

BOOK OF TEA



BY

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Other than that Qian Chunnian (錢椿年) was from Changshu (常熟), Jiangsu Province (江蘇), not much information about him has survived.

Gu Yuanqing (顧元慶, 1487-1565) came from a wealthy merchant family from Jiangsu Province. He was the only son in the Gu family who liked to read and he collected tens of thousands of books. In the 1540s, he selected the best forty fantasies/short stories from his collection and re-printed them in a work entitled "Novels from Gu's Study." About a decade later, he printed another collection, "Gu's Choice of Forty Writings of the Ming Dynasty," of which eight of them were written by himself.



Preface

I am obsessed with drinking tea. In my twenties, I met Mr. Wu Xinyuan¹ in Yangxian,² and Mr. Guo Yangzhuo in Qinchuan.³ They both enjoyed drinking tea and taught me all about picking, firing and roasting, as well as the whisking of tea, which are all quite simple to understand and difficult to do. After I read the historical accounts of tea from the Tang and Song Dynasties, I learned about all the utensils for brewing tea and how tea leaves were ground into powder, sieved, and pressed into tea cakes, called “petite dragon cakes,” which are extremely precious. As a result of their value, there was a popular saying that went: “Gold is easier to come by than a dragon cake.” Alas, how could an official afford a dragon cake? Recently, I read what Mr. Qian wrote about tea, and his writings were similar to what I’ve learned from Mr. Wu and Mr. Guo. However, Mr. Qian collected many different people’s comments on tea without any collation, and the result was not really a manual for tea lovers, so I edited his writings in my spare time and appended Wang Youshi’s bamboo stove and six related accounts at the end to share with all Chajin.⁴ This is that compendium, written by Gu Yuanqing from Wu County.

Introduction

Tea is a magnificent tree growing in the South. Tea trees range from one or two feet to tens of feet tall. In Bashan⁵ and the river gorges of Sichuan, there are tea trees growing to such a size that it would take two people hand in hand to embrace their circumference. Because these trees are so very tall, the branches need to be cut down to harvest the leaves.⁶ The shape of tea trees resembles those of other Camellia. The leaves look like those of a gardenia and the little white flowers are so many lovely rosettes. Tea seeds are like those of palms with stems like clover, while the root system is similar to that of walnut trees.⁷

Ranking Teas

There are many different teas throughout the empire. For instance, the following are all famous teas: Stone Flower Tea from Mengding Mountain at Jiannan,⁸ Russet Bamboo Tea from Guzhu, Huzhou,⁹ Bright Moon Tea from Bijian, Xiazhou,¹⁰ *Si’an* Tea from Huojing, Qiongzhou,¹¹ Thin Slice Tea from Qujiang,¹² True Fragrance Tea from Badong,¹³ *Boyan* Tea from Fuzhou,¹⁴ White Dew Tea from Hongzhou,¹⁵ *Yangxian* Tea from Changzhou, *Juyan* Tea from Wuzhou,¹⁶ *Yangpo* Tea from Yashan,¹⁷ *Qihuo* Tea¹⁸ from Longan,¹⁹ Tall *Duru* Tea from Qianyang²⁰ and tea from Na Brook and Plum Peak in Lu River.²¹ If I had to rank these, then Stone Flower is the best, Russet Bamboo is second, while Bright Moon is the third. Unfortunately, they are all difficult to come by.

Cultivating Tea

Treat the tea trees the same as gourds and the tea leaves will be ready to be harvested in three years.²² It is better if tea growing on a cliff faces eastward, while tea trees growing in the forest are best situated in shady sites. As for tea leaves, russet ones are better than green ones.

