


TEA OF THE MONTH

nce again, we follow our holiday tradition of returning to Liu Bao tea, which is a very underappreciated and absolutely fantastic genre of tea. In fact, it is one of our favorite kinds of tea, and since it is great in the winter and summer (cooling and warming), it brings a bit of summer to our winter (or vice versa if you are in the southern parts of the world). This month's tea is also special because, like last year's, it was donated by our tea brother Henry Yiow, which means it connects all of you to our lineage of gongfu tea. Henry is one of Master Lin's oldest and brightest students. He is generous and kind, and provided this wonderful tea with an open heart. Through it, may you find the sentiment of heritage it expresses from us, and may it be a newfound love at first sip, promising many more amazing cups of Liu Bao in the future!

Before we start discussing Liu Bao, we must once again drive home the difference between red tea and black tea. What is called "black tea" in the West is actually red tea (*hong cha*). Red tea is oxidized completely during production, whereas black tea is characterized by post-production artificial fermentation. Its liquor is actually red. We have covered this to some extent, but it is important to the producers of Liu Bao. This September, we met with two farmers from Liu Bao, in Guangxi, and they were so happy with our efforts to honor and respect true "black tea," returning it to its proper

place in the West, that they broke out a celebratory fifty-year-old Liu Bao tea and congratulated us again and again, cup after cup! And their gratitude was definitely sincere, as is our respect for black tea producers.

Liu Bao is a black, black tea produced in Cangwu, Guangxi. The name "Liu Bao" literally translates to "Six Castles," which may refer to forts that existed in the area at some time in the distant past. The local mountains are full of canyons, streams and waterfalls that are misty year-round. The loose, fertile soil, humidity and proper sunshine make the region excellent for growing tea. The tea trees here are neither big- nor small-leaf varietals, which we have discussed extensively in past issues. To briefly summarize: the original tea trees are all what has become known as *Camellia sinensis* var. *assamica*. They can grow bigger leaves, and generally have a single trunk with roots that grow more downward. As tea moved northward, naturally or carried by people, it evolved into a small-leaf varietal, known as *Camellia sinensis* var. *sinensis*. These trees can't grow leaves as large, are more bush-like, with many trunks and roots that grow outwards. Liu Bao is a bigger leaf tea, but not as big as puerh. Neither is it as small as small-leaf tea—you could say that Liu Bao is "medium leaf," if you're willing to have a new category; otherwise, it's big leaf. Like puerh, the best-quality Liu Bao tea is made from older tea trees. It is amazing that farmers and indigenous

healers demonstrate a deep connection to the fermentation process, adapting their processing and preparation of the leaf accordingly, long before there was even a concept of a microscopic world. They often adapted their processing to suit the microbes before they could have had a notion of such influences, in other words—demonstrating a deeper underlying connection to the Nature of the leaves they shared their lives with.

Liu Bao tea is processed similarly to shou puerh. In fact, when puerh manufacturers were developing the process of artificial fermentation used to create shou puerh in the 1960s and early 70s (officially licensed production began in 1973) they studied Liu Bao production, amongst other kinds of black tea. Ultimately, shou puerh production methodology is based on such teas and owes its existence to them. However, the exchange actually goes the other way as well, since Liu Bao production was also influenced by shou production in the 1980s, resulting in deeper, wetter and longer piling for Liu Bao (as for shou). The main differences in production result from the unique microclimates of both locations, as well as the differences in the varietals. The raw material is very different from shou puerh to Liu Bao (large leaf versus medium leaf) and the microclimate is also very different (Yunnan is wetter and richer in all flora and fauna). This means they need to be piled in very different ways.



Beneath the Pines



Liu Bao, Guangxi, China



c. 2000 Liu Bao Black Tea



Han Chinese



~500 Meters

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the Month video to
learn more!*



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Processing

There are some variations in Liu Bao production, as is the case with all tea, so formulas can be a bit misleading, as they ignore the adaptations farmers make to suit the weather—different amounts of rainfall lead to different schedules and moisture content in the leaves, for example. Also, different factories/farmers have different recipes, even internally, at different times or for variety.

Liu Bao was traditionally harvested in bud-sets of one bud and two leaves, though in modern times more leaves are sometimes picked to increase yield—a problematic trend in many tea-growing areas. There have been four general processing methods of Liu Bao tea throughout history. Though some scholars debate the dates and some of the details, we will present them as Master Lin taught us.

