GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE
April 2020

JIANG RONG

1919–2008

Contents

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GLOBAL TEA HUT
TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

PHOENIX DRAGON

This month we are once again entering the magical world of Yixing teapots, exploring another great master of the twentieth century: Jiang Rong. We will also discuss some other aspects of Yixing teaware, while drinking one of the most stunning dian hong teas we have ever shared in Global Tea Hut: the loose-leaf version of Phoenix Dragon!

Love is changing the world bowl by bowl

FEATURES

TRADITIONS

recycled & recyclable

Soy ink

From the editor

In April, the weather starts to get really warm and we start to retreat indoors for our tea drinking. The first teas of the year start to arrive. Sampling fresh spring teas is a great joy. This is the time when we start planning Global Tea Hut teas, as well as the teas we will carry for the year's Light Meets Life fundraiser. The newest sheng puerh and dian hong teas still haven't arrived, but will very soon. We are therefore still drinking last year's teas. The cataloging process continues from March, as we sort through how our teas are faring in storage, move them around if need be and check in on them after a year away. This is like catching up with old friends you only see once a year, listening to all they have learned over the course of the year.

Last month, we began a new tradition of having a Light Meets Life day on March 1st. We held fundraisers in more than twenty cities around the world and raised tens of thousands of dollars towards Light Meets Life. We are so thankful for all the support. As many of you know, we are taking a phased approach to building Light Meets Life. The first phase is to find land. We currently have over $200,000 USD in our bank account. This could be a down payment on the land. We are expecting the land to cost between $800,000 and $1,000,000. We could use this money as a down payment and then pay the mortgage down for a couple years, at which point we could then refinance and start phase two. (If some donor(s) help us purchase the land, then we could use our $200,000 to start phase two immediately.) Phase two will be erecting a large building that will serve as the whole Center temporarily. Much like the Tea Sage Hut, we could then begin small courses again, hosting five to ten people. This building would contain a kitchen, a dining hall, tea rooms, a meditation hall and dormitories, like our old Center. Then, phase three will be constructing an external meditation hall and dormitories, converting the main building into a kitchen, a dining hall and tea rooms exclusively. At this point, we could then start hosting larger courses of around twenty to twenty-five people. This is when we would also start offering a greater variety of courses, including more advanced courses for those who have already taken introductory courses.

Another of our goals this year is to build a solid financial foundation for Light Meets Life. Much of why we are so tired around here, and so grateful for this brief interlude of rest, is that Tea Sage Hut was created twelve years ago and it became difficult to keep it free. Maintaining a free Tea Center meant lots of travel to raise money and awareness and a stress surrounding the magazine and operation of the Center, Tea Sage Hut. A lot of our issues boil down to a lack of experience and learning as we went along—what worked and what did not. The difference now is that we are very aware of the issues that need to be solved, so that we do not repeat the same problems on an even bigger scale when Light Meets Life opens. We are determined to make Light Meets Life a free, donation-based Center as well. However, this time we are going to architect a stress-free environment for those who live and work at Light Meets Life. We are also aiming to make Light Meets Life extremely stable and sustainable financially. This year will be one of experimentation, as we solve the problems of Tea Sage Hut before we even open Light Meets Life's doors. So far, we don't have all the solutions, but an awareness of the issues is the first step in working all of this out before we open.

As part of this process, there will be a tremendous amount of tea and teaware up on our website, as well as a new website design to house it all. The influx of tea and teaware also has to do with the fact that many of our friends here in Taiwan continue to donate tea to us to help raise money for Light Meets Life.

Last year, we covered the first and most important of the Twelve Grandmasters of Yixing, Gu Jing Zhou (顧景舟). We now continue that series exploring the only female of the twelve, Jiang Rong (蔣蓉). Her work and skill were truly magnificent and inspirational. Though she made works of art more than teapots, tea lovers are all filled with admiration for the late grandmaster and her legacy of work and students, who now have students of their own—continuing the heritage of Yixing craftsmanship that began five hundred years ago. Any issue of Global Tea Hut devoted to Yixingware is a great issue in my book. I love geeking out on teapots! We also have a very magical tea to share along the way, a dian hong called "Phoenix Dragon."

–Further Reading–

This month, we recommend reading through the September 2017 special Extended Edition which is all about Yixing teapots. That issue is the largest English-language publication on Yixing teapots in the world, and is a treasure trove of history, clay types and teapot creation processes.

Tea of the Month

Over the course of this month, we will be drinking a gorgeous dian hong that was part of our "Phoenix Dragon" set. Last year, we produced three teas that were carefully chosen from old-growth trees in Feng Qing, Lincang (鳳慶, 臨滄). We thought it would be amazing to offer all three types of puerh from the same region and forest of Yunnan, as the differences will be all the more powerful. The cakes aren't from the exact same trees, but do come from the same forest. The teas were from the oldest trees, some of which are 300 to 500 years old. The dian hong in particular sold out almost immediately, and many of you complained that you didn't get the chance to try it. We are therefore going to share all the loose-leaf Phoenix Dragon dian hong we had in the Center's personal storage with you. Sharing this tea in Global Tea Hut is better than aging it for ourselves, anyway!

"Dian" (德) is an aboriginal word for "Yunnan" and "hong (宏)" is, of course, red, so this term applies to any red tea produced in Yunnan. It may surprise you that Yunnan produces red tea, since it is famous for puerh tea. Actually, throughout the twentieth century, Yunnan produced much more red tea than puerh, until the boom in the early 2000s. In the late nineties, there were hardly any puerh shops in Kunming, and the locals drank much more red and green tea. Now, of course, there are puerh shops everywhere, including even the airport.

Any tea can be processed like a red tea, and while the process may seem complicated, it is actually one of the simplest kinds of tea to make: pluck and oxidize heavily. Since dian hong starts out as puerh raw material, its quality is determined in much the same way, which means that terroir and the age of the trees play a huge role in evaluating dian hong. Some of you will remember our discussions of trees and gardens in Yunnan, in which we said that, like most things in the tea world, there are no standard ways of discussing tree ages or garden types (and like most things tea, the trends that do exist are often misleading and/or incorrect).

Understanding the age of the tree, the mountain the tea came from and the kind of garden the tea was grown in are essential for puerh tea. Most teas have a ratio between the terroir/trees/raw material and the processing skills that create the final quality. This ratio is different in each genre. In oolong, for example, quality is half-and-half. But in puerh and dian hong, as much as ninety percent of the quality of any tea is in the raw material—the terroir.

Dian hong is distinct from other kinds of red tea in the same ways puerh is. Puerh maocha is unique because the firing (*sha qing*, 殺青) is done at a lower temperature for a shorter duration so that the heat-resistant spore colonies essential in the post-production fermentation will survive. The tea is then sun-dried so that the light and heat will reactivate the microbes and fermentation will begin. Dian hong has no firing stage (no de-enzyming), so the microbe-dense leaves, which are covered in hundreds of species of molds and bacteria before harvest, are even more active. Like puerh, dian hong is sun-dried, which gives the tea a unique flavor and leaves the microbes active.

Dian hong is most often malty and rich, brisk and energetic. The color of the leaves ranges from dark, bluish-black to bright gold, and can be made of buds or sets of leaves and buds. The liquor often brews a dark or bright red and can be cloudy due to a lack of production skill and quality control in Yunnanese tea production, especially if the tea is made simply in the village. But no one drinks a dian hong looking for refinement.

Our Tea of the Month is sweet, strong and vibrant. It moves the Qi—as briskly and vibrantly as any genre of tea. The flavors and aromas involve the same complexity as puerh, with added sweetness and maltiness from the extra oxidation. And though dian hong teas can be hard to palate when they are produced from plantation tea, covered in chemicals, when they are produced from quality raw material from old trees, they are most often loved by everyone, and therefore are go-to choices for those starting their tea journeys.

Phoenix Dragon

Feng Qing, Yunnan

Dian Hong Tea

Bulang

~1,400 Meters

德宏鳳慶

鳳凰龍

How to Choose a Pot: Shape

Gongfu

Wherever a discussion of gongfu tea or Yixing comes up, tea lovers are always asking about how to choose an Yixing pot. Journeys into a subject matter are always from the gross to the subtle, the general to the specific. To begin choosing a teapot, from as wide and open a vantage as possible, we would like to start by saying that there is certainly a story and some destiny involved in finding your pot. To adapt the saying in our tradition about how "as the person seeks the Leaf, the Leaf seeks the person," we could also say that as the person seeks the teapot, the teapot seeks the person. The best pots are found through travel, friendship and generosity, meeting the craftsman him or herself or hearing a story that enriches the pot, imbuing it with a charm and glow beyond its form.

The aesthetics, design and clay will all play a role in selecting a teapot, as will the shape relative to what type of tea we are to brew. Let us briefly discuss aesthetics, design and clay, before we show some of the shapes of pots and discuss what types of tea they are ideal for.

Moving from the more universal, natural aspects of teaware to the material itself, one must start the evaluative process with some aesthetics. Teapot aesthetics, however, are subjective and difficult to discuss. From a very general perspective, the same aesthetic governs all of tea practice, from farming to tea processing, and chaxi to brewing: harmony. It is balance and harmony that makes a great pot. This includes the space around the button/pearl, through the handle and even around the spout. Echoing the favorite analogy of our eldest teacher, Lao Tzu, the usefulness of the teapot also lies in its space; the tea flows through it, just as the Dao flows through us when we are clean and pure. And then, when we brew our teas, the improvement in aroma and flavor will help us judge our friendship with any given pot. Because of this combination of function and design, Yixing teapots have achieved a legacy of their own, finding a central place in the story of Tea.

The design of a pot refers to the shape, the spout design and pour, as well as other details of the construction that are less tangled up with aesthetics and are purely functional. In other words, some of the features of a pot are best when crafted in an aesthetically pleasing and equally functional way. The "design" of the pot refers to the aspects of the pot that are more strictly functional and so only really become evident when using the pot to prepare tea. The first aspect of design worth mentioning is also an aspect of aesthetics: a good pot should be balanced well. When a pot is balanced well, it will pour smoothly and gracefully, resulting in finer tea. The second aspect of a well-designed pot is often contrary to the craftsmanship and artistic sensibility of teapot makers and collectors both. It is often assumed that well-crafted pots should have a perfect, tight-fitting lid. Teapot makers strive to achieve this, and collectors often check this when they are evaluating a pot.

如何根據形狀選擇壺

However, we always wondered why fewer antique pots have such tight lids, especially considering that modern craftsmen and collectors both often say that the talent and skill of their ancestors far exceeds the modern era. Over time, we began to realize that a tight lid affects the pour. Oftentimes, the small amount of air entering through the hole in the button/pearl or lid is not enough. Another important design feature is a roundish body that opens in the middle, leaving room for the tea leaves to open and expand. This helps promote smooth and clear tea sessions from start to finish. The more round a pot is, fat at the middle, the more suitable it will be for every kind of tea. Of course, the spout is also important in tea brewing. While it is nice to have a built-in filter, we have found that a single hole makes for a smoother pour and brighter tea. The filter separates the tea, breaking its structure.