- 1) Wu Xinyuan (吳心遠) was a member of the local gentry.
- 2) Yangxian (陽羨) is modern-day Yixing City (宜興), Jiangsu Province.
- 3) Qinchuan (琴川) is modern-day Changshu City (常熟), Jiangsu Province.
- 4) Yuchuanzi (玉川子) is the sobriquet of the great Chajin poet, Lu Tong (盧仝, 790–835) who wrote the *Ode of Seven Bowls of Tea*.
- 5) Bashan (巴山) reaches from modern-day eastern Sichuan (四川) to Yichang City (宜昌), Hubei Province (湖北).
- 6) Originally written by Lu Yu. But aboriginals have always had the means to climb the trees and rarely cut whole branches.
- 7) This section is a direct quote from the *Tea Sutra* by Lu Yu, which we translated in the Extended Edition, September 2015.
- 8) “*Shihua* (石花),” literally “stone flower,” came from Mengding Mountain (蒙頂山), modern-day Yaan City (雅安), Sichuan Province (四川).
- 9) This tea is called “*Zisun* (紫笋)” since the tea buds are purplish in color and look like bamboo shoots. Guzhu (顧渚) is in modern-day Changxing County (長興), Zhejiang Province (浙江).
- 10) “*Mingyue* Tea (明月),” literally means “Bright Moon,” because the tea is half-roasted. As a result, the crescent-shaped, shiny, jade-colored tea leaves recall a full moon. It is a famous tea in Bijian (碧澗), literally “Jade Stream in the Valley,” Yichang City (宜昌), Hubei Province (湖北).
- 11) Two famous tea production lines are *Huojing* (火井, literally “Fire Well”) and *Si’an* (思安, literally “Pondering Peace/Stability”) from Qiongzhou (邛州), modern-day Qionglai County (邛崃), Sichuan Province (四川).
- 12) A rare dark black tea, *Bopian* (薄片, literally “Thin Slice”) can be found in Anhua County (安化), Hunan Province (湖南).
- 13) *Zhenxiang* Tea (真香, literally “True Fragrance”) grows in modern-day Badong County (巴東), Hubei Province (湖北).
- 14) *Boyan* Tea (柏岩, literally “Cypress Cliff”) grows in modern-day Fuzhou City (福州), Fujian Province (福建).
- 15) *Bailu* Tea (白露, literally “White Dew”) grows in modern-day Jiangxi Province (江西).
- 16) *Juyan* tea (舉岩, literally “Emerged from the Boulders”) grows in modern day Jinhua City (金華), Zhejiang Province (浙江). It is withered but not rolled, so it appears straight and flat, and the tea liquor looks a milky, greenish-white.
- 17) *Yangpo* Tea (陽坡, literally “Sunny Slope”) grows in Ganzhou City (贛州), Jiangxi Province (江西).
- 18) *Qihuo* Tea (騎火, literally “Riding Fire”). During the Spring and Autumn period, Duke Wen of Jin (晉文公, 697–628 BCE) was driven out of his fief by civil war, returning after nineteen years. Among his strategists, Jie Zhitui (介之推) was most helpful. However, Jie left the palace and returned home. The Duke misinterpreted this as betrayal and set fire to his neighborhood, killing Jie. Out of remorse, the Duke decreed that no fire was allowed on the day of Jie Zhitui’s death. To this day, Chinese people eat cold food on this day. The holiday often falls the day before the solar term, *qingming* (清明). Teas that are picked before *qingming* are referred to as “*qihuo*” tea: “before the day when fire is allowed.”
- 19) Unfortunately, over the long history of China, there have been several places that have been named Longan (龍安).
- 20) Qianyang (黔陽) is modern-day Hongjiang (洪江), Hunan Province (湖南).
- 21) Lu River (瀘川) is modern-day Lu County (瀘), Sichuan Province (四川).
- 22) Farmers in the fifteenth century did not harvest tea trees younger than three years old, so he is most likely referring to wild tea trees here.

Picking Tea

*Tuanhuang*²³ is famous for “one flag with two rifles,” which means each contains “one bud with two leaves.” Leaves that are picked in the morning are true tea, while those picked later will be bitter. The best time to pick tea leaves is around the solar term *guyu*. As long as the leaves are picked when it is sunny, and roasted and stored properly, leaves of all different sizes will make fine tea.

