

GLOBAL TEA HUT

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE

October 2021



玉書碯

火是茶最尊崇的老師

GONGFU
KETTLES & STOVES



RADIANCE

This month, we are delving deep into gongfu tea. We hope to do at least one issue on all of the Four Treasures of gongfu tea. This time, we are exploring Chaozhou kettles and stoves. We have some amazing collections of antiques to show you as well. And we have one of the most magical teas we have ever shared to drink along the way.

*Love is
changing the world
bowl by bowl*

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recycled & recyclable



Soy ink

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In October, the weather cools down in Taiwan enough that we can drink tea outdoors comfortably—one of the few times in the year when it is perfect for doing so. This month, we cross the midpoint of autumn and start moving towards winter. This means we are moving from metal to water in the Five Element understanding of the world. Mostly this means drinking earth teas to control the water, but we also drink a lot of fire teas to control the metal, depending on the weather. When things are wetter and cooler, we will choose an earth tea. This includes most shou puerh teas, some younger, middle-aged or aged sheng. Some black teas also fall into the earth category. Fire teas are traditionally-processed oolongs and some roasted red teas. Some metal teas might come out of the cabinet at this time too—to support the coming water. At this time of year, that typically means aged oolongs. Of course, there will be differences based on where you live in the world and what the weather is like.

Whenever we do a live broadcast, someone asks for news concerning Light Meets Life, but there really is none to share. The pandemic has ground most things to a halt. We continue to look online and visit some properties when it is safe to do so, but about all we can do is continue to focus on creating as much of the non-material architecture as we can: imagining and designing the types of courses we want to host, building out the logistics of employment for Global Tea Hut and Light Meets Life and thinking about how to learn from the strengths and mistakes of Tea Sage Hut to create an environment that is as uplifting and healthy for short-term volunteers and long-term residents as it can be. Things seem to be opening up a bit here, so we are hoping to begin looking at properties soon. All of the money we have raised towards Light Meets Life is safe in American bank accounts waiting for the right time.

We have also been focusing on building up Global Tea Hut's support system so that Light Meets Life can remain free when it opens and to create more clarity and strength in Global Tea Hut as well. We are hiring more Taiwanese employees, including a new accountant, to move towards more integration with the local community, which is something that means a lot to us. We hope to design courses and events in Light Meets Life for the local tea community as well, and Master Tsai Yizhe (蔡奕哲) is keen to help with that, as is Rou Yingyin (羅英銀), who said she is excited to plan "tea days" once we open. Those of you who read the March annual financial report will already know that we have around a half-million dollars in tea/teaware assets, and so the more you support us by buying that, much of which has been donated by the local Taiwanese community, the closer we get to being able to purchase a property when we find one.

Over the last two months, we took a deep dive into leaves in a bowl tea, covering the history and ceremonialization of one of the most ancient brewing methods on Earth. But as they say, absence makes the heart grow fonder. It is great to take a break from gongfu tea, but also equally great to return.

In traditional gongfu tea, there were "Four Treasures" necessary to preparing tea: an Yixing teapot, porcelain cups, a teaboat (*cha chuan*, 茶船) and a kettle and stove (some traditions separate the kettle and stove and drop the boat). We have already covered Yixingware in many past issues, and so hope to cover each of the other treasures, the bare necessities for gongfu tea in the future. This issue is devoted completely to the last of these, the traditional gongfu kettle and stove/brazier. These small stoves were an essential part of the mastery involved in gongfu tea. Originally, they were quite small, since it was thought to be ideal to keep the water as "new" as possible. Understanding structure in water and tea was essential for mastery back in the day, and Chajin in those days thought that boiling each and every steeping individually resulted in better tea. Of course, some kettles were bigger, for then and now each tea lover must find their own balance between quality and convenience, skill and ease of use.

We will cover some history and lore surrounding these magic clay kettle and stove sets and then get a look into some famous collections of antique wares, allowing us to see some incredible examples of traditional kettle and stove sets. And as we do so, we of course need a beautiful oolong to light the way. Radiance is a gorgeous concubine tea that is mind-numbingly good, especially when you pour some coal-heated water from a gongfu stove over it, shower the pot and prewarm the cups...



—Further Reading—

This month, it is worth reading the December 2020 issue, which focuses extensively on the history of gongfu tea. That will add some great context to this issue. The September 2017 issue on Yixing teaware is also a deep dive into another of the Four Treasures of gongfu tea (and perhaps the most important).

TEA OF THE MONTH



ver the course of this month, we will be exploring one of the Four Treasures of gongfu tea, braziers and kettles (or two treasures according to some lists). Since gongfu tea was born and grew up alongside oolong tea, we wanted to share a special oolong tea for this month, and it doesn't get more special than this. Radiance is our favorite Taiwanese concubine tea and one of our all-time favorite oolong teas in general. It is rich, complex and full-bodied. Radiance is also incredibly patient, lasting throughout a very long session and rewarding you with many, many different nuances that unfold and unravel with the leaves.

The story of concubine tea (*gui fei cha*, 貴妃茶) really starts with Eastern Beauty. Eastern Beauty (*dongfang meiren*, 東方美人) is also known as white bud oolong (*bai hao oolong*, 白毫烏龍) and sometimes “liar’s tea (*peng feng cha*, 極風茶),” since they say the neighbors of the first producer thought he was lying when he said he sold his bug-bitten summer tea for more than spring tea. The magic of Eastern Beauty starts with the leafhoppers that bite the leaves in the early summer. There are many species of leafhoppers in Taiwan, but *Jacobiasca formosana* and *Empoasca onukii* are the most common. These insects are so small, you cannot see their bites. They do not make holes, but rather little pricks that allow them to suck the juices out of the leaves. There are enzymes in their saliva that cause the leaves to change, along with the bite holes, which also cause changes. Their bites affect the leaves in three ways: 1) they begin oxidation; 2) they cause the tree to release defensive chemicals that change the nature of the leaf, and 3) the tree also releases airborne compounds that change the fragrance/flavor of the leaves.

In the late 1970s, oolong tea in Taiwan moved to higher and higher altitudes as the mainstream market grew fond of the idea that higher means better. There is some truth to this, especially when using the Qing Xin (青心, Gentle Heart) varietal, which thrives at higher altitudes. When producing lightly-oxidized, greener oolongs from

this varietal, there is a magic to higher-altitude farms and even an energetic quality from being so high and close to the sky. However, quality in tea can be based on many other factors, including what to us is more important than flavor or energy: the sustainability of the tea production. But as a result of the popular idea that higher means better, a lot of traditional lower-altitude growing regions were left behind and forced to come up with other ways to distinguish themselves, even though many of them were older and had deeper heritages than the new higher farms.

These lower-altitude farms have restored their viability in many different ways: the lowest regions, like Ming Jian, have moved to growing high-yield, cheaper teas that are often used in the bottled tea market (“RTD,” or “Ready to Drink”). Regions like Lugu have switched from the greener processing of high-mountain oolong back to traditionally-processed oolong, using higher oxidation and/or deeper roast. Best of all, many of these regions have switched to sustainable, organic agriculture to further distinguish themselves from the higher, greener oolongs. Since Eastern Beauty was growing in popularity in the early 2000s, some lower-altitude growing regions in central Taiwan where these insects also thrive started producing a bug-bitten, ball-shaped oolong with high oxidation like Eastern Beauty—and that is what Concubine tea is.

Concubine tea is sometimes also called “honey fragrance (*mi xiang*, 蜜香) oolong” due to the sweet fragrance and flavor reminiscent of wild honey. Teas like Radiance are bitten by the same leafhoppers that affect Eastern Beauty, but are then processed like traditional ball-shaped oolongs, combining some of the features of traditionally-processed oolong with the sweetness of Eastern Beauty. Many people prefer Concubine teas like Radiance over either traditionally-processed oolongs or Eastern Beauty teas. This is an extremely fragrant and delicious tea that lasts for a long time. It's best to have plenty of time to let go of time and step outside your day.



Radiance



Nantou, Taiwan



Concubine Oolong Tea



Taiwanese



~1,000 Meters



光輝



Brewing Tips

冲泡技巧 完成好茶

Oolong tea was born and raised with gongfu tea. In fact, the term “gongfu,” which means “mastery through self-discipline,” first referred to Cliff Tea, not a tea brewing method. This is due to the tremendous amount of dedication and skill that it takes to produce fine oolong, which is more complicated than any other type of tea. The brewing method came later and was, in part, created to match the mastery of oolong tea with a similarly skillful brewing that could not only bring out the full potential of oolong tea, but also honor all the craft that went into its creation. While it is often nice to put a few balls of oolong into a bowl, which is wonderful because they unfurl like no other tea on Earth, the best oolong will always be made gongfu.

