and much less in Taiwan. Most of us have tried a jasmine tea of some kind.

From then on, there was no further need to send Taiwan's Baozhong tea to Fuzhou for refined processing. A succession of Chinese tea brands—such as Zhennan, Jinfang, Wuyuan and Yong Qing Li—came to Taiwan to invest in Baozhong tea manufacturing. Their products were mostly sold in Southeast Asia, and the demand for Baozhong tea began to grow rapidly.

Spectacular Success in the North

After the opening of Taiwan's ports, the efforts of Dodd and his contemporaries saw Formosa Tea make its debut on the world stage in 1869. The impressive profits to be made on the export market had many northern farmers scrambling to expand the area of their tea crops. The 1871 *Tamsui Government Records* note the extent of tea planting at that time: "(Tea) is most abundant on the mountains of Daping, Datun and Nankang, and the inner Shenkeng mountain." In 1877, the British Embassy at Tamsui made the following report: "Each year the Han people continue to cultivate more of the mountainous region. Hill by hill, they cut down the trees and plant tea." A similar record appears in a Tamsui customs report from 1878: "Fifteen years ago, tea was practically nowhere to be seen on the hillsides around Da Daocheng; now, those same hillsides are completely covered with tea plants, right up to the native territory… Tea now extends south as far as the 24th parallel north, almost to the central region of Taiwan." From these records, it's not difficult to imagine the flourishing vista of tea planted all over the northern part of Taiwan.

In addition, the joint efforts of the British and Chinese tea merchants saw the introduction of new tea varietals and processing methods, which not only greatly increased the area of tea crops and the quality of production methods, but also brought changes to Taiwan's whole manufacturing economy. Because tea brought significant extra value to the economy, it rapidly became one of Taiwan's major industries. According to records from *Shanghai Customs, China* (上海中國海關), tea, sugar and camphor respectively represented 53.49%, 36.22% and 3.93% of Taiwan's total export value between 1868 and 1895. Tea alone represented more than half of the total export value, which led to a rapid economic upturn in northern Taiwan. The port of Tamsui grew in importance by the day, which also boosted the status of Taipei.

Taiwan's Political Center Moves North

Taipei further received official recognition from the government; in 1874, after the Mudan incident of

茶 *Top: Signing the Treaty of Tientsin. Below is a scene from the commercial port near the British Consulate at Tamsui. To the right is a map of Qing Dynasty Taiwan. Images from "The Stories of Formosa Tea," Nan Tian Bookstore (南天書局).*

three years earlier, government official Shen Baozhen (沈葆楨) recommended strengthening government control, and petitioned the emperor to establish a new Taipei Prefecture in addition to the existing Taiwan Prefecture. The Qing court approved his proposal, and the focus of Taiwan's overall development gradually shifted toward to the north. In 1884, the construction of city walls and gates was completed at Taipei.

In 1885, Taiwan was established as a province. The original plan was to set up a provincial capital in central Taiwan; however, its construction was never finished, and governor Liu Mingchuan remained temporarily stationed at Taipei and established the governor's office and the administrative commissioner's office within the newly completed Taipei city walls. Thus Taipei became the de facto provincial capital; following these developments, Monga, Da Daocheng and the walled city grew into three neighborhoods, which became known as the "three cities area (*san shi jie*, 三市街)." In 1894, the next governor proposed that Taipei be made the provincial capital, and thereafter Taipei officially replaced Tainan as the center of government in Taiwan.

According to *A Comprehensive History of Taiwan: Agricultural Records,* "Oolong tea is a distinctive style from Taipei; it is sold in the United States of America and sales are growing by the day. This has led to a boom in the tea industry; the yearly value is as much as two million and several hundred thousand *yuan* in silver. Merchants have come from Xiamen and Shantou; altogether they have set up twenty or thirty tea companies. Most of the tea workers are from Anxi; they make tea in the spring and return home in the winter. Women from poor households harvest tea for a living; each day they make two or three hundred *qian* (one *qian*, or mace, was equal to one tenth of a silver tael). All of this has shaken up the situation in the city of Taipei." Hence, looking back, the northward shift of Taiwan's center of government was one of the notable factors that contributed to the emergence of the city of Taipei and to the boom in the tea industry in northern Taiwan.

Tea Houses

The "tea houses" of the time, called *cha hang* (茶行), were mainly concentrated around Da Daocheng, with some also located near where the tea was grown. (These are "brands," which are called "houses" in Chinese, not sit-down places to drink tea, like a cafe, which are also called "teahouses.") The main business activities of these tea houses were buying "rough" (semi-processed) *maocha*, carrying out further processing to refine the tea, then packaging it and selling it to the foreign trading firms. Those tea houses that refined oolong tea were called "*fan zhuang* (番庄)," literally "native villages,"

while those that dealt in Baozhong tea were known as *pu jia* (鋪家), "shops." Those that processed both types of tea were simply known as "Oolong–Bao tea houses (烏龍包茶館)."

In the early days, the tea houses at Da Daocheng were mostly tea processing facilities established by the foreign trading firms, and had a fairly large amount of capital. However, in 1875, the Qing court lifted restrictions on immigration to Taiwan, meaning that people from southern China were now able to cross the straight legally, and merchants from Anxi in Fujian subsequently began arriving in Da Daocheng to establish tea houses. From then on, thanks to the prosperity of the tea industry, a succession of Chinese tea merchants came to Taiwan to set up tea houses. Soon enough, these tea houses occupied a larger share of the market than the foreign tea trading firms. Moreover, tea drinking gradually became more popular among the general population, and these tea houses were established at several of Taiwan's major ports. Aside from Da Daocheng, which mainly supplied the export market, the tea houses in the capital and at Lukang purchased tea from either the local tea region or from the Mainland, and sold it on the domestic market.

Several related industries sprang up following this tea boom, such as the merchant houses that offered financing as well as tea manufacturing, and packaging companies that manufactured tea chests and provided the art to decorate them.

Tea Districts

In 1872, a number of different "districts" began to emerge which were in charge of Taiwan's imports and exports; their function was similar to that of a trade association. At the time, the international tea trade was flourishing, yet the market was showing signs of change. Around 1881, the volume of tea export from Japan, India and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) multiplied rapidly, while China experienced a sudden decline. In 1883, the United States issued a ban on the import of "inferior quality" tea, and Taiwanese tea took the place of tea from Xiamen and Fuzhou on the US consumer market, with Taiwan becoming the main place of export. In 1885, after the Sino-French War ended, the export volume of Taiwanese tea grew substantially; it was just at this period of thriving export that unscrupulous traders began to appear, dealing in imitation Taiwanese tea or trying to pass rough, mass-produced tea off as the genuine article. This led to an overall decline in quality.

In 1889, Taiwan's governor at the time, Liu Mingchuan, formed a plan to prevent these corrupt business practices, preserve the quality of the tea, resolve business disputes and provide emergency relief to the tea workers. To this end, he gathered all the major tea houses at Da Daocheng and established the "Yonghe Xing Tea District (茶郊永和興)," an organization intended to regulate the tea industry and the quality of tea in Taiwan. Thus Taiwan's first specialized "tea district (*cha jiao*, 茶郊)" was formed. The objectives of the organization were described as follows: "The circulation of stolen property or imitation goods is forbidden from north to south; the *Rites of Zhou* (a Confucian work on governance) places great importance on the governance of cities. Regarding the tea trade with foreign firms, these terms ought to be everlasting, to express our honesty and sincerity toward other countries and to seek prosperity for the East China Sea. Our tea trade here at Tamsui grows more prosperous by the day; many merchant ships set sail each day. Green *rufu* tea bowls can be found in many countries in the Far West; and bowls decorated with viburnum flowers are famed throughout the Indian Ocean. These days, our produce is plentiful and our revenue is increasing; although there are many people, some good and some bad, as the value of goods has risen, malpractice has appeared, with people seeking to make large profits by trading in counterfeit goods or mixing (tea) dust in with the products. All this has a negative effect on our general situation. Therefore, we gather as fellow professionals in this trade to discuss these terms and establish these prohibitions for the sake of replacing old habits with new, not to lay blame but to unite and help each other, to eradicate the source of (ill-gained) profits. The name of our collective is Yonghe Xing (meaning "eternal harmony" and "prosperous"), to signify our hopes for the lasting prosperity of the tea industry. May the future hold great opportunity and daily progress; may the current of trade at Da Daocheng be fair and the ships that sail from the port of Huwei be like a gathering of rosy clouds." The hope was that tea merchants could work together toward a common goal, put an end to dishonest practices for personal gain and join forces for the prosperity of the whole Tamsui tea industry.