The clay also plays a huge role in the quality of a pot, perhaps more than any other factor. Many times when choosing an antique pot, we have to excuse design flaws, and often forgive aesthetic issues (maybe even chips or cracks), but we do so because the clay of these pots is so much better. This demonstrates how important the clay of a pot is. It is the clay more than anything else that affects the structure and quality of tea liquor.

There are three large families of Yixing clay: *zisha* (紫砂, purple-sand), *hongni* (紅泥, red clays) and *duanni* (段泥, yellow, gray and green clays). It is *zisha* clay that was married to tea all those centuries ago, and *zisha* clay that makes Yixing the "Teapot City." Sometimes, Chinese people even refer to all Yixingware as "Zisha." (In this magazine, we distinguish such usage with a capital "Z" and use a small "z" and italics for the clay type.) Much more than the two other families, *zisha* makes smooth, bright tea. A nice *duanni* pot can be good to have for green, white or yellow teas. *Hongni* pots are often nice for lightly-oxidized oolong, due to the high iron content. However, for most teas, in most situations, it is *zisha* which makes the best tea.

Originally, only *zisha* was used to make teapots. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), all teapots were very large, and *hongni* could not be used to make such large pots, as the shape would warp in the kiln. Therefore, only *zisha* was mined for teapots. *Zisha* is a much richer clay, and *hongni*/*duanni* are both missing or deficient in several of the minerals and compounds found in *zisha* ore. *Zisha* ore is richer and creates a much smoother liquor than the other types of clay.

We have also found that the best *zisha* clays are unblended, which is called "*qing shui ni* (清水泥)." Using just one ore, from one vein, fermented to produce a single clay, results in better tea. There are many kinds of ore in each family (*zisha*, *hongni* and *duanni*). You will hopefully be inspired to explore some of those more as you learn more about Yixingware.

Shape of Pot vis à vis Type of Tea
壺的型狀對茶的種類

We get lots of emails about choosing a pot for specific types of tea, so we thought we would show you what shape of teapot is ideal for different types of tea. However, don't be limited by this. Like all things gongfu tea, these are trends, not hard rules. A pot that is good for tea brewing will be good for all tea, even though certain shapes are more ideal for certain teas. A well-designed pot is roundish with enough room for the leaves to open, and has a good spout and a nice lid. Round pots like this one are actually great for all types of tea.

When you are in doubt and don't know which pot to use, choose a nice round design. If you only have one or two pots, you will most likely be best served by purchasing round pots, which are good for making any type of tea well. Start with one pot, and always make sure to clean the leaves out immediately after every session, since you will be using this pot for all types of tea. You will also need to scour such a universal pot at least once a year, though we recommend twice a year. (Scouring instructions are on pp. 35-38 of this issue.) Then, when you get your second pot, you can divide them into dark and light teas. As you move into greater and greater separation, you can then stop scouring the pots and start "seasoning" them with the oils of a particular tea that will enhance all future sessions with that type of tea. Ultimately, there is no limit to how many teapots you have, and you may want to start a collection. However, we recommend avoiding the impulse to collect for collecting sake. The pots you rarely use would be a treasure to someone starting out in tea. Our Starry Sky pots are great all-arounders that make excellent tea of all types.

潘壺

Flatter, wider pots, like our new Pan Hu (潘壺) shown here, are great for "striped" teas (long twisted-shaped leaves as shown above): red teas, Wuyi Cliff Tea, Baozhong (包種) or Dancong (単叢). The wider body makes it easier to get the leaves in and allows them with plenty of room to open up.

如意

A round pot like this Da Bin Ru Yi Hu (大彬如意壺) could really be nice for any type of tea. However, the fully-round shape that is achieved by lifting the body up on legs makes this type of teapot ideal for ball-shaped oolongs like tieguanyin or Taiwanese teas. This fully-round shape will allow the balls to open up uniformly, which makes such tea far more aromatic.

When preparing any type of red tea, it is ideal to have a tall pot with thick walls. This preserves heat and channels the aroma upwards, making for a more fragrant and sweet red tea. This is especially true of gongfu red teas, but even dian hong teas, like our Tea of the Month, benefit from such a tall pot. This Upright Ji (*Ji Zhi*, 汲直) is a famous shape first created by Chen Man Sheng (陳曼生). It is an ideal shape for red tea, and is one of our favorite pots as well.

陳曼生

启发几代人的茶壶大师

Compressed teas need lots of space to open up. We have found that any pot with a flat lid and flat bottom distribute heat more evenly and are therefore great for young sheng puerh. This Cow Nose Lotus Seed (Niu Gai Lian Zi, 牛蓋蓮子) is one of our favorite pots to use for young sheng. It takes off some of the bite (astringency), and cakes open up more evenly in this pot.

獅球

Duanni (段泥) pots are often better for lighter teas, like green, yellow or white teas. These teas are often better when brewed at lower temperatures, and light *duanni* clay does not maintain temperature as well as *zisha*. This Lion Globe (Si Chiou, 獅球) pot is perfect for green tea.

悠泉

It is good to have at least one large pot for serving larger groups. Larger, more open bodies are also great for all compressed teas, giving them plenty of room to open up. This is especially true of shou puerh, which is often more difficult to come apart due to the piling before compression. This Remote Springs (You Quan, 悠泉) teapot is perfect for shou puerh, aged sheng or for serving larger groups.

Brewing Tips 沖泡技巧完成好茶

This month's tea is rather flexible when it comes to brewing. You can make a very excellent Phoenix Dragon leaves in a bowl, sidehandle or gongfu. Certainly, brewing gongfu will make the sweetest, most delicious cup (and also be in alignment with this month's Yixing theme), but a sidehandle brew of this tea will make for an excellent ceremony, with a bright and open feel to it. Leaves in a bowl, on the other hand, will bring some simplicity to your life and let you experience this tea in its rawest form. It will be less patient, however.

If you are brewing this tea in a large sidehandle pot, try taking the lid off between steepings. This will prevent the tea from steaming in the pot, which makes it less patient and often results in a boiled tea flavor, losing some of the sweetness and maltiness of a good dian hong. This is true of smaller sidehandle pots as well, but is much more influential in a large pot that has a lot of air/steam inside. We do this for red teas and green teas when brewing in a sidehandle pot.

When steeping a dian hong, the amount of tea and steeping time will be very important, as the tea can get tannic, bitter and too dark. We want a malty brew with a sweet finish that is reddish in hue. If you put too little leaf, the liquor will be golden and watery, tasting sweet but without breadth and maltiness. If you put too much, it will become astringent and tannic. The amount of leaves will depend on the size of your pot, of course. As with all things tea, there is no formula. You have to learn to work with the brewing method and teaware of each session.

There are a couple of general principles we can use for adding leaf to a pot, though. The first incorporates the idea that there is no such thing as a mistake, so long as we learn something—only lessons. All mistakes are lessons, in other words. We should avoid serving teas we are unfamiliar with to guests, so that we are always prepared to offer our guests the best possible brew. Home alone, or with close tea friends, we can experiment and get to know our teas better before serving them to guests. It is always better to start with too few leaves; you can always add more. Though it is not ideal, you can even add more within the same session. Taking leaves out, on the other hand, is difficult to do and wastes the tea.

Another guideline when it comes to adding the right amount of leaves is to cover the bottom of the pot, while keeping the bottom visible throughout. The leaves should look like the first fall of leaves on the ground in autumn: blanketing the ground, without completely covering it. This is only a general rule of thumb. Don't get stuck in formulas. Some teas are better stronger, and others are better lighter. This is a good place to start, though, and then as you get to know a tea better, you can add more or brew it lighter next time—making each session a lesson.

As you get to know specific teas better, this will also help you to understand the genre, which will help you get to know the next tea that comes along in the genre faster and better. Learning to brew Phoenix Dragon red, for example, will help us understand red tea in general and dian hong more specifically. Much of what we learn will then apply to other teas of these types.


Sidehandle


Gongfu


Leaves in a Bowl

Water: *spring water or best bottled*
Fire: *coals, infrared or gas*
Heat: *hot, fish-eye, roughly 90–95 °C*
Brewing Methods: *leaves in a bowl or gongfu or sidehandle*
Steeping: *Gongfu: longer, flash, flash, flash, then growing*
Patience: *fifteen (gongfu) / ten (sidehandle)*

茶 If you are brewing this month's tea in a sidehandle pot, especially if it is large, try taking the lid off between steepings. This will improve patience and keep the tea sweet!

蔣蓉

自然通過茶壺

Jiang Rong

Nature Pots

茶人: *Huang Yijia* (黃怡嘉)

蔣蓉

Jiang Rong
(1919-2008)

Jiang Rong (蔣蓉, 1919–2008) was a renowned Zisha purple-sand clay teapot artist, honored as a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts. She was born into a family of teapot artisans in Qianluo Village, Chuanbu township, located in Yixing, the famed capital of Zisha (purple-sand clay) teaware in Jiangsu Province. When she was born, the flowering Hibiscus mutabilis were in full bloom, inspiring her parents to name her "Rong (蓉)" after the Chinese name for the flower. She was also known by the alias "Lin Feng (林鳳)." Her whole family made their living as Zisha teapot makers, including her father, Jiang Hongquan (蔣宏泉), and her mother, Zhou Xiubao (周秀寶). The burden of providing for their nine children was a heavy one, and when Jiang Rong was eleven years old, her father had to take her out of school to join the family business and study teapot crafting with him.

At the time, her uncle, Jiang Honggao (蔣宏皋), who also went by the artist's moniker "Yanting (燕亭)," was working in Shanghai in a studio that made replicas of antique pots. One day, a few years into Jiang Rong's training, her father went to visit his brother and took along two pieces that Jiang Rong had designed and made herself: a rhinoceros and an inkstone decorated with a crab and goldfish. Her uncle's boss was astonished when he saw them and immediately invited this talented young lady to come to the studio

***Pekingese Dog**, 1940*
6.5 cm tall X 14.5 cm long

***Bundled Firewood "Three Friends" Pot**, 1945*

紫柿

水果甜茶

Purple Persimmon Pot,
mid-1940s
6.5 cm tall X 18.5 cm wide

* ***Please remember:*** *In this magazine, we distinguish the use of the word "Zisha" as a reference to all Yixingware, of all types of clay, with a capital "Z" and use a small "z" and italics to refer to the clay type, as opposed to hongni and/or duanni.*

Round Fruit Pot,
1946

in Shanghai. So this was how, in 1940, a 21-year-old Jiang Rong arrived in the big city to specialize in making replicas of purple-sand clay antiques alongside her uncle. Jiang Rong recalled how "back then, all the pots Uncle Jiang Yanting made were stamped or engraved with the signatures and seals of great masters from the Ming Wanli era, such as Shi Dabin, Chen Ziqi, Chen Mingyuan and He Cun. His boss used to pass them off as antiques."