Since we will be learning all about Chaozhou braziers in this issue, it is perhaps worth revisiting the topic of heat in gongfu tea. In all tea, the heat is amongst the most important elements in preparing fine tea, and especially in gongfu tea. Heat is what extracts the essence from the leaves and what moves the energy of the tea in our bodies. From a perspective of enjoyment, the aromas are released, conveyed and appreciated through the heat. Getting the heat just right not only allows the aroma to unfold perfectly but also allows the tea to be more patient, which means more steepings. From a Traditional Chinese Medicine perspective, it is the heat that allows the energy of the plants to steep into the water and that allows the medicine to move to where it needs to go in the body, which is why herbs were traditionally boiled. The right heat can literally change our tea and our practice.

There are three types of heat in modern tea: electric, gas and charcoal. One can also use a wood fire, but that will blacken and damage the kettle, and if done improperly, may impart a smoky flavor to the water. We find that the quality of heat generally runs according to the order listed above, with electric being the worst. That said, we all have to find our perfect balance of quality to convenience, and that means using electric heat sometimes. We recommend infrared burners, which we have found to be the best electric heat source, followed by metal hotplates, and then at a very distant third place, induction heat, which can really spoil tea (though we are forced to use it sometimes). Of course, you shouldn't take our word for it—experiment for yourself. Electric heat has no real fire element and is just heat, so gas is a step up but can be inconvenient, especially if you don't have gas. There are, of course, alcohol stoves as well, but these are just for maintaining heat, not for boiling, since they would take too long and tea is ideally brewed with water that was brought to a boil as quickly as possible, which maintains the structure of the water. And that brings us to charcoal, which is the ideal heat source. If you have proper ventilation and the right type of charcoal, this can completely transform your tea and practice.

The ideal is to use charcoal to boil the water and to maintain temperature, but if you have to choose one or the other, it is actually more effective to use charcoal to maintain heat than to boil, which may seem strange at first glance since the kettle is on the stove where it boils longer. However, when using a charcoal stove to maintain heat, it means that the last heat the water touches before the tea is steeped is on charcoal, which actually has a greater influence. Therefore, a small Chaozhou stove can be a great way to incorporate some charcoal into our tea practice, using less coal and in a way that can be easier for beginners. We recommend re-reading some of the fire articles in past issues to learn more!



Gongfu

Leaves in a Bowl

Water: spring water or best bottled

Fire: coals, infrared or gas

Heat: high heat, fish-eye, 95°C

Brewing Methods: gongfu or leaves in a bowl (gongfu is ideal)

Steeping: long steeping, then 2–3 flashes, then start growing longer

Patience: 20–25 steepings (gongfu)

茶 Experiment with different types of heat this month, especially charcoal if you are able to. Using charcoal with oolong tea and gongfu brewing will have a dramatic impact on the tea.



GONGFU KETTLES & STOVES





THE JOURNEY OF SHADIAO KETTLES

茶人: Shuo Qicheng (朔琦成)

Zhang Huayun's (張華雲) poem "A Song of Chaozhou Gongfu Tea (潮州工夫茶歌)" has a line that goes: "Spring water boils in a light pot; olive pits burn in a clay brazier." The "light pot" mentioned in his song refers to one of the Four Treasures of Gongfu Tea, a type of sidehandle kettle called a "yushuwei (玉書煨)," commonly known as a "shadiao (砂銚)." The *shadiao* is the optimal choice of water-heating vessel for gongfu tea. Its appearance is just like that of any ordinary sidehandle pot, but as soon as you pick it up, you'll notice the difference right away: it is extraordinarily light and graceful, with a thin, delicate body finely crafted from clay. The whole pot, including the lid, usually only weighs around 100 grams.

Some may wonder, what is the point of insisting on using a *shadiao* to boil the water for tea—after all, it's just boiling water, isn't it? But during the complex process of gongfu tea brewing, using a *shadiao* to pour from on high and down low really brings a free

and easy feeling to every movement. Its graceful lightness and sidehandle make it very easy to hold and use, helping the brewer to more easily bring out the unique flavor and character of the gongfu tea. So, in the eyes of a gongfu tea enthusiast, a smooth-pouring *shadiao* of just the right size is a top choice for boiling the water.

One Pot of Water One Steeping of Tea

Shadiao are generally round and full in shape, with a long, trumpet-shaped handle on the side, which can be hollow or solid and allows the brewer to easily grasp the pot during brewing. A quality *shadiao* must have a very thin, light body to easily absorb the heat, and it's especially important for the base of the pot to have a deep inward curve to it; this way, the fire from the brazier can penetrate further up into the kettle, boiling the water inside more vigorously. Early exam-

ples of *shadiao* all have very thin, finely crafted lids without steam holes, so when the water comes to a boil, the lid will bump around from the pressure, knocking gently as if to tell you that the water has boiled.

In order to embody the "one pot, one brew" gongfu tea technique, *shadiao* usually have a fairly small volume, only holding around 200 milliliters of water. Because the gongfu tea tradition values the freshness and "liveliness (*nen*, 嫩)" of the water, each pot of water can only be used for one steeping. Boiling the same water repeatedly will cause the water to be over-boiled and lose its lively quality; hence, a *shadiao* is traditionally quite small in capacity in order to better bring out the rich, "rocky" Cliff Tea flavor of gongfu tea. (Remember, "gongfu tea" originally referred to Cliff Tea (Yan Cha, 岩茶) itself and then later became a brewing method that was devoted almost exclusively to this type of oolong.)

Shadiao are mainly produced in the areas of Fengxi and Raoping in Chaozhou, in Guangdong province.





They are made from the locally abundant red *hongni* clay and are shaped by spinning on a potter's wheel before being fired in a kiln. During the Republic of China era (1912–1949), some teapot artisans from the city of Shantou began making *shadiao* kettles as well; these included artisans Wu Jinyong and Wu Ruishen, who produced *shadiao* under the brand Yuanxingbing Mark (源興炳記), signed with the maker's marks "Zheng Xing (正興)" or "Xing Ji (興記)." During the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), the red clay *shadiao* from Chaozhou and the white clay ones from Fujian featured slightly different handle shapes; the handles on these kettles were most often solid and were decorated on the far end with "*jin qian* (金錢, gold coin)" patterns or the signature of the maker.

In the Republic of China era, these solid handles with their decorative *jin qian* pattern fell out of favor and were replaced by hollow handles; hence, you can tell whether a certain *shadiao* dates to the Qing Dynasty or the Repub-

lic era by inspecting its handle. These finely crafted red clay pots followed the southward current of migrants from Chaozhou to Malaysia and spread throughout Chaozhou Chinese settlements. The presence of *shadiao* was particularly evident in the Malaysian state of Penang, home to a flourishing gongfu tea culture.

The earlier white clay *shadiao* were produced in Zhangzhou and Quanzhou in Fujian province. During the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing dynasties, gongfu tea had already become popular in southern Fujian; most of the white clay *shadiao* that survive today were made in the Qing Dynasty. In the early Qing, a considerable number of Fujian natives began emigrating south to Indonesia; most of the gongfu tea implements excavated from local tomb sites and recorded on tombstones were white clay tea braziers (*lianglu*, 涼爐) and *shadiao* dating to the Qing Yongzheng (1722–1735) and Qianlong eras (1735–1796). Many are now in use again.

These early *shadiao* and other gongfu tea implements excavated from tomb sites in Indonesia later found their way to Malaysia, where they ended up in the personal collections of local Chajin, adding another layer of significance to the rich history and culture of gongfu tea in Malaysia. It is indeed meaningful that Chajin of the past loved tea so much that they were buried with their favorite teaware.

During this period, gongfu tea was very much part of the fabric of life in the state of Penang in northern Malaysia. Almost every household had at least one tea set, and their forebears brought many old tea implements over with them when they migrated from Fujian and Guangdong, which meant that the gongfu tea drinkers of Penang had these venerable tea implements close at hand to truly bring out the essence of gongfu tea. In recent years, the growth of the local economy and the recognition of Chinese cultural heritage has led to a renewed interest in these centuries-old gongfu tea



茶 On the opposite page we have some of the *shadiao* kettles that were unearthed from tombs in Indonesia and then sold to Chajin in Malaysia, ultimately bringing them back to life again like ghosts risen from the grave. The top left photograph on the opposite page shows why some kettles were called “saucepans,” as they had no lids and were designed based on cooking pans, often glazed as the right one is. The bottom three photographs show a *shadiao* that was made in China, shipped to Japan and then bought by a Malaysian collector. You can clearly see how the bottom indents to allow the heat to enter the water and boil it more quickly. Above is an example of a hoop overhandle white clay kettle with a cannon spout that became popular later on. Most early gongfu kettles were sidehandles. This one bears the stamp/seal: “Made by Chen Yongxing of Mount Baofu (保福山陳永興造)” on the handle that is shown directly left.

traditions, inspiring countless people to explore and study the way of gongfu tea. This revival has brought much history to light.