Storage

It is best to pick tender, young leaves for tea. Tea leaves tend to absorb aromas, so try not to store tea with food, anything with a strong fragrance, or medicinal herbs. Tea is best stored in a warm and dry environment, rather than cold and humid places. As a result, tea lovers often roast young leaves sealed in their containers²⁴ every two or three days. The best temperature for roasting is about body temperature, so as to maintain the appropriate humidity. If the fire is too strong, then the leaves will be burned and become undrinkable.²⁵

VARIOUS SCENTED TEAS

Orange Tea

Cut orange peels into thin slices and mix with high quality tea at a ratio of one part to five. Place the mixture on tightly woven linen and warm over a fire. Then, cover the warm tea mixture with a clean cotton cloth for four to six hours. Seal the roasted tea in envelopes made of thick, tough paper such as *Jianlian*,²⁶ then wrap the envelopes in the cotton cloth again to dry before putting them away.

Lotus Tea

Before sunrise, force open a blossoming lotus bud and pour in a handful of tea. Wrap the petals with some hemp stalks and leave the tea inside of the bud overnight. Pick apart the flower the following morning and pour the tea leaves into a *Jianlian* paper envelope and roast them dry. Repeat the same procedure several times, until the tea smells fantastic.

Other Flowers

Many flowers are good choices for making scented teas, such as osmanthus (*Osmanthus fragrans*), jasmine, rose, all the flowers from the orchid family (*Cymbidium*), orange blossoms, cape jasmine (*Gardenia jasminoides*), Lady Bank's rose (*Rosa banksiae*) and plum blossoms. When these flowers are in season, pick them before they are fully open, and while they are still exuding a strong fragrance. Depending on the amount of tea, estimate the amount of blossoms needed. If there are too many blossoms, the flavor of the tea will be overpowered. On the other hand, if the blossoms are too few, then the fragrance will not come through. Start with a ratio of three parts tea for every one part blossom. Osmanthus flowers need to be prepared by cutting off the stems and sepals, washing off the dust and removing insects. Put one layer of tea under one layer of flowers in a ceramic jar and keep layering them until the jar is full. Use paper and

big bamboo leaves to wrap the jar up very tightly and boil the whole ceramic jar in a big pot. Take the leaves out and wait until they are cool to the touch. Then, put them into an envelope and roast them until they are dry. The same procedure can be applied to all the flowers mentioned above.

Notes

23) *Tuanhuang* (團黃) is tea from modern-day Yingshan County (英山), Hubei Province (湖北). It was selected as tribute tea starting in the Tang Dynasty (618–907).

24) We think he means paper envelopes here. It is unclear if there is another kind of container.

26) This section is a direct quote from Zhu Quan's work, with some minor changes.

26) *Lianzhi* (連紙) is a kind of paper similar to sack kraft paper in that it is made with a higher percentage of pulp than normal writing paper. As a result, it is more tear-resistant than most other kinds of paper. *Jianlian zhi* is the *lian zhi* made in Fujian Province (福建).

茶 Organic Tieguan-yin aged with roses for around fifteen years in the Center. It is quite wonderful tea!





FOUR ESSENTIALS OF BOILING WATER FOR TEA

Water

If the water is not sweet, then it will diminish the taste of the tea. Therefore, traditionally, water is foremost in making tea. In general, water from a mountain spring is best, river water is second, and well water is the worst. Among waters found in the mountains, those milky springs that meander are better.²⁷ Do not draw from waterfalls that splash and crash, running too fast. Drinking too much water from such sources will cause problems in the neck.²⁸ For river water, remote rivers are better than those that are too close to civilization. On the other hand, wells that are frequented by people more often are always better.²⁹ Do not use well water to boil tea if it looks cloudy or creamy yellow, like the yellowish innards of cooked crabs, or if it tastes bitter or salty.

Rinse the Tea Leaves

Before boiling, the tea leaves need to be rinsed with hot water to remove the dust and coolness.³⁰ Then the tea will taste great.