Jiang Rong spent the next five years in Shanghai learning the art of Zisha pottery from her uncle, broadening her perspective and making impressive technical progress. Most of the pieces she worked on during this time were ornamental pieces in the "*huahuo* (花货)" or "flower-ware" style, which features animals, plants or flowers sculpted in relief. Her works from this period included the Red Water Caltrop, Small River Snail, Small Chili Pepper and Lotus Seed Head Water Pot. She became familiar with many different pot shapes and developed new skills, laying a solid foundation for her future work.

***Lotus Flower Pot**, 1955*
11.5 cm tall X 19 cm wide

One particular piece of her uncle's work brought Jiang Rong a new, more profound understanding of the art of Zisha teapot making. One day she caught sight of a lotus seed head he had crafted, with its swirl of lively pale-yellow seeds embedded in the dark green pod, and was struck by its lifelike charm and sense of imagination. Seeing it, Jiang Rong understood that the true meaning of Zisha art lay in the act of creation.

After her five years in Shanghai, the economic depression and political unrest of the Japanese occupation era forced Jiang Rong return to her hometown of Qianluo Village to continue making Zisha ware. In 1955, she joined the newly formed Shushan Pottery Manufacturing Cooperative (the predecessor of the Yixing Zisha Craft Factory). Only in her thirties at the time, she became the youngest of the cooperative's seven technical instructors and mentored more than fifty apprentices. In 1956, she was awarded the Yixing County Encouragement Prize, and in the coming years she received several other awards from the Jiangsu Province Yixing Pottery Company.

***Nine Lifelike Fruits**, 1955*

Arranged on the dark green lotus leaf dish are nine different roots, nuts and seeds: a water caltrop, a water chestnut, a walnut, a peanut, a chestnut, an arrowhead tuber, a gingko nut, a watermelon seed and a sunflower seed. This piece was officially gifted by Premier Zhou Enlai on an overseas visit. There are many such small dishes filled with seeds and nuts, but none as famous as this one, which has inspired countless Yixing potters since.

***Duanni Clay Buddha's Hand Citron Pot**, 1957*
9 cm tall X 20.2 cm wide

***Peony Pot**, 1956*
11.2 cm tall X 19 cm wide

Jiang Rong was an astute observer of natural subjects such as fruit, vegetables, flowers, birds and insects. These natural forms became the inspiration for her creations, which she brought to life in multi-colored Yixing clay with increasingly refined artistic skill. Her cleverly composed works are naturalistic in terms of shape and color, blending natural charm with her unique artistic sensibility. Each piece brims with the innocent, remarkably lifelike charm that characterizes Jiang Rong's distinct style. Two of her works from this period, the Lotus Pot and the Peony Pot, earned special features in publications such as *News in Culture* and *Fine Arts in China*. The body of the Lotus Pot resembles a lotus flower in full bloom, featuring a lotus seed head lid with a little frog perched atop it, a lotus leaf as a spout and a lotus stem as a handle. The coloring is harmonious and well-balanced, the whole piece strongly evoking the natural charm and unique local feel of Jiangnan's lotus ponds. The Lotus Pot received a special award at the National Ceramics Industry Conference and was also awarded first prize for innovation in Yixing County. Another of her masterpieces, Nine Lifelike Fruits, was selected to be officially gifted by Premier Zhou Enlai on one of his overseas visits.

In 1957, Jiang Rong designed and crafted the Buddha's Hand Citron Pot using a revolutionary slip-casting method that involved pouring the clay into a mold. This method was a great success and led to a tenfold increase in efficiency. She subsequently designed several dozen more pieces which were mass-produced using the new method, including the Pumpkin Pot, Rhombus Pot, Three-Footed Flowerpot, Leaf-Shaped Ashtray, Pumpkin Ashtray, Large Chestnut Cup and Bamboo Brush Pot. She also produced a series of other fine

***Toad and Lotus Seed Head Pot**, 1957*
11.3 cm tall X 17.5 cm wide

蛤蟆蓮蓬壺

***Watermelon Pot**, 1985*

works which were displayed in various exhibitions, such as the Lotus Smoking Set, Bamboo Smoking Set, Small Lotus Pen Holder, Pumpkin Pot and Woman Plowing.

Jiang Rong's specialty was creating lifelike flower-ware pots and elegant Zisha items for use in the study. The shape, color and texture of her pieces represent the pinnacle of artistic achievement. For example, her White Lotus Root Liquor Jug (*cover*), produced in 1965, perfectly captures the lovely shape of a lotus root. The joints of the lotus root are embellished with fine grooves etched into the clay and spots applied to the surface. The tip of the lotus root strikes a jaunty pose, and the body of the jug is pale, glossy and beautifully rounded. All these details make it a very charming piece. A new green lotus leaf and its stalk unfurl to form the spout, with a delicate lotus bud curving upward to decorate the front surface of the jug. Its stem, sculpted in semi-relief, seems to be swaying in the breeze. A lotus leaf stem serves as the handle, its pattern of tiny, regular thorns and veins sculpted in meticulous detail—a truly miraculous feat of artistry.

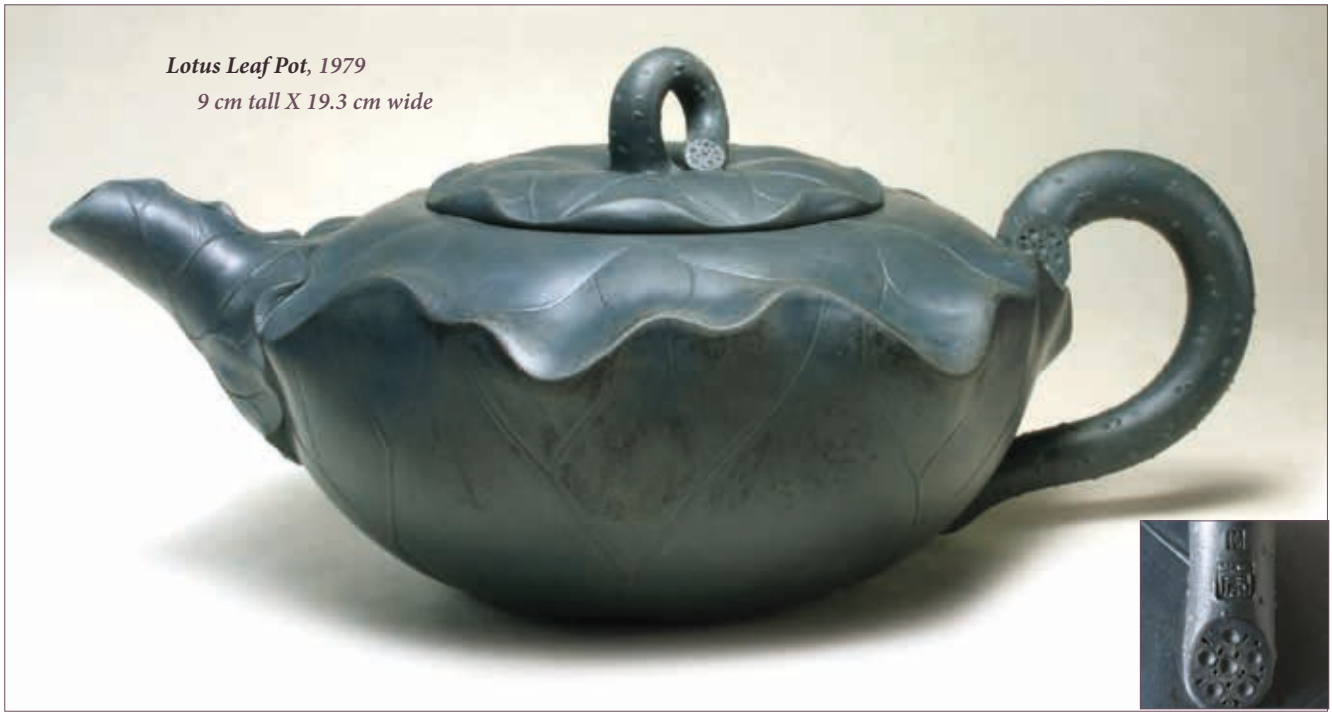
Another of Jiang Rong's pieces, the Loquat Pen Holder, also displays great originality. It has a unique shape: the dark green loquat leaf is covered in lighter veins, and the stem of the leaf cleverly joins onto a short fruit stem. Attached to this stem sit two golden-yellow loquats with a lifelike fuzzy-looking texture. Three pens can rest on top of the leaf. Later, the Loquat Pen Holder was chosen for display at Ziguang Hall at Zhongnanhai, a former imperial garden in Beijing that houses China's high-level government offices. After a tremendous amount of work, Jiang Rong was representing Yixing craft.

The next phase in Jiang Rong's life and career was a more difficult one, as it was for artists throughout China. From 1966 to 1970, the early years of the Cultural Revolution, Zisha teapots joined the ranks of things that were considered the trappings of "feudalism, capitalism and revisionism," and all clay artists were forced into hiatus. Jiang Rong recalled that "during that period I had many pieces in mind that I wanted to make, yet I couldn't. The feeling of suppression was very painful." During the latter years of the revolution, from 1970 to 1975, the situation eased, and potters gradually began to revive their craft. From 1977 onward, after the Gang of Four was disbanded, relative stability was restored, and the world of pottery slowly returned to normal.

Jiang Rong's most prolific period began in 1973, during which she produced the Loquat Pen Holder, the Toad Hunting an Insect Water Pot, the Toad on a Tree Stump Bowl, the Tree-Section Bowl, the Watermelon Pot, the Green Lotus Leaf Pot, the Lotus Petal Cup and the Mango Pot. Her work found favor with collectors throughout China and the world. In September of 1981, the Hong Kong Urban Council Art Museum organized the Yixing Zisha Pottery Exhibition as part of the sixth Festival of Asian Arts in Hong Kong, featuring Jiang Rong's work. The programming included lectures and demonstrations and aroused a great amount of interest in Zisha pottery throughout Hong Kong and Taiwan. Both Hong Kong and Taiwan would be at the heart of an Yixing renaissance. To this day, Yixing potters speak very highly of people from Hong Kong and Taiwan, who they feel were responsible for saving the market and therefore heritage of Yixingware. They remember when Chajin from Hong Kong and Taiwan saved them.