Lao Cha Po (Grandma Tea)

Since very ancient times, people in Guangxi have made very simple tea to drink. Long before tea looked like it does today, the villagers would cook the leaves in a wok with a tiny

bit of water and then hang them up to dry from the rafters above their oven in the kitchen. The pinewood fires they cooked with would give the tea a smokey flavor. They would then boil this tea or serve it in bowls. Such tea is rare, but can still be found in some houses even today.

Antique Era Liu Bao

In the early days, before 1958, Liu Bao tea was steamed three times—once for de-enzyming (*sa qing*), then for piling and finally for compression. At that time, they didn't wither (oxidize) the tea. It was picked and directly sent to the "kill green (*sa qing*)" stage, which arrests oxidation and de-enzymes the tea, making it less bitter. In those days, the *sa qing* was done by steaming the tea as opposed to wok-firing like most teas. Then it was left overnight to be finished the next day. Master Lin thinks that leaving the tea overnight is maybe how farmers discovered piling, and the improvement it makes on this kind of tea. The next day, they would roll the tea and steam it once more for piling. In some cases, cultures from previous batches were introduced to promote fermentation.

It was then dried in big bamboo baskets over pinewood fires, which is one of the defining characteristics of Liu Bao processing in all eras. After that, the tea was once again steamed in order to compress it into the large baskets, as we will discuss in a bit.

Vintage Liu Bao

After 1958, the farmers stopped using steam to de-enzyme the tea (*sa qing*) and started firing it in woks like other tea. Like puerh, Liu Bao is given a lower-temperature and shorter-duration de-enzyming so that the heat-resistant spores can survive into the fermentation phase. They also stopped using steam to pile/ferment the tea. Instead, they began spraying the tea with water and piling it, in the way that shou puerh is fermented. Consequently, Liu Bao went from being processed with three stages of steaming to having just one: the final steam for compression. In the vintage era, Liu Bao was: picked, fired/de-enzymed, left overnight, rolled, sprayed and piled, dried over pinewood fire, steamed and compressed. (Sometimes there were two pilings, a "cold" and "hot" one, which will be discussed later in the issue.)

A Beginner's Mind in Tea

At the Center, we practice avoiding the use of the word "repeat." Sometimes, it is helpful to adjust the way one uses language, as it then helps affirm or change habit patterns, but only if we don't get caught up in the semantics and focus instead on the spirit of what we are trying to cultivate. In this instance, not using the word "repeat" is about maintaining the "beginner's mind" of Zen, which is a translation of the Sanskrit word for wisdom (*prajna*). Tea also is a path of studentship. In Zen (and Cha Dao—they are "one flavor," after all), we say that only the dead and gone can be called "masters." As long as we live, we are students of Zen (and tea). In Cha Dao, we practice passivity,

humbleness, open-mindedness and a genuine desire to learn. Every time we go to places rich in tea wisdom, like Wuyi in Fujian, for example, we are left with the feeling that what we don't know is infinitely more than what we do—even after decades. And we wouldn't be able to learn so much each time if we approached the place, or the teachers there with an attitude of "knowing." If you cultivate this attitude, you will go far in tea, which is, ultimately, a path of receiving, of humility and acceptance—a path of honoring even the simplest of lessons.

In fact, we learn through repetition. Advanced techniques are basic techniques mastered. We can always refine our understanding of tea,

tea brewing, spirit or cultivation. Repeating information helps us to understand and remember. We all use it as a technique in our studies. In these issues, we are committed to "renewing" rather than "repeating." When we do reprint information, we always update, change and grow the material to add depth and detail so that you can review the basic material and also travel a bit deeper each time, growing along with us—in understanding and tea wisdom both!

In this issue, we will delve deeply into the history of Liu Bao from many perspectives, and hopefully by revolving around the same topics from different angles we'll all evolve our understanding of Liu Bao tea!



茶 The trees are between the large-leaf varietals of Yunnan and small-leaf varietals of northern tea regions.

Aged to Modern Liu Bao

In the 1980s there was another slight shift in Liu Bao production that was influenced by the prominence of shou puerh: the piling process was extended longer and the piles themselves formed deeper to increase fermentation. This often gives the Liu Bao from this era a camphor flavor, as well as a wetter profile.

In the last ten to fifteen years, factories have also started producing green, sheng Liu Bao to rival sheng puerh. This tea is often harsh and strange, and it is difficult to know how it will age, if at all.

