

# GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

October 2019

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TETSUBINS  
THE IRON KETTLES OF JAPAN





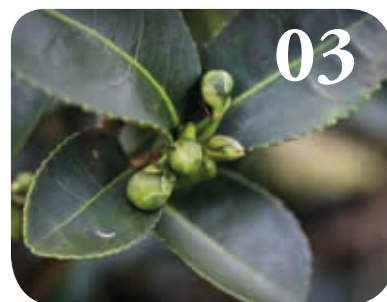
## FOUR SEASONS RED

The kettle is an often-neglected, yet essential part of the Chajin's tools needed to craft the work of art that is every cup or bowl of tea. For a long time we have sought to explore kettles in an ongoing series and have finally arrived at the first such issue, all about iron kettles, called "tetsubin" in Japanese. We are also doing a two-month tea exploration as well!

*Love is  
changing the world  
bowl by bowl*

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高山秀龍茶  
四季紅



recycled & recyclable



Soy ink

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# From the editor

In October the weather is great in Taiwan, and we love to drink tea outdoors. This is the time when all the best of our teas start to come out. We drink a lot of aged sheng, aged oolong and Cliff Tea. We drink more gongfu tea at this time as well. Of course, it is always great to start the day with red tea, any time of year.

The transition from having two ten-day courses a month at the Center to having none has been one of the most challenging of my life. It is difficult to feel so inspired without seeing all of your lovely faces and having the opportunity to serve you. Since the magazine was created to fund this free space, it also makes this work feel somehow less rewarding. There is always a lot of great growth that comes in challenging times as well. It is through our obstacles that we grow—no mud, no lotus. At the Center, we practice turning all obstacles into offerings, and offerings into dharmas. This is at the core of my own personal orientation as well. I am therefore looking within and starting to make the shift towards a more inward-oriented period in my life.

This means I will travel a lot less in the coming months or even year, and focus on holding the inner light, catching my breath, releasing and growing inside. In this way, I will be in harmony with the Center as it is also contracting, gathering resources and energy towards a bigger push outwards into Light Meets Life. I plan to use the time to do some long, silent meditation retreats and rekindle some old practices I haven't had time for in the last five to seven years. Then, like the Center, I will be ready to work even harder once the money and energy for Light Meets Life arises.

We are so grateful for all you have done to help us spread the word about Light Meets Life and all that you have given to our GoFundMe. All your support has been so inspiring and in many ways has made up for the lack of guests here at the Tea Sage Hut, where we have held the last-ever course and are winding down towards moving to a new location. We still aren't sure what this will look like, but we trust it will be best for the community and tradition.

As a result of all that has happened this year, many friends are donating tea to help support the fruition of Light Meets Life. This means that there are way more teas and teaware on the website than ever before. Purchasing tea and teaware is another way you can help us raise the money we need to build Light Meets Life. There are some incredible treasures on the website, and you can always donate extra for each tea or piece of teaware you choose. We are really excited about all the teas we have chosen for this year and the ones being donated. There are some amazing sheng puerh teas, several incredible dian hong cakes, a very deep and wonderful shou, some aged shou and sheng puerh teas and a whole lot of exciting Taiwanese teas, including a Three Daughters set that has the three daughters of Taiwan all processed similarly to help you experience the differenc-

es in the varietals. We also have some beautiful handmade Cliff Tea sets, including the Four Legendary Names and a new set with aged Rou Gui tins of various vintages which will be on the website soon.

For a long time, I have been dreaming of this very issue of Global Tea Hut. I love *tetsubins*, and we have used them at the Center for a long time. They have an amazing history and bring a lot of depth and energy to a Chajin's tea brewing. They are an essential piece of teaware to us, and their long history, craftsmanship, art and lore are all things we have hoped to explore with you for a very long time.

We would like this to be the beginning of a series focusing on kettles, including later issues on silver kettles (called "*ginbin*"), and even some issues on different clay options as well. We could also do another issue going deeper into fire, discussing heat sources and the proper use of charcoal, which is the goal of many tea lovers, since it produces the best water. There is so much to explore in the world of boiling water for tea.

We are also exploring another idea I have wanted to experiment with for a long time, which is somehow connecting the Tea of the Month across more than one issue. Over the next two months, we will be drinking the same Si Ji Chun (四季春) tea from the same farm in Zhu Shan (竹山), only it will be processed very differently each time. This month, we will be sharing and learning about what we call "Si Ji Hong (四季紅)," which is a red tea version of the tea and then next month we will have a traditionally-processed, roasted oolong version of the same leaves from the same harvest. We hope you are as excited about tetsubin history, craftsmanship and lore as we are!



## —Further Reading—

This month, we recommend re-reading the fire issue of August 2015, which dove deeply into kettles, charcoal and all kinds of other heat sources. It would be a great review for this issue. You can find all our previous issues archived on our website for your convenience!

# TEA OF THE MONTH



Over the course of this month we will be drinking a very special tea. This is the first of two teas in a two-part series which we will offer this and next month. They are both made from the same harvest of tea leaf, but processed very differently. Both these teas are traditionally processed and come from Nantou County's Zhu Shan Village (竹山鎮) in Nantou County. They are MOA organic, with a beautiful roast and the right amount of oxidation. This is an amazing tea for drinking or aging. Its quality put it out of reach for us, but thanks to the generosity of Master Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲), who protects this farm along with others, we are able to share it with you.

Si Ji Chun is one of the "Three Daughters" of Taiwan (Jing Xuan, 金萱, and Tsui Yu, 翠玉, are the others). Though you could perhaps call Si Ji Chun a hybrid, it is a natural, wild varietal that arose in Mu Zha. Since it is a more natural varietal, it is heartier than the others. This is a testament to one of the principles we always promote in these pages when discussing living tea, which is that the leaves produced by humans will never compare to those made by Nature. These trees yield buds at least four times a year, which is where its name comes from. "Si Ji Chun" might also be translated as "Four Seasons Like Spring," referring to the fact that this bush can produce as much in other seasons as in spring. It is also thought to be the youngest of the Three Daughters, coming into commercial production in the 1980s. Since it evolved naturally, Si Ji Chun does not have a Taiwan classification number. Si Ji Chun is more closely related to Ching Shin (青心) than it is to Jin Xuan or Tsui Yu. The leaves of Si Ji Chun are round in shape, with veins that shoot off at thirty- to sixty-degree angles. The leaves have a light green hue. The buds of Si Ji Chun are often reddish when they emerge. This is a common mutation caused by anthocyanins that protect the tea leaves from UV light. It can also be handed down genetically.

MOA stands for "Mokichi Okada Cultural Services Association International." It was created by Mokichi Okada (1882–1955), who started three great projects in his lifetime: a "Mokichi Style Detoxification Treatment" for land, "Natural Agriculture, Drinks and Food" and "Fine Arts and Culture." These three projects created affiliated groups of people with common goals to help each other. His overall aim was "to allow humanity to expand and flourish, helping create healthier people, families, regions, countries and culture." His Japanese NPO natural agriculture culture movement created the Da Ren (大仁) farm in 1982, and then in 1991 developed standards for healthy, organic agriculture. They began to set up branches and create a social system for theory and practical cooperation amongst farmers in Japan.

In April of 1990, a group of people who cared about Nature and were concerned about environmental pollution wanted to change the situation in Taiwan. They joined the Japanese MOA International Association and created a sister organization to educate farmers and legally certify organic foods and drinks island-wide. This Taiwanese foundation was formed to explore and seek health and happiness for mankind and to guarantee environmentally sustainable MOA natural agriculture, expecting this ideology and the sustainable agriculture techniques behind it to spread all over the world. MOA certification is rather rigorous, and they do a great job of ensuring sustainable, organic agriculture without much of the bureaucracy or financial interests that trouble a lot of organic certification worldwide. Looking out for MOA certification is a good way to enter Taiwanese teas.

Our Tea of the Month is very unique because it is processed like a red tea, which is rare for Si Ji Chun. It is a beautiful, fruity and delicious red tea best enjoyed in the morning. It is very vibrant and can brighten a day no matter how it is brewed. Share it with the notion of comparing it to next month's tea.



Four Seasons Red (四季紅)



Zhu Shan Village, Taiwan



Red Tea



Taiwanese




~600-800 Meters



# A DEEPER SESSION

## Further Exploration into Our Tea of the Month



 ver the course of this month, we will be drinking a “Four Seasons Red (四季紅)” tea, which is a very unique type of tea you won’t find elsewhere. It is very rare to find a Si Ji Chun varietal processed into a red tea, but it works. This amazing tea comes from a beautiful, natural farm in Zhu Shan (竹山), where the Jing Xuan (金萱), Golden Lily, we sent earlier this year also came from. We can talk more about the farm in a moment, but we want to start with a discussion of processing that this tea and next month’s suggest.

This is the first time that we have ever done an experiment like this, sending out a type of multiple-month learning session. We hope you enjoy it. It allows us to dive deep into

some topics and discuss tea in a different, more constructive way, building on the lessons of the last month. This is something we try to achieve in general by repeating ideas, articles or segments of articles in this section of the magazine each month. In Zen, the word for “wisdom,” which is “*prajna*” in Sanskrit, is often translated as the “beginner’s mind.” Around here, we try to avoid the word “repeat,” as it implies already knowing something, which is, when you think about it, a kind of ignorance—maybe the worst kind. Instead, we say “renew,” which holds a deep respect for our need to learn through repetition and that when we hear a lesson again, we can deepen our understanding. In Zen, we flip the script upside-down, realizing that

“advanced techniques are basic techniques mastered.” Instead of listening to or reading about a basic technique and dismissing it with an “I already know that!” the Zen perspective is: “My previous learning and training in this matter renders me uniquely suited to receive this message and utilize it on a deeper level.” Rather than dismissing with pride, we absorb and digest more deeply through humility and receptivity. That is the true mark of real knowledge, for those who have truly studied any topic deeply quickly realize how little they know, not how much.

For this reason, we tend to start these “Deeper Sessions” by repeating some information and then we add to it. In that way, we learn in slow, revolving circles that spin deeper each time,



creating a smooth and powerful understanding of tea. These two months offer a unique chance to celebrate this trend, by also providing a tea that has the exact same foundation (raw material), though the two teas couldn't be more different. Furthermore, this offers us all the chance to cultivate a skill that is necessary in the mastery of Cha Dao, which is to be able to taste a tea's "body (*cha ti*, 茶體)."

### ***A Tea's Body***

The body of a tea, or "*cha ti*," is an important topic that comes up at tea tables where tea lovers appreciate tea. Being able to find the tea's body in the cup or bowl is an especially important

skill when one lives in the Wild West of a tea market we modern Chajin find ourselves in: a market where misinformation and deceit prevail, and a tea is very rarely what the vendor purports it to be; a place where each great tea is surrounded by an ocean of low-quality tea covered in agrochemicals or processed by people who care more about quantity than quality and are often new to the game, as opposed to the generational mastery handed down over centuries that was the norm in the past, when tea was tea. In such a lawless land, it is important to cultivate one's palate, as well as one's skills (*gongfu*) to evaluate tea from the cup, as opposed to the stories of the vendor. As Master Lin always says, "The truth is in the cup; the cup never lies."

Like most tea terms, different tea lovers use the term "tea body" differently—pointing to different aspects of what is foundational to them. Here, we define the "body" of the tea as the characteristics that are present in the leaf due to the varietal, tree age and health, and environment/garden type the trees grow in. In other words, the "body" of the tea is to us everything that precedes processing; it is the quality of the tea independent of the processing skills.

While the body of the tea is not the only factor we would recommend in evaluating a tea, it is an important one. (In order to learn some other criteria for evaluating tea, we recommend searching our archive for some of the great articles we have.

For example, read the “Ten Qualities of a Fine Tea,” or watch the video we posted on YouTube on the same topic.) After all, with most types of tea, the processing skills post-harvest are half of what determines quality. Puerh is unique in that, as the quality of puerh is not measured by an equal assessment of the raw material and processing skills, but rather a 90/10 split in favor of the leaf. In other words, the *cha ti* of puerh is even more important, since 90% of its quality lies in the mountain, type of garden and age of the trees, and has little to do with the processing skills. As time goes on, and more aboriginals in Yunnan invest in proper techniques and machinery to make better tea, the processing skills involved in the quality of puerh will grow, especially as many producers experiment with strange processing techniques adapted from other genres of tea that create new types of puerh (most of which are not as good). They do this because more tea lovers are drinking their puerh young.

Actually, the tea processing itself also must start with the body, as we have often stated in these issues: each step in tea production is determined by the previous steps. To make fine tea, the Chinese have always said, requires the cooperation of Heaven, Earth and Human. The Heaven part can be thought of as all the cosmic and spiritual aspects of ecology that the conceptual mind cannot intrude upon, as well as the weather—proper rainfall, sunshine and all at the perfect time, which is why, like wine, tea farmers have great years only once every seven to ten years. The Earth part of fine tea could also be the spirit of the soil, worshiped in traditional Chinese culture, and the minerals and health of the environment, including the varietal, individual tree health, factors like whether or not the tea is seed-propagated, biodiversity and all the rest. The Human element, then, would be the mastery required to harvest at the right time and in the proper way, as well as the immense body of

processing skills needed to dry a tea, crafting the finest possible leaf out of whatever leaf is available due to the confluence of Heaven and Earth. Of course, we could also add the brewer to the Human, who is a continuation of this process, taking the dried leaf and preparing it in a way that brings out its highest potential, finishing the artwork the farmer started. The brewer must also make do with what Heaven, Earth and the farmer’s processing skills have provided her with, crafting this dried leaf into artwork in a cup.

As each previous step determines the next, the weather and Heavenly spiritual influence will determine where to plant the tree. The garden’s health and location will then determine the varietal, which determines harvest time. The harvest then informs the withering and so on, and so forth. In light of this, we realize that the *cha ti*, or body of the tea, is always a very important aspect of its overall quality, and therefore an essential part of what we must learn to evaluate in tea,





both because it itself determines at least half of the quality of any tea, and also because it will also determine the route the processing takes, especially by a master who is always adapting based on the particular, specific leaf before him.

These two Teas of the Month, October and November, are a unique opportunity to try to taste beyond the processing to the *cha ti*, or tea body, because they are both crafted from the exact same harvest of the same Si Ji Chun trees from this spring. The body is the same in them, which means that once you taste past the processing, what is left will be the body. Also, this experiment could just as easily go the other direction, which means that once you have determined what the body of the tea is like, you can then taste the processing. If you had other teas from the same region, you could then determine the skill of the processing. Our experiment lends itself to the former method, however, of tasting past the processing to the body.

It is helpful, of course, to quiet the mind and still the body. There is an old Chinese saying that “the amateur tastes tea with the mouth, while the master tastes with the whole body.” While aroma and flavor are an aspect of all tea, including *cha ti*, there is more to this. Focus on the Ten Qualities of Fine Tea, and pay attention to the Qi in particular. The quieter you are, the better suited to this you will be. The tea journey rewards quiet and stillness with more and deeper flavors, aromas, sensations and access to the energy (Qi) of the tea. In this way, Cha Dao is self-cultivation, changing us as much as we change ourselves to meet the tea on deeper levels. As we cultivate sensitivity, we are encouraged to do so by more and greater appreciation of the teas we drink, in other words.

It is also helpful to brew the tea way beyond what you are used to when trying to learn how to taste the *cha ti*. As Master Lin always says, “Last thing in, first thing out,” which means that when brewing a tea, the first flavors are

the storage, then the processing and then the leaf itself. This means that you should notice many characteristics in later steepings that are the same for these two months’ teas, as they come from the same raw material.

Learning to notice, appreciate and evaluate the body of the tea gets us close to the Nature behind the tea—the Heaven and Earth it represents. This allows us not only to sweep by all the sales pitches, and sip our way by any adaptations made to cover up mistakes or to hide the fact that the garden/variety/climate that year were not ideal and therefore we have before us an inferior grade of raw leaf. Sometimes, farmers roast the tea heavily to cover up such low quality leaf. The piling of shou puerh is an example of this. (Traditionally, shou puerh was piled skillfully to match the leaves used.) Through learning to taste the body, we can get past the human. Getting past the human brings us to another topic we would like to discuss, which has to do with the categorization of tea.



