

More than just a Drink: Tea Consumption, Material Culture, and
'Sensory Turn' in Early Modern China (1550-1700)

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Yuanxin Jiang

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Ann Waltner

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Introduction

Tea as a Commodity and its Social Life

“We are adamant about keeping separate the spheres of material objects and persons,” Igor Kopytoff, an anthropologist, states in his article entitled “The Cultural Biography of Things.”¹ In *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Practices*, Arjun Appadurai has written, “taking my lead from Veblen, Douglas and Isherwood, and Baudrillard, I suggest that consumption is eminently social, relational and active rather than private, atomic and passive.”² From the perspective of an anthropologist, Appadurai argues that goods cannot be reduced to production for exchange value, which “is never an inherent property of objects, but is a judgement made about them by subjects.”³ Since value is encoded in commodities, so the analysis should focus on the things exchanged rather than the process of exchange, he suggests. The meanings of commodities go beyond any simple conception of their monetary value and include their forms, the way they are used, and their trajectories or social lives in given social contexts.⁴ “Situations ground things, giving them meaning,” Appadurai further suggests studying how

¹ Igor Kopytoff, “The Cultural Biography of Things” in *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-91: 77.

² Arjun Appadurai ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 31.

³ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 3.

⁴ Peter K. Lunt, Sonia M. Livingstone, *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity* (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1982), 14.

situations have constructed objects as commodities.⁵ A thing can be in the commodity state or not, with different time-cycles for the transformation from non-commodity to commodity. Moreover, an object becomes a commodity at the intersection of a variety of temporal, cultural, and social factors, as Appadurai has pointed out.⁶ “The social lives of commodities can be understood as a series of narratives which depict the paths and diversions through which a good travels.”⁷ In addition to following the things, the meanings of things are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories. Appadurai concludes that only through the analysis of these trajectories that we can interpret the human transactions and calculations that enliven things.⁸

Demand and consumers’ desire play significant roles in the value of commodities. Jean Baudrillard, a French sociologist, has argued that that demand emerges from the social practices around commoditization rather than from human needs.⁹ He stresses that all purchases, because they always signify something socially, have their fetishistic side.¹⁰ Objects can always say something about their users. Therefore, the reason why consumption remains more important than production is because the “ideological genesis of needs” precedes the production of goods to meet those needs.¹¹ Appadurai suggested

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 15.

⁷ Lunt, *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, 15.

⁸ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 5.

⁹ Lunt, *Mass Consumption and Personal Identity*, 15.

¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publication, 1998), 59. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 29.

¹¹ Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of Sign* (Candor: Telos Press, 1981), 63-87.

to treat demand and consumption as an aspect of the overall political economy of societies. According to him, demand, “emerges as a function of a variety of social practices and classification, rather than a mysterious emanation of human needs, a mechanical response to social manipulation, or the narrowing down of a universal and voracious desire for objects to whatever happens to be available.”¹² Appadurai considered demand as an economic expression of the political logic of consumption.¹³ On the one hand, demand is determined by social and economic forces; on the other hand, it can manipulate, within limits, these social and economic forces.¹⁴ For instance, Christopher Bayly’s study on cloth in India since 1700 demonstrates the links between politics, value, and demand in the social history of things. Bayly argues that the production, exchange, and consumption of cloth constitute the material of “political discourse” that ties together royal demand, local production structures and solidarities, and the fabric of political legitimacy.¹⁵ Appadurai noticed that “the customary consumption logics of small communities are intimately tied to larger regimes of value defined by large-scale polities.”¹⁶ Like cotton cloths to India, the production, exchange, and consumption of tea is also deeply embedded in China’s political scene. Tea not only can be an important tribute of the empire, whose production and shipment were both scrutinized by supervisors, but was also one of the most important taxable resources that contributed to

¹² Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 29.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

the court's revenue. Furthermore, while playing a role in domestic politics, tea was significant to the daily life of people outside China Proper, and its influence went far beyond the trading itself.

Consumption, as Appadurai has pointed out, is not only for “sending social messages,” but for receiving them as well. He further indicates that “elite tastes, in general, have a ‘turnstile’ function, selecting from exogenous possibilities and then providing models, as well as direct political controls, for internal tastes and production.”¹⁷ One way to execute the political control over consumers is the “sumptuary laws,” through which consumption is subjected to external regulation. Appadurai asserted, “what modern money is to primitive media of exchange, fashion is to primitive sumptuary regulation.” Different from sumptuary laws, which are rigid, slow to move, weak in their capacity to commensurate, tied to hierarchy, discrimination, and rank in social life, the term fashion suggests “high velocity, rapid turnover, the illusion of total access and high convertibility, the assumption of a democracy of consumers and of objects of consumption.” However, Baudrillard and Bourdieu have both pointed out the effectiveness of fashion and taste in the contemporary West in the attainment of similar results, including limiting social mobility, marking social rank, and discrimination. “Taste makers” and “their affiliate experts,” who determine those ever-shifting rules, dwell at the top of society. “The demand for commodities is critically regulated by this variety of taste-making mechanism,” Appadurai argued. According to him, the consumption demands of persons are regulated by high-turnover criteria of

¹⁷ Ibid.

“appropriateness (fashion).” Therefore, demand is a socially generated impulse, “not an artifact of individual whims or needs.” The impulse could come from the media or could be manipulated by political appeals. Appadurai concluded that, in general, “those commodities whose consumption is most intricately tied up with critical social messages are likely to be least responsive to crude shifts in supply or price, but most responsive to political manipulation at the societal level.”¹⁸ Like other commodities, the value of tea in China was not only decided by forms of technology and labor, but also heavily depended on demands from its consumers. These consumers included ordinary people who utilized it as a daily drink, and more importantly, imperial courts and emperors, who used the tea as a way to fulfill their political control. In terms of taste, the imperial selections of tea, also known as the tribute tea, was significant to the reputation and popularity of each tea that had been chosen. The fashion that was first generated from a small change of imperial taste would result in a huge transformation in the national tea market.

Traders were the critical agents between the supply and demand of commodities. Appadurai argued, “the politics of demand frequently lies at the root of the tension between merchants and political elites; whereas merchants tend to be the social representatives of unfettered equivalence, new commodities, and strange tastes; political elites tend to be the custodians of restricted exchange, fixed commodity systems, and established tastes and sumptuary customs.”¹⁹ Since the merchants were the only group who were familiar with suppliers and consumers, they played a significant role in

¹⁸ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 32-3.

¹⁹ Ibid.

controlling the flow of commodities and influencing on the value of each type of tea. New commodities brought by merchants provided a materialistic condition for consumers to break sumptuary customs. Craig Clunas has noticed late-Ming social elites' anxiety about social status that was engendered from the "social emulation," which was a phenomenon presented in the form of "conspicuous consumption."²⁰ Tea, particularly those famous teas circulating in China's domestic market, contributed significantly to the discourse of conspicuous consumption at the time.

Werner Sombart's insight on the development of early capitalism from approximately 1300-1800 in Europe suggests that the principal cause of the expansion of trade, industry, and finance capital was the demand for luxury goods, "principally on the part of the *nouveaux riches*, the courts, and the aristocracy."²¹ He locates the source of this increased demand in the new understanding of the sale of "free" love, sensual refinement, and the political economy of courtship during this period.²² This new source of demand meant that fashion became a driving force for the upper classes, satiated only by ever-increasing quantities and ever-differentiated qualities of articles for consumption.²³

Goods do not fall simply into the two classes of luxury and necessity. In a book focused on the consumption of tea in Victorian England, Julie E. Fromer called tea "a

²⁰ Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), 163.

²¹ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 37.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

necessary luxury.”²⁴ Appadurai explained luxury in a discourse of social history, and he explains that luxury goods were not so much in contrast to necessities, but “as goods whose principal use is rhetorical and social, goods that are simply incarnated signs. Since most luxuries are used, though in special ways and at special cost, Appadurai regards luxury as a special “register of consumption” rather than “a class of thing.”²⁵ He further explains, “in relation to commodities, the signs of this register” have following attributes:

(1) restriction, either by price or by law, to elite; (2) complexity of acquisition, which may or may not be a function of real “scarcity”; (3) semiotic virtuosity, that is, the capacity to signal fairly complex social messages (as do peppers in cuisine, silk in dress, jewels in adornment, and relics in worship); (4) specialized knowledge as a prerequisite for their “appropriate” consumption, that is, regulation by fashion; and (5) a high degree of linkage of their consumption to body, person, personality.²⁶

Not only in Europe after 1800, when sumptuary laws were in eclipse, but all societies display some demand for luxury goods, Appadurai concludes. The demand for luxury goods is freed from political regulation and left to the “free” play of the marketplace and of fashion. Appadurai continues, “fashion, in this new context, is the urge to imitate the new powers, and this urge is often integrated, from better or worse, with traditional sumptuary imperatives.”²⁷ The system of tribute tea in China could be explained as sumptuary laws that regulated and directed the consumption and taste of tea. However,

²⁴ Julie E. Fromer, *A Necessary Luxury: Tea in Victorian England* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 1.

²⁵ See Appadurai’s explanation of luxury in *The Social Life of Things*. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See Appadurai’s explanation of fashion in *The Social Life of Things*. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 38.

the relaxation of sumptuary laws and the rise of local elites in regional political powers in late-Ming period not only allowed more and more luxurious tea products circulating in the market, but also resulted in local elite, who contributed greatly in the consumption of luxurious tea, becoming “fashion leaders” in this field.

Furthermore, the line between luxury and everyday commodities is a historically shifting one. For example, Braudel noted that sugar was a luxury before the sixteenth century because it was initially limited to a few.²⁸ However, there was a movement from the “few” to the “many” because such a movement expressed the general incidence of the desire for these goods.²⁹ Appadurai indicates that the distinction between humble commodities and more exotic ones is not a difference in kind, but most often a difference in demand over time, or a difference between loci of production and those of consumption.³⁰ Chandra Mukerji’s study of material culture in early modern Europe suggests that “the cultural meanings and uses of objects stem from or helped to define economic value.”³¹ Mukerji further notices, “manufactures did not intentionally produce a pattern of stratification in objects to enhance the development of the new social order, but when they attempted to tailor objects to different income groups to increase their profits, they effectively mirrored and ratified the social system. They cultivated

²⁸ Fernand Braudel, *The Wheels of Commerce: Civilization & Capitalism 15th-18th Century, Vol. 2* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 183.

²⁹ Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 34.

³⁰ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 40.

³¹ Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 23.

cosmopolitan tastes among elites and produced a taste for less expansive commodities among nonelites, helping to create aesthetic and lifestyle differences between the two groups.”³² Tea as a commodity can be understood through two directions. On the one hand, some types of tea developed from luxury to everyday commodities; on the other hand, some of types developed the other way around. Nevertheless, both development routes represent the changing attitudes and tastes of their consumers.

Demand is thus neither a mechanical response to the structure and level of production nor a bottomless natural appetite. It is a complex social mechanism that mediates between short- and long-term patterns of commodity circulation, Appadurai concluded. Short-term strategies of diversion might entail small shifts in demand that can gradually transform commodity flows in the long run. However, long established patterns of demand act as constraints on any given set of commodity paths. “Paths,” according to Appadurai, are “inherently shaky. They rest on unstable distributions of knowledge.”³³

Knowledge and Consumption

Appadurai has pointed out that there are two sorts of knowledge about commodities: “the knowledge (technical, social, aesthetic, and so forth) that goes into the production of the commodity; and the knowledge that goes into appropriately consuming the

³² Ibid., 243.

³³ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 41.

commodity.”³⁴ Knowledge at both poles “has technical, mythological, and evaluative components, and the poles are susceptible to mutual and dialectical interaction.”³⁵ However, according to him, the technical knowledge required for the production of primary commodity (grain, metal, fuels, oils) is much more likely to be standardized than the knowledge required for secondary or luxury commodities, “where taste, judgement and individual experiences are likely to create sharp variations in production knowledge.” Nevertheless, technical knowledge is “always deeply interpenetrated with cosmological, sociological, and ritual assumptions that are likely to be widely shared.” For commodities that have experienced long-distance flow, the trader and his agents take the responsibility of translating external demands to local producers. They provide “logistical and price bridges between worlds of knowledge that may have minimal direct contact.”³⁶

Many anthropologists have noticed that “whenever there are discontinuities in the knowledge that accompanies the movement of commodities, problems involving authenticity and expertise enter the picture.”³⁷ Their studies also suggest that, under premodern conditions, the long-distance movement of precious commodities entailed costs that made the acquisition of them in itself a marker of exclusivity and an instrument of sumptuary distinction.³⁸ Where the control of such objects was not directly subject to

³⁴ Ibid. Appadurai also indicates that it is not accurate to regard knowledge at the production locus of a commodity as “exclusively technical or empirical” and knowledge at the consumption end as “exclusively evaluative or ideological.”

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 42.

³⁷ Ibid., 44.

³⁸ Ibid.

state regulation, it was indirectly regulated by the cost of acquisition, so that they stayed within the hands of the few. When the reproduction of these objects on a mass basis became possible due to the technological development, “the dialogue between consumers and the original source become more direct.”³⁹ Therefore, in modern society, particularly in the modern West, “the only way to preserve the function of these commodities in the prestige economies is to complicate the criteria of authenticity.”⁴⁰ Baudrillard and Bourdieu’s research both suggest that there is “very complicated competition and collaboration between ‘expert’ from the art world, dealers, producers, scholars, and consumers,” all of whom together construct the “political economy of taste” in the modern West.⁴¹ The issues of authenticity and expertise also generate some other issues, such as good taste, expert knowledge, originality, and social distinction, most of which are particularly “visible in the domain of art and art objects.”⁴² The term object, according to Baudrillard, emerged to the need of describing a thing that is no longer just a product or a commodity, but essentially “a sign in a system of signs of status.”⁴³ In addition, fashion is the cultural medium in which objects move.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Appadurai notices that knowledge about commodities is itself increasingly

³⁹ Ibid., 44-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

⁴¹ Ibid. Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of Sign* (Candor: Telos Press, 1981), 63-87. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1984), 1-7.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of Sign*, 185.

⁴⁴ Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things*, 46.

commoditized.⁴⁵ In the process of the commoditization of knowledge, expertise, credentialism, and high-brow aestheticism all play different roles.”⁴⁶

Politics, in a broad sense of relations, assumptions, and contests pertaining to power, is what links value and exchange in the social life of things, Appadurai argues.⁴⁷ He further explains the many forms of the politics of value, particularly from a social elite point of view. In addition to the politics of fashion, the politics of knowledge and ignorance, of expertise, of sumptuary control, of authenticity and authentication, and the politics of connoisseurship are all expressions of the interests of elites in relation to commoners.⁴⁸ Tea could be understood in terms of the politics as well. However, the consumption of tea in late-Ming China, especially in a domestic market, was a synthetic practice that represented all above politics.

From the perspective of consumers, consumption is “a stage in a process of communication, that is, an act of deciphering, decoding, which presupposes practical or explicit mastery of a cipher or code,” Bourdieu commented.⁴⁹ For example, the capacity to see is a function of the knowledge and the words that are available to name visible things are “programmers” for perception.⁵⁰ Bourdieu further indicates that “the conscious or unconscious implementation of explicit or implicit schemes of perception and appreciation which constitutes pictorial or musical culture is the hidden condition for

⁴⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 57

⁴⁹ Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 2.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

recognizing the styles characteristic of a period, a school or an author, and, more generally, for the familiarity with the internal logic of works that aesthetic enjoyment presupposes.”⁵¹ A consumer “who lacks the specific code feels lost in a chaos of sounds and rhythms, colors and lines, without rhyme or reason.”⁵² Bourdieu believes that the ‘eye’ is a product of history reproduced by education. In a context of China, the practice of tea tasting, in contrast to tea as a daily necessity, was an important branch of art that paralleled with other branches, such as painting, calligraphy, and music. Yu Shunde, a Taiwanese anthropologist, has noticed that the ability of sensing and evaluating objects, taking tea and ceramics as examples, was acquired through training rather than an innate capacity.⁵³

The Social Life of the Senses and the Aesthetic of Objects

As early as in 1908, Georg Simmel (1858-1918), a German sociologist, paid attention to the social life of the senses in his essay entitled “The Sociology of the Senses.”⁵⁴ Inspired by him, a series of other prominent twentieth century thinkers laid the groundwork for the “sensory turn,” which has come over the humanities and social sciences since the

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Yu Shunde, *Ti wu ru wei: Wu yu shen ti gan de yan jiu* (Taipei: Tsing-hwa University, 2008), 44.

⁵⁴ In this essay, Simmel briefly analyzed the changing role of the senses of smell and sound and sight in modern life.

1980s.⁵⁵ These thinkers include the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss and the media theorist Marshall McLuhan.

Lévi-Strauss has pointed out the sensory power of myth. In his opinion, each of the senses are seen as codes that transmit messages. He commented in *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques*, “They [the senses] are operators, which make it possible to convey the isomorphic character of all binary systems of contrasts connected with the senses.”⁵⁶ Take life and death as an example, it is coded in smell (imputrescible vs. putrid), in sound (loud vs. faint), in terms of touch (hard vs. soft), and “the action of the myth will depend on smelling or not smelling, hearing or not hearing, etc., until all the permutations (inversion, transposition, dilution, expansion, etc.) have been exhausted, and some sort of resolution of the initial opposition is achieved, or not.” As with Lévi-Strauss, there is a strong emphasis on the relations between the senses in the work of Marshall McLuhan, for McLuhan also views the sensorium as a kind of combinatory. However, McLuhan concentrates on relations of domination, complementarity and/or fusion between the senses themselves. He posits four stages in the evolution of human communication: an “oral” stage when speech was the dominant medium of information, followed by a chirographic stage when writing took over from speech, then a typographic stage when the printing press was dominant, and finally an electronic stage. Through these four stages, people have ended the “tyranny of ears” and “ratcheted up the role of sight.” McLuhan believes that the printing press helped precipitate the “fragmentation of

⁵⁵ David Howes, “The Social Life of the Senses,” *Ars Vivendi Journal* No.3 (February 2013): 4-23, 4.

⁵⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked: Mythologiques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 153.

senses;” however, the hegemony of vision was ruptured and “a kind of tribal sensibility restored with the arrival of electronic media.”⁵⁷

François Laplantine, a French anthropologist/philosopher, and Constance Classen, a Canadian cultural historian/anthropologist both contribute significantly to “foundations of anthropology of the senses.” Laplantine suggests that “the experience of fieldwork is an experience of sharing the perceptible.”⁵⁸ Classen has discussed the socialization of the senses and sensation. She states,

When we examine the meanings associated with various sensory faculties and sensations in different cultures we find a cornucopia of potent sensory symbolism. Sight may be linked to reason or to witchcraft, taste may be used as a metaphor for aesthetic discrimination or for sexual experience, an odor may signify sanctity or sin, political power or social exclusion. Together, these sensory meanings and values form the sensory model espoused by a society, according to which the members of that society ‘make sense’ of the world, or translate sensory perceptions and concepts into a particular ‘worldview’.⁵⁹

Classen’s statement stresses the necessity and significance of exploring the senses across cultures. Furthermore, she is a predecessor of historicizing the sensorium. Classen pays attention to the cultural history of smell and touch, the latter of which she calls “the deepest sense” because it is relatively neglected by scholars.⁶⁰ David Howes, another

⁵⁷ David Howes, “The Social Life of the Senses,” 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁹ Constance Classen, “Foundations for an Anthropology of the Senses,” *International Social Science Journal* 153, 1997: 401-412, 402.

⁶⁰ Howes, “The Social Life of the Senses,” 11.

Canadian anthropologist, observes that the dearth of tactile history is therefore attributable to the differential social valuation of the senses.⁶¹

In contrast to study the cultural history of each sense individually, Howes suggests looking at the interrelation of the senses. He has observed that “the idea of aesthetic experience as having to be pure” is a “deeply entrenched construct.”⁶² To be more specific, each sense has its proper sphere. For instance, going to an art gallery is to treat our eyes. Going to a concert hall is to please our ears. A restaurant is for indulging our palate. However, this idea of separation or “bureaucratization of the senses” was challenged by Howes who argues for “multisensory aesthetics.”⁶³ Based on his study of *kōdō* (way of incense) in Japan, Howes indicates that the essence of the aesthetic experience lies in the union and/or transposition of sensations, rather than their separation.⁶⁴ In Howes’ opinion, the single-sensed understanding of art is dominant in Western society; however, non-Western and Indigenous aesthetic practices such as the Japanese tea ceremony and Navajo sandpainting, reveal art forms which engage multiple senses.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., 15.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 16.

⁶⁵ Howes, “The Social Life of the Senses,” 19-20.

The term “aesthetics” originally came from the Greek *aisthetikos*, which refers to “sense perception.”⁶⁶ The modern Western understanding of aesthetics was forged in the mid-eighteenth century. It was elaborated on the basis of a taxonomy of “the five arts” (architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry).⁶⁷ Jonathan Rée, a British philosopher and historian, has pointed out that the scope and criteria of the various arts were delimited in terms of the dualism of vision (epitomized by painting) and hearing (epitomized by either music or poetry). The ‘dark’ or ‘lower’ senses of smell, taste and touch were deemed too base to hold any significance for the fine arts.⁶⁸ In many non-Western societies, as Howes has noticed, the aesthetic does not constitute a realm apart, but is rather an aspect of everyday life and ritual practice, and the senses are not separated from each other but rather combine in specific ways to achieve specific purposes, such as healing. Therefore, he emphasizes the importance of studying the aesthetics in a cross-cultural way. Furthermore, his studies of different cultures suggest different manners of crossing the senses.⁶⁹

All aesthetic experience, whether of art or nature, seems to be informed by and dependent upon an exercise of taste.⁷⁰ For Bourdieu, tastes “are the practical affirmation

⁶⁶ David Howes, “The Aesthetics of Mixing the Senses,” 75-81, 75. “aesthetic – Definition of aesthetic in English by Oxford Dictionaries,” *Oxford Dictionaries - English*. Retrieved 5 June 2019.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/aesthetic>

⁶⁷ Howes, “The Aesthetics of Mixing the Senses,” 75.

⁶⁸ Jonathan Rée, “The Aesthetic Theory of the Arts,” in Peter Osborne ed., *From an Aesthetic Point of View* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2000), 32. Howes, “The Aesthetics of Mixing the Senses,” 75.

⁶⁹ Howes, “The Aesthetics of Mixing the Senses,” 76.

⁷⁰ “Taste, Criticism, and Judgement,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved 18 July 2019.

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/aesthetics/The-origins-of-modern-aesthetics>

of an inevitable difference,” “a system of classificatory schemes,” or “the source of the system of distinctive features which cannot fail to be perceived as a systematic expression of a particular class of conditions of existence.”⁷¹ It is only very occasionally and briefly in Bourdieu’s work that taste becomes “the faculty of perceiving flavors.”⁷² However, “taste” not only refers to its sociological meaning, which emphasizes on personal and cultural patterns of choice and preference associated with social relations and dynamics between people; but also means gustatory perception, the sensory impression of food and drink on the tongue. In a context of China, the sociological layer of “taste” was developed beginning in the 1980s when a group of Chinese scholars noticed the explosion of consuming commodity goods in the late-Ming China. Taiwanese scholar Wu Jen-shu argues that the pursuit of commodity goods was a response to “social emulation” in late Ming China.⁷³ In English scholarship, Craig Clunas, the author of *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, suggests that the “invention of taste” was the mechanism through which a gentry elite was able to retain cultural power, by appreciating manufactured things more important than the mere fact of ownership.⁷⁴ However, the historical studies on “taste” as gustatory perception are rare. This dissertation tries to understand the role of “taste” as sensory experiences in

⁷¹ Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 56, 174-5.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 474.

⁷³ Wu Jen-shu, “Ming dai ping min fu shi de liu xing feng shang yu shi da fu de fan ying,” *Xin Shixue* 1999 (3): 55-109.

⁷⁴ Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*, 71-2.

tea drinking that have played in a broader understanding of “taste” which indirectly shapes social relations.

Words for the Senses

“A culture’s understanding of the physical senses may reveal implicit features of its world view,” Jane Geany, the author of *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, states.⁷⁵ In texts created in the Warring States period (481-221 BCE), the senses were usually classified into five categories. This number happened to conform to a general tendency to fit things into “five-fold schemes,” such as five colors and five tastes.⁷⁶ The sensory organs in Warring States philosophical texts were identified as “officials.” There were “five officials” (*wu guan*); however, there was no firm consensus about the constituents of these sensory organs. For instance, the *Xunzi* listed the sensory organs as mouth, nose, eyes, ears, and body, while *Mencius* listed mouth, eyes, nose, mouth, and limbs.⁷⁷ In their behavior as official, each sensing organ was an office with its own area of concern.⁷⁸ In *Xunzi*, it argued that “ear, eye, nose, and mouth cannot trade offices.”⁷⁹ Furthermore, these five offices were ruled by the heartmind (*xin*).⁸⁰ In the

⁷⁵ Jane Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 耳目鼻口之不可以相借官。

⁸⁰ The term is translated by Geany in *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*. Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 19.

Xunzi, it has also been pointed out, “ear, eye, nose, mouth, and form, each has its own receptions and does not do things for the others. Now, these are called the heavenly officials. The heartmind dwells in the central cavity and governs the five officials. Now, this is called the heavenly ruler.”⁸¹ In sum, the senses behaved as officials under the control of a ruler.

Philosophers in early China agreed that sensory desires were fundamental in human beings; however, they could be dangerous, particularly to one’s morality. In her study of the senses in early China, Geany has noticed that it was common for thinkers to believe that “the senses are born investigating desires. These desires distract the heartmind from its ability to think and accomplish its aim.”⁸² For example, the *Xunzi* described a scene of a man sitting in a cave, trying to concentrate, and the author argued, “if the desires of the ears and eyes contact (what they desire), then his thoughts will be defeated, and if he hears the buzzing of mosquitoes or flies, his concentration will be damaged.”⁸³ In another session, the author stated, “the eyes desire the greatest extreme of colors, the ears desire the greatest extreme of sounds, the mouth desires the greatest extreme of tastes, the nose desires the greatest extreme of smells, the heartmind desires the greatest extreme of comfort.”⁸⁴ Thus, the senses themselves were inherently inclined to toward excess.

⁸¹ Translated by Geany. Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 19. 耳目鼻口形能个有接而不相能也，夫是之谓天官。心居中虚以治五官，夫是之谓天君。

⁸² Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 21.

⁸³ Translated by Jane Geany. Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 20. 耳目之欲，接则败其思。蚊虻之声，闻则挫其精。

⁸⁴ Translated by Geany. Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 21. 目欲綦色，耳欲綦声，口欲綦味，鼻欲綦臭，心欲綦佚。

Philosophers also expressed their concerns about the excess. For example, Mozi commented, “the wicked kings of the Three Dynasties did not control the flowing of their ears and eyes and did not restrain the partialities of their heartmind’s aim.”⁸⁵ Because sensory desires are distracting and possibly excessive, the senses must be restrained, so as to avoid inauspicious situations or immorality.

Early philosophers have noticed the relationship between the senses and the way of knowing. Different schools provided multiple answers to this issue. The discussions mainly focused on two things: the first one was “sensory knowledge,” which refers to knowledge of the senses themselves; the other thing was “verifying knowledge,” which means “knowledge that is constructed by a combination of certain senses and the heartmind.”⁸⁶ “Sensory knowledge” mostly came from the discussion about “sense discrimination.”⁸⁷ One chapter entitled *Zhengming (Rectification of Names)* in the *Xunzi* introduced the function of the senses and their relation to objects, “The mouth may be holding fine meats, but it does not know their flavor. The ears may listen to bells and drums, but they do not know their sounds. The eyes may see embroidered, ornamented garments, but they do not know their form. Though it has cold and warmth, peace and a fine bamboo mat, the body does not know their ease.”⁸⁸ A passage from the *Mozi* also suggested that the senses may have their own abilities to “know,” and it says, “the body

⁸⁵ Ibid. 三代之暴王不繆其耳目之淫不慎其心志之辟。

⁸⁶ Ibid., 30-1.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁸⁸ Translated by Geany. Ibid., 36-7. 心忧恐则口衔刍豢而不知其味，耳听钟鼓而不知其声，目视黼黻而不知其状，轻暖平簟而体不知其安。

knows their comfort, the mouth knows their sweetness, the eyes know their beauty, and the ears know their music.”⁸⁹ The ability to know not only belonged to the senses. Geany has pointed out that the heartmind also had the ability of “knowing.”⁹⁰ However, when the heartmind “intended to feel and understand things” (*yi wu*), it recruited the senses to collect information. In the *Xunzi*, the term “zheng zhi” (verify knowledge) was used to describe the process of verifying the sensory information and finally turn it into knowledge.⁹¹ According to Geany, “verifying must await the heavenly officials’ meeting and recording their kinds in order to be possible. If the five officials record them without knowing, or if the heartmind verified without speaking, then people will not fail to pronounce it ‘not knowing.’”⁹² The connection between the heartmind and things was completed by the senses.

However, the Daoist school provided a different understanding of the relationship between the senses and knowledge. In contrast to those ideas which appeared in the *Mozi* and the *Xunzi*, the Daoist philosophers considered the eyes and ears untrustworthy in terms of acquiring knowledge. Moreover, the *Laozi* considered the senses dangerous because of their tendency to stimulate desire.⁹³ “The five colors cause people’s eyes to go

⁸⁹ Translated by Geany. *Ibid.*, 37. 身知其安口知其甘目知其美耳知其乐也。

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Liu Xuezhong and Feng Guozhen, *Zhongguo zhe xue shi bian lan* (Xining: Qinghai ren min chu ban she, 1988), 120.

⁹² Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 36. 微知必将待天官当簿其类，然后可也。五官簿之而不知心微之而无说，则人莫不然谓之不知。

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 154.

blind,” the author argued in the *Laozi*.⁹⁴ Furthermore, “the five flavors cause people’s mouths to miss the mark,” while “the five tones cause people’s ears to go deaf.”⁹⁵

Therefore, pacifying senses was the way to attain the goals of minimizing desires and weaken ambition, both of which were valued mostly by the Daoist school. The *Laozi* suggested to close off the senses, such as “looking without seeing” and “listening without hearing.”⁹⁶ Furthermore, the author specifically reminded to “taste without tasting.”