After fermentation (piling) and sorting, the leaves are steamed to re-moisten them and then pressed into large bamboo baskets. The tea is packed down into these wicker baskets, pressed in tightly around the edges and more loosely in the middle, to facilitate the next phase of air-drying.

The drying takes a few months, after which the tea is often aged.

In previous times, Liu Bao was only sold in large baskets weighing 40 to 50 kilograms. These large bundles were sometimes wrapped in huge bags for transportation, called “gunnies (*Bao Lan* 宝篮)” by Malaysian Chinese who spoke fluent English. In more recent times, Liu Bao has often been re-packaged after aging into smaller amounts. Modern Liu Bao is also produced in one-kilogram baskets, into other amounts in boxes, bags, or even compressed into other shapes to hitch a ride on the bandwagon of puerh, as its neighbor has soared to great popularity and wealth.

When Liu Bao wasn't as famous, the baskets were aged for one to three years before even being sent to market. After the Great War, they were first put in air raid tunnels that are common in the area. These cool and moist wind tunnels were perfect for aging/fer-

menting the tea. After some period in the tunnels, the tea was then transported to wooden storage warehouses that had wet and dry rooms. They would be alternated between a drier space right after coming out of the moist tunnels and then to a wetter room. Drier spaces were often higher up, since humidity can differ a lot between the floor and the ceiling. This oscillation from wet to dry would continue until the masters felt the tea was fermented enough.

As we mentioned above, a lot of Liu Bao made these days is green and raw/sheng, so it doesn't have as much piling or aging in the tunnels/warehouses. And even the tea that is aged is only done so for a very short time compared to the years of warehousing that was done in the past eras. Our Tea of the Month has been aged for about sixteen years, though. (It did go through piling, but it was dry, without any water sprayed on to the pile to help speed up fermentation.)

Vintages of Liu Bao

Traditionally, Liu Bao tea was exported to Cantonese tea drinkers in Malaysia and Hong Kong. In Malaysia, it was often served to tin/pewter miners during their breaks. In mainstream Chinese culture in Malaysia, senior citizens refer to it simply as “big leaf (*da ye*).” It always had a reputation for being cheaper tea, often boiled, dried and re-boiled in restaurants. A lot of famous old Liu Bao teas have survived in Malaysia. Some of the most famous, most coveted vintages of Liu Bao tea are:

茶 1950s “Joy to the World,” *Pu Tian Gong Qing* (普天共庆), which was a higher grade of Liu Bao reserved for the managers and owners of the mines.

茶 1970s *Shuang Xing Hao Yin* (双星号印 / SSHC Penang).

茶 Liu Bao in gunnies, like N152, LLLL367, NL229, etc.

茶 Some of the best/most famous vintages of Liu Bao teas are those produced by the Guangxi Wuzhou Tea Factory (广西梧州茶厂). They produced the famous “VIVE” in the 1980s (with two grades) and a famous 1990s Liu Bao as well.

Master Lin ranks the five best Liu Bao teas in this order: 1930s *Pu Tian Gong Qing*, 1950s *Zhong Cha*, 1960s LLLL367 (which came from Hong Kong and has four “Ls” as grades from one to four. The “L” represents “orchid”—“*lan*” in Chinese—because this tea is Orchid brand, and “four orchids” was their highest grade), 1950s *Da Xing Hang* and finally 1950s *Fu Hua*.

It used to be that Liu Bao was a cheap alternative to aged puerh, often providing the same warming, deep and fragrant brews that settle the soul and aid in digestion. However, nowadays the more famous vintages of Liu Bao are also expensive. Aged Liu Bao is said to offer a dark red cup with mellow, thick liquor that tastes of betel nut. It is often regarded as the highest quality when covered with the spores of a certain yellow mold, which you will read about later on in this issue. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, it is cooling



or warming when needed, which is very unique, and also refreshing and good for dispelling dampness as well as detoxification.

Molds & Microbes

Some of the magic of post-production fermentation isn't in the tea leaves. Scientifically, little is known about many of the molds and bacteria that arise naturally in fermented teas like puerh, Liu Bao and other black teas. Most of these teas grow in humid areas, so molds, fungi and unique bacteria are present in and around the trees. As the tea is fermented, each cake, brick or batch of loose tea will be different. Even sheng puerh, aged naturally over time, is susceptible to mold and not all of it is bad for us.