Overseas Gongfu Culture

Aside from being brought over to Southeast Asia by southern Chinese immigrants for use in their new homes, early examples of Fujianese white clay *shadiao* and Chaozhou red clay *shadiao* can also be found in old ceramic shops or Chinese medicine shops. Once, in an old Chinese medicine establishment in Penang, I personally came across an intact set composed of a Qing Dynasty red clay tea brazier and white clay *shadiao* bearing the “Liu Xianhe (劉賢合)” seal, made in Fengxi, Chaozhou. When I inquired about it, I learned that these were historically used for brewing Chinese medicine rather than gongfu tea. Fortunately, this particular *shadiao* had never been used for brewing Chinese medicine and could still

be used to boil water for tea. This Qing Dynasty white clay Chaozhou *shadiao* was very light and finely crafted; it felt as light and graceful as paper when held in the hand. The base of the pot featured a deep inward indentation, displaying the artisan’s great skill with clay.

Most of the old *shadiao* that survive today have been passed down through the generations as heirlooms. For example, Mr. Wu Chongmei, a venerable Chajin from Penang who is of Fujianese ancestry, uses *shadiao* that were left to him by his ancestors, as well as some that were obtained from old ceramic shops; each of these antique vessels is almost a hundred years old. Then there is Mr. Hong Fude, a veteran Chajin and the president of the Penang Gongfu Tea Association, who once came into possession of a white clay *shadiao* excavated in a dig. The shape and crafting technique of that pot are consistent with the style of the Qing Kangxi (1661–1722), Yongzheng and Qianlong eras.

These artifacts have afforded people a chance to study and appreciate genuine antique *shadiao* from these eras. A relative newcomer to the tea scene, Mr. Hu Zhanggui is the owner of an old collection passed down to him by his forebears, including a white clay *shadiao* bearing the Qing Dynasty “Yuan Xing (元興) seal”; aside from these, he also has a Qianlong-era white clay *shadiao* unearthed in Indonesia that he came upon several years ago. Today, all of these *shadiao* are rare and precious antiques.

Aside from the sidehandle *shadiao* that we’ve already discussed, in the late Qing Dynasty, Chaozhou also began producing some white clay *shadiao* with hoop-shaped overhandles attached at the top of the pot. These pots came in two sizes, approximately 200 and 500 milliliters in capacity; naturally, the smaller size was better suited to boiling the water for gongfu tea. Handling small kettles, sidehandle or overhandle, was a necessary gongfu (skill) in tea preparation.

This type of white clay hoop-handled *shadiao* often bore the seal “Made by Chen Yongxing of Mount Baofu (保福山陳永興造)” stamped on the upper part of the handle; of course, there were also some where the handle was left plain, with no seal. They are generally very graceful and delicately crafted, extremely well suited to gongfu tea. The design of the handle makes them very convenient to use for tea, as the hot steam can easily be prevented from reaching the handle, making it easy to carry out the high and low pouring motions of gongfu tea without scalding one’s hands.

Aside from the Qing Dynasty *shadiao* of Fujian and Guangdong, white clay *shadiao* that have made their way back from Japan are also a good choice, especially the early white clay *shadiao* that were made locally in Japan, whose shape was heavily influenced by the Qing Dynasty white clay *shadiao* of Fujian. The only disadvantage with these *shadiao* is that they were fired at quite low kiln temperatures, meaning that any water boiled in them will have a slight taste of clay, so they require a period of special treatment before they will produce standard-quality water.

These early *shadiao* were made in Japan with local white clay and are every bit as finely crafted as their Chinese counterparts; with their light, delicate bodies and the simple elegance of the white clay, they are brimming with the essential spirit of Chinese gongfu teaware.

For a gongfu tea enthusiast, a venerable *shadiao* of a hundred years or more is truly a priceless treasure; it is impossible to quantify its value in monetary terms. With an antique *shadiao*, after so many years of use and weathering and heating over a charcoal flame, the sweet, fresh quality of the water will have gradually permeated the clay of the pot. The water produced by such a *shadiao* is extra smooth and mild in quality, and untainted by any unintended flavors. This makes for an even richer, mellower tea liquor, ideally suited to bringing out the strong flavor required by gongfu tea.

These early *shadiao* were exquisitely crafted, and the body of the pot was generally very thin and light. This meant that they were susceptible to breakage and not easy to preserve over the course of use; hence, any intact *shadiao* that have survived from this era

are extremely precious. The Chaozhou *shadiao* that were produced in the 1970s, with their decorative all-over brown glaze, are not as light and thin as those of the Republic era; however, since even they have now seen more than a half-century of use, the water they produce is sweet and mellow, and not significantly different from water boiled in a hundred-year-old *shadiao*.

As gongfu tea culture has grown in popularity and esteem throughout China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and around the world, this sort of antique gongfu teaware has become more and more highly valued. The traditional old teaware that ended up overseas has lived through many generations of winters and summers, bearing witness to the longstanding gongfu tea traditions of overseas communities. In recent years, the cities of Chaozhou and Shantou have both been scrambling to open gongfu tea culture museums, which not only serve to promote gongfu tea history and culture but have also propelled the surging popularity of gongfu tea to new heights. In the Penang gongfu tea tradition, which has been passed down to form its own branch of overseas gongfu tea



culture, local Chajin use old *shadiao* passed down by previous generations to sprinkle the nine styles of Penang gongfu tea across the land, continuing to spread the gongfu tea craze throughout Malaysia.

Clay Braziers Past & Present

In the southern Chinese regions of Fujian and Guangdong, people like to use small, finely crafted tea sets, preferably including a Meng Chen (孟臣) Yixing Zisha teapot and little Ruo Shen (若琛) porcelain cups (two of the other Four Treasures), accompanied by complex and detailed brewing techniques. To produce a rich, mellow tea liquor, no piece of equipment is more essential than a “Chaozhou brazier (潮州風爐仔),” also called a “small Chaozhou red-clay brazier (潮州小紅泥爐).” This brazier is one of the “Four Treasures” of gongfu tea (*gongfu cha si bao*, 工夫茶四寶). Famous Song Dynasty (960–1279) poet Su Dongpo (蘇東坡) wrote a line in the poem “Drawing River Water for Cooking Tea” that

means: “Lively water must be boiled with a lively flame.” This is a testament to the importance of a clay brazier for boiling the water for tea. So, a convenient and easy-to-use clay tea brazier is invaluable in vividly bringing out the true richness and flavor of gongfu tea.

Clay braziers first appeared in the Chaozhou/Shantou region as a result of the gongfu tea trend in southern Fujian. Local artisans in the city of Chaozhou subsequently began making these stoves out of the local red clay. In fact, there was an existing type of green-glazed brazier that combined the ability to cook and brew tea, which had been around since the Western Han Dynasty (206 BCE–8 CE). It was a funnel-shaped implement for boiling water that was comprised of two base sections that fitted together and finished all over with green glaze. It also included the basic features of an inner compartment for the fire and an opening or “door” in the brazier. This type of implement can be considered one of the earliest incarnations of a clay brazier; it was a miniature version of an everyday piece of equipment and was used as a funerary object that was entombed alongside the deceased.

By the Tang (618–907) and Song dynasties, tea culture had undergone centuries of change, and as tea brewing and drinking methods gradually evolved, so too did the associated tea equipment. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the clay braziers that were used to boil water took on a fixed shape that was influenced by the increasingly popular gongfu tea customs of southern Fujian; once these spread to Chaozhou and Shantou, artisans gave their creativity free rein, inventing all sorts of new shapes. Prior to the rise of gongfu tea in the Chaoshan (Chaozhou/Shantou) region, the city of Fuzhou in Fujian province was already producing white clay “*lianglu* (涼爐)” braziers (this Chinese name comes from the Japanese name for this type of brazier, “*ryoro*,” which uses the same characters). At that time, gongfu tea culture was limited to the upper echelons of society, scholarly and official types drinking their tea from tiny pots and cups. Later, this set of traditions gradually broadened into a popular tea-drinking practice among ordinary people; following from this trend, the clay brazier became one of the Four Treasures of gongfu tea.