According to a later study by a Japanese researcher, the Yonghe Xing Tea District was the organization of the oolong merchants, and there was also another organization for the Baozhong tea merchants, called the "Golden Harmony Shop Cooperative (鋪家金協和)." This marked the beginning of the tea districts, and provides further evidence of the lively state of the tea industry at the time: a bustling era of traders from around the world coming and going from Taiwan. A tea lover can sip Taiwan oolong and imagine this adventurous time, when tea was carried across the high seas!

茶 *Formosa tea export tins.*

Section Four: Tea Drinking Culture in Qing Dynasty Taiwan

From the late Ming through to the Qing Dynasty, along with the transplanting of Fujian tea, a large number of people from the southern provinces of Fujian and Guangdong immigrated to Taiwan, bringing their tea drinking customs with them. As author Lian Heng (連橫, 1878–1936) puts it in the introduction of the *Yatang Anthology: A Discussion of Tea* (雅堂文集˙茗談), "the tea drunk by the Taiwanese is different to the tea from the central Mainland, but is the same as the tea from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Chaozhou. There are many people from these three places living in Taiwan, so the prevalent habits are also similar." So, Taiwan's tea drinking culture was influenced by the tea culture from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Chaozhou; one could even say that the tea culture in Taiwan was an extension of that of southern Fujian. In the early days, most of Taiwan's teaware was also brought over from the Mainland where the famous kilns were.

Records of tea drinking culture in Qing Dynasty Taiwan are limited to a few poems by literary types and some reports on the activities of government officials who visited Taiwan. Shen Guangwen (沈光文, 1612–1686) wrote the following poem, called "Reminiscence (感懷):" "My mind is tired; a winter's dream spirals back through the branches. Suddenly, I imagine I have died, and am tasting Mengding tea once again." (Meng Ding tea was a green tea from the Mengshan region in Sichuan.) Lu Ruoteng (盧若騰, ?–1661) searched all over to find the best spring water for brewing tea, and concluded that Crab Eye Spring at Mount Taiwu on the Kinmen Islands earned first place. Sun Yuanheng (孫元衡), Taiwan's coastal defense sub-prefect, wrote "Inspiration in The Study on a Winter's Day (冬日草堂漫興):" "I teach the young servant how to brew tea; how to listen to the crab-eye bubbles and judge the heat. The water is drawn from near the monastery in the bamboo forest; the tea comes from Dawang Peak." These records present a picture of bureaucrats in Taiwan searching for spring water for their tea and tasting Chinese green tea and Wuyi Cliff Tea; tea culture was mostly popular among the literati, government officials and wealthy families. In the early days, they largely drank Wuyi tea, and later on they mostly drank oolong and Baozhong.

The teaware in use at the time can be broadly divided into three categories: gaiwans (individual lidded tea cups), large teapots and tea bowls, and gongfu teaware (small teapots and small cups). Of these, the main trend in Qing Dynasty Taiwan was for gongfu teaware, which had a profound influence on the development of the art of tea-making in Taiwan. We'll talk about gongfu teaware in detail below. First, we will describe the characteristics of gaiwans and large teapots and tea bowls, which played a role in casual tea drinking.

Gaiwans (蓋碗)

Gaiwans were a popular type of teaware among Qing Dynasty officials. They are also known as "*san cai wan* (三才碗)" or "three talent cups," indicating their three parts: the lid, the cup and the saucer. Tea brewed in a gaiwan has a strong fragrance and a pure flavor. When drinking from a gaiwan, it is not necessary to lift the lid; one can simply move it partly aside and sip with the lid still half on. This way, the tea leaves will not get in one's mouth, and the tea can slowly steep. Holding the saucer in one's hands makes it easy to drink the tea and avoids burning the hands. Gaiwans are generally made of porcelain, and they are crafted using a dazzling array of different decorating methods: blue and white, "five color" painting, colored enamel and the colored painting techniques created for imperial court teaware. There are traces of gaiwan use throughout the population, from the imperial court to the ordinary people; it is a classic form of Qing Dynasty teaware. In 1999, some Qing Dynasty ruins were excavated at Bantou village in Hsinkang township, Chiayi County. Among the artifacts unearthed there was a gaiwan decorated with blue and white *kui long* patterns (夔龍紋) depicting a mythical beast resembling a one-legged dragon—more details on this artifact can be found in *A Report on the Sondage at Bantou Village, Hsinkang Township, Chiali County* (嘉義縣新港鄉板頭村遺址考古試掘報告) by Liu Kehong (劉克竑). Although the cup and the lid were both fragments, the characters 成化年制 (*cheng hua nian zhi*) are still visible on the bottom of the cup, meaning "Made during the Chenghua years" (the Chenghua Emperor's reign, 1465–1487). This shows that there were already signs of gaiwan use in Taiwan during the period of Qing rule.

蓋碗在廚房

茶 *Above is a Portrait of Shen Baozhen* (沈葆楨)*, and he is seen using a gaiwan to drink tea. The bottom right is a Qing Dynasty gaiwan that we have here at the Center. It is very important to note that though gaiwans date back to the early Qing Dynasty, they were used only as lidded cups for drinking out of, much as we drink leaves in a bowl tea. They were* ***not*** *used as brewing vessels as they often are these days. This was a casual way of drinking tea in the home and at tea houses, as servants or waiters could easily refill the gaiwan as time passed. Using gaiwans as brewing vessels really began in the 1980s in Taiwan and spread from here to the Mainland and beyond. But a gaiwan is really more of a cup or bowl than a brewing vessel, and wasn't created to be used in that way.*

Using large pots and bowls was how the majority of Chinese people drank tea throughout the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). It is very misleading to get lost in the assumption that in such-and-such an era, people drank tea in a certain way, like saying that people "boiled tea in the Tang, whisked it in the Song and steeped it in the Ming." Such statements are akin to saying that "Americans wore bell-bottoms in the 1960s," which is technically true, but not all Americans. China is a large land, vast in culture and rich in peoples. There have always been many brewing methods throughout China, and the changes are never abrupt. Still, it was popular amongst the mainstream, literate scholars in the Ming and early Qing dynasties to let tea steep for a long time while they worked or chatted and then decant it into large bowls. This was also the period in which the West came into contact with China and started its own tea drinking journey. And that is why "Western" tea brewing is in this style even today. The Europeans learned this style of brewing from the Chinese at the time, who mostly drank tea this way.

Large Teapots & Bowls

From the early Ming Dynasty onwards, large teapots became the most common tea-brewing vessel; although the tea they produce tends to have a weaker fragrance and flavor, they are simple, convenient and practical. After adding a certain amount of tea leaves, one can generally keep steeping the tea all day long, adding hot water several times and continuing to drink it, not worrying about drinking it while it's still hot. It's even possible to forgo teacups and simply drink straight from the spout. Another method is to brew oolong tea using a large pot and large bowls, then drink it sweetened with white sugar, making use of the tea's ability to eliminate summer heat and promote digestion. The large teapots used included dragon pots as well as several types of Yixing purple-sand clay pot, or "*zisha hu* (紫砂壺)," brought over from the Mainland.