Tasting “no taste” might be achieved by appreciating simple foods. Geany has pointed out that this idea resulted in “a kind of boundless sensory appreciation of simplicity.”⁹⁷

In terms of epistemology, the taste played a special role in the context of Chinese philosophy. In contrast to the modern West, in which the vision has a commanding place in cognition, the eyes were not able to stand out from other senses in providing the most direct knowledge of things in China.⁹⁸ In early China, the eyes, ears, and the taste all played important roles in the acquisition of knowledge; however, there were also disputes about which dominated this field. For instance, in the competition between the eyes and ears, scholars have noticed that the ears gradually took the advantage. Gong Huanan argues that the term “wen dao,” which refers to gaining knowledge of the correct path through the ears, implies that the hearing played a more important role in searching for

⁹⁴ Translated by Geany. *Ibid.*, 154. 五色使人目盲。

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 154. 五味使人之口爽，五音使人之耳聋。

⁹⁶ Geany, *On the Epistemology of the Senses in Early Chinese Thought*, 174.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press), 9-10.

the *Dao*.⁹⁹ Gong explains that the hearing was considered superior because hearing did not mean following blindly but meant to process information critically.¹⁰⁰ Compared to the eyes that can help people to understand things through their appearance, hearing signified the reorganization of information.¹⁰¹

In the competition between the ears and the taste, the taste had risen to the top of the hierarchy during the Qin and Han dynasties. Gong's research shows that the epistemology derived from the taste provided a new way of knowing. This new way, which was different from the eyes and ears that collected information from objects with a distance, drastically diminished the distance between people and objects. Furthermore, unlike the eyes that focus on the form and color of objects, the taste investigated things through their flavors. Philosophically, the flavor of a thing was considered to be the representation of its intrinsic essence, according to Gong's research. Therefore, each thing had its own flavor, which was called the "original flavor (*ben wei*)" or the "orthodox flavor (*zheng wei*)."¹⁰² In this new way of knowing, people were not bystanders or observers of any objects, but have close contact with these objects. The exploration of the taste of an object meant to seek its nature. Since the importance of tasting had been noticed by Chinese thinkers during the Han Dynasty, words originating

⁹⁹ Gong Hua'nan, "Zhongguo zao qi si xiang shi Zhong de gan guan yu ren zhi," *Social Science in China*, No. 4, 2017: 42-61, 49.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Gong Hua'nan, "Wei jue si xiang yu Zhongguo wei dao," *Hebei Academic Journal* 37, No. 6, 2017: 26-31: 30.

from tasting became prevalent in many fields of knowledge, such as medicine, literature, metaphysics, and art.¹⁰³

Tea Literature in the late-Ming Dynasty

Drinks have a strong connection with not only human bodies, the senses of sight, taste (gustation), and smell, but also with other social issues. The studies of English tea are usually connected with colonialism, social class, and the international market besides tea's fundamental function as a drink. Similarly, in the study of Chinese tea, scholars pay most of their attention to its economic, political, and legal consequences. Since China had collected special tax on tea production and trading since the Tang Dynasty, the social-economic history of tea production and management are always a major issue.

Furthermore, China was the only provider of tea to its neighboring regions, in which tea played a crucial role in people's daily diet, so the Chinese court established special regulations on tea trading. It was an important way to gain economic benefits and political power in dealing with relationships with these areas. However, the studies on the Tea Horse Road usually focus on the frontier area and the tea with relatively low quality, they can only tell us little information about fine tea.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Gong, "Zhongguo zao qi si xiang shi Zhong de gan guan yu ren zhi," 58.

¹⁰⁴ The term "tea horse road" generally refers to the network of trading routes winding through the mountains of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Tibet. The system of exchange of tea for horses in Sichuan is studied by Paul Smith in his monograph entitled *Taxing Heaven's Storehouse: Horses, Bureaucrats and the Destruction of Sichuan Tea Industry, 1074-1224*. Martha Avery's study of the tea trade between China and Russia describes the route connecting these two regions. Gary Sigley views the "Tea horse road" as an important cultural heritage to China, and he pays attention to its significances in contemporary China.

The amount of tea literature reached a new height during the late Ming China. Tea connoisseurs were keen to demonstrate their expertise with a wider audience and wrote about tea and associated subjects in detail. Ming scholar-officials were intensely involved in the tea connoisseurship that was highly refined. They insisted on examining subtle distinctions between teas produced within few hundred meters of each other. Nearly fifty works of tea literature were in circulation by the start of the 17th century.¹⁰⁵ In the studies of the consumption of fine tea, Wu Zhihe is one of the major scholars. His works cover the research of scholar-officials' custom of tea drinking during the Ming and Qing dynasties. He stresses the elegant lifestyle of scholar-official tea connoisseurs and the cultural values of tea connoisseurship. Wu offers very important information about scholar-officials' consumption of fine tea and very insightful interpretation of tea texts.¹⁰⁶ However, his works do not include the economic aspect of tea; therefore, there is still a gap between the social-economic values of tea and its cultural meanings. My dissertation provides a new vision to looking at the tea market in the late-Ming period. It examines the role of scholar-official consumers as "taste-makers" and tries to answer the question

Paul J. Smith, *Taxing Heaven's Storehouse: Horses, Bureaucrats and the Destruction of Sichuan Tea Industry, 1074-1224* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asian Center, 1991). Martha Avery, *The Tea Road: China and Russia Meet across the Steppe* (Beijing: Wuzhou chuan bo chu ban she, 2003). Gary Sigley, "The Ancient Tea Horse Road and the Politics of Cultural Heritage in Southwest China: Regional Identity in the Context of a Rising China" in Helaine Silverman and Tami Blumenfield (eds), *Cultural Heritage Politics in China* (New York: Springer, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ James Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 108.

¹⁰⁶ Wu Zhihe, "Literati Hermits and Tea Connoisseurs in Southern Zhili in Ming Dynasty." *Cha yu Yishu Zazhi*, 1989 (6): 69-75.

of how their descriptions of sensory experiences had influenced the production and market of fine tea.

Between the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, the literature specifically created for Luojie Tea emerged, in which the authors examined all facets of knowledge related to it, including its place of origin, producing techniques, economic value, taste, and its history of development. The first chapter of my dissertation explores the rise, the development, and the decline of Luojie tea, analyzes its attraction to late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs, and examines the reasons for its rapid fall in terms of social changes and a shift in taste. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the gender relations and women's roles that were hidden behind the writings about Luojie tea and activities of tasting it. It argues that the rise and fall of Luojie were deeply embedded in the switch of powers between the imperial court and local elite. The cultural hegemony of the local elite, who dominated the aesthetic principles during the late-Ming era, was interrupted by the dynastic transition. Ming loyalists, many of whom were enthusiasts of Luojie tea, suffered from the transition and the new ruler. The passion for Luojie tea faded away along with the loss of their lives. Without its most important supporters, Luojie tea disappeared from the tea market.

Compared to Luojie Tea, which experienced a decline in the late-Ming period and finally disappeared from the tea market during the early-Qing era, the other two types of tea had totally different destinies within this same period. The second chapter examines the development of these two types of tea, which were respectively named Songluo and Longjing. Both Songluo tea and Longjing tea were new commodities to the tea market; however, they soon became two of the most expensive teas and were particularly valued

by scholar-official tea connoisseurs. The fineness of these two teas represented tea makers' effort to improve the taste of teas through changing the processing techniques. The making of fake tea did not only play a negative role in the development of these two teas. Along with the development of fakery, many surrounding areas had joined the production of these teas and improved their techniques. These fake teas were also the major products which fulfilled the increasing needs of tea consumers. After the dynastic change, the two teas developed in different ways. Songluo tea entered a larger market with more commoners and international consumers; meanwhile, Longjing tea received its biggest fan, the Qianlong Emperor.

The third chapter examines the social functions of water in scholar-officials' daily life during the late Ming. It analyses the reasons why water, particularly spring water, played an important role in their daily life, and why spring water could contribute to the discourse of taste in this period. In addition, unlike antiquities, paintings or porcelains, water was a public and free source which differed from other commodity goods produced by artisans, trade by the merchants, and finally owned by the consumers who then put in their houses and studios. How did free water help to distinguish the scholar-official's social status by showing their 'taste' and superiority over others in a late-Ming context?

The fourth chapter explores the transformation of tea vessels around the period from the mid-Ming to the early Qing. Corresponding to the shift in imperial taste from cake tea to loose tea at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, Yixing stoneware teapots emerged during the mid-Ming period and quickly became the most valuable tea vessels among the consumers, mostly the scholar-officials. Previous studies have shown the scholar-officials' role of consuming and making Yixing teapots a new luxury good by praising

their rustic quality and elegance in their widely circulated connoisseurship literature. This chapter explores the interaction between scholar-officials' taste and potters' innovations in teapots by examining the privileged Wu family of Yixing and its family members' personal connections with well-known local potters, such as Shi Dabin and Xu Youquan. This chapter argues that the scholar-officials were not only the consumers but also the patrons who participated in the creation of new designs of teapots. As consumers and patrons, they influenced potters' designs from two aspects: the size and the style of the inscription. In addition, with the help of the scholar-officials, Yixing potters were no longer treated as regular potters in the society, but a specific group of artisans with outstanding talent, who were called "Yixing potters" by the consumers of the pots.

The last chapter discusses the space for tea consumption. Geographically, tea first originated from Sichuan in western China, and soon developed into a popular drink along the Yangzi River area. However, tea remained a drink for southerners, due to the division between the north and south before the Sui Dynasty (581-618). Discursively, northerners treated tea as an inferior drink to dairy drinks such as yogurt, because it was the north which had political, economic, and cultural advantages over the south. Tea gained its popularity in the north with the help of Chan Buddhism, which came to China in the sixth century. The status of tea was legitimated by the imperial court, Buddhist monasteries, and the masses during the Tang Dynasty. In urban areas, the teahouse played a more and more important role in people's daily life and became a new and phenomenal business during the Song Dynasty. However, the teahouse was not a space exclusively designated for tea consumption, but also served as a multi-functional place, a place of providing accommodations and entertainments for its clients, and space for drinkers to socialize and

exchange information with others. However, the intention of creating spaces for tea drinking was not always to increase socialization. In the late-Ming period, scholar-official tea connoisseurs expressed their willingness to create private spaces in the urban area for the pleasure of tea tasting. This small and reclusive cell was called *chaliao*. The invention of this space, on the one hand, was influenced by late-Ming understandings and pursuits of reclusiveness and exclusiveness; on the other hand, represented a series of aesthetic principles that tea connoisseurs intended to apply in their practices. In addition, these aesthetic principles were also applied to the decoration and consumption of other spaces, such as studio, guest-hall, open space, and even teahouses.

Our contemporary way of tea drinking is deeply influenced by the late-Ming way. However, when examining the development of tea production and consumption within this period, we can find so many changes. Some commodities rose to the top in the market, such as Longjing tea and Yixing teapot, while some of them declined and even disappeared from the market, such as Luojie tea. Some of them survived; however, consumers' attitudes toward them became different. Late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs, for their part, played active roles in these transformations, in which they dominated the fashion of tea drinking through establishing a series of aesthetic principles.

Chapter One

The Rise and Fall of Luojie Tea: Materiality, “Sensory Turn,” and Gender Relations in Late-Ming Tea Literature

Qingyuan tea and Wuyi tea produced in Fujian, Tianchi tea and Huqiu tea produced in Suzhou, Longjing tea from Wulin, Songluo tea from Xin’an, Yunwu tea produced in Kuanglu all have good reputations; however, none of them can compete with Luojie tea.

—Shen Zhou (1427-1509)¹⁰⁷

Early season Longjing tea is fragrant; it still retains the flavor of the herb. Tianchi tea has the flavor of soybean. Huqiu tea has a floral flavor. Only Luojie tea has no floral or woody flavor, but has a slightly metallic flavor, and yet sometimes it will have no trace of anything at all. That is the reason why Luojie tea is highly valued.

—Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610)¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Shen Zhou, “Shu jie cha bie lun hou” in *Xu Cha jing* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 16b. 若闽之清源、武夷，吴郡之天池、虎丘，武林之龙井，新安之松萝，匡庐之云雾，其名虽大噪，不能与芥相抗也。Lu Tingcan, the author of *Xu Cha jing* (1734), collected this piece of work in his book; however, scholars are still discussing about its author. They suggest that the author of this piece of work is probably to be a tea connoisseur who lived in the second half of the sixteenth century.

¹⁰⁸ Yuan Hongdao, “Longjing” in *Yuan Zhonglang quan ji you ji* (Taipei: Wu zhou chu ban she, 1960), 15. Translated by James Benn. James Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 2015), 188. 大约龙井头茶虽香作草气。天池作豆气。虎丘作花气。惟芥茶非花非木，稍作金石气，又若无气，所以可贵。芥叶粗大，真者每斤至二千余钱。

These two statements were made by Shen Zhou and Yuan Hongdao, both of whom were members of the leading cultural elite during their times. However, their praise of Luojie tea provides just two examples among a large quantity of tea literature in which the authors expressed their appreciations and desires of Luojie tea. Furthermore, between the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century, the literature specifically created for Luojie Tea emerged, in which the authors examined all facets of knowledge related to it, including its information about where it was produced, producing techniques, economic value, taste, and its history of development. This chapter explores the rise, the development, and the decline of Luojie tea, analyzes its attraction to late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs, and examines the reasons for its rapid fall in terms of social changes and a shift in taste. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the gender relations and women's roles that were hidden behind the writings about Luojie tea and activities of tasting it. It argues that the rise and fall of Luojie were deeply embedded in the switch of powers between the imperial court and local elite. The cultural hegemony of the local elite, who dominated the aesthetic principles during the late-Ming era, was interrupted by the dynastic transition. The Ming loyalists, most of whom were enthusiasts of Luojie tea, suffered from the transition and the new ruler. The passion of Luojie tea faded away along with the end of their lives. Without its most important supporters, Luojie tea disappeared from the tea market.

Luojie Tea: An Introduction

From the heartland of Jiangnan region, Luojie tea was produced in a village that was located no more than ninety *li* south of Yixing county, a county in which not only the Yixing stoneware teapots were made, but was also famous for its production of Yangxian tea, one of the top-ranked tribute teas during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Under the jurisdiction of the Southern Zhili province, this village lies in a valley located in Mount Mingling (Mount Tea) whose ridge defines part of the boundary between Zhili and Zhejiang provinces.¹⁰⁹ Another village, which was seated on the south-facing slopes of these mountains but administered by Changxing county of Zhejiang Province, was the incubator of Guzhu zisun tea (Purple Bamboo Shoot tea), another tribute tea that also shared the same reputation with Yangxian tea since the Tang Dynasty.

Composed of two characters, the name of Luojie tea provides some significant information about the tea itself. It is said that Luo (罗) originally came from the surname of Luo Yin (833-910), a Tang-dynasty Daoist poet as well as a ten-time civil service examination participant, who once came and lived in seclusion in this village.¹¹⁰ Jie(芥/嶰) refers to the valley between two mountains.¹¹¹ In some Ming texts, Luojie tea was

¹⁰⁹ Zhou Gaoqi, *Dongshan jiecha xi* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi Zhong xin, 2003), 2b. 浙直分界，只一山冈，冈南即长兴山。

¹¹⁰ Mao Xiang, *Jie cha hui chao* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 2a. 介于山中谓之，罗隐隐于此故名罗。This information was recorded by Mao Xiang; however, no record about Luo Yin shows that he once lived in this village.

¹¹¹ 芥 is pronounced as *kǎ* in local dialect, but in this chapter, the pronunciation in Mandarin Chinese jie would be used. Zhou, *Dong shan jie cha xi*, 还嶰境十里而遥，为嶰者不可指数。嶰而曰芥，两山之介也。

also written as Jie tea (芥茶).¹¹² Tea connoisseurs in the Ming Dynasty believed that there were eighty-eight spots in the mountainous area around the village that were able to grow wild tea trees, which were suitable for growing Luojie tea.¹¹³ They had classified Luojie tea produced in these spots into five categories based on their quality and taste.¹¹⁴ Zhou Gaoqi (1569-1645), a scholar-official tea connoisseur and a Ming loyalist, recorded that the best Luojie tea was produced in the backyard of the old temple dedicated to a local god of tea.¹¹⁵ The second-grade tea was produced around the new temple and a site called “Chessboard Summit.”¹¹⁶ Tea produced in Dongshan, where the tea trees were exposed to sunshine, was not listed among the first or second-grade tea; however, it was also highly praised by some scholar-official tea connoisseurs such as Mao Xiang (1611-1693), who categorized it into the “divine class.”¹¹⁷ Even though there were so many subcategories, Luojie tea was considered one of the best-tasting teas by tea connoisseurs in general, along with Huqiu tea from Suzhou, Longjing tea from Hangzhou, Songluo tea from Huizhou, and so on.¹¹⁸ Among the extant tea literature composed during the late-

¹¹² Four Examples: Chen Jiru in *Shu jie cha bie lun*, Zhou Gaoqi in *Dong shan jie cha xi*, Mao Xiang in *Jie cha hui chao*, and Feng Kebin in *Jie cha jian*. 《书芥茶别论》、《洞山芥茶系》、《芥茶汇抄》、《芥茶笺》

¹¹³ Zhou, *Dongshan jie cha xi*, 2b. 云有八十八处。

¹¹⁴ Zhou, *Dongshan jie cha xi*, 2b-3b. 第一品，第二品，第三品，第四品，不入品。

¹¹⁵ Translated by Benn. Benn, *Tea in China*, 176. Zhou, *Dongshan jiecha xi*, 2b. 罗氏居之，在小秦王庙后，所以称庙后罗芥也。第一品，老庙后，庙祀山之土神者也，瑞草丛郁，殆比茶星肿蟹矣。

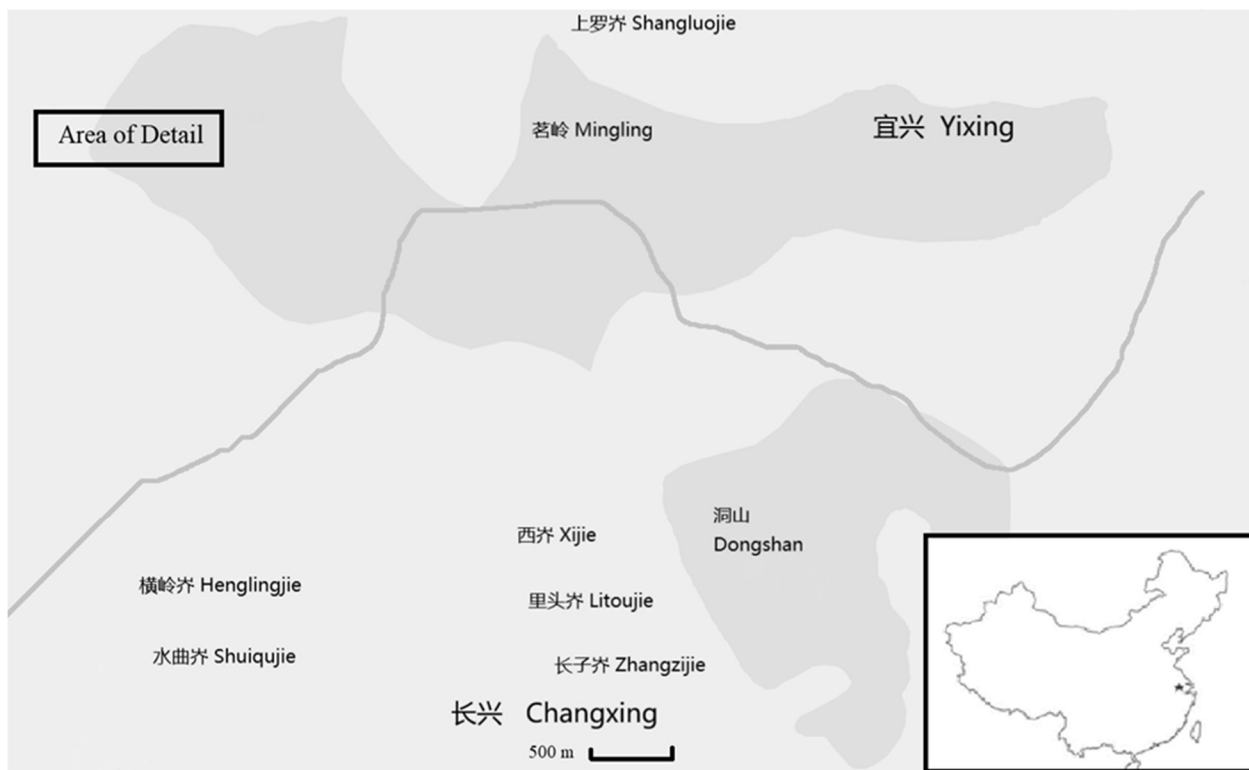
¹¹⁶ Zhou, *Dongshan jie cha xi*, 3a. Benn, *Tea in China*, 176. 第二品皆洞顶芥也。新庙后，棋盘顶...产茶亦不能多。

¹¹⁷ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 1b. 总不如洞山，南向受阳气独专，足称仙品。

¹¹⁸ Wen Zhenheng, *Zhang wu zhi* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang ren min mei shu chu ban she, 2011), 157-159.

Ming period, twenty-nine of them include the introductions, authors' commentaries and recommendations of Luojie tea.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁹ Kou Dan, "Jie cha yu ming dai cha wen hua," *Nong ye kao ku*, Vol. 4, 1996: 32-36, 33.



Map 1.1 The Production Area of Luojie Tea

Luojie Tea and New Trends in Tea Tasting during the Ming Dynasty

“Chinese history is a great lesson in what they term ‘change within tradition,’” as John Evans has pointed out, “traditions were maintained and only transformed as required to meet new demands.”¹²⁰ Tea had been used as a drink for centuries, and its transformation and development were intertwined with technological innovations and changes in taste. The Ming Dynasty marked a significant transition in the history of tea. Within this dynasty, not only were the ways of tea production and the practice of drinking tea experienced transformed, but a new understanding and the pursuit of the natural flavor of tea also became prevalent among tea drinkers. Luojie tea, with its rise and fall, played a unique role in this process.

Many late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs had noticed and pointed out the importance of appreciating the “true flavor” (zhen wei/真味) and “intrinsic aroma” (zhen xiang/真香) of tea. These two terms commonly appeared in some works of tea literature after loose tea became trendy among its producers and consumers. Compared to the Tang and Song dynasties, when all tribute teas were high-quality compressed teas from different areas, the personal taste and preference of the Ming’s founding emperor had totally changed the scene of tea production and consumption that had developed since the Tang period. In the twenty-fourth year of the Hongwu Reign (1391), the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) officially ended the history of compressed tea being the only tribute tea. Through an edict, the emperor ordered officials in Jianning,

¹²⁰ John C. Evans, *Tea in China: The History of China’s National Drink* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 80.

where the best tribute tea had been made since the Song Dynasty, to stop producing tributary Longtuan tea (compressed tea cake with a dragon pattern on it) and to inform tea farmers to pay tribute with loose tea instead.¹²¹ The recognition from imperial power not only helped loose tea justify its status in China's political structure, but also elevated the economic value of loose tea in the market. Even though loose tea has been an important drink since the Song Dynasty, its status remained lower than compressed tea, since most of its consumers were commoners rather than members of the imperial family. Only two types of loose tea of the Song Dynasty were recorded by scholar-official tea connoisseurs: one of them was Shuangjing tea, and the other one came from Guzhu. Besides their quality and taste, these two types of tea were also famous for their connections with local scholar-officials. Shuangjing tea was produced in the tea plantation belonged to the family of Huang Tingjian (*zi* Luzhi, 1045-1105), a Northern-Song scholar-official from Fenning (in the modern Jiangxi Province) with outstanding talents in painting and poetry writing. Guzhu loose tea, on the other hand, originated from the traditional tea-growing region in Changxing of the Zhejiang Province, and most of its tea production was processed by the family of a *jinshi* degree holder, Liu Jue (*zi* Xifan, 1078-1132), who tried to help the Northern Song court to defend against the Jin invasion

¹²¹ *Ming taizu shilu (Hong ge chao ben)* (Taipei: Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo, 1966), 3144. 庚子诏：建宁岁贡上供茶，听茶户採进，有司勿與，敕天下产茶去处岁贡有定额，而建宁茶品为上，其所进者必碾而揉之，压以银板大小龙团，上以重劳民力罢造龙团，惟採芽茶以进。

but failed at the end.¹²² However, only a few acres of land were suitable to grow these tea trees, therefore merely five or six *jin* of tea leaves were annually available for drinkers.¹²³

Loose tea and compressed tribute tea were different from each other in terms of aesthetic value. The former emphasized the original and natural flavor of tea leaves; while the latter stressed expensive spices. Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs viewed the history of tea making an important part of tea knowledge. Therefore, many of them had made annotations on records of tea production in previous dynasties, especially those records from the Song Dynasty. Their understandings about the process of tribute tea production largely came from a Song scholar-official named Cai Xiang (1012-1067), who managed the production of tribute tea in the 1040s. Cai's *The Record of Tea* informed Ming tea connoisseurs that "tribute tea manufacturers like to mix a small amount of dragon brain (longnao/dryobalanops aromatica camphor), supposedly to enhance the aroma."¹²⁴ The purpose of mixing spices with compressed tea was to distinguish the tribute tea from the common ones.¹²⁵ However, even in the Song Dynasty, the true aroma, or in other words, the original aroma, was valued outside of the imperial court, by the tea farmers in Fujian. Cai, as the supervisor of tribute tea production, had already noticed

¹²² Ouyang Xiu, "Gui tian lu" in *Xu Cha jing Vol. 8* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian wei suo fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 3b. 草茶极品惟双井、顾渚，亦不过各有数亩。双井在分宁县，其地属黄氏鲁直家也。元丰间，鲁直力推于京师，族人交致之，然岁仅得一二斤尔。顾渚在长兴县，所谓吉祥寺也，其半为今刘侍郎希范家所有。

¹²³ *Ibid.* 亦不过各有数亩。地所产，岁亦止五六斤。

¹²⁴ Cai Xiang, *Cha lu* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1936), 1. 茶有真香。而入貢者微以龍腦和膏，欲助其香。建安民間皆不入香，恐奪其真。

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 以别庶品。

that people in Jian'an, where the tribute tea was made, did not combine any spice or fragrance with compressed tea, so that these additives would not damage the intrinsic scent of tea. However, this idea was ignored by the imperial court and was barely mentioned in other Song tea literature.

In the Ming Dynasty, the Hongwu Emperor did not intend to establish a new set of aesthetic values by using imperial power; however, what he had done became the beginning of such a process. The Hongwu Emperor's initial motivation to reform the tribute tea system was to prevent lavishness in tea production, reduce labor forces, and relieve tea farmers from the heavy duties on tribute tea production. Furthermore, in contrast to the Song Dynasty, while there were production quotas for different tea-grow regions, the emperor canceled the quota system and let the tea farmers themselves decide the quantities of tribute tea, except for his favorite Guzhu tea, where the quotas remained.¹²⁶ In addition, he ordered local officials to cease bothering farmers by collecting tribute tea.¹²⁷ Even though the quota system was re-established decades later for the sake of inadequate provision of tribute tea in the imperial court, local officials were still not allowed to disturb tea farmers.¹²⁸ Along with a low tax rate on tea (1/30),

¹²⁶ Lu Tingcan, *Xu Cha jing Vol.3-2* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi Zhong xin, 2003), 3b-4b., 定制岁贡止三十二觔.....县官亲诣采茶进南京奉先殿，焚香而已，未尝别上有贡。

¹²⁷ Wu, *Ming Qing shi dai yin sha sheng huo*, 59. He Qiaoyuan, "Cha ma ji" in *Ming shan cang* (Taipei: Cheng wen shu ju, 1971), 2952. 建宁所供有探春、先春、次春、紫笋及鉴等号，旧皆如宋故事碾揉为大小龙团，高皇帝尽罢之，诏诸处独採芽茶进，复上供户五百家，已闻有司督徵严切，复听民自进，想念民深矣。*Ming Taizu shi lu*, 3144. 置茶户五百，免其徭役，专事採植，既而有司恐其后，时常遣人督之。茶户畏其逼迫，往往纳赂。上闻之，故有是命。

¹²⁸ Wu, *Ming Qing shi dai yin cha wen hua*, 59.

this reform not only saved time and labor for tea farmers, but also benefited tea farmers economically, especially for those ones who traditionally produced loose tea.¹²⁹ Since early Ming's governance valued the economic foundations of the farming people's livelihood, tea farmers were able to recover from the unstable social conditions and remove heavy burdens that had lasted for centuries.¹³⁰ An institutional change finally resulted in the emergence of loose tea consumption in the imperial court, while setting up a stage for a transformation in tea drinkers' everyday aesthetics.

Once it received an imperial recognition, loose tea experienced a rapid development. The Jiangnan region, in which a large quantity of famous loose tea was produced, began to benefit from the development. However, Fujian province, which received more attention due to its tribute tea production during the Song period, was experiencing a decline in tea production in this period. At the end of the Ming Dynasty, almost every county in southern China had tea growing regions located in their mountainous areas.¹³¹ Besides the territorial expansion, a Yuan-originated method of processing tea called *chaoqing* (roasting out of the green) was gradually adopted by more manufacturers.¹³² *Zhengqing*, literally meant steaming out of the green, was a more popular method of making loose tea during the Song Dynasty. However, tea leaves processed through this method were not able to retain their original fragrance and taste. *Chaoqing*, on the one

¹²⁹ Tax rate on tea remained 1/30 in the Ming Dynasty. Chen Zugui, Zhu Zizhen, *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji* (Beijing: Nong ye chu ban she), 577. 凡卖茶之地，令宣课司三十取一。

¹³⁰ Mote, *Imperial China*, 561.

¹³¹ Wu, *Ming Qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo*, 40.