***Pumpkin Pot**, 1977*
7 cm tall X 16 cm wide

In 1983, Jiang Rong attended a continuing studies course in Zisha purple-sand clay pottery crafting at the Central Academy of Applied Arts. By now she was sixty-five, yet she had certainly not lost any of her creative zeal. Some of the most representative pieces of this period in Jiang Rong's career are her Tree Stump Longevity Pot, Jade Hare in the Moon Pot, Chrysanthemum Butterfly Pot, Pinecone Pot, Lotus Leaf Pot and Twin Dragons Zisha Inkstone. Jiang Rong went on to publish several papers and participate in many more exhibitions, such as the Zisha Pottery Retrospective Exhibition in Beijing and the Yixing Pottery Exhibition in Yokohama, Japan, as well as others in Hong Kong and Malaysia. Her Mango Pot and Watermelon Pot were acquired by the Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware in Hong Kong, and her Water Chestnut Pot was acquired for the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.



***Lotus Leaf Pot**, 1979*
9 cm tall X 19.3 cm wide

***Lotus Flower Cup**, 1978*
4.2 cm tall X 13.7 cm long, 10 mm thick

***Water Chestnut Pot**, 1981*
6.3 cm tall, 14.3 cm wide

栗子壺

In October 1997, at the age of seventy-nine, Jiang Rong was delighted to participate in the National Artists' Congress in Beijing. Attending as one of 108 "Masters of Chinese Arts and Crafts" from all over the country, she was honored with the highest commendation from the State Council and the China Light Industry Council. The same year, she was invited to participate in a seminar on the works of historical Zisha master Chen Mingyuan at the Art Museum of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, to appraise the style of some of the pieces in the museum's collection. In 1988, she was also invited to Hangzhou and Shanghai to attend the opening of an exhibition of Chen Mingyuan's work, where she participated in discussions on Zisha ceramic art along with many other scholars and ceramic art experts, and published an academic paper entitled *The Ceramic Art of Chen Mingyuan: Shining Through the Ages*.

Throughout her artistic career spanning seventy years, Jiang Rong created more than 100 pieces, all brimming with the honest, unaffected style that gives them such natural appeal. Her work gives us a window into the artist's love for life and for the natural expression of feeling. In August of 2000, Taiwan's Tangren Gongyi Publishing House released a book entitled *The Ceramic Art of Jiang Rong*, collating several decades of her work in one place and gaining wide acclaim.

In a commentary on Jiang Rong's style, scholar Zhang Daoyi (张导一) says: "After seeing master Jiang Rong's work, I got the strong feeling that she had forged her own unique path. There are few female artists on the pages of Zisha teapot history, and even fewer who have become as famous as Jiang Rong. She specialized in crafting flower-ware using colored clay. This choice came with two difficulties: firstly, it's not easy to achieve a harmonious use of color when working with multi-colored clay; secondly, crafting everyday items that resemble elements of the natural world is an even greater challenge… I admire Jiang Rong's courage and perseverance in choosing such a difficult path and walking it for more than half a century, finally reaching the peak of her skill in crafting Zisha flower-ware." It is easy for anyone to have such admiration for Jiang Rong, for working uphill to become a national treasure and hero to all Yixing craftsmen. After passing away, her legend has grown as several generations of students carry on her legacy. It would be difficult to enter a shop selling Yixing teapots and not see several creations inspired by her work.

Toad on a Tree Stump Bowl
11.5 cm tall X 12.8 cm wide

***Tiger**, 1985*

***Frog and Lotus Leaf Pot**, 1986*
7.5 cm tall X 15 cm wide

Moonlight Frog and Lotus Pot,
1989
9 cm tall X 15.2 cm wide

Frog and Pomegranate Tree Pot,
designed in 1990
10 cm tall X 14 cm wide

Another scholar, Yang Yongshan (杨永善), comments: "She's a ceramic artist who is very skilled at re-creating the beauty of Nature. Beginning in 1955, master Jiang Rong transitioned from imitating traditional Zisha pieces to experimenting with designing and creating her own original Zisha pottery art. In her spare time outside of work, she designed the Lotus Pot, which was a great success and earned her much recognition and praise. From then on, she began to create original pieces, making this an important turning point in her life: step by step, she gradually evolved from an ordinary artisan to join the ranks of master Zisha artists… She treads this road with an indomitable spirit, and after a long and arduous trek, she finally reached the pinnacle of her artistic career and became a Master of Chinese Arts and Crafts." Jiang Rong will always live in the scrolls that commemorate this art.

Jiang Rong's sensitivity and intelligence, along with her keen observation of the beauty of Nature, allowed her to express her zest for life through the medium of colored Zisha clay. Throughout the years, she followed her artistic path through difficult times with unwavering determination. Her work reflects the vitality of the artist herself and embodies her own distinctive style. Jiang Rong's work is a shining example of Zisha flower ware clay art in the modern era.

***Mango Pot**, 1991*
8.5 cm tall X 16 cm wide

***Moonlit Lotus Pond Pot**, 1995*
9 cm tall X 15.5 cm wide

***Jade Peach Longevity Pot**, 1995*
11.6 cm tall X 18 cm wide

Small Lotus Flower Pot and Cup Set
The original set in this shape was made in 1956. Much later, in 1996, the set was re-created with a smaller-sized pot.

The Enchanting World of Liu Pei Teapots

留佩壺的魔

茶人: *Peng Qingfu*（彭清福）

Throughout the art-filled Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), many different styles of Yixing teapot emerged with the changing times. During the reign of the Shunzhi Emperor and the beginning of the Kangxi Emperor's time, Yixing teapots had inherited the prevalent style of the late Ming (1368–1644) and tended to be simple and humble in style. Progressing into the reign of the Kangxi and Yongzheng Emperors, a neat, dignified and elegant aesthetic came into favor, while by the time the Qianlong Emperor came into power, the popular taste had moved toward more elaborate and decorative styles. No matter the style *du jour*, the art of Yixing teapots was flourishing during this period, with various crafting techniques and decoration styles giving rise to myriad expressions. From a sociocultural perspective, the Kangxi and Yongzheng eras were followed by a period of stability where arts and culture thrived. Tea drinking became extremely popular among scholars and officials; the higher someone's social status, the more likely they were to pay particular attention to their teaware.[1] The Yixing teaware used by the royal court during the reigns of the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong Emperors represents the pinnacle of Yixing pottery craftsmanship. Of course, if the emperor showed an interest in something, it would cause waves of imitation to ripple through all levels of society, transforming the fashions of a generation.

In the latter part of the Emperor Qianlong's reign and the early part of the Jiaqing Emperor's era, as socio-economic conditions gradually declined, so too, sadly, did the crafting and decoration techniques of Yixing purple-sand clay or *Zisha* (紫砂) pots. Fortunately, the Jiaqing era also saw the appearance of the "A Man Tuo Workshop (阿曼陀室)," associated with the Mansheng (曼生) teapot brand of master Chen Mansheng, whose "scholar's teapots" carried inscriptions of poems. This gave rise to a new trend and propelled the development of Yixing purple-sand clay teapots on to new heights. This influence continued through to the early years of the Republic of China. Mansheng's teapots began a new era of these "scholar's teapots;" as pots by other artisans including Shi Mei (石梅), Liu Pei (留佩) and Zi Ye (子冶) emerged in turn, the style of decoration of these Zisha scholar's pots was passed down across generations. These pots were as beloved by people of the time as Meng Chen's (孟臣) small red clay teapots were in the regions that favored gongfu tea (Chaozhou, Fujian and later Taiwan).

Among the various scholar's teapots by Man Sheng, Shi Mei, Liu Pei and Zi Ye, Liu Pei's pots are the most enigmatic. In terms of textual records of Liu Pei, we have this passage from Japanese author Ao Lantian's (奥蘭田) *Catalog of Teapots* (茗壺圖錄): "There is a Qing pot decorated with flowers and plants, which bears a maker's mark of four characters: 'Gusu Liu Pei (姑蘇留佩);' the identity of this person is unknown."[2] Then, we have another mention of Liu Pei in Li Jingkang's (李景康) *Illustrated Study of Yangxian Sand Teapots* (陽羨砂壺圖考): "The background of the craftsman named Pei is unknown; it's unclear whether the two characters Liu Pei are both part of the given name, or whether the surname is Liu and the given name, Pei. Moreover, Liu Pei pots are often signed with four characters, 'Gusu Liu Pei,' using a place name as if it were a surname."[3] From then until now, our knowledge of Liu Pei is still limited to these references; there hasn't been any further progress on the subject. From these limited texts, it's difficult to piece together a complete picture of Liu Pei's pots. All we can do is to look at the facts surrounding the surviving Liu Pei pots and try to make some guesses about the situation. As well as being known in China, Liu Pei pots had also crossed the seas toward the East during

(Illustration 1)

the reign of the Daoguang Emperor—what, then, do these pots look like? And how did they come to be known overseas?

In the latter part of the Edo period in Japan, scholars and Chajin had great admiration for Chinese culture and the fashions of Ming and Qing Dynasty lifestyle and tea culture. Because of this, Yixing teaware became highly sought after, and once Yixing pottery traveled east to Japan, this enthusiasm was transferred to the purple-sand clay "scholar's pots," beloved for their associations with Chinese literati. This trend directly influenced the production of the pots themselves; among the Yixing pots that were exported to Japan, one could not only find purple-sand clay pots with poems on the sides, but also red clay pots whose poetic inscriptions had migrated from the bottom of the pot to the sides; this became a common trend. So, these purple-sand clay and red clay pots with their inscribed poems accompanied Japanese scholars and Chajin in all things tea, and thus began a new fashion. In the time that followed, Yixing pots with marks such as "Meng Chen," "Mansheng," "Zi Ye," "Liu Pei" and "Er Quan (二泉)" became widespread among tea aficionados in Japan. Because of this, many of the Liu Pei pots that survive today are in Japan. Toward the end of the 19th century, the aforementioned Japanese author Ao Lantian published the *Catalog of Teapots,* which contains this passage: "Pots by Meng Chen, Liu Pei, Zi Ye and Mansheng are far from scarce. As for whether or not they are authentic, it is just like trying to tell jade from swallowstone." ("Swallowstone," or "*yan shi*, 燕石," is a type of stone that looks very much like jade.) So, it seems that this account bears witness to the general circumstances regarding Yixing pots in Japan after they were imported in large numbers.

In his *Collection of Famous Teaware Brands* (煎茶道具名品集), Japanese author Xiaochuan Houle (小川後樂) includes the following introduction: "Liu Pei, skilled at making thin-walled sand teapots…"[4] Shao Jingnan (邵景南), a potter of some repute from the Jiaqing and Daoguang periods, was also skilled at making purple-sand and red clay teapots. His red clay, or *zhuni* (朱泥) pots show skilled and meticulous workmanship, and the clay used for the body of purple-sand clay pots is very refined; the bodies of the pots are thin and the work clever; the designs are harmonious, simple yet elegant. His pots were often marked with the name "Liu Pei," but none of them are marked with the year. Eventually the reputation of the Liu Pei name overshadowed that of Shao Jingnan, so the pots were later referred to simply as "Liu Pei Pots."