In 1999, the National Museum of Natural Science carried out an excavation of the Bantou village ruins in Hsinkang township, Chiayi. In olden times, this area was called Bengang (笨港) and was one of the earliest areas to be cultivated by the Han people. It featured in a saying about the three major ports of the period: "First, Tainan Prefecture; second, Bengang; third, Monga." The ruins excavated were the office of the deputy governor of Bengang, Zhuluo County. Among the artifacts unearthed here were twenty Zisha teapot fragments, which are believed to come from four individual pots. One of these was a large Zisha pot with bamboo-joint style handles and spout. (*Pot is shown above.*) There are several examples of Large Yixing pots in most anthologies of Yixingware, especially if they include pots from the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. There are also large porcelain pots from this time period as well. Though gongfu tea started burgeoning in the south of China, such large-pot tea brewing continued throughout Chinese history.

Four Treasures of Gongfu Tea

Gongfu Teaware

"Gongfu teaware" refers to the teaware used for brewing gongfu tea in the southern regions of Fujian and Guangdong, where it was popular during the Qing Dynasty. This brewing method involves many different implements, but the most obvious characteristic is that the pots and cups are very small, suitable for drinking oolong teas such as Wuyi Cliff Tea. The first type of tea to be introduced to Taiwan during the Qing Dynasty was Cliff Tea, which was made using the oolong processing method, and was also mainly brewed in the gongfu style from Fujian and Guangdong. So, the teaware and tea drinking customs in Taiwan at that time were all inherited from the Mainland provinces of Fujian and Guangdong.

The Qing Dynasty gongfu tea brewing method from Fujian and Guangdong was characterized by the use of small pots, and can be traced back to the late-Ming pot brewing method. Ming Dynasty brewing methods included the "cooked tea" method (*jian cha fa*, 煎茶法) that used a large porcelain pot, and the "pinch method (*cuo pao fa*, 撮泡法)" that used a tea bowl. From the mid-Wanli period, the "steeping in a teapot" method (*hu pao yue cha fa*, 壺泡瀹茶法) emerged, which involved putting the tea leaves in an Yixing Zisha teapot and then directly pouring in the boiling water. Although this method arose later than the other two, it was more widespread. The main characteristic of this brewing method was the importance of the teapot; as Qian Chunnian (錢椿年) puts it in the Jiajing era *New Manual of Tea Making* (制茶新譜): "If the pot is large and there is tea left over, and it sits for a long time, the flavor will deteriorate; this is not good!" In *The Book of Tea* (茶經) from the late Ming Dynasty, author Zhang Qiande (張謙德, 1577–1643) also expresses the opinion that "the qualities of tea are limited; if the pot is too big, the flavor will not be strong." The size and material of the teapot both influence the flavor of the tea; hence the teapots used for drinking green tea at the time gradually trended toward a smaller size. In the late Ming and early Qing, the pan-firing method used for Wuyi tea gained an oxidation step, resulting in semi-oxidized tea. Many fine teas emerged, such as those praised by Shi Chaoquan in "A Song of Wuyi Tea:" "With an aroma like the plum blossom and the orchid, it generally becomes fragrant when roasted." Because Wuyi Cliff Tea has a strong fragrance, it's speculated that this is where the method of using small teapots to brew semi-oxidized teas came from; the small pots that would later characterize the gongfu tea brewing method were probably also established as a feature of the method during this period. In short, the small-pot gongfu tea brewing method developed from the Ming Dynasty teapot brewing methods, and was formed around the unique characteristics of oolong, thanks to the progress in Wuyi tea processing methods; it later became known as the "gongfu tea (工夫茶)" brewing method.

Tea drinking in Taiwan mainly involved this gongfu brewing method. Zhou Shu (周澍, 1684–?), who lived during the Kangxi and Qianlong eras, spent some time in Taiwan and wrote a work called "A Hundred Songs of Taiyang (台陽百詠)," which contains this poem: "Under the shade of the hanging banyan, the day is becoming clear. I pour water into the Gong Chun teapot; the crab's-eye bubbles make their sound, like the wind and rain outside a closed door, like droplets falling from the bamboo tips into the gutter of a tiled roof." He also noted that "the people of Taiwan Prefecture all brew their own tea. First, they hold some tea in one hand and smell its fragrance; then put it into a small Gong Chun teapot. Gong Chun (供春) is the pseudonym of Wu Yishan (吳頤山), a maker of Yixing teapots; the name 'Gong Chun' is sometimes written with a different character (龔春), which is erroneous. One pot can be used for decades, and is worth a tablet of gold." We can see from these excerpts that the trend for this teapot brewing method had already arrived in Taiwan.

After the arrival of Fujianese Wuyi tea and processing methods in Taiwan, tea brewing methods adapted to the strong flavor and fragrance of oolong tea. Only a small pot could bring out the right flavor and color; only a small cup could concentrate the aroma of the tea. Hence, the gongfu tea brewing method used for Wuyi tea became extremely popular, as we can see from this quite detailed record in Lian Heng's *Yatang Anthology: A Discussion of Tea*: "The tea drunk by the Taiwanese is different to the tea from the central Mainland, but is the same as the tea from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Chaozhou. There are many people from these three places living in Taiwan, so the prevalent habits are also similar. The tea must be Wuyi; the pot must be Meng Chen; the cups must be Ruo Shen; these three are vital for tasting tea. Anything less than these is not worthy of pride, and not worthy of serving tea to guests." This point of view is inherited from the gongfu tea customs of Fujian and Guangdong: to entertain guests, one needed Wuyi tea and fine tea implements. These were known as the "Four Treasures of Chaoshan (潮汕四寶):" an Yu Shu (玉書碗) pottery sidehandle pot for boiling water, a Chaoshan stove, a Meng Chen pot (a small purple-sand clay teapot), and Ruo Shen cups (small white porcelain tea cups). (Some lists put the stove and kettle together and add the teaboat as the fourth "treasure." There are different sources and traditions of gongfu tea.) Along with Qing Dynasty gongfu tea drinking customs in Taiwan, many of these tea implements also came over from the southern coast of the Mainland, making Taiwan a hub for gongfu tea culture.

In 1999 during the excavation of the Bantou ruins at Hsinkang, Chiayi, archaeologists discovered part of a *zhuni* (朱泥) red clay teapot that had a partly legible verse inscribed on the base: "The moon on the pavilion (*missing words*) people—Meng Chen (亭月□□人 孟臣)." They also found some blue and white porcelain teacup fragments with the words "Ruo Shen Collection (若深珍藏)" on the base. These findings serve to verify Lian Heng's records of gongfu tea drinking customs in Taiwan. (More detail on the excavation can be found in the aforementioned *Report on the Sondage at Bantou Village, Hsinkang Township, Chiali County* by He Chuankun and Liu Kehong, and *Jingxi Zhuni Clay* by Huang Jianliang and Huang Yijia.) In addition, further archaeological findings from tombs and shipwrecks provide another point of view on the same time period, testifying to the popularity of gongfu teaware both on the export market and within China, and verifying the origins of gongfu tea culture in Taiwan.

There are many explanations as to the origins of the name "gongfu cha (工夫茶)," encompassing two main meanings. The first originally referred to high-quality Wuyi Cliff Tea; since the processing method for a good Wuyi Cliff Tea is very complicated, it was called "gongfu tea" (*gongfu* can be interpreted as meaning "time and effort," "mastery through discipline" or "acquired skill"). The Qing Dynasty *Sequel to the Classic of Tea* (續茶經), compiled in 1734 by Lu Tingcan (陸廷燦), contains a passage in Chapter 3, "Processing," from the 1678 *About Tea* (茶說) by Wang Fuli (王複禮). It describes the process of Wuyi tea making as follows: "…after the tea is harvested, it is spread out evenly in bamboo baskets and stacked on a frame to dry in the wind and the sun; this is called "sun-drying (*shai qing,* 曬青)." After this, its bright green color gradually recedes; it is then fired. Yangxian Jiepian (陽羨芥片) tea is only steamed, not pan-fired, and then finished by roasting over a fire. Songluo (松蘿) and Longjing (龍井) are pan-fired and not roasted, which gives them their pure color. Only Wuyi Cliff Tea (武夷岩茶) is both pan-fired and roasted. After this cooking process the leaves come out half green and half red. The green is from the pan-firing and the red is from the roasting. The tea leaf is spread out and shaken; when it gives off a strong fragrance, it is pan-fired. It must not be fired for too short or too long a time. When it is both pan-fired and roasted, the old leaves and stalks are all repeatedly picked out, to ensure it is uniform in color. It is described in Shi Chaoquan's poems as having "an aroma like the plum blossom and the orchid," and as requiring "a calm mind, nimble hands and meticulous skill." So, from this description, we can see that Wuyi tea was spread out and shaken after picking to allow it to oxidize; compared to steamed green tea such as Yangxian Jiepian and pan-fired green teas like Songluo and Longjing, the Wuyi manufacturing process, involving steps such as pan-firing, roasting and picking out old leaves and stems, truly does require a lot of time and energy; hence the name "gongfu tea."