When it comes to black tea, Chinese people have always determined the quality of many teas by how many

“Golden Glowers (*Jin Hua*)” they have. This is especially true of the brick teas of Hunan, where such mold is most desirable. In fact, Hunanese brick tea is intentionally fermented in conditions favorable to this mold, and any brick without it is considered lower quality. Traditionally, Liu Bao tea was not characterized in this way, though it is sometimes found with this mold on it. For some reason, this particular mold very rarely grows on puerh (aged sheng or shou), though puerh has many other kinds of molds and fungi.

Also known as *Eurotium cristatum*, most of the golden bunches are actually spores. In recent times, black tea has started to grow in popularity and some Liu Bao and Liu An teas are also fermented under conditions that promote Golden Flowers.

There have been medical studies in China suggesting that *Eurotium cristatum* can be effective in treating diabetes, promoting a faster metabolism



松木干燥

Pine Drying

The distinguishing characteristic of Liu Bao processing is the pine drying. Since pinewood was traditionally used to dry Liu Bao tea, as opposed to charcoal, as for oolong, or the sun, as for puerh, it often tastes of pine smoke. This one of the characteristics that helps distinguish it from other black teas and aged sheng or young/old shou puerh. The pinewood is burned for some time (essentially to coals) and then tea is placed over the heat to dry. However, no matter how much the fire has died down, there will always be some smoke, since pine is such a resinous wood. This means that there is also an odor, rich and strong or soft and mild, depending on how skillfully the fire was applied and then controlled to dry the tea. (A softer, milder heat is ideal.)

Nowadays, other methods are used to dry Liu Bao, including electric machinery that works like an oven. There are still some producers making Liu Bao in traditional ways, but usually only when they are commissioned to do so. Try to see if you

can taste the pine-smoky flavors in this month's tea and any other Liu Bao you come across. This will be helpful in identifying aged Liu Bao amongst other fermented teas.

Last September, when we were in Malaysia visiting Master Lin, an old friend named Alex came by with some very old tea his father had left him. He wasn't sure if it was aged puerh or Liu Bao, and therefore wanted to brew some for Master Lin so he could tell him. We drank that tea and determined that it was, in fact, puerh because it lacked the pinewood flavors of a Liu Bao. Master Lin then rooted around in his bag and pulled out a very old Liu Bao. Brewed side-by-side, the pinewood flavors and aromas were very distinct from the puerh. The puerh liquor was also thicker, with a consistency like milk. It was amazing to be able to taste the pine smoke even after so many decades in storage, suggesting that maybe farmers used to smoke it even more than they do these days.

and as a digestive aid, and even potentially assisting in the treatment of cancer patients. Though Golden Flowers have been used medicinally in China, Mongolia and Tibet for centuries—where most brick black tea was exported to—further research is still needed.

Beyond the more scientific approach to health, we would also like to offer a different approach that focuses on trusting our bodies, Nature and life, looking to our own connection to our selves and plant medicines instead of waiting for a lab report to tell us what is going on inside of us. Perhaps the combination of these approaches results in more holistic health and healing.

There is some debate about the molds that develop in fermented teas like puerh and black tea. There aren't any known cases of mycotoxins in these teas, but the possibility is there. Some white spores on puerh tea will give it a musty flavor, which people

may or may not appreciate. Traditionally, almost all aged puerh was musty, having been stored in Southeast Asia. The tea wasn't as valuable as it is today, and was often left to age naturally, with little human intervention. As puerh has increased in value, however, tea lovers are more concerned with how their tea will age, putting more effort into controlling the storage environment. In the future, we will be able to share more experiments and results as tea is aged in new environments around the world, some conducive to better aging and some not so nice.

Although many people think of mold as bad for us, it isn't inherently so. Our bodies are full of microorganisms. We need them to survive. There are bacteria all around and throughout our bodies, and by number they account for the majority of cells in us. While we find that the presence of certain white and yellow molds on aged sheng and other black teas enhances

their Qi, and in the case of Golden Flowers makes them sweeter, we aren't doctors and wouldn't recommend using this tea to treat any illness. You need to take responsibility for your own health, consulting physicians, Western or Chinese.