Boil the Water

The tea leaves should be roasted over a slow fire while the water for tea is boiled with a “live flame.” This so-called “live flame” is charcoal with a rising, flaming fire that keeps the water from boiling in vain, so as to culture the tea properly.³¹ In the beginning, water boils like fish eyes, scattering on the surface, and a slight noise starts to rise. Then, more bubbles emerge from all directions like a fresh spring, followed by a string of pearls. After that, the water boils violently, like high tide, and all the vapors start to vanish from the water, which is called “old man water.” This “three boil method” can only be achieved with flaming coals. Also, if there is too much water for the tea, then a white foam will not form. On the other hand, if there is too much tea and not enough water, then a creamy porridge-like surface will form.³²

Selections

The smaller the tea kettle, the shorter the time it takes for the water to boil, and the easier it will be to maneuver

when preparing tea. If the kettle is too big, then it takes too long for the water to boil, and the tea will not taste good. Pots³³ and kettles are best made out of silver or tin, while ceramic ones are second best.

When the tea liquor looks pale, then it is best to use black-colored bowls. A dark bowl made in Jian’an with decoration of fine rabbit’s fur lines is the best, because the bowl itself is thick. After the bowls are preheated, the tea will last for a longer time. Bowls made in other places are inferior in that they are either thinner or of other colors.

Notes

27) Some movement is good for spring water; it filters the water and moves the Qi. Too much movement and the water gets rough. The best is when there is a bio-dynamic, slow movement from one pool to the next. As we have discussed in previous issues, water from the top is always better than that from the bottom. (Try experimenting with your own water jar.) Therefore, when the water moves from pool to pool, it is refined, since the topmost layer slowly flows to the next, and so on.

28) We think maybe he is referring to thyroid problems, but we aren’t completely sure.

29) Stagnant water is not good for tea. The spring water in the Center starts to lose its vibrancy after around a week. Wells that are frequented would therefore have more movement.

30) Coolness in Traditional Chinese Medicine terms.

31) As we discussed in our issue on fire in August 2015, the more “lively” the coals, the better, as you want to heat the water as quickly as possible.

32) This is not exactly the same as the Zhu edition. So either there is a mis-transcription in the modern Zhu edition, or Gu did not agree with Zhu’s writing on this.

33) The term he uses, a “*Chadiao* (茶銚),” is a kind of small pot/kettle with a long handle for heating water and a spout to pour hot water out.

THREE ESSENTIALS FOR WHISKING TEA

Notes

Clean the Utensils

The kettles, bowls and spoons get dirty or rust easily and will then contaminate the tea, so it is imperative to clean these utensils before each session.

Preheat the Bowls

When making tea, it is important to preheat the bowls. If the bowls are warm, then it is easier to form a white foam while whisking. If the bowls are cool, then the color of the tea won't reach its full potential.³⁴

Selecting Snacks

Tea itself has a true fragrance, fabulous taste, and gorgeous color. As a result, during whisking, it is not advisable to serve any of the followings foods, which have a strong aroma of their own. For example, pine nuts, oranges, tangerines, almonds, lotus seeds, Lady Bank's roses (*Rosa banksiae*), plum blossoms, jasmine, rose, and osmanthus tend to overpower the aroma of a tea.³⁵ Food with strong flavors, such as milk, Saturn (doughnut) peaches, litchi, dragon eyes (*longyan*), Asian pears and loquats will also impact a tea.³⁶ Therefore, when savoring fine tea, it is imperative not to serve snacks like these so as to enjoy the true flavor and aroma of the tea. As a result, if I do choose to serve delicacies with tea, I select refined foods such as the following, all of which go well with tea: walnuts, hazelnuts, watermelon seeds, jujube seeds, water chestnuts, Indian almonds (*Terminalia catappa*), chestnuts, ginko seeds, Chinese yam (*Dioscorea polystachya*), dry bamboo shoots, sesame, lettuce and celery.³⁷

Medicinal functions of tea

According to *A Supplement to Materia Medica*, written by Chen Cangqi,³⁸ "Good tea can quench people's thirst, help people digest food, dissolve phlegm, reduce the need for sleep, facilitate proper urination, brighten the eyes³⁹ and bring clarity of mind." According to the most famous literary figure of the Song Dynasty, Su Shi,⁴⁰ tea can help you deal with your worries⁴¹ and digest heavy food.⁴² Some people cannot live without tea every day, while other people feel that they should not drink tea at all due to specific ailments. Even so, it is a good idea to gargle with strong tea immediately after each meal to get rid of an undesirable aftertaste in the mouth. Since the tea is spit out after that, the stomach and spleen are not affected. In addition, any residual food stuck between teeth will eventually loosen and fall out after several such gargles. Without the need to keep picking at whatever is stuck between teeth, and therefore harming the teeth, food between the teeth will disappear before you know it. As a result, the teeth will suffer less from picking and be healthier. Since the tea is not for drinking, rather only for gargling, medium- or low-quality tea will suffice for this.⁴³