The Shi Chaoquan poem that Wang Fuli mentions in *About Tea* is the same poem quoted earlier in this article, "A Song of Wuyi Tea," which dates to around the late Ming or early Qing; the Wuyi tea of the poem was simply the product of an early form of the oolong processing method, and the word "gongfu" in this context does not appear to refer to a particular tea varietal. Moreover, the detailed reference to the oolong-style processing methods of Mount Wuyi tea in Wang Fuli's *About Tea* suggests that high-quality gongfu Wuyi Cliff Tea likely had its origins in the late Ming and took shape in the early Qing. At present, the earliest known historical record that clearly uses the term "gongfu tea" to refer to high-quality Wuyi Cliff Tea is the 1734 *Sequel to the Classic of Tea* by Lu Tingcan, in which the fourth chapter, "Tea Production," contains the following excerpt from *A Journal of Things Seen and Heard* (隨見錄): "The Wuyi tea which grows on the mountains is known as 'cliff tea (*yan cha*, 岩茶),' while that which grows by the rivers is known as 'riverbank tea (*zhou cha*, 洲茶).' *Yan cha* is superior, while *zhou cha* comes second. *Yan cha* grown on the northern mountain is superior to that grown on southern mountain. The teas are named after the two mountains where they are grown, north and south; the best of all is called gongfu tea." The original book, *A Journal of Things Seen and Heard*, is now

lost, but was probably written earlier than the *Sequel to the Tea Classic* of the Yongzheng era. A later book from around 1753, *A Collection of Leisurely Moments* (片刻餘閑集) by Liu Qing (劉靖), contains this description: "The best of the rock teas is old-growth *xiaozhong* (small-leaf) tea; the next best is *xiaozhong*, then *xiaozhong* gongfu, then gongfu, then gongfu *huaxiang* (floral fragrance), then *huaxiang*…" *Recollections from the Fields* (歸田瑣記) by Liang Zhangju (梁章鉅), written around 1843 to 1844, has a section called "Tea Tasting (品茶)" that says, "*Xiaozhong* is a common product of the mountains; the best kind is called *mingzhong* (名種). It is hard to find outside of the mountains; people in Quanzhou and Xiamen call it gongfu tea." Here, "gongfu tea" refers to high-quality Wuyi Cliff Tea; it's clear that from the time of *A Journal of Things Seen and Heard* onwards, this term became widespread.

The second interpretation of "gongfu tea" is that it refers to the brewing and drinking methods of Wuyi Cliff Tea; it's speculated that it was named for the complicated process and delicate teaware involved in brewing gongfu tea. The earliest record to date of the Wuyi Cliff Tea brewing and drinking method is from the *Suiyuan Catalog of Food and Drink: Tea and Wine* (隨園食單·茶酒單) by well-known Qianlong-era scholar Yuan Mei (袁枚, 1716–1797). He writes, "I was not particularly fond of Wuyi tea; I disliked its strong, bitter taste that was rather like drinking medicine. In the autumn of 1786, I traveled to Wuyi, and visited such places as Manting Peak and Tianyou Temple, where the monks warmly offered me tea. The cups were as small as walnuts, and the pot as small as a citron; each pour only filled one or two (cups). When bringing the tea to the mouth, one must not swallow it immediately, but first smell the fragrance and then taste the flavor, to slowly savor and contemplate it. Indeed, it had a pure fragrance that filled the nostrils, and an ample sweetness on the tongue. After the first cup, I tried one or two more; it soothes restlessness and calms the spirit, leaving one cheerful and relaxed. After this, I began to feel that although Longjing is pure, its flavor is a little weak; although Yangxian is a fine tea, its appeal is a little deficient. Just like jade and crystal, each has a different character. Hence, Wuyi enjoys an excellent reputation throughout the land, of which it is truly not unworthy. What's more, it can be steeped three times and still retain its flavor."

In this excerpt, Yuan Mei describes how he was used to regularly drinking well-known teas from Jiangsu and Zhejiang such as Yangxian and Longjing, but was unaccustomed to drinking oolong teas such as Wuyi Cliff Tea. When he visited Mount Wuyi in 1786, the monks warmly entertained their guest with Wuyi Cliff Tea. They used small cups and a small pot, first smelling the tea then tasting it, carefully savoring and swallowing it to truly experience the floral fragrance and sweet aftertaste of the Wuyi Cliff Tea. It could even be steeped three times. This experience vastly changed Yuan Mei's impression of Wuyi tea, and green teas such as Longjing and Yangxian no longer seemed so good by comparison. Although Yuan Mei's description does not use the term "gongfu tea," from his depiction of the small cups and pots and the tea's ability to be steeped three times, it's clear that he's describing the gongfu brewing and drinking method. (Many traditions in Chaozhou use only three cups, and also only serve three steepings, even into the present day this is still practiced.)

The earliest known use of the term "gongfu tea" in relation to a brewing method appears in the *Mengchang Miscellaneous Writings: Scenes of Chaozhou* (夢廠雜著·潮嘉風月), written by Yu Jiao (俞蛟, 1757–?) in 1801. This passage from the book recounts a description of the courtesan boats in Chaozhou, and also touches on the gongfu tea brewing method.

"The gongfu tea brewing method originally came from Lu Yu's *Tea Sutra* (茶經), and the teaware is very fine. The stove is cylindrical in shape, about one foot and two or three inches in height, made of fine white clay. The best teapots are those produced by the Yixing kilns; they are round with a flattened belly, a X spout and a curved handle; the larger ones can hold half a *sheng* of tea. The cups and dishes are mostly floral-patterned porcelain, decorated on the inside and outside with landscapes and people; they are very finely made. They were not made in recent times, but they do not bear any maker's mark, so it is impossible to verify the year in which they were produced. The stove and the pot are placed on a tray surrounded by as many cups as there are guests; the cups are small, and the tray is like the full moon. Apart from this, there are also pottery vessels called *wa cheng* (瓦鐺), a palm fiber mat, a paper fan and a pair of bamboo tongs; all are simple and elegant. The pot, tray and cups are all beautiful old ones, valuable treasures; they are common on the boats but difficult to obtain. First, spring water is poured into the *wa cheng*, and then heated with fine charcoal until it begins to boil. The tea from Fujian is put into the pot and water is poured in; the lid is put on, and more water is poured on top. Then the tea is poured and sipped delicately. It has a strong fragrance, even more marvelous than if one were chewing on plum blossoms themselves; those who gulp it down or drink it only as part of the finger-guessing game cannot truly taste its distinctive flavor. I have also seen two boats on the river, with owners from Wanhua, decorated with tea drinking poems. One goes, 'The banquet finished, I return home late by the light of the full moon; I remove my outer robes and sit alone to see out the waning evening. To my left, the beloved daughter of our household, most accomplished, brews phoenix tea cakes (*feng tuan*, 鳳團) to soothe my restless mind.' The other goes, 'The small cauldron makes many sounds, like the playful babbling of a spring; outside the canopied window, the night is quiet; voices mingle with the sounds of cicadas. I gently sip from my cup; (the tea) is as pure as snow; I do not envy the brews of Mengshan with their lively flames.' Tea from Sichuan has not been quite as good for some time; the most highly esteemed tea on the boats these days is Wuyi, of which the finest costs one hundred *qiang* and two *mei* per *jin*. So, it's clear that the 'six-sail boats' are quite extravagant in their choice of refreshments."