# HOW WE CATEGORIZE TEA

There is often an implicit, or even explicit, suggestion that the typical “six genres of tea” used to classify tea throughout books, articles and vendors’ websites are somehow classical or traditional. Their age and import is often exaggerated, in other words. Actually, categorizing tea by processing methods into six genres only began in the late 1970s and early 1980s and is often attributed to the scholarly work of one or a few professors in Anhui who wrote many influential articles and books that changed the burgeoning university programs at the time, which were devoted to tea. This system then trickled into the mainstream from there, and later made its way to the West.

Behind and above this system of categorization, however, we have millennia of other classification systems. And this modern method is also not

without its detractors. Several tea scholars we know refuse to use the “six genres” as a way to understand tea, arguing that the collapsing of Wuyi Cliff Tea, Phoenix Mountain Dancong, Anxi Tieguanyin and Taiwanese teas into one category called “oolong” is absurd, as the differences between these teas are so very vast. Prior to the 1970s, going back thousands of years, most Chinese people categorized tea by region in this way. For example, one could also categorize tea on ecological terms, organized into living tea, organic plantation tea and conventional/industrial tea.

This brings up an important issue, which is why we choose to use processing as the main focus of our categories, dividing tea based exclusively on the Human influence and thereby leaving out the Heaven and Earth aspects of tea. But before we discuss that, it is

perhaps worth reviewing why we use seven instead of six genres in our magazine.

In the middle of the last century, a famous tea author named Chuan Chen came up with the now famous “Six Genres of Tea,” which are: white, yellow, green, oolong, red and black. At the time, puerh fit neatly into the “black tea” category, as all puerh that was consumed was either aged sheng or ripe shou (fully fermented, in other words). In fact, government records for 2004 list puerh production at a much lower level than we would today because they didn’t include sheng puerh at all. As more people have begun consuming puerh young and raw, puerh no longer fits in the “black tea” category, which is characterized by post-production fermentation. These changes are large enough to warrant a shift in the way we categorize tea.



# 我們如何分類茶

When the world changes, or our understanding of the world changes (or both), it is time to change our categories. We have found that people learning about tea will pick up on the genres of tea faster and more efficiently when there are seven genres, as opposed to maintaining an artificial and ultimately arbitrary tradition of using six. Also, it should be noted that there are other ways of categorizing tea, and some are much older. The seven genres are just one map for exploring the tea world.

It can be confusing when tea people say that the categories of tea are strictly defined by processing methodology, because the seven kinds of tea weren't invented at once. Rather, they evolved over time *in response to* the variations in the plant as it changed terroir. It is a very modern, and in many ways unhealthy, practice to tell Nature what

to do. Traditional farming was always about accepting the bounty of Nature with gratitude, rather than coercing Her to give certain kinds of foods in certain amounts. Each genre is as much a varietal (or varietals) as it is a processing method.

Interestingly, the exception to this is, of course, red tea, as any kind of tea can be made into red tea. You can make puerh into red tea, which we call “dian hong (滇紅),” since “dian” is the aboriginal word for Yunnan. Fine green tea buds can be made into “gongfu red tea (功夫紅茶),” which we covered in the June 2017 issue of Global Tea Hut. Any tea can be made into red tea—even Si Ji Chun, which is more of an oolong varietal. Usually, if the processing is done well, any tea will make a nice red tea.

In the 1970s and 80s, when this type of categorization was beginning,

China was opening university programs to study tea, offering degrees in tea. The main focus of this education was on industry and production, granting graduates employment opportunities in the tea/agricultural field. Therefore, it made sense for these curriculums to focus on production, and use processing as the determining characteristic in understanding tea; the whole focus was on this.

Focusing on tea as defined by production allowed for the creation of machinery that could increase yield, as well as innovation, taking one region's tea processing heritage and applying it to another to suit the market. This type of innovation is neither good nor bad, or it's both. It sometimes results in good works and also can damage the environment and cultural heritage of a people. Like all power, it depends on how it is applied.



茶 To the far left are the seven genres of tea as we teach them. On this page, we have the lesson we are always teaching about correcting the mistake of calling red tea “black tea.” On the left side we have the dry and wet leaves of a red tea and black tea. Obviously, the leaves and liquor of what is called “black tea” in the Western world are red, while real black tea has dark leaves and black liquor. Some tea people have taken to keeping red tea as “black tea” and calling black tea “dark tea,” but we think correction is better and easier, especially since it is a mistake.





茶 Master Tsai was so excited to take us to the farm where it all began for him. He stared longingly at a bud and told us stories expressing how much he loved this place. He then showed us the obvious signs of long-term biodiversity: like spiderwebs, bug-bites on the leaves and even a leafhopper which landed on his thumb, which brought smiles to us all. He then shared with us something much deeper, and none of us had ever thought of this before. Someone pointed out that there were many seeds and that it was early in the year for this (July). He said that the trees were covered with seeds because of the drought this year. He said the trees “knew” this was a tough year and so were giving more life-force to seeds, passing on their heritage in case they would die. He mentioned that only living tea grown in biodiverse gardens will display such harmony with the environment.



The limitations of a production-based classification system also brings to light our current environmental crisis, which is, ultimately, based on favoring human needs over ecological balance. Studying tea solely in terms of production method cuts out Nature and turns the leaves of trees into a product, which is, in a way of thinking, literally divorced from its roots. The individual tree lost in this system, which encourages cloning and planting hedges of many bushes that no one can tell apart. Like all industrial farming, which loses the individual pig to “pork” and tree to “tea,” a disrespect for beings is inherent in this philosophy. Beyond the tree, however, is the soil, the wind and rain, and then beyond that, the sun, stars and moon whose light was literally photosynthesized to create the leaves that are our

tea. All of that Nature, so vast and infinite, is dismissed in a philosophical system that focuses exclusively on processing method. It seems to us that, in this day and age, we need to strive to include these factors more, not less.

In the end, any conceptual system of categorization is just a map. The map is not the terrain. It is a fundamental and all-too-common human mistake to see the map as the terrain. And then, attached to our maps, we try to change the terrain to suit the map, as opposed to dropping the map and making a new one. We all face this silliness, as individuals in our personal lives and as a species in terms of collective worldviews. As long as one understands the limitations of any individual map, as well as the limitations of cartography in general, one can employ several types of maps towards a greater

understanding of a place. In this way, one could look at geographical, political and climatic maps of a region and use them to better understand it. In the same way, the “seven genres of tea” can help us to understand and navigate the tea world successfully, so long as we understand that above the processing there are many worlds of tea, and that the Heaven and Earth elements come first, before and within the Human and are critical to the quality of tea, as they are critical to our sustainability as a species that is endangered (yes, *Homo sapiens* has endangered itself). The other limitation of the seven genres, which we discussed earlier, is that even in terms of processing itself, these categories can be reductionist, sweeping over the vast differences between an Eastern Beauty, Dancong and a Tieguanyin, for example.



As long as we understand the limitations of this system, however, we can utilize the seven genres to understand, discuss and share tea. We can use it to navigate the production of tea and all the quality inherent therein, which often represents half of the overall value of a tea. In the case of red teas, like our Tea of the Month, this system is especially helpful, since red tea is, literally, only a production method, whereas the other genres blur the line between production and varietal(s).

In the end, these two months' teas will provide us with a lot of learning opportunities, in the form of discussion such as these, and, more importantly, in the tasting of two teas that derive from the same source, but were processed very differently. We hope you keep that in mind as you taste this month's tea. In other words, take notes

(or even save some leaf for next month to drink side by side), so that the two teas will be more than enjoyment, resulting in growth and tea education, which is what Global Tea Hut is all about!

### *Four Seasons Red*

Master Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲) has studied tea for close to thirty years now. During that time, he has become a champion of the environment and very much a hero to all of us here at the Hut. He would bow and humbly step out of the way of our praise, not realizing how deeply we admire all he does, or how often his example is a beacon guiding us onwards. Master Tsai says: "You see, when I had first

started drinking tea in college, the Taiwanese tea industry was going through big changes. In the late seventies and early eighties they started using large quantities of pesticides, weed-killers and chemical fertilizers. Also, many of the chemicals sold to Asia were suspect. Some were even found to be incredibly harmful later on. Furthermore, farmers always use such chemicals improperly when they first start out, applying too much of them or too often." He says that the chemicals in the tea were a source of discomfort to him. We agreed, having met many people myself who complain that drinking tea keeps them awake, gives them headaches or upsets their stomach. Oftentimes, these symptoms will completely vanish when they drink clean, organic teas. Surely, this is what happened to him.

Master Tsai could not drink tea for twenty years or so, as even a small cup made him uncomfortable. He loved tea so much, though, that he continued preparing it for friends. Even the smallest cup would upset his stomach. It was not until years later, on a trip to Zhu Shan Village, that he felt pressured to drink some tea by a farmer pushing his simple hospitality on Master Tsai with repeated “But this tea is different!” pronunciations, which he had heard many times before and still gotten sick. However, this time he drank a cup, then two, then three—then drank tea all afternoon without any symptoms. He thought he was cured and rushed home to break out his tea set only to get ill again. It was not until later when he figured out that the tea in Zhu Shan was organic that he called the farmer back and ordered some, beginning a new chapter in his life that has affected so many tea lovers in turn. Our Tea of the Month comes from that very same organic farm, clean from that day in the late 1990s until today!

In 2012, Master Tsai had the idea for the Tea Mountain Preservation Society. Our Tea of the Month also comes from the Tea Mountain Preservation Society, meaning that all of you, this Global Tea Hut together, are supporting the transformation of the earth through better, more sustainable tea agriculture. We are proud to offer what we can to the Tea Mountain Preservation Society, and hope that you also feel inspired by the part you have played through this magazine!

Si Ji Hong is made from ecological, semi-wild Si Ji Chun (四季春) varietal trees in Zhu Shan, which is in Nantou County. The farm has some young and some older trees (thirty to fifty years) and absolutely no neighbors, meaning it is clean and organic for miles around. The tea is healthy and happy, full of nice energy and thick, juicy leaves.

Once again, it is important to understand that what most Westerners call “black tea” is actually “red tea”. Ordinarily, it doesn’t matter what something is called, but in this case there is another kind of Chinese tea that is called “black tea.” So if you call red tea “black tea,” then what do you call black tea? This issue cannot be repeated enough. It’s important and one we have a passion to correct it as well.

The reasons for this mistake are manifold, having to do with the long distances the tea traveled in chests to Europe, and even more importantly with the general lack of information for the first few hundred years tea was traded. Another layer to the confusion comes from the fact that the Chinese have always categorized tea based on the liquor, and Westerners used the leaf itself. The differences between black and red tea are much more obvious in the liquor than in the leaf, though the leaf is also slightly red to our eyes. Europeans weren’t allowed inland in those days, and never saw the tea trees or the processing either (except some roasting). Buying through middlemen in broken pidgin, you could see how easy it would be to spread misinformation. We repeat this every time we send a red tea, because it is an important mistake that we tea lovers have to correct in the world, so that the real black tea can have its name back!

The basic difference between red and black tea is that red tea is heavily-oxidized through prolonged withering and rolling during production and black tea is artificially fermented post-production. This usually happens through piling, which is akin to composting. Local bacteria are important in the post-production artificial fermentation of black tea, which means that it is a very regional kind of tea—its terroir includes the micro-environment, along with the trees, soil, weather, etc. Red tea, on the other hand, is the only genre of tea that is truly a production methodology, which can therefore be applied to any varietal/cultivar.

Our Tea of the Month was hand-picked and then withered in troughs for around twelve hours. It was then machine rolled for ninety minutes before being piled again to further oxidize while it was wet and pasty. Finally, the tea was roasted dry, which not only dries the red tea, but changes some of the chemistry and imparts a nice flavor to the tea.

*茶 This fifty-year-old tree has been allowed to grow up and is taller than a person.*





# Brewing Tips

冲泡技巧 完成好茶

Like most red teas, our Tea of the Month responds well to all the brewing methods we teach: a few leaves in a bowl is an excellent way to start your morning; you could also brew this tea sidehandle and it will be excellent for many bowls; and, of course, Si Ji Hong makes for an excellent gongfu tea as well. If you brew it in a sidehandle and your pot is large, you may want to take the lid off between steepings to make the tea last longer. If you are brewing this tea leaves in a bowl, the amount will be important. Remember, you can always add more but can't take out wet leaves. It is therefore always better to start with just a few leaves in the bowl.

Since we are learning all about *tetsubins* this month, it is the perfect time to begin exploring the role the kettle plays in your tea brewing. Since our eyes are literally and metaphorically centered on the pot and cups, we often spend more time enjoying our teapots, cups and bowls. More of our money and energy naturally flows into these utensils. However, tea all begins with water and fire. The easiest, fastest, cheapest way to improve all your tea is with good water prepared well.

The preparation of water is the fire element of tea. Fire is the "Teacher of Tea," without which we could not extract the essence of the leaf or move it through our body. Temperature catalyzes the movement of Qi. We recommend using charcoal, as it brings true fire into your tea preparation. Not all spaces are designed for it, though, as there are fire and carbon monoxide hazards, so tread carefully. Otherwise, you can use gas or electric heat (if electric, we recommend infrared).

The kettle stands between the water and fire, tempering them both as they come together with the tea in the bowl or teapot. The kettle is a very important instrument in the creation of the Chajin's artwork: a bowl or cup of tea. In material, there are many options, including an iron *tetsubin*, silver *ginbin* or clay kettle. In all cases the material and design are incredibly important. The quality of the clay, iron or silver can either enhance the water or damage its structure. Beyond structure, the wrong kettle can add a flavor to the tea which overpowers it. Also, different types of kettles are ideally suited to different types of tea. Choosing the right material for one's kettle is therefore of the utmost importance.

Beyond material, shape and craftsmanship are also very important. Oftentimes, a beginner feels as if the connection between the arm and kettle ends at the kettle's handle, but it doesn't—continue the flow all the way to the bowl or pot, placing the water in the bowl or pot as opposed to dumping it. Choose a kettle with a solid handle that is comfortable and does not move or rattle when you pour. The kettle is ideally also well balanced and the right weight for the brewer, becoming an extension of her arm. Also, the spout is incredibly important. Different spouts may be ideal for different types of tea, just as with the material of the kettle. The spout should offer control of flow and feel smooth and clean. You should feel more present and aware when you hold your kettle, the way you do with a good teapot.

This month is the perfect opportunity to do some experiments with different types of kettles, learning the difference in material and craftsmanship in tea preparation. Maybe you could get together with some friends and try each other's kettles side by side!



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 (2-3 stripes is better in a bowl)

**Patience:** twenty (gongfu)

茶 Try placing the water in the teapot as opposed to dumping it. Practice controlling the flow and placement of the water, letting the connection extend through the spout.







鑄  
鐵  
壺

日本的鐵壺

# Tetsubins

IRON KETTLES OF JAPAN

茶人: Liang Jun Zhi (梁俊智)



# An Essential Part of Everyday Life

## 日常生活必不可少的部分

In western Japan in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the development of *tetsubins* was already beginning to influence tea drinking habits in large, developed cities. It had already become fashionable to drink afternoon tea from *tetsubins*, with their unique design and decoration. Wealthy people liked to spend their leisure time sharing this tranquil moment of tea with their friends, and so *tetsubins* became more widely integrated into daily life and evolved into a staple household item.

It's believed that there were two factors that led to the *tetsubin* becoming a household staple. Firstly, sencha tea had become established as an integral part of Japanese people's daily lives, and the *tetsubin* had consequently become an essential piece of household equipment for the middle and upper classes. Secondly, cast-iron pots are intimately linked to the transmission of tea culture. Dr. Phillip Franz von Siebold summarizes the situation between 1830 and 1942 as follows: "Tea had already infused itself into every corner of daily life in Japan. They used teapots to brew tea, and drank it with their meals. Really, there wasn't a designated 'tea time'—people from all strata of society would drink tea at any time of day."

Dr. von Siebold pointed out that lower grade *bancha* tea was the daily staple drink among the Japanese people, and he believed that the status of *tetsubins* is unquestionable. His early works included some wonderful illustrations of Japan; one of the drawings particularly shows his high regard for *tetsubins*.

The kettle in his illustration is decorated with an icicle pattern and grid-lines that circle around from the base to the body of the pot (called "*hane*" or "feathers"), making this a very classic *tetsubin*. This *tetsubin* has a copper lid and a very distinctive handle. As another example, the use of this type of water kettle in the second image traces

back to 1821. It's worth noting that as well as showing up on this type of tea kettle, the icicle pattern also appears in relief on tea sets.

Around 1825, the type of *tetsubins* described above had a deep-rooted status in Japan. However, this was mostly the case in the large cities of western Japan, as this type of teaware was very costly to make.