According to Zhang Hong (张虹), in the *Illustrated Study of Yangxian Sand Teapots:* "Of all the Liu Pei pots in circulation, the quality is consistently fine; but the characters of the maker's marks are all carved in a different hand. It appears that those potters who were not proficient in calligraphy asked expert calligraphers to add the handwriting to the pots; thus, the calligraphy on each pot varies—each has similarities and differences. The many Liu Pei pots passed down through various families can verify this." The surviving Liu Pei pots do indeed verify this, displaying many different styles of calligraphy. So how, then, can one determine whether the Liu Pei pots in circulation today are authentic or not? The answer is that it's very difficult to tell. There is really no accurate way of knowing for certain if any Liu Pei pot is genuine, and even calling a pot a "Liu Pei" is ultimately ambiguous.

Perhaps classifying these pots according to the style of the maker's signature and stamp may still be a feasible way to arrange the existing knowledge for further discussion. Making do with this method, then, let's take a closer look at some of the existing Liu Pei teapots, in two groups: red clay *zhuni* pots, and purple-sand clay *zisha* pots.

Red Clay Pots

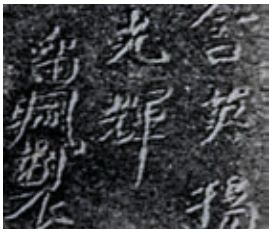
Most of these pots bear the "Liu Pei" name; some are signed "Liu Pei" on the inside of the lid (Figure 1), and the bottom of the pots are signed "Meng Chen," with lines from poems (Figure 1.1).[5] Others have the "Liu Pei" name stamped on the inside edge of the lid (Figure 2)[6] and on the bottom of the pot (Figure 3).[7] The signatures are all carved into the clay, with varying calligraphy. This style of maker's mark is modeled after that of Meng Chen's pots. To attribute these pots to the Qing Dynasty Kangxi and Yongzheng period would likely be a mistake. There are many surviving red clay pots that also bear the "Liu Pei" signature on the bottom in the style of Meng Chen (Figure 4),[8] whether they were made by later potters imitating the style, or by descendants of Shao Jingnan. Then there are the Liu Pei red clay pots where the lines of poetry have shifted from the bottom of the pot to the sides, such as those in Illustrations 1, 2 and 3. The style of these inscriptions has been changed to cater to the Japanese market, and are clearly very different in style from the inscriptions on Meng Chen red clay pots in the gongfu tea region of southern Fujian.

From this point on, the style of signatures on Liu Pei red clay pots followed two distinct paths—with different styles for pots that were intended for the local Chinese market and pots that were destined for overseas. There is some historical context behind these changes; during the reigning years of Qing Emperors Daoguang and Guangxu, as mentioned earlier, Japanese literati and Chajin were eager to imitate Chinese tea culture of the Ming and Qing. So, one can understand how there came to be an expectation for Chinese teapots coming out of Yixing to have verses inscribed on them. This style of red clay pot with poetry engraved on the sides was not limited to Liu Pei pots; Meng Chen red clay pots were also made in this style. Some examples are the Wan Chang (萬昌) brand red clay teapot in Illustration 4 and the "Made by Bai Shenxi (白申錫造)" red clay teapot in Illustration 5. These provide some useful clues as to the circumstances at the time, confirming the changes that occurred in signature styles on pots intended for the Japanese market.

Purple-sand Clay Pots

These display the "scholar's teapot" style of decoration; just like the Liu Pei red clay pots, each teapot displays a different style of calligraphy. The one similarity is in the way the name is signed; each pot is engraved with a line of poetry on the body, accompanied by a small stamped seal with two characters, the name Liu Pei. There are two different variants of the "Liu" character; so some read: "劉佩" (Figure 5) and others "留佩" (Figure 6). The inside of the lids is signed with the two characters "Jingnan (景南)" in a gourd-shaped seal (Figure 7). The bottoms of the pots bear square seals reading either "Made by Gusu Liu Pei (姑蘇留佩制)" or "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)." But when you look very closely at these two small round

(Figure 1)



(Figure 3)

(Figure 6)

(Figure 1.1)

(Figure 4)

(Figures 7 & 8)

(Figure 2)

(Figure 5)

(Figure 9)

and square stamps, you can see that just like the calligraphy, although the style is the same, they were not necessarily produced with exactly the same stamp.

Since Liu Pei pots bear an assortment of different makers' marks on the bottom, this has made it very difficult for people in more recent times to distinguish which ones are authentic. Which of the makers' seals continued to be used by later generations of potters? And which are later imitations of seals from the late Qing? To clarify this, we must establish whether a certain Liu Pei pot was made by Shao Jingnan, or by his descendants who continued the family craft, or whether it was made in the Guangxu period, imitating the original seal.

1. "Made by Gusu Liu Pei (姑蘇留佩制)" elongated seal with Zhuanshu seal script characters (Figure 8). The surviving pair of Gusu Liu Pei round spring pots can be seen in Illustrations 6 and 7. The first inscription reads: "To drink tea, all one needs is the water from the Three Gorges; to drink fine wine, who needs a hundred thousand measures of grain? Liu Pei." On the left is a small seal with the two characters "Liu Pei (劉佩)." The second inscription reads "Inside there is a pearl of wisdom that prevents one from withering, and makes one a scholar of the immortals. Liu Pei." Again, on the left there is a small stamp with the characters "Liu Pei (留佩)." Both pots have a gourd-shaped "Jing Nan (景南)" stamp on the inside of the lids, and another on the base that reads "Made by Gusu Liu Pei (姑蘇留佩制)" in raised seal script. This style of pot has also been recorded elsewhere;[9] the two pots are carefully made, with thin sides and a harmonious shape; they have a classic elegance and a masterful air about them which suggests they are the genuine work of Shao Jingnan. There is a degree of mastery here that lends authenticity to these pots.

2. "Made by Ding Shengjian (鼎盛監製)" round seal with characters in standard Kaishu script (Figure 9). See the pair of Liu Pei Lotus Seed pots in Illustrations 8 and 9. The inscriptions on the body of the pots read: "When guests arrive what harm is there, after making tea, to enjoy some poems in order to drink more tea? Liu Pei," and "Above three mountains, the sun is half-set in a clear sky; between two lakes is the ground where egrets land. Liu Pei." On the left is the "Liu Pei (劉佩)" seal; on the bottom is the "Made by Ding Shengjian (鼎盛監製)" seal in standard script. This pair of pots is recorded as originally belonging to a collection from the 6th year of the Japanese Ansei period, or around the 9th reign year of Qing Emperor Xianfeng. The "Liu Pei (劉佩)" seal is in the same style as the one on the Gusu Liu Pei round spring pot in Illustration 6. There is no seal on the lids; but the clay is very refined, and the shape solid yet gentle, with very fine workmanship and great skill. The engraving on the inscriptions is also of excellent quality. They are a fine example of the Liu Pei style, and are no doubt the work of Shao Jingnan. Again the craftsmanship is really unmistakable, allowing us to be more certain about the artist and the date of creation.

(Illustration 2)

(Illustration 3)

(Illustration 4)

3. "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)" seal with raised Kaishu standard script characters (Figure 10). This seal is on the Shao Jingnan Liu Pei Lotus Seed Pot in Illustration 10. The inscription reads "Moonlight shines between the pines; a clear spring flows over stones. Liu Pei." The small stamp on the left reads "Liu Pei (劉佩)," and the stamp on the inside of the lid is the "Jing Nan" gourd-shaped seal. On the bottom is a square stamp that reads "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)." The small Liu Pei seal is the same style as the one on the Gusu Liu Pei round spring pot in Illustration 6, suggesting that it's likely the work of Shao Jingnan. The square "Made by Shao Jingnan" seal that appears on this pot is seen relatively often and is generally considered to be the genuine article. However, if we go by the style of seal on certain surviving pots, it has to be admitted that there's the possibility this mark may still have been used by the next generation of Jingnan's descendants, or even his grandchildren's generation. Of the existing pots bearing this seal, there are some with the "Er Quan (二泉)"[10] and "Zi Ye (子冶)"[11] seals; and others with the seal "Ding Shang (頂上)," or "On the summit" (Figures 11 and 11.1) and "Shun Tai (順泰)" on the body of the pot (Figure 11.2). This pot has engraved characters and pictures, which are characteristic of a style that emerged in the late Qing, which really takes it out of the original Liu Pei pot category; it's clearly an example of a Liu Pei pot made by Shao Jingnan's descendants. So, if we were to categorize this pot based on the seal alone, we would likely reach an inaccurate conclusion.

4. "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)" square seal with raised Zhuanshu seal script characters (Figure 12). The seal comes from this Shao Jingnan Liu Pei Lotus Seed Pot in Illustration 11. The inscription on the body of the pot reads: "Making tea before the rain; painting a picture between composing poems; a most relaxing world. Liu Pei." As usual there is a small "Liu Pei (留佩)" stamp to the left, and a square "Made by Shao Jingnan" stamp in raised seal script on the bottom. The workmanship is very fine and the overall impression of the pot is outstanding; the inscription on the side is particularly fresh and refined. The small "Liu Pei" stamp is the same style as the one on the Gusu Liu Pei round spring pot in Illustration 7; however, this pot is different from those mentioned above in that it has no identifying mark on the underside of the lid. As to whether this pot was made by Shao Jingnan himself, it's very hard to determine; for now, we can assume that it belongs to the category of pots made by Shao Jingnan's descendants.

5. "Shao Jingnan Seal (邵景南印)" square stamp with raised Lishu "clerical script" characters (Figure 13). This seal comes from the Shao Jingnan red clay pot in Illustration 1. The inscription on the pot reads: "Along the stream, flowers flow free; beyond distant mountains, the moon begins to sink. Liu Pei." The small "Liu Pei (留佩)" stamp is on the left, and the seal

(Figure 10)


(Figure 11.2)

(Figure 14)

(Figure 11)

(Figure 12)

(Figures 15)


(Figure 11.1)


(Figure 13)

(Figure 16)

on the bottom reads "Shao Jingnan Seal" in Lishu script, as per the above. Despite the fine workmanship on this red clay pot, it's most likely the work of one of Shao Jingnan's family members.

6. "Shao Jingnan Brand (邵景南記)" square seal in raised Kaishu script (Figure 14). As suggested by the wording, this stamp certainly indicates that Liu Pei and Shao Jingnan were used here as a brand name under which Shao Jingnan's descendants sold their teaware as part of the family business.

7. "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)" small square stamp with raised Kaishu script (Figure 15). This seal is seen on the pair of Shao Jingnan Liu Pei Lotus Seed red clay pots in Illustration 2. The inscriptions read: "Pick up this pottery jar, and see it become a jade pot, too. Liu Pei," and "Evening moonlight reflects many colors; dazzling jade lights up the room. Liu Pei." The square stamp on the bottom reads "Made by Shao Jingnan." Other known pots that bear this seal include a pot signed "Er Quan" and a purple-sand clay pot with the mark "Zhi Yun (芝雲)" stamped inside the lid. The type of pot and style of seal indicate that this teapot was made in the Guangxu era, with the seal made to emulate the original Liu Pei pots.