¹³² Evans, *Tea in China*, 80.

hand, simplified the tea processing itself substantially and on the other hand, made it possible to manufacture loose tea that tasted and smelled good.¹³³ Nevertheless, tea made by the method of *zhengqing* still remained, even though its market shrank quickly. By the late-Ming Dynasty, tea produced by the *zhengqing* method had become an exception in the market.¹³⁴

The idea to pursue the “true flavor” and “intrinsic aroma” of tea thrived along with the development of loose tea and the *chaoqing* technology, the better way to diffuse the original scent of tea. Different from the Song Dynasty when “true flavor” and “intrinsic aroma” were only cherished by the tea farmers in Fujian and a few scholar-officials, scholar-official tea connoisseurs in the Ming period, especially those who lived in the second half of the dynasty, not only have accepted this idea, but also elevated it to be a criterion to differentiate tea connoisseurs and dilettantes. Wen Zhenheng (1585-1648), an influential late-Ming taster and writer, has indicated in *Treatise on Superfluous Things* that,

Several dozens of authors wrote about tea from the earliest time to the present day, like Lu Yu's *The Classic of Tea* and Cai Xiang's *The Record of tea* are among the best. However, at that time, tea was processed by grinding and molding. Not until the Xuanhe reign of the Song Dynasty (1119-1125), people began to consider white tea as superior. Zheng Kewen, the man in charge of marine transportation first invented “Silver Thread Ice Sprout” tea. [He] discarded the leaves and used only sprouts. He then soaked the tea sprouts in clear spring water. Without various fragrances such as dragon brain (dryobalanops aromatica camphor), the tea was molded with a pattern of curling baby dragon on it and named “Superlative Snow Dragon Cake.” At

¹³³ Ibid., 74.

¹³⁴ Zhenqing was called 芥中制法 by Xu Cishu. Xu also talked about the method of *chaoqing* (pan-fry), and Xu considered it the common way of making tea. Xu, *Cha shu* (Taipei: Yi wen yin hu guan, 1965), 4-5. 炒茶/芥中制法

that time these methods were deemed unchanging. However, the fashion in our (Ming) dynasty has changed. Our methods of brewing and tasting tea are also different from that of our predecessors. Our methods are unusually simple, full of natural charm, and fully express the genuine flavor of the tea.¹³⁵

Wen's preference and confidence in tea-tasting at his time over the Song-style tea drinking were common among his contemporary tea connoisseurs. Wen believed that Zheng Kewen's decision to not add any fragrance in tea cake was a significant correction in the evolution of tea production. However, Wen also informed his readers that this new level was an improvement on the past, not a break with it.¹³⁶ Preserving the intrinsic flavor and fragrance of tea was a selection after centuries of trial and error, and tea connoisseurs in the late-Ming period all agreed that the new trend was "the most practical, tasting-enhancing aspects of tea production and preparation."¹³⁷

The ideas of "true flavor" and "intrinsic aroma" became dominant among scholar-official tea connoisseurs. Moreover, the two ideas later turned into the only legitimated taste of tea in the late-Ming period for the elite class. At this point, "serving tea with fragrance" had been defined as a typical deed practiced by a dilettante, a tea drinker

¹³⁵ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 157. 古今论茶事者，无虑数十家，若鸿渐之经，君谟之录，可谓尽善。然其时法用熟碾为丸为挺，（故所称有龙凤团，小龙团，密云龙，瑞云翔龙。）至宣和间，始以茶色白者为贵。漕臣郑可闻始创为银丝冰芽，以茶剔叶取心，清泉渍之，去龙脑诸香，惟新胯小龙蜿蜒其上，称龙团胜雪。当时以为不更之法，而我朝所尚又不同其烹试之法亦与前人异然简便异常天趣悉备可谓尽茶之真味矣。

¹³⁶ Evans, *Tea in China*, 80.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

without the ability of tasting.¹³⁸ Lu Shaoheng (? -?), the author of *Zuigutang jiansao* (*The Scouring Blade from the Hall of Infatuation with Antiquity*), an aphorism collection first published in the 1620s, argued that the practice of mixing tea with fragrant additives was totally unnecessary. If pure tea were compared to an elegant mountain recluse, then adding surplus fragrances to tea was nothing different from forcing this elegant recluse to fall into the trap of the mundane world.¹³⁹ He further stated that those moves, such as mixing tea with spices and placing the fruit in tea bowls, were like destroying the natural beauty of a woman by overusing cosmetics, all of which were unnecessary.¹⁴⁰

In the sphere of tea tasting, the Ming scholar-officials unfolded a strong confidence in their own understandings of tea connoisseurship instead of putting the ancients and predecessors' theories first. Their resistance of fragrance and spices in tea can be viewed as a divergence from the long-lasting Tang-Song tradition of tea production and consumption. A divergence from the past and an emphasis on the newly developed fashion were not common among Confucian scholar-officials who traditionally valued thoughts and objects from the past. Craig Clunas has pointed out that “at least as many radical disjunctions in society and culture may have taken place between the China of the Han Dynasty (220 BCE – 200 CE) and that of the Ming, but they were not felt by the majority of the elite to involve a rupture of the connections between themselves and their

¹³⁸ Wu, *Ming Qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo*, 117. Lu Shaoheng, *Zui gu tang jian sao Vol. 1*, 11b-12a. 好事者，投香物佐之，反以为佳。

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* 此与高人韵士误堕尘网中何异？

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 117-8. Lu, *Zui gu tang jian sao*, 89a. 茶中著料，盞中著果，譬如玉貌加脂，峨眉著黛，翻累本色。

equivalents, as bearers of a continuous cultural tradition.”¹⁴¹ However, tea connoisseurship played a unique role in the late-Ming context of material culture. First, late-Ming tea connoisseurs clearly understood the different practices between the previous dynasties and their time. Furthermore, they all admitted that late-Ming ways of tea production, preparation, and taste were all superior to the ones in the earlier periods.¹⁴²

This mentality not only helped change the map of tea production and consumption, but also resulted in a less enthusiastic feeling towards the ancient tea vessels compared to other objects from the past in the antique market. On the other hand, tea connoisseurs did not overlook the information about tea provided by Tang and Song tea experts. They revealed their interests in the ways of drinking tea in the past by quoting selections of earlier texts or paraphrasing them in their own works and treated them as an important part of tea connoisseurs’ knowledge and cultivation. Nevertheless, information was mostly used in the prefaces of much Ming tea literature to demonstrate the advantages of contemporary methods in preservation the true flavor and intrinsic aroma of tea.¹⁴³

Since the loose tea was accepted and its status being justified by the Ming imperial court, the taste of tea changed gradually in Chinese society. At the end of the Ming

¹⁴¹ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 92.

¹⁴² In the preface of *Cha jie*, Luo Lin mentioned that the Tang-Song way of processing tea was too excessive, so the true flavor of tea has been lost; however, the contemporary way (Ming) would not destroy the intrinsic taste and smell of tea. Luo, “Cha jie” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji* (Beijing: Nong ye chu ban she, 1981), 163.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* 唐宋间，研膏蜡面，京挺龙团，或至把握纤微，直钱数十万，亦珍重哉。而碾造愈工，茶性愈失，矧（示集）以香物乎。曾不若今人止精于炒焙，不损本真。

period, the pursuit of the true flavor and intrinsic aroma of tea became ordinary among tea drinkers. At the same time, their proud feeling of the contemporary taste over the Tang and Song cannot be ignored and was well presented in tea literature. All these phenomena suggested that a new set of aesthetic values had been set up and was well accepted by tea connoisseurs. However, Luojie tea as an exception, which did not follow the new trend, became the most prominent tea in China's domestic market and the most mentioned tea in scholar-official's writings on tea.

Luojie Tea: A Special Case in Late-Ming Tea Connoisseurship

Luojie tea was named one of the best teas in many pieces of tea literature created by scholar-official tea connoisseurs since the mid-Ming Dynasty. Besides the two examples listed at the beginning of this chapter, Wen Zhenheng of Suzhou, Tu Long and Xu Cishu of Hangzhou, Gu Qiyuan (1565-1628) of Nanjing, Qian Chunnian (?-?) of Suzhou, Huang Longde (?-?, *zi* Xiangming), Luo Lin (1573-1620, *zi* Gaojun) of Cixi, and twenty other tea connoisseurs all expressed their appreciation of Luojie tea in their writings.¹⁴⁴ In addition, tea drinkers, including Mao Xiang (1611-1693, *zi* Pijiang) of Rugao, Zhou

¹⁴⁴ Tu Long, *Kao pan yu shi* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang ren min mei shu chu ban she, 2011), 322. 阳羨俗名罗芥。浙之长兴者佳，荆溪稍下。细者其价两倍天池，惜乎难得。Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 158. 浙之长兴者佳，价亦甚高，今所最重，荆溪稍下。Xu, *Cha shu*, 1-2. 近日所尚者，為長興之羅芥，疑即古人顧渚此筍也。介於山中謂之芥，羅氏隱焉故名羅。然芥故有數處，今惟洞山最佳。Luo Lin, "Cha jie" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji* (Beijing: Nong ye chu ban she), 164. 余按唐宋产茶地，葶葶如前所称，而今之虎丘、罗芥、天池、顾渚、松萝、龙井、雁荡、武夷、灵山、大盘、日铸诸有名之茶，无一与焉。

Gaoqi of Jiangyin, Feng Kebin (?-?, *zi* Zhenqing), and Xiong Mingyu (1579-1649, *zi* Liangru) had respectively composed treatises containing detailed descriptions of Luojie tea. With a considerable amount of tea literature dedicated to Luojie tea, it is necessary to explore the reason why Luojie tea could be distinguished from other famous tea in the eyes of tea connoisseurs and attracted so many attentions at the time. In addition to its extraordinary taste, most of the authors noticed that Luojie tea was different from all other famous teas in terms of production.

The different selection of tea leaves distinguished the production and marketing of Luojie tea from others. First, it was crucial to the timing of when Luojie tea was available to its consumers; second, the selection of tea leaves was influential to the taste, fragrance, and texture of the final product. The leaves of Luojie tea were picked only after *lixia* (in May), the seventh solar term in the Chinese calendar that signified the beginning of summer.¹⁴⁵ Mao Xiang's *Collective Transcription on Luojie Tea* and Feng Kebin's *Notes on Luojie Tea* both emphasized the special timing of tea-leaf picking. Tea farmers never picked Luojie tea until summer came around, because it was colder in these mountain valleys than other tea growing regions, and it was necessary to wait longer until the tea leaves became mature.¹⁴⁶ Mao Xiang indicated that people should not take this as a weakness even though it was contradictory to the popular thought that best tea was only produced before the date of *guyu* (Grain rain, usually in mid-April), the sixth solar term

¹⁴⁵ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 1b. 惟罗芥立夏开园。

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 芥中之人，非夏前不摘。其地稍寒，故需待时。

in a year.¹⁴⁷ By evaluating the growth of tea leaves, Feng Kebin recorded “the essence of tea leaves has not fully developed before *guyu*; but leaves and stalks are overgrown and become tough after summer.”¹⁴⁸ To retain the quality of tea leaves, tea pickers had to finish their work within a few days after *lixia*, a day on which a tea farmer would start picking for the first time in a year, and local people called the “opening of tea plantation.”¹⁴⁹ Luojie tea’s annual debut on the tea market was postponed compared to other finest tea; however, this became an advantage of Luojie tea since it did not have any fine tea as a competitor at the beginning of the summer. Therefore, scholar-official tea connoisseurs believed that the appearance of Luojie tea in the market was the moment worth celebrating, not to mention the moment when they received Luojie tea either from the market or from their friends. A tea connoisseur named Peng Sunyi (1615-1673) expressed his expectation for drinking Luojie tea in his poem by saying, “when the jasmine flowers are in blossom and the soybean hulls are filled, Luojie tea from Dongshan finally arrived,” which not only informed the readers of his excitement, but also implied that the newly produced Luojie tea became available to its consumers around a month later than other famous tea.¹⁵⁰ Zhou Gaoqi also pointed out that those

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 茶以初出雨前为佳。

¹⁴⁸ Feng Kebin, *Jie cha jian* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 1b. 雨前则精神未足，夏后则梗叶大粗。

¹⁴⁹ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 2a. 初试摘者，谓之开园。

¹⁵⁰ Wu, *Ming Qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo*, 34. 茉莉清香豆穀肥，峒山芥片到来稀。《茗斋集》卷一七，167.

preposterous sayings like “pre-Qingming Luojie tea” were rooted in people’s lack of the knowledge about tea.¹⁵¹

Furthermore, the producers of Luojie tea intentionally chose to pick older mature tea leaves rather than buds and young leaves. The tea farmers’ initial motivation was to protect the tea trees and not to damage their buds, since they cherished the tea trees, one of the most important sources of income for local people.¹⁵² However, their choice played a key role in shaping the special flavor and aroma of Luojie tea. The uniqueness of older mature tea leaves came from their large and tough veins, which could bring a strong “herbal” or “grassy” taste to the tea.¹⁵³

In addition, the weather had a huge impact on tea leaves and the quality of tea. It was best to pick tea leaves in warm and sunny days after the dew on tea leaves had evaporated.¹⁵⁴ The fresh leaves were first placed in baskets by tea pickers. However, when the temperature was getting higher, it was important to prevent the humidity and heat from affecting tea leaves; therefore, tea pickers need to keep the baskets in the shade of umbrellas and quickly move these baskets indoors.¹⁵⁵ As soon as the leaves were relocated in the buildings, they were immediately spread out on several winnowing trays. Tea producers immediately picked out wood sticks, wilted leaves, and bugs. They only

¹⁵¹ Zhou, *Dongshan jiecha xi*, 2b. 世人妄云雨前真芥，抑或未知茶事矣。Qingming refers to the Qingming festival, which is also known as Tomb-Sweeping Day. It is on the fifteenth day after the Spring Equinox.

¹⁵² Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 2b. 芥中惜茶，决不忍嫩采，以伤树本。

¹⁵³ Benn, *Tea in China*, 176

¹⁵⁴ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 2b. 时看风日晴和，月露初收

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* 亲自监采入篮。如烈日之下，又防篮内郁蒸，须伞盖至舍。

kept purely fresh tea leaves in trays for withering, a procedure to remove excessive water from leaves and allow a slight amount of oxidation.¹⁵⁶

When tea leaves were prepared, the tea processing began immediately. The processing was another important characteristic that distinguished Luojie tea from other famous teas. In the *Commentary of Tea*, Xu Cishu, a late-Ming tea expert, recorded two methods of tea processing that were prominent at the time. One of the methods was *chaoqing*, a more popular and convenient way of tea processing, which helped present the true flavor of the tea. The other one was named “processing method in Jie,” and Xu further explained,

There is no pan-frying process of Jie tea (Luojie tea). All the tea leaves were steamed in *zeng* (steamer), and then move to roasting. Because of the belated picking, tea leaves and stalks are slightly overgrown. The process of pan-frying would be insufficient to soften them, but only dry them up and let them break into pieces. To steam tea leaves, one need to first observe their tenderness and then decide the duration of steaming. The tea stalks should achieve the status of fragmentariness while the color of leaves turns to red; however, overcooking will result in the loss of the delicious taste.¹⁵⁷

This method of tea processing recorded by Xu Cishu was also called *zhengqing*, one of the major methods used by tea producers of the Song Dynasty. However, as more and more tea producers adopted the method of *chaoqing* to accommodate to the appreciation of true flavor and intrinsic aroma, teas processed in the *zhengqing* method became the minority in the market during the late-Ming period. Xu’s descriptions of two methods, on the one hand, implied the fact that *zhengqing* had not been the best or a popular choice

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. 速倾净匾薄摊，细拣枯枝病叶，蜻丝青牛之类，一一剔去，方为精洁也。

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. 芥茶不炒，甑中蒸熟，然后烘焙。缘其摘迟，枝叶微老，炒不能软，徒枯碎耳。蒸茶，须看叶之老嫩，定蒸之迟速，以皮梗碎而色带赤为度，若太熟则失鲜。

for making a best-quality tea, due to the reason that the rest of famous teas, including Huqiu, Songluo, and Longjing, were all processed in the method of *chaoqing*; on the other hand, they suggested that Luojie tea, even though was processed by a comparatively outdated way, was still able to attract lots of attention from tea connoisseurs. Therefore, tea drinkers, including Xu and many others, believed it was necessary to single that out and described it in the writings about this alternative product.

Luojie Tea and the “Sensory Turn” in the Late-Ming Tea Literature

Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs used a variety of ways to express their passion for Luojie tea. James Benn has pointed out that tea connoisseurs utilized their expertise in the knowledge of tea, including tasting, selection, grading, and evolution of various varieties of tea, to demonstrate their taste and cultivation in general to their audiences.¹⁵⁸ In such a context, Luojie tea played a unique role to demonstrate tea connoisseurs’ knowledge and their extensive understandings of tea by focusing on the methods of tea processing, especially the one inherited from the past.

Furthermore, Ming tea drinkers’ understanding of “tea connoisseurship” had become more refined and sophisticated than their Tang and Song predecessors. Tea master Lu Yu of the Tang Dynasty simply used the terms “shang” (the superior class), “zhong” (the mediocre class), and “xia” (the inferior class) to differentiate the quality and taste of different teas, the criterion of which was largely influenced by Tang imperial taste that

¹⁵⁸ Benn, *Tea in China*, 173.

reflected in the Tang tribute tea system.¹⁵⁹ Cai Xiang of the Song Dynasty paid more attention to the management of tribute tea production in order to fit the imperial taste.¹⁶⁰ Scholar-official tea connoisseurs of the late-Ming period created their own views rather than following the evaluation system originated from the Tang and Song imperial courts or even the taste developed by the Ming imperial family. One of the most distinctive signs of progress in tea tasting appeared in Ming tea literature was its emphasis on the sensory experiences. Their detailed sensory descriptions of Luojie tea offered a great example to examine late-Ming people's understandings of the interactions between objects, human body, mind, and knowledge. They further raise the question of how these interactions finally resulted in the change in the tea market and people's daily life.

The sensory experiences were well presented through the term of “pin” (connoisseurship and classification), a term and a practice that have been spread by scholar-officials and flourished since the late-Ming Dynasty. The practice of “pin” also embodied the newly-developed philosophical theory about the understanding of “things” in the personal life in the late-Ming era. Wang Yangming (1472-1529), the most influential Neo-Confucian philosopher explained how things, which were external, connected with what was internal, the human mind, and he claimed,

The ears, the eyes, the mouth, the nose, and the four limbs are parts of the body. But how can they see, hear, speak, or act without the mind? On the other hand, without the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the nose, and the four limbs, the mind cannot see, hear, speak, or act when it wants to. Therefore, if there is no mind, there will be no body, and if there is no body, there will be no mind. As something occupying space, it is called the body. As the master, it is called the mind. As the operation of the mind it is called the will. As the

¹⁵⁹ Lu, *Cha jing* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991), 18-9.

¹⁶⁰ Cai, *Cha lu*, 1.

intelligence and clear consciousness of the will, it is called knowledge. And as the object to which the will is attached, it is called a thing. They are all one piece. The will never exists in a vacuum. It is always connected with some thing or event.¹⁶¹

In Wang's opinion, without the intention to taste, the sensory organs would not function in the ways they were supposed to be. At the same time, without the body and the sensory faculties, the mind cannot fulfill its roles. Wang emphasized the importance of five senses, and he believed that sensing and perceiving things were the key that not only connected the external and internal of human body but also a way to demonstrate the existence of the mind. According to Wang, "pin" represented one's will to perceive an external object or a thing; meanwhile, the literature of connoisseurship exposed deeper human feelings and perceptions that "responded to the inner voice of intuitive inspiration."¹⁶²

However, the connoisseurship of tea differed from the main discourse of connoisseurship, such as antiques and paintings. For one thing, tea, a drink as well as a commodity for daily uses, lacked the characteristic role of the display compared to other objects. In case of being affected by damp, tea with the best quality, especially early-season tea, should be consumed as soon as possible. Therefore, for those famous teas that

¹⁶¹ Wang Yang-Ming, trans., Wing-trit Chan, *Instructions for Practical Living and other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 189. 先生曰：“耳、目、口、鼻、四肢，身也，非心安能视、听、言、动？心欲视、听、言、动，无耳、目、口、鼻、四肢亦不能。故无心则无身，无身则无心。但指其充塞处言之谓之身，指其主宰处言之谓之心，指心之发动处谓之意，指意之灵明处谓之知，指意之涉着处谓之物，只是一件。意未有悬空的，必着事物。Wang Yangming, *Chuan xi lu* (Taipei: Jin feng chu ban she, 1987), 162-3. 《门人陈九川录》。

¹⁶² Mote, *Imperial China*, 773.

only produced in limited quantities, memorable moments related to tea tasting were recorded by tea drinkers in their diaries, poems, and essays immediately. For another thing, tea tasting, as a multisensory practice, required the connoisseurs and writers to pay attention to all facets of sensory experiences, including taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch. Compared to previous dynasties, the knowledge of how to perceive tea became more important in late-Ming tea literature, due to the social-economic and intellectual changes in the society and an expansion of the tea market.

The “sensory turn” in tea tasting in Ming-Dynasty China would make more sense if we compare it with the Japanese tea ceremony, the heritage of which was largely adopted from the way of tea drinking in the Southern Song Dynasty of China.¹⁶³ Around the fifteenth to the sixteenth centuries, contemporary with the Ming period, the Japanese tea ceremony emerged as a synthesis of many Japanese aesthetic and religious traditions.¹⁶⁴ Concentrating more on the ceremonial aspect implied that both tea masters who controlled the whole process of the ceremony and that his guests had to pay attention to the movements of their bodies to fulfill the complete setting of a religion-like event. Even though the preparations of the environment, tea vessels, water, and tea were all intended to satisfy practitioners’ sensory experiences, body movements still played an extremely important role in the whole process. In this case, both tea masters and guests need to be trained, not only to understand the tastes of tea, the aesthetic of tea vessels and the surroundings, but also to memorize the body movements to practice for the different

¹⁶³ Benn, *Tea in China*, 145.

¹⁶⁴ Theodore M. Ludwig, “Before Rikyu. Religious and Aesthetic Influences in the Early History of the Tea Ceremony,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 1981: 367-390, 367.

procedures of the ceremony. However, since “Ming-style tea became everyman’s tea,” tea drinking in China became more involved with people’s daily-life rather than a ritualized activity full of religious and aesthetic elements.¹⁶⁵ Evans noticed that during the Ming time, “no longer was the expert hand of a Tea Master required, as host prepared tea for the guests themselves in a dramatic break with the past.”¹⁶⁶ He has further pointed out, “Generally, the down-to-earth Ming eased existing tea rules and made them less studied and more natural.”¹⁶⁷ Without the restriction of the ritual, tea drinkers could concentrate more on the tea itself and the perceptions brought on by the drinking process.

Furthermore, when Japanese tea masters personally handled arrangements to create the perfect surroundings for their guests, Chinese tea drinkers and connoisseurs were not enthusiastic about practicing tea preparation by themselves. As we can find in many paintings created by Ming scholar-official artists, young servants were quite lively in those images depicted the scene of scholar-officials’ tea gatherings.¹⁶⁸ Young servants took the responsibilities of fetching spring water, boiling water, preparing tea vessels, and even making a pot/cup of tea. A scholar-official tea connoisseur played the roles of a tea consumer in this situation, along with the role of a practitioner of other cultural activities, including writing poems, painting, and appreciating art.

However, tea masters haven’t disappeared from the Chinese society, but retained a relatively high status in tea drinkers’ minds; nevertheless, their roles were different.

¹⁶⁵ Evans, *Tea in China*, 86.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ See Figure 1.1 and 2.

Compared to Japanese tea ceremony, the de-ritualized or secularized daily practice of tea-drinking in China did not require tea masters to manipulate the procedure of a ritual. However, they needed to grasp a comprehensive understanding of tea, including its history and new knowledge, and more importantly, had sensory faculties that were sensitive enough to “differentiate subtle distinctions between teas produced within a few hundred meters of each other.”¹⁶⁹ Tea masters, such as Wu Lun and Min Wenshui, were not members of the scholar-official class in terms of their social status; however, their ability and sensitivity for identifying tea and water allowed them to enjoy the best reputation commoners could receive from the social elite.¹⁷⁰ With the help of trained young servants, not only the tea masters, but also average tea drinkers could avoid tea preparation, and focus on enjoying the moments of tasting tea, appreciating art and beautiful scenery.

¹⁶⁹ Benn, *Tea in China*, 173.

¹⁷⁰ More details about these two Tea Masters are discussed in the third and fourth chapters.



Figure 1.1 This scroll titled *Songxi lun hua tu zhou* (*Discussing Painting on the Shore of the Pine Creek*) was created by Qiu Ying (1494-1552). Qiu depicted an image of two scholar-officials discussing the art of painting. Two young servants, placed on the left side of two scholar-officials, are preparing tea. One of them is drawing water from the creek, and the other is boiling water for making tea.¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Source: Jilin sheng bo wu guan (Jilin Provincial Museum in Changchun, Jilin)

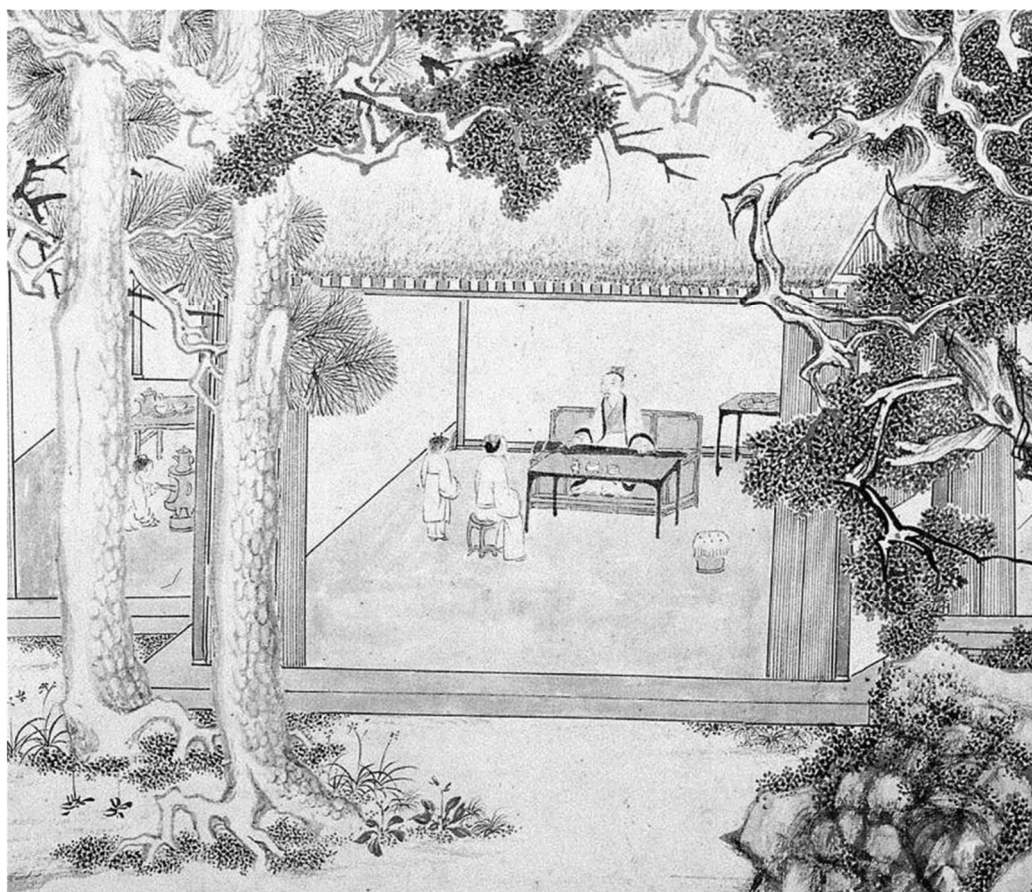


Figure 1.2 This image is selected from a long scroll first created by Wen Zhengming (1470-1559) for a tea connoisseur named Chen Chaojue.¹⁷² This image depicts a typical scene of a reception when visitors came to a tea connoisseur's house during the Ming Dynasty. The host is talking with the visitors in the main hall, while on the left side of the image, a young servant is preparing tea next to a stove in the room.¹⁷³

¹⁷² Wu, *Ming ren yin cha sheng huo wen hua*, 11.

¹⁷³ This scroll entitled *Yi lan xiao jing* is currently collected by the Palace Museum in Beijing. Source: Gugong bo wu yuan (The Palace Museum, Beijing).

Classification, the other meaning of “pin,” was also explicitly presented in the late-Ming writings on Luojie tea. Besides the strict control over the producing procedure to guarantee the best quality of tea, the taste and connoisseurship of the tea needed the drinkers to master a series of sensory capabilities to understand the value of the tea, including its taste, aroma, color, and the way to select the most appropriate water. Tea literature played crucial roles to demonstrate the writers’ sensibility to their readers. As mentioned previously, Luojie Tea had been divided into several sub-categories based on different producing regions. Even though some of these regions were very small with only two or three acres, and some of these areas were extremely close to each other only a few hundred meters distant, tea connoisseurs were interested in giving each of them a specific name, ranking them in order of quality, and comparing their subtly different tastes, colors, and aroma. The concept of “pin” was first used to classify men on the basis of their suitability to hold office in the bureaucracy, as Clunas has observed, “men were ranked before things.”¹⁷⁴ The rankings for tea, water, and tea vessels created by Lu Yu and his contemporary tea connoisseurs of the Tang Dynasty was the first occurrences in adopting this idea of evaluating things. The practice of “pin” was further influenced by paintings criticism, as Clunas has pointed out “no artist appears on his own but only by reference to those above or below him on the ladder of quality.”¹⁷⁵ In a late-Ming context, promoted by the growing sophistication in the Ming cultural market, classification and ranking were gradually involved with the discourses of taste, which

¹⁷⁴ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 89

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

contributed to the formation of an identity among the elite members sharing the similar condition of existence, because people “with similar resources and competences at their disposal are likely to have similar tastes or at least will classify and consume cultural objects in similar ways.”¹⁷⁶ Taste brings people together; however, it is “the practical affirmation of an inevitable difference,” and “expresses the line of demarcation that separate one social group from another.”¹⁷⁷ Perrier Bourdieu has noticed that cultural distinction derives from those displaying a preference for the rare as opposed to the common, the prestigious instead of the vulgar, the new rather than dated. Expressions of tastes also mark out boundaries that separate a social grouping from fractionally below them in social space.¹⁷⁸ Taste is understood in its broadest sense; however, taste could also be explained as one of the five traditional senses: its original meaning, “the faculty of perceiving flavor.”¹⁷⁹ Even though social conditions such as cultivation, education, and knowledge can be shared by a group of people with a common background, the taste for and the writings about tea were much personal and diverse, as the anthropologist Yu Shunde has noticed, the sensory experiences were inward, and they were difficult to express for the reason that the vocabulary for describing the sensory experiences was so limited.¹⁸⁰ For instance, a person can identify so many different odors; however, only a few words were available to articulate the perception of the odors.¹⁸¹ Therefore, ranking

¹⁷⁶ Simon Stewart, *A Sociology of Culture, Taste and Value* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 56.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 474.