Early uses of the word "*tetsubin*" in the Japanese language give a clear indication of the function of these pots. *The Taihashi Collection*, published in 1835, contains the following passage: "This morning I awoke from my dreams, my hair a matted mess, and enjoyed today's breakfast—the hot water from my *tetsubin*."

During the decades after Dr. von Siebold's opinions were published, more evidence emerged to confirm their veracity. A photograph copied in 1867 shows a stove in the room with tea implements placed on it. As this scene suggests, the *tetsubin* was already very widespread by that point, and in the decades to follow it became fashionable and led the way for a new trend. From the historical evidence, it can be traced back to 1910.

In his writings dating from 1877–1881, Edward S. Morse pointed out that the *tetsubin* had become an inseparable companion to every Japanese family: "The *hibachi* is a sort of portable fireplace, around which the family gathers to gossip, drink tea, or warm their hands... In a winter party the *hibachi* are previously arranged by the servants, one being allotted to each guest; and the place where each is to sit on the matted floor is often indicated by a little square cloth-cushion... Whenever you call on a friend, winter or summer, his very first act of hospitality is to place the *hibachi* before you." Then as now, wherever you are in the world, tea is hospitality and kindness.

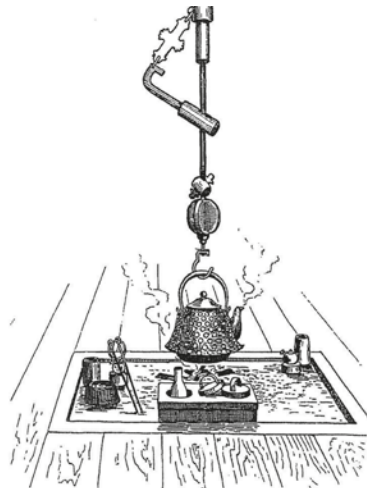
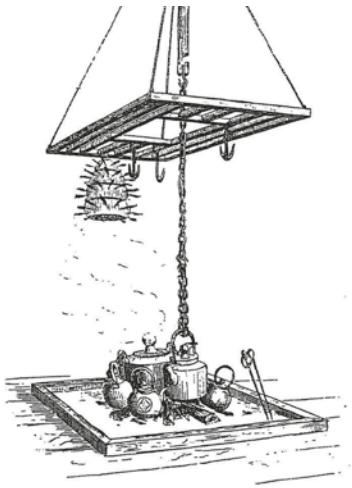
A representative example of the scene Morse describes can be seen in the drawings to the right. Sir Edwin Arnold also clearly described this type of tea-drinking custom. Ten years later, he wrote of the Japanese tea ceremony: "Of course the austere etiquette of the *Cha-no-yu* (literally "water for tea," this refers to formal whisked tea ceremony) is special; but its spirit, as the central ceremony of tea drinking, has palpably passed through all Japan, where everything begins and ends with the *tetsubin* and the tea cup."

In *A Handbook of Modern Japan* from 1903, Ernest W. Clement gave a very similar description. He wrote, "A kettle of hot water is always kept ready at hand, in house or at an inn, so that tea may be steeped in a moment and procured to drink at any time. It is always set before a guest as soon as he arrives, and is absolutely indispensable in every household."

One might think that the *tetsubins* intended for household use were cheaper ones with relatively little decoration. However, in the cities of western Japan, this was not the case. The writings of Mary Crawford Fraser, the wife of British diplomat Hugh Fraser, who was stationed in Japan from 1889–1891, provide some insight into this. In her book, there is a picture showing the evening meal of a fairly well-off family. As well as showing sencha being drunk as an accompaniment to the meal, it depicts an ornamented kettle (*also to the right*).

The original function of the *tetsubin* was as a kettle for boiling water. The 1897 novel *Wasureenu Hitobito* (*Unforgettable People*), Kunikida Doppo, contains a reference to the *tetsubin* in the form of an illustration. The reference portrayed the act of placing a small stone jar of sake inside an iron kettle of water to heat the sake.

The use of *tetsubins* in many rural areas is reflected in Morse's illustration.



☼ To the left are the drawings from Edward S. Morse's book showing fireplaces in country houses where *tetsubins* always hang ready. Below left is a family eating a meal with a *tetsubin* going around them. In the middle is the wood block print with the icicle-patterned *tetsubin* with feathers called "hane," and then just below there are two original photographs (which are very low quality) of some *geisha* getting dressed while a *tetsubin* boils behind them. Along with tea, some authors think Japanese boiled water to increase humidity in dry months.



Morse describes this scene as depicting "...a common arrangement for the kitchen in the north of Japan, and in the country everywhere. Here the fireplace is in the center of the room. A kettle is suspended over the fire by a chain, and other kettles are huddled around it to be heated."

Above to the left is another example of how rural life revolved around the fireplace. As well as providing light and warmth, the fireplace was also a space to put the teapots that were used for heating water for tea. Cooking was done in a separate room, and there would often also be an iron kettle hanging above the cooking stove. The water in the kettle would first be preheated over this stove before being transferred to the fireplace to keep warm. Such scenes warm the heart and imagination!

The *tetsubin's* evolution into a household item is intimately connected to Morioka in northern Japan. Morioka had an important status as a center of teaware production. During the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the *daimyō* (feudal lord) of the city of Nanbu had service contracts for the provision of metal casting machinery with several families, including the Arisaka, Koizumi and Suzuki families. In around 1710, a new metalsmith by the name of Fujita Zennosuke became known in Morioka. It's said that he worked independently in the beginning and was later contracted by another company belonging to the Nanbu clan. However, none of his descendants in subsequent generations remained in the employ of the Nanbu family.

In around 1815, a metalsmith of the same family line by the name of

Fujita Zankuro was working as what was called a "townsman"—in other words, a craftsman who lived and worked in the city. In contrast to those who served in the feudal domains, these craftsmen received their income and allowance from their local *daimyō*.

For Fujita's customers, this official title and his artist's name probably added to the appeal of his work. He was reportedly already producing cheap, simple *tetsubins* by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and at that time he believed that the best *tetsubins* were those without any decoration. He also intentionally made a lasting impression with his design drawings, such as the cross-section of a round kettle (which was very difficult to make without round tools, and therefore very expensive), or his distinctive sanded surfaces on various kettles he produced.

In other words, sand that didn't have the requisite texture was used for the mold. He also used simple copper lids that were not fixed in place and hollow handles. Soon afterwards, many other craftspeople made use of Fujita's innovations and discovered a market for ready-made teaware in the small towns and villages, leading to the expression "many goods being carried by a single name." Thus, the legacy of a single artisan had a great impact.

Fujita differed from his contemporary Koizumi Nizaemon in that his work was limited to fulfilling the demands of the Nanbu family, while he mainly served ordinary folk. He was a very talented smith and made high quality *tetsubins* that were both functional and beautifully decorated. These kettles were burnished with fine sand to make the white cast iron smooth and shiny (see the old photos below). One interesting detail is that the aforementioned white cast iron has clearly

been burnished. They were often given as gifts and were very popular among ordinary people, as well as being exported to other feudal domains.

In this sense, Fujita had a profound influence; not only was he instrumental in the *tetsubin* becoming a common household item in northern Japan, but he also made a significant contribution to the unity and joint development of northern and southern Japan.

Of course, it's difficult to judge from this whether he was the first person to make *tetsubins* for household use, or what was the relationship of the first *tetsubin* to Morioka and Kyoto. Northern Japan was a rural region, and the people there were not particularly aware of new tea-drinking customs. The upper echelons of society in the Nanbu domain, on the other hand, were very familiar with the *sencha* tea brewing method and its associated customs, including the use of *tetsubins* in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Here, we can draw a conclusion: *tetsubins* had already begun to play an important role in the daily life of Japanese people before 1800, though they were not seen as an everyday household implement. So, it's generally believed that the origin of the *tetsubin* as an ordinary water kettle was in Morioka in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The use of *tetsubins* became more widespread thanks to a few specific elements of tea ceremony. For example, the use of tea boxes (*chabako*) allowed tea drinkers to hold their sessions anywhere, outside of a dedicated tea room. Thus, tea ceremonies could be graced with the added atmosphere that comes from gazing on mountains, flowers or the moon. Tea boxes were already in use in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; at that time water was heated in a copper kettle made especially for that purpose. Later, outdoor tea sessions split into several different types of ceremony; for example, *usucha* ("thin tea") was replaced



86. Kettle ascribed to Fujita Nabezen and dated late Edo-period. (Hashimoto Museum, Morioka).



87. Kettle ascribed to the 11th generation Suzuki Kihachi Iesada (died 1847). (Hashimoto Museum, Morioka).



88. Kettle ascribed to the 11th generation Suzuki (died 1847). (Collection: Morioka Tezukuri Mura).



89. Late Edo-period *tetsubin* of unknown craftsman. (Collection: Morioka Tezukuri Mura).



茶 To the left is an actual page from an old *tetsubin* collector's book, including the captions. It is hard to say where any of these masterpieces are today. Above is one of our favorite *tetsubins* here at the Center, and also one of our oldest. We use it for bowl tea due to the large canon spout. It is *wabi*, but it makes excellent water.

by *koicha* (“thick tea”), and *tetsubins* replaced copper kettles as a popular addition to the contents of the tea box, which holds true to this day.

In *Der Teekult in Japan (The Tea Cult in Japan)* from 1930, Anna Berliner wrote: “The *tetsubin* is used in the formal tea box ceremony. An interesting detail of this is that the tea master holds the pot in the left hand, so that from the guest’s perspective, the spout is facing to the left.” Ordinary people had simple expectations as to the decoration of *tetsubins*; usually it was considered that a copper lid on an otherwise undecorated pot was suitable for the general aesthetic of teaware.

At that time, *tetsubins* could also be used as part of the *kaiseki* (traditional multi-course Japanese dinner). Before a tea ceremony began, the host would prepare this light meal for the guests, and tea would also be provided with the meal. Even today, in this era of standardized tea ceremonies, *tetsubins*

are still used as part of *kaiseki* meals. For example, at the meticulous, tradition-focused Enshu tea ceremony, which can take as long as four hours, *tetsubins* are present throughout each step of the process.

In 1850, Japan opened up to the outside world, which resulted in a marked decline in interest in tea-drinking among the Japanese people. Gengen-sai, the leader of the Urasenke school of tea ceremony, had a very strong reaction to this trend. In 1872, he invented a new, simplified tea ceremony format, using a tray. In *usucha* (thin matcha) tea ceremonies, *tetsubins* and tea bowls are placed together. During the ceremony, the *usucha* vessels would be placed on the tray, and the host would hold the *tetsubin* in the left hand. The simplified ceremony also used the tea box ceremony method, but the important thing was to hold the *tetsubin* in the left hand. From this we can conclude that around 1900,

the use of the *tetsubin* was increasing in both informal and formal contexts.

So, from all these materials, we can observe that *tetsubin* gained an increasing importance in Japanese tea ceremony over the course of history. It gradually became integrated into the daily lives of Japanese people, becoming a household essential. Holding an antique *tetsubin* filled with water, pouring it and enjoying the peaceful atmosphere, really gives one a sense of travelling back to the past. May we continue to pass on the story of the ancient *tetsubin*, so that future generations can enjoy it too!



90. Late Edo-period tetsubin, possibly made by Fujita Nabezen. (Collection: Morioka Tezukuri Mura).



91. Late 19th century tetsubin, by Takahashi Manji. Notice the polished cast-iron of the decoration, the so-called migaki technique. (Collection: Morioka Tezukuri Mura).



92. “Left” side of Ill. 91.



93. Late 19th century kettle, made by Fujita Manzō. (Collection: Morioka Tezukuri Mura).



茶 To the left are more old plates of some amazing kettles with a detail of craftsmanship rarely seen these days. Above is another of our tetsubins. This one is giant. It is useful for large bowl tea sessions, but it requires some serious arm strength. We think this was the type of kettle hanging in Japanese kitchens and boiling the day away...

# The Role of Sencha in the Development of Tetsubins

## 煎茶在鐵壺發展裡的角色

茶人: Liang Jun Zhi (梁俊智)

*In the beginning, “sencha” was literally “simmered tea,” and was processed very differently from what we think of as sencha today, which is a green tea meant to be steeped with a characteristic green-hued liquor and notes of seaweed and nuts in the flavor/aroma due to the steam used in the kill-green (sha qing) phase of production. The rise of sencha as boiled tea and as a more formal Way (Dao/Do) greatly influenced the trajectory of tetsubins.*

According to historical Japanese tea records, a craftsman by the name of Koizumi Nizaemon made the first ever *tetsubin* in Morioka. Koizumi, who lived until 1758 and was from the third generation of the Koizumi clan, signed a service contract with the Nanbu family. At the time, Koizumi noticed that more and more people had begun using clay pots in place of *chagama* (a type of tea cauldron also called a “*kama*”), so he decided to try using the high-quality iron ore produced in Morioka to make cast iron versions of these clay pots.

After much experimentation, he landed upon a form that was a hybrid of the *chagama* and the clay pot. He made it smaller in scale than a *chagama* and added an artistic spout and handle. His creative spirit and his expert skill came together to make him the inventor of a brand-new type of pot: the *tetsubin*.

In the heyday of *sencha*, Koizumi’s pots, with their added spouts and handles, became very fashionable in Japan via the recommendations of tea merchants. They became firm favorites among devotees of *matcha* tea as well.

Here are some points worth noting in a discussion of *tetsubins*:

1. There is no existing historical record to confirm that Koizumi Nizaemon was the maker of the very first *tetsubin*. According to textual records from the Iwate prefectural government and the Morioka library, the theory that the progenitor of the Koizumi clan arrived in Morioka in 1659 is probably not accurate; but there was certainly a connection between the Koizumi and Nanbu families. The existing records only show that the Koizumi family produced “iron medicine pots” (another name for *tetsubins*) during the Kōka era (1844–1848).

Maeda Koji’s research points out that “in 1771, a *daimyō* (feudal lord) from the Nanbu clan gifted an iron medicine pot to a *daimyō* of the Matsumae clan. It’s also known that the *daimyō*’s palace housed a foundry, at which the third generation of the Koizumi family assisted in the making of tea kettles.”

However, histories of the Koizumi clan actually make no mention of *tetsubins* prior to 1845. This doesn’t nec-

essarily mean that the Koizumi family didn’t produce any *tetsubins* before that time, of course. Nevertheless, it’s puzzling that the inventor of the *tetsubin* wasn’t recorded in the family histories, since its invention would later come to be regarded as a sudden breakthrough.

2. There are no traces of the *tetsubins* made by the third-generation Koizumi Nizaemon. However, records of *tetsubin* pots made by the artisans of the fourth, fifth and sixth generations of the Koizumi family appear in the well-known *Great Japanese Encyclopedia*. The Nanbu *tetsubin* displayed in the Morioka Hashimoto Museum of Art in October 1985 was made by a fourth-generation craftsman from the Koizumi clan.

3. Japanese *matcha* tea ceremony gradually split into more than one type of ceremony; this resulted in the development of *sencha*, and the associated tea implements gradually started reflecting the influence of Kyoto culture. There was a movement away from formality in tea ceremonies that was influenced by Chinese tea culture.



繩文





current records indicate that prior to the 1770s, Japanese people used other types of kettles (such as *Tedorigama* and *choshi*), but there is no trace of the use of *tetsubins* before that time.

For confirmation as to whether *tetsubins* took off after 1770, we can look to paintings from the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Certain paintings from 1789 by Shimokawabe (1764–1789) and from around 1795 by Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1806) contain depictions of household implements, but there are still no *tetsubins* featured among them.

If we want to make inferences based on this source, we need to first determine whether any of the pots in the paintings are actually *tetsubins*. *Tedorigama* kettles can be distinguished

by their size; and from observing the black color used for *choshi* in bamboo screen paintings, we know that cast-iron ware was usually painted a black or dark grey color.

So, these paintings tell us that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *tetsubins* still may not have been a major feature of daily life in Edo. This was most likely also the case in other parts of Japan. By 1800, the sencha craze had taken hold among scholars and intellectuals, who were particularly enamored with Chinese teaware. But since Chinese teaware was rare and expensive at the time, imitations began appearing toward the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

However, *tetsubins* were already in use among sencha aficionados from around 1800. If we take a look back

at the early sencha research contained in *The Book of Japanese Tea*, we find *A Quick Guide to Sencha*, published in 1802 and written by Ryūkatei Ransui from Nagoya, who was originally a firm fan of matcha, but ended up switching preferences to sencha. His goal in writing the book was “to provide a simple introduction to the Way of Sencha (*Senchado*), so that those who are not interested in complicated explanations may get to know this tea.” From this book, we learn that sencha’s popularity was not limited to only the upper echelons of society, but had begun to spread to a wider audience.