This passage on gongfu tea from *Scenes of Chaozhou* specifies the requirements the people of Chaozhou had when drinking Wuyi Cliff Tea. The tea implements it describes are more complex than the small cups and small pots of Yuan Mei's monastery visit, with a white clay stove, an Yixing purple-sand clay teapot, a porcelain tray and teacups, pottery cups, a palm fiber mats, a paper fan and bamboo tongs all making an appearance. The brewing process, too, is described as having several steps: arranging the implements, boiling the water, adding the tea, pouring on the water, wetting the teapot, pouring and then tasting the tea. From this description of the delicate teaware and painstaking process, it's easy to see why the phrase "gongfu tea" is used to describe this Wuyi Cliff Tea brewing and drinking method.

Although Chaozhou is the main place featured in Yu Jiao's *Mengchang Miscellaneous Writings: Scenes of Chaozhou*, the gongfu tea brewing method certainly wasn't limited to Chaozhou. It may have started there, but very quickly spread. Gao Jiheng (高繼珩, 1797–1865), also known by the pseudonym Ji Quan (寄泉), wrote the *An Unofficial History of Diejie* (蝶蜡外史) in 1854. The section entitled "Gongfu Tea" says the following: "Gongfu tea is most prolific in Fujian; it is produced on the mountains of Wuyi; after harvesting it is scented with flowers. The pots used are all Yixing sand-clay pots; they come in many styles, made by Gong Chun and Shi Dabin. Every tea has its pot; a stove and a long-handled pot are used to heat the water until the third stage of boiling. First come the crab-eye bubbles, then come the fish-eye bubbles, and finally the string-of-pearls bubbles, at which point the water is ready. If the water is under-boiled, the tea liquor will be too 'young;' if it is over-boiled, the liquor will be 'old.' It's not easy to get it just right, hence the saying, 'the Heavens provide the moon, and people must watch the flame.' A good cup of tea requires habitual practice, it doesn't happen by chance. First, when the water in the long-handled pot is (nearly) ready, some is poured into the empty teapot and then poured out again. Second, when the water is ready, a few taels of tea must be placed preemptively in the teapot with a utensil. Then, water is poured into the teapot until it overflows around the lid, and the pot is placed onto a copper tray. Third, when the water is once again ready,

it is poured onto the teapot, starting from the top and pouring it all over, to bring out the fragrance of the tea. The cups are like (those used for) yellow rice wine; a cup is offered to each guest, who sips at the small drop of tea inside it, savoring and pondering the subtlety of its flavor. If one drinks the tea in one gulp, one will know nothing of the flavor; a respectful guest avoids such behavior."

Like Yu Jiao, Gao Jiheng also gives a detailed description of the gongfu tea brewing and drinking method, including warming the pot, preparing and placing the tea, adding water and pouring it over the pot, and so forth; this time, the location of the tea session is Fujian. Another description of this gongfu brewing method appears in the *Qingbai Collection* (清稗類鈔) by Xu Ke (徐珂, 1869–1928), who also mentions that "gongfu tea is in vogue in Fujian and can also be found in eastern Guangdong; it is present all over the three prefectures of Tingzhou, Zhangzhou and Quanzhou in Fujian and the prefecture of Chaozhou in Guangdong. The brewing method originally comes from Lu Yu's *Tea Sutra*, and the teaware is finer." So, this gives us a picture of the spread of the gongfu tea brewing method throughout the various prefectures of Guangdong and Fujian.

In summary, historical records indicate that the phrase "gongfu tea" was used earlier on to refer to high-quality Wuyi Cliff Tea, with its complicated manufacturing process. Around the middle of the Qing Dynasty, the meaning extended to include the Wuyi Cliff Tea brewing method that was popular in the coastal regions of Fujian and Guangdong, with its delicate teaware and complex process. So, by the late Qing, the term "gongfu tea" had two meanings, denoting both high-quality Wuyi Cliff Tea and its associated brewing method. It's worth noting that although the use of "gongfu tea" to denote the Wuyi Cliff Tea brewing method first appeared during the mid-Qing Dynasty, the brewing method itself certainly didn't pop up suddenly in the mid-Qing; its origins can be traced back to the teapot-brewing methods of the late Ming. Therefore, there is much missing from the historical records concerning the origin of gongfu tea. Different traditions record their own histories as well, so there is no one way of "gongfu tea."

Cliff Tea then and now... Oolong is the most difficult tea to make, and Wuyi Cliff Tea is the pinnacle of all oolongs. The craftsmanship has continued for centuries—each step painstakingly monitored as the tea is crafted with great skill, or "gongfu." Indeed, the birth of such oolong tea is one of the three reasons that "gongfu" brewing began, for tea crafted with such heart and devotion demands that the brewer respect the hard work of the farmers, from leaf selection through the night of processing. In our tradition, we talk about two other forces that helped create and inform the creation of this brewing method: the martial artists of southern China (their philosophy, cosmology and lifestyle) and an ideal of simplicity/frugality. Large pots and bowls were expensive and wasted such precious teas. These simple people wanted to use a small amount of tea and brew it in a way that one could be satisfied after a single pot.

Section Five: Archaeology & Qing Dynasty Gongfu Teaware

During the Qing Dynasty, Taiwan's tea drinking customs were just as described earlier by Lian Heng in *A Discussion of Tea:* "The tea drunk by the Taiwanese is different to the tea from the central Mainland, but is the same as the tea from Zhangzhou, Quanzhou and Chaozhou. There are many people from these three places living in Taiwan, so the prevalent habits are also similar." Therefore, historical records of tea customs from Fujian and Guangdong during the Qing Dynasty can also provide evidence as to what tea customs in Taiwan looked like at the time. This section will discuss two 19th century trading ships which met with misfortune and sank in the waters of Southeast Asia after setting out from Xiamen. The two ships were each carrying a significant amount of teaware, and have thus become an invaluable source of archaeological artifacts. In addition, the custom of including teaware among the burial objects in tombs in the Zhangpu region of Fujian has provided another source of archaeological material.

The Tek Sing (泰興號)

The Tek Sing sank in 1822 off the coast of Java. Of all the shipwrecks discovered to date, the Tek Sing (also sometimes called the "*De Shun Hao*, 得順號") has proved the richest source of information about gongfu tea culture. Nowhere was gongfu tea more prevalent in the Qing Dynasty than in the coastal areas of Fujian and Guangdong, and Xiamen was one of the region's major hubs; so the gongfu teaware that this large trading ship was carrying when it set out from Xiamen is of great significance. These wares included pottery items such as Yixing clay teapots by the maker Meng Chen, tea stoves, sand-clay sidehandle pots, and water jugs; they also included porcelain items such as blue and white porcelain teacups, porcelain bowls, gaiwans and tea trays inscribed with tea poems. Besides these, there were also a few tin tea cannisters. These tea implements all display a clear relationship to other existing pieces that are known today in places such as Taiwan (the teaware customarily used by the older generation and in the Chaozhou and Zhao'an brewing traditions), Japan, (the teaware used in sencha tea ceremonies), and the Mainland Chinese provinces of Fujian and Guangdong (various pieces that have been passed down or excavated). This cargo is undoubtedly an outstanding source of first-hand historical data regarding the Yixing teapot trade and gongfu tea culture.