茶 These are all examples of Fuzhou white clay braziers, which were amongst the most common types back in the day. They have built-in charcoal baskets, which means that if they crack, they cannot be repaired (unlike other braziers with removable baskets). Most braziers of this type are either straight cylinders or trumpets (above) and feature three small protrusions on top to support the *shadiao*. This style is called a “white clay three-peak *lianglu*,” as the protrusions resemble little mountain peaks. They often have poems on them, like the one shown on the opposite page in detail. The left characters say “Fuzhou” and the brand as well as who supervised them. The right side is a portion of a Tang Dynasty poem by Wang Changling (王昌齡) that alludes to integrity. Above there is a trivet, which often came with the brazier and was either for setting the brazier itself on or could also be used for the kettle. This one has a *ruyi* (如意) symbol with decorations.

During the early Qing Dynasty, a large number of gongfu tea implements and white clay *lianglu* braziers followed southern Fujianese migrants on their southward journey to Indonesia. According to historical evidence found in tombs from that era, many of these pieces were produced during the Qing Yongzheng and Qianlong eras. I've had the opportunity to look over excavation records detailing items found in tombs of that era; almost all of the artifacts were white clay *lianglu* braziers from southern Fujian with their simple, elegant shapes, brimming with scholarly charm. (Again, it is also impressive to note how often Chajin of the past were buried with their teaware, suggesting the sacred value tea had in the lives of even the simplest people.)

The *lianglu* braziers produced in Fujian were made from white clay, then coated in a layer of white glaze on the outside. Most braziers of this type are formed either in the shape of a straight cylinder or a trumpet and feature three small protrusions on top to support the *shadiao*. This style is called a "white clay three-peak *lianglu*," as the protrusions resemble little mountain peaks. The inner chamber for the fire and the outer body of the brazier are formed all in one piece; the disadvantage of this is that if the fire chamber component is damaged, the whole thing is a write-off. Above the opening of the brazier, to either side, are two lines of engraved inscription, including the name of the brazier's place of origin and some lines of poetry. The overall effect is very elegant and refined. Fuzhou white clay *lianglu* braziers are simple and elegant in shape, without much embellishment; this reflects the tastes of Fujian's literati and scholar-officials when it came to gongfu tea, and their pursuit of a cultured, refined aesthetic.

Beautiful & Practical

After gongfu tea spread from southern Fujian to the Chaozhou/Shantou region of Guangdong, the popularity of gongfu tea in this region reached its peak during the Qing Qianlong and Jiaqing eras (1711–1820). Most of the red clay tea braziers during this era were produced and supplied by two areas, Chaoyang in Shantou and Chao'an in Chaozhou. The red clay

braziers manufactured there varied quite a bit in terms of shape, from the basic straight-sided cylinder, square or octagonal shapes to more unusual shapes such as the likeness of a small child with a big head, reflecting a down-to-earth folk-art style.

Once, when I was in Guangzhou on a search for old teaware, I came across a Chaozhou clay tea brazier in an antique shop that was about three feet high, in the shape of a woman with a tea brazier atop her head. According to the owner of the shop, it dated back to the Qing Dynasty. I found this quite eye-opening and was amazed at the wide variety of shapes one can find in Chaozhou clay braziers.

There are many elegant and finely crafted examples of Qing Dynasty red clay Chaozhou tea braziers; among these, the most exquisite of all are those signed by the artisan Liu Xianhe (劉賢合). These are crafted from local red clay and finished on the surface with a layer of red glaze. Some of the most beautifully glazed examples are as vividly colored as vermilion *zhuni* (朱泥) clay from Yixing.

The difference between these braziers and the Fuzhou-style *lianglu* is that the inner fire chamber is removable and replaceable, and its air holes are very closely spaced, providing superior ventilation for the charcoal fire within. This makes it easy to boil the water for tea, with very little effort involved.

Liu Xianhe is likely the name of the artisan who made these braziers; however, there is no trace of this artisan in historical records pertaining to gongfu tea. Perhaps this indicates that the works Liu Xianhe produced were simply considered ordinary everyday items at the time. Liu Xianhe's signature (劉賢合) was always stamped above the brazier's opening, on both sides, and some pieces also feature the addition of decorative motifs on each side to add to the aesthetic. During the Qing Dynasty, a considerable number of Liu Xianhe red clay braziers were exported to Japan, where they were used for boiling water in the local sencha tea tradition. People in Japan saw these red clay braziers as precious treasures, and many even commissioned special boxes to store them in with beautiful cloth wrappings inside. Some were even named.

After Chinese Zen Buddhist monk Ingen Ryūki introduced sencha tea to Japan in the mid-1600s, during the Edo period, Fuzhou white clay *lianglu* *ryoro* and Chaozhou red clay braziers also began to be imported into Japan in large numbers. To make these braziers more widely available for local use, Japanese artisans began making them from the local white clay, modeled after the white clay *lianglu* braziers from Fuzhou. Most of these early Japanese braziers were heavily influenced by the Chinese style and tended to be similar in shape to the Fuzhou three-peak white clay braziers.

Aside from these braziers that imitated Fuzhou three-peak white clay *lianglu* in shape, local Japanese artisans also improved on the traditional *lianglu* braziers to create new shapes. They mainly did this by improving on certain details; among the myriad of Japanese-made braziers that made their way back to China, some were fashioned into quite complicated designs. This makes it easy to distinguish between Japanese-style and Chinese-style braziers.

Clay tea braziers are an embodiment of tea culture; an implement that is at once functional and ornamental. Water that is boiled over a clay brazier and a charcoal flame can not only be easily heated to the critical temperature, but is also second-to-none at bringing out the four qualities of gongfu tea: strong, hot, fragrant and smooth. The quality of water boiled in this way makes for a smoother, richer and mellower tea liquor, which doubtless elevates the experience of gongfu tea to a whole new level.



✿ Early Qing Dynasty brazier and kettle. This one is unique, having eight corners and guardian ghosts all around. The lid is also a trivet and lid rest, separating in two.



涼
爐

一壺一泡
茶道

BRAZIERS & KETTLES

茶人: Huang Quanhao (黃權豪)

Thanks to the influence of the Japanese sencha tea tradition, some people are in the habit of referring to the clay braziers used to boil the water for tea as “*ryoro* (涼爐),” or the Chinese pronunciation of the same characters, “*lianglu*.” Although culture is like a living organism, in a constant state of flux, it would surely be a great pity to preserve only the modern name for a precious piece of teaware while forgetting its history. According to the inscriptions on some of these braziers and related historical materials, the most basic name for these clay stoves that were dedicated to brewing tea was simply a “tea stove (*cha zao*, 茶灶)” or “tea brazier (*cha lu*, 茶爐).” During the Qing Qianlong era (1735–1796), it became fashionable to steep oolong tea using a small pot; in other words, the rise of gongfu tea had begun. At this time, the tea braziers used for this purpose began to proliferate and diversify, with a multitude of different styles and centers of production. Some people simply called them “gongfu stoves” after the style of tea brewing that they were used for, while

others called them “cut-off cylinder stoves (*jie tong lu*, 截筒爐)” after their shape. They could also be named after the kiln where they were produced; for example, Dazhuang, Chaoshan and Nanfeng braziers.

What is the point of differentiating between all these names? The point is to clearly distinguish the different histories of the Japanese sencha and Chinese gongfu tea traditions, which are related but at times worth isolating for the purpose of understanding and research. It is well known that the Japanese sencha tradition was influenced by the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) Chinese tradition of green tea brewing that differed from gongfu tea culture, which was mainly centered around oolong tea. Although the earliest *ryoro* were imported into Japan from China aboard official “red-seal (*zhu yin*, 朱印)” trading ships, the Chinese exporters would often adapt the style of the braziers to better suit the Japanese practice of using them while kneeling on a tatami mat, or else to reflect Japanese aesthetic tastes; such changes included making the stoves

taller or designing them in shapes that were commissioned by the Japanese buyers. Because of this, some of the clay braziers that have returned from Japan are unique and special in their own ways.

In addition, any discussion of tea braziers would not be complete without mentioning tea kettles, or “*chadiao* (茶銚).” These *diao*, or sidehandle vessels, are also called “hot-water pots (*tang hu*, 湯壺)” or “hot-water bottles/pitchers (*tang ping*, 湯瓶).” In the mid-Ming Dynasty, there was a transition period when the prevalent green tea brewing method of whisking powdered tea gave way to steeping the leaf in a teapot; during this period, some people still continued to use the old-style tea implements, with names such as “tea ladle (*cha piao*, 茶瓢),” “tea pan (*cha cheng*, 茶鐺)” and “tea cauldron (*cha fu*, 茶釜).” As for the water-boiling vessel that the Japanese called a “Zhangzhou bottle (漳州瓶),” this was actually a type of pot called a “*bao* (煲)” that was common in Fujian and Guangdong during that era, used for boiling herbal medicine.