Ryūkatei mentions that “in the past few years, sencha has won the acceptance and appreciation of more and more people of refined taste.

## 煎茶道



It also appeals to those of artistic persuasion; yet at the same time, those who wish to start out on the way of sencha have very little knowledge of the rarely encountered sencha teaware and its significance. So, I had an artist do some illustrations of the sencha tea set that I have in my tea studio.” In these illustrations, we can see a *tetsubin* placed on the tea stove. This *tetsubin* features Chinese characters along with Japanese furigana script (a pronunciation guide), which is a very clear indication that it is indeed a *tetsubin*.

## Conclusions

From the sources discussed above, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. At present, there is no direct evidence to support the theory that Koizumi Nizaemon, of the third generation of Koizumis, was the inventor of the *tetsubin* and made the first one in Morioka around 1770.
2. In 1800, *tetsubins* were already in use in sencha circles.
3. It does not appear that the first *tetsubin* was made in Morioka; it seems more likely that it would have been made in the capital Kyoto, which was the main center of the sencha trend and the place where *tetsubins* were first developed.
4. Around the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, *tetsubins* were still not a feature of daily life in Japan.

The word “*tetsubin*” made its first official appearance in 1853 (the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the Tenpō period), in a book called *The Taihashi Collection*.

Due to the growing population of scholars and intellectuals, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, sencha teaware from China had become very rare and expensive. At that time, Japanese society was recovering from a period of upheaval, and such rare teaware was not easily in reach even for the wealthy. So, it was against this background that the search for an alternative type of teaware gave rise to the *tetsubin*.

According to points two and three above, *tetsubins* were already in use among sencha circles, but had not yet

become common household items. In light of this, the more likely scenario is that *tetsubins* were invented for brewing sencha, rather than that they already existed and were later adopted for use in sencha brewing.

It can perhaps be said that the scarcity of Chinese-made teaware led to the production of new Japanese pots for boiling water. When sencha became popular, more and more people began using clay pots instead of *chagama* kettles, because of their resemblance to Chinese Yixing clay teapots. *Tetsubins*, then, were a cast-iron version of these clay pots.

Since clay pots were the precursor of *tetsubins*, why did *tetsubins* go on to become the more popular of the two? And since copper “medicine pots” were already in use for boiling water, why did the people of Japan switch to using *tetsubins* for this purpose? In brief, it was probably due to the influence of the sencha trend. With the scarcity of sencha teaware, it was entirely possible to use copper medicine pots as an alternative vessel for boiling water, and clay pots were sufficient for use as ordinary teapots—in other words, for boiling low quality tea along with the water. Sencha tea enthusiasts, meanwhile, liked to use high quality tea leaf and to preserve its quality by selecting the best water and making sure it was precisely the right temperature for brewing the tea. The idea that “the best water comes from iron” came from the Chinese theory of the five elements and was also supported by Confucian philosophy. This was a perfect fit with the lifestyle of early proponents of Chinese *jiancha* (sencha) in Japan. Most Japanese people thought that water boiled in iron was superior in flavor.

The emergence of *tetsubins* is believed to be the result of three different driving forces:

1. The long history of teaware development in Japan, which gave rise to this “pioneer” and decided the appearance of the *tetsubin*.
2. The popularity of Chinese *jiancha* (sencha), which contributed to the increased use of Chinese-made clay teapots (including Yixing teapots). This trend changed tea culture in Japan completely, including, of course, teaware.

3. The scarcity of Chinese-made teaware around 1800, which led people to search for alternate types of teaware.

At present, there is very little information available on *tetsubins*. Hence, we must turn to books and paintings in order to lift the veil on these mysterious Japanese pots, and further explore the ups and downs in the history of *tetsubins*.



茶 These are some of the earliest *tetsubins*, with iron lids and simple designs based on clay pots of earlier times (which we will discuss in the next article). As the Way of Sencha moved into the upper classes later on, nicer *tetsubins* were created to meet the demand, with bronze or copper lids inlaid with gold or silver, and sometimes inlays in the handle and body as well. Still, these older examples have a certain charm to them and character as well. They are simple but profound, and speak to the Chajin.



# The Evolution of Tetsubins

## 鐵壺家族的演變

茶人: Liang Jun Zhi (梁俊智)

*In our efforts to understand tetsubins, it is helpful to look at some of the teaware that preceded them, as these influenced their development. We find this exploration through the ages of Japanese teaware to be fascinating, and helps us have a greater appreciation for our own tetsubins, as we look on them and see all the history behind them.*

In Japan, during the mid-1800s, sencha tea drinking in the capital of Kyoto was governed by the following three principles:

1. “Scholar’s tea” or “*bunjincha* (文人茶)” reflected the cultured lifestyles of those who drank it, and was characterized by a relaxed, uncomplicated and individual atmosphere.
2. “Commoner’s tea” or “*zokujincha* (俗人茶)” became popular with ordinary people in the cities, and was more standardized in style. This is the true Japanese tea ceremony, or “*cha-no-yu* (water for tea)” or “*chadō* (the Way of Tea)”.
3. “Tea for the masses” shared some of the characteristics of scholar’s tea in that it was a relaxed method and not particularly standardized, yet it also caught the attention of the general public. It became popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and became a continuation of the “scholar’s tea” tradition among ordinary folk.

From 1850 onwards, the “scholar’s tea” drinking method rapidly declined in popularity, and tea drinking began to develop throughout Japan using new brewing methods. The sencha tea brewing style would be used to entertain guests, using high-end tea leaf and costly teaware, and was very effective at facilitating social interaction; it was especially good as a precursor to a discussion, and could make for a cheerful atmosphere during the ensuing conversation. This tea drinking method can be seen as a revival of the early “scholar’s tea” style.

Riding the wave of this new revival of scholar’s tea, Japanese *tetsubins* also came to play a more and more important role. Entertaining important guests, tasting fine teas, using expensive teaware—all these situations naturally called for a more refined cast-iron kettle. Demand emerged for cast-iron kettles that were more refined in all aspects; add to this the accumulation of technical knowledge over many years, and the result was a leap in the overall level of production quality.

The *tetsubin* is a small cast-iron water kettle in the shape of a teapot, with a curved, upward-pointing spout (a spout for ordinary use), and a hoop-like handle that crosses over the top of the pot. On average, they stand about ten centimeters high (not including the handle), and are usually not taller than thirteen centimeters. *Tetsubins* first appeared in Japan in around 1800, but to better understand the development of cast-iron pots, we must trace their origins further back, to the household implements that were already in use prior to 1750.

### The Origins of Tetsubins

To discuss the origins of *tetsubins*, we can look at two main groups of vessels: one is early prototypes, and the other is precursors to the *tetsubin*. Both of these played a role in the development of *tetsubins*, which naturally grew out of these trends. Below, we will discuss them each in turn.



# EARLY PROTOTYPES

In around 1750, this type of pot began appearing in Japan in large numbers. In terms of shape, they bear very clear similarities to *tetsubins*. From the shape, material and manufacturing methods of Jōmon era clay pots and kettles, it seems very likely that the metal casters who made the first *tetsubins* used these prototypes as a reference.

## Jōmon (“Rope-Patterned”) Pottery

Jōmon pots feature a classic teapot shape; they are made of biscuit-fired potter’s clay and were produced in ancient Japan. The earliest cast-iron pots that have been unearthed in Japan are believed to date to the late Jōmon period (2000–200 B.C.E.). These pots represented an early form of the classic teapot shape, with a spherical body and an attached bridge-shaped handle and spout. At that time, tea drinking culture had not yet spread from China to Japan, so these pots were probably used for brewing herbal medicine. In China, Japan and Korea, brewing medicine in unglazed clay teapots is a very ancient

method, and one that is still in use today. During the Yamato era, unglazed rope-patterned clay pots, called “clay master pots,” gradually evolved into a form that closely resembled ceramics. Some of these “clay master pots” bear remarkable similarities to modern teapots. Some of them bear traces of soot, from which we can infer that they were probably used as water vessels. Jōmon pots are the earliest style of ancient clay pots, and in Japan they are considered to be the very first generation in the teapot lineage. (*A tetsubin base on this style is shown below as well as on p. 24.*)

## Kama (Cauldrons)

The origins of these kettles can be traced back to the brick tea drinking customs of Tang Dynasty China. Their first appearance in Japan was during the Nara period (645–781 C.E.). From being a household pottery vessel that was purely used for holding hot water, *kama* evolved to be used for several different purposes. For example, in 11<sup>th</sup> century Japan, people would

use this type of water vessel on a daily basis; i.e., they were not made exclusively to hold tea. When powdered tea (*matcha*) made its way to Japan, pots for boiling water were still considered kitchen implements. A kitchen would be equipped with a kettle for cleaning cutlery in, used for preventing smoke by covering the flame of coals, and to increase humidity in the dry months. The kettle would be placed atop the clay cooking stove. These early specimens were of a traditional style that would later be seen as the prototype for late-period Japanese tea ceremony kettles. There are several painted scrolls from the 13<sup>th</sup> century that indicate the practice of tea drinking was widely adopted at the time, but was still carried out in the kitchen.

During the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century, tea drinking customs had already undergone some changes, with the setting moving from the kitchen to the corridor (between the kitchen and the living room). The kettle that was used for boiling water had a flange running around the body of the pot and was



茶 Above is an example of a *tetsubin* that was based on Jōmon pottery, with the rope handle and a traditional body. This one is very old. To the direct right is one of the Center’s *kamas*, which we use for whisked tea ceremonies. Below it is a cast-iron brazier (called a “*furo*”), which is also quite old. To the far right are three gorgeous examples of *Ashiya tetsubins*, including one with a copper handle with dragons.





# 早期的原型

placed on a stove in the corridor. Each side of this kettle had a lid and a ring that allowed it to be hung above the stove on a chain. At this time, kettles were used solely for boiling water; once it was boiled, the water would be poured into a different jug. So, the function of the kettle was very different from its function in late-period tea ceremonies.

It is generally believed that Ashiya was the original site of factories for kettle production. A second center developed later at Edo (modern-day Tokyo) in the Kantō region in eastern Japan. According to *Kamashi* (Kettle Masters), written by Nishimura Dōya in 1700, the earliest Ashiya pots date back five hundred years, and the Ashiya pots from the Kantō region date back four hundred years.

Following the rise of tea during the Higashiyama period (1435–1490), this type of kettle was no longer limited to use for boiling water for cooking, and became popular for tea ceremonies, too. Sen no Rikyū (1521–1591), a key figure in the history of Japanese

tea ceremony, had a huge influence on the outward appearance of these pots, as he trained the foundry workers to cast kettles after his own style. By the Rikyū period, dedicated jugs for holding tea liquor were beginning to disappear. At the same time, kettle factories began to appear in Kyoto, and kettle makers in the area formed a trade association. People's interest in tea began to grow significantly during the early Edo period (1600–1868), and Kyoto's kettle manufacturers began to play an important role in this trend.

In around 1600, three places became famous for their cast-iron kettles: The first was Ashiya in Chikuzen Province (modern-day Fukuoka Prefecture), which produced what were called “old Ashiya ware.” The second region included Shimotsuke and Tenmyō (modern-day Sano City, Tochigi Prefecture), which produced a type of pot called “old Tenmyō ware.” The third was Kyoto, which produced “old Kyoto ware” pots. Below, we will explore the development of each of these regions.

## Ashiya

The early history of kettle manufacturers in Ashiya is not very clear, but there are two factors that certainly had a significant impact. The city of Ashiya, situated in the west of the island of Kyūshū, was very close to the mainland, and hence there was a lot of traffic to and from the city. Traces of crude iron are not limited to the Kofun era (250–537 C.E.); in the beginning, iron came from China via the Korean peninsula, and later it came via direct links between Kyūshū and China.

Ashiya had its own iron resources. Along the coast, iron-rich sands could be found on the beaches, and beside the beaches were expansive forests providing carbon, an indispensable resource for producing cast iron. Prior to the Kamakura period (1158–1332), various types of iron implements, such as kitchen kettles and weapons, were made in the Fukuoka district. The period after the Genpei War brought peace and stability to the local population, allowing people to turn their attention to making kettles.



# 蘆屋鐵壺

早期茶寶藏

Industry flourished in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century; early Ashiya kettles were modeled after the shape of Chinese kettles. Old Ashiya ware kettles were characterized by a wide, stable silhouette; later, some newer versions were improved with the addition of a protruding flange (in Japanese these are called “*hane*” or “feathers”). These were probably derived from the metal rings featured on pots from China’s Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.).

Aside from the pots made in Ashiya itself, there were also many pots from various other parts of Japan, such as Echizen, Hizen, Ise, Harima, Hakata, Iwami, Tenmyo and Odawara. Pots from these areas all imitated Ashiya ware in terms of color and design. It is believed that the production of Ashiya ware declined during the Azuchi–Momoyama period (1573–1599), and had completely vanished by 1625. This was closely linked to the rapid rise of Kyoto ware.

### Tenmyo

Tenmyo, in what is now Sano City, became one of the traditional birthplaces of kettles, largely due to practicality and geography. In 940, insurgent leader Taira no Masakado conquered a number of cities and provinces in the Kantō region, before ultimately being defeated by Fujiwara no Hidesato.

Taira no Masakado’s sudden rise attracted many iron casters from Kawachi Province, between Kyoto and Ōsaka, who gathered in the city of Ashikaga in the southwest of modern-day Tochigi Prefecture to make weapons; they were the successors of Korean artisans. It is believed that Korean-style pots were originally modeled after Tenmyo ware pots. These pots are distinguished by their three feet, just like early Tenmyo pots. Tenmyo pots are characterized by their simplicity, lack of any particular decoration and relatively tall spouts. These pots garnered a lot of attention in Japan.

### Kyoto

Nagoshi Shichiro, a 5<sup>th</sup> generation descendant of the Nagoshi clan, was arguably the most famous kettle maker in Kyoto in his time. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a kettle makers’

association was established by Kyoto’s Sanjo district group, and the kettles produced in the area were called Kyoto kettles. Kyoto kettles began to be made using the “firing right through” technique, which involves placing the kettle back into the fire once it has been cast, and then finishing it with a firm brush to even out the surface and give it an attractive shine. At the same time, in order to achieve an antique look, the first pots without the *hane* (flange) around the sides were produced.

Kyoto kettles became very famous in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and attracted many iron casters to the area. The kettle makers’ association grew in number, from eight members in 1583 to sixty-seven members in 1602. In the last decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Japan entered a period of peace, and the demand for tea kettles quickly began to grow. Orders from Kyoto suddenly started flowing into Ashiya and Sano. Because of the inconvenience caused by the distance between the two places, many iron casters from Ashiya were encouraged to migrate to Kyoto. This trend led to declining kettle production in Ashiya and Sano.

The Nanbu domain in northeastern Japan (modern-day Iwate Prefecture) holds a unique place in the history of Japan’s iron crafting industry. In addition to the ability to transport goods along the river, raw iron was discovered at Kitagawa, only twenty kilometers away from the southwestern part of the region. The riverbed containing magnetic iron, situated only ten kilometers from the Kamaishi port, is the largest such region in the whole country.

The early history of this region uncovers the link between gold mining and ironworking technology in the Nanbu domain. The Nanbu *daimyō*’s territory had access to gold mines, which made it an excellent location not only because the new mining technology brought increased wealth, but also because iron working was becoming more and more important to the war. Another important reason was that the Portuguese began bringing muskets into Japan, and during the Eiroku era (1558–1570) they began manufacturing weapons at Nanbu with the help of Chinese craftsmen. This craftsmanship and technology would evolve over time, resulting in incredible tea utensils, flower vases and *tetsubins*.