The gongfu teapots aboard the Tek Sing are Meng Chen pots; they were all made in Yixing, some from purple-sand *zisha* (紫砂) clay and some from red *zhuni* (朱泥) clay. They vary in size, with a capacity ranging between 120 and 220 milliliters. There are over ten different shapes of pot, roughly representing all the main gongfu teapot shapes. Most of them are signed on the bottom with the words "Made by Meng Chen (*Meng Chen zhi*, 孟臣制)" in raised *xingkai* (行楷) semi-cursive regular calligraphic script, and some of them also bear a stamp in *zhuanshu* (篆書) seal script. The time of manufacture was the late Jiaqing period (the Jiaqing Emperor reigned from 1796–1820). The crafting techniques displayed on these pots are identical to those of the *zhuni* clay pots excavated from Qing Dynasty tomb sites throughout southern Fujian. This shipment of gongfu teapots are classic Meng Chen pots, with the craftsmanship displaying a certain level of skill; at the time they would have been classed as mid- to high-end commercial products. They were mainly sold on the domestic market in Fujian and Guangdong and on the export market among overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. This also implies that the customers who bought them were all well versed in traditional gongfu tea customs, and likely belonged to the middle to upper socioeconomic strata of the overseas Chinese settlements. By this time, gongfu tea brewing had spread throughout the diaspora, reaching Malaysia, Singapore and Taiwan as well—everywhere that oolong tea was drunk and enjoyed.

The Desaru (迪沙如號)

The Desaru sank off the coast of Johor in southeastern Peninsular Malaysia in around 1845. Items excavated from the wreck included over 50,000 blue and white porcelain spoons and all sorts of other everyday ceramics, many of which were Yixing pottery. Among these were several hundred Yixing teapots, most of which were pear-shaped pots and straight-spouted flat-bellied pots, and one Zisha tea leaf jar. The Zisha teapots found aboard the Desaru gave us some very interesting information: they are made from the "pure" *Qingshui* clay (清水泥) and red-brown *Hongzong* clay (紅棕泥) commonly used to make Zisha teapots in the Jiangnan region; yet they are made in the most traditional gongfu teapot shapes—pear-shaped and the straight-spouted flat-bellied shape—

and have a relatively large capacity. Moreover, the Zisha purple-sand clay teapots found on the Desaru bear over thirty different makers' marks, all in the inscription style typical of Zisha pots from Jiangnan. So, we can conclude that this batch of Yixing teapots are a hybrid of the purple-sand clay pots of Jiangnan and the gongfu teapots of Fujian and Guangdong, blending elements of the tea culture of both regions.

The Gongfu Teapots Excavated in Fujian

In southern Fujian, when someone died, it was traditional to bury the teapot and teaware that they used during their life with them in their tomb. The most well-known excavation of this kind was the tomb of Lan Guowei (藍國威, ?–1756) at Qianyuan Village in Chiling Township, Zhangpu County, Fujian. Among the artifacts unearthed at the tomb was a gongfu tea set, including a hexagonal tea tin containing tea leaves and a slip of paper with the brand name Su Xin (素心) written on it. There was also a Kangxi-era porcelain tea tray decorated with landscapes and figures painted in ink, four small white porcelain teacups bearing the mark *Ruo Shen Collection* (若深珍藏), and a small Yixing *zhuni* clay teapot. Judging by the tea stains on the inside, this pot had evidently seen many a brew over the years. When put together, all these items make up a full set of implements for a gongfu tea session, so during his lifetime, Lan Guowei was clearly a tea enthusiast. And he loved tea so much, these wares traveled with him in to the afterlife.

A number of historical relics were also excavated from another tomb in Zhangpu County, dating from some time during the late Qianlong to the early Jiaqing era. Among these artifacts was another gongfu tea set, including four classic blue and white porcelain *Ruo Shen Collection* brand teacups, a Meng Chen *zhuni* clay teapot and a green celadon glazed porcelain tea tray. The glaze is applied down to the foot of the tray, which is the only part exposed, and displays a pattern of large cracks. Experts believe that it dates to the Yongzheng or Qianlong era during the Qing Dynasty.

茶 *Left are kettles and stoves from the Tek Sing, and above are gongfu pots and wares from the Desaru. They aren't great for making tea anymore, though.*

Aging Oolong Tea Well

Master Tsai shares his decades of wisdom with regards to storing Taiwan tea. It should be noted that this article is in reference to storing Taiwanese tea, not puerh or black tea, which would involve very different advice.

茶人: ***Tsai Yizhe*** (蔡奕哲)

Because of their health benefits, old and aged teas can be quite expensive. Some of the old teas being sold are genuine, but some are not, and without a certain amount of experience, you may risk spending an exorbitant amount of money on an old tea that may be harmful to the health. So, rather than relying on old tea of uncertain origins supplied by someone else, it's better to choose a properly made organic tea and age it yourself.

In his Tang Dynasty *Tea Sutra*, or *Cha Jing* (茶經), tea saint Lu Yu (陸羽) says the following: "There are nine skills one must master in a life of tea: processing the leaves, discrimination of quality, understanding the utensils and their use, preparing the proper fire, understanding and selecting suitable water, proper roasting of the tea, grinding the tea into powder, brewing the perfect elixir and drinking the tea. To pick leaves on cloudy days and roast them at night is not the sign of skillful tea processing. To but nibble the tea leaves and sniff their fragrance is not truly discerning quality. Pots used for cooking or bowls that smell of food are not appropriate implements for brewing tea. Similarly, firewood contaminated with oil or mere kitchen coals are not suitable for brewing tea, either. Rapidly moving or stagnant water sources are not worthy of a fine tea. When roasting tea cakes, if the outside is done while the inside is still raw, one has more practice to do. Do not grind the tea leaves into too fine a powder. Neither stirring boiling water with jerky motions nor too vigorously is proper brewing. One must stir gracefully and smoothly. And lastly, drinking tea only in one season, like during the summer yet not much in winter, is not conducive to a true understanding of tea." Any of these missteps mean that "the tea will become undrinkable!" Wouldn't it be a great pity to have the good fortune to master these nine challenges, yet not manage to store the tea successfully? In his *Record of Tea* (茶錄), Song Dynasty author Cai Xiang (蔡襄) has this to say about storing tea leaf: "It loves bamboo leaf and fears medicines; loves cool, fresh air and loathes humidity. It loves clean solitude and dreads perfumes and odors." Clearly, there are a lot of things to be careful of when planning to age your own tea.

The Ming Dynasty *Tea Chest* (茗笈) by Tu Benjun (屠本畯) emphasizes that: "Tea has its own spirit, and must be carefully protected; just like a newborn baby, how could one not protect it?" To explore this in terms of modern science, the qualitative changes in the tea are in part caused by breakdown of the lipids in the tea leaves, which constitutes around 5–8% of the leaf. For oxidation to occur, the tea needs a certain amount of water to act as an intermediary; so in humid atmospheres, tea will quickly oxidize to the point that it becomes acidic. In fact, when tea processing is newly completed, the water content in the tea leaf is around 3–4%; at this point, the water content forms a monolayer and any moisture in the outside atmosphere is not easily absorbed. If the tea leaf is carelessly put somewhere without careful protection, it will gradually absorb moisture from the atmosphere; when the water content rises above 5%, the free water will introduce oxygen into the leaf, and the leaf will gradually become acidic. When the water content rises above 6%, water will coagulate in the capillaries of the leaf fiber, transforming them into water channels. This speeds up the effect of the oxygen and the process of acidification. So tea leaves must generally be roasted to dry them before packaging for storage, ensuring the water content is reduced to below 5%. (A traditionally-processed oolong is perfect for this, as it will have been properly roasted. All oolong was made to be aged back in the day, at least as long as it was being drunk.)