¹⁸⁰ Yu Shunde, *Ti wu ru wei* (Taipei: Tsing-hwa University Press, 2008), 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

and grading provided a solution to such a problem, and they simplified the language that needed to be used in the writings about things. This system, on one hand, represented a common interest in discussing things to distinguish themselves from the less cultivated people; on the other hand, retained the individuality and subjectivity in the expression of their innate feelings and understandings of things.

Since the perceptions of an object were inward and personal, different authors offered various writings and rankings about their own perceptions of the sub-category of Luojie tea. In *Report on Luojie Tea*, Zhou Gaoqi, a talented scholar who had devoted himself to writing, book collecting, and the study of tea before he was massacred by the Qing army as a Ming loyalist in Jiangyin in 1645, classified Luojie tea into five classes according to their quality and taste. Zhou, as many other tea connoisseurs such as Mao Xiang and Feng Kebin, singled out Miaohou Luojie, a type of Luojie tea produced in the backyard of the old temple, and ranked it on the top of the list. The value of this type of Luojie tea was based on the best sensory experiences that it could offer to its drinkers. Zhou described his observation and perception in the text, and he said, “The color of the leaves is light yellow rather than green, whereas the veins of the leaves are pale white and thick. Tea stalk rarely appears in final products. When placed in hot water, the leaves’ color becomes softened white like ‘jade dew.’ The taste of tea is delicious, and its aroma developed as it is sipped.”¹⁸² Chen Zhenhui (1604-1656), a Yixing local and a close friend of Mao Xiang, also recorded his experiences in his essay collection entitled *Qiu*

¹⁸² Zhou, *Dongshan jiecha xi*, 2a. 色淡黄不绿。叶筋淡白而厚。制成梗绝少。入汤色柔白如玉露，味甘，芳香藏味中。

yuan za pei, as he wrote, “once it has been mixed with other tea, it becomes indistinguishable. Its color, aroma, and taste are all light. When it is first put in your mouth, it seems flavorless. After a moment, the delicious taste enters the throat; after another moment, its quietness enters the internal organs; after another moment, its purity enters the bones.”¹⁸³ To Chen, the taste of Luojie tea was not only about sensory faculties and experiences but also became a practice that touched every part of a drinker’s body.

Besides offering the superior sensory experiences, the value of Miaohou Luojie was also decided by its availability in the market, since the site where those ancient tea trees grew was no larger than two or three *mu* and each year produced less than twenty *jin* of tea.¹⁸⁴ The second-grade Luojie tea described by Zhou was named Dongding Jie tea, which literally means Luojie tea grew on the top of Mount Dongshan, a mountain with a karst cave. Exposed to sunshine and nurtured by clear water from a spring and creek, the difference between Dongding tea and the top-rank Miaohou tea was trivial. Zhou believed that “its aroma is subtle, and the color is pale. The taste is profound. It is not much different from Laomiao (Miaohou Luojie). Sipping it, the drinker can perceive that the taste is slightly thinner.”¹⁸⁵ Like Miaohou tea, Dongding was not a mass-produce tea.¹⁸⁶ For the rest of the three classes, Zhou only mentioned the names of twenty-one

¹⁸³ Chen Zhenhui, *Qiu yuan za pei* (Taipei: Taiwan hua wen shu ju, 1966), 1a-b. 阳羨茶数种，芥为最。芥数种，庙后为最。庙后方不能亩。外郡人亦争言之矣。然杂以他茶试之，不辨也。色香味三淡，初得口，泊如耳。有间，甘入喉；有间，静入心脾；有间，清入骨。嗟乎！淡者，道也。虽吾邑士大夫家知此者可屈指焉。

¹⁸⁴ Zhou, *Dongshan jiecha xi*, 1b-2a. 地不二三亩。茶皆古本，每年产不甘斤。

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.* 香幽色白，味冷隽，与老庙不甚别，啜之差觉其薄耳。

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 新庙后，棋盘顶，纱帽顶，手巾条，姚八房，及吴江周氏地，产茶亦不能多。

localities; however, he concluded that the taste of Luojie, in general, should be “pure (*qing*) as a bamboo growing alone, harmonious as Liuxia (Liuxia Hui), the Sage of harmony.”¹⁸⁷

The quality of tea had always been closely associated with the location of tea trees. Not only the sites mentioned above, the places only few hundred meters away from each other in the same village, had different natural conditions such as sunlight, soil, and water, which resulted in the differentiation, but the mountainous areas, as a whole, were also considered to possess some advantages to produce teas with qualities superior to those from other terrains. Even though there were economic, agrarian, and even religious explanations of why best teas were often picked in mountainous regions, tea connoisseurs were willing to justify this fact through their understanding based on senses.¹⁸⁸ For instance, Mao Xiang commented, “teas produced in the plains would receive much *qi* from the soil, that is why they contain a muddy quality (*zhuo*); however, Luojie tea originated in the mountains, in which the tea trees are surrounded by the pure (*qing*) and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. 品芥至此，清如孤竹，和如柳下，并圣人矣。Liuxia, known as Zhan Huo, was recorded as the Sage of harmony in *Mencius* because of his morality. A bamboo growing alone (*Guzhu*) refers to the story of Boyi and Shuqi, two brothers lived in the transition between the Shang Dynasty and the Zhou Dynasty. Two brothers refused to eat food provided by Zhou. Their loyalty to Shang was praised by historians, poets, and painters lived in later dynasties.

¹⁸⁸ In *Nong Shu (On Farming)*, Wang Zhen (1290-1333) discussed the way of planting tea trees. He suggested to plant tea seeds on mountains so as to avoid the excessive soil humidity. This was the most influential book that talks about the knowledge of growing tea trees since it was written in 1313. Wang Zhen, “Nong Shu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 284.

empty (*xu qi*) brought by the wind and dew, therefore it is valued.”¹⁸⁹ Feng Kebin also indicated “bathed in the warmth of the morning sun and sunset, surrounded by wreathing the clouds and mists,” that was why the taste of Luojie tea was distinctive.¹⁹⁰

To re-examine the glossary that were used to describe scholar-official tea connoisseurs’ perceptions of the Luojie tea, *qing* and *dan* were commonly mentioned and treated as two valuable qualities. These two terms not only represented drinkers’ preferences and pursuit in tea tasting, but also were the terms widely used in late-Ming writings about things created by scholar-officials, which became important parts of their aesthetic principles. *Qing*, as mentioned above, refers to pure, clear, and cool in terms of sensory experiences and perceptions of tea connoisseurship, and was utilized to stress the purity, sobriety and the function of purification of tea, a drink to refresh the mind and the body of a drinker. In the late-Ming discourse of aesthetics, *qing* was often combined with the word *ya*, a character signified elegance. “*Qing ya*” literally refers to “light elegance,” and together with “*gu ya* (antique elegance)” and “*jing ya* (refined elegance)” became connoisseurs and tasters “favored term of approbation, a common way of recognizing of an object.”¹⁹¹ Furthermore, *qing* could be also used as a positive term to describe one’s morality, to indicate his or her upright moral character. The phenomenon of using a morality-related term to describe the taste of tea also emerged when Zhou Gaoqi used the word “harmonious (*he*)” to describe the taste of the second-grade Luojie tea, and he even

¹⁸⁹ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 1b. 茶产平地，受土气多，故其质浊。芥茗产于高山，浑是风露清虚之气，故可为尚。

¹⁹⁰ Feng, *Jie cha jian*. 1a. 朝旭夕晖，云滃雾浥，所以味迥别也。

¹⁹¹ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 82-3.

compared its quality of harmony to the Sage of harmony. *Dan* was different from *qing*, since the latter character was traditionally considered positive. *Dan* may be given a negative meaning to describe the light and tasteless quality of certain food. However, in the late-Ming context of aesthetics, *dan* was endowed with a new explanation. In Chen Zhenhui's writing on Luojie tea, he has emphasized that the color, aroma, and taste of Luojie tea were all light; nevertheless, he further made a statement that "Alas! The tastelessness (the light taste) is the way! To differentiate all the scholar-officials in our county, those who understand this can be counted on the fingers of one hand."¹⁹² Chen, as one of the cultural leaders of Yixing, was calling for a recognition of a new idea to the existing aesthetic principles in his community. However, this idea, which had not been explicated in any text before Chen, has already developed in practice among some scholar-official tea connoisseurs. The admiration of *dan* represented connoisseurs' extensive pursuit in the demonstration of their sensitivity in tasting, and more details will be discussed in the chapter focusing on water selection for tea drinking.

Luojie Tea: Its Values and Troubles

As a consumer good that best fitted to and represented scholar-official tea connoisseurs' aesthetic principles, the values of Luojie tea, including its fame and price, increased along with the promotion of this tea made by tea connoisseurs both in their texts and in their daily practices. Besides being ranked and listed in the literature about daily consumer

¹⁹² Chen, *Qiu yuan za pei*, 1. 嗟乎! 淡者, 道也。别吾邑士大夫家, 知此者可屈指焉。

objects that demonstrated the authors' elegant taste, Luo jie tea was often mentioned by scholar-official tea connoisseurs in other genres of literature, including diaries and vignettes (*xiaopin*), both of which provide details about connections between Luo jie tea and the daily practice of Luo jie tea. Tea connoisseurs living in the late-Ming period took the moments of the acquiring and the drinking of Luo jie tea seriously, and that was why they thought it was necessary to make records on various occasions.

Diaries, a popular genre of literature among the elite class during the late-Ming period, offered detailed information about connoisseurs' daily practice of tea drinking, particularly their interactions with Luo jie tea, which they considered worth mentioning. Feng Mengzhen (1548-1605), the author of his published diary entitled *Kuai xue tang ri ji*, offered his readers a typical image depicting the leisure and artistic life of a reclusive member of the elite class. Feng, a Jiaying native, moved to Hangzhou and established a house on the west bank of West Lake. In this house, he made the records of his daily life for nineteen consecutive years. Feng was enthusiastic about tea drinking and had built up a community of tea connoisseurs around the city of Hangzhou and nearby counties. Hangzhou-based tea connoisseurs and writers such as Tu Long, Xu Cishu, Tian Yiheng, Xu Maowu and so on all played active roles in this community. Luo jie tea played important roles to consolidate their connections and friendships, as well as to inspire their writing. Feng's annual anticipation of Luo jie tea usually began in the last few days of the fourth month. He would receive new tea at the beginning of the fifth month.¹⁹³ The new arrivals were the best souvenirs that he received from his friends. Luo jie tea immediately

¹⁹³ Feng Mengzhen, *Kuai xue tang ri ji* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chu ban chuan mei ji tuan, 2010), 87.

became the most attractive and cherished drink that he could share with others. In the year of 1593, Feng mentioned Luojie tea frequently,

On the First day in the Fifth Month: I received Yao Bodao, Shaoru, and Shudu's letters, and each of them sent some pre-summer Miaohou Luojie tea to me as gifts.

On the Second day of the same month: I roasted the Luojie tea and stored it in the jug.

On the Nineteenth day in the Sixth Month: I roasted the Luojie tea.¹⁹⁴

Previously to 1593, Feng had already recorded his reception of Luojie tea from his friends, writing “on the Tenth day of the First Month: I visited Xu Maowu. At where I stayed, we talked until the dark has fallen. He left me a bottle of Luojie tea.”¹⁹⁵ These writings did not only suggest how Feng valued and cherished Luojie tea, but also implied the important fact that Feng could only obtain the tea from his friends instead of buying it from the market. Through his friends, Feng could taste new Luojie tea as soon as it was produced; however, he never mentioned how his friends acquired the tea. Different groups of tea connoisseurs composed the major part of consumers of Luojie tea. Feng's student and his friend, Li Rihua (1563-1635), a *jinshi* degree holder and a famous art collector residing in Jiaxing of the Zhejiang Province, also recorded his first consumption

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68. 五月初一。接姚伯道，绍儒，叔度札，各餉夏前庙后罗芥茶。初二，焙芥茶入罈。六月十九，焙芥茶。Yao Bodao, Shaoru, and Shudu were three brothers from the Changxing county. They were the children of Yao Yiyuan (1509-1578), who received his *jinshi* degree in 1544. The Yao family was one the most distinguished families in Changxing, where was close to Ming Ling, the place where Luojie tea was originated.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 62. 正月初十，访徐茂吴，留叙，至初更而归，见餉芥茶一瓶。

of Luojie tea in the year of 1614 in his diary *Wei shui xuan ri ji* (Diary from the Pavilion for Tasting Water). In another entry recorded in 1615, Li compared the taste of three types of nameless tea he received from friends with Luojie tea and concluded that their taste was not inferior to Luojie tea, which he took as the high standard of taste.¹⁹⁶

Vignettes (*xiaopin*), the other popular genre of literature of the late-Ming period, in which tea connoisseurs expressed their feelings and described their activities, contained more details about tea authors' attitudes toward Luojie tea.¹⁹⁷ In these texts, authors also paid attention to and had more space to comment on the taste of Luojie tea. For example, Yuan Hongdao's evaluation of different types of tea, which is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, came from his essay entitled "Brewing Tea when Visiting Longjing," which he composed during his visit in Hangzhou. Yuan recorded his conversation with his friends Tao Wangling (1562-1609), Huang Daoyuan, and Fang Zigong, all of whom were core members of the Gong'an School, one of the prominent literary communities in the late-Ming time. When they were brewing tea near Dragon Well, Tao asked Yuan to compare the advantages and disadvantages of Longjing tea and Tianchi tea; however, Yuan's answer weirdly turned into a topic concentrated on Luojie tea due to his personal preference. Yuan responded, "only Jie tea has a natural charm of limpidity, and its flavor is just like a beautiful landscape. It belongs to the untrammelled class of tea."¹⁹⁸ His answer continued, "Jie tea has coarse leaves; therefore, it is important to clean them

¹⁹⁶ Li Rihua, *Wei shui xuan ri ji*, 451.

¹⁹⁷ Yang Ye, "Hsiao-pin of the Late-Ming: An Introduction" in *Vignettes from the Late Ming* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 18.

¹⁹⁸ Yuan Hongdao, "You Longjing ji," 15. 唯芥韵致清澈，风味如泉石，茶之逸品也。

before the infusion of boiled water. Even the inferior Jie tea is good enough to wash annoyance away.”¹⁹⁹ In addition, Yuan has pointed out, “I have been drinking Jie tea for quite a while, so drinking Tianchi only makes me uncomfortable. It is true that it is inferior to Jie tea.”²⁰⁰

Yuan Hongdao’s recognition of Luojie tea, like all other tea connoisseurs’ compliments on it, promoted its growth of reputation in the society, along with the booming of the publishing industry in the late-Ming period. Tea connoisseurship became a popular subject for both writers and publishers. For writers, on the one hand, they had their own needs to express themselves, including their fondness and feelings, through writings; on the other hand, to write and publish works about tea connoisseurship was an effective route to distinguish them as an individual or as a group from others by demonstrating their cultivation, aesthetic principles, and sensitivities of sensory faculties by means of consumptions. Taken into a consideration of the fact that publishers and editors, like Chen Jiru, were also writers who associated with the elite class, their contribution to the spread of late-Ming tea literature was massive.²⁰¹ In such a circumstance, the reputation of Luojie tea could reach wider audiences, including their

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 芥茶叶粗大，洗净方可注汤，下者犹能蠲烦涤滞。

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 往余嗜芥久，饮天池则胀，然皆芥之下者。

²⁰¹ Jamie Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru: Chen Jiru (1558-1639): the background to development and subsequent uses of literary personae*, (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 160-2.

elite readers and commoner readers of daily-life encyclopedias, in which tea also composed an important part of the knowledge.²⁰²

The value of Luojie tea was not only presented through writings focusing on comparing it with a variety of other famous teas and commenting on their subtle differences, but also manifested in tea connoisseurs' concerns about its price. Costliness was one of the most distinctive features of Luojie tea observed by its scholar-official consumers; therefore, even though tea connoisseurs would like to concentrate their topics on objects and aesthetic principles for the reason of pursuing elegance, the high price seemed to be a topic that they could not avoid. According to Wen Zhenheng, "The Jie tea is cherished the most these days" and that was why "its price was extremely high."²⁰³ Gao Lian (1573-1620), a Hangzhou-based writer who was interested in healthcare, also noticed, "if the Luojie tea is authentic, its price should be very high, twice as much as the price of Tianchi tea."²⁰⁴ How much did a drinker need to pay for a pot of Luojie tea? The only available answer was Yuan Hongdao's record in one of his vignettes, in which he wrote, "Luojie leaves are quite coarse, and a catty (*jin*) of the authentic tea can cost more than 2,000 cash. I have been looking for it for years but acquired only a few ounces."²⁰⁵ However, the authenticity of this statement is controversial among scholars, since there

²⁰² The titles of daily-life encyclopedia usually include its target audiences. For example, "si min tong yong (designed for four groups of people)" and "shi min tong yong (designed for the officials and commoners)" often appear in these book titles. Wu Huifang, *Wan bao quan shu*, 311, 633.

²⁰³ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 158. 今所最重。价亦甚高。

²⁰⁴ Gao Lian, *Zun sheng ba jian*, the *Siku* Edition, 9. 若真芥茶，其价甚重，两倍天池。

²⁰⁵ Yuan Hongdao, "Longjing," 15. 《龙井》 真者每斤至二千余钱。余觅之数年，仅得数两许。

were two versions of this vignette published and circulated since 1612. In the other version, a version which scholars consider more likely to be Yuan's original piece based on the evaluation of the writing skill, Yuan did not mention its exact price, but he said, "Jie is not far from Changxing County, wealthy residents in the mountainous region pay a large sum of money to make reservations for the tea a year in advance. Moreover, since the yield of tea is poor, it is still hard to acquire."²⁰⁶ Even though Yuan's original description was not able to offer an answer, it suggested the lack of availability of Luojie tea in the market.

The high price and lack of availability brought some troubles for Luojie tea itself, its consumers, as well as its producers. In the latter part of the Ming Dynasty, as Christopher Rae and Bruce Rusk have pointed out, China underwent a flourishing of domestic and international commerce that created overnight fortunes. In such a circumstance, there was "a sense of the paranoia that resulted from the new risks and social change brought by this flow of money."²⁰⁷ They further suggest, "commerce shook up the social order."²⁰⁸ Tea in the market, especially Luojie tea, was experiencing the same problem

²⁰⁶ Luo Qingyun and Dai Hongxian made a comparison between the two different versions of this vignette described Yuan Hongdao's visit of Longjing. These two versions are respectively named "wu jun (吴郡)" and "pei lan ju (佩兰居)." Two authors concluded that the former version was possibly the original version created by Yuan, but the latter one was revised by He Weiran (何伟然), who published Yuan's anthology in 1619. Luo, Qingyun and Hongxian Dai. "Yuan Hongdao shan shui you ji yi wen yan jiu (袁宏道山水游记异文研究)," *Zhongnan da xue xue bao*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2013, 192-196: 194-5.

²⁰⁷ Christopher Rae and Bruce Rusk, "Introduction to the *Book of Swindles: Selections from a Late Ming Collection*," in *Book of Swindles: Selections from a Late Ming Collection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), xiv.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

with the antique market, the producing of fakes.²⁰⁹ Many tea connoisseurs implied the circulation of fake Luojie tea in their works. Not only Yuan Hongdao and Gao Lian, but also Mao Xiang and Feng Kebin, discussed this issue. Both Mao and Feng provided their audiences with the basic knowledge of how to identify authentic Luojie tea from fake products. Judging through their texts, Mao and Feng shared the same method of discerning authentic Luojie tea, since Mao transcribed Feng's text and published it in his own work entitled *Collective Transcription on Luojie Tea* (*Jie cha hui chao*). Feng Kebin, the author of the original text entitled *the Discourse of Jie Tea* (*Jie cha jian*), was from Yidu of the Shandong Province (in the modern Qingzhou City) and received his *jinshi* degree in the second year of the Tianqi reign (1622). Feng soon received his appointment in Huzhou Prefecture, which was located close to Yixing and was famous for its tribute tea production in the Tang and the early-Ming Dynasties. Feng was born into an elite family and his father Qizhen was an accomplished painter who was skilled at depicting bamboos. Feng was a filial son who took care of his father when he was suffering from illness. However, in Huzhou, the father and son still had the chance to enjoy the pleasure brought by their interests like painting, music, and tea. Due to the popularity of Luojie tea, Feng's writing later became a significant piece of work that could be considered the ancestor or the founder of the genre of writing on Luojie tea.²¹⁰ Feng's analysis of

²⁰⁹ Craig Clunas talks about the production of fakes in *Superfluous Things*, and he quotes from *Essential Criteria of Antiquities* that "Previously, fakes were mixed with the genuine; Now it has become cleverer in recent years. The good artists do not create their own works, they copy and take pride in their close-likenesses." Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 111.

²¹⁰ Feng, *Jie cha jian*, 6b. 近日推芥茶，平章以大冯君为宗老，又作鼻祖，当以入茶谱。

genuine Luojie tea was conducted through a multi-sensory process, and he first made comments on the general taste of Luojie tea by saying “it has an aroma of orchid and a sweet taste. After the rainy season and autumn have passed, drinkers open the jug and brew the tea. The fragrance of [authentic] tea becomes stronger and it still tastes like newly made tea.”²¹¹ Moreover, the tea generating white-color tea water was the authentic Dongshan tea, Feng concluded.²¹² Compared to Luojie, teas produced in other valleys also had an aroma after they were made; however, the aroma would disappear when autumn was coming, and Feng indicated that this was the moment when drinkers could “realize how different it was from the genuine product.”²¹³ In addition, Feng described, “there is a type of tea, which is fragrant but tastes bitter; there is another type of tea, which is in light yellow and has a slight fragrance; there is a third type of tea, which is dark green but has no fragrance; there is a fourth type, which is refined and tender but has an impure fragrance and a bitter taste. All these types of tea are not genuine.”²¹⁴ Before ending the topic on the differentiation of authentic tea from fake ones, Feng concluded, “tea tasters should identify colors and aromas of tea and examine the tastes of them at different times. In this way, there won’t be a single error in a hundred times.”²¹⁵

²¹¹ Feng, *Jie cha jian*, 3a. 有如兰花香而味甘。过霉历秋，开坛烹之，其香愈烈，味若新沃。

²¹² *Ibid.* 以汤色尚白者，真洞山者。

²¹³ *Ibid.* 若他嶰，初时亦有香味，至秋，香气索然，便觉与真品相去天壤。

²¹⁴ *Ibid.* 又一种有香而味涩者，又一种色淡黄而微香者，又一种色青而毫无香味者，又一种极细嫩而香浊味苦者，皆非道地也。

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* 品茶者辨色闻香，更时察味，百不失一矣。

The aroma of orchid, as Feng have noticed, was one of the most important features of Luojie tea. However, tea containing a floral scent in this discourse differs from our modern understanding of a flower-scented tea, for instance, the jasmine tea. Even though the flower-scented tea became popular among consumers for the first time due to the obsession with flowers in general during the Ming period, flowers were usually used to disguise the taste of inferior teas. Evans has indicated, “this is why the upper classes of the Late Ming disdained scented teas, calling jasmine tea ‘servant’s tea.’”²¹⁶ For tea connoisseurs, the orchid fragrance was intrinsic and natural to Luojie tea, which represented the concept of “zhen”; however, flowers were excessive and would destroy the real taste of tea. Different understandings of flowers and floral scents suggested two diverse principles of aesthetics. Feng’s evaluation provided his audiences and tea drinkers with one of the most comprehensive and sense-based methods to distinguish authentic tea from fake and adulterated teas. This system, first initiated by scholar-official tea connoisseurs, was adopted by many other consumers. For centuries, this sense-based method played a unique role until modern technologies are widely utilized in the evaluation of tea.

Many tea connoisseurs were aware of the circulation of fake Luojie tea in the market. Besides identifying Luojie tea through sensory faculties during the consumption, some tea connoisseurs chose to supervise on the entire producing procedure, and some of them even went to the tea tree site and picked tea leaves themselves. In the early 1590s, Tu Long commented that “it is marvelous to pick tea leaves personally” in *Desultory*

²¹⁶ Evans, *Tea in China*, 85.

Remarks on Furnishing the Abode of the Retired Scholar (Kao pan yu shi), while Gao Lian commented in *Eight Discourses on the Art of Living* (Zun sheng ba jian) by saying that it was necessary to send someone with a good morality, who was trustworthy, to fulfill the duty of picking tea leaves.²¹⁷ Decades later, Zhou Gaoqi illustrated a scene of trading Luojie tea and fake tea in early summer. In *the Genealogy of Luojie tea*, Zhou wrote,

After the opening of the tea plantation, people came to mountains to sell tea leaves and twigs. At least two hundred or three hundred *shi* were sold every day. Mountain residents bought and processed the fake tea and sell it as genuine. Tea enthusiasts usually went to the plantation personally. I hired workers to pick and make tea for me. No matter how carefully my people inspected, most of the real tea was substituted with the fake ones. People bid large amounts; however, every buyer could only get two or three catties.....There were people waiting till the market closed. They collected all the leftover tea leaves and used them to make tea named “Xiushan,” which was as fragrant as Luojie tea, but the colors were very different. Nowadays, most of the Luojie tea circulating in the market is in fact Nanyue tea, which could be marked as a tea swindle.²¹⁸

Witnessing this situation, Zhou sighed, “all tea-men are motivated by profits, and they make me feel like my pursuit of real (*zhen*) tea is in vain.”²¹⁹ Zhou’s understanding of “zhen” became different if we compare it with the “zhen” discussed before. In this context, “zhen” was simply a practical term, which was utilized to stress the originality of

²¹⁷ Tu Long, *Kao pan yu shi*, 322. 须亲自采收，方妙。Gao, *Zun sheng ba jian*, 9. 须用自己令人采收方妙。

²¹⁸ Zhou, *Dongshan jiecha xi*, 2b. 茶园既开，入山卖草枝者，日不下二三百石。山民收制乱真，好事家躬往。予租采焙，几视惟谨，多被潜易真茶去。人地相京，高价分买，家不能二三斤。又有俟茶市将阑，采取剩叶制之者，名修山，香味足而色差老。若今四方所货芥片，多是南岳片子，署为骗茶可矣。

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* 茶人皆有市心，令予徒仰真茶已。

a product and to pay respect to its producers. Viewing Zhou's description from another angle, the wide spread of fake teas seemed to be out of control and brought anxieties to consumers. The Ming government also noticed the problem of making fake tea as early as in the twenty-sixth year of the Jiajing Reign (1547); therefore, they issued a new law intended to punish all the counterfeiters who made them or the merchants who traded them. If the weight of fake tea was over five hundred catties, the producers and dealers were to be punished, and their products to be confiscated.²²⁰ If the weight was less than five hundred catties, the punishment would be as the same as the person who violated the law of producing and dealing illegal salt.²²¹ However, the law had its own troubles during the execution. For one thing, in this dichotomic tea administration system, the Ming government paid more attention to foreign-trade tea rather than tea provided for the domestic market, due to its important role in the national security. For another thing, the production of fake tea, especially the forgeries of famous tea, had never been practiced in large amounts; therefore, the forgeries were difficult to detect. Not until the moment when a tea drinker took a sip of tea, the forgeries were exposed. To respond to such an unfortunate situation, tea connoisseurs had to develop a new system to differentiate the real tea from the fake, the good-quality tea from the inferior. Without any modern technologies, the most trustworthy method was to depend on one's own mind and body.

²²⁰ Liao Jianzhi, *Ming dai cha wen hua yi shu*, 52. 嘉靖二十六年议准，蒸造假茶 500 斤以上者，商人，园户及专卖者，发附近卫，茶价入官。

²²¹ *Ibid.* 不及前数者，依私盐法论罪。

A “sensory turn” in the late-Ming world of material was not only for the reason of aesthetics, but also was a necessity simulated by the social reality.

The Decline of Luojie Tea: Dynastic Transition, Ming Loyalists, and Women

It is easier to notice a thing when it is in prominence; however, that prominence may fall quickly and fall silently. The decline of Luojie tea did not make any significant influence in the society. In contrast to a large amount of writings that were created to discuss this tea during the late-Ming period, numbers of new literature dedicated to this topic were quickly reduced to none by the early-Qing era, and the newly printed texts related to the topic were merely re-edited versions that were collected by Qing publishers, such as Zhang Chao (1650-1707).²²²

The fascination of Luojie tea disappeared along with the loss of its most important consumers and supporters, including Zhou Gaoqi, Feng Kebin, Zhang Dai, and Mao Xiang. These four tea connoisseurs were productive writers and local cultural leaders, who decided to “expressed their common moral and intellectual commitment for the fall of the Ming Dynasty.”²²³ When the Manchu army arrived at Jiangyin, Zhou Gaoqi was

²²² Zhang Chao collected Zhou Gaoqi's *the Genealogy of Dongshan Jie Tea* and printed it in *Tan ji cong shu*. Feng Kebin's *the Discourse of Jie Tea* and Mao Xiang's *Collective Transcriptions of Jie Tea* were published in his *Zhao dai cong shu* in late-seventeenth century.