34) He literally says that the tea color "will not float." Chinese use the same expression to refer to something that "stops the color from developing fully." This is not only used in tea; it can also be said about anything. Another meaning of this phrase is that there is not enough contrast between two things to create a pleasant aesthetic.

35) You can experiment with eating one thing while smelling another that has a strong aroma. Human beings tend to pick up smell over taste. However, this section seems contradictory at first glance, because in the previous section on methods of making scented tea, flowers and tea leaves are roasted or scented together. But it should be understood that scented tea is homogeneous after the time-consuming process of fusing the tea and flowers, and thus different from eating food with a strong aroma while drinking unscented tea. Alas, tea is such a delicate and refined art!

36) Sometimes, it is not necessarily that the food tastes too strong, but that the combination of certain foods will create strange flavors, as we discussed in our January 2017 issue on food and tea.

37) There is another vegetable in his list that is unfamiliar to us. A modern, popular vegetable with similar characters is *tonghao* (茼蒿, *Chrysanthemum coronarium*). However, we would say that *tonghao* is a strong-tasting vegetable and therefore not what the author is referring to.

38) Chen Cangqi (陳藏器) was an official in Chang'an (長安), the capital of the Tang Dynasty. He was very interested in botany and Chinese medicine, so he wrote *A Supplement to Materia Medica* (本草拾遺) in the 730s, trying to make the Chinese medicinal herb bible more comprehensive.

39) "To brighten the eyes" is an old use for tea. In some circumstances it may refer to sharpening eyesight, but it usually is a spiritual reference: in Traditional Chinese Medicine, there are three energies in the body and world: Vitality (*Jing*, 精), Energy (*Qi*, 氣) and Spirit (*Shen*, 神). The *Shen* is the cosmic energy that connects us to the Heavens. They say that when the *Shen* descends to the heart, opening it, our eyes light up. This is why saints are typically depicted with bright eyes in Chinese art. And most of us here have experienced such a bowl of tea!

40) Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037–1101) was a genius in literature, poetry, calligraphy, painting and cooking, among many other talents. In his old age, he was exiled to the southernmost island in China due to his political incorrectness. Traveling to the remote frontier and trying various exotic produce along the way made him unhealthy. Without his usual literary companions, he developed a habit of writing letters to his friends, commenting on whatever he was reading or exchanging recipes and medicinal formulae. After his death, many people published notes on various topics such as literature, food and medicine formulae, claiming Su had written them. *Notes from Chouchi* (仇池筆記) is one such collection.

41) "*Fan* (煩)" usually refers to defilement, worries, problems or things that bother people. In other words, it tends to refer to mental rather than physical ailments. There is also a formula in Traditional Chinese Medicine called "Eight Ingredients for Ridding Oneself of Worries (八味除煩湯)" that helps patients with insomnia, anxiety and/or irritability to calm down. However, in the following sentence, the author says that "using strong tea to gargle after each meal can eliminate the "taste of *fan* (煩味)," which in that instance might mean undesirable aftertastes in the mouth.

42) Both of these can be taken literally or as spiritual metaphors, once again marrying the sacred and mundane through tea.

43) You have to love this passage!

APPENDIX

Inscription for the Gentleman of Principle⁴⁴ by Sheng Yong from Xishan⁴⁵

*Shaped like the vault of Heaven and the square of Earth:⁴⁶
Bamboo sheathed metal, bamboo wrapped clay.*

Within, a lively fire burns,

Bearing sounds of waves on the river Xiang.

One drop of sweet dew

Cleanses my poetic core.