Because the humble simplicity of this vessel's shape fit with the Zen aesthetic sensibilities of the Japanese folk kilns, it was chosen for use in sencha ceremonies and was greatly esteemed. Also, Japanese sencha was originally boiled, not steeped, as the ancients once prepared tea.

Origins of the Yushuwei

I have in my possession a *chadiao* that bears the name “*yu shu* (玉書),” literally “jade book,” which was produced in the early 1900s, some time around the end of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and the beginning of the Republic of China (1912–1949). Yet there is no evidence of the name “*yushuwei* (玉書硯)” —the word “*wei* (硯)” being another name for this type of kettle, which we’ll discuss in more detail shortly—appearing prior to the Republic era. Even the *Chaozhou Tea Classic* (潮州茶經), published in 1957, only mentions the name “*shaguozi* (砂鍋仔),” “sand-clay pot/saucepan.”

The early tea book *Life and Tea* (人生與茶), published in Taiwan in 1979, only uses the word “*shaohu* (燒壺),” meaning “kettle,” or more literally, “boiling pot.” The 1989 publication *The Ancient Art of Chinese Tea Drinking* (中國古代飲茶藝術), on the other hand, does use the term “*yushuwei*.” By comparison, this word does not appear in Chen Xiangbai’s (陳香白) 1997 book *Chaozhou Gongfu Tea* (潮州工夫茶), so it’s possible that the term “*yushuwei*” wasn’t in widespread usage until even later that we might think; it may only have gained gradual recognition from the 1980s onwards (a lot changed in the gongfu tea world at that time due to Taiwanese influence). As for the etymology of this word, there are two prevalent theories:

1. It comes from the name of an artisan who made pots and kettles back in the day. In the 2002 book *The Historical Development of Tea Art* (茶藝發展史), author Zhang Hongyong posits the theory that the original maker was named Pan Yushu (潘玉書).

2. It was named after the function of the vessel. Literary descriptions likening boiling water to jade are common, such as “pouring out jade liquid” (from the *Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Tea*, 中國茶葉大辭典, 2000).

My personal opinion is that this term probably arose as a more elegant, honorific name for this type of pot, since the phrase “*yushu*” often appears in Daoist scripture as an honorific description, for example in the phrase “*yushu shi dao liu* (玉書示道流),” literally “the jade book reveals the flow of the Dao.” Since Chinese tea culture absorbed the influence of historical Daoist Zhu Quan and his quest to decoct an elixir of immortality from cinnabar, it was common to find Daoist references and sentiments in the poems of Ming and Qing Dynasty tea enthusiasts, such as the line “arms drooping, I sit and recall those years of cooking cinnabar.” This captures tea’s deep history in the sacred, as well as its roots in Daoist alchemy. Even today, it’s common to see tea



茶 The opposite page shows a Qing Dynasty lotus leaf Yixing brazier. The Yixing braziers are usually more decorated and show the more developed skills of potters there at the time. They aren't usually made of purple-sand clay as it cracks easily. This one is signed "Meng Chen (孟臣)," which was common on teapots of the time as well. Hui Meng Chen (惠孟臣) didn't make this; signing his name was honorary. In fact, all Yixing teapots at the time were often called "Meng Chen" pots. Directly left is the author's kettle with the name "yu shu (玉書)," or "jade book," stamped on it, as many were. Below is a kettle by Chen Yongxing (陳永興) with a trivet that could also be used for a brazier.



stoves inscribed with images or lines of the sort that would appear on the Daoist cauldrons used for decocting pills of immortality, such as the eight divinatory trigrams from the *Book of Changes* (*I Ching*, 易經), the *Supreme Ultimate* (*Taiji*, 太極) or the "Eighteen Paradises" (*shiba dongtian*, 十八洞天). So the name "yushuwei" (玉書硯) may have arisen as a description implying that the "wind soughing the pines" made by the water as it boils is as exquisite as lines of Daoist scripture—the term certainly brings a sense of Nature and poetry to the tea table! As for the word "wei" (硯), the main theory at present is that the pronunciation developed from a local language variety. The *Chaozhou Tea Classic* calls this sort of kettle a "shaguozi" or "sand-clay pot," and the Hokkien (Minnan) language of southern Fujian uses the word "weiya" (硯呀) for "pot" in place of the Mandarin "guo" (鍋). Although these days you sometimes see people on the internet use an alternate character for "wei"—煨 instead of 硯, with a "fire" radical on the left in place of the

"stone" radical—it is the latter that appears in the vast majority of tea books and essays over the years. If one also considers how much the stone kettle (*shadiao*, 石铫) was praised and revered in Ming and Qing Dynasty tea culture, then it makes even more sense to use the version of the character that contains "stone" within it (look at the character "wei" (硯) and you will see that the left-hand radical is a modified version of "shi" (石), the character for "stone"). Hence, I still use this version of the character to pay tribute to its historical origins.

Early Gongfu Braziers

Ancient scholars were a diverse lot, and naturally they did not necessarily all follow the same customs or popular trends when it came to tea drinking. In fact, every historical account of tea that we might read today is really a subjective account of one author's opinions and experiences of tea and shouldn't necessarily be viewed as a textbook

on tea brewing during that particular era. For example, Xu Cishu (許次紓) and Luo Lin (羅廩) were two scholars from Zhejiang who both wrote about tea during the Ming Wanli era (1573–1619), but Xu Cishu chose to use a copper tea brazier, while Luo Lin preferred those made from pottery or bamboo; it was simply a question of individual preference. This was still the case later on during the Qing Qianlong era (1735–1796), after gongfu tea had gained popularity in the southern coastal regions. For example, these days we are quite used to quoting the phrase "the brazier must be Dazhuang (*lu bi dazhuang*, 爐必大壯) or speaking of "Chaoshan braziers (*Chaoshan fenglu*, 潮汕風爐); however, there are many tea enthusiasts who didn't follow these common prescriptions. For example, the important Qing Dynasty tea texts *Recollections from Fujian* (閩瑣記) and *Unofficial Records of the Qing Dynasty* (清稗類抄) mention two tea experts who used two different types of setup: one a brazier made from asbestos, and one a fire pit set.

The reason I make a point of mentioning these historical records is to discourage modern gongfu tea enthusiasts from placing all their focus on age-old prescriptions such as the Four Treasures of gongfu tea while forgetting that our predecessors in fact placed the ultimate importance on the tea liquor itself, and there has always been quite a lot of individual variance in the style of teaware that they used for brewing gongfu tea. That said, it is better to not just adopt modern techniques because they are modern or more convenient either. Experimentation and wisdom are key in gongfu tea.

Form Follows Function: *Evolution of the Scholarly Aesthetic*

The tea braziers of the early Ming Dynasty were designed for brewing powdered tea; for example, Zhu Quan's "Beneath the Tree" tea brazier had to be able to boil two kettles at once, so it wasn't exactly a small, cute implement.

By the Ming Wanli era (1573–1619), the careful selection and tasting of natural loose-leaf tea had become the main focus. A host of scholars began to put the flavor of the tea liquor at the center of their approach, and from this angle they developed the opinion that small pots were better at retaining the fragrance of the liquor. This was the origin of the Qing Dynasty opinion that "the pot should be as small as a grapefruit." However, the "small pots" of the Qing Dynasty were quite a different thing from the small pots of today—"small pots" in that era had a capacity of more than 500 milliliters. For example, the two purple-sand clay pots that Zen monk Ingen Ryūki took with him from China to Japan, recounted in the legends of Manpuku-ji Temple (which he founded), would be considered positively gigantic by today's tea drinkers, who are accustomed to using pots with a capacity of just sixty to 200 milliliters. But the evolution to smaller pots was underway.