²²³ Timothy Brook, “Family Continuity and Cultural Hegemony: The Gentry of Ningbo, 1368-1911,” in *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1990), 28.

among the victims who were massacred outside of the city in 1645. Feng survived through the dynastic transition in Huzhou; however, he chose to be a recluse for the rest of his life.²²⁴ Zhang Dai, who had refused to cut and braid his hair in the Manchu style, searched refuge in temples forty miles away from Shaoxing City. His memories of the good old days were recorded while he was suffering from hunger. As a tea connoisseur, Zhang did not overlook tea in such a desperate situation. In *Tao an meng yi* (The Dream Recollection of Tao'an), he recorded a story about a singer-courtesan named Wang Yuesheng in Nanjing. "Wang learned to read and write, and to paint well, excelling in her rendering of orchids, bamboo and narcissi; she became a connoisseur of fine teas by sitting at the feet of the region's greatest tea expert, Master Min (Min Wenshui)," who had a conversation with Zhang on Luojie tea and could "conjure up the taste of a particular tea from the empty air" in Zhang's description.²²⁵ Wang and her enthusiasm of tea drinking inspired Zhang to write a poem entitled "For the singer-courtesan Wang Yuesheng," in which he expressed his appreciation of Wang and how her beauty and charming personality could be explained through the language of tea tasting,

From the white porcelain cup the aroma ascends like orchid;
 Its color like pear blossom glimpsed through a paper window.
 How to describe that delicate taste on the tip of the tongue?
 Sweetness and tartness are even better than the inner tang of olive.
 So when I first came face to face with Wang Yuesheng,
 It was almost as if the tea spoke overtly to me.
 Her walking was delicate, three steps to my one;
 But so restrained was her reserve, she seemed like ice.

 Using the exquisiteness of tea to describe an exquisite woman,
 Who has ever thought of such a thing down through the ages?

²²⁴ Zhang Chao, *Zhao dai cong shu* Vol. 43, 8. 国朝尚无恙。

²²⁵ Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 36-7.

Even just saying that someone's calligraphy "is filled with the sound of a river"
Will lead those who hear you to spit out their food with laughter.²²⁶

Wang's life was not only embellished with the tea master, her scholar-official sponsors, and artistic practices, but also intertwined with the crisis and the fall of the Ming Dynasty. Yu Huai (1616-1696) recorded that Wang later became a concubine of a scholar-official and moved to Luzhou Prefecture. In 1642, the rebel Zhang Xianzhong (1606-1647) attacked the city and found this couple hiding in a well. Wang's husband was soon executed. Wang's cursing irritated Zhang, which resulted in her own death. The image, Yu described, was cruel, that "she was stabbed to death in a ditch, but her body still stood for a while, then fell. To entertain his followers, Zhang cut off her head, placed it in a container and steamed it."²²⁷ To memorialize a singer-courtesan was also to memorialize a talented tea expert. In this case, the taste of tea brought together Zhang Dai, Wang Yuesheng, and Min Wenshui, who had different social backgrounds, and let them forget their diverse social origins.

It is noticeable that men from the elite class recognized and complimented talented and beautiful women "as much for their scholarly attainments as for their physical

²²⁶ Zhang Dai, "Qu Zhong ji Wang Yuesheng" in *Zhang Dai shi wen ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1991), 45-6. 今来茗战得异人，桃叶渡口闵老子。钻研水火七十年，嚼碎虚空辨渣滓。白瓯沸雪发兰香，色似梨花透高低。舌闻幽沁味同谁？甘酸都尽橄榄髓。及余一晤王月生，恍见此茶能语矣。蹴三致一步吝移。娟洁幽闲意如冰。但以佳茗比佳人，自古何人见及此？犹言书法在江声，闻声喷饭满其几。 Translated by Jonathan Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain* (New York: Viking, 2007), 37-39. Zhang Dai, "Wang Yuesheng" in *Tao an meng yi* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1982), 72. 好茶，善闵老子，虽大风雨，大宴会，必至老子家啜茶数壶始去。所交有当意者，亦期与老子家会。

²²⁷ Yu Huai, *Ban qiao za ji* (Taipei: Yi wen yin shu guan, 1968), 20-1. 断其头，蒸置于盘，以享群贼。

allure.”²²⁸ The knowledge and expertise in tea drinking were important components of the courtesans’ scholarly achievements. Like Wang Yuesheng, Dong Xiaowan (1624-1651), another famous courtesan in Nanjing, was an expert in tea tasting; moreover, she was specifically interested in Luojie tea. Dong married Mao and became his concubine in 1643; however, their marriage only lasted for nine years. Being a Ming loyalist, Mao and his family had to leave home. They experienced illness during the exile. Dong died at a young age and was buried in Yingmei Nunnery. Mao Xiang grieved Dong and wrote *Ying mei an yi yu* (Memories from Yingmei Nunnery). Through the text, Mao depicted images of a good wife and an expert in tea tasting. Dong enjoyed drinking wine; however, considering Mao was not able to consume wine, she chose to stop.²²⁹ Fortunately, the couple were both tea lovers, and particularly enthusiastic about Luojie tea; therefore, they could enjoy the finest Luojie tea which was selected and sent to them by their friends. Dong even changed Mao’s habit of tea choice, as Mao recorded that he had begun consuming Luojie tea produced by a tea farmer named Ke from forty-seven years earlier. For the next fifteen years, he consistently consumed the same tea; however, since Dong came to his family, he became more interested in Luojie tea produced by Gu Zijian, whose product was finer than his original choice.²³⁰ Furthermore, for Dong,

²²⁸ Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 35.

²²⁹ Mao Xiang, “Ying mei an yi yu” in *Dong Xiaowan hui kao* (Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian chu ban she, 2001), 142. 姬能饮，自入吾门，见余量不胜焦叶，遂罢饮。

²³⁰ Mao, *Jie cha hui chao*, 4b-5a. 忆四十七年前，有吴人柯姓者，熟于阳羨茶山，每桐初露白之际，为余入芥，箬笼携来十余种，其最精妙不过斤许数两，味老香淡，具芝兰金石之性。十五年以为恒。后宛姬从吴门归，余则芥片必需半塘顾子兼，黄熟香必金平叔，茶香双妙，更入精微。

Luojie tea was an important ingredient in her daily food recipe. Every day, she used a pot of Luojie tea to cook tea rice, and then decorated it with vegetable and salted black beans.²³¹ Mao's memories of Dong were interwoven with different scenes of drinking Luojie tea, a practice to which they both devoted.

Courtesans were trained to entertain male clients, so they have adapted themselves to aesthetic principles invented by scholar-officials. Besides famous courtesans, other women were also important tea consumers during this period. The novel *Jin ping mei* has provided audiences much information on how women from a merchant family practiced tea drinking on a daily basis. However, women's own writings about tea connoisseurship were still rare. We have to extend the time period to find one exception. This exception came from Xu Deyin (1681-?), a well-educated woman from a Hangzhou elite family. She was a talented poet, a painter, and a tea drinker. Her poems clearly show that she was not only a drinker, but also very knowledgeable in tea literature. Xu often cited some important terms and metaphors that first appeared in Lu Yu's *the Classic of Tea*, such as *xieyan* (crab eyes), a term to describe the bubbling status of boiling water.²³² Furthermore, she was also familiar with tea literature produced in the Song Dynasty, as she talked about "the tea contest (*dou cha*)" in her poems.²³³ Xu's attention on tea drinking distinguished her poems from works created by other women poet. The

²³¹ Mao, "Ying mei an yi yu," 146. 姬性淡泊，于肥甘一无嗜好，每饭，以芥茶一小壶温淘，佐以水菜、香豉数茎粒，便足一餐。

²³² Xu Deyin, "Lü jing xuan shi chao" Vol. 1 in *Ming Qing nü xing bie ji* (Hefei: Huang shan shu she, 2008), 21, 42.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 8.

distinction was based on her childhood and education. Xu was educated like a boy by her father Xu Xuling (Posthumous name: Qingxian), who received his *jinshi* degree in 1655. Her father valued her talent so much and he believed that if she were a man, she would not become a scholar who miswrote “jin’gen (Emperor’s carriage).”²³⁴ It is reasonable to assume that her interests in tea were heavily influenced by her father and her educational background. Drinking tea was a shared practice by both genders; however, tea connoisseurship, particularly writing on tea tasting, inclined to be a men’s practice. Courtesans used tea to entertain men, while a talented female poet wrote about tea under the influence of her father. Both of these two cases have suggested men’s dominant role in tea tasting, especially the writing of tea connoisseurship.

Surviving as a Ming loyalist, Mao Xiang died in 1693, almost half a century after the establishment of the Manchu rule in his hometown Rugao. By the end of the seventeenth century, the generation of Ming loyalists that experienced the traumatic dynastic transition had faded away. Along with their death, a group of scholarly courtesans and the prosperous brothel quarter in Nanjing also disappeared. A type of tea cherished by both groups, which represented the aesthetic principle of elite members during the late-Ming era, lost its most important tasters, consumers, promoters, and recorders. In silence, the marvelousness of Luojie tea was entombed by time.

²³⁴ Jin’gen refers to the carriage of the emperor. When editing a book, Han Chang, Han Yu’s eldest son, changed the character of Gen (根) to yin (银 silver) without doing any research. This story later became a famous case to describe the lack of knowledge and responsibility in book editing. Xu Chengdian, *Guangxu zeng xiu gan quan xian zhi* (Nanjing: Jiangsu gu ji chu ban she, 1991), 219. 公极爱怜之，且谓生男如是，当不误改金根，惜乎女子也。

Chapter Two

Songluo Tea and Longjing Tea: New Taste, New Method, and New Market

In contrast to Luojie Tea, which experienced a decline in the late-Ming period and finally disappeared from the tea market during the early-Qing era, the other two types of tea had totally different destinies within this same period. This chapter examines the development of these two types of tea, which were respectively named Songluo and Longjing. Both Songluo tea and Longjing tea were new commodities to the tea market; however, they soon became two of the most expensive teas, which were particularly valued by scholar-official tea connoisseurs. The fineness of these two teas represented tea makers' effort to improve the taste of teas through renovating the processing techniques. The circulation of fake Songluo and Longjing tea did not merely play negative roles in the development of these two teas. Many surrounding areas joined the production of these teas and improved their production techniques. These fake teas were also major products, which fulfilled the increasing needs of tea consumers. After the dynastic change, the two teas developed in different ways. Songluo tea entered a larger market with more commoners and international consumers; meanwhile, Longjing tea received its biggest fan, the Qianlong Emperor.

Songluo tea

An Introduction

Songluo tea had a special place in many late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs' preference lists. For instance, in Wen Zhenheng's opinion, Songluo tea was good enough to compete with Huqiu tea, Tianchi tea, Luojie tea, Liuhe tea, Longjing tea, and Tianmu tea.²³⁵ Xu Cishu compared it with Longjing tea of Hangzhou and Huqiu tea of Suzhou.²³⁶ Xie Zhaozhe listed it on the top of all Ming famous tea, including Huqiu tea, Longjing tea, Luojie tea, Tianchi tea, and Yangxian tea.²³⁷ Mao Xiang, the enthusiast of Luojie tea, considered Songluo tea the only rival of his favorite Luojie tea.²³⁸ Wen Zhenheng analyzed the merits of Songluo tea, saying "because it is easy to brew, and its fragrance remains strong."²³⁹ To understand the reason why Wen complimented the Songluo tea through these two aspects, we need to consider some changes that happened in the Ming tea market and how tea consumers interacted with these changes.

Songluo tea was named after Mount Songluo (pine lichen), which was thirteen *li* north of Xiuning County, in Huizhou Prefecture, Southern Zhili (in modern Anhui Province). It was new to the tea market during the late-sixteenth century and soon conquered scholar-official tea connoisseurs.²⁴⁰ A Buddhist monk named Dafang was

²³⁵ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 158-159.

²³⁶ Xu Cishu, "Cha shu" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji* (Beijing: Nong ye chu ban she, 1981), 149-150. 若歛之松蘿，吳之虎丘，錢塘之龍井，香氣濃郁，並可雁行於頡頏。

²³⁷ Xie Zhaozhe, "Wu za zu" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 323. 今茶品之上者，松蘿也、虎丘也、羅芥也、龍井也、陽羨也、天池也。

²³⁸ Mao, "Jie cha hui chao" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 194. 計可與羅芥敵者，唯松蘿耳。我代松蘿叫屈，同此一样清芬。

²³⁹ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 159. 以易于烹煮且香烈故耳。

²⁴⁰ There is no specific record showing the first appearance of Songluo tea in the market. Zou Yi, a scholar at the Fudan University, suggests Songluo tea originated previous to the 1580s. Zou Yi, "Songluo shan,

reportedly responsible for the originality of this particular tea.²⁴¹ It was said that Monk Dafang from Huqiu Monastery in Suzhou arrived on Mount Songluo and began pan-frying the tea leaves he picked from the neighboring mountains. At the time, monks in Huqiu Monastery were taking charge of the production of Huqiu tea, which was generally acknowledged as “the finest tea under heaven.” However, the producers of Huqiu tea were not strong enough to resist the exploitation from local officers. Li Rihua recorded what he had heard about Huqiu tea, “monks in the monastery pulled all the tea trees out, and only left a servant stand by.” Li explained, “they (monks) had to cut off what they relied on, just because they were tired of the exploitation from those officers.” The legendary Monk Dafang, in another way, saved the techniques of producing Huqiu tea, one of the most delicate teas during the late-Ming period.

Monk Dafang made the Huqiu method revive in Huizhou Prefecture. The tea was named Songluo after the mountain where Monk Dafang resided, rather than any places where tea trees actually grew.²⁴² Its production was limited by the relatively small area available for tea growing in the region. The color of the authentic Songluo tea was compared to pear blossom and its fragrance to bean flowers. Drinking it was said to be “like munching snowflakes.” The finer the tea, the whiter the color, and it was said that even if the liquid were left in the cup overnight it would leave no stain of tea.²⁴³ The

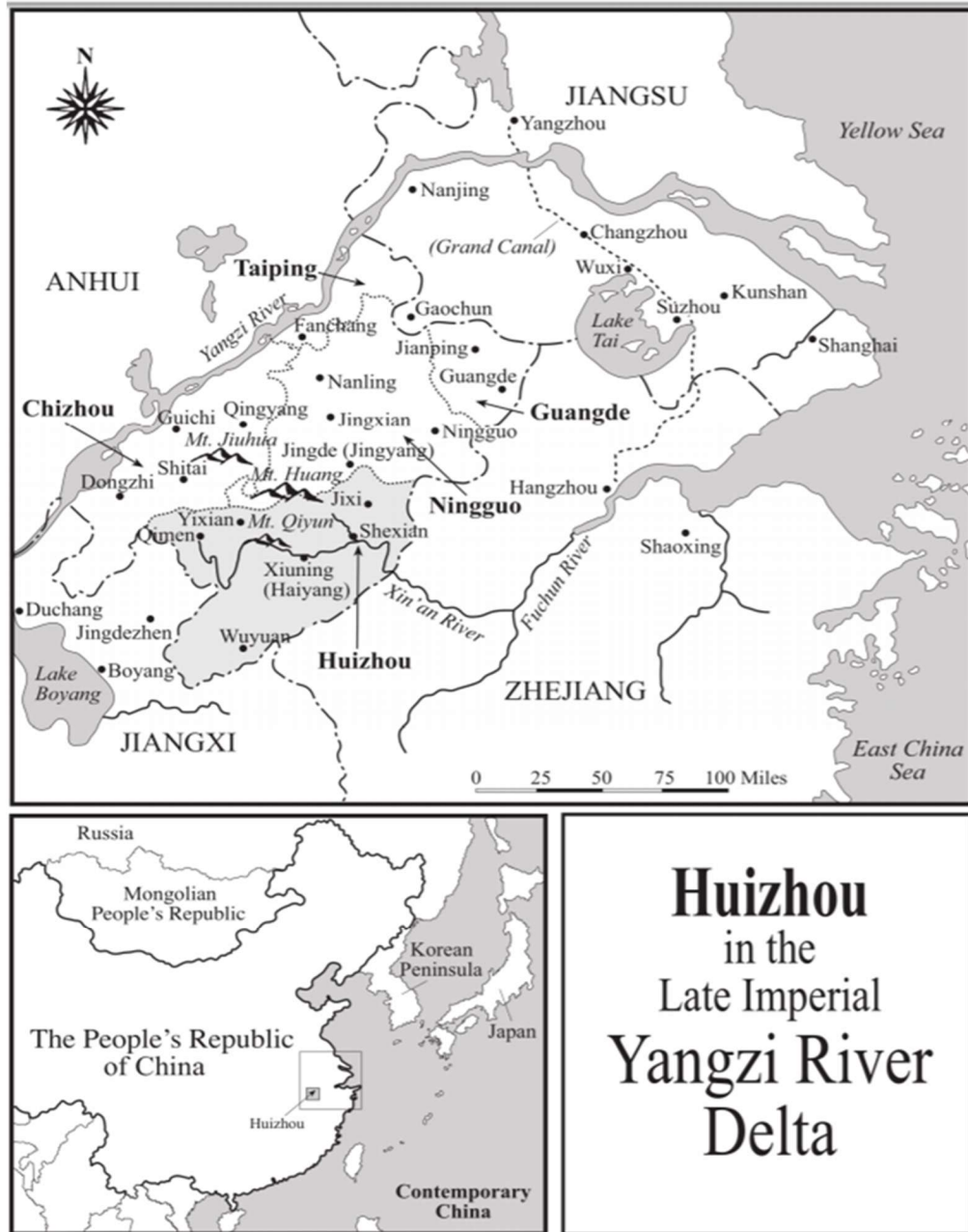
Songluo cha yu Songluo zhi fa: Qing Zhong ye yi qian Huizhou ming cha li shi de chu bi shu li,” *Shi lin*, Issue. 6, 2010: 69-79, 72-3.

²⁴¹ Feng Shike, “Cha lu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 170. 始比丘大方。

²⁴² Benn, *Tea in China*, 175.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

evaluation of tea colors became more diverse in the late-Ming era; however, tea in white color was still cherished by tea connoisseurs, like what had been valued during the Song Dynasty. Songluo tea's contemporaries, such as Luojie tea and Tianchi tea, were all famous for its white color.



Map 2.1 Huizhou in the Late Imperial Yangzi River Delta²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Yu Fangren, *Going Back to Anhui: Formation of Huizhou Culture*, B.A. Thesis, University of Iowa, 2016,

The Songluo Method

To attain the delicate status of Songluo tea, the method of processing tea was crucial. The Huqiu method, from which the Songluo method originated, was not recorded by any tea connoisseurs, even though Huqiu Monastery was famous for its method of tea processing before it disappeared from the market around the mid-seventeenth century. In the prime time of Huqiu tea, tea connoisseurs had indicated that the ways of picking leaves and roasting played significant roles in the final products.²⁴⁵ It was commonly agreed that the reason tea produced in Suzhou, where Huqiu tea came from, could gain a nationwide reputation because of the way it was picked and roasted.²⁴⁶

Compared to Suzhou and its historical advantages in producing fine tea, Huizhou was not famous for its production of high-quality teas. Some Ming tea connoisseurs argued that Huizhou was never a tea producing area; however, their understandings were contrary to the fact that Huizhou had been an important tea producing area since the Tang time.²⁴⁷ Records in local gazetteers and studies both suggest that Huizhou had become an important source of revenue during the Five Dynasties.²⁴⁸ In the Tang and Song dynasties, Huizhou was also able to produce a few famous teas, such as Han'gao, Shengjin, Nensang.²⁴⁹ However, due to the transformation in the way of tea-drinking, these teas, which were all cake teas, were not recognized by late-Ming tea connoisseurs.

²⁴⁵ Xu Shupi, "Shi xiao lu" in *Zhongguo nong ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 344. 茶全贵採造。

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 苏州茶，饮遍天下，专以採造胜耳。

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 徽郡向无茶。Zou, "Songluo shan, Songluo cha yu Songluo zhi fa," 71.

²⁴⁸ Zou, "Songluo shan, Songluo cha yu Songluo zhi fa," 71.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

Previous to the late-Ming Dynasty, Huizhou was important to the tea market because of its huge output rather than the quality and taste of tea. It was understandable that these ordinary or coarse teas were not able to attract tea connoisseurs' attention.

The adoption of the Huqiu method in Shexian County, or in other words, the invention of the Songluo method, quickly changed this situation. Songluo tea soon became one of the most popular teas among scholar-official tea connoisseurs. Tea connoisseurs were not only interested in the tea itself, but also paid attention to the way it was processed. The Songluo method required tea producers to pay more attention to details. In 1609, Luo Lin (1583-1620), a tea connoisseur from Ningbo, had provided a relatively simple description of the Songluo method. He emphasized the two most important steps: removing the veins on tea leaves and pan-frying tea leaves.²⁵⁰ Xie Zhaozhe provided a more detailed record of the Songluo method based on his visit in Mount Songluo. Xie had a chance to talk to a monk who was responsible for making tea. After Xie expressing his curiosity about the method, the monk commented on the fragrance of tea. He informed Xie that his choice of tea leaves would not have on a significant impact on the final product.²⁵¹ What really mattered was the temperature and duration of heating.²⁵² On a tea leaf, the tip was easily burnt, while the stalk remained uncooked.²⁵³ A high-quality tea could not be like this. Therefore, the producers of

²⁵⁰ Luo Lin, "Cha jie" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 167. 松萝茶出休宁松萝山，僧大方所创造，其法，将茶摘去筋脉，银铤炒制。

²⁵¹ Xie, "Wu za zu," 323. 余尝过松萝，遇一制茶僧，询其法，曰：茶之香，原不甚相远。

²⁵² *Ibid.* 惟焙者火候极难调耳。

²⁵³ *Ibid.* 茶叶尖者太嫩而蒂多老，至火候匀时，尖者已焦而蒂尚未熟。

Songluo tea would remove the tip and the stalk of each leaf, and only use its middle section.²⁵⁴ In this way, tea makers could pan-fire the leaves evenly, and all leaves could reach the same degree of doneness.²⁵⁵ This process was extremely time-consuming, as Xie had noticed.²⁵⁶

Fang Yizhi (1611-1671), a Ming loyalist from Tongcheng county of Southern Zhili, also discussed details of Songluo tea's pan-frying process. He said that the producers should heat the pan gently but stir the tea leaves as fast as possible. Meanwhile, producers should use a fan to accelerate the airflow and remove the excessive heat. In this way, tea makers could avoid overcooking tea leaves and turning them brown.²⁵⁷ Once the tea leaves were moved out from the pan, tea makers also needed to let them cool down as quickly as possible. While using fans to cool down tea leaves, they had to rub these processed leaves heavily.²⁵⁸ After this process of dehydration was finished, the most important job for tea makers was to prevent tea leaves from humidification. Once processed tea leaves were affected by moisture, tea makers had to repeat the pan-frying process.²⁵⁹ Fang concluded that the use of fire was decisive to the quality of Songluo tea.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁴ Ibid. 松萝茶制者，每叶皆剪去其尖蒂，但留中段。

²⁵⁵ Ibid. 故茶皆一色。

²⁵⁶ Ibid. 而功力烦矣，宜其价之高也。

²⁵⁷ Fang Yizhi, *Wu li xiao shi Vol. 6*, the *Siku* Edition, 11b. 文火武催急翻，半熟为度，生则黑矣。旁扇祛热，乃免黄褐。

²⁵⁸ Ibid. 掀出磁盘，尤须急扇，乃重揉之。

²⁵⁹ Ibid. 带润覆之，则气罨鬱，更一焙焉，待冷上霜。

²⁶⁰ Ibid. 优劣定于始铛，清浊系乎末火，确矣。

It was the time-consuming and complicated procedure that made Songluo tea one of the most expensive teas in the market, as Xie Zhaozhe observed during his trip.²⁶¹ The high cost and rarity of Songluo tea were a double-edged sword to the development of tea. On the one hand, its price and rarity represented its quality, taste, and tea makers' efforts during the production. Moreover, active Huizhou tea merchants played significant roles in the promotion of Songluo tea. They delivered Songluo tea from Shexian county to Hangzhou through waterways. Xin'an River, which connected the Huizhou area and Zhejiang, provided a comparatively convenient and inexpensive way for tea merchants to bring goods to Hangzhou, the southern end of the Grand Canal.²⁶² To scholar-official tea connoisseurs in the lower-Yangzi delta, Songluo tea meant more than just its taste. As a luxury good, Songluo tea was able to fit the need for conspicuous consumption, like all other famous tea. At the same time, tasting Songluo tea was the moment at which tea connoisseurs could demonstrate their cultivations and sensibilities to their companions or even a wider range of audiences. Their activities and writings promoted the reputation of Songluo tea to a new level.

On the other hand, due to the high cost of Songluo tea, forgers rushed into the market so that they could gain huge benefits through producing fake Songluo tea. Many scholar-official tea connoisseurs had expressed a similar concern in their essays that "the genuine Songluo tea was hard to obtain."²⁶³ The issue of authenticity bothered many tea

²⁶¹Xie, "Wu za zu," 323. 功力烦矣，宜其价之高也。

²⁶² See Map 2.1.

²⁶³ Anonymous, "Sui jian lu" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 363. 其松萝真品，殊不易得。

connoisseurs. Around the 1610s, Huang Longde (?-?) who was an active tea connoisseur during the late-Ming era, noticed that the phenomenon of fakery seemed to be unstoppable in the tea market.²⁶⁴ Since every type of genuine famous tea was only produced from a few tea trees, as Huang as explained, it was not easy to acquire from the market.²⁶⁵ The tea produced in Zhejiang but with a lower quality was usually labeled as Huqiu and Tianchi tea.²⁶⁶ Meanwhile, the tea from Xuanzhou and Chizhou (in modern Anhui Province) was sold under the name of Songluo.²⁶⁷ Decades later, Zhao Jishi (1628-1706), from Xiuning County, pointed out that Beiyuan tea, produced in a nearby area, was labeled as Songluo tea as well.²⁶⁸ These fake teas, according to Huang, deserved no appreciation.²⁶⁹ Huang informed his readers that if the color of tea turned dark not long after it was brewed, this tea must not be genuine. It was certainly a fake tea which came from Xuanzhou and Chizhou.²⁷⁰ Huang suggested that observing the change in color was an easy but a necessary step to differentiate genuine tea from the fake.²⁷¹

These fake Songluo teas, which were produced in nearby areas, later also became part of Songluo tea, in a broader sense. The price of Songluo tea, therefore, declined. A

²⁶⁴ Huang Longde “Cha shuo” in *Zhongguo gu dai cha dao mi ben wu shi zhong* (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 528.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 僅僅數株，然不能多得。

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 其余杭浙等產，皆冒虎丘天池之名

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 宣池等產，盡假松蘿之號。

²⁶⁸ Beiyuan was in Shexian County. Zhao Jishi, “Ji yuan ji suo ji” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 353. 松萝茶擅名天下，实则唯山顶一片。香甘异他产，余皆北源茶冒名松萝者也。

²⁶⁹ Huang, “Cha shuo,” 528. 此亂真之品，不足珍賞者也。

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 若泛時少頃而昏黑者，即為宣池偽品矣。

²⁷¹ *Ibid.* 試者不可不辨。

scholar named Ye Mengzhu (1624-?), who experienced the dynastic transition, recorded the price change of Songluo tea. At the beginning of the Shunzhi Reign (1644-1661), tea under the name of Songluo was still considered a type of high-end fine tea, and the cost of each *jin* was around a tael of silver. Later, it fell to eight *qian* or even five *qian*.²⁷² At the end of the seventeenth century, as Ye observed, even the top-rank Songluo tea was only worth two or three *qian*.²⁷³ Both Huang Longde and Ye expressed their sorrow for the decline of Songluo tea from a famous tea on the top of connoisseurs' lists to a comparatively inexpensive and common one. However, scholar-official tea connoisseurs, who participated in the promotion of Songluo tea in the early stage of its development, were no longer leaders in its marketing, since there were more and more tea farmers, producers, merchants, and consumers involved in chasing profits.

Compared to the scenario in the late-Ming period, the popularity of Songluo tea rose beyond the circle of scholar-official tea connoisseurs after the dynastic change. The famous late-Ming tea connoisseurs Dong Qichang (1555-1636) and Yuan Hongdao recorded their stories with Songluo tea. For both, authentic Songluo tea was not easy to acquire from the market, so they considered it precious if they received it as a gift from their friends. Moreover, the moment of consuming Songluo tea was worth mentioning. In a text created for his painting entitled *Xiao Chibi* (The Little Red Cliff), Dong Qichang recorded a gathering with his friends at Lu Junce's villa named Ji Shu (The Irregular

²⁷² 1 *liang* = 10 *qian* (mace). Ye Mengzhu, "Yue shi bian" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 355. 顺治初，每斤价一两，后减至八钱，五、六钱。

²⁷³ *Ibid.* 今上好者，不过二、三钱。

Villa), which was located in Songjiang Prefecture. A friend of Dong named Zhang Yiyuan, who originally came from Mount Baiyue (in the modern Xiuning County of Anhui Province), visited the villa and brought Songluo tea from his hometown for this gathering. After playing games, they drank Songluo tea and some wine. They were all happy with the fact that there were no vulgar people in sight. At the end of the gathering, Lu, the host of the gathering, required Dong to paint on the theme of the Little Red Cliff. Not only did he finish the painting, Dong also wrote this poem to memorialize this gathering, during which they could enjoy and share the taste of Songluo tea.²⁷⁴ In a poem, Yuan Hongdao also recorded the experience of consuming Songluo tea when he was visiting his younger brother Yuan Zhongdao (zi Xiaoxiu, 1570-1626). In the Hall of Jinglü (Pure Green), they had a tea gathering for tasting Songluo tea, a gift brought by a guest from Suzhou. Yuan commented that making and drinking Songluo tea could wash away all the dust and refresh the mind of a poet.²⁷⁵ Both cases suggested the value of Songluo tea and its meaning to scholar-official tea connoisseurs.

Unlike Luojie tea, which disappeared from the market after the Ming-Qing dynastic transition, Songluo tea remained visible in tea markets during the Qing Dynasty.