8. "Made by Shao Jingnan (邵景南制)" small square seal with Kaishu characters (Figure 16). It can be seen on the pair of Shao Jingnan Liu Pei "Magic Lamp" pots in Illustration 3. The engraved lines read: "The finest spring on earth. Liu Pei," and "Let us be pure and simple of heart. Liu Pei." The mark inside the lid is "Shui Ping (水平)," and the "Made by Shao Jingnan" seal is on the bottom of the pot. The crafting techniques and style of the script and seals indicate that this pot is another of those made in the Guangxu period, imitating the original Liu Pei pots. Sometimes the imitations are difficult to identify with certainty, but the genuine works are often more clearly and demonstrably verified due to the degree of mastery involved.

(Illustration 5)


(Illustration 6)


(Illustration 7)

So perhaps, now, we can begin to unravel the mystery of Liu Pei's identity. As we read earlier, the *Illustrated Study of Yangxian Sand Teapots* expresses some uncertainty as to whether Liu Pei is made up of a surname and first name, or a two-character first name. It's certainly possible that the two alternating Liu characters that are seen on Liu Pei pots ("劉" and "留") could be interpreted as a surname. Now, if we assumed that there was a scholar or potter with the surname Liu and first name Pei, then it would follow that this person was signing his own name on all the pots. But this wouldn't explain why we see so many different types of calligraphy on Liu Pei pots, with no consistent style or hand. It seems clear that Liu Pei is a first name, without the surname, so it's likely the signature of the potter himself, rather than a scholar who had commissioned the pots. So this could explain why we see some pots signed by Liu Pei beneath the lid and Meng Chen on the base.

Modern writings suggest that Liu Pei and Gusu Liu Pei are likely aliases of Shao Jingnan himself[12] (in ancient China it was common to go by several different names). There do not appear to be any ancient records to support this, so it's really just speculation. Nonetheless, this theory does fit well with the facts. The fact that Shao Jingnan signed his pots with the name "Gusu Liu Pei" does seem to announce that he is Liu Pei. Gusu is the name of a place in modern day Suzhou, so this would indicate that Shao Jingnan was not from Yixing. In 2008, the Nanjing Museum published a report entitled *Archaeological Discoveries of Yixing Clay at the Ancient Shushan Kiln Site*, which mentions the inner molding of a lamp from a soil stratum dating to no later than the Qing Kangxi era. The lamp is inscribed with three characters, "Yongdong Jun (甬東郡)," meaning "the Yongdong region," which is interpreted as meaning that the potter was from Yongdong, an area in the east of modern-day Ningbo, and was not native to Yixing.[13] So although the practice of potters using their pieces to record where they came from is not very common, there is precedent.

The reputation of Yixing teaware has endured for a long time. This is due in part to its excellence at brewing tea, but the deep affection of scholars and officials for Yixing ware has certainly also been a supporting force. The reason that Meng Chen pots have maintained their legacy for hundreds of years, other than that people in the gongfu tea regions of Fujian have a fondness for pots as small as a citron, is the poetry often engraved on the base of the pots. The purple-sand clay teapots popular in central China were also often accompanied by poems, either stamped or engraved on the base of the pot, or inscribed on its sides. The manner of engraving poems on the sides of Zisha "scholar's pots" meant that they really did surpass the small red clay pots in terms of the ability to express a sentiment or impart an air of culture, and so they won the enthusiasm of generations of scholars and literary people. The names of such workshops as Mansheng and Zi Ye became so famous as to eclipse the names of the potters themselves; while Liu Pei, like Meng Chen, became famous in his own right as a crafter of teapots, earning the support of Chajin and making his mark on the history of purple-sand clay teaware with his beautiful pots. Even into the Qing Guangxu period, purple-sand clay and red clay Liu Pei pots in the style of the originals were still being exported to Japan, proving them just as appealing as pots by Mansheng or Zi Ye. This was one of the finest qualities of Liu Pei pots—the composition of the engraved characters perfectly embodied the style of "scholar's pots" and the spirit of the times. As they made their way across the sea toward Japan, they opened a window onto a brand-new world: the mysterious and enchanting world of Liu Pei teapots.

Notes:

[*] Article from the book *Purple Clay Treasures* (紫泥藏珍), Tangren Gongyi Publishing House (唐人工藝)

[1] Huang Chien-liang (黃健亮), *The Development of Zhuni Pots and the Style of Maker's Marks,* (浅谈朱泥壶的发展历程与署款文化), in *Jingxun Lou's Spring '98 Yixing Ancient Teapot Auction Catalog,* pp. 6-8, Jingxun Lou, 1998

[2] Ao Lantian (奧蘭田), *Catalog of Teapots* (茗壺圖錄), Japan, Yuan Liu, 1876

[3] Li Jingkang (李景康) & Zhang Hong (張虹), *Illustrated Study of Yangxian Sand Teapots* (陽羨砂壺圖考), Republic of China, unknown, 1934

[4] Xiaochuan Houle (小川後樂), *Collection of Famous Teaware Brands* (煎茶道具名品集), Tokyo, Danjiao Publishing, 2003

[5] Li Ruilong (李瑞隆), *Appreciating Ancient Yixing Pottery* (宜興古陶器鑒賞), p. 164, Taichung, Jingguang Tang, 1993

[6] Zhan Xunhua (詹勛華), *Catalog of Yixing Pottery* (宜興陶器圖譜), p. 265, Taipei, Nantian Publishing House, 1993

[7] Zhan Xunhua (詹勛華), *Catalog of Yixing Pottery* (宜興陶器圖譜), p. 185, Taipei, Nantian Publishing House, 1993

[8] Huang Chien-liang (黃健亮), *Jing Creek Purple-sand Clay Ware* (荊溪紫砂器), p. 116, Taipei, Yingji Chinese Arts & Crafts Publishing House, 1999

[9] Li Youren (李佑任), *A Journey through Yixing Pottery* (宜陶之旅), p. 185, Li Youren Pottery Company Publishing, 1995

[10] Li Ming (李明), *Selected Writings on Sand Teapots* (砂壺選粹), p. 160, Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 2008

[11] Luo Guixiang (羅桂祥), *Yixing Pottery Art* (宜興陶藝), p. 130, Hong Kong, Museum of Teaware, 1981

[12] Han Qilou (韓其樓), *The Complete Book of Zisha Teapots* (紫砂壺全書), pp. 325 & 473, Fujian Fine Arts Publishing House, 2002

[13] Hang Tao (杭濤) & Ma Yongqiang (馬永强), *Findings from the Ancient Kiln Site at Shushan, Yixing* (宜興蜀山窯址的發掘), in the *Imperial Palace Cultural Relic Monthly, Vol. 302,* p. 49, Taipei, National Palace Museum, 2008

(Illustration 8)

(Illustration 9)

(Illustration 10)

(Illustration 11)

How to Scour an Yixing Teapot

刷洗茶壺

Materials for Scouring

茶 Stainless steel cooking pot with a lid. Try to find a cheaper one that's only used for scouring teaware and is not used for cooking food.

茶 Pure *white* ash, purchased or sifted from your charcoal brazier. Alternatives include: lemon-based powders for cleaning teaware, but ash is the best, and this product may not be available in your country, Sodium percarbonate, non-chlorine oxygen bleach in lieu of pure white ash is also okay. In fact, we always use this for especially dirty, old pots. It is water soluble, meaning it will be completely gone after a few boilings, which we'll get to in the procedure (just don't use regular bleach, containing sodium hypochlorite).

茶 Natural loofah sponge. This is the dried fiber-remains of the loofah vegetable. In lieu of this, you can use a soft, natural fibered cloth or a scouring pad. (Make sure they are not treated with any chemicals.)

茶 A heat source (gas, electric or infrared stove).

茶 Spring water is best, followed by treated drinking water, but tap water will do if necessary.

茶 Oven mitts, hot pads, trivets, towels, spoon and bowls.

茶 Optional: "medicine stones (*mai fan shi*, 麥飯石)," bamboo or white charcoal and/or crystals. (All the things you use in your water urn that you use to store water for tea.)

Many of you email us on a regular basis asking about how to scour your Yixing teapot. Here is our technique in great detail. We use this to scour new teapots, as the pores are full of dust from the firing which kills all the organics in the clay. We also use it when we find an antique and/or used teapot—to clean it before use. We also use it for pots we use to brew multiple kinds of tea, cleaning such pots every six months or so.

茶人: ***Shen Su*** (聖素)

Scouring Yixing teaware is a necessary process at some point in the lifetime of a tea lover, but there's not a lot of information out there on how to do it. We'd like to share with you the simple method passed on in our tradition—one that has worked for hundreds of our Yixing teapots, let alone our teachers' and their teachers' pots.

There are three types of pots that need scouring: If you have a new Yixing teapot, a used teapot of unknown origin or one of your own that needs to be "reset," it is a good idea to scour it. This process will clean out the pores of the Yixing pot. Scouring will unclog the pores, removing any organic matter in the form of dust from firing if the pot is new, or remove mustiness or tea oils that would otherwise affect your steepings if it is a used pot.

If your pot came from an unknown source, you will want to remove any unknown, inorganic or low-quality tea oils that will negatively influence future steepings. If you got the pot from a friend, on the other hand, and you know what type and quality of tea they brewed in it and are satisfied that you will brew the same type of tea and that none of the tea was low quality or inorganic, then there is no need to scour.

Sometimes we scour our own used pots to "reset" them after much use, opening up the double-porous structure, allowing the teapot to "breathe" again, facilitating the capillary action which helps to preserve temperature, producing a finer, smoother cup of tea. The porous structure of Yixing clay allows it to breathe, which also lets it preserve temperature very well—and temperature is important in gongfu tea. We don't want to clog the pores, but we do want to season our pot over time. This creates a dilemma that every tea lover will have to decide for herself. Seasoning your pot over time enhances the Qi (energy), brings joy and wisdom to your pot, making it more *your friend* and enhances tea with oils from previous sessions. Scouring, on the other hand, will open the pores and make your tea liquor smoother. There is something to be gained and lost both ways. If the pot is not in use regularly, we would recommend scouring it annually. If it is used regularly, you will have to decide for yourself.

There is a common misconception out there that you *must* dedicate your Yixing clay teapot to one genre of tea, or even to one tea only. There is some truth to this, but it's important to make things clear before moving on because we get this question a lot from our readers, especially with regards to scouring.