After the emergence of semi-oxidized "gongfu tea," teapots became

smaller and smaller in pursuit of the ideal that "a small teapot concentrates the fragrance." This change meant that braziers and kettles also shrank in size. Why was this? It was because the ancients were concerned with keeping the water "young/lively (*nen*, 嫩)" and avoided using water that had boiled for too long to brew their tea. So in general, one kettleful of boiled water would only be used to brew one round of tea; if you wanted to brew three rounds in succession, this necessitated an approach that was expressed as "boil the kettle three times, one pot (of water) per brew." Any boiled water left over after a brew was said to have lost its "rocky spring energy" and was not used in the next brew—the universal wisdom was that "old (*lao*, 老) water must be thrown away." (The contrast between *lao* and *nen* used here to describe water connotes "young" versus "old," but also "tender" versus "tough/overdone.") This is quite unlike the approach of modern tea drinkers, who will use one big kettle no matter how many steepings they are planning and



re-boil it several times when they need a top-up of hot water. So, during that era, the kettles and tea braziers had to correspond to the teapot in size to avoid boiling too much or not enough water for each brew. This also had an influence on the changing design of teapots. During the Ming Wanli era mentioned above, small teapots had already become the preference of the day, so during that period, small portable bronze braziers that could be brought along on a journey also made an appearance.

During the late Ming and early Qing Dynasty, braziers and *diao* (side-handle) kettles designed according to the description in Chen Gongyin's (陳恭尹) influential poem garnered even more praise among the scholars and Chajin of the time:

*Burning cleanly,
it can be placed near the house;
being small,
it is easily carried around.*

The significance of this change was that scholars were no longer limited to drinking tea in a tea hut with a servant to attend to aspects of the tea preparation, but could instead transport their tea setup to the study to sip in solitude at any hour, leading to a deeper and more personal aesthetic experience of tea drinking. For example, during the Ming Wanli era, author Xu Cishu encouraged scholars to go to their tea rooms alone and brew the tea themselves once in a while, rather than always having a servant attend to the brewing. During the Qing Qianlong era, the famous classic novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* (紅樓夢) by Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹) portrays the character Miaoyu, an aloof Buddhist nun, personally fanning the stove to boil the water for serving tea to her friends in her private chambers. In the Qing Daoguang era (1820–1850), scholar Huang Kaitai (黃開泰), a successful candidate in the highest civil service examinations, even professed that knowing how to light the charcoal and make tea was a matter of utmost importance and should

be studied via an apprentice system. With this shift to valuing intimate personal experience during tea making, it's no wonder that poetry describing tea braziers eventually began to appear, such as the line, “the glaze is jade-green like a springtime moth fluttering over tranquil waters; the clay is sturdy as the earth.” We even see verses recording the sentiments associated with these familiar objects, such as the following:

*After the heat comes
the crisp cool of dawn;
we carry our brush-rests
and tea brazier wherever we go.
Free-spirited scholars relax
while reciting a springtime poem,
leaving Yu Yang
and his generation behind.*

As modern tea lovers know, the ability to carry one's tea utensils out into Nature to enjoy tea is transformative. The ability to light and control a proper flame with charcoal was a necessary skill in the preparation of tea in those days.



茶 On the opposite page is a larger tin kettle, which were also common at the time, showing that not every tea lover was interested in going to the lengths of boiling water every steeping or two to three steepings. We all have to find our balance of convenience to quality, as Chajin back in the day did as well. This pot is stamped with the name Wan Xingji (萬興記). The hoop handle is wrapped in rattan and the spout pours smoothly. On this page, above, are two sidehandle kettles. The one on the right has a ruyi (如意) on the handle and is marked with the “yu shu (玉书),” or “jade book,” on the body, like the kettle on the previous page. Both of these are from Chaozhou. The brazier is a Fuzhou brazier with the “three peaks.” The poems on braziers are usually just single lines and often seven characters. This one alludes to the “moon in a dewdrop” of Zen thought. This poem is by Li Ying (李郢).



OVERVIEW OF THE BRAZIER SCHOOLS

產地略說

Leaving aside unique, one-off items made by individual scholars, almost every kiln active during the Ming and Qing dynasties was producing clay tea braziers and *diao* kettles. Some well-known places, such as the city of Yongding (永定), which is now famous for producing Fubang tea braziers, were not actually big pottery-producing centers during the Qing Dynasty. On the contrary, most of the Qing and early Ming Dynasty pieces that we know of today were produced in the following places:

Taihu School, Yixing: “Unparalleled inscriptions and shapes”

Thanks to the excellent quality and moldability of the local clay, along with the famed skill and artistry of its teapot makers, this area produced the most impressive variety of shapes out of all the tea brazier crafting traditions of its era. These braziers feature a number of decorative techniques, such as appliqué, engraving, scraping and carving, and were often formed by joining several flat segments of clay together. In addition, some of the finer tea braziers produced in this area were inscribed with poetry or other literary quotes using the “three blade” engraving technique, achieving a refinement unparalleled in any other region.

Chaozhou School, Fengxi: “Exceptionally fine”

Fengxi became famous for the decorative ceramic technique called “*tong hua* (通花),” a style of openwork involving appliqué and carved-out shapes. Perhaps because of this, the tea braziers and *diao* kettles from Fengxi also display a variety of exquisite details. In terms of tea braziers, most of them feature a decorative border below the mouth of the brazier in traditional styles such as the cloud or *ruyi* (如意) patterns. In addition, the mouth of the brazier often features an inscribed

tablet-stye seal identifying the maker, and sometimes also a cloud-patterned clay lining. Qing Dynasty tea kettles from Fengxi often feature a *ruyi* pattern or “*jin qian* (金錢, gold coin)” pattern on the handle, and the body of the kettle sometimes bears a two-character inscription on a horizontal tablet-shaped piece of clay added using the appliqué technique. When you pick up the lid by its knob, it gives the impression of Taihu stone; the “shoulder” part of the pot displays sturdy, upright lines, and the base has a deep concave indent for the flames to reach up into the kettle. The body of these kettles is exceptionally fine and thin and is rightfully known as the thinnest of all.

Zhangzhou School, Mapping: “Solid and durable”

The pieces produced in this area are thick and sturdy, an excellent choice for everyday use. Ordinary-quality braziers often display visible traces of firing, and some also have couplets engraved around the mouth. Sometimes these braziers would also feature a window in the shape of the character *wan* (a swastika, 卐, in its original incarnation as an auspicious Buddhist symbol), which was quite popular. The finer-quality examples are made from “Guanyin clay” (kaolinite, a type of clay mineral), and were often brushed with a fine, light-colored clay slurry to give the surface a textured feeling. They’re very unique, elegant pieces. During the mid-Qing Dynasty, Dazhuang (大壯) braziers from Mapping enjoyed a leading position on the market for a period, until the center of gongfu tea culture shifted southward to Chaozhou in Guangdong, at which point the Chaoshan brazier came into vogue and replaced them as the prevalent style. Chaozhou braziers would go on to become a paragon of gongfu tea braziers and are still crafted and used to this day, both in white and red clays and various sizes and shapes, including new modern designs.

Quanzhou Kiln School & Fuzhou Kiln School: “Export models”

During the Qing Dynasty, a large quantity of these pieces were destined for overseas sale, exported via maritime trade to places such as Japan, Taiwan and Southeast Asia. Some examples of this category of commercial pottery include the Yongxing (永興) brand from Baofushan in Fujian, the Qingling Shi (清靈氏) brand from Fuzhou and the Shengtai Hao (生泰號) brand. Most of these pieces were formed using pottery molds, and some of them were embellished with decorative patterns or lines of verse using wooden stamps. This type of brazier forms the majority of pieces that have made their way back to China from Japan; they tend to be on the delicate side and won’t stand up to very powerful flames.

Summing Up Braziers

In a broad summary of the evolution of tea braziers and kettles such as this, we are naturally limited to a brief discussion that does not go deeper into some topics that are worthy of exploration, such as the Shiba Dongtian (十八洞天) brand or the evolution of crafting materials. However, my intention in writing this article is simply to bring this topic to the table and open it for further discussion; if it encourages others with knowledge in the area to come forward and share their insights, then it will have done its job.



茶 Early Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) brazier commissioned by Japanese Chajin. The design is taller for use on tatami while kneeling.

砂鍋仔

掌握火焰

水的訓練



GONGFU KETTLE & STOVE COLLECTIONS

工夫壺和爐具收藏
火焰守護者





工夫茶





茶 *Serene Fragrance of the Heart's Abode, or Xin An Xiang Yin (心庵香隱), is a peaceful oasis in bustling Taipei for appreciating incense, tea, flowers, art, music and Nature (including the much-loved resident tortoises). For owner Xiao Qicheng (蕭祺昌), a piece of antique teaware is like a thread, connecting us to the feelings associated with tea in that far-off era. Mr. Xiao finds great delight in collecting mini shadiao and small "scholar" braziers, selecting different antique teaware for each occasion and noticing the unique ways in which each piece is suited to tea. The collection contains Chinese Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) pieces and Japanese pieces from the Edo (1603–1868) and Showa (1926–1989) periods. These are just a handful of the teahouse's many pieces.*



茶 Mr. Lin, the owner of this collection, began collecting lianglu braziers and shadiao kettles more than a decade ago, out of a growing appreciation for the sense of culture and history that this graceful teaware could bring to a tea session. He says: "Tea is not simply about the tastebuds, but about immersing oneself in the moment, washing away worldly worries—so naturally, the atmosphere is very important! Perhaps these pieces, with their classic Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) shapes and crafting techniques, can bring a sense of depth and time to the tea table."