²⁷⁴ Dong Qichang, "Ti hua xiao chi bi tu" in *Tai rong shi ji* (the Chongzhen Edition), the *Siku* Edition. 題畫小赤壁圖（有序）吾松有小赤壁，與黃州赤壁大小實相埒，不知何事辱之為小，沈徵士繪圖為茲山解嘲。雨中過君策齋頭，君策方以吳綃點綴泉石，有張子淵自白岳至，携松蘿茶與畸墅，鬪勝，君策呼酒佐之，永日無俗子面目，君策強余畫，為畫此圖并書赤壁詩，詩書畫皆君策和之。

²⁷⁵ Yuan Hongdao, "Yue xia guo xiao xiu jing lü tang, shi Wu ke suo xiang Songluo cha" in *Xiao bi tang ji* (the Wanli edition), the *Siku* Edition. 《瀟碧堂集（明萬曆刻本）》月下過小修淨綠堂，試吳客所餉鬆蘿茶 碧芽拈試火前新，洗却詩腸數斗塵。江水又逢真陸羽，吳瓶重瀉舊翁春。和雲題去連篔葉，與月同來醉道人。竹影一堂修碧冷，乳花浮動雪鱗鱗。

However, its role had drastically changed. Songluo tea often appeared in different genres of Qing literature, such as drama, novel, and medicine. For instance, in a scene of *Xue Yue Mei* (*The First Talented Woman*), a romance novel written in 1775, Songluo tea functioned as a payment to hire a boatman when traveling.²⁷⁶ A Qing script of Kun Opera entitled *Zhui Baiqiu* (*The Patched White Fur Cloak*), which was published in the 1770s, also mentioned Songluo tea. When a young wife's mother and mother-in-law met, they began their conversation on the topic of tea. The mother-in-law treated the mother, who was visiting her daughter, with Songluo tea. With a rural background, the mother failed to understand the taste of Songluo tea and simply commented that it was "too bitter."²⁷⁷ The mother-in-law was shocked and asked for her preference. "What we usually drink is called 'Man tian fei (to fly around everywhere),' " the mother answered. She further explained, "that is throwing a handful of tea leaves into a cup. When the boiling water is poured into the cup, tea leaves begin to fly everywhere. This is why we call it 'Man tian fei.'"²⁷⁸ These texts created in the 1770s implied that Songluo tea had frequently appeared in commoners' daily life. Even though it became more accessible in the market, tea consumers valued it and used it seriously.

The medical functions of tea were recognized from the beginning; however, the medical use of Songluo tea had not been discovered and practiced until the mid-19th

²⁷⁶ Chen Lang, *Xue Yue Mei* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1994), 82.

²⁷⁷ Qian Decang, *Zhui bai qiu liu ji Vol. 3* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2005), 184. 苦巴巴的，我們鄉裏却不吃這種茶。

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 185. 把茶葉抓一把，攔在缸子裏，燒了一鍋滾水，一冲冲將下去，那茶葉就飛起來了。這就叫做滿天飛。

century. The new function of Songluo tea was another indication of its popularity among commoners. Medical books such as *Leng Lu Yi Hua* (Medical Talks in a Cold Mansion, 1858) and *Lei Zheng Zhi Cai* (Classified Treatments and Syndrome Differentiation, 1839) both included prescriptions containing Songluo tea. In these prescriptions, Songluo tea was used as an important ingredient to heal ulcers or hematochezia.²⁷⁹ Songluo's function of detoxification was legitimated by doctors in medical books. This was another implication that its consumers were no longer limited to the elite class anymore.

Furthermore, through most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Songluo tea was one of the most important types of tea traded in the international market, along with other global commodities such as South Asian opium, Caribbean sugar, and British textiles.²⁸⁰ Songluo tea was also called Singlo in English. In this global context of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the definition of Songluo tea had already become

²⁷⁹ The use of Songluo tea in healing hematochezia is recorded in *Lei Zheng Zhi Cai*. Lin Peiqin, *Lei Zheng Zhi Cai*, the *Xuxiu Siku* edition. 《便血论治·肠风 脏毒附》若未止，用劉寄奴五錢，松蘿茶一錢，烏梅肉一枚，煎服效。The use of Songluo tea in healing ulcers is recorded in *Leng Lu Yi Hua*. Lu Yitian, *Leng Lu Yi Hua Vol. 5*, Chong ding Cao shi yi xue da cheng ben, 9. 《質直談耳》載舊青浦鎮瘍醫陳天士，名馳四方，就醫者日不下數十人，其藥最秘者手治之，歲久毒氣熏灸，晚年中拇間生惡疽，知不可療，聞南去百五十里地名潭中，有一叟精於針砭，恆自晦不欲以術自鳴，即易姓名，疾赴其所乞治之，叟曰：此藥毒也。君殆知醫，向之中惡深矣，不發則已，發必難治非者力所及也。盍往質問陳天士乎？天士大恐，速歸，疽遂潰，神昏而歿。余謂陳雖能醫，技猶未精也。《秋鐙叢話》云：北賈貿易江南，喜食豬首，兼數人之量，有精於岐黃者見之，向其僕曰：每餐如是，已十有餘年矣。醫者云：病將作，凡藥不能治也。俟其歸，尾之北上，將以為奇貨。久之無恙，復細詢其僕曰：主人食後必滿飲松蘿茶數甌。醫爽然曰：此毒惟松蘿可解。悵然而返。使陳能如此賈之豫為防，何致成不治之症乎？

²⁸⁰ Andrew B. Liu, "Incense and Industry: Labour and Capital in the Tea Districts of Huizhou, China," *Past and Present*, Volume 230, Issue 1, 2016, 161–195: 164.

different from the famous and high-end tea that was consumed and complimented by scholar-official tea connoisseurs. Songluo tea was representing the type of tea that modeled after the Songluo style when the price for Songluo tea rose sharply during the eighteenth century.²⁸¹ Families across Huizhou began to harvest and sell this type of tea. Moreover, active Huizhou merchants entered the Canton tea trade in the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁸² They opened tea shops in Huizhou, where they bought leaves from local peasants, refined and sifted them in their makeshift workshops, and took them to Canton to be sold overseas.²⁸³ Songluo tea was a representative green tea in the global market; however, its price kept falling as the tea production for the global market was gradually transmitted to colonial South Asia by the 1880s.²⁸⁴

From one of the finest teas and a luxury product consumed and promoted by scholar-official tea connoisseurs to a daily consumer good in China's domestic market and a declining green tea in the global market, the route that Songluo tea experienced was a complicated process, which was influenced by many forces, including commercialization, technological improvements, and the demands of the global market.

The Legacy of the Songluo Method

Along with the spread of Songluo tea, the Songluo method received more and more attention since the late-Ming period. Scholar-official tea connoisseurs were interested in

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 164.

the method and recorded it in their literary works. Moreover, the techniques went beyond Shexian County and nearby places in Huizhou and expanded to other provinces, in which tea producers adopted the Songluo method to upgrade their techniques so as to improve the quality of their tea.

Zhang Dai, the active late-Ming tea connoisseur, recorded the influence of the Songluo method on his daily practice. It was from a vignette entitled “Snow Orchid Tea (Lanxue cha)” written during the mid-seventeenth century. Zhang, a resident of the Jiangnan region, described a story that happened between him and his third uncle named Zhang Bingfang (*zi Jiu’e*). Rizhu tea, a type of tea originating in Zhang’s hometown Shaoxing, had been considered one of the best teas since the Tang Dynasty. However, during the late-Ming period, Rizhu tea had lost its attraction in the eyes of tea merchants and consumers due to the prevalence of Songluo and other famous teas. Rizhu tea was no longer a desirable tea; therefore, tea merchants could not bring enough benefits to Shaoxing’s local tea producers.²⁸⁵ To revive the glory of this product, Zhang and his uncle intended to improve the taste of Rizhu tea. As a tea expert, Zhang’s uncle knew well about the method of making Songluo tea. He practiced every step of this method on local tea leaves and the result turned out to be exceptional.²⁸⁶ Therefore, they recruited

²⁸⁵ Zhang Dai, “Lan xue cha” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 336. 日铸者，越王铸剑之地也。茶味棱棱，有金石之气。欧阳永叔曰：“两浙之茶，日铸第一。”王龟龄曰：“龙山瑞草，日铸雪芽。”日铸名起此。京师茶客，有茶则至，意不在雪芽也，而雪芽利之，一如京茶式，不敢独异。

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 三娥叔知松萝焙法，取瑞草试之，香扑冽。杓法、掐法、挪法、撒法、扇法、炒法、焙法、藏法，一如松萝。他泉瀹之。

some tea producers from Shexian County of the Huizhou Prefecture, in which Songluo tea was originated and developed, and introduced them to Rizhu.²⁸⁷

The quality of new Rizhu tea was so good that the uncle and the nephew explored a wide range of possibilities to maximize its taste and aroma. For instance, after testing a number of water sources, they found that only the spring water from the Speckled Bamboo Shrine (Banzhu an) was able to bring out the richest aromas.²⁸⁸ “When the tea was prepared in the finest of white porcelain, the color of the brew—the purest and the palest of greens—was incomparable.”²⁸⁹ The two men then debated about whether to add jasmine petals to the tea leaves. Finally, they both agreed that adding the freshly boiled water to a little of the same water that had been allowed to cool in the same pot was the perfect method: watching the leaves stretch and unfold was like “seeing one hundred white orchid flowers open their petals in a wave of snow,” and so it was that they named their discovery Snow Orchid tea.²⁹⁰

Zhang Dai did some experimentation to expand the potential of Snow Orchid tea. He blended four cups of the tea with milk and boiled them for a long period in a bronze pot

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 337. 遂募歙人入日铸。

²⁸⁸ Ibid. 他泉瀹之，香气不出，煮襖泉，投以小罐，则香太浓郁。

²⁸⁹ Ibid. 以旋滚汤冲泻之，色如竹箨方解，绿粉初匀；又如山窗初曙，透纸黎光。取清妃白，倾向素瓷。Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 18.

²⁹⁰ Zhang, “Lan xue cha”, 337. 真如百茎素兰同雪涛并泻也。Translated by Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 18.

until the mixture became sticky and thick, “like liquid jade or pearls.”²⁹¹ When chilled, the flavor and aroma were to Zhang “sumptuous as snow,” delicate as the scent of orchids, “silky as the hoar frost.”²⁹² Other experiments with the Snow Orchid tea included mixing with local wine and then steaming in earthenware, mixing with soybean flour and letting it ferment, and simmering with sugar cane and molding into delicate conch-shell shape. Zhang cherished these recipes so much that he kept them under lock and key, and they were “not lightly to be passed on even from father to son.”²⁹³

Around 1620, within five years after the appearance of Snow Orchid tea, it had ousted its rivals from the connoisseurs’ circles, according to Zhang Dai.²⁹⁴ In Zhang’s narrative, it replaced Songluo tea and became one of the most popular types of tea in the market of Zhejiang. Those dilettante tea consumers did not value Songluo anymore but had switched their attention to Snow Orchid tea. Two consequences of this change were, on the one hand, the price of Songluo tea declined; on the other hand, the price of Snow

²⁹¹ Zhang Dai, “Ru lao” in *Tao an meng yi* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she,1982), 34. 余自豨一牛，夜取乳置盆盎，比晓，乳花簇起尺许，用铜铛煮之，淪兰雪汁，乳斤和汁四瓯，百沸之。

Translated by Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 18-9.

²⁹² Ibid. 玉液珠胶，雪映霜膩，吹气胜兰，沁入肺腑，自是天供。Translated by Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 18.

²⁹³ Ibid., 35. 或用鹤觞花露入甌蒸之，以热妙；或用豆粉搀和，漉之成腐，以冷妙；或煎酥，或作皮，或缚饼，或酒凝，或盐腌，或醋捉，无不佳妙。而苏州过小拙和以蔗浆霜，熬之、滤之、钻之、掇之、印之，为带骨鲍螺，天下称至味。其制法秘甚，锁密房，以纸封固，虽父子不轻传之。Translated by Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 19.

²⁹⁴ Zhang, “Lan xue cha,” 337. 四五年后，“兰雪茶”一哄如市焉。Translated by Spence. Spence, *Return to Dragon Mountain*, 19.

Orchid tea rocketed.²⁹⁵ But it was not long before unscrupulous businessmen began to market inferior teas under the Snow Orchid brand name, and those who drank it seemed not to know they were being gulled.²⁹⁶ Zhang was surprised to see that even some tea producers in Shexian County began to label their own products “Snow Orchid tea.”²⁹⁷ Zhang Dai’s nostalgic description of Snow Orchid tea possibly exaggerated the influence of Snow Orchid tea, because this tea barely made an appearance in the writings of other contemporary tea connoisseurs. However, it is still interesting to see that the Songluo method became an important piece of knowledge in the minds of scholar-official tea connoisseurs. For them, it was necessary to spend time on acquiring the knowledge of tea production. Moreover, they were not satisfied with the theoretical understanding the technology, but also would practice and conduct experiments based on the knowledge.

Tea producers outside of Huizhou were also eager to improve the quality of their teas so that they could survive in the marketplace and stand out from these competitors. From the late-Ming to early-Qing period, scholar-official tea connoisseurs helped pass on the Songluo method to other provinces, where tea grew more plentifully. Two officials who made significant contribution were Long Ying (1560-1622) and Yin Yingyin (?-1700).

Long Ying, originally from Wuling County of Huguang Province (in modern Hunan Province), received his *jinshi* degree in 1580, the eighth year of the Wanli reign.²⁹⁸ Long soon began to fulfill his duty in Shexian County after he received the *jinshi* degree. He

²⁹⁵ Zhang, “Lan xue cha,” 337. 越之好事者不食松萝，止食兰雪。

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.* 兰雪则食，以松萝而纂兰雪者亦食，盖松萝贬声价俯就兰雪，从俗也。

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.* 乃近日徽歙间松萝亦名兰雪，向以松萝名者，封面系换，则又奇矣。

²⁹⁸ Zhu Baojong, *Ming Qing jinshi ti ming bei lu suo yin* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1980), 2562.

became a friend of Wang Daokun (1525-1593), a cultural hero of Shexian County, and joined a literary society named Baiyu (White Elm), which was initiated by Wang in 1583.²⁹⁹ Through Wang, Long was able to socialize with some famous tea connoisseurs, such as Wang Shizhen, Tu Long, and Xu Maowu. Long stayed in Shexian County until 1586. Within these years, he noticed how exquisite the Songluo tea was and became interested in the production of Songluo tea. He used to visit Mount Songluo, where he had a chance to observe and study the production of Songluo tea from monks.³⁰⁰ Long understood that it was the way of processing that distinguished Songluo tea from other teas; therefore, the adoption of the same procedure could significantly improve the quality of other teas. Three decades later, in the 1610s, Long composed a postscript for Luo Lin's book entitled *Cha Jie*, in which he recorded his story of promoting the Songluo method in his hometown. Long's brother, who owned a tea plantation, still processed tea through steaming, which was similar to the way of processing Luo jie tea.³⁰¹ According to Long, tea producers in his hometown did not even know the way of pan-frying; therefore,

²⁹⁹ Wu Guanghui, "Long Ying can yu wan Ming jie she huo dong kao lun," *Zhongguo wen xue yan jiu*, Vol.1, 2013: 47-51, 48.

³⁰⁰ Long Ying, "Meng shi" in *Cha ban shu xiang* (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ban she, 2001), 240. 今时茶法甚精，虎丘、罗芥、天池、顾渚、松萝、龙井、雁荡、武夷、灵山、大盘、日铸诸茶为最胜，皆陆经所不载者。乃知灵草在在有之，但人不知培植，或疏于制法耳。……松萝茶，出休宁松萝山，僧大方所创造。予理新安时，入松萝亲见之，为书《茶僧卷》。其制法，用铛摩擦光净，以干松枝为薪，炊热候微炙手，将嫩叶一握置铛中，札札有声，急手炒匀，出之箕上。箕用细篾为之，薄摊箕内，用扇搨冷，略加揉揅。再略炒，另入文火铛焙干，色如翡翠。

³⁰¹ Long Ying, "Cha jie ba" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 169. 所产茶，实用蒸法如芥茶，弗知有炒焙揉揅之法。

he began to teach local tea makers the Songluo method.³⁰² Long did not mention whether his promotion was a success; however, he and his friends were enthusiastic to practice the Songluo method in Wuling by themselves. Long was satisfied with the result that the final product tasted just like Songluo tea.³⁰³

If Long Ying promoted the Songluo method for his own interest and preference, Yin Yingyin promoted it for the purpose of improving the quality and taste of tea produced in Mount Wuyishan (in the modern Fujian Province). Fujian, in general, was a traditional tea producing area specializing in the production of cake tea.³⁰⁴ During the Song Dynasty, cake tea from Fujian was considered the best among all tribute teas.³⁰⁵ However, during the late-Ming period, local tea producers did not follow the trendy method of pan-frying but still insisted on steaming. When traveling in Mount Wuyishan, Wu Shi (?-1642), a tea expert from Xiuning of Huizhou, indicated that this way of tea processing was too outdated. Wu further commented, “that is because they do not understand the new technique of pan-frying, and they pay more attention to the quantity and chasing profits.”³⁰⁶ Without a decent tea to drink during the journey, he picked some tea leaves and processed them through the Songluo method by himself.³⁰⁷ Wu’s practice

³⁰² Ibid. 归而传其法。

³⁰³ Ibid. 上有茶数株，翳丛薄中，高君手撷其芽数升，旋沃山庄铛，炊松茅活火，且炒且揉，得数合。余命童子汲溪流烹之，洗盏细啜，色白而香，仿佛松萝等。

³⁰⁴ Sun, *Tang Song cha ye jing ji*, 68.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 129. Wu Shi, “Wu yi za ji” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 336. 武夷茶赏自蔡君谟，始谓其味过于北苑龙团。

³⁰⁶ Wu, “Wu yi za ji,” 336. 盖缘山中不晓制焙法，一味计多徇利之过也。

³⁰⁷ Ibid. 余试采少许，制以松萝法，汲虎啸岩下语儿泉，烹之，三德具备。

demonstrated that it was possible to process local tea leaves through the Songluo method and still attain good results. However, Wu did not promote the Songluo method in Fujian systematically. After Wu, several attempts were initiated by local tea producers, who tried to imitate the Songluo method; however, it was difficult to keep the quality stable.³⁰⁸ No significant technical improvement was made until the arrival of Yin Yingyin (?-1700), a fellow-townsmen of Wu Shi. Yin was assigned to be the magistrate of Chong'an County (in modern Fujian Province) in 1652, the ninth year of the Shunzhi Reign.³⁰⁹ During his service, Yin attempted to improve the techniques of tea processing. He invited monks who produced tea in Mount Huangshan (located in Shexian County), to help with the transformation of technique.³¹⁰ This project aimed to maximize the fragrance and taste of local tea leaves through the adoption of the Songluo method. Furthermore, tea makers in Chong'an followed their counterparts in Huizhou to pack tea in small tin cans.³¹¹ Yin's experimentation was a great success, according to Zhou Lianggong (1612-1672), who once received a few ounces of tea from Yin and valued it as a treasure.³¹² Yin's effort was widely recognized by other tea connoisseurs in the early eighteenth century. Wu Chenchen (1664-?) believed that the tea was not very different from Songluo

³⁰⁸ Wu Chenchen, "Min you ou ji" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 360. 僧拙于焙，既采，则先蒸而后焙，故色多紫赤。盖制茶者，仍係土著僧人耳。

³⁰⁹ Zheng Fengren, *Chong'an xian xin zhi* (Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1975), 234.

³¹⁰ Wu, "Min you ou ji," 360. 近有人招黄山僧，用松萝法制之。

³¹¹ Zhou Lianggong, "Min xiao ji" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 343. 一时学新安，制为方圆锡具，遂觉神采奕奕。

³¹² *Ibid.* 今年余分得数两，甚珍重之。

tea, just with a stronger fragrance. Therefore, tea drinkers often called it Wuyi Songluo tea.³¹³

The emergence and spread of the Songluo method not only brought Huizhou into the scene of tea connoisseurship for the first time, but also significantly influenced the production and taste of loose tea. Since the Songluo method could retain the true flavor and enhance the fragrance of tea, it helped improve the quality of loose tea in general. Once the tea market was invaded by this sensational new product, tea consumers were brought to a new level of tea tasting. To survive in the tea market, tea makers had to adjust the way of tea processing so as to fit the new requirements of consumers.

Longjing Tea

The Emergence of Longjing Tea in the late-Ming Dynasty

Longjing tea was produced in the range of Mount Fenghuang (Mount Phoenix) in the city of Hangzhou (in the modern Hangzhou of Zhejiang Province). Longjing (Dragon Well), also known as Longhong (Dragon Pool), originally referred to a famous fresh water spring that nourished the nearby tea plantation. However, prior to the Ming Dynasty, not only tea from Mount Fenghuang, but also tea produced in the Hangzhou region in general, had not played a significant role in the tea market. In *The Classic of Tea*, Lu Yu suggested that monks from Lingyin (Soul's Retreat) Monastery and Tianzhu Monastery participated in the production of tea during the Tang Dynasty; however, the quality of tea

³¹³ Wu, "Min you ou ji," 360. 与松萝无异，香味似反胜之，时有武夷松萝之称 ”。

was ranked lower than the tea from neighboring Huzhou where the top-rank tribute tea was produced.³¹⁴ When cake tea was favored by the imperial family during the Northern and Southern Song dynasties, loose tea, which was mostly produced in Liangzhe (Two Zhe) Circuit, was in general not highly valued by drinkers from the elite class or systematically recorded by tea connoisseurs.³¹⁵ During his service in Hangzhou, Su Shi noticed that “under the Mount Baiyu (White Cloud), there are new tea sprouts growing.”³¹⁶ Mount Baiyun was where Tianzhu Monastery was located, and Baiyun tea was of the most famous teas produced in this Southern Song capital.³¹⁷ Su’s description also implied that the Dragon Well was not the center of tea production in the Song period. The Dragon Well had not been connected to the production and consumption of tea until the Yuan Dynasty. Yu Ji (1272-1348), one of the greatest poets in the Yuan Dynasty, recorded one of his trips around the Dragon Well in his poem, in which he said: “[We] brewed these golden sprouts, none of which were picked after the day of Grain

³¹⁴ Lu Yu, “Cha jing” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 17. 浙西以湖州上，常州次，宣州，杭州，睦州，歙州下。杭州临安、于潜二县。钱塘生天竺、灵隐二寺。

³¹⁵ Liangzhe Circuit (997–1160s) was one of the major circuits during the Song dynasty (960–1279). Its administrative area corresponds roughly to modern Zhejiang, Shanghai, and southern Jiangsu (the portion east of Changzhou, between Lake Tai and the Yangtze). According to Ouyang Xiu, a Northern-Song-Dynasty scholar-official tea connoisseur, Liangzhe Circuit was where most loose tea (Cao cha) was produced and flourishing. He listed some of their names, such as Rizhu and Shuangjing. Ouyang Xiu, “Guo tian lu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 236. 草茶盛于两浙。洪州双井白芽渐盛。其品远出日注上，遂为草茶第一。

³¹⁶ Qian Shuoyou, *Xian chun Lin’an zhi* (Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1970), 556. 东坡诗云：白云峰下两枪新。

³¹⁷ Wu Zimu, “Meng liang lu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 281. 物产：宝云茶、香林茶、白云茶，又宝严院垂云亭亦产。

Rain (Guyu).”³¹⁸ Even though the name of Longjing tea was not yet used at this time, the time of picking tea leaves and the color of tea both suggested that Yu was consuming a type of tea which was quite similar to Longjing tea.

In the late-Ming Dynasty, the tea produced in the Dragon Well region began to attract attention from Hangzhou officials. “A product from the Dragon Well Region” was the name that local officials and tea connoisseurs often used. In *the Gazetteer of Qiantang County* edited in the early seventeenth century, the concept of “a product from the Dragon Well” was officially recorded as a “local product” for the first time by a local scholar. Yu Chunxi (1553-1621), who received his *jinsshi* degree in 1583 and was the author of the gazetteer, summarized: “the tea produced in the Region of Dragon Well retained a fragrance of soybean flower. It was green in color, and its taste was described as sweet and delicious. It is different from teas produced in other mountains.”³¹⁹

However, when we compare this early-seventeenth-century text with an earlier text, we can clearly see how the understanding of tea production in Zhejiang had changed. The earlier text was *The Gazetteer of Zhejiang*, a provincial gazetteer published in the fortieth year of Jiajing Reign (1561). In the chapter on “Local Products,” the author Xue Yingqi (1500-1575) summarized famous teas produced in Zhejiang, such as Guzhu tea and

³¹⁸ Yu Ji, “Ci yun Deng Shanzhi you shan zhong” in *Dao yuan yi gao*, the *Siku* Edition, 15b-16a. 徘徊龙井上，云气起晴画。澄公爱客至，取水挹幽窦。坐我詹卜中，余香不闻嗅。但见瓢中清，翠影落群岫。烹煎黄金芽，不取谷雨后。同来二三子，三咽不忍漱。

³¹⁹ Yu Chunxi, *Wanli Qian tang xian zhi* (Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1975), 95. 茶出老龙井者作豆花香，色青味甘，与他山异。

Rizhu tea, without mentioning any product from the Longjing Region.³²⁰ This change suggested that the reputation of tea produced in the Dragon Well Region began to build up after the 1560s. Nevertheless, within three decades, it had become an important local product. In *the Gazetteer of Zhejiang* published in 1736, the first year of the Qianlong Reign, the concept of “Longjing tea” was defined for the first time in a provincial gazetteer. Shen Yiji, who got the *jinshi* degree in 1706, listed “Longjing tea” in the category of “local product.”³²¹ He further indicated that, in terms of quality and taste, other teas produced in Zhejiang were not able to compete with tea produced around the Dragon Well.³²² The most precious tea from the Dragon Well Region was produced by rare tender buds that were only picked before the day of Grain Rain.³²³ The output of this precious tea was therefore limited, Shen concluded.³²⁴ Shen’s statement was an indication that “a product from the Dragon Well Region” had become an independent category of tea in the tea market in the early-eighteenth century, and it was not considered a by-product of the famous spring anymore.

However, late-Ming tea connoisseurs were still enthusiastically discussing the connection between the quality and taste of tea and this precious water source. They agreed that the high quality of spring water contributed significantly to the greatness of tea produced in this area. For example, the renowned local tea connoisseur Tian Yiheng

³²⁰ Xue Yingqi, *Jiajing Zhejiang tong zhi* (Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian, 1990), 923-4.

³²¹ Zhu, *Ming Qing jinshi ti ming bei lu suo yin*, 2677.

³²² Shen Yiji, *Zhejiang tong zhi* (Taipei: Hua wen shu ju, 1967), 1693. 杭郡諸茶總不及龍井之產。

³²³ *Ibid.* 雨前細芽取其一旗一槍尤為珍品。

³²⁴ *Ibid.* 所產不多宜其矜貴也。

explained the relationship between the finest spring water and the best tea: “Of all the springs in Wulin, only Longhong is worthy of selection; as for tea also, that of Mount Longhong is the best.”³²⁵ Tian was knowledgeable in the history of tea and he claimed to understand every famous tea produced in Zhejiang that was mentioned in tea literature from the past dynasties.³²⁶ He used to imagine the flavor of Guzhu tea through reading a poem by Yao Gongshou, in which Yao (1423-1495) expressed his sorrow for the decline of the best tribute tea of the Tang Dynasty. He blamed Lu Yu for lacking the understanding of Longjing tea and ranking tea produced in Hangzhou the lowest among many other places. He also tried Baiyun, Baolin, and Xianglin tea, all of which were popular during the Song Dynasty.³²⁷ However, he found that few could compete with Longjing tea, not only because of the tea itself, but also because of the quality of spring water.³²⁸ This combination of tea and spring water was peerless, according to Tian.³²⁹ For another example, expert connoisseur Tu Long, a major proponent of the incorporation of the Buddhist practice into scholar-officials’ daily life, also noticed the influence of spring water on the quality of tea. He stated, “it was probably because heaven opened up this

³²⁵ Tian Yiheng, “Zhu quan xiao pin” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 129. 武林諸泉惟龍泓入品，而茶亦惟龍泓山為最。Translated by Benn. Benn, *Tea in China*, 174.

³²⁶ Tian, “Zhu quan xiao pin,” 129. 余尝一一试之。

³²⁷ *Ibid.* 姚公綬诗，品尝顾渚风斯下，零落茶经奈尔何，则风味可知矣。鸿渐第钱塘天竺灵隐为下品，当未识此尔。。

³²⁸ *Ibid.* 而郡志亦只称白云、香林、白云诸茶，皆未若龙泓之清馥隽永也。

³²⁹ *Ibid.* 茶泉双绝，两浙罕伍云。

beautiful spring, the spirit of the mountain specifically created this fine tea to accompany the spring.”³³⁰

Benefitting from the spring, Longjing tea gained a natural advantage compared to other teas; however, tea producers still put in a lot of effort and intelligence to successfully transform tea leaves to a type of exquisite tea. To achieve such fineness, tea producers paid special attention to two steps. The first step was to control the quality of tea leaves. Timing played an important role in the creation of quality. To produce Longjing tea with the highest quality and guarantee the tenderness of buds, tea pickers needed to finish tea picking before the day of Grain Rain.³³¹ This theory of timing was not new to tea production. For example, Lu Yu suggested to pick tea leaves during the second, the third, and the fourth month in a year.³³² During the Yuan Dynasty, Wang Zhen (1290-1333), the author of a comprehensive record of Chinese agriculture entitled *Nong Shu*, had claimed that “it is the best to pick early-season tea leaves.”³³³ Wang’s definition of “early” referred to the days prior to the Qingming Festival or the day of Grain Rain.³³⁴ The best Longjing tea leaves were usually picked previous to the day of Grain Rain, due to the comparatively lower temperature in this area.³³⁵ After Grain Rain, tea buds and leaves would be overgrown and resulted in a taste which was “too

³³⁰ Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 323. 大抵天开龙泓美泉，山灵特生佳茗以副之耳。

³³¹ Shen, *Zhejiang tong zhi*, 1693. 雨前細芽取其一旗一槍尤為珍品。

³³² Lu, “Cha jing” in in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 3. 凡采茶，在二月、三月、四月之间。

³³³ Wang Zhen, “Nong shu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 284. 采之宜早。

³³⁴ *Ibid.* 率以清明谷雨前者为佳。过此不及。

³³⁵ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 159. 山中早寒，冬来多雪，故茶之萌芽较晚。

strong.”³³⁶ However, once tea leaves were picked before the Qingming Festival, their flavor was not strong enough.³³⁷ During the picking, tea pickers usually follow the standard of “Yi qi yi qiang,” which literally meant one tender bud and one leaf.³³⁸ Time of the selection distinguished Longjing tea from Songluo tea. The fineness of the former relied on the careful selection during the picking; meanwhile, the delicacy of the latter came from the accurate processing of picked tea leaves.