Putting aside disclaimers about how we won't be responsible for your health, we drink such tea a lot and it is great. As we mentioned above, there are no known cases of mycotoxins released from Golden Flowers—to the contrary, there are several studies, both Western and Chinese promoting their medicinal benefits. Also, there is research which demonstrates that the molds and bacteria in most teas are mitigated by the temperature of water used in tea preparation, especially dark teas like Liu Bao and puerh, which are better when prepared with water that has reached a full boil. (The hotter water helps penetrate the tough, fermented leaves.)

There is a magic in the relationship between the millions of microorganisms in fermented teas and our bodies. This is a big part of what makes puerh and aged teas, like this month's Liu Bao, special. We have talked here a lot about the scientific aspects of these molds, but we should also recognize that it is hard to say how much of the Qi in any aged tea is from the leaves and how much from the microorganisms. Without humidity, puerh and black teas don't ferment. The changes they go through over time are related to the presence of bacteria, itself the defining characteristic of fermentation—in anything from cheese and yogurt to kombucha.

The mold adds a deepening to the Qi, making it more Yin, while sweetening the tea, bringing a longer-lasting *huigan*. Microorganisms—molds and bacteria—are part of what makes tea and the world alive.

We have Liu Bao teas from all different ages, some of which are fifty or sixty years old, some from the 1980s, 90s and early 00s. Very few of them have Golden Flowers, so count yourself lucky if you find one! This month's tea has little to no Golden Flowers, as Malaysia is not really humid enough to encourage them. Still, learning about them is a part of understanding black teas like Liu Bao.

Tea of the Month

Beneath the Pines was donated by Henry on our trip to Malaysia this year. He said that we could travel deeper and further this year, sharing a better Liu Bao than our last one (Old Grove), which was one of the most talked about and beloved Global Tea Hut teas of 2015. So you're in for a treat!

Both teas were commissioned by Henry himself and processed traditionally, in much the same way as Liu Bao was made back in the day, with a lighter, more shallow piling like the tea made between 1958 and the 1980s. This one comes from the Wuzhou factory.

There are, however, a couple of reasons that Beneath the Pines is a better tea than Old Grove. First of all, this tea is older by maybe ten years. Old Grove was from 2008. We aren't sure exactly when this year's tea was produced, but it comes from some time around the turn of the millennium—give or take a year. The added age has increased the depth, vibrancy and wisdom this tea has to offer. The second reason this tea is a step up from last year is that it was produced using better raw material, from older, wild trees, which was more available at that earlier time and for a better price. And Old Grove was already one of the best modern-era Liu Bao teas we have ever tried (let's not push it down too hard, after all, especially when so many of us had such amazing sessions with that beautiful tea!) Highlighting these improvements is meant to help us grow and learn together—about quality tea in different genres and also about why a particular tea is finer.

This month's tea is also different from other Liu Bao in some other ways that are worth discussing. Since Beneath the Pines was piled/fermented for a shorter time, it is more raw (*sheng*) than most Liu Bao teas. This may have happened because of the large, wild leaves and/or because of the rising popularity of puerh at the time. It was also fermented without spraying water on the piles (dry piling). This means that Beneath the Pines is more lightly fermented than most Liu Bao teas and therefore has more room to grow

over time. Much of the Liu Bao from the early days was also artificially fermented to a lesser degree since it also went through years of natural fermentation before it was even sold. Also, Beneath the Pines was not compressed like most Liu Bao; the baskets were just filled with the leaves and passed on that way. This probably also had to do with the size/kind of leaves. These two factors make Beneath the Pines more mild, soft, feminine and graceful than almost all Liu Bao teas we have ever tried. Ordinarily, these greener Liu Bao teas that broke with the tradition of heavier piling were made because it was cheaper (or to be like puerh), and are therefore not usually nice. This month's tea is an exception. We wanted to send a tea that represented modern trends while still being great to drink!

Beneath the Pines is named after Wu De's favorite Chinese poem, and captures the essence of that poem wonderfully. It tastes of a pine forest, and has a wandering uplifting Qi that makes you feel as though you are lost in such a place, with only the wind and the pine-fragrance to guide you. This month's tea is soft and graceful, like a very pleasant autumn or early winter forest walk. It is a wonderful tea for the holiday season, as it refreshes and inspires, while remaining warm-hearted and friendly. And during the potential stresses of the holiday season, we could all use some of that energy! May we all stay grounded in the spirit of love, light and connection that informs the holidays, helping to be a supporting force of positivity amongst our colleagues, loved ones and even those whose paths we cross more gently each day. This tea can really help make this a better holiday season. Just breathe deeply and remember what it was like standing Beneath the Pines!