It is absolutely ideal to dedicate one gongfu teapot to one kind of tea. If you do this, your teapots will season nicely, improving subsequent tea sessions used with the same tea. Also, the flavors of one tea won't interfere with another. However, this is a luxury that not everyone can afford. Authentic Yixing clay teapots can be expensive, and it's therefore not always practical or affordable to have so many pots. Some of you may only have one Yixing clay teapot. If that's the case, you can use it for all of your teas. Yes, the pores of your pot will absorb the oils of multiple teas and that *will* detrimentally influence your steepings, more noticeably over time, which is why you will need to scour such a pot every six months or so. (Also, it is a good idea to take the leaves out of a pot used for different types of tea right away. If you leave the tea in the pot, it will absorb more oils and need scouring more often.) Nevertheless, it is ideal to enjoy tea in its purest form, not influenced by other teas, so most of us eventually start acquiring more pots. Then the Yixing bug bites and before you know it, you have a collection.

If you have more than one teapot, then you can start making general divisions. For example, if you have two teapots, you may dedicate one to darker teas and one to lighter teas. As you welcome more pots into your life, you can start focusing certain pots to smaller groups of similar teas, narrowing down which pots you use for which genre of tea. Until you have a pot for every type of tea you drink, you will need to scour and "reset" these pots every six months to a year, depending how much tea you brew in them. Later, when you have a pot for every type of tea, you will then be faced with the very difficult decision to scour or not to scour.

To summarize, there are three types of pots that we scour: new pots which have clogged pours from the dust of organics due to firing, used pots from unknown sources that need to be cleaned and pots from our own collection that we want to "reset," either because we have decided that this is ideal or because we use them for different teas. Now on to the process...

Steps to Scouring a Teapot

刷洗茶壺步驟

1) Add water to your steel pot. Remember, spring water is ideal throughout the scouring process; however, the water in this first stage isn't as important because you'll be adding ash (or an alternative cleaning agent), which will all come out in subsequent boilings. If you're limited on spring water, save it for step seven. Carefully place the teapot inside the water and rest the lid next to the teapot. Everything should be fully submerged. You may produce discolored rings if part of your pot is above the water line, so make sure your steel pot is deep enough. You can do this with multiple teapots depending on the size of your steel pot. Arrange them with enough space between the two so they don't bump into each other while jiggling around.

2) With everything arranged in the steel pot, bring it to a boil over your heat source. We will use a gas stove. The teapot, lid, or other items may move around due to the vibrations and bubbles as the water comes to a boil. This is normal, but watch them and separate with a chopstick if necessary.

3) Have your ash or cleaning agent ready for when the water comes to a boil. Do not let the water boil for a long time; it's only necessary to bring it to a boil, then add the cleaning agent. You'll need a heaping teaspoon of ash (probably only half a teaspoon for other cleaning agents). Once the water has just come to a boil, scatter the ash in and around the teapot and immediately turn off the heat. This is especially important for other cleaning agents, like non-chlorine oxygen bleach, which will cause the water to bubble and overflow if you leave the heat on. (We strongly recommend natural, white charcoal ash.)

4) Place the lid on your steel pot, remove the steel pot from the heat source, and let it sit for eight to twelve hours. If necessary, label the steel pot so others don't move it or bump it accidentally. (Make sure you use oven mitts or towels to safely move the steel pot and place it on a hot pad or trivet!)

5) After eight to twelve hours, carefully remove the teapot, lid and other contents onto a towel on a level surface and discard the water. Thoroughly clean your steel pot with water only.

6) Now it's time to clean your teapot and lid under cool, running water. This is where you can use your soft, natural fiber cloth to clean both the interior and exterior of your teapot and lid. We prefer to use a dried loofah sponge, which is completely natural and soft, but abrasive enough to clean thoroughly and safely; it's the ideal material to use in this step. If your teapot is brand new and doesn't need as thorough of a cleaning, you can simply use your thumb and fingers (make sure they are clean and oil-free). Please, ***do not use soap***, and as always, carry out this step very mindfully as you handle this treasure. (Also, be careful as some scouring pads come with harsh chemicals in them!)

7) Now that everything is clean, refill your clean steel pot with water. It's important to use spring water here because you will *not* be adding any more ash or other cleaning agents. (At this point, you can also add optional materials, such as water crystals, medicine stones and/or charcoal.) Place the teapot and lid inside the steel pot as in step one. Bring it back to a boil, turn off the heat, place the lid on the steel pot, and let it sit for three to four hours. Discard the water and repeat step six, cleaning your steel pot with water and your teapot under running water with a loofah, cloth or your thumbs.

8) Repeat steps six and seven until your teapot is clean. Depending on how used your pot was, this will take two to four repetitions. (Extremely dirty old pots can take many rounds, sometimes even dozens of rounds of boiling and scrubbing.) The idea is to remove any and all residue from the pores and also any of the cleaning agent used in the first stage. There are a few things to look for that will indicate whether your pot is ready for use or requires more scrubbing and boiling:

a) After your steel pot has cooled down for a few hours and before discarding the water, check the surface for any film or residue. If you can see any residue on the surface of the water, you need to continue cleaning by repeating steps six and seven.

b) Before and after cleaning the teapot under running water, smell the interior. There should be no aroma. Ash, lemon powder and oxygen bleach have noticeable aromas that indicate you need to continue cleaning.

c) Especially if you are using oxygen bleach as a cleaning agent, you can feel the surface of the teapot with your hands because the bleach leaves behind a slippery texture.

d) Finally, after a few boilings, add some fresh, hot water into your teapot and pour into a clean cup. By tasting a small amount, you'll know right away if you need to continue cleaning. (Obviously, there's no need to swallow the small amount of water if you feel it requires more cleaning.)

9) When there is no residue on the surface of the cooled cleaning water, no smell in your teapot and no taste from a sample of clean water, you may begin this final step. Skip this step if you are using this pot for more than one kind of tea. In that case, rinse the pot a few times with boiling water and begin using. Otherwise, if the pot is for one kind of tea, add spring water into the steel pot again. Place your teapot and lid back into the steel pot with water and bring it to a boil. Once boiling, add a few grams of the type of tea you will steep in your teapot, turn off the heat, and let it sit for a few hours. After a few hours, discard the tea liquor and rinse your teapot and lid under running water for a few minutes just using your thumbs. Let it air dry. Rinse with boiling water from your kettle and run it through the teapot two or three times. As a final measure, it's best to use it a couple of times yourself before serving guests. (This is ideal for pots that have skipped this step as well.)

Please remember that you may want to follow this procedure every six months to a year depending on how often you use your teapot. A heavily-used multi-purpose pot may need to be scoured after six months to "reset" it and clear out the pores. A teapot dedicated to a specific type of tea will require a hard decision concerning whether to scour or not. As we said above, seasoning a teapot to a specific kind of tea will clog the pores of your teapot, which sacrifices the teapot's ability to breathe and preserve temperature, ultimately sacrificing the smoothness of your tea liquor. However, there is much to be gained from seasoning, even for its own sake. We recommend experimenting both ways to decide which is for you—just don't experiment with the pots you have been seasoning for many years, as you won't ever get that time back! Once you get to a place where you have a pot for each type of tea you brew, maybe scour one after six months or so, and see if you can notice an improvement from doing so and then decide.

A Few Reminders:

1) This process will take a couple of days, so give yourself enough time and space to completely finish this process. You shouldn't let your teapot sit in the water for too long during any of the steps. In fact, if you forget it at some point or fail to follow these guidelines, you may need to start over again from the first step!

2) For many of you, this scoured teapot will be a multi-purpose pot, meaning it will be used for multiple teas; in that case, always thoroughly clean out your teapot after each use. Remove any tea liquor and all of the spent leaves immediately after use. Remember, the longer you leave any tea or spent leaves in your teapot, the more the pores will absorb oils and sediments which will have a greater influence on subsequent infusions. The idea is to mitigate this influence by cleaning thoroughly each time so that your teapot remains useful as a multi-purpose pot used for different teas. Clean your teapot under running water and let it air dry somewhere safe. Once it is dry, place it back where it belongs. Never leave your teaware out to dry for more than twenty-four hours (unless it requires further drying); it should always be returned to its designated location in a cabinet, on a shelf, or wherever you store your teaware when not in use.

3) If you decide to dedicate and season your teapot with a specific kind of tea, you can follow the last step to prepare your teapot for use. This might mean a very specific tea for some of you, but most likely means a genre of tea—like sheng puerh, for example. You can, therefore use any tea from that genre for the last step. (Again, this is unnecessary if you are going to use your teapot for more than one kind of tea.)

Special Offer

Pan Hu

潘壺

These gorgeous *zisha* (紫砂, purple-sand) teapots are made from genuine forty-year-old clay. They are all handmade in cooperation between Master Zhou's two apprentices and Master Chen herself, who finished every single pot. Like Master Zhou, Chen Ju Fang is another of our teachers. She is a master of Yixingware in her own right. Their studio is called "Wu Xing Shan Fang (五行山坊)," but we had "Light Meets Life (光壽無量)" stamped on the bottom of these pots.

These pots are a copy of a special type of Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) teapots. There was a famous merchant named Mr. Pan Shi Cheng (潘仕成) who was an Yixing lover and collector, ordering many teapots for himself and his businesses. He was an owner of opium dens. When people smoked opium, they would also get thirsty and drink tea, so all his businesses had many tea sets to serve customers. Mr. Pan fell in love with tea and Yixing pots. He ordered only a few special shapes for himself and all his businesses, which all came to be known as "Pan Teapots."

These shapes are great for tea and come to be loved and copied by those seeking teapots for gongfu tea brewing, as opposed to teapots as artworks.

Like "Wagon Wheel (巨輪珠)" teapots, Pan teapots are amongst the favorite shapes of pot for those who brew gongfu tea. In the Cha Jing (茶經), Lu Yu said that the spirit of Tea is simplicity. Tea lovers have ever and always favored all things "*wabi*," which means naturally imperfect. We tend to favor teapots that have a simple, round shape and are made of clay. Ultimately, the measure of a teapot is how well it makes tea, but a simple aesthetic has always been favored by tea lovers, including Mr. Pan who so long ago chose pots of this shape. Simplicity is indeed the spirit of Tea!

Having a simple pot that is humble in design somehow evokes a natural style that is conducive to tea. It reminds us to stay simple and humble, learning that the true treasure of a tea session is not that from the session we travel to distant experiences or have extraordinary visions, but that the miracles are all around us in the simplest and most mundane moments. Tea teaches us to treasure the ordinary, finding joy in the simple pleasure of drinking tea, breathing and living our lives upon this magical Earth. A simple pot celebrates this magic.

These pots can be used to make any tea, but are especially suited to any striped tea, like our marvelous Cliff Tea sets.