A pure wind sweeps beneath my sleeves,

Carrying me beyond the realm and into the Void.⁴⁷

—Translated by Steven Owyong



The Six Departments⁴⁸ of tea utensils are now established, and all the implements are stored within it, supporting the Gentleman of Principle in preparing tea amidst springs and rocks, mountains, studios and pavilions. The Gentleman of Principle is fervent in all things, so he is granted the title of state governor.⁴⁹ According to the ten parts of the *Tea Sutra*—namely, Origins, Implements, Processing, Utensils, Brewing, Drinking, Records, Production, Omissions, and Tenets—of the utensils in Part Four, there are none that may be eliminated. The lack of any utensil signifies the neglect of the other nine parts, and the tea is thus wholly ruined. Even though the utensils are listed in the fourth section, they are essential in brewing tea as well. If any of the utensils are missing, then the rest of the nine parts are useless, and no tea can be prepared. The design of the Six Departments and of each utensil is genius, so that all the utensils for tea can be placed in one container for easy storage. In addition, use the spring water from Hui Mountain and the tea from Yangxian—otherwise, alas, ruination! As for Master Lu’s utensil case, this he fully described in the *Tea Sutra*: weave it using the hard glossy skin of Xiang bamboo. Since a printing of it is attached, I will not spend much time describing its appearance.

—Dated to the Grain Rain Days of the third month, 1500. Written by Sheng Yu, Tea Immortal of Mount Hui

THE SIX DIVISIONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

First, the Jian Town

Since tea leaves should be sealed tightly, they are stored inside a bamboo container. It should be stored as high as possible to avoid humidity, which would diminish its flavor. Ancient people roasted tea leaves with fire regularly to keep them at body temperature as often as possible, so the tea leaves do not dry out. Nowadays, the storage container is referred to as “Jian Town.”

Gu’s note: According to *Record of Tea* by Cai Xiang,⁵⁰ a group of people enjoyed tea so much that they built a citadel to enclose all the nice tee treas and named the “town” Jian’an.⁵¹

Second, the Yuntun⁵²

When gathering spring water, it is best to draw it from the source, where the spring is at its purest and cleanest. In order to maintain its fragrance, it is best to take some pebbles and store them in a jar along with the spring water until it is brewed with tea. If the spring water gets flat, then the tea will not reach its full potential. Previous generations commented that spring water from Hui Mountain is the best. Nowadays, it has been renamed as “Yuntun,” which means “aggregate of clouds.” The “cloud” here refers to the spring water, which can be stored in this vessel.⁵³ Even though one works with other petty officials in the mundane world, if one can rest amongst the clouds of clean spring water, then one is lofty and has risen out of the quotidian world in one’s heart.

Notes

44) “Kujiejun (苦節君),” literally means “the lofty gentleman who endures a lot of hardship.” The character for a bamboo “joint (節)” is the same character as that for “integrity.” Therefore, Sheng puns here, lauding the bamboo stove for being a “person of integrity” and for working hard under terrible circumstances, yet never complaining.

45) Sheng Yong (盛顯, 1418–1492) was from modern-day Wuxi City (無錫), Jiangsu Province (江蘇).

46) Its bottom bamboo rack is square and the soft cushion that the kettle sits on is round. The ancient Chinese believed that Heaven is round while the Earth is square.

47) Since the furnace is made out of latticed bamboo strips, air can pass through the entire object, which marries the sacred and mundane.

48) The Central Secretariat (中書省) was the leader of all six divisions that governed China during the Ming Dynasty.

49) Actually, Sheng himself was a state governor. So he might be comparing himself to the object that is steadfast with upright principles and is hard-working.

50) Cai Xiang (蔡襄, 1012–1067) wrote the *Record of Tea* (茶錄) around 1048–1051.

51) Jian’an (建安) could be near Jian’ou City (建甌) in Fujian Province (福建).

52) “Yuntun (雲屯),” literally means “aggregate of clouds.”

53) This sentence distinguishes “cloud aggregate” as the vessel for storing spring water for tea, as opposed to the location of the spring.

Third, the Dark Mansion: Coal Basket⁵⁴

Coal is an object that looks pitch dark and is strong and tough in nature. When it encounters fire, it can create a ferocious flame. Whatever touches it will be harmed by it, and whatever violates it will be burned. It is not unlike an official from the Justice Department who can intimidate crooks and criminals, even from afar. The gentleman of principle becomes even more powerful with its help. Furthermore, it is also known as “dark silver,” which reveals its treasure within only to those who know its ways. Therefore, it is suitable to call it the “dark mansion.”