The second important step was pan-frying. Compared to the technique of steaming, the method of pan-frying was relatively new during the late-Ming Dynasty. Xu Cishu, an active Hangzhou-raised tea connoisseur, was knowledgeable in the way Longjing tea was processed. In his comprehensive guidance to tea production and consumption, Xu described the method of pan-frying in detail. After tea leaves were picked, tea producers needed to use the fire to let the fragrance of tea leaves diffuse.³³⁹ However, tea leaves were sensitive to the temperature of the fire. The process of pan-frying should not last long.³⁴⁰ Furthermore, tea makers should avoid pan-frying too much tea at once, because it was difficult to heat them evenly.³⁴¹ Once the tea leaves were placed in a pan and heated for too long, their fragrance would be lost, or they could be burnt.³⁴² All of these

³³⁶ Shen Changqing, “Shen shi ri dan” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 330. 太迟则味郁。

³³⁷ Xu Cishu, “Cha shu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 150. 清明太早，立夏太迟。谷雨前后，其时适中。……气力完足，香冽尤倍。

³³⁸ Luo Zhufeng, *Han yu da ci dian* (Shanghai: Han yu da ci dian chu ban she, 1994), 1372.

³³⁹ Xu, “Cha shu,” 151. 生茶初摘，香氣未透，必借火力以發其香。

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 然性不耐勞，炒不宜久。

³⁴¹ *Ibid.* 多取入鑪，則手力不勻。

³⁴² *Ibid.* 久於鑪中，過熟而香散矣。甚且枯焦。

activities would result in the waste of precious tea leaves. In terms of the tools of pan-frying, a pan made with new iron was a taboo. Once the tea leaves were penetrated by the smell of iron, the fragrance would disappear.³⁴³ In addition, grease was forbidden, since it was harmful to iron pans; furthermore, these pans should be used exclusively for tea.³⁴⁴ When tea leaves were prepared, they should be pan-fried as soon as possible. In each pan, four *liang* of tea leaves were allowed.³⁴⁵ Tea producers should heat with a mild fire to soften leaves at the beginning, then use intense fire to accelerate the process till these tea leaves were half-cooked.³⁴⁶ At this stage, the fragrance should be diffused. After the processed tea leaves were removed from the pan, tea makers should place them on a bamboo colander and use a fan to accelerate the airflow.³⁴⁷ In order to keep the product dry, tea makers should place a piece of cotton paper at the top of each bamboo colander.³⁴⁸ After the final products were cooled down, they were ready to be packed.³⁴⁹ In Xu's opinion, any small mistake in the process would result in a waste of all these carefully selected tea leaves. Therefore, Xu commented on the whole process, and called it "the hardest work."³⁵⁰

³⁴³ *Ibid.* 炒茶之器，最嫌新鐵。鐵腥一入，不復有香。

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.* 尤忌脂膩，害甚於鐵，須豫一取一鑪，專用炊飯。無得別作他用。

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 鑪必磨瑩旋摘炒。一鑪之內，僅容四兩。

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 先用文火焙軟，次加武火催之。手加木指。急急鈔轉，以半熟為度。

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 微俟香發，是其候矣。急用小扇鈔置被籠。

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 純綿大紙襯底燥焙積多。

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.* 候冷，入罐收藏。

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 蓋炒速而焙遲，燥濕不可相混，混則在減香力。一葉稍焦，全鑪無用。然火雖忌猛，尤嫌鑪冷，則枝葉不柔。以意消息，最難最難。

Tea producers' efforts were paid off as Longjing tea became one of the most popular teas among scholar-official tea connoisseurs in the last decade of the sixteenth century. In their preference lists, Longjing tea was paralleled with Luojie tea, Songluo tea, Tianchi tea, and Huqiu tea.³⁵¹ Tea connoisseurs praised Longjing tea on its fineness in processing.³⁵² Compared to three decades earlier, when Longjing tea was considered an attachment of the Dragon Well, the reputation of Longjing tea became more independent and even exceeded the fame of this water source. Moreover, Longjing tea was not only cherished by local tea connoisseurs of Hangzhou, but also by tea connoisseurs from other regions, especially drinkers from Suzhou, who were known for their interests in luxury goods. Xu Cishu noticed that consumers from Suzhou particularly valued Longjing tea, and they would offer extravagant prices for the finest tea that produced before the day of Grain Rain.³⁵³ However, Xu believed that their enthusiasm for Longjing tea originated from the custom of conspicuous consumption rather than a true understanding of its marvelousness.³⁵⁴

Fakery and the Development of Longjing Tea

As happened to Luojie tea and Songluo tea, the rocketing reputation and price of Longjing tea also engendered fakery. Authenticity, again, became an important word in

³⁵¹ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 158-9. Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 322-3.

³⁵² Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 323. Gao Lian, "Zun sheng ba jian" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 301. 炒法甚精。

³⁵³ Xu, "Cha shu," 150-1. 吴淞人极贵吾乡龙井，肯以重价购雨前细者。

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 151. 狃于故常，未解妙理。

the discourse of tea consumption. Both Gao Lian and Tu Long stated that the genuine Longjing tea was the one that Tianchi tea could not compete with.³⁵⁵ Gao was aware that only a few tea producers could actually manipulate the right method of pan-frying.³⁵⁶ Some Buddhist monks also participated in the production; however, the production of high-quality tea leaves was limited to the area around the Dragon Well, an area of no more than twenty *mu*.³⁵⁷ Even though producers from nearby regions all claimed their products as Longjing tea, the quality was not comparable with that of genuine tea. The increasing demand of Longjing tea in the market was largely fed by fake teas. Moreover, Gao observed that not only producers from nearby regions, but tea makers around the Mount Beishan (Northern Mountain) and Xixi (West Creek), which were distant from the Dragon Well, began to claim their products as Longjing tea.³⁵⁸ Longjing tea was the only tea from Hangzhou that attracted nationwide attention; however, in terms of the taste of the genuine tea, even local residents of Hangzhou were not familiar with its taste.³⁵⁹ At the beginning of the early-seventeenth century, the fake Longjing tea that was circulating in the market had already surpassed the authentic one, Gao concluded; therefore, more and more consumers were confused with the taste of genuine tea.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁵ Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 323. Gao Lian, “Zun sheng ba jian” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 301. 真者，天池不能及也。

³⁵⁶ Gao, *Zun sheng ba jian*, 301. 山中仅有一二家，炒法甚精。

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 近有山僧焙者亦妙。但出龙井者方妙。而龙井之山，不过十数亩。

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 外此有茶，似皆不及。附近假充，犹之可也，至于北山西溪，俱充龙井。

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 既杭人识龙井茶味者亦少。

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 以乱真多耳。

Gao Lian's concern over fake Longjing tea was shared by other Hangzhou-based tea connoisseurs. Tea connoisseurs who once tried the genuine Longjing tea were able to identify the authentic tea from the fake. Feng Mengzhen, one of Gao Lian's friends in Hangzhou, complained about the flooding of faking Longjing tea in his writing.³⁶¹ Feng, together with Xu Gui (*zi* Maowu), a native of Changzhou (in modern Jiangsu Province) but a resident of Hangzhou, went to the Dragon Well region and tried to find some good Longjing tea.³⁶² For Feng, Xu, who obtained the *jinshi* degree in the same session as Feng in 1577, was a trustworthy tea taster and qualified to appreciate the genuineness of Longjing tea.³⁶³ During the trip in the Dragon Well Region in 1600, they tried Longjing tea provided by more than ten villagers; however, all of them were identified as fake, according to Xu.³⁶⁴ Xu shared his experiences in tasting Longjing tea, and he summarized, "the genuine Longjing tea is sweet and fragrant without bringing a feeling of coldness."³⁶⁵ Later, these two men finally received a small package of tea, which was claimed to be the genuine tea. After trying this package of tea, Feng and Xu both appreciated its superb fragrance, and Xu confirmed its authenticity.³⁶⁶ However, villagers and monks who offered fake tea came around and criticized Xu for making a big

³⁶¹ Feng Mengzhen, "Kuai xue tang man lu" in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 311.

³⁶² *Ibid.* 昨同徐茂吴至老龙井买茶。

³⁶³ Zhu, *Ming Qing jinshi ti ming bei lu suo yin*, 2560.

³⁶⁴ Feng, "Kuai xue tang man lu," 311. 山民十数家各出茶，茂吴以次点试，皆以为贗。

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 曰真者甘香而不冽，稍冽便为诸山贗品。

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 得一、二两以为真物，试之，果甘香若兰。

mistake.³⁶⁷ Feng, without doubting Xu's ability, felt frustrated with the chaos in the tea market, and he complained, "how could fake products disturb the market like this!"³⁶⁸

Feng Mengzhen's writing not only discussed the flooding of fake Longjing tea, but also provided some interesting information about this tea. Compared to the producing areas of Luojie tea and Songluo tea, both of which were distant from the central residential area of scholar-official tea connoisseurs, the producing area of Longjing tea was next to the city of Hangzhou. Visiting the Dragon Well and the surrounding tea producing area was not difficult for travelers and Hangzhou residents. If the promotion of Songluo tea was finished by the cooperation between the Huizhou merchants and tea connoisseur consumers, the reputation of Longjing tea was raised with the help of a group of Hangzhou tea connoisseurs, through their activities and writings. Through Feng's dairy, we can find some details about this Hangzhou tea connoisseur community and its relationship with Longjing tea and the Dragon Well. This community included several authors of books about tea connoisseurship published in the late-Ming, such as Xu Cishu, Tian Yiheng, Tu Long, Gao Lian, as well as some famous and active tea connoisseurs at the time, such as Xu Maowu, Jiang Zigan, Zhang Zhongchu, Yao Bodao, and Li Rihua.³⁶⁹ Feng several times recorded tea gatherings with his friends and their drinking of Longjing tea. For example, in 1590, on the thirtieth day of the third month,

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 而山人及寺僧反以茂吴为非。

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 吾亦不能置辨，伪物乱真如此。

³⁶⁹ The interactions among these Hangzhou elites were studied by Livio Zanini in the paper exploring the life of Xu Cishu. Livio Zanini, "The Brush-rest and the Tea Stove: Xu Cishu's Biography," *Ming Qing Yan jiu*, 2002 (2004): 123-153, 132-3.

Feng said in his diary: “Rainy and cloudy in the morning, clear in the evening. Xu Ranming (Xu Cishu) returned from Shandong and came with Zhang Zhongchu to see me. We sat and chatted, and we tried Longjing tea prepared with water from the Huishan Spring.”³⁷⁰ In 1591, on the tenth day of the third month, Feng recorded: “Cloudy with rain. Xu Ranming and Zhang Zhongchu came by. Zhongchu gave me a packet of Longjing tea that we tried with water from the Huishan Spring.”³⁷¹

Beyond consuming Longjing tea at home, they often traveled to the Dragon Well to purchase tea. On the twenty-eighth day of the third month in 1591, Feng, Xu, and two of their friends met at the Dragon Well. Xu purchased several *jin* of tea, Feng recorded.³⁷² However, eight years later, when Feng went to the Dragon Well again with his friends in 1599, Feng noticed that “travelers are like ants, and they try to imitate in elegant ways.”³⁷³ Feng’s observation tells us that the Dragon Well region had become a popular destination for visitors. In addition, it explained Feng and Xu’s frustration when they tried to find some genuine Longjing tea here in 1600. Visitors came to the Dragon Well Region not only for the historical water source, but also with the purpose of consuming

³⁷⁰ Feng Mengzhen, *Kuai xue tang ri ji* (Nanjing: Feng huang chu ban she, 2010), 53. 三月三十。早雨，阴，晚晴。许然明自山东会，同张仲初来，留叙，烹惠泉龙井。Translate by Zanini. Zanini, “The Brush-rest and the Tea Stove,” 133.

³⁷¹ Feng, *Kuai xue tang ri ji*, 64. 三月初十，阴雨。许然明、张仲初来。仲初餽新龙井一包，试惠泉。Translate by Zanini. Zanini, “The Brush-rest and the Tea Stove,” 133.

³⁷² Feng, *Kuai xue tang ri ji*, 65. 三月二十八。……与曹林师兄同行……茂吴已先往，至老龙井相及。茂吴与闽人莊生者，俱得茶数斤。

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, 126. 游人如螳，颇仿雅道。

Longjing tea. Consequently, the Dragon Well area itself was able to become a market for Longjing tea, either genuine one or fake, within a decade.

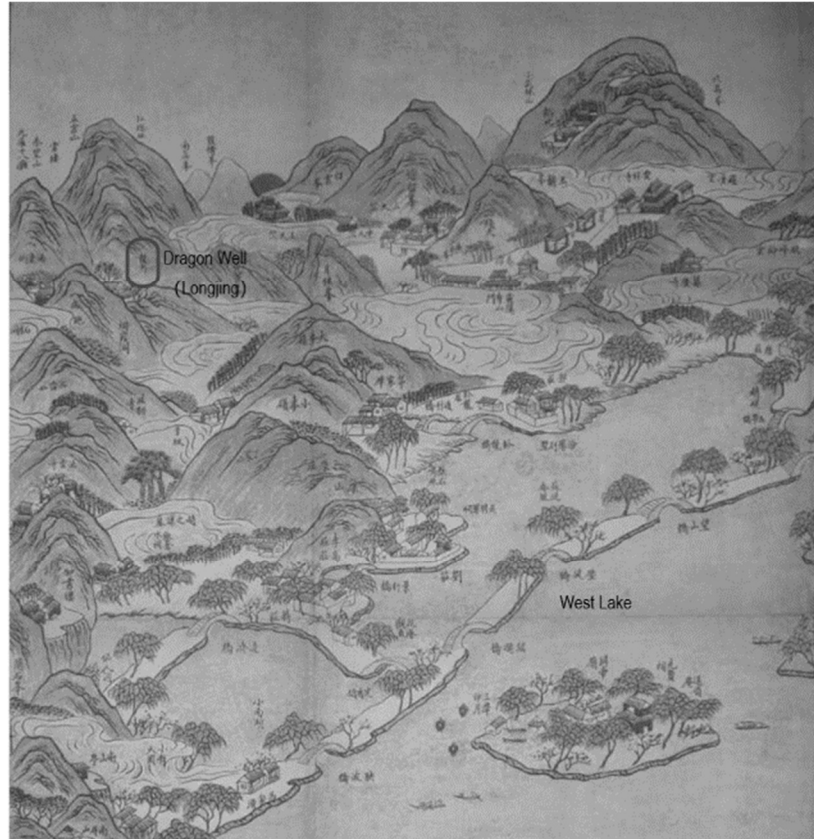


Figure 2.1 The Location of the Dragon Well (in the upper left of the map) and the West Lake (in the lower right of the map). This map was published in the 1920s.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Hangzhou zhu bao xiang cai hua wu cai shi yin gong si, “Zui xin xi hu quan tu: Tian xia di yi feng jing” (Hangzhou: Hangzhou zhu bao xiang cai hua wu cai shi yin gong si, fl. 1925)

A Comparison between Songluo Tea and Longjing tea after the Dynastic Transition

Both Songluo tea and Longjing tea had faced the issue of fakery since the late-Ming period; however, did fakery only play negative roles in the development of two teas? As some observers had noticed, along with the development of fakery, many surrounding areas had joined the production of these fake teas. These fake teas were also the major products which fulfilled the increasing demand of tea consumers. Furthermore, the methods of processing developed by the producers of these two teas were both influential to other tea makers and even their forgers. They both represented improvements in tea processing.

As mentioned previously, Songluo tea experienced a decline in its price after fake tea began to proliferate. In the new dynasty, its price kept falling until it became comparatively accessible in both the domestic and global tea markets. In contrast to Songluo tea, the developing route of Longjing tea was quite different. Through the writings of the tea connoisseur community, Longjing tea's reputation was soon built up and became a representation of an elegant taste of the elite class. This symbolic role of Longjing tea did not disappear in the Qing Dynasty, but was even further legitimated by Emperor Qianlong. During his Southern Inspection Tours, Emperor Qianlong composed several poems on the themes of the Dragon Well and tea.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵ Qian Shilin, "Longjing cha shi hua," *Nong ye kao gu*, Issue. 2, 2013: 144-150, 146-7.

The attention of an emperor distinguished the development of Longjing tea from other teas. From a late-Ming famous tea, which represented the taste of scholar-official tea connoisseurs, Longjing tea was recognized as a part of the imperial taste in the Qing Dynasty. This change was significant to its destiny. Longjing tea did not repeat the route of Luojie tea, which disappeared from the market after the dynastic transition. It also remained its status as a fine tea, preventing its value from dropping, in contrast to what happened to Songluo tea.

Chapter Three

The Taste of Tastelessness:

Water Tasting, Tea Drinking, and Social Status in Late-Ming China³⁷⁶

In late Ming context, the order of four social status was influenced by diminishing control from the central government, and the sumptuary laws which were set up during the Ming founding era no longer function well.³⁷⁷ Commercialization through mid-Ming until the late Ming also accelerated the changes in social status. Many historians have noticed the rise of the merchant class, which was caused not only by the economic development and political changes, but also because of the very influential thought of Wang Yangming, who basically helped the merchant class to theoretically justify their status in the society.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, the financial crisis of the central government forced the

³⁷⁶ “The Taste of Tasteless” is translated from “味无味” in Chinese, which was first appeared in *Laozi*, one of the most important Daoist Classics in Chinese history. I have appropriated this phrase from its original meaning of “taste without tasting”, which is often understood by Daoist scholars, to a new interpretation in this chapter. The original meaning emphasizes the ability of the non-active tasting; however, the new explanation stresses the ability of tasting, the pursuit of understanding the flavor of the most flavorless thing, water.

³⁷⁷ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 147.

³⁷⁸ “A further part of Wang’s new social attitudes was his recognition that merchants too have a place in Confucian society, and as individuals can realize Confucian norms in their personal lives while adding valuable components to the life of the whole society Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 683.

government to sell official positions to the ones who could afford the price and narrowed the entrance of official position through the civil service examination.³⁷⁹ All the above changes resulted in a challenge of the scholar-officials' highest social status among the four groups. Craig Clunas has pointed out that the pursuit of expensive superfluous things had replaced the pursuit of land and became the main method that the scholar-officials could show their superiority over other classes, particularly the merchants. Pursuing luxurious objects provided a chance for scholar-officials to present their elegance in taste, which was a quality that they believed the merchants did not have.³⁸⁰ Wu Jen-shu has pointed out that literati tried to reduce their anxiety of the social emulation from lower classes by creating new extravagant consumer goods; however, their creations were always quickly copied by people from the lower social status, and all their inventions later became a fashion in the whole society.³⁸¹ In the analysis of the social emulation in the late Ming, the study of material culture has touched the topics of antiques, clothing, paintings, transportation, etc., which were all closely related to scholar-officials' daily and artistic life, and played important roles in building their lifestyle.

Tea drinking, like collecting antiques and paintings, was also one of the most important practices in the scholar-officials' daily and artistic life and ranking different types of tea was quite popular among the scholar-official groups. Furthermore, the pleasure of tea drinking could not be separated from the pleasure of tasting water. The

³⁷⁹ Wu Jen-shu, *Pinwei she hua: Wan Ming de xiao fei she hui yu shi da fu* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2008), 56-9.

³⁸⁰ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 72.

³⁸¹ Wu, *Pin wei she hua*, 32-33.

importance of water could be widely observed in the manuals of taste written by scholar-officials themselves, such as *Superfluous Things* and *Eight Discourses on the Art of Living*. However, compared to the connoisseurship of tea leaves, which has been considered as a significant part of late-Ming material culture studies for quite a long time, the importance of water has not been recognized by historians. In contrast to tea leaves, which had been an established commodity in the late Ming market, water was not yet a commodity good, and there was no price tag that had ever been attached to any of the water sources. In other words, water retained its nature as a public source and was usually shared by the whole society during the late Ming, regardless of the users' social and economic situations. However, existent scholarship about material culture have overlooked important substances like this.

Few scholars have paid attention to the topic of drinking water for tea drinking. James Watt briefly talks about the fact that tasting water was the ultimate way of showing the excellent taste of the elite class during the late Ming. He believes that water, because of its colorless quality and slight taste, provided a highly regarded form of delectation.³⁸² Qiu Zhonglin, a Taiwanese scholar, also notices the issue of water in people's daily life; however, his article has dedicated most of its space to water consumption in Beijing during the Qing Dynasty. Qiu has pointed out that, like Western scholarship on water, Chinese scholarship on this topic focuses on water consumption in the urban areas after the late Qing period, when the urban areas had been significantly influenced by

³⁸² James C. Y. Watt, "Literati Environment," in *the Chinese Scholar's Studio: Artistic Life in the Late Ming Period* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 7.

industrialization and urbanization. However, the study of water consumption in pre-industrial time is not very common. Qiu treats water consumption in the Ming Dynasty as an important context of the Qing, and he notices that the quality of water, such as the taste and the color, had affected water consumption as early as in late-Ming China.³⁸³

Time and space matter in the study of water drinking, because water sources differ from one place to another based on the specific geological conditions and climate. Meanwhile, different levels of urbanization also lead to different phenomena of water consumption, because the growth of the urban population can also re-map water distribution for daily uses. The Jiangnan Region had its own features in terms of water sources. Several important waterways and relatively humid climate provide this area with more options in drinking water, including river water, spring water, groundwater, and rainwater (or snow water). Furthermore, as mentioned before, the Jiangnan region was also experiencing a dramatic social development. An understanding of the social functions of drinking water contributes to not only the study of the material culture of the late Ming, but also the study of the social structure in this period.

Above all, this chapter examines the social and culture functions of spring water in scholar-officials' life during the late Ming. It analyzes the importance of spring water in the discourse of tea tasting and its role in building late-Ming aesthetic principles. Moreover, unlike antiquities, paintings or porcelains, water was a public and free source which was different from other commodity goods produced by artisans, traded by the

³⁸³ Qiu, Zhonglin, "Shuiwozi: Beijing de gong shui ye zhe yu min sheng yong shui (1368-1937)." In *Zhong guo cheng shi sheng huo*, by Li Tsiao-ti, 203-252 (Beijing: Xinxing Press, 2006), 207-11.

merchants, and finally owned by the consumers who then put in their houses and studios. This feature allowed spring water to play a unique role in the late-Ming tea consumption.

Water in Scholar-officials' Daily Life: A Key to Tea Drinking

Tea drinking had crossed the social boundary between statuses and became a common practice in the Chinese society as early as the Song Dynasty. Jacques Gernet notices that teahouses had been widely established in the Southern Song Capital Hangzhou, which meant that a commercialized tea drinking practice has emerged in this period.³⁸⁴ Even though water was considered as an important ingredient in the practice of tea drinking, the commercialization of tea drinking since the Southern Song Dynasty had its root in the process of commercialized tea production and consumption rather than the commercialization of water resources. When studying a late-Ming manual written for luxury-good consumers, Clunas has concluded that “none of the types of artefact included in the twelve chapters of the *Treatise on Superfluous Things* stood outside the commodity sphere.”³⁸⁵ However, when examining the section of “Tianquan (heavenly springs)”, a term literally meaning water from heaven, such as rain water and snow water, and the other section entitled “Di quan (ground springs),” a term refers to ground water especially spring water, we may be able to find some exceptions to Clunas’ statement. Water had not become a commodity during the late Ming. As a natural resource, drinking

³⁸⁴ Jacques Gernet, *Daily Life in China, on the Eve of the Mongol Invasion, 1250-1276* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 139.

³⁸⁵ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 118.

water only started its way of commercialization and became a commodity good in people's daily life in the Qing Dynasty when there was a population growth in the urban area which led to a relative lack of good-quality drinking water in the urban area, as Qiu's research has explained.³⁸⁶

In late-Ming China, even though tea drinking had been accepted by the whole society, tea tasting retained its aesthetic function, in which people believed that it could reflect the taste and the social status of the drinkers. The relationship between taste and social status has been studied by some scholars. In the very influential *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Pierre Bourdieu argues that taste, the faculty of perceiving beauty and the capacity to discern aesthetic values, functions to legitimize social differences and establish one's social orientation or "sense of one's place."³⁸⁷ After comparing the cultural pattern in both Ming and early modern Europe, Clunas has noticed that,

If the unequal distribution of cultural resources is necessary to the stratification of society, as Bourdieu has argued, and if those cultural resources are full of commodities, available to all who possess the relevant economic resources, what is to prevent the cultural and economic hierarchies collapsing into each other, till the rich are the cultured, and the cultured are the rich? Here, taste comes into play, as an essential legitimator of consumption and an ordering principle which prevents the otherwise inevitable-seeming triumph of market force.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁶ Qiu Zhonglin, "Shuiwozi: Beijing de gong shui ye zhe yu min sheng yong shui (1368-1937)," 211-4.

³⁸⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 387.

³⁸⁸ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 171.

In the context of late-Ming China, Clunas has concluded that, the “invention of taste,” was the mechanism through which the social elite were able to retain cultural power.³⁸⁹

The social elite created a set of morally grounded aesthetic principle, such as the concept of “elegance,” and “attaching more importance to the manner of possessing (rather than the fact of possession) with regard to accepted categories of high-status goods.”³⁹⁰

The consumption of tea itself was a typical practice that represented a combination of luxury consumption and a cultural practice under a newly created aesthetic principle. The consumption of tea could be very luxurious in late Ming in some cases. As we have seen, Luojie tea, Longjing tea, and Songluo tea were all expensive and sometimes inaccessible in the market.³⁹¹ In contrast to the tea’s role of representing luxurious consumption, water played another role in the practice of tea drinking. Compared to building gardens, collecting antiques, or consumption practices, water itself had only no or relatively low cost, which made water lacked the function of showing off the wealth and economic status of its consumers. However, the cultural value attached to water during the practice of tea drinking was as important as the economic and social value which was added to tea leaves. Since the Tang Dynasty, water tasting began to play roles in demonstrating drinkers’ sensual sensitivity and sophistication. Furthermore, water tasting helped define aesthetic principles and construct the vocabulary related to “taste,” which supported the building of boundaries that differentiated social classes.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 71-2.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 172.

³⁹¹ The price of these famous tea has been discussed in Chapter One and Two.

Water tasting has become a special skill among the tea drinkers during the Ming era, and this ability was utilized by many scholar-officials to demonstrate their sensual sensitivity and the sophistication of their taste. In the late-Ming period, the importance of water choice was still emphasized by tea experts in their tea books and essays. On one hand, good water can help to diffuse the scent of tea; on the other hand, unsuitable and low-quality water would destroy the taste and smell of tea or would be even harmful to drinkers' health. Xu Cishu (1549-1604?), a well-known tea expert who was raised in a scholar-official family in Hangzhou during the late Ming Dynasty, had concluded, "Fine tea contains nice fragrance. Its fragrance can only diffuse depend on certain water. Without water, there is no need to talk about tea."³⁹² Another late Ming scholar, Zhang Dafu (1554? -1630), also wrote, "The essence of tea originates in the water. When mediocre tea leaves meet the best water, tea became the best; however, mediocre water with the best tea leaves only results in mediocre tea."³⁹³ The above quotations are some representative examples of describing the relationship between water and tea. They show that the evaluation of tea as a drink always goes along with the quality of water during the late-Ming period. Tracing back to the Tang Dynasty when the art of tea drinking was formed, drinking water has already played an important role in the practice; however, the understandings of water, including the taste of water and the relationship between water and tea were much simpler, because the flavor of water had not been carefully studied

³⁹² Xu Cishu, *Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu* (Taipei: Yi wen yin shu guan, 1965), 8a. 精茗蘊香，借水而发，无水不可与论茶也。

³⁹³ Zhang Dafu, *Wen yan zhai bi tan* Vol. 5 (Gu Mengzhao's Edition, 1605), 1. 茶性必发于水，八分之茶遇十分之水，茶亦十分矣。八分之水试十分之茶，茶只八分耳。

and described by any tea experts yet. When Lu Yu (733-804?), known as the Sage of Tea, was writing *The Classic of Tea* in the 760s, he had already noticed the importance of the quality of water in tea drinking. In the fifth chapter of this classic, he had categorized drinking water into three types and ranked them by their connections with tea. The water from the hills was ranked the highest; river water was inferior, and ground water, especially well water, was the worst.³⁹⁴ Furthermore, Lu Yu talked about the water from the hills more specifically. He believed that, among the water in mountainous areas, spring water, particularly from springs that flow slowly across the stones, was the best.³⁹⁵ On the contrary, the springs that flow too fast were not suitable for drinking, since it might cause neck problems.³⁹⁶ If mountainous water was not available, river water and ground water (well water) were also acceptable. However, before drinking these kinds of water, the drinker should make sure it was healthy. For example, before drinking water in the river valley, people should dredge the valley first to make the water flow. Speaking of the river water, it was better to draw water from the place where was far from human activities. For well water, the ones which were used by more people were better. Above all, in Lu Yu's evaluation, health was a major concern, and the way to fulfill this requirement was to find the flowing a water source.³⁹⁷

Lu Yu's categorization of tea water basically set up the standard for later generations; however, the evaluation of tea water became more and more complicated in

³⁹⁴ Lu Yu, *Cha jing* (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1991), 11.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

later generations. Even though later scholar-officials all considered Lu Yu's book as the most important classic, new thoughts about water choice kept emerging. The complication of water choice not only reflected the changes that had appeared in the tea market, but also implied the sophistication of perception on water tasting. Decades after Lu Yu's time, Zhang Youxin (?-?), the top scorer in the civil service examination in the year of 814, wrote an essay which only focuses on the water for tea drinking. He added new ways to evaluate the water for tea drinking, and the basic rules were that the water should be both cold and clear, which means that he started to evaluate water by involving his eyes and the sense of touch.³⁹⁸ Moreover, Zhang has also pointed out another important way to identify the suitable water for tea in his essay, which says "Making tea with the water from its place of origin is always a good option for the reason that the water and the soil are suitable for each other. Without the water from the original place, other water makes the taste of tea reduce by half."³⁹⁹ Furthermore, Zhang listed his choice of the best water resources in China, which includes twenty of them, and snow water, which is clear and cold, became a new resource among the top ones. This became a creation beyond Lu Yu's three categories of tea water. Both Lu and Zhang's theories developed from the atmosphere of tea consumption in the Tang Dynasty, which was influenced by the taste of the royal family and the development of Buddhism at the time. Take Lu Yu as an example, on the one hand, *The Classic of tea* was written in Guzhu of

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Zhang Youxin, *Jian cha shui ji* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju), 3. 夫烹茶于所产处，无不佳也。盖水土之宜。离其处，水功其半。

Huzhou Prefecture, which was one of the most important sites to produce tribute tea during the era. On the other hand, Lu was raised by Buddhist monks, and this gave Lu a natural advantage in tea drinking. Descriptions in *The Classic of Tea* have shown that the use of tea was widely spread in Buddhist Communities during the Tang period.⁴⁰⁰

As mentioned in previous chapters, the most conspicuous change related to tea appeared in Song era was a new way of making tea. This change in making tea resulted in two new phenomena. First, in the Song tea literature, the verb to describe the process of cooking tea changed from brewing (zhucha/jiancha) to whisking (diancha), which meant that tea powder and boiled water were prepared separately. Furthermore, two important ingredients, salt and ginger, which were widely used during the Tang practice, were discarded in the Song style of tea drinking. Lu Yu used to mention how salt was used in Tang tea, and he said, “when the water boiled for the first time, add salt in accordance with the volume of water.”⁴⁰¹ However, neither salt or ginger was mentioned in tea literature by scholar-officials or tea experts since the Song Dynasty.