It is believed that Nanbu kettles were first produced in 1659. There were two main reasons for their rise: the first is that the first *tetsubin* was made in Nanbu, and the second is that the Nanbu domain went on to improve on the design of *tetsubins* and make them famous throughout Japan. Because of this, the gaze of the people was drawn to this region, and the kettle industry became more prosperous by the day. During this period, an important figure emerged: Koizumi Ni-zaemon (of the third generation of the Koizumi clan), who is widely seen as the inventor of the *tetsubin*. The Koizumi family had been kettle makers in Kyoto for generations; along with the Suzuki and Arisaka families, they held a very high status among the Nanbu domain’s artisans. Below is some basic information about the origins of Nanbu kettle production:

**1625:** *The Nanbu clan moved from their former domain to Morioka.*

**1641:** *A contract was signed between Suzuki Nui from Koshu and daimyō Nanbu Shigenao. Nanbu Shigenao belonged to the 29th generation of the Nanbu clan, and was an expert in art and tea paintings.*

**1652–1655:** *A member of the Arisaka family from Kyoto, who is said to have been a maker of Buddhist bells for a Tendai temple, also had dealings with two households from the Nanbu clan. Later, he signed a contract with the Nanbu clan.*

**1659:** *The kettle maker Koizumi Gorō, the first ancestor of the Koizumi lineage, signed a contract with Nanbu Shigenao. Koizumi Gorō came from eastern Kyoto, and made the first kettle in Morioka.*

Nanbu kettles are far from homogeneous, and their characteristics are closely linked with the Koizumi and Suzuki clans. In the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century, the Nanbu clan began employing iron casters and covering their expenses, gradually establishing them as important figures. Morioka, at the center of northern Japan, gradually became famous for its kettles. These kettles evolved into the finest *tetsubins* in history, which are still collected by tea lovers to this day.



# PRECURSORS TO THE TETSUBIN

At the time, there were many pottery vessels in popular use which were very similar in shape to the *tetsubin*. In order to meet the same needs for usage, iron casters began copying the shape of these pots; this is how the idea of making *tetsubins* first came about.

## Tedorigama ("Hand-Held Kettles")

*Tedorigama*, or "hand-held kettles" were a type of kettle with a spout and a bridge-shaped handle. They were made of cast iron and resembled a very large teapot in appearance; a small *Tedorigama* had about the same capacity as a large *tetsubin*. In fact, in northern Japan, large *tetsubins* were used as a kind of water jug for hand-held kettles. The average capacity of a *Tedorigama* was around four liters, and the capacity of an average-sized *tetsubin* was around one-third of that.

The earliest record of a *Tedorigama* dates to around 1554. It was made by an iron caster from Tenmyo and had a spout and a handle and was similar to a clay pot in shape. At that time, these kettles were used by tea drinkers for their tea ceremonies. Their appearance displayed characteristics typical of Tenmyo ware. (An example of a *tetsubin* based on this style is off to the right.)

## Choshi

*Choshi* were a type of kettle usually made out of cast iron, though a few were also made of copper or pottery. Cast-iron *choshi* were first used during the Muromachi period (1392–1572). In terms of appearance, they had a lid and a handle on the top; their distinguishing features were a horizontal line around the body of the kettle and an opening at the top, and three iron feet on the base.

## Water Jug

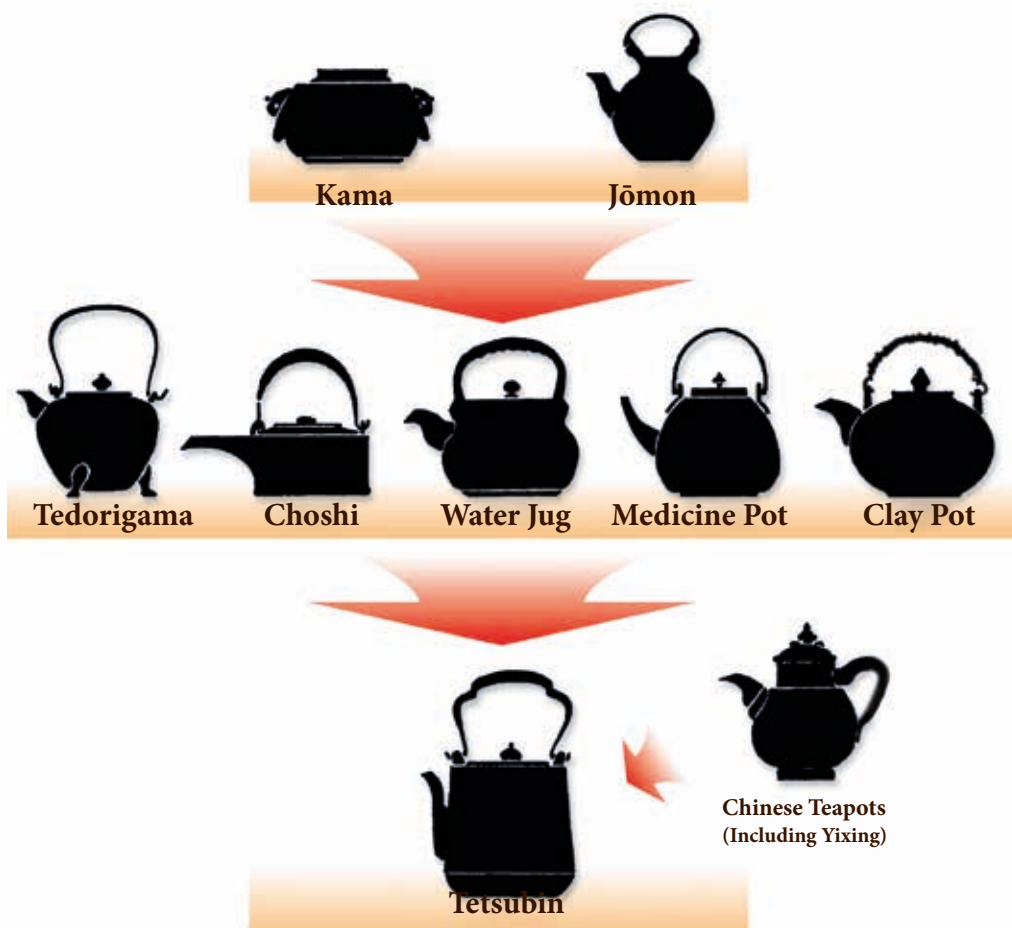
During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, this type of water jug was already in use during the dinners that preceded tea sessions, called "*kaiseki*." They were made of glazed ceramic; Shino ware and Oribe ware were particularly well-known styles. In the beginning, they were designed in a style imitating *choshi*, and were used as condiment jars. These water jugs bear a strong resemblance to certain *tetsubins*.

## Medicine Pots

German physician Simon Paulli wrote a commentary in 1665 decrying Europe's overuse of tea and tobacco. To provide illustrations for the book, he made drawings of Chinese and Japanese tea implements. These illustrations included copper teapots with spouts and handles; each one sat on a cylindrical water-storage tray and was



## Evolution of the Tetsubin



# 鐵壺先驅

placed among a tea set designed for keeping the water hot. This was a type of portable tea set that was used in all sorts of settings in Japan, such as while traveling or picnicking. The upper part of this type of pot was very similar to small European teapots. Around 1700, the copper water pots that were called “medicine pots” appeared in Japan, but they were not equipped with this type of removable cylindrical water tray. They would usually be placed on top of a kettle, and their main function was heating water.

## Clay Pots

During the early Edo period (1600–1868), unglazed clay pots were widely used for tea; this practice evolved from the existing method of steeping traditional Chinese herbal medicine. This method was mainly used in the two major cities of Kyoto

and Edo (Tokyo). Over the following few centuries, clay pots retained their “teapot” shape, and remained a staple tableware item in ordinary households.

## Concluding Remarks

These days, it is widely thought that the *Tedorigama* was the predecessor of the *tetsubin*. The *Great Japanese Dictionary* says, “The shape of the *tetsubin* indicates that it developed from the *Tedorigama*. The same people also believe that the *Tedorigama* developed from the clay pot.” Of course, the similarities between *Tedorigamas* and *tetsubins* are not limited to their shape alone. The materials, iron casting and crafting techniques also follow the same principles. As to exactly which type of vessel is the true predecessor of the *tetsubin*, even today there is still no clear answer.

This being the case, tracing the clues that the *tetsubin* has left behind throughout history can be just as fascinating a pastime as tasting aged tea. As a haze of steam gently drifts up from the old *tetsubin*, it feels just like being transported back to the Shōwa era to indulge in some tea and poetry with Japanese scholars. So, in the meantime, let us each ponder the mystery of the ancient *tetsubin* in our own cloud of fragrant tea steam.



# 銚子壺



茶 To the far left is a drawing of some travelers drinking tea from a *Tedorigama* boiling over a fire. The *tetsubin* above is based on this style. To the far left on the bottom is a clay medicine pot, which would have been used to boil herbs. This one has a bridge handle like a *Tedorigama*, making it a kind of transitional piece, with characteristics of both. Directly above are two *choshi* kettles, an iron and an earlier copper one. Usually, the spouts of these *choshi* are open like the iron version, but this old copper one is unique. These were used for tea, herbal medicine, for heating sake and other uses as well. These days, they are more often used for sake wine. Sometimes they are used like water jugs as well, or for condiments and other table sauces or soup that are used in a meal. The copper kettle to the left was used for outdoor tea.



# Finding a Tetsubin

找

一生的寶藏

鐵

壺

茶人: Wu De (無的)

**M**etal is the most powerful of the elements and can influence the tea liquor greatly. For that reason, some tea masters in the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) dynasties suggested that one completely remove all metal from tea preparation. We propose, on the other hand, being conscious of the role metal plays in your tea. We think that the tea authors who recommended never using metal didn't have access to the right kind of metal.

There are two important factors to keep in mind with regards to metal. Firstly, one must be conscious of the quality of the metal. Silver, gold and iron can enhance tea, though the variation in quality amongst iron kettles is much greater than silver and gold (which can be prohibitively expensive). Secondly, we have found that it

is important to recognize where in the tea preparation metal should be introduced. We have found that it ideally resides between the fire and water. This is because both of these elements are stronger than the metal, and its influence therefore reduced. According to Five Element theory, metal is a discipliner of wood (tea) and can therefore harm the tea's energy and flavor/aroma profile. The fire and water, therefore, act as a buffer, and the metal also buffers them, allowing their volatile natures to combine more smoothly. Try experimenting with metal strainers, scoops or even teapots and you will perhaps come to the same conclusion: that the kettle is the only place for metal in tea.

Antique iron *tetsubins* are a great addition to any tea lover's collection. They can be anywhere from 30 to 200

years old. Most of the ones on the market in Asia date from 1900 to the start of WWII. They are cast in an array of designs including bamboo, various natural textures, plums, fish, etc., and the higher-quality ones are often inlaid with gold and silver on the handle, knob or even sometimes on the body. The prices of such kettles also vary tremendously, and part of this is due to the factory or artist that made them. Of course, handcrafted kettles that were made by famous smiths will be worth large sums of money. It is still possible, however, to find a nice *tetsubin* from this era at a reasonable price.

When buying an iron *tetsubin*, there are two things to keep in mind: aesthetic appeal and water quality. Of course, we want a kettle that is attractive and lends itself to the tea ceremonies we are having. For this aspect,



there is no set of guidelines or advice, since each of us must use our own discrimination.

The function, then, is perhaps of greater importance than who made the kettle or even how nice it looks. It should heat up nicely, pour smoothly and of course not leak anywhere, which some of the antiques do unfortunately. If the pot has sat unused on a shelf, the inside will be rusted in hues of orange and brown. This isn't ideal. One should instead look for a kettle that has what the Japanese call "fur," a layer of whitish-yellow minerals on the inside. This is a sign that the kettle was used in conjunction with mountain spring water for some time, and these mineral deposits enhance the water greatly. It is difficult to find one used so much that it is completely covered with "fur," but try to find one that has at least been

used a lot since it was made. By using mountain spring water yourself, you will also contribute to this build-up of mineral deposits.

Some of the newer *tetsubins* have enamel coatings on the inside, which isn't as good for preparing water. These are actually made to be teapots, not kettles. The same goes for colored coatings on the outside of the *tetsubin*. It is much better to use the antique, cast-iron ones, which are porous and absorb the minerals. Also, modern *tetsubins* are not made of the same type of iron. Most modern ones, even finely crafted ones, are often made of recycled iron, not the "pig iron (猪鐵)" that was mined from the earth and is a special type of ore which lends the earthy, deep and slightly sweet flavors to a good *tetsubin* (earth is sweet in Five Element theory).

In the old days, *tetsubin* makers used sand and wax casts to create *tetsubins*. The wax-cast kettles are often very beautiful, but we have found that this method closes the pores of the kettle and reduces the water quality greatly. The sand-cast ones make much better water for tea. Finally, sand-cast *tetsubins* are one of a kind, as the cast could only be used once, but wax casts could be used a few times, meaning there are similar kettles out there. The good news is that the wax-cast ones are often more desirable to collectors and are therefore much more expensive.

Another thing to look for in a *tetsubin* is a silver pearl, or button, on the lid. Of metal kettles, *tetsubins* are cast from molten ore and are therefore very yang in energy. They are, in fact, so yang that they are actually downward moving energetically,

as all energy moves in cycles according to Five Element theory. This is why *tetsubins* are so downward-flowing energetically, producing heavy, Yin water. The lids, however, are not cast. They are often made of bronze or copper and were handmade separately. The lid also contains the artist or brand name (because of this, you have to be careful of lid-switching, so choose a *tetsubin* whose lid is an obvious fit). The silver knob will pierce through the bronze lid, with a silver rod and washer facing downwards on the inside of the lid. The silver adds upward-moving Yin to the energy of the water and tempers the iron's heaviness slightly. This energetic shift is slight, but we have found it to be effective. (You can experiment by switching lids if you or a friend have *tetsubins*, with and without silver buttons.) Also, we find the touch of silver to be very aesthetically pleasing, capturing the tea aesthetic of a "royal steed tethered to a grass hut," meaning one elegant element in a chaxi or on a piece of teaware contrasted with the simple. For energetic and aesthetic reasons, we consequently choose *tetsubins* with silver buttons and also keep the silver polished.

We have found that, because of the differences in the original iron, coupled with the water that was boiled in it over time, each antique kettle has its own unique flavor. No two are alike. There are those with similarities, but every antique *tetsubin* adds its own flavor to the water. There are, of course, generalities that are common to all good iron kettles: they all impart a sweetness to the water, bringing depth and more flavor. For that reason, they are best suited to brewing heavily-roasted teas, aged teas, puerh and red teas. These teas are already rich, so the added depth—even the extra flavor a kettle may have—only make the tea more complex, varied, deep and rich. We have found that the water brewed in iron *tetsubins* has a heavier mineral content and an earthy Qi. It brings to the water or tea a depth and richness, with a slightly sweet aftertaste depending on the kettle. Because many of these teas are as much or more about drinking the Qi as they are about flavor and aroma, and because they already have deep, rich, earthy flavors, an iron *tetsubin* really enhances them and brings everything to a deeper and

richer level than otherwise possible. As the Qi of the water moves downward and is loaded with earth and Yin, this kind of kettle isn't as nice for oolongs, green, white or other lighter teas—often overpowering their delicateness. There are exceptions to this, though, as some iron kettles are lighter and sweeter, more like silver.

One great thing about iron kettles is that they can be used in conjunction with hardwood charcoal. They are strong and durable and respond extremely well to charcoal. The water cooked on such charcoal always maintains a higher temperature, steams more and brings depth to the tea. The temperature and energy of charcoal is very different from hotplates. Most masters, ancient and modern, agree that in general, higher-quality teas respond better to higher temperatures, while lower-quality teas are better brewed at lower temperatures. The obvious reason for this is that more of the essence of the leaves is released when using higher temperatures. No electric heater can ever get to the depth of hardwood charcoal. It brings out many deeper, subtler levels from a tea, rewarding us with a deeper sense of the tea's essence. Try using hardwood charcoal with your higher-quality teas, and you'll find a whole new world waiting for you.

In order to truly shine, these iron *tetsubins* also really need the added heat. We have found that when we use a hotplate in conjunction with an iron kettle, the effect is not nearly as nice, and we feel like we would have been better off using silver or copper. For the minerals and earthy Qi to really shine, it would seem that these old iron kettles need that extra bit of heat from a natural fire. They were created to be heated in that way. The fire element is purer in a charcoal fire, and the heat deeper. *Tetsubins* hold heat longer than any type of kettle we own, and the heat penetrates deeper, extracting more from teas that are aged and therefore have collapsed cells, the juices of which are hard to access unless they are boiled (which is why we also often re-boil the spent leaves of aged teas after the normal session, as we discussed in the April 2018 issue on boiled tea).