玉書碬



燒 壺





茶 Wang Jiehong (王介宏) is the current director of the Chinese Gongfu Tea Association, the owner and manager of the Di Fan Tea Hut (滌煩茶寮) and a teacher and researcher of traditional gongfu tea and Song-style tea brewing. He has been collecting gongfu teaware since the 1990s. The braziers and kettles in this collection all date to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and come from Zhangzhou, Chaozhou and Yixing. Mr. Wang has spent a lot of time experimenting with different water boiling vessels and has found that the mild, gentle water from a shadiao kettle produces the most reliable results. It's no wonder that the wisdom of the Ming and Qing dynasties hails yushuwei kettles and clay braziers as two of the Four Treasures of gongfu tea. (Again, some traditions put kettles and braziers together and add a teaboat.)



茶 Established in 1989 by some of our tea teachers Chen Huaiyuan (陳懷遠) and Lu Minhua (盧敏華), Jiamu Tang Chen Yuan Hao (嘉木堂陳遠號) is a space located in Tainan city dedicated to puerh, oolong, old Taiwanese teas, Yixingware, photography and tea art and is home to an extensive collection of ancient books, art and historical artifacts. Beginning in 1994, Master Chen Huaiyuan has spent a lot of time at the tea mountain of Yiwu in Yunnan, helping to revive traditional puerh tea processing techniques. As well as a significant number of purple-sand clay (zisha) pots, the collection includes braziers from Fujian that largely date from the late Qing (1644–1911) and early Republic of China (1912–1949) eras and some Japanese braziers (ryoro) and kettles from the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho eras (1912–1926).









茶 Mr. Lin Ziquan (林子權) is a Taiwanese tea connoisseur and collector. He began collecting antique puerh and other old Taiwanese teas in the 1980s, and old teaware naturally followed. Taiwan has had an influx of old Japanese tea implements, which allowed him to acquire these pieces. At first, he focused on a variety of pots and kettles to experiment with for boiling water and later expanded to other tea implements. He believes that teaware is a pursuit of perfection in both aesthetic beauty and crafting techniques. Only by using them can you truly understand the designer's intent. This collection includes Chinese pieces from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and Japanese pieces from the Bunka era (1804–1818) of the Edo Period (1603–1868).



茶 A driving force of tea culture, Mr. Liang Mingzong (梁明宗) founded the Jinghe Tang (靜和堂) tea space and publishing house in 2005. Jinghe Tang publishes books about tea and pottery and deals in puerh, traditional Taiwanese oolong, local pottery and Japanese tetsubin. The gongfu tea renaissance in Taiwan led to a renewed focus on the age-old importance of braziers and kettles for boiling water. Mr. Liang has studied gongfu tea for more than twenty years and has visited Chaozhou numerous times, gradually amassing a collection of valuable teaware. This include a masterpiece-level shadiiao kettle by famous Chaozhou craftsman Wu Dalin (吳大林) and an array of antique tetsubin that fill up an entire wall of the Jinghe Tang space. The braziers and kettles featured here range in age from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) through to the Republic era (1912–1949). Many of you know our dear friend and teacher Mr. Liang, as he was guide to several Global Tea Hut trips. He is family to us and has taught us so much over the years. So many of our teas and the articles that have blessed these pages over the years were graciously donated by Mr. Liang. Raise a cup for him!









茶 In her spare moments, Wang Yanju (王豔菊), founder of the Yi Gallery (億美術館), likes to sip a cup of tea in quiet solitude, facing toward the southern regions of the Yangtze from her northern viewpoint. Although the clay braziers of Chaoshan are made in those southern climes, they are even better suited to the biting winters of the north: picture friends huddled around a charcoal fire, sipping a creamy brew amid the whirling snow. Wang Yanju's tea sessions with friends evolved into both a profession and a profound love for tea, and she has amassed an impressive collection of fine tea paraphernalia from across China and Japan: purple-sand clay pots, cast-iron tetsubin, cups, tins, incense equipment, tea cabinets and of course lianggu tea brazier sets. The pieces featured here date to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) and Japan's Heian (794–1185) and Edo (1603–1868) periods.

Our Sixth Annual Photography Contest

年度攝影比賽

Every year, members and non-members submit photographs that express their Tea spirit. We so enjoy seeing how people creatively show the ways Tea is manifesting in their lives. It is always so hard to choose our winners each year. We discuss our favorites, ask guests what they think and are often awestruck by so many of the entries. Alas, it is a contest! We would like to commend the bravery of all of the photographers and to say that we love them all. The winning photographs will stay up on our website as beacons of Tea spirit to the world! Check them out in the community section of the website and keep on making such beautiful and inspiring photography celebrating Tea spirit! Feel free to send us any of your photographs, and we would be happy to share them on our Instagram!

This year, our winner is:

Taisiia Zinina



Taisiia is from Russia. What an amazing and beautiful photograph! Not only is the lighting and the scenery incredible, but the driftwood seems gathered from nearby, turning this spot into the chaxi. The top-down perspective adds interest for us and the water at the corners makes us feel like there is more to see, leading our imagination off the frame. She said this about the photograph: "Chaxi on the old paddle that I found on the rocks after a typhoon, perhaps as a symbol of using tea to swim through the storms of life. At the hardest times, the Universe will always send you an old paddle and a cup of tea."



There were so many amazing photographs this year that we chose three runners-up to receive some great cakes of tea:



Charlie Hà Cheesman, Australia



Matthew Barbour, Australia

Lera Zuyeva, U.K.