Seaching for the Hermit in Vain

*I asked the boy beneath the pines.
He said, "The master's gone alone
Herb-picking somewhere on the mount,
Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown."*

Chia Tao (777-841 C. E.)
Translated by Lin Yutang

尋隱者不遇

雲 只 言 松
深 在 師 下
不 此 採 問
知 山 藥 童
處 中 去 子

—賈島



Beneath the Pines

Like so many of you, we also sit down with friends to share the Tea of the Month. And though we drank Beneath the Pines at a different time than you, we are reminded once again of the interconnectedness we share within this global tea community. Just as we set out altar cups in acknowledgment of our tea brothers and sisters the world over, we also drank this tea with all of you in mind, knowing that somewhere under this global thatched roof, you'll likely be doing the same! And just as you might discuss your experiences drinking this tea with your friends, we did the same:

茶 We meet Beneath the Pines, Your Heart in My Heart. Together we listen to the wind rustling through trees, the freshly fallen leaves dancing upon a soft, wet earth. We enter into the stillness of sunlight, clarity shining its warm rays upon us. Long after the last bowl is dried, the forest continues to sing!

– Abby Parker, USA

茶 When I first smelled the dry leaves of “underneath the pine” I thought about wood. The smell stayed so present that it transported me into a warm autumn day in the forest throughout the whole session. The red-brown color reminded me of fallen leaves in the wind, the trees gently and slowly preparing for winter. The tea connected with my heart and made my chest do a slow joyful dance, swinging with the leaves. This feeling of lightness was supported with every sip, leaving a very soft bitterness and warmth in my mouth.

– Sophie Taenzer, Germany

茶 The raw smell of soil in the dry leaves instantly took me to the dynamic ecosystems of the forest and introduced me to the life crawling amongst the roots of the trees. Upon drinking, she was soft and stable. Cup after cup, the heat from the velvety honey-hued liquid lingered around my temples before steadily sinking to my abdomen, a balanced Qi throughout. The consistent smooth wash over my mouth and tongue and strong *hui tian* revealed a steady body and structure, with a lingering light breeze that could be sensed between the leaves.

– Resham Daswani, Hong Kong

茶 Crisp, fresh, awake, clear, like the moments before the sun creeps through the tree tops, finding its way through the fog to the soil... Opening the heart and caressing the lungs. A gentle silky sweetness with each cup. This tea brings clarity to the mind and softness to the heart.

– Laura Chandler, Australia

茶 Sheltered under the pines, the wind swirls around me. As I breathe the fragrance in, my mind quiets to sense the deeper truths in the tea. The aroma moves up into my forehead. I felt a sense of calm move from the physical to the subtle body.

– Sam Gibb, Taiwan/New Zealand



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on brewing tips now!*

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A close-up photograph of a hand pouring tea from a brown teapot into several small white cups with blue floral patterns. The cups are arranged on a wooden tray. Steam is rising from the cups, indicating the tea is hot. The background is dark and out of focus.

Brewing Tips

Like shou puerh or aged puerh, aged Liu Bao is often better when it is a bit darker. Try adding a bit more leaf than you are used to, or steep the tea a bit longer. You want the liquor to be dark red or even black (like the name of the genre). When the steam swirls around the dark liquor, with shades that fade from black to browns, and then into maroons and reds with a gold ring around the edge, you will know you have got the perfect cup of aged tea.

Heat will be very important when brewing dark, aged black tea like this month's. Not only will you want hotter water, but the source will be very important. Try to seek out the best quality heat and kettle combination you can for this tea. If you have multiple options, definitely choose whatever is the best. (If you don't have a choice of heat source and/or kettle, then be content with what you do have.) We will post some of the information concerning heat and kettles in the Further Readings section for this issue.

If you do "preserve the heat" with a tea like this, you will find it brews up much richer, darker and more full-bodied. It will also be more patient (耐泡), which means you'll get more steepings. As we spoke about in the Gongfu Tea Tips last month, keeping the tea patient and fluent from cup to cup makes a huge difference in a session, especially when brewing gongfu. With a tea like this, proper brewing will have more to do with heat than any other practical consideration. If you focus on cultivating and maintaining a high and consistent temperature, you will find that you get way more enjoyment out of this month's tea. There's really no better brewing advice for this month than that!