After trying the water from several iron kettles and choosing one, there are some important things to remember

in raising your antique *tetsubin*. Since it is porous, it is important that you continue to fill it with good water (*tetsubins* are actually even more porous than Yixing clay). The water you use with a *tetsubin* is even more important than with a clay kettle. If it has a mineral layer from decades of spring water, you shouldn't continuously fill it with low-quality water. By adding spring water, you will further its seasoning, and it will get better and better with each use. Also, iron *tetsubins* **cannot** be used in conjunction with gas stoves. The flames will crack the bottom of the *tetsubin* slowly over time. If it is necessary to use a gas stove, you could buy a white clay diffusion disk sold throughout Asia. The disk distributes the gas flames through pores and prevents them from harming the bottom of your *tetsubin*. Finally, to prevent rust, it is important that you keep your *tetsubin* dry. For that reason, you must "roast it dry" after every use. This is done simply by emptying out all the remaining water and returning it to the heat source—lower it if possible—and monitoring the inside until the water has evaporated. When using a hotplate, we just turn it off and place the iron pot on top. As the hotplate cools down, there will still be enough heat to evaporate the water inside. This is done with the lid off, but the lid should be returned once the kettle cools down a bit.

If you prefer heavily-roasted tea or aged puerh, an antique *tetsubin* will greatly improve your tea. Aside from the depth in flavor and rich, earthy Qi, an antique *tetsubin* has a certain aesthetic that is appealing, especially when it's resting above some charcoal. *Tetsubins* also make a lovely sound when they boil, which the ancients thought resembled the wind blowing through pine trees. Listening to the "wind sowing through the pines" and feeling the gentle heat of the charcoal is often a worthwhile enough reason to appreciate iron *tetsubins*.



茶 This is our favorite *tetsubin*, which we use the most. It is the template for our clay kettles as well.





# The Craft & Creation of Tetsubins



茶人: Zong Yue (宗岳)

*Since there are far too little historical records of tetsubin production, we have to study the craft as it exists today and use the oral traditions of modern craftsmen and artists to glean how our tetsubins were made. Though machinery and technology have changed, most of the skills that go into the production of tetsubin by hand today are similar to those made long ago.*

**N**anbu *tetsubins*, or *Nanbu tekki* (Nanbu ironware), are generally the first things that come to mind at a mention of iron kettles. *Nanbu tekki* originated from the Nanbu domain during the Edo period, with Morioka as the center of production. They evolved from *chag-ama*, an earlier type of iron tea cauldron (*kama*). “*Nanbu tekki*” refers to all of the handmade ironware currently produced in Iwate Prefecture, including the Mizusawa ironware made in the Date clan territory. In 2010, the Mizusawa Castiron Foundry Cooperative participated in the Taiwan International Tea Expo held in Taipei, led by the cooperative’s general director Oikawa. *Nanbu tekki* were available for sale at the site and were well received by expo attendees.

Iwate Prefecture is home to a number of natural resources needed for making ironware, notably ironsand.

It also produces other resources such as lacquer, charcoal and clay, so the ironware industry has flourished all over the prefecture from early times. In the past it also enjoyed the protection afforded by being part of the Nanbu domain, so the ironware industry became well developed; even today the area is still famed for its *Nanbu tekki* ironware.

In the previous few articles, we focused on the development of *Nanbu tekki* and on introducing some of the artisans who make it. These introductions aim to offer some knowledge about the heritage and culture of these kettles to fellow enthusiasts. In order to give you a better sense of just how difficult it is to craft a quality *Nanbu tekki* pot (although I have never made one myself), in this article I shall try to provide an introduction to the crafting process based on the materials that I have collated.

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# THE CRAFTING PROCESS

鐵壺的工藝與創造

*The process for crafting and creating fine tetsubins is roughly as follows:*

1. Design & Sketch
2. Making the Wooden Mold
3. Making Attachable Parts (Spout, Handle & Lid)
4. Making the Casting Mold
5. Casting
6. De-Molding & De-Sanding
7. Coloring & Attaching the Handle





茶 This is the designing and mold-making phase. In the olden days, molds were first made of wood, so they are still called the “wooden mold,” even though they are made of metal. Traditionally, the molds could only be used once, meaning that every single kettle was unique, but modern molds can be filled with sand more than once. Some tetsubin were wax cast, which was repeatable. These do not have a mold line through the center and are more glossy. Here we have photographs of the designing and sketching and the sifting of the sand that will be used to make the mold. The sand is then poured into the metal mold and smoothed out. After that the design and calligraphy are applied to the mold, which is then left to dry for some time before moving on to the next phase of casting, which is shown on the following page.



### 1. Design & Sketch

When making a *tetsubin*, the first step is to decide on the shape and decoration. In general, the maker will consider whether to use a traditional shape and decorative motifs, or to create something entirely new. In terms of composition, there are a number of factors to consider, including the overall shape of the pot, the size of the opening, the shape of the spout, lid and lid knob, and the overall look and color. After these things have been decided, they are recorded in a scale drawing.

### 2. Making the “Wooden Mold”

Next, the artisan will cut a cross-section of the pot based on the composition drawing and will make a “wooden mold” based on this, which will in turn be used to make the casting mold. This initial mold usually needs to be made in three parts: the upper section of the main body of the pot, the lower section and the lid. This so-called “wooden mold” got its name because these molds were originally made out of logs; however, these days they

are actually most commonly made from 1.5-millimeter iron sheeting. Since *tetsubins* are hollow inside, the center of the iron mold must be filled with an inner mold made of sand. So, during the crafting process, sometimes the artisan will make the inner mold at the same time as the “wooden mold.” To give the *tetsubin* a certain thickness, the inner mold must be a bit smaller than the outer mold.

### 3. Making Attachable Part (Spout & Lid)

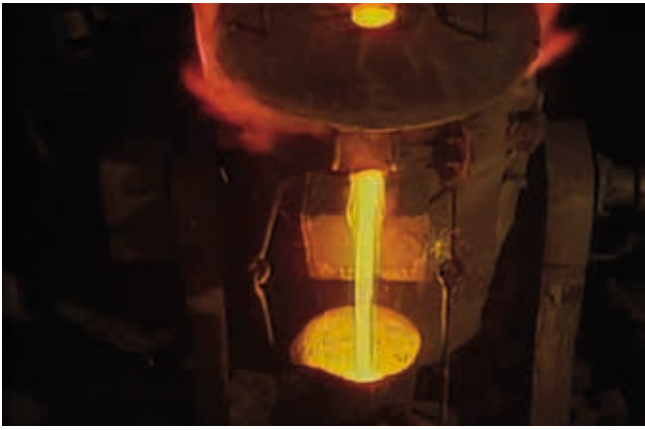
These are the parts that are separate from the main body of the pot and will be attached after casting. They include the spout and the knob for the top of the lid, as well as the metal rings that attach the handle to the body of the pot. Separate casting molds must be made for these. The lid knob is often in the shape of a plum blossom, chrysanthemum flower, gourd or jewel; some artisans also make them in original shapes such as horses, cows or butterflies. The rings for attaching the handle might be made to look like distant mountains or ghostly faces, varying in

shape to best suit the individual pot. There really is an infinite array of creative choices in these.

### 4. Making the Casting Mold

The first step in this process is to make a full mold out of a fired brick-like clay, which will form the outer part of the casting mold. Next, the mold is filled with a composite of fine sand, clay and clay slurry. The “wooden mold” is then placed inside the full mold and rotated to carve out the intended shape. This forms the casting mold. The process of rotating to carve out the shape is called “pulling the mold” in Japanese. In the early stages of this process, the attachable parts—such as the spout and handle rings—are fixed in place. Then a relatively fine composite of sand and clay will be added before continuing to carve out the shape. Then the final shaping of the mold is carried out with a fine sandpaper, a bit like tough silk fabric.

Once this process of carving out the shape is done, and before the mold has completely dried, the artisan must start to carve the decorative patterns.



茶 To the far left we have the dried mold being prepared for casting, including the lid. On the top right of the far page are all the ornaments that are attached afterwards, like the spout, lid, button, handle and the rings that will attach the handle to the body. On this page we have the casting itself, which was traditionally done with “pig iron” from the earth or beaches. Above, the cast kettle and mold are removed with tongs to cool down. Then, an iron tool is used to scrape off the affixed sand, especially near the design. Inside, there are some bits of iron that leaked from the cast. It is nigh impossible to cast a *tetsubin* without any mistakes, so the rule is that if there are six or less blemishes, the kettle is sold. Then, bottom right shows the kettle being cooked with lacquer and tea to blacken it and protect it from rust.

The traditional dotted *arare* (“hail-stone” or “Buddha’s hair”) pattern is made using a metal carving stick. Each dot is individually imprinted by hand; a single *tetsubin* decorated with this pattern will have around two thousand dots. For other types of motif, the original sketch is often stuck onto the sand mold and used as a guide to engrave the pattern.

At some point during this process, the artisan will also make the inner mold. This is made using the same method as for the outer casting mold. In general, this inner mold will also be made in upper and lower sections. Once the sand mold is complete, the center is filled with more sand, and the upper and lower parts are stuck together using clay slurry. Once it’s dry, the inner mold is removed. At the very end, when the casting mold is dry, it is re-fired using wood charcoal. At this point, the casting mold is finished.

### 5. Casting

Once the casting mold is finished, the upper and lower parts of the mold are fixed together, and the inner mold

is placed inside them. During casting, the mold is placed so that the bottom of the pot will be facing upwards. As such, the inner mold is also placed bottom-up, and several small iron or metal disks are placed between its bottom and the outer mold. This is to prevent the inner mold from floating upwards when the molten iron is poured in.

### 6. De-Molding & De-Sanding

After the iron is poured into the mold and has cooled down, the casting mold can be dismantled, and the finished product taken out and cleaned of sand. This is usually done by tapping the sand until it crumbles, then removing any sand that remains stuck to the inside. Along the seam where the upper and lower sections of the mold were joined, there may be some protruding bits of iron; these are removed by tapping or grinding them off.

After this final shaping step, the *tetsubin* is fired at about 800–1000 °C in a charcoal fire. The main purpose of this is for the *tetsubin* to develop an acidized coating, which prevents rust. It is said that this technique was

invented by a craftsman by the name of Arisaka Fuzaemon. As it comes into direct contact with the charcoal fire, the outer surface of the *tetsubin* may become blackened. This blackened layer can be removed with a metal brush.

### 7. Coloring & Attaching the Handle

Next, the *tetsubin* is tested to make sure it has no leaks. If it passes the test, it can then be colored. The *tetsubin* is placed above a charcoal fire at a temperature of around 200 °C and is then stained with a mixture of lacquer and strong tea. Some *tetsubin* handles and lids are handmade separately by specialized craftsmen. The handles are most often crafted from sheet iron, which is beaten into a tube shape. Once finished, the handle is attached to the *tetsubin*, marking the completion of the whole crafting process. The lids are often made of copper and/or bronze with gold and/or silver inlay and buttons/pearls. Sometimes there are other materials used as well, like the beautiful amber button/pearl shown on the next page.

## THE LANGUAGE OF TETSUBINS

鐵壺的語言

As described above, the crafting process for a handmade *tetsubin* is extremely meticulous and complex. If we break the process down into finer detail, there are over sixty individual steps. Traditionally, a mold was only used once, making sand-cast *tetsubins* unique.

Each detail must be carried out very carefully. From the early design sketches to the finished product, the whole process takes at least two months. It takes many years of practice to become a specialized *tetsubin* maker, let alone a master who signs each creation. Without a lot of hard work and accumulated experience, it's very difficult to gain recognition as a *tetsubin* maker. Of course, this traditional handcrafting method is different from large-scale machine production. The skill of the *tetsubin* master can be seen in every step of the process. Each trace left behind by the crafting process says something about the *tetsubin's* maker.

This said, it is worth noting that with handmade *tetsubins*, the traditional crafting technique currently in use can leave a few small imperfections. For example, the casting process can leave some irregularities at the place where the *tetsubin* and the inner mold meet. Because of this, there's a Japanese saying that has been handed down in the old *tetsubin* workshops which means "six injuries, no harm done." The meaning is that over the course of making one *tetsubin*, even if it has six small signs of damage, it's still not considered a failure; all it takes is to mend these small "injuries," and the pot can still be used. From this, we can get an idea of just how difficult it is to make a perfect, flawless *tetsubin*—so we really must be careful when using one of these wonderful kettles.

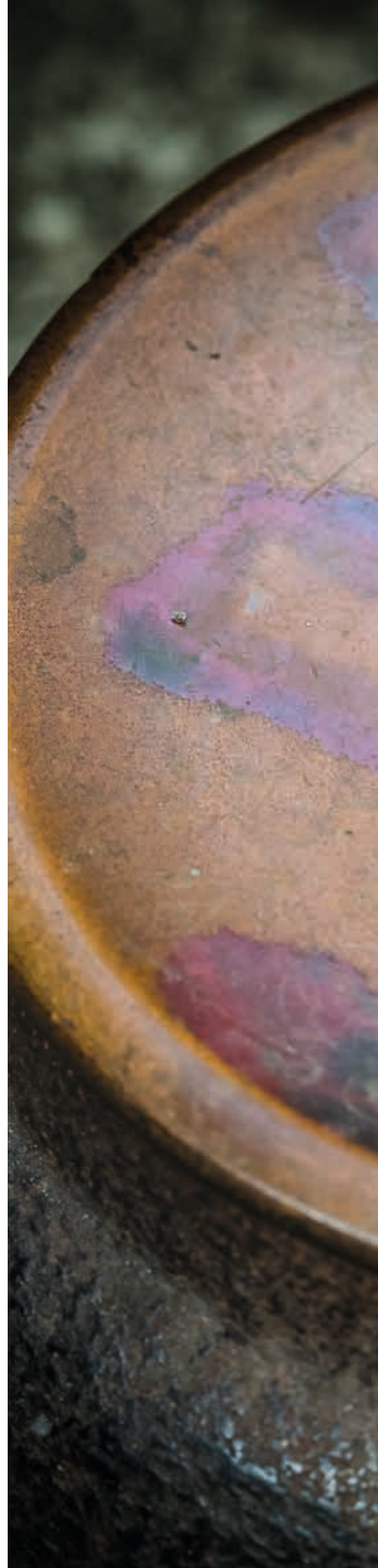
From observing this crafting process, we can also get a clear picture of the basic characteristics of a handmade *tetsubin*. Although every *tetsubin* studio has its own crafting techniques, *tetsubin* masters also pursue their own new iron casting methods, so these two factors shouldn't be lumped together. That said, on a *tetsubin* made using the

process described above, you should be able to clearly see the mark left from casting at the point where the upper and lower sections of the casting mold were joined, as well as the place at the bottom of the pot where the molten iron was poured in and the traces of the small iron or metal disks that were placed on the inner mold to stop it from floating upwards.

Each *tetsubin* speaks to us in its own language, each in its own way, telling us the story of the master who crafted it, of their creative skill and artistic labor. So, pay careful attention when admiring each *tetsubin*, and listen for its language; if you do, you are bound to find one that speaks to you.



**茶** *Sometimes the craftsmanship of the lid is absolutely exquisite. This is one of the Center's kettles (shown in full on p. 30). It is around 150 years old. It has an amber button, which is gorgeous and also functional, as it doesn't get hot. We have seen buttons/pearls made of other materials, like jade and once even vulture skull. These amazing lids were often crafted separately and made by different artisans than the ones who were casting the kettles. The lids often hold most of the value of a *tetsubin*, since they also have the artist's signature inside. In fact, you have to be careful of lid swapping!*





新築紀念

瀧原化學工場

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# The Unknown History of Tetsubins

茶人: Liang Jun Zhi (梁俊智)

*There are so many unanswered questions about where tetsubins come from. Other than searching for answers in the images we see in our kettle's steam, there are some invitations towards further research and exploration. And perhaps someone in this very community will write the next article or book that all tetsubin lovers could use to grow our understanding!*

**D**uring the period beginning around 170 years ago and lasting until World War Two, the *tetsubin* became widespread in Japan as an everyday household implement. This cast-iron kettle with a handle and spout also made its way into semi-formal tea ceremonies. However, most *tetsubins* were limited to everyday household use, and although finely crafted, very few bore any decoration. Most *tetsubins* were hung over a charcoal flame on an iron hook that was adjustable in length, called a “*jizaikagi* (free hook),” or placed over the fire on a tripod called a “*gotoku*.”