In another Ming Dynasty work, the *Zhang Boyuan Tea Records* (張伯淵茶錄), author Zhang Yuan (張源) points out that: "When tea is newly made, it starts out fresh green in color. If it is not stored properly, firstly it turns darker green, secondly it turns yellow, thirdly it turns black and fourthly it turns white. Drinking such tea can cause stomach cold and even *qi* deficiency." So, these changes that occur in the tea are not simply a question of taste—they can also have negative effects on the health. Zhang Yuan also raises the question of storage methods: "To start, the tea must be dry. First, put it in an old box, and seal up any gaps by wrapping it with paper. Wait three days for the tea to recover its original state, and then dry it again over a low flame; when it has cooled, pack it in an earthen jar. Tamp it down lightly and compress it using a bamboo-leaf lining. Use repeated layers of bamboo leaf and paper to seal the mouth of the jar, then use a heated brick to press it down, and place it into a *cha yu.* It must not be stored near drafts or flame; being near drafts will make it too cold, while being near flame will make it prematurely yellow." (A *cha yu*, 茶育, was a special container described thus by Lu Yu in the *Cha Jing*: "A covered wooden storage container, called a *yu*, is used to preserve tea cakes. It has bamboo walls covered in a paper finish. There are partitions and racks in every chamber. Below, there is a door. Behind the door there is a fan and a stove with constant low heat. This maintains the freshness of the cakes. However, for people living in the South, during the rainy season, a fire will be needed to keep the tea dry.")

In his *Commentary on Tea* (茶疏), Ming Dynasty author Xu Cishu (許次紓) mentions that when storing tea, one must be careful to "pack the tea solidly, and wrap it tightly with thick bamboo leaf. The mouth of the jar must be sealed with more bamboo leaf and wrapped with paper." Aside from the container, an even more important requirement is the storage location: "It should be kept in a place where people often sit or lie nearby. This way it is near to human energy, and will be kept at room temperature and not become too cold. It should be kept in a wooden storehouse, not an earthen cellar; wooden storehouses are warm and dry, while earthen cellars are humid. [The storage location] should also be

well-ventilated; do not keep it in a hidden, closed-in space, as it will tend to be too humid." Another author of the same era, Luo Lin (羅廩), mentions in *Tea Explained* (茶解) that "tea is absorbent and easily contaminated; any smelly, dirty or strongly scented items must not be kept near it. The fragrances of different teas should also not be allowed to mingle together." So, choosing a good storage container is very important: "Any vessel used for storing tea must be used only for tea from beginning to end; it should not be used for other purposes." Luo Lin also says that "stored tea should be kept suitably cool and dry. If it is too damp, the flavor will change and the fragrance will diminish; if it is too hot the flavor will become bitter and the tea will turn yellow." If tea is not stored appropriately, it usually displays certain changes: the color becomes darker, the fragrance and taste grow weaker, and the tea may even spoil or go moldy!

Tea leaf has a high capacity to absorb odors and moisture, mainly because the leaf is composed of dry matter with a loose structure and many capillaries. According to research, many of the substances in tea are hydrophilic in nature, including tea polyphenols, esters, proteins and sugars. Under the influence of the absorbed moisture, the tea polyphenols, ascorbic acid, esters and so forth all undergo varying degrees of oxidation. Because of these characteristics, we must be careful about what we store together with the tea when aging it; otherwise, the flavor of the tea can very easily be contaminated or spoiled. To store our tea properly, resulting in well-aged tea, we must be sure to observe the following points:

1. Dry the tea thoroughly before storing it (or choose a well-processed oolong);

2. Store it in dry conditions;

3. Avoid sudden changes in temperature;

4. Avoid contaminating the tea with other odors;

5. Avoid direct sunlight.

In short, "tea should be finely processed, stored in a dry place and brewed cleanly. Fine; dry; clean: these are at the heart of the Way of Tea."

茶 ***The principles that Master Tsai is suggesting actually apply to the storage of most all tea, especially for long-term storage. Puerh and Black tea do have some humidity requirements, but the other aspects remain the same. Interestingly, we have found, like Xu Cishu, that the tea needs positive human energy nearby.***

Special Offer

Age Your Own Oolong Tea

陳化自己的烏龍茶

We have some great news for those of you interested in aging some oolong: We are offering this year's Old Man Dong Ding in a small quantity with very special Yixing jars for aging. We have had Yixing jars made from forty-year-old clay, each one packed with roughly 600 grams of Old Man Dong Ding. Every one of these limited jars will have a *Metta Sutra* (慈經) inside. After cleaning the jars, we will fill them with tea and put in the *Metta Sutra*. We will also provide a traditional Japanese cloth to each jar and protect the tea inside. Unlike puerh, oolong ages well anywhere. It doesn't need a hot, humid climate. In fact, the less humidity the better. All of the proceeds from these fifty jars will go to support the building of our new center, Light Meets Life.

"Dong Ding (凍頂)" comes from the same place as the original Dong Ding bushes—Wuyi Mountain in China—and it means "Frozen Summit." As the name suggests, this tea knows how to handle a chill in the air, and it can help you do the same. (There is another local story for how it got its name, suggesting that the "Dong" refers to the flexing in the calf muscles required to get up the cliffs to the trees, as it sounds identical to that word in the local, Taiwanese dialect.) Traditional Dong Ding oolongs are expertly roasted, lending them a warming Qi and flavor that's ideal for autumn and winter. Better yet, they love to be infused many times, so they're perfect for warming up a few hours on a cool morning, or just after the increasingly early sunsets of the season.

According to local folklore, the original Dong Ding tea bushes were brought to Taiwan around 1855. Legend has it that a government official named Lin Fong Tse traveled to Wuyi and came back with thirty-six *Qing Shin* (清心, "purified heart" or "tender heart") varietal tea plants. He gave twelve of these trees as a gift to a friend in Nantou, who then planted the trees amongst the gorgeous views outside the Nantou town of Lugu. Some of those original plants are still around today, and although a few of them have been overly taxed by cuttings for cloned bushes, there is still reverence for them in the area, and small offerings can sometimes be seen strewn around their roots.

In the many years since the arrival of these twelve plants in Nantou, much work has gone into perfecting the processing of this distinctive varietal of tea. Nantou County tea makers (especially those around Lugu) have mastered the art of charcoal roasting and garnered immense respect for their medium-oxidized, dark roasted Dong Ding oolongs in the past. Unfortunately, the region temporarily lost its way when lighter oxidation, unroasted oolongs came into fashion in the 1980s, and many traditional processes were cast aside in favor of the prospect of higher profits. In an attempt to compete with the success of nearby San Lin Xi high mountain oolongs, the farmers of Lugu cast aside their traditional processes, and many lost the knowledge and skills behind traditional oolong roasting entirely as a new generation of farmers took over. Perhaps even worse yet, the loss of traditional processing methods coincided with a switch to conventional farming. Realizing that they couldn't compete with the aroma of high mountain oolong (which is, by the way, the best thing high mountain oolong has going for it!), they began to pump their plants full of fertilizers in an attempt to increase their profit margins by drastically increasing amounts. Much of the land surrounding Lugu was scorched with harsh chemicals in the decade or so after this shift, and some of it remains fallow or seriously damaged today.

Traditional Dong Ding oolongs are processed in a specific way requiring great skill. They are typically oxidized around thirty percent and rolled into a semi-ball shape during a process of rolling and shaping, roasting and re-rolling. The rolling is a process of repeated rolling or kneading, requiring

凍頂

Metta Sutra in each jar.

strength and endurance. It's often left to strapping young men who work as bamboo harvesters during the off-season. The roasting is repeated firing, and the shaping is done with a cloth bag to produce the ball-shape. These processes are managed by an experienced tea master who can evaluate the tea's oxidation levels by appearance and aroma at each step of the way.

After the tea has been processed, it is given a final "finishing roast." The lengthy firing process is traditionally done in a charcoal fire pit with charcoal from *longyen* (龍眼, dragon eye) trees. During charcoal roasting, the tea is placed in a woven bamboo tray or basket over a stone pit. In the stone pit, embers gleam from beneath a thin layer of ash. The embers must be continually adjusted to get the right temperature and to keep smoke to a minimum throughout the roasting.

Since the Black Dragon first flew—and oolong means "Black Dragon"—it traditionally had a high degree of oxidation and roast. Oolong has always meant semi-oxidized tea, but the range of oxidation was much more narrow in the olden days. Traditionally-processed oolongs are way better for aging.