Fourth, the Magistrate of Water: Water Container⁵⁵

The true flavor of tea lies in the leaves and buds, and can only be developed after they are rinsed with water. After immersing the tea leaves in water, more spring water is added. When the water starts to hum and buzz, then a nice fragrance arises from the cauldron. Eventually, all the gentleman’s entourage becomes dirty after use. Therefore, it is very important to use water to clean all of the utensils. I’ve named this utensil “Magistrate of Water” because gentlemen clean themselves with water in dishes, and filth is thereby cleansed away. The body is then uncontaminated again. In other words, the water container helps the gentleman to start every day with a fresh, clean slate. Is this not a good moral for people?⁵⁶

Fifth, the Department of Utensils⁵⁷

*Shangxian*⁵⁸ is the ancient name for a stone *ding*, the three-legged cauldron for cooking.

*Guijie*⁵⁹ is the bamboo brush that cleans the pots.

*Fenyong*⁶⁰ is the spoon, which Master Lu Yu called “*shuize*.” In general, for every two *sheng* of water, one *liang* of tea is used.⁶¹

Dihuo is the bronze spoon that scoops the coals and moves them around.⁶²

Jianghong are the bronze fire tongs.⁶³

Zhiquan is the scale for tea.⁶⁴ Every one *liang* of tea leaves requires two *sheng* of water.

Tuanfeng is the green bamboo fan.⁶⁵

Luchen is for washing the tea bowl.⁶⁶

Jingfei is the bamboo frame, which the Tea Sutra refers as “*zhifu*.”⁶⁷

Zhuchun is the ceramic kettle.⁶⁸

Yunfeng is the knife to cut fruit with.⁶⁹

Gandun is the wooden cutting board.⁷⁰

Chuoxiang are tea cups from Fujian Province.⁷¹

Liaoyun is the bamboo tea spoon.⁷²

Najing is the bamboo tea holder.⁷³

Shouwu is the tea cloth for wiping up.⁷⁴

These are the sixteen utensils in brewing tea that are stored together, so as to serve the gentleman with principle. Therefore, they are all given a title for better management, for they all exhibit inherent virtues, elegance, and discipline, which is why they can work together under the proper and noble leadership of the tea brewer.

Sixth, the Taste and Aroma Inspector⁷⁵

In the olden times, tea farmers added a trace amount of borneol during the process to make some tribute tea cakes smell stronger. In spite of their intention to enhance the fragrance, the original flavor of the tea was actually lost in doing so. Furthermore, once such flavored tea is brewed, the artificial flavor will stain the cauldrons and tea bowls. Other people added food such as jujubes,⁷⁶ oranges, green onions, and ginger while whisking, which is even worse. Nowadays, the tea produced in Yangxian is highly valued by tea lovers. In addition, the brewing method most practiced is in Zhaozhou’s tradition.⁷⁷ In that tradition, the tea is brewed light and goes well with bland food, such as bamboo, Indian almonds (*Terminalia catappa*), watermelon seeds, celery or other bland greens. Therefore, the God of Xiang River⁷⁸ is in charge of setting up an inspector to screen off those strong-flavored foods.



茶 Charcoal basket and water container illustrations from another Ming Dynasty author, Mao Yixiang’s work “Tea Utensils with Illustrations.”



Postscript

Gu Yuanqing also goes by his style name, Dashi Shanren, the boulder man from the mountain. No one knows where he is from. I only know that he was a long-time friend of my fellow townsman, Wang Tianyu.⁷⁹ Wang is an erudite who enjoys ancient affairs, and his friends are mostly local esquires. In his old age, Wang grew tired of living in the city and moved to the shady side of Mount Ming. He only socializes with Gu Yuanqing and Yue Dai during the day. Yue is a hermit from Suzhou whose sobriquet is Zhangyu. He is a fine painter and his calligraphy is almost as good as the great calligrapher Mi Fu (1051–1107).⁸⁰ Among this circle, I have met two out of the three, so I can infer the personality of the other one. I read his *Tea Manual* today and it is certain that he must have indulged himself in books throughout his life to be able to write anything even remotely of the caliber of this manual. As a result, I can also picture who he was from his books. I so enjoy leaving this manual on my desk for all my guests to enjoy.