During the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the growing trend for tea drinking, these pots were incorporated into tea sets and inevitably became highly valued. They were often beautifully decorated, sometimes even inlaid with gold, silver or copper embellishments. Pieces of this type can be found in museums and private collections in many Western countries. Thanks to their great popularity in Europe, not only because they were identifiable as “teapots,” but also because

they were a representative example of Japanese iron crafting. *Tetsubins* can be found in major museums all over western Europe. Despite this, they are relatively scarce compared to some other types of museum pieces, numbering only around forty or fifty pots in total, and private collectors who own *tetsubins* tend not to have many. For example, hundreds of Dutch collectors have *tetsubins* in their collections, but most of them only have one pot, or just a few; there are a very small number of private collectors in Europe who own as many as twenty to eighty pots. There are only occasional references to be found about *tetsubins* in European-language publications.

Among the relevant books, essays and maps published in European languages, we find some reports in German on Japanese metalwork, ceremonies and customs by Friedrich von Wenckstern and Oskar Nachod, dating from 1859–1893 and 1906–1926 respectively. These reports are considered very significant, but do not appear to have drawn much attention to *tetsubins*. Similar reports also appear

in English-language publications such as: *Japan: Its history, Arts and Literature* by Captain Frank Brinkley and *Things Japanese* by Basil H. Chamberlain; yet they do not mention *tetsubins*. The first reference to the *tetsubin* in European literature was by a German geographer named J. J. Rein who was stationed in Japan from 1874–1875. In 1886 he published a book about his experiences called *Japan nach Reisen und Studien (Japan: Travels and Researches)*. In the book he makes a clear reference to a type of cast-iron kettle with a copper lid, made by the iron-casting studios of Kinjudo in Kyoto and Ryubun in Osaka. He also gives an overview of the outward appearance and the work involved in the whole inlaying process, as well as how certain special surfaces are crafted. At almost the same time, American zoologist Edward S. Morse published his book *Japanese Homes and Their Surroundings*. Morse used drawings to illustrate the method of boiling water in a *tetsubin*, explaining how to suspend the kettle above the fireplace on a chain, which is still done in some places even today.

鐵壺未知歷史



Another author from the same period, British metallurgist William Gowland, presented a report at the Japan Society of London prior to 1899, entitled *Metals and Metal-Working in Old Japan*. In it he mentions *tetsubins*, stressing that the local people used metal vessels and tableware with copper embellishments and also explaining that *tetsubins* were vessels for boiling water and were decorated with fine metalwork in the shape of leaves or stripes.

It is worth noting that in the literature that exists, and even in Japanese books, *tetsubins* have been almost completely overlooked. One example is *All About Tea* by William H. Ukers—more than half of the book's one thousand pages pertain to Chinese and Japanese tea, but even though it constantly emphasizes the importance of hot water in brewing tea, it doesn't mention *tetsubins* as a tea implement at all. The sole exception is *Der Teekult in Japan (The Tea Cult in Japan)* by Anna Berliner, in which the author mentions that when tea ceremonies were conducted outside of a dedicated tea room, the tea

box (*chabako*) would be accompanied by a *tetsubin*, rather than using a *kama* (cauldron) with metal loops (sometimes called "ears") at either side and ladling the water out with a bamboo spoon.

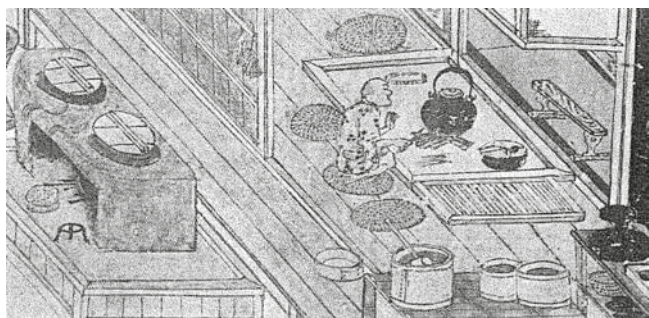
This shortage of information is lamented by tea and *tetsubin* connoisseur Rand Castile in *The Way of Tea*, where he writes, "There are almost no materials on *tetsubins*. This is an unfortunate oversight and means that one must start from the very beginning and fumble along before learning how to use them." More recently, around 1981, Kodansha International published a book called *Japanese Teapots*; in it author Kanzaki Noritake briefly mentions the use of iron teapots and kettles. In *Japan Handbuch (Handbook on Japan)*, chief editor Horst Hammitzsch also mentions *tetsubins*, but from the photographs in the book it is clear he has confused *tetsubins* with *chagama*, another type of tea utensil more akin to a cauldron.

In Japan, only a small minority of people have realized the value of *tetsubins*. They are mostly people born

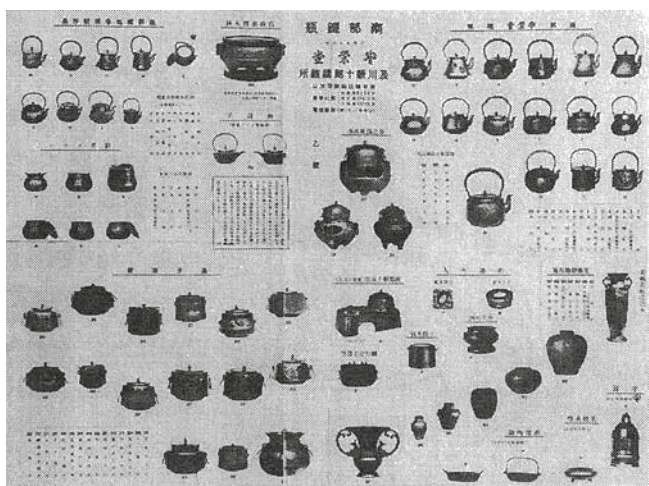
before World War Two who were accustomed to using *tetsubins* at home; yet, this unfortunately doesn't provide us with any further reference material. An important reference book from 1967, *Nihon no kogeï* (Japanese Industrial Arts), contains a chapter entitled "Kinko (Metalwork)." In this chapter, it is mentioned that Morioka/Iwate Prefecture, which had always had a significant focus on traditional kettle-making techniques, also became famous due to its kettles made in this traditional manner. Hence, this book provides invaluable information regarding traditional cast-iron kettle-making techniques.

The eight-volume *Dai Nihon Hyakka Jiten (Great Japanese Encyclopedia)* is also an important source of information. The text provides some introductory material on *tetsubins*, mentioning the use of bronze lids as well as inlaid gold and silver embellishments, all of which often feature on *tetsubins*.

From both Japanese and Western literature, we can see that the historical development of *tetsubins* is closely linked to the societal background of



## 遺失的遺產



the time. However, the existing knowledge on *tetsubins*—whether in terms of ordinary use, technical use or the manufacturing process—is incomplete and hasn't been organized systematically. To this end, here are some questions that we can explore in the name of further investigation:

1. When did the *tetsubin* first appear in Japan?
2. What were the circumstances surrounding its appearance?
3. What specific factors determined the shape and material?
4. How did the *tetsubin* come to be used for brewing tea and for everyday household use?
5. What criteria define a well-functioning *tetsubin*?
6. How were *tetsubins* viewed in Japan? Is there any evidence of people preferring them to a regular pot for heating water?

7. Where were the centers of *tetsubin* production, and which artists were involved?

8. What was the role of these cast-iron pots in society and the economy?

9. How were *tetsubins* made?

10. What effect did the introduction of Western technology have on the manufacture of *tetsubins* in Japan?

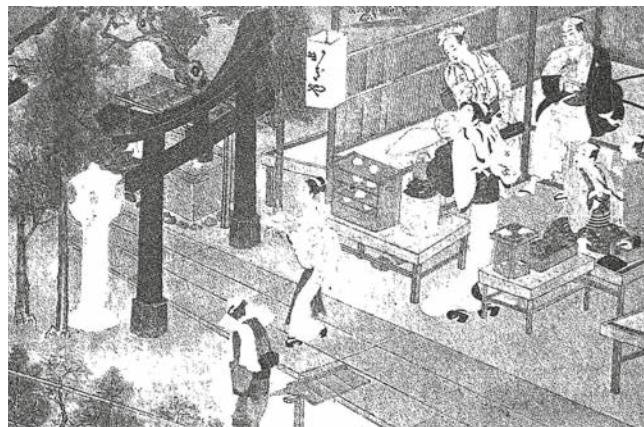
The above questions have only been explored up until World War Two, since for various reasons, *tetsubins* no longer retained their former importance after that time. From 1945, *tetsubins* (*Nanbu tekki* ironware) were produced almost exclusively at Morioka, and the scale of production decreased significantly. To turn to another aspect of the topic, although the development of tea culture in China and Japan are inseparably linked, there hasn't been any detailed investigation as to any potential influence of China on the development of the *tetsubin*. Let's hope someone starts this!

In Japanese culture, there is a strong link between tea and iron. In the existing histories of tea, most Western publications do not make much mention of the use of iron teaware for tea brewing; instead, they mostly focus on the brewing of powdered tea (*matcha*).

After more in-depth research, Japanese historians discovered that the history of iron-crafting culture in Japan dates back much earlier than original records would suggest. The earliest iron kettles were made from “pig iron (crude iron)” that had to be smelted in a furnace using the traditional Japanese method before it could be made into kettles. From 1868, many of the Western-style furnaces in Japan also began using pig iron, which led to a turning point in the history of iron refining in Japan. Lastly, there hasn't been any detailed research into the decoration of *tetsubins*. Even though inlaid copper or silver embellishments are a noteworthy feature when acquiring pots for a collection, the information available on these decorative features is still extremely limited. We all hope more scholars will take up the baton!



日常



茶 These are various woodblock prints and drawings/illustrations that show *tetsubins* in use. Many of them are taken from the Western books mentioned in this article and give an idea about the historical use of *tetsubins*. To the far left is a copy of an advertisement from a pre-WWII magazine offering various Nanbu ironware: everything from *tetsubins* to teapots, flower vases to *kamas* (cauldrons). The craft continued until the wartime when the government forbade the use of precious iron for art. To the immediate left, we see servants (“*cha tong*, 茶童”) blowing through a bamboo tube to flame up the charcoal just as we do here at the Center, continuing ancient traditions. The water in the foreground is probably from a special well or spring (or at least that is what we imagine when we look upon works like this...)

## Conclusions

*Below are four possible approaches to exploring the above questions:*

1. Spend an estimated five or more years inspecting various *tetsubins* from museums and private collections, analyzing a large number of pots in terms of their shape, characteristics, signatures and seals. Since there is no existing information to refer to, there would be no way to reliably date the *tetsubins* based on their signatures or seals, so this method of research would be very difficult.
2. There are still no clear criteria for distinguishing *tetsubins*, either in Japanese or European-language publications. So, it would be necessary to sort through and select relevant information on Japanese tea drinking, etiquette, customs, arts and crafts. Based on the current literature, Japanese historical records and resources can generally be considered trustworthy, unless there is a question of vested interests. Japan places great value on traditional crafting techniques, so in this respect, we can be sure that the relevant information will be carefully recorded for future reference.
3. Of the Western sources, especially those dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some were written by non-experts, so they cannot be fully relied upon as official historical records. However, we can still weigh the information given in these sources and make inferences about which parts are accurate to help us in our research.
4. Another source of information is the large body of available Japanese books, prints and paintings. They provide a number of useful illustrations, which are particularly valuable for identifying time periods.



## *A Brief Timeline of Tetsubins*

**1083–1087 (3rd year of the Eihō era to 1st year of the Kanji era):** Iron casters who specialize in making pots and kettles began to appear.

**1914 (3rd year of the Taishō era):** The golden age of tetsubins begins roughly around the start of World War One.

**1938 (13th year of the Shōwa era):** Due to firearms regulation policies, there is a total ban on the production of all ironware, such as tetsubins, chagama (tea kettles), vases and so on.

**1942 (17th year of the Shōwa era):** In order to preserve traditional Japanese crafting techniques, a limited number of tetsubins are once more allowed to be produced.

**1945 (20th year of the Shōwa era):** World War Two ends, and production of cast iron tetsubins, an everyday household item, fully resumes.

**1947 (22nd year of the Shōwa era):** A typhoon results in a pause in production.

**1948 (23rd year of the Shōwa era):** Due to further typhoons and floods, the Nanbu Tekki Ironware Factory suffers extensive flooding, and production is ceased for a longer period.





# 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!). 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](mailto:voicesfromthehut@gmail.com) We cannot wait to read all the exciting articles to come!*

## INFUSING GRIEF WITH LOVE

✪: *Christin Ament*

I came to befriend grief and sorrow through my own personal losses and the losses of the patients I serve as a hospice and palliative care provider. Many nights I spent wondering about grief and loss, and about what I could do to help people move through their grief. I had an epiphany one day as I sat with my morning ritual of tea and meditation as I realized that the space held by Tea was similar to that of a chaplain, social worker and best friend. I decided to bring Tea alongside me as I worked with patients, families and friends of those dealing with grief, loss and sorrow.

Grief, accompanying the loss of something or someone that one holds dear, is arguably one of the most universal human experiences and, with few exceptions, has a significant impact on people's lives. While no one is immune to death or the death of a loved one, in the West we have become a culture that often avoids talking about and denies the reality of death. Instead, we tend to focus on our accolades, our wealth or our reputation, because to embrace death is to embrace the reality that we are merely human and that this fragile human life is not made permanent by anything within our control. Thus, as

Earnest Becker so eloquently put it in his book *The Denial of Death*, “Man cannot endure his own littleness unless he can translate it into meaningfulness on the largest possible level.” So, we search for a higher meaning, a larger purpose and perhaps we can find it before death takes us. However, I would espouse that if this meaning is not found or embodied fully, death can bring with it a whole host of emotions that I have seen time and time again. The dying process varies for each individual and the grieving process varies just as much. Each person has created their own story about their death and their life which dictate the end for them. Subsequently, each person's unique story will shape their personal sojourn through grief and sorrow.

Sorrow, often following grief, carves riverbeds in our souls, deepening us as it flows in and out of our lives. Grief, in helping us adapt to the inevitable changes that occur in the wake of loss, is leading us back into ourselves and, ultimately, back into love. Grief and sorrow are the sustained note in the song of Life. To be human is to know these emotions in many forms. This should not be perceived as a depressing truth, but rather the path which guides

us to find our way into the grace that lies in sorrow. These emotions allow us to fully embody meaning and understand the human condition. To journey to the land of grief brings us face to face with the most tender part of who we are—our vulnerability.

This is what struck the strongest chord in my heart when I began to reflect on my connection with Tea and how She could hold space for those in grief. I found Her at a time of deep grief and an *inability* to allow love to flow in and be vulnerable. It was during the beginning stages of my relationship with Tea that my inability to be vulnerable and open my heart started to reverse. Tea showed me meaning through reflection and stillness. Tea showed me softness with no strings attached. Tea has this ability to hold space like the best friend you could imagine, and in doing so allows love to pour in, opening up space for acceptance and vulnerability. Vulnerability, I realized, is not weakness, but rather part of our humanity. To heal, we must learn to trust the tender place inside ourselves that has no answers. However, we may feel disoriented as the self we thought we knew gets lost in the chaos and unpredictability of grief.





Many of us keep busy to numb the ever-present feelings of helplessness, but this busyness once again encourages us to stray from the road less traveled and follow the path of least resistance as we avoid our relationship with death, grief, sorrow and loss.

I believe many of our illnesses today to be rooted in unprocessed grief and sorrow, masked in a narrow category of “mental illness.” Historically, grief was said to be an energetic transference in the psychic realm when one was unsuccessful in their mourning, leading to a state of prolonged melancholia. As early as the late 19th century, Freud documented that grief may resemble other syndromes, such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress—which has led some researchers to regard severe responses to sustained grief as a distinct disorder to be treated with pharmaceuticals.

Society often expects us to continue to function and live our lives as we had previously, since to grieve is to be weak or to have a “distinct disorder.” However, by doing this we end up living two lives: one where we meet our social responsibilities and expectations; the other in the lonely realm of loss, where we experience everything

through the lens of sadness. It is here in the deepest places of our hearts that we begin the painful and unavoidable journey of grieving.

Many human experiences and conditions have expected outcomes, and treatment is aimed at bringing about an intended resolution. In grief, the goal is shifted to acceptance and creating a new understanding of life, a higher meaning. However, this is often easier said than done. Western society does a poor job of allowing people to grieve and process loss, and those in the medical field often add insult to injury by not providing space or therapeutic presence to a process that each one of us will experience in some capacity or another. Pharmaceuticals, rather than loving-kindness, are often the treatment plan. Fortunately, Tea has shown me how compassionate communication can shift this experience for those suffering with grief and has shown time and time again how she can act as a catalyst for emotional processing and healing to occur through ritual and conscious grieving.