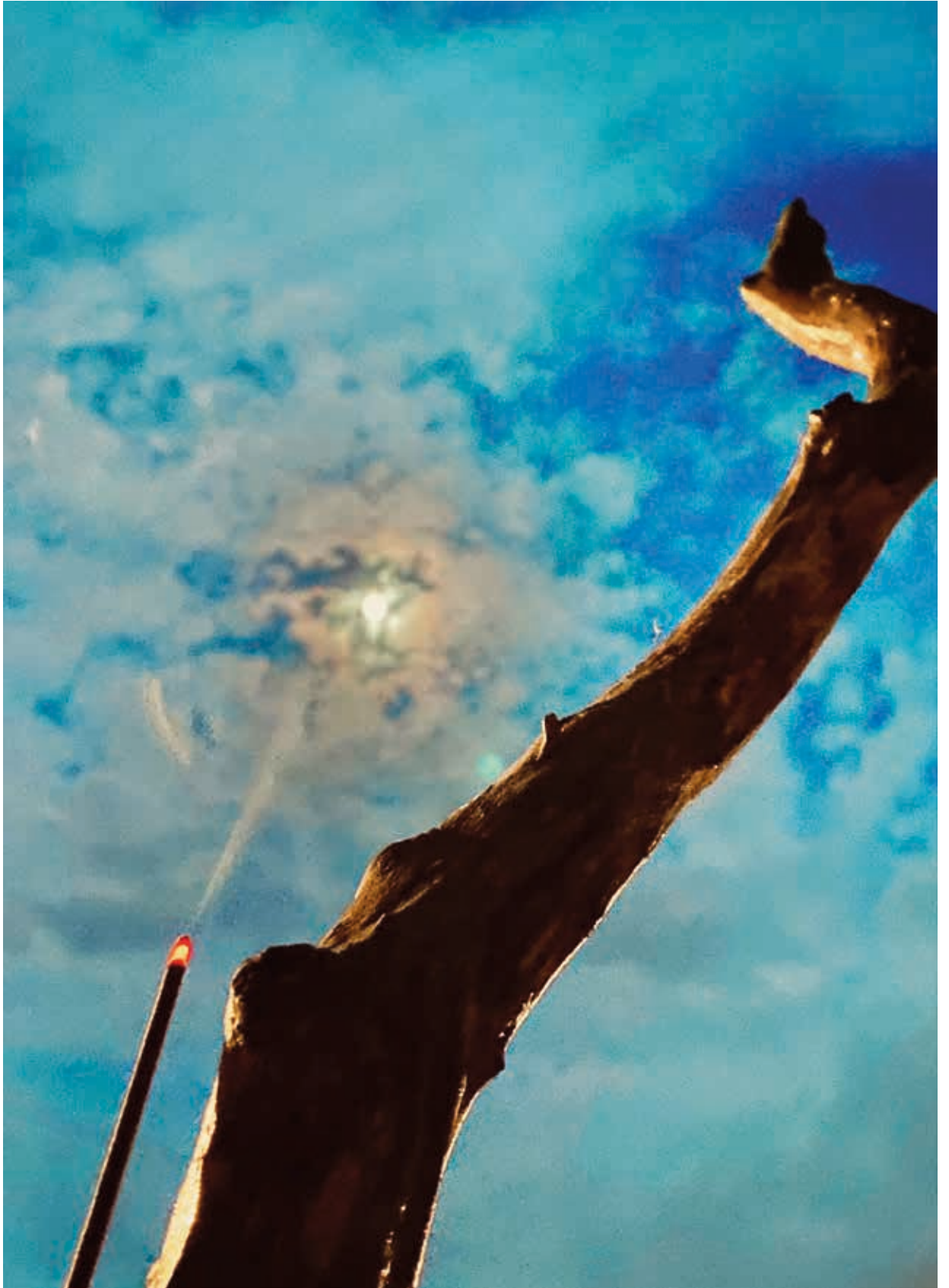
香氣證
迷失在茶的片刻



We also had an incense photo contest this year, which had fewer submissions but some great ones. We chose two of those as winners:

Siim Loog, Estonia





Jason Lange, USA

Global Tea Hut artisans and photographers Raneta Kulakova and Petr Novak also chose three winners to receive handmade gifts from them:



Katrine Friis Olsen, Denmark/Hong Kong

Petr: There were quite a few photographs this year that I liked very much. I chose this one from Katriin Olsen for the emotions and imaginations that this simple gesture evoked in me. I feel a soft sadness there—sadness that many of us experienced here and there during the months of lockdown this past year. We are safe inside, in isolation from others... Tea helped so many of us during this time. In this picture, there is strength, resilience and desire for connection at the same time. I love it!



Raneta: There were so many great entries this year that I couldn't choose just one. I had to choose two, and even that was difficult since so many of you made such beautiful photographs. Both of these pictures represent for me the aspect of Cha Dao that I value the most: building a tea temple embraced by Nature, honoring and celebrating life itself by making that extra effort and bringing all of what's needed to do so. Both photographs and places are beautiful, and I would love to be invited to these tea sessions!

*Tracy Conti McCarty,
USA*

Odile Chaperon, Australia



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 Deborah McAulay.

In my home, tea always had a strong ceremonial feeling, though it was secular before I understood it to be sacred. There were nonetheless strong ritual boundaries, like timing, method and teaware, particularly at my grandparents' home. As a young adult, I noticed that my mother was buying tins of Longjing tea from an old man who owned a traditional tea store in Hong Kong. I went to explore myself, and that was when I stepped into a world of magic. The shop with all its different tins and containers of tea, simple old wooden table and tiled floor, smelled of the earth. It was here where I bought my first tin of tea that I would take with me, as life took me to different parts of the world. It was a connection to the land I love, that is home.

As a child I spent much time creating imaginary worlds, where I would make healing potions. My mother often traveled to Japan and would bring home gifts like small colorful paper boxes that would have boxes inside, and yet smaller boxes inside those. I would fill each one with an ingredient for my "apothecary" and would administer the specific remedy for each "customer." I would weigh, mix and add to my boiling cauldron with great focus, depending on what my "customers" needed. As I investigate the depths of my dark teapot now, with the steam rising and the leaves unfurling, I am always taken back to my essence, and what was once imaginary has become real, for all my senses to delight in. And yet, I feel I played no part in its creation...

One morning, following a full moon night, where I ended up with a group of people I did not know, I found myself following threads of invitation which included an offering of tea by Hong Kong's dearest tea sister, Resham. This is where Tea took a turn. As I drank bowl after bowl, I observed as layer after layer of myself was stripped away, until there was just a bare shaft of light that remained. There it was, laid out in front of me. All that was unimportant, that took up so much of my attention, was revealed as empty, and the truth, my true purpose of being, surfaced once again with more clarity, presence, grace and with the most beautiful understanding that I had found a friend—a true friend who would hold my hand and walk me home. The connection to Tea on a whole other level was sealed in that moment. It's as though She recognized my body as her true home, and soft, gentle tears began to flow. The tea was called "Enlightenment."

Things happened quite quickly from there. I joined more tea sits in Hong Kong, and I found that my body would recognize Her before I even took a sip. I would often notice a big lump of emotion in my throat that would then be released by the tea as I drank. It was December, and I decided to ask Resham if she would consider offering a tea ceremony to my family as my Christmas gift. She then told me that her teacher was coming to town, and that perhaps he would consider doing this. Of course, I was delighted by the timing and said that would be wonderful! A few weeks later, Wu De came to my home and served tea to



🍵: Deborah McAulay, Hong Kong/U.K.

my whole family. I had no idea what to expect. My parents are elderly, so it was decided that we would all sit around the dining table for comfort. This was the table that had hosted many family meals, with all their energetic complexity. It was the first time we sat in complete silence, which stripped us all down to one ingredient: Tea... after which, my brother turned to me and said that was the best family "meal" we had shared in our lives! The silence, the tea, the teacher, the history, the land, the ancestors... all of it was present, as one unified force; separation and differences began to melt. I have no idea what happened, but I do know it was deeply healing for all of us.

I signed up for the upcoming annual trip to Fujian, knowing very little but feeling pulled, and shortly after, found myself at the Tea Sage Hut, studying in the ten-day course. Each of those experiences would take pages to write about. Four years later, I served Enlightenment to my mother for her eightieth birthday. It took a surprising amount of courage to do such a simple act, but the tea leaf has made choices much simpler and clearer in my life. It has simply been a case of listening and heeding the call.

It has been exciting to witness the Global Tea Hut community growing in Hong Kong, and I have been blessed to be a part of it, building pockets of community through sharing tea in different corners of our territory. If ever you find yourself in this part of the world, you will find many hearts and hands wishing to welcome you, and the most beautiful tea spots imaginable!

Inside the Hut

COMING SOON TO GLOBAL TEA HUT MAGAZINE

茶主题: Wood Firing

茶主题: Gongfu Experiments II

茶道

茶主题: Classics of Tea

茶主题: Chinese Medicine



We would like to encourage all of you to get involved with the magazine. This is a community first and foremost! You can submit criticism or ideas for future issues you would like to see. Also, feel free to submit your work for the Voices from the Hut section. Don't be hesitant or intimidated to write. Sometimes, we think that expertise in tea is needed, but tea is about having a beginner's mind, and so we all can stand to learn from anyone's perspective on tea, no matter where they are in their journey.



We will be launching an entire section of the website devoted to whisked tea, including bowls, scoops, whisks and some of the best powdered teas we could find from Taiwan and Japan!



We have three beautiful new Eastern Beauty teas from Master Gu Cheng Gan (古乘乾). There is also a new aged Eastern Beauty that is very delicious as well.



We have some really cool silver filters for the gongfu kettles as well as the silver tea leaf set, which also works really well in a Chaozhou kettle if you are using one. Try experimenting with silver in your water for tea.



We hope you enjoy the online courses we have made during the pandemic. There are Intro to Cha Dao, Boiled Tea, Incense Ceremony and the Seven Genres of Tea courses for those who want to learn more about the science, production and lore of tea itself. We are starting to plan the next courses, which will likely include a course on puerh tea, which will be similar to the Seven Genres casual classroom-style course, and then two levels of gongfu tea for those who are interested in this brewing style.

Center News



We have started looking at properties online again, though we haven't been able to visit any. Recently, we have been toying with the idea of just getting land and building the Center slowly on our own. Having land with a building does speed things up, but since everything has been slowed by the pandemic anyway, it may be a better option for us to build everything ourselves. That certainly allows us more freedom to architect and construct however we would like. That said, Taiwan's zoning laws are very complicated. Joyce is in contact with an expert who can help us navigate the legal side of construction.



We are also searching hard for a new building to rent. This would be warehouse space as well as a photography studio and ideally residential space that is bigger and more comfortable. Like so many, the pandemic left us with some people living in what were supposed to be temporary lodgings. Hopefully we can find a bigger and well-lit place for living and for creating and a better photography studio to improve the magazine. We used to have the perfect spot in the old Center's hallway, as some of you remember. We are looking for something like that!

October Affirmation

I am passionate

Do I love life? Do I delve deeply into experiences? Can I find the fire in life without added attachment? I am passionate yet free, devoted but unattached!



www.globalteahut.org

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

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