—Written by Mao Yixiang from Guaian⁸¹



Notes

54) “Wufu (烏府)” literally means “dark mansion.”

55) The second character of “shuicao (水槽)” is a homophone of “cao (曹),” which could be a last name, or a suffix to denote general officials in cities and counties. In this case, “water container (水槽),” is then the officer who is in charge of the water affairs of the city or county (水曹).

56) The author is referencing more than just keeping one’s body clean, but also purifying the spirit and starting each day fresh, without the negativities of the past. As Wu De often says, “Cha Dao is eighty percent cleaning, inside and out!”

57) “Qiju (器局)” literally means the “department of utensils.”

58) “Shangxiang (商象)” literally means “Elephant of the Shang Dynasty” (1675 BCE–1046 BCE). Some of the *ding* (鼎) from the Shang Dynasty were decorated with elephants. Therefore, some people refer to the *ding* as “shangxiang.”

59) “Guijie (歸潔)” literally means “to become clean again.”

60) “Fenyong (分盈)” literally means “to divide what was originally full.”

61) One *sheng* (升) is equal to 1.035 liter. One *liang* (兩) is equal to 37 grams or 1.3 oz.

62) “Dihuo (遞火)” literally means “to pass the fire around.”

63) “Jianghong (降紅)” literally means “descending red.”

64) “Zhiquan (執權)” literally means “to exercise authority.”

65) “Tuanfeng (團風)” literally means “round wind.”

66) “Luchen (灑塵)” literally means “dripping off the dust.”

67) “Jingfei (靜沸)” literally means “boils quietly.” “Zhifu (支腹)” literally means “supporting the belly.” However, this utensil is not called by this name in the modern version of the *Tea Sutra*, which we used to make our translation for the Extended Edition of September 2015, and may therefore have another name as well.

68) “Zhuchun (注春)” literally means “to pour in springtime.”

69) “Yunfeng (運鋒)” literally means “to maneuver the blade.”

70) “Gandun (甘鈍)” literally means “sweet and dull.”

71) “Chuoxiang (啜香)” literally means “to sip fragrance.”

72) “Liaoyun (撩雲)” literally means “to touch the clouds lightly.”

73) “Najing (敬納)” literally means “present to you respectfully.”

74) “Shouwu (受汙)” literally means “to receive filth.”

75) “Pinsi (品司)” literally means “the inspector who tastes.”

76) This could be dates or jujubes.

77) Zhaozhou (趙州, 778–897) was a Zen master who, like most such masters, often used nonverbal expressions to point at Zen-mind. One of his teachings is in Wu De’s book *Zen & Tea One Flavor*.

78) The “God of Xiang River (湘君)” is a mythical god who governs the Xiang River in Hunan Province, according to a collection of Shamanic rituals written by Qu Yuan (屈原, 340 BCE–278 BCE). We don’t know what this god has to do with guarding tea from these foods, however, as the reference is either mystical, colloquial or just beyond us.

79) Wang Tianyu (王天雨), whose official name is “Ji (濟).”

80) Mi Fu (米芾, 1051–1107) was one of the most famous painters and calligraphers of the Song Dynasty (960–1279). He developed a painting style not unlike the impressionists in that the entirety of each painting is comprised of dots varying in size. The only difference is that Mi painted in monochrome ink. A true artist of heart and mind, he could not abide by all the pretentious hypocrisy and bureaucratic nonsense of the city and was, therefore, only appointed to a low-ranking title as a result of his “uncivilized” behavior, which the intelligent, and posterity, recognize as ingenuity.

81) Mao Yixiang (茅一相) was from Wuxing City (吳興), Zhejiang Province (浙江). He was a contemporary of Gu Yuanqing. Mao is the author of *Tea Utensils with Illustrations (Chaju Tuzan, 茶具圖讚)*.