We cannot deny the reality of loss. No one chooses the path of suffering, but here it is. And because our world is saturated with duality, we often be-

lieve we will not be happy until the sadness stops. Thus, this is the role of pharmaceuticals—to make the sadness stop. But the heart and soul do not live in this black-and-white world. As a result of this duality, we end up living in a suspended state of grief, waiting for relief from the pain. But conscious grieving offers an alternative. As we lean into and learn from loss, conscious grieving invites us to allow both sadness and hope into our time of mourning, to open our hearts to both gratitude and loneliness in our grief. Conscious grieving calls us into dual awareness. Tea acts as a catalyst to allow people to tap into this consciousness. Conscious grieving is a process of moving from “equilibrium” in our inner worlds and social worlds before a death, to new equilibrium following a loss.

When serving Tea to those grieving and those transitioning to death, conscious grieving is demonstrated. As Nelson Mandela noted, “Grief’s teachings are meant to return us to wholeness and to hope.” We are not to run from grief, but rather to sit with grief as we sit with Tea—held. We can begin to feel the softening of our hearts as we sit with the pain of a loss.

We can then consciously grieve. To sit in this space consciously is to know that to mourn is to touch the substance of divine compassion. And just as ice must melt before it can begin to flow, we too must become liquid before we can flow into the larger mind of meaning and awareness. I have been privy to many moments of this melt, where rigid bodies are sitting in front of me held together by a farce of strength, only to become softened bowl by bowl and allowed to grieve. I am often moved to tears as I am witness to the tears of others. There is a sacredness in these tears—a knowing that the tears come from a place of love. Love is the gravity of the soul. We are created in love, called to live our lives with love, discover our best selves through love, and of course, experience deep loss because of love. For, without love, we would not feel loss. When sitting with Tea,

One experience that I vividly recall involved a patient named Gordy. He was deeply steeped in his community, he was loved by all of those around him, and he had an infectious hunger for life. However, his life was taken because of an incurable and inoperable brain tumor. When his wife Debbie lost him, a part of her died. Debbie's emotions were pulled back and forth between Gordy's bedside and the home she shared with her sons in the role as Mother. Though Debbie was grateful for the peaceful death Gordy had experienced, her own heart was broken. Once everything had settled, Debbie entered into the emptiness of her grief. She loved her life with her children but felt trapped in the pain of her loss. While Debbie tried to find ways to distract herself, she knew the best way to heal from her loss was to find a way to bring Gordy back into her life where

Debbie started to make meditation and Tea part of her daily ritual and subsequently part of her healing through grief. The making of ritual is a creative act fundamental in human life. What is too vast and shapeless to deal with in its totality, we deal with in small, manageable pieces through ritual. We do this for the sake of practicality, but we also do this for a higher purpose—to relate safely to the mysterious, to communicate with the transcendent, and to find a higher meaning in the experience. As grievers, many are not actively seeking a spiritual experience. Yet Tea and grief lead us to the space of reverence where we meet our soul. As it turns out, ritual speaks the language of the soul because of its ability to both embrace and transcend the realities of human life.

While no one can escape the inevitability of death, loss or grief, we can all learn from Tea and from ritual that there is beauty in our suffering. The moment we allow ourselves to sit as a friend with grief and sorrow is the moment, we become a more compassionate and empathetic being, to everything and everyone. Cha Dao teaches us this Way. And Tea offers Her strength, softness, love, and grace so that we may find the space to heal in a healthy and conscious way. She reminds us that we are to revere death as much as we revere birth—that everything is connected, and that birth and love do not exist without death and grief.



***“Ritual also plays a significant role in our soul’s journey with grief. Rituals keep us in the present moment, where memories and dreams rest together without expectation but with an attitude of reverence... Tea shows us reverence for all things...”***

we feel love. This is how we utilize Tea to transform suffering into the healing medicine of consciously grieving.

Ritual also plays a significant role in our soul's journey with grief. Rituals keep us in the present moment, where memories and dreams rest together without expectation but with an attitude of reverence. Wu De often talks about how Tea shows us reverence for all things—that the way in which we tie our shoes or treat a stranger is the same way that we should treat our greatest teaware or the Dalai Lama (paraphrasing). That when we revere the ordinary with the same zeal that we revere the exquisite, life begins to shine all around us. This translates into seeing how beautiful loss can be if we revere it as something beautiful. Ritual plays a large role in training our mind toward an attitude of reverence for all things. And that is life-changing, for us and the world around us. Change is the only constant.

he had always been. She knew his role in her life was to change, but she needed to affirm his presence in her life on a daily basis to move through her grief.

We sat in a tea ceremony together and had moments of silence, coupled with moments of stories of Gordy. She described sweet memories of him, and we laughed as she revisited memories of fiddle music by the river and catching fireflies in the evenings. Her voice quieted and she remembered some of their most sacred promises and cherished memories. Debbie and I shared Tea many times together after Gordy's death. Tea was the only time and place that she was allowed to share her memories as well as the silence needed to process her grief, bringing Gordy into the present rather than leaving him in the past. She changed her relationship with Gordy as she invited him to be part of her daily ritual, giving reverence to every memory and every emotion—good and bad.

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# A CALL TO ACTION

**T**he simplest things in life can be the most transformative. What is it about a few leaves in a bowl that when added to hot water can change your life so significantly? The mystery of that medicine has driven many of us to join this global community, in search of communion and presence through the Leaf. And what a wonderful community those few leaves have gathered together; how lucky we truly are! As part of my search down this path of tea, I have found that this community has offered me more than I ever could have imagined, adding to the mystery. How has fellowship through tea added so much richness to my life? I believe many of you feel the same way and ask similar questions. What is it that this community, this way of life, has to offer that inspires us so? It must be something we need, deep down, something that nourishes us wholly. I believe that something is connection, and tea has always been known as the “Great Connector.”

It is no secret that people are simply transformed after their ten-day experience at Tea Sage Hut. Time and time again I’ve heard this claim, not that there haven’t been bumps along the way; that’s only natural when humans live together. But the overall consensus is abundant and positive change that lasts in the lives of thousands of tea lovers. One of the many reasons I continue to serve at Tea Sage Hut and Global Tea Hut is because of this very experience I see in people on a regular basis. There’s something in the roots of this ancient tradition that, when tapped into and honored, affects us to our very core. It’s

got nothing to do with me and everything to do with the Leaf. To recognize that power of Tea and to do what you can to facilitate its transformative effect, even in a small way, is deeply nourishing. The amazing thing is that it’s not a particular person or even group of people that make this experience possible, but a collection of energy and wisdom gathered and refined over time and passed on over the centuries through countless beings who have dedicated themselves to this Way of Life. This is one way of describing a lineage, and it is the collective strength and wisdom of this tea lineage that nourishes us so.

It is exactly this experience that we want to share with all of you and to pass down to future generations of tea lovers just like us. Though we were unexpectedly forced to move from one center to the next, the real impetus behind this movement forward has always been to share this Way of Life with you and to protect this beautiful tradition that so many of you have come to know and love. Light Meets Life has always been a matter of “when,” not “if,” and that time is upon us!

Tea Sage Hut has housed this powerful tea lineage for over a decade, and it’s time to move into a bigger and more permanent center to preserve this meaningful Way. Light Meets Life will make this Life of Tea available to us now and into the future. What an amazing opportunity to give something that is truly special to you to future tea lovers. It is for this same reason that we store so much tea. There is far too much for us to drink in this lifetime, but there is great joy in knowing that many decades

from now, people will be healed by this stored tea in the same way that we are now, thanks to the efforts of those who came before us. We invite you to be a part of that beautiful vision, to give what you can towards Light Meets Life for those of us now and in the future, whether through monetary donations, word of mouth, social media exposure, prayer, and/or any other kind of support that helps to bring our new center to fruition.

Living longer isn’t about quantity or length of time on this planet. It’s not a pill or a procedure, a special diet or a morning routine; it’s about leaving this world better than you came into it, passing that on to future generations, and being part of the great give-away. This is the potential of being intimate with the creation of Light Meets Life. Always remember, just a few leaves in a bowl can change a life. Even a “few leaves” of support towards Light Meets Life can make all the difference in the world, because those few leaves are part of a much bigger and older timeline that we can’t always see. The collective potential behind your actions is greater than you can ever imagine.

So many of you have already given so much—thank you! Light Meets Life will be the result of endless help from countless people like you. As always, we are raising a bowl to you and yours and especially look forward to the day when we can raise a bowl together, in person, at Light Meets life, the greatest center of tea the world has ever seen!

*Shen Su*

[www.lightmeetslife.org](http://www.lightmeetslife.org)

愛正在改變世界一碗接一碗

呼喚改變世界的行動



## Testimony of Donors:

茶人: *Robin Durfee*

Although I did not have the opportunity to visit the Sage Tea Hut in Taiwan, I want to support the creation of the new 'Light Meets Life' Center. This tradition, this Ceremony and these teachings have touched me deeply and have had an impact on my life and the way I relate to Tea.

茶人: *Nicolas Wormser*

A short stay two years ago provided me with wisdom beyond expectations in many forms (tea, teachings, care, reflections). I'm confident Light Meets Life is on the way to its full glory and I'm grateful to have the chance to support it on its journey! Looking forward to meeting Wu De, Shen and the Tea Hut family in the new space.

茶人: *Tarmo Aidantausta*

Tea with the help of this global family of ours has brought so much healing and love in my world! Every payday I'll donate a bit more.

茶人: *Timo Einpaul*

I donated with gratitude for the many ways this project has shaped my life.

茶人: *Megan Ganatta*

I am very grateful to Global Tea Hut for opening my eyes to the depth of Tea and for creating a tea community, and I hope to come and visit the Center one day soon, wherever we end up!

茶人: *Rivo Sarapik & Signe Sillasoo*

We donated because Tea, Global Tea Hut, Wu De, the teachings, every volunteer and member of the Global Tea Hut community have given us something beyond words—The Way.

茶人: *James Apperley*

Global Tea Hut and Cha Dao have changed my life. All I know of Tea and a life of Tea I owe to Global Tea Hut and I want to do my bit to support Light Meets Life.

茶人: *Wesley Gade*

Although there is some sadness and fear at the loss of Tea Sage Hut, there is so much more joy, hope, and love for the creation of Light Meets Life. Thank you again Global Tea Hut community for introducing me to the Way of Tea and may we one day share a bowl together in our new Center.

茶人: *David Melladew*

I couldn't think of a more sincere and well-intentioned organization than Global Tea Hut to donate to.

[www.gofundme.com/globalteahut](http://www.gofundme.com/globalteahut)

# TeaWayfarer

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

I first met with Tea in Miaoli, Taiwan. This may seem unusual to have one's first experience be at the Tea Sage Hut, but I believe very much that I was meant to be at that place, at that moment. While I had certainly drunk tea before, I had never appreciated it with such reverence that was formally introduced to me during my time at the Hut. I was on a six-month tour around the globe to learn about traditional medicine practices at their places of origin, so that I could juxtapose these practices with my Western medical training. Taiwan was not on my list of places to go. In fact, there was a cardiologist waiting for me in Tanzania during the time I found myself at the Tea Sage Hut. I remember sitting on a stoop in Delhi, contemplating where I could go for a safe shelter after I had just suffered a health scare. My partner reminded me of the Tea Sage Hut, and I called to see if there were any spots available. Fortunately for me, they said "yes." The rest is history. Life has forever been changed by that single moment.

My beginner's mind was wide open as I sat there absorbing everything that Wu De had to say about Tea, mindfulness, practice, reverence, and the interconnectedness of all things. These teachings and this practice tied everything I had been grappling with into a nice, pretty package, while leaving me simultaneously flipped upside down. When I returned to the States, I began working in hospice, as getting back into critical care seemed the furthest thing from my heart. In beginning this work with those who understand they are terminal, there still seemed to be such resistance and anxiety associated with the end of life. It was as if everyone, including the patients themselves, knew the end was near, yet no one seemed to acknowledge the elephant in the room. We would go round and round talking about intervention options and drug choices, and any time acceptance of dying would come up, it was shut down and pushed back upon. I remember Wu De saying, "You don't treat illness by resisting it; you treat it by accepting that it is there and that there is a need for medicine. The modern resistance to illness and death is itself an illness."

I vividly remember my first ceremony I served to a patient and her family as she sat on the stoop of death's door with pancreatic cancer that had metastasized throughout her body. She was having a hard time expressing her emotions about her upcoming transition to her son and her husband, the son's step-father. The tension in the room was palpable, and the love that needed to be expressed in those final moments was stuck between two walls of ego and fear. What I noticed more than anything was a lack of connection. The patient had lost the connection with her body, her voice, and her family. She felt isolated by illness and the felt the inability to talk openly about what she inherently knew was coming. The son had lost his



茶人: Christin Ament, USA

connection to his mother and his relationship to his fear. The husband, and stepfather, had lost his connection with his grief. A few short days later, she transitioned into the final stage of her life—death. Her son mentioned to me that he had never seen his stoic Swedish mother open up in the way in which she had. It was at this moment, I realized that Tea's meaning to me was less about its purpose in *my* life and so much more about Tea's ability to hold space for other people to grieve and to emote; to soften in a culture where medicine and death create rigidity. This plant became my sidekick when working with those who are on their deathbed, and those who have recently lost someone they loved.

The more and more I sit with Her, and the more and more I sit with those who are dying, the more I am called to remember what is truly important in this fragile life. I am reminded how our connection to this Earth, to our hearts, to the Spirit world, to each other, and to our Self, shapes the way in which we walk this path. If I have learned anything from both Tea and death, it is that no drug will cure an aching heart or depressed state. Knowledge of medicine is critical, but knowledge of the heart's medicine is far superior. I am grateful to have found so much of my heart medicine in Tea and this community of service. I am honored and humbled to share this Great Connector with those in difficult phases of their life. Thank you for accepting me years ago, Global Tea Hut.

# Inside the Hut

COMING SOON TO GLOBAL TEA HUT MAGAZINE

茶主题: Zen & Tea

茶道

茶主题: Classics of Tea

茶主题: Chajin & Teahouses

茶主题: Chaxi



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.) If everyone in this community donates, we can together create the most gorgeous Tea Center ever. Obviously, not all of us have a lot of money to give, but we can all do our part. Each of us is also connected to a larger community of people who can share in the building of this project. As a global community, we can do this for us and for future tea lovers!



Wu De has published a new book called "Fallen Leaves." We are super excited. We think you are all going to love reading it, especially while you drink tea alone or share tea with friends. Right now you can purchase a limited-edition, hardcover, full-color and signed edition from our website, on the "teaware" page. Otherwise, you can get your paperback copy at Amazon or other online retailers. All the proceeds from this new book will help us build our Center, Light Meets Life. This is another great way to help!



Wu De will be in Los Angeles this November and there will be some public events at AYAM in Playa del Rey. The events should be posted on social media soon. We hope to see you there!



We have some of the best teas we have ever had for a Light Meets Life fundraiser this year. We figured we had to get some excellent teas, since this year we are trying to build a new Center. Don't miss out!



Wu De will once again be doing a retreat at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California from Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> through the 20<sup>th</sup> of 2020. We are very excited to once again be drinking tea and meditating on such sacred land. Come and join us!

## Center News



It is Light Meets Life time!!! We have launched a giant, worldwide fundraiser to make the move this very year. This will be our permanent Center, offering tea courses for the rest of our lives and beyond, serving future generations of tea lovers. Visit [www.lightmeetslife.org](http://www.lightmeetslife.org) now!



It may seem daunting, but together we can raise the funds we need to move into a new Center—*your* new Center. If you have any experience dealing with fundraisers of this nature and want to get involved, please email us and let us know your ideas.



The Center will be closed indefinitely for obvious reasons. There will be no courses for the second half of 2019, though if all goes according to plan, we hope to restart in 2020 with an even better and more varied schedule than ever before.



We may have to make some big shifts next year if we have to constrict and save money in the coming year. We think a breather before a big push out will only make us stronger!

## October Affirmation

*I am rooted*

Do I drift through life? Do I lack direction? I root myself in the rhythm of my practice. No matter where I go, or what my day is like, I practice and live deeply and fully as an expression of my Dao. I am the Dao Daoing.



# 鐵壺

[www.globalteahut.org](http://www.globalteahut.org)

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

GLOBAL TEA HUT

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