Each handmade Pan Hu is $200 USD + shipping

www.globalteahut.org/teaware

Voices from the Hut

*In the past, we have opened up to the community a section of the magazine, "Voices from the Hut," allowing all of you some pages to write about your experiences in Tea. Over the years, we have found that these are some of the best and most interesting articles we have ever published. Therefore, we have decided to include a "Voices from the Hut" section in every issue from now on! Our dear tea brother, Matthew Grohne, has volunteered to edit this section of the magazine. He has a lot of great topics, themes and ideas for future issues, and is in need of contributions from the community. (He may have already contacted you about contributing!) So, if you would like to contribute some writing to Global Tea Hut magazine or have an idea for an interesting topic, you can reach Matthew on the Global Tea Hut app (in the "Voices from the Hut" section), on Instagram (**IG: foldedleaves**), or at the email: **voicesfromthehut@gmail.com** We cannot wait to read all the exciting articles to come!*

The Same River

茶人: ***Petr Novak***

In 2017, I decided to join the Zen and Tea Retreat with Wu De for the first time. From any angle I look at it, I see that the decision to do so changed my life and has continued to influence my actions to this day. I have participated in all the following years as well, now having spent early autumn days in silence at Casa Cuadrau for the past three years in a row. In this article, I would like to refocus from the retreat itself, widen the perspective and share about the impact of these retreats on my day-today, ordinary life.

To start, I have to say that probably the most significant change I have experienced, which is becoming more and more pronounced in my day-to-day perception, is realizing how thin the line between "mundane" and "spiritual" really is. Or, even, that there is no division between mundane and not mundane, spiritual and not spiritual. Such a realization is, on an intellectual level, nothing new for me and could surely have been found in the first books about the Dharma that I touched more than twenty years ago. So, then, what is the big deal? What is the difference between my perception of brushing my teeth this morning and my experience of the same activity four years ago?

As I understand it, the shift has come through an experiential understanding of the Zen saying, "When we sit zazen, we are expressing our Buddha Nature." But if sitting and doing nothing is expressing my Buddha Nature, then what I am expressing when I eat or talk, prepare tea, make love or create teaware? What am I expressing when I feel angry or confused, tired or hungry? Wu De likes to remind us that, "Our relationship to the issue *is* actually the issue!" The thing that has changed in me over the years is my orientation to the issue, with the "issue" being anything that appears in my life as I am living it moment by moment. And the Zen and Tea retreats have definitely contributed to that shift. Every moment can be spiritual. Every moment can be practice.

Each year, when thinking about whether I should sign up for the retreat or not, I sit on the fence for a while. Looking back at my wavering mind, I can see that all of the arguments for going were coming from the heart. Thoughts of friends and tea community, mountains and rivers, exciting travels and quiet hours of meditation all screamed to me, saying, "Yes, you have to be there!" On the other side, most of the arguments saying, "No, stay home" were from the head, sounding something like, "You should stay home. It is expensive. There is no time and you have a lot of work to finish. Flying is not ecologically friendly. And also, you know everything already, so you might as well just stay home and practice tea and meditation.

You might get even more out of that than if you went on the retreat." Each time, I took a deep breath and made myself some tea. And afterward, each time, I booked my ticket and sent my application to dear Katya at Casa Cuadrau. Yes, I chose the heart over the head, but I also recognized that, for the most part, the "head" arguments were actually pretty solid. As a result, I promised myself that I would squeeze as much out of the experience as I could and use that unique opportunity to grow in inspiration.

I set an intention to apply myself as much as I was able to on the retreat. So even before going, I started to meditate more, drink more tea in a ceremonial spirit, read and connect to the tradition. But the main movement has always come after my return home. It is easy to accept changes and challenges when they are ideas, presented on retreat within an evening Dharma talk from a charismatic speaker. In that moment it all makes sense and I know exactly what to do. But then it comes—lightning strikes and weaves its way into the ordinary—some great yet simple ideas, which were close to impossible to keep alive while back in my old skin, now make perfect sense and have become easy, and other big stones are moved without even trying.

After the first retreat, I was in awe, very excited from the experience. Determined to implement more "spiritual" work into my daily routine, I started to sit in meditation at least once a day for forty-five minutes, make tea every morning for myself and serve to friends whenever they were around. These simple and pleasurable rituals did not seem to have much of an effect at first, but over time they built into my bones some basic habits of mental hygiene, which provided me with inner strength for the chapters to come.

After the second year, the outer changes were larger and more obvious. A long-term relationship came to an end, and many of my plans and dreams were blown away like the smoke of a tiny incense stick. There were very dear, personal things that I had to let go of, and I was left wondering how I would face my new reality and what would have happened without the experiences I had at the Zen and Tea Retreat. But there are no "ifs" or "maybes" in life. I switched from one to two hour-long meditation sessions per day and started to offer public tea ceremonies. In the midst of life changes and turbulence I again realized how valuable both meditation practice and Cha Dao are to me. Learning from the experience, I found myself answering again and again the question: "How can I use this mess, so that it becomes fertilizer for my personal growth?"

When the third year of the Zen and Tea Retreat came around, I knew deep inside that I had to go even if it was more challenging on a practical level than ever before. It felt like a project I had started on retreat a couple of years ago needed to be finished. And so I went again for a third year and it was again worth every bit of energy I invested. If you had looked inside the meditation hall at Casa Cuadrau in Autumn 2017, and then again in 2019, it might look almost exactly the same: twenty or so beautiful people sitting in quiet from gong to gong, from breath to breath. Then breakfast, walking, tea, lunch, meditation, tea, meditation...all the same. Or is it? How many dramas had played themselves out, inside and outside even just in one tiny being like myself? How many magazines and tea ceremonies had Wu De and the crew put together for us in those three years? Every single one of us in that meditation hall had her or his stories and was trying to navigate their life as skillfully as possible. So we sat and expressed our Buddha Nature. And then we returned home to eat and talk, laugh and love, work and rest...

Writing this, the retreat has been over for several months, and yet it still lives on. The experiences I have and the lessons I learn during my daily life are reflected in my time on my meditation cushion, and my daily routines will never be the same thanks to the habits I am building when sitting and "doing nothing." Just two sides of the same coin—two wings that carry me forward. So, what are you expressing when serving tea to a stranger? What are you expressing right now? And now? Zen.


禅

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 Max Nordeman.

I can remember the smell of the tatami mats, the smell of wood and air. The precise architecture of the tea house seemed to have hidden meaning within its angles and openings, a feeling of a world far away. All the buildings I knew were built to separate you from the wind and air, whereas the tea house of my youth was happily in alignment with these elements.

As a young boy the tatami mats and finely crafted walls were more of a playhouse to me than a ceremonial space. I remember playing in the tea house imagining I was a ninja under attack by the intruding dark ninjas armed only with my nunchucks to defend our temple. Even though I was immersed in my kungfu antics I can still recall the peace and power held by the tea house of my youth. Ultimately it was a place of refuge dear to me.

The traditional Japanese tea house was built in the '80s by my mother's second love, Tony May, who is a well-studied Japanese carpenter, artist and tea man. Tony had crafted our community tea house in the trees behind his home where tea service and Dharma talks would often happen. Having grown up around tea and Zen there has always been an eastern mindset instilled into my own ways. But, growing up in California, even though progressive, is still the West. By the time I was a teenager I would come rolling in on my skateboard to find the monks in deep chants. The monks would gather in the tea house weekly. The lovely sounds of their chants were grand but I never really understood the depths of what was actually happening.

It's spectacular to wander back in time exploring what has led me to where I am today. Furthermore, my father, an immigrant from the UK, had another way with tea. Very precise with his Earl Grey he would dip the tea bag, but not for too long. Milk and sugar were added first. A squeeze of lemon would be the last touch. Then, a sip. To this day I'm still amazed by my father's tea hand. He can't be bothered by much, but then the tea is to be brewed. British "tea" and the even more intentional "high tea" aren't usually seen as ceremonial but when one steps back the reverence and intention can be seen. The craft to the British has history. Teaware is held in high esteem and is often passed on through the generations. The tea stage is set, and conduct is appropriate to form. Seeing my father's reverence for his tea surely prepared me for my own relationship to come.

When living tea entered into my life a few years back it was as if I understood her language immediately—this intimate relationship that lies between reflection and exploration. Tea and a bowl were immediately like opening a book to sage advice—like a family member who had long awaited my return, a lover I was entering into a great journey with. I would have never thought in my youth that enjoying a bowl of tea would be so grand to me. These days tea is at the foundation of my spiritual journey. It's the one seat that I always return to. Whether it's for medicine or communion she seems to always be the prescription. Sitting quietly enjoying the stillness amongst loved ones has become one of my greatest joys. From ninja to skater to tea man and all that has come between, I suppose it's no surprise that I find myself where I am today writing on tea and contemplation—in awe of life and what may come with the next sip of tea. So, I'll take this moment to give thanks to all those and that which have led me to where I am now. Use the Global Tea Hut app and get in touch if you are in the Bay area!

茶人: ***Max Nordeman, USA***

Inside the Hut

Coming Soon to Global Tea Hut Magazine

茶主题: *Sencha*

茶主题: *Anniversaries*

茶道

茶主题: *Classics of Tea*

茶主题: *Ginbin*

We need your help to get to a place where we can build your permanent Center, Light Meets Life. (And we do hope that you feel that our Center is yours, not ours.) Help us to spread the word about Global Tea Hut and Light Meets Life. As subscription increases, and tea/teaware sales rise, our financial power grows and we move closer and closer to phase one, which is to purchase land. Once we have land, we think that the next phases of construction will happen faster and more smoothly.

We are revamping our website and looking to expand the "community" page there. We are open to your suggestions about the kind of connection and/or information you want to see online!

As a way of saying thank you to this community for all the love and support towards Light Meets Life, we have opened up our cave and we're offering half of our stock of the greatest dian hong ever: Joy!

We are thinking of creating an online Cha Dao course in the form of videos that could be downloaded or purchased with included tea and teaware. This would start for beginners, but we could do levels. Let us know if you have any ideas.

We would like to thank everyone that participated in any of the fundraisers we held around the world on March 1st. There were events in more than twenty cities around the world, and we raised around $25,000! This first Light Meets Life day went a long way towards our future Center. We hope to keep this momentum going. If you have any ideas for fundraisers where you live and need our help, don't hesitate to reach out. We would be happy to provide resources (like tea tins) or to help promote your event!

April Affirmation

I am calm

Do I lose the balance of my mind when life vacillates? I understand that the way forward is through the calmness at the center of the present moment. I remember to breathe and stay centered.

Center News

The rest and relaxation that this pause between Centers has brought us is so needed and welcome. We are also using this space to sort out all the logistics that will make Light Meets Life more sustainable and stress-free for the long-term volunteers who live there!

We hope you stay excited for Light Meets Life. We want to involve you in the planning of what we hope you feel is your Center. The more form Light Meets Life takes, the more real it becomes. Please contact us with ideas if you have any; about what you envision for the property and for the experience at ten-day courses. Perhaps you have an idea for a type of course you would like to see when we open. Please share with us your ideas. We hope to create a whole new calendar and curriculum for Light Meets Life.

We are looking at land, which is phase one of our three-phase plan to build Light Meets Life. We have already looked at some plots of land, and we promise to keep you in the loop, showing you options as we find them!

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The most nature-potted 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.

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