As Master Tsai would travel to Dong Ding to get his different organic teas, he would sometimes drink tea with the old, retired grandfather that lived on the farm, Master Su. All the tea production has since been handed over to his son. Though the decades of tea oils soaked into the old man hands would have attracted any Chajin, every time they shared tea, Master Tsai noticed that the oolong was very different than what he was buying. After getting to know the old man better, Master Tsai inquired about this tea. The old man admitted that their farm was producing a relatively traditional Dong Ding oolong compared to what is available in the market nowadays, with more oxidation and roast. But to him it still was not "traditional" enough. He liked his tea as it had been made long ago when he was young. So every year he would process some of the tea for his own enjoyment, retiring in style, as it were.

After a few years and more rapport, Master Tsai asked if he could commission some of the tea the old man was enjoying, since he too preferred the taste of tradition. The farmers agreed and "Old Man Dong Ding" was born.

There are three tea-growing areas in Dong Ding. The highest is called Fong Huang, which is a newer area. Then, the oldest farms are in an area called Zhong Ya. The lowest farms are in Yong Long. Our tea is from Zhong Ya, which is considered to be the "true Dong Ding," and definitely the place where you could find an old man still making tea in the traditional style!

Like all fine oolong, this tea is processed mostly by hand. It is picked and withered, indoors and out. The defining characteristic of oolong tea is in the shaking, which bruises the edges of the leaves. This causes cellular breakdown that further semi-oxidizes the tea. Oolong is then fired to arrest oxidation and de-enzyme the tea. After that it is rolled to further break down the cells, release the juices and to shape the tea. Striped oolong is rolled across the ridges of a bamboo tray, like the Wuyi tea we sent out earlier this year. Ball-shaped oolong, like this month's tea, is rolled in a twisted-up cloth bag, which compresses and shapes the tea. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, oolong tea is roasted, which seals in the flavors and lends it depth. This stage also protects the tea for storage/aging.

This is one of our all-time favorite teas. It is deep, fragrant and has a long-lasting satisfaction. The Qi moves to the head and uplifts you, leaving you stranded with the dragons. It tastes of nuts, plums, dates and often of Chinese medicine. It is an excellent candidate for long-term storage!

Each Amazing Jar is $200 + Shipping

www.globalteahut.org/dongding

Tea Wayfarer

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 Erika Houle.

I feel honored to share my Tea journey with you. It is my wish that we get to share many bowls together in person one day... Tea's journey into my life is very much intertwined with my partnership with Gordon. Tea first came into my life in 2009 when Gordon served her in a class he was teaching. Although I was interested in the metaphor he was using to demonstrate, the tea honestly gave me a headache. But I knew I wanted to befriend Gordon, so I kept an open mind. Over the years we got to know each other better as we prepped materials for his class and worked on films together. Tea was an ever present companion too as we slurped many cups while tediously binding slides or warming our bones on snowy film shoots with a thermos. In a natural course we began dating. During the early stages of courtship we decided to go on an adventure together because Gordon had never taken a vacation since graduating high school. After hearing many stories about some weirdo in Taiwan who had dedicated his life to Tea, I suggested we go visit him. (Only years later have people pointed out to me how odd it was to visit a Zen monk as a romantic getaway.)

Upon arriving in Taiwan we learned that Wu De had just transformed his home into the Tea Sage Hut. To our surprise we ended up spending much of our visit working, packing the fourth issue of Global Tea Hut into envelopes, and running errands for the Center. Any conventional sense of romance was dashed, yet we still enjoyed ourselves. Gordon and I hoped to get a bit of private time on a trip to Taroko National Park. However, due to financial and logistical constraints, Wu De ended up generously driving us there. My favorite part of the trip was the night we all shared a cabin. While Gordon was changing, Wu De caught a peek and exclaimed, "Wow, Gordon! You are one hairy little dude!'

For the next few years, Tea gradually seeped more and more into our lives through Global Tea Hut. In 2015, I began organizing tea gatherings which slowly and organically grew our tea community. Then, in 2016, we invited Wu De to be the officiant at our alchemical union celebration. Together we devised a ceremony which of course included Tea. From that moment on She poured like a fountain into my life. The weeks following our celebration were spent managing fourteen workshops and ceremonies for Wu De to lead, after which our New York City Tea community blossomed. This gave me a blessed opportunity to serve the community with my organizing skills by hosting regular gatherings alongside other Tea brothers and sisters. This has offered tremendous opportunity for growth.

茶人: ***Erika Houle***

This June, Gordon and I went to the Tea Sage Hut to sit a course. Through the service and guidance of those serving at the Hut, I learned a lifetime of lessons from Tea. Those ten days were the most profoundly transformative of my life. The process of release was intensely painful, yet incredibly healing. Since returning home I see a marked difference in my ability to navigate life, work, and relationships more skillfully. Witnessing what it means to live a life of service was incredibly inspiring and has already helped me serve my film students in a deeper and more profound manner. The discipline and self-accountability I have continued to develop have supported me in allowing challenges to polish rather than harden me. One of the most radical changes I experienced was internalizing the lesson that the only issue is my orientation to an issue. A funny example of this was how my first trip to Taiwan was nearly ruined by how I allowed mosquitoes to bother me. This time I learned to love and appreciate them because their itchy bites helped me focus on my breath better in meditation. I actually miss the little suckers.

Inspired to give back and learn more about a life of Tea and service, I have decided to return to the Hut to serve a course before I begin a new job. I look forward to meeting some of you there. And, of course, a bowl of tea is always waiting for you at our home in Brooklyn.

Inside the Hut

Coming Soon to Global Tea Hut Magazine

茶主題: *Tea & Diet*

茶道

茶主題: *Classics of Tea*

茶主題: *Sun Moon Lake & Elevation*

茶主題: *Masterpiece Era Puerh*

Global Tea Hut is looking for an SEM and Facebook ad professional to help us set up and optimize evergreen SEM and Facebook campaigns in order to reach people we might not otherwise reach. We want to work with someone who is deeply experienced in this field, and who will be thoughtful and loving. Volunteers have done a great deal of the groundwork already. We need the right person to take their efforts the last mile. For compensation we can offer tea and a small monetary consideration. Let us know if you can help!

Wu De will be teaching at Esalen from December 7 to 9. The course is full, but there are off-site spaces still available. You can find out more information at: www.esalen.org

Check out our live broadcasts on Facebook, Instagram and soon YouTube, which we do every month. Also, check out our "Life of Tea" podcast on Soundcloud and "Brewing Tea" video series on YouTube!

We have created a vast array of teaware for this community, both for bowl tea and gongfu tea. There are also some amazing Light Meets Life teas this year, including a gorgeous shou puerh, some dian hong cakes, a sheng puerh and an aged Liu Bao as well!

We are looking for a PR person with experience who can help us spread the word about Global Tea Hut. The job entails contacting blogs, magazines and other periodicals to send sample months to review, and trying to facilitate interviews for articles, radio, television, podcasts, YouTube channels, etc. Also, if you know anyone with a podcast or video channel who would fit us and would be interested in interviewing Wu De or another student, please let us know. Help us get the word out and grow this amazing community!

October Affirmation

I am compassionate on my future self

Many of the habits I create or reinforce now will influence my future self, becoming an encouragement or obstacle to growth. I succor habits that lead to character development and renounce those that are unwholesome for me.

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. Make sure you apply early for courses as they fill up fast. This is why we need a bigger, more awesome Center.

We have opened all the ten-day courses to service! This is exciting for those of you who have already taken a ten-day course and want to come serve one. You can apply on the website. This is also another way to visit if a course is full!

We have a whole new crew at the Tea Sage Hut living and serving. We are moving towards one-year internships for students for who have sat and served some courses and are willing to volunteer in this way. If you are interested in a future spot, email us for more information.

We are saving up to buy or lease a van to drive you around during service periods and to take you to the tea farm and mountain to fetch water during courses.

www.globalteahut.org

The most historic 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