The above transformations resulted in new requirements for the choice of water, and since then the taste of sweetness (gan) has become one of the most valuable qualities to evaluate the perfect water, particularly spring water, for tea drinking. A Song scholar-official named Ye Qingchen (1000-1049) has pointed out, “when the spring water does

⁴⁰⁰ James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 39-40.

⁴⁰¹ Lu, *Cha jing*, 11. 五之煮：初沸，则水合量，调之以盐味

not smell nice or taste sweet, after boiling and scooping, the tea would taste like mud.”⁴⁰²

Cai Xiang, a native of Fujian as well as the author of *The Record of Tea*, which was

considered as one of the most important tea books after *The Classic of Tea*, says,

“Moreover, the water which does not taste sweet could impair the flavor of the tea.”⁴⁰³

The reason why the taste of sweetness was valued in tea drinking since the Song time was that the salt and ginger had been discarded in the practice; therefore, the flavor of water itself became much more important than it was during the Tang time. Furthermore, in earlier philosophical texts, philosophers have realized the importance of sweetness as a flavor, as well as a concept related to five phases. As one of the five flavors, sweetness helps other flavors to enhance their own features, as Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE), a Confucian philosopher during the Han Dynasty, has commented, “without *gan* (the sweet flavor), sour, salty, pungent, and bitter could not form their flavors. The sweetness is the origin of five flavors.”⁴⁰⁴ Among five flavors, the sweetness was considered as the neutral one, just like water compared to other food and drinks. This actually helps to make sense of the reason that why sweetness was stressed as the original flavor of water.

The aesthetic principle created by the Song tea drinkers and their appreciation of the original flavor of water continued to the Ming Dynasty. Moreover, since loose tea, which

⁴⁰² Ye Qingchen, “Shu zhu cha quan pin,” in *Xu Cha jing* edited by Lu Canting, the *Siku* Edition. 泉不香、水不甘，爨之、扬之，若淤若滓。昔郦元善于《水经》，而未尝知茶；王肃癖于茗饮，而言不及水表，是二美吾无愧焉。

⁴⁰³ Cai Xiang, *Cha lu* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1937), 2. 又有水泉不甘能損茶味。

⁴⁰⁴ Dong Zhongshu, *Chun qiu fan lu* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991), 179. 若酸咸辛苦之不因甘肥不能成味也。甘者，五味之本也。

tasted more bitter than both Tang and Song styles of tea, was adopted by scholar-officials and people from other classes, the original flavor/the sweet flavor of water was valued even more during the tea drinking in the late-Ming era. The bitterness of tea was appreciated when other flavors, such as the taste of salty or the flavors of spices, were removed from the tea due to the popularity of loose tea consumption. Timothy Brook has mentioned that the scholar-officials were the major practitioners of the Song style cake tea drinking in the early Ming era but later they accepted and became fascinated by loose tea. However, loose tea had been widely accepted by the commoners already, since loose tea was much more inexpensive and accessible.⁴⁰⁵ On the other hand, the consumption of loose tea was promoted by the founder of the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398) who came from a rural background and stressed frugal lifestyle in his reign. Zhu believed that the Song way of making cake tea was too luxurious since tea-makers decorated the tea cake with gold, silver, and some precious spices. Therefore, the Song cake tea was forbidden as tribute tea by the founding emperor because it was too labor and money consuming, and he soon ordered to tribute loose tea instead.⁴⁰⁶ Tea scholars in contemporary China believe that the Ming Dynasty was the beginning of consuming

⁴⁰⁵ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 126-7.

⁴⁰⁶ Cheng Menglei ed., "Shi huo bian" in *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng*. 按《續文獻通考》二十四年九月詔：建寧歲貢上供茶聽茶戶採進有司勿與敕天下產茶去處歲貢皆有定額而建寧茶品為上其所進者必碾而揉之壓以銀板為大小龍團上以重勞民罷造龍團惟採芽茶以進其品有四曰探春曰先春次春紫筍先是置茶戶五百免其徭役俾專事採置

loose tea among all the consumers from all social status.⁴⁰⁷ Meanwhile, tea producers started to adopt the technology of *Chaoqing* (*pan-frying*), a skill that has lasted for hundreds of years and forms the current practice of tea drinking in China.⁴⁰⁸

Besides this changed way of tea production, the late Ming tea drinkers and connoisseurs created new ways to evaluate the water for tea drinking. The first phenomenon was that the term *xiang* (fragrance), which is related to the sense of smell, was brought up in the conversation on water choice during tea drinking. The representative works on water for tea drinking came from Xu Xianzhong (1469-1545) and Tian Yiheng (1524-?), both of whom were Ming-dynasty writers, tea drinkers, and tea connoisseurs. Xu's brochure titled *Shui pin* (*Water Tasting*) specifically focused on drinking water, and he believed that drinking water was one of the most important factors of tea tasting. Tian, from a Hangzhou scholar-official family, not only had accepted both the framework of water categorization set up by Lu Yu and the relatively new evaluation originated during the Song Dynasty,⁴⁰⁹ but also concluded that the best water for tea drinking was spring water, which was clear, cold, sweet and fragrant, and he explained: "because of the sweetness and the fragrance, spring water could nourish people. However, sweet spring water is easy to acquire when fragrant ones hard to obtain. It's never happened that the spring water is fragrant but not sweet."⁴¹⁰ This example shows

⁴⁰⁷ Zou Yi, *Ming Qing yi lai Huizhou she hui yu di fang she hui 1368-1949* (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2012), 59.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Tian Yiheng, *Zhu quan xiao pin* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju), 2.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid., 13-4.

that Tian's comment had combined the evaluation of spring water from the senses of sight, smell, and taste. At this point, it was far more sophisticated than Lu Yu's evaluation.

Secondly, due to the process of urbanization and the growth of population in late Ming China, particularly in the Jiangnan region, the water sources became more precious. The best water sources were often used in water tasting and tea connoisseurship, which were both cultural practices popular among the scholar-officials and their friends. Furthermore, the dwindling water sources may have caused more attention from scholar-official tea drinkers; therefore, the relationship between tea drinking and water choice became closer during this era. On one hand, the writings about the water usually use tea to differentiate the quality of water; on the other hand, tea literature always contained the content of water choice. For example, Tian Yiheng arranged one chapter titled "Water that is suitable for tea" in *Zhu quan xiao pin (the Vignette of Brewing Spring Water)*.⁴¹¹ Tu Long (1543-1605), also a Hangzhou resident, started to review different water choices right after he finished writing about tea tasting in his famous *Kao pan yu shi*, an important manual of aesthetics and the material culture of the Late-Ming era.⁴¹² Moreover, when Yuan Hongdao (1568-1610) was informing people what was the best water to nourish flowers, he mentioned that "the water collected in rainy season is suitable to nourish flowers, and also suitable for making tea."⁴¹³

⁴¹¹ Tian, *Zhu quan xiao pin*, 1-43.

⁴¹² Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 321-334.

⁴¹³ Yuan Hongdao, "Ping shi," in *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chu ban she, 1981), 822. 未若多贮梅水为佳.....经年不坏，不独养花，亦可烹茶。

Thirdly, besides setting up new criteria for water tasting, the Ming scholar-officials also started to pay more attention to the water sources which were not valued by their predecessors. The Longhong Spring, which was located in the same area where the best Longjing tea was produced, remained unknown to tea connoisseurs during the Tang Dynasty; however, Tian Yiheng, a late-Ming tea taster, has recorded it in *Zhu quan xiao pin* as the best water source in the city of Hangzhou and as a hidden gem of the tea world, based on its clarity, coldness, sweetness and fragrance.⁴¹⁴ Compared to Lu Yu's comment, which says "tea produced in Huzhou is superior...tea produced in Hangzhou is inferior," the tea producers in late-Ming Hangzhou were able to develop one of the finest loose teas in China's domestic market.⁴¹⁵ Furthermore, the tea connoisseurs' efforts to discover new water sources in the nearby area also helped to enhance the impression of Hangzhou as one of the centers of tea consumption among the drinkers during the late-Ming era.

The attractions of good spring water were not only based on the quality and the taste, but also rooted in the scarcity and inaccessibility. Even though Xu Xianzhong had listed thirty-four water sources in *Shui pin*, these sites were scattered in a large territory, ranging from Shanxi Province in the northwest to Fujian Province in the southeast.⁴¹⁶ Therefore, for each relatively small region, good water sources were still rare. That was why Tian Yiheng emphasized, "Good springs are not easy to obtain. People should value

⁴¹⁴ Tian, *Zhu quan xiao pin*, 17. 今武林諸泉，惟龍泓入品，而茶亦惟龍泓山為最。其泉清寒甘香，雅宜煮茶。

⁴¹⁵ Lu, *Cha jing*, 18. 八之出浙西以湖州上，常州次，宣州、杭州、睦州、歙州下。

⁴¹⁶ Xu Xianzhong, *Shui pin quan zhi* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991), 1-5.

them. Valuing the water sources is a blessed deed.”⁴¹⁷ However, no water, neither spring water nor other ground water, was priced, because no record has shown that drinkers need to pay for their water consumption to the owners of the springs or wells during the Ming Dynasty. Therefore, no price was a distinct feature of drinking water, which distinguished water from all commodity goods, especially luxurious ones that were circulated in the market. Furthermore, even though good water sources were rare and most of them were distant from densely populated urban areas, water sources remained opened and available to the public, and this means that people from different social statuses all had chances to drink and taste the same water source regardless of their economic and social background, if they could get to the water. For the members of the elite class, they could either send servants to get water for them or could travel to these sites. This feature of drinking water also helped to set up a stage for scholar-official tea tasters to demonstrate their talent in a circumstance of social emulation in the late-Ming era. On the one hand, tasting water itself became an important capability that people from high social status could present to lower ones about their sensual sophistication and their cultivated aesthetics, the so-called “taste,” which meant a different level of cultivation; on the other hand, the pursuit of best water source also played a supporting role in extravagant consumption in scholar-official tea connoisseurs’ daily life, and it helped to attach cultural, social and even economic functions to the daily practice of tea drinking, which let them draw the boundary between themselves and less-cultivated wealthy

⁴¹⁷ Tian, *Zhu quan xiao pin*, 39. 山居之人，固当惜水，况佳泉更不易得，尤当惜之，亦作福事也。

merchants. The next part of this chapter will dedicate to an examination of the above functions of water in late Ming scholar-official tea tasters' life.

Tasting Water as An Expression of Taste

Drinking water was not only one of the most important substances that supported the pleasure of tea drinking; however, it also carried an extremely significant function of expressing the scholar-officials' aesthetic principle during the Ming Dynasty. James Watt has pointed out that the selection of water contributed to scholar-officials' critical language of "taste," such as "dan" (tasteless and colorless), which was a highly-regarded form of delectation.⁴¹⁸

The tasteless and colorless nature of water offered a chance to display the ability to distinguish and appreciate the good water through sharp eyes and sensitive noses and palates. Sensitivity was an important concern of the scholar-official groups during the late-Ming time. Yuan Hongdao, who was a Hubei native and later became the magistrate of the county of Wu in the Jiangnan region, recorded a story about one his friends Qiu Zhangru who was also a Hubei native. When Yuan was the magistrate of the Wu County, Qiu toured Wu County and came back with forty jars of water from the Huishan spring, which considered as one of the best water sources in China for hundreds of years. Qiu's servants, who failed to see the point of much labor for a trivial purpose, poured the spring water away and replaced it with water from a river just outside the city in which Qiu

⁴¹⁸ Watt, "Literati Environment," 7.

lived. After Qiu's guests assembled in feverish anticipation and had smelled and sampled the water, they thanked the host profusely for the opportunity to taste of the Huishan spring water. No one identified the fake spring water until the story of change leaked out as a result of a quarrel among the servants and there was much embarrassment all around.⁴¹⁹ Yuan's narrative explains two phenomena related to water-tasting during the time. First, the failure to identify and appreciate the famous spring water was almost a shame to a scholar-official and his friends. Moreover, this story implied that there were different attitudes and understandings of spring water between the scholar-official class and their servants. On the one hand, the admiration of famous spring water could hardly be understood by the servants; on the other hand, scholar-officials and their friends, who shared the similar educational background and were tutored with the same aesthetic principle, valued the famous spring water very much, even though they were not physically familiar with the taste of the Huishan spring water.

This narrative also raises the issues of how and why the famous spring water played a prominent role in scholar-officials' minds and in their daily lives. First, drinking water from famous springs or consuming water on the spring sites that were recorded by Tang-dynasty tea masters such as Lu Yu and Zhang Youxin, provided the scholar-official tea drinkers an access or a space for "interaction with the past."⁴²⁰ In the preface of *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture*, Christian Murck points that "the interaction with the past is one of the distinctive modes of intellectual and imaginative

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., 7-8.

⁴²⁰ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 91.

endeavor in traditional Chinese culture.”⁴²¹ Clunas indicates that the “artifacts of the past which did survive were actually deployed in the context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century China, to give concrete social form to that sense of continuity.”⁴²² Wen Zhenheng (1585-1645), the author of *The Treatise of Superfluous Things*, a book mainly focused on connoisseurship of objects and antiques, devoted a large portion of his discussion to water-tasting, a topic remotely related to the theme of the book. Compared to other objects such as ancient bronze vessels or paintings, spring water could not be called as an antique; however, spring water, such as the Huishan spring, carried a continuity which started from the ancient time (the Tang Dynasty) to the present day (the late-Ming era). In this case, the long-lasting reputation of the Huishan spring could be seen as an antique discursively, and it not only represented a history of eight hundred years since Lu Yu’s time, but also was seen as a cultural symbol that was widely recorded in the classics that the scholar-officials would enjoy reading in their literary life.

The fascination of renowned springs, on the one hand, offered the scholar-officials a chance to express their admiration of antiquity; on the other hand, it helped scholar-officials reaffirm their identities through some shared aesthetic principles and cultural background developed from the discourse of tea-tasting and other literary classics. After both Lu Yu and Zhang Youxin had named it the second-best spring source, the Huishan spring, which was located in the city of Wuxi, became one of the most important water sources for tea drinking. In later dynasties, its reputation grew substantially. Emperor

⁴²¹ Christian F. Murck, “Introduction,” *Artists and Traditions: Uses of the Past in Chinese Culture*, Princeton, 1976, xi-xxi.

⁴²² Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 92.

Huizong of the Song Dynasty, a well-known tea connoisseur, said “the beauty of water is valued by people...when ancient people deliver water, they often choose the Zhongling or Huishan spring; however, considering the distance, it is not easy to acquire” in his well-known tea essay entitled *Da guan cha lun*.⁴²³ During the Yuan Dynasty, Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322), a scholar-official who was famed for his paintings and calligraphy, left an inscription of “The Second Spring Under Heaven” on the wall of the spring pavilion. In the Ming dynasty, the Huishan spring became the most valuable water source, particularly for the scholar-official tea drinkers who lived in the Jiangnan region, such as Xu Xianzhong, Tu Long (1543-1605), Gao Lian and so on. In some literary descriptions in this era, the Huishan Spring water was portrayed as ideal for tea drinking, since its sweetness and fragrance surpassed any other spring water, even those of which ranked higher, such as the Gulian spring water at Mount Lu or the Zhongling spring located in the middle of the Yangzi River.⁴²⁴ Compared to the two water sources which were used to be named as the best, the Huishan spring had its own advantages. For one thing, the importance of the Huishan spring was decided by its location. Since it was located in the center of the Jiangnan region where most of the fine tea was consumed instead of being in a remote or mountainous area, the Huishan spring was able to retain its accessibility to the scholar-official tea connoisseurs who resided in the nearby area.

⁴²³ Zhao, Ji. "Emperor Huizong's Treatise on Tea." *Global Tea Hut: Tea and Tao Magazine*, 2016: 35-48.

古人品水，雖曰中泠惠山為上，然人相去之遠近，似不常得。

⁴²⁴ In the *Classic of Tea*, Lu Yu ranked Kang wang gu water as the best water source. Zhang Youxin recorded another tea connoisseur's (Liu Bochu) ranking system and listed the Zhongling spring as the best one.

For another thing, the Huishan Spring has been universally ranked as the “second” under Heaven by the tea connoisseurs for the past thousand years. Its reputation for being the “second best” had been remarkably stable, while there were numerous candidates bidding for the top position. One suspects that the second place is a quite comfortable and secure place that ensures considerable influence yet avoids much of the envy and competition.

The familiarity with the classics also enhanced the importance of famous spring water in scholar-official tea tasters’ minds. The studies of the classical texts had internalized the knowledge of these spring sites in their minds; therefore, once there were chances to drink spring water from those places, tea drinkers would keep the accounts of their special experiences. The interactions between literary texts and actual spring water became a very special phenomenon among the scholar-official group. Wen Zhengming (1470-1559), one of the best painters as well as the great grandfather of Wen Zhenheng, recorded his first pilgrimage to the Huishan Spring. Wen Zhengming only had a chance to visit the Mount Hui when he was thirty-five years old on the way to participate in the civil service examination. In the autumn of 1504, he finally arrived in the Huishan spring and drank tea with his friends. During this trip, he wrote a poem entitled *Chanting at the Huishan Spring*. The beginning of this poem had already demonstrated how familiar he was with this spring through reading the literary classics. Wen recorded, “I read *The Classics of Tea* at a young age and remember the ranks of different waters. However, with only hundreds of *li* away from home, I’ve never tasted the spring water from the

Mount Hui.”⁴²⁵ Furthermore, Wen mentioned Su Shi (1037-1101), a celebrated poet, scholar-official and tea connoisseur of the Song Dynasty, who was also fascinated by the Huishan Spring. Wen wrote that, after visiting the site and tasting the spring water, he finally believed Su Shi’s description of his taste with the spring, which says, “Both the color and fragrance are exceptionally marvelous.”⁴²⁶ In this circumstance, the Huishan spring had become a connection between Lu Yu of the Tang Dynasty, Su Shi of the Song Dynasty, and Wen himself of the Ming Dynasty. The visit to the Huishan spring not only evoked Wen’s memory of the classics but also made his cultural imagination come true. Wen’s activity and his theme of writing were very typical among the Ming tea drinkers. The Huishan spring actually helped to create a space for scholar-official tea connoisseurs to interact with the past and accomplished their desire to have a conversation with the ancients.

Furthermore, the visiting of spring water sites in person or drinking famous spring water provided opportunities for scholar-official tea drinkers to understand the water in a more specific and personal way. Their understandings of spring water finally jumped out from the texts, evolving from a cultural imagination to a better understanding based on their bodily experiences. This significant step made it possible for them to be capable of identifying water, since this ability could not develop easily by reading tea literature only. Yuan Hongdao, who later became an important aesthete during the late-Ming era,

⁴²⁵ Wen Zhengming, *Wen Zhengming ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chu ban she, 1987), 7. 《咏惠山泉》 少时阅《茶经》，水品谓能记。如何百里间，惠泉曾未试。空余裹茗兴，十载劳梦寐。

⁴²⁶ Su Shi, “You hui shan” in *Su Shi shi ji* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1992), 946. 《游惠山》 色味两奇绝。

admitted that he and his brother Yuan Zhongdao (1575-1630) were unable to tell the differences between the spring water from Mount Hui and water from other spring sites when the labels on the storage jars became illegible. However, Yuan was aware that only after he had been a magistrate of the Wu County for a while, and had many opportunities to taste the spring water from different sites, was he able to appreciate and differentiate spring water through their tastes.⁴²⁷ To taste water personally not only connected the shared sensual experiences between the ancient tea masters and the contemporary tea drinkers, but also linked the descriptions of spring water in texts and drinker's own bodied-experience together. In Qiu Zhangru's case mentioned above, the reason the drinkers in the narrative could not distinguish the Huishan spring water from river water is comprehensible once we consider that there were only few chances for tea drinkers in Huguang region (Hubei province) to taste the Huishan spring water personally, since these two places were too far away from each other. Yu Shunde, an anthropologist, has noticed that the interaction between the body and the object played an important role during the education of cultural practices, such as tea drinking.⁴²⁸ Distinguishing spring water also needs such training on body-object interaction. This training not only relied on the theory, the familiarity with textual records that repeating the taste of spring water, but also needs physical interaction with the water. This body-object connection also corresponds with the "concrete social form to that sense of continuity," which Clunas has argued as one of the distinctive modes of scholar-officials' lives.⁴²⁹ The perception

⁴²⁷ Watt, "Literati Environment, 8.

⁴²⁸ Yu, *Ti wu ru wei*, 9.

⁴²⁹ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 92.

during the water tasting connected the late-Ming tea drinkers' sensual experiences with their Tang and Song predecessors on the same object, the spring water.

Tea classics produced in previous dynasties enhanced the reputation of some famous springs; meanwhile, the circulating “books about things” and encyclopedias for daily use that published during the late-Ming Dynasty contributed to the popularity of notable spring sites.⁴³⁰ These “books about things” include *Desultory Remarks on Furnishing the Abode of the Retired Scholar (Kao pan yu shi)* by Tu Long, *Eight Discourses on the Art of Living (Zun sheng ba jian)* by Gao Lian, *Treatise on Superfluous Things (Zhang wu zhi)* by Wen Zhenheng and so on. These authors usually contributed a large portion of their books discussing the water sources for tea drinking. On the other hand, the encyclopedias for daily uses, such as *Wan bao quan shu*, also contains very specific knowledge of spring water tasting under the tea section.⁴³¹ Since the publishing of these “books about things” and cheaper-edition encyclopedias for daily use was quite common due to improvements in printing technology, a large number of knowledge about famous springs could be informed to a larger population, including commoners and merchants.⁴³² Ming people's fascination with things and knowledge might have been under the

⁴³⁰ Clunas uses the term “Books about things” in *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Clunas indicates that this kind of books can be interpreted as a literature of connoisseurship. Dutch Sinologist Robert van Gulik argues that these books belonged to a specific genre, and they were guide-books for scholar of elegant taste. Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 1-8.

⁴³¹ Wu Huifang, *Wan bao quan shu: Ming Qing shi qi de min jian sheng huo shi lu* (Taipei: Guo li zheng zhi da xue li shi xi, 2001), 191.

⁴³² Elman, *Collecting and Classifying: Ming Dynasty Compendia and Encyclopedias (Leishu)*, *Extrême-Orient, Extrême-Occident, hors série* – 2007, 134.

influence of Wang Yangming's and his followers' idea of "investigation of things."

Benjamin Elman suggested,

In general, in the hands of Wang's more radical late Ming followers, however, the focus on the "investigation of things" began to shift away from a pathway to sagehood to a more rigorous methodology for extending all knowledge, whether moral, textual, or worldly, which carried over to late Ming encyclopedias. This growing emphasis on ancient classical learning as the cornerstone of literati scholarship also occasioned a revival of encyclopedias.⁴³³

Famous spring water as part of worldly things, as well as part of classical learning, transformed into knowledge which people would want to pursue in the late-Ming era.

This knowledge which was already widely taken for granted by the social elite also became a knowledge among a larger population.

However, spring water for tea drinking played a more important role in scholar-officials' daily life than in the daily life of merchants and commoners. The novel *Jin ping mei* (*The Golden Lotus*) has provided us some information about a merchant's daily-practice of tea drinking. *Jin ping mei* has described several ways of tea drinking in Ximen Qing's household, such as the flower tea and the sweet tea (*tiancha*). Interestingly, the word "sweet" here has a different meaning than what has been mentioned above when discussing on the taste of spring water. This difference has also demonstrated how the social elite and merchant class understood the taste of sweetness. For scholar-officials, the sweetness referred to a slight taste that cannot affect the taste of tea itself; however, for Ximen Qing and his family members, the sweetness in tea meant a substantial taste that not only brought by ground water, but also by the seasonings such as sugar and fruit

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 133.

that were mixed with the tea. Liu Xuezhong, a tea scholar in China, has defined that Ximen Qing was pursuing the taste of “Vulgar Sweetness.”⁴³⁴ Clunas and Watt have both noticed that “elegance” and “vulgar” contributed to the vocabulary of aesthetic principle used for differentiating tastes between the scholar-officials and the merchant class.⁴³⁵ For the scholar-officials, drinking famous spring water represent their pursuit of “elegant sweetness” that was much more superior than the “vulgar sweetness” brought from ground water and seasonings.

In conclusion, some precious drops of the spring water carried over long distance symbolically connected the connoisseurs with the place where the water was from. The place carried incredibly rich cultural meaning thanks to centuries of poetic and artistic imagination. And a sip of the water from that particular place provided the literati, who immersed themselves in this culture, with experiences that were mostly aesthetic and imaginative. The water was not appreciated exactly as water, but a cultural object that revealed one’s familiarity with the tradition, his upbringing as a cultivated person, and his desire to fully embrace the aesthetic principle of the educated class. The spring water was not only an object that combined aesthetic values and classical culture, but also other social functions and economic implications. The next part of this chapter will talk about scholar-officials’ practices related to spring water that enhance their impression of being a more sophisticated, more sensitive and more elegant taster.

⁴³⁴ Liu Xuezhong, “Lun Jin ping mei yu Zhongguo cha wen hua,” *Journal of Fuyang Teachers College*, Vol. 90, No.6, 2002, pp. 36-40, 36.

⁴³⁵ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 82.

Pursuing Spring Water as a way of Showing Taste and Social Status

The consumption of famous spring water usually happened in two situations. On the one hand, the scholar-officials who resided far from the famous spring sites needed to arrange spring water delivery, so that they could enjoy the pleasure of tea drinking at home; on the other hand, they sometimes travelled to those spring sites, which were usually located in the mountainous area and managed by monks in the Buddhist monasteries, to try newly-produced tea, taste fresh spring water, and interact with their scholar-official friends and Buddhist monks at the same time. The popularity of these two practices was not only encouraged by the scholar-officials' desire to develop palates, but also a part of a long cultural tradition, which resembled the activities practiced by the tea connoisseurs from previous dynasties. Even though the spring water itself remained a free and opened resource to the public during the Ming time, the costs of delivery and traveling were still impressive. Therefore, the economic values, which emerged from the relatively high costs of vessels, labors, transportation and so on, were attached to famous spring water during the water delivery.

Traveling to water sites functioned differently from the water delivery since the traveling usually occurred in the public space. Traveling provided some opportunities for the scholar-officials observe and compare themselves with the merchant- or the commoner travelers; at the same time, the scholar-officials themselves could be exposed to the public as well. Timothy Brook has concluded that this was the way in which the

scholar-officials were able to “publicize their gentry identity.”⁴³⁶ The differences between the scholar-officials and merchants/commoners were demonstrated in public. While both the two parties were perceiving the same things during the traveling, the scholar-officials’ imagination of their own superiority emerged based on their more sensitive perceptions of things and a more profound understanding of their cultural backgrounds and implications.

Furthermore, while spring water was available to all drinkers regardless of their social status and family wealth, the mode of consumption played a significant role in distinguishing drinkers’ identities. The consumption of spring water was different from the conspicuous consumption of pieces of jewelry, clothing, gardens and so on, in which the goods themselves contain intrinsic values. It also differed from another pattern of public conspicuous consumption that David Cannadine called “consensual pageantry,” which refers to using public rituals to affirm and cement the social order.⁴³⁷ However, spring water consumption was usually practiced by individuals or small groups of close friends, instead of in the form of an organized ceremony. Therefore, spring water itself only represents the taste of the drinkers and the cultural implications accompanied by the history and classic literature. However, the way of consuming spring water bears some resemblance to the more typical definition of conspicuous consumption.

⁴³⁶ Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 215.

⁴³⁷ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 159. David Cannadine, “The transformation of Civic Ritual in Modern Britain: The Colchester Oyster Feast,” *Past and Present*, 94 (1982), 107-30.

1. Spring Water Delivery

There has been a long history that people had spring water delivered for the pleasure of tea drinking, and the water delivery was usually practiced by the tea drinkers who had a demanding taste of water. As early as during the Tang Dynasty, Li Deyu (787-850), the Prime Minister who served in the Wenzong and the Wuzong reigns, valued the Huishan spring water very much; therefore, he required his servants to deliver spring water from Wuxi to the Tang capital, Chang'an.⁴³⁸ However, the cost of water delivery was high. A monk resided in Chang'an recommend a local spring to Li and declared that the water from this spring tasted exactly the same as the Huishan spring water because there was a water vein that connected two places together. Li had no reason to trust him. Therefore, the monk bottled spring water from ten different sites and asked Li to taste and identify. Li finally left two bottles that he could not identify, one of them came from Mount Hui, and the other was from the site where the monk recommended. At the end, Li agreed with the monk that there was a spring in the capital tasted exactly like the Huishan spring water. Consequently, Li stopped this costly and routinely water delivery from Wuxi.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 335. 唐李卫公德裕，喜惠山泉，取以烹茗。自常州到京，置驿骑传送，号曰“水递”。《芝田录》

⁴³⁹ Anonymous, *Yu quan zi*, the *Siku* Edition. 《玉泉子》李德裕在中书，尝饮惠山泉，自毗陵至京置递铺。有僧人诣谒，德裕好奇，凡有游其门者，虽布素皆接引。僧白德裕曰：「相公在中书，昆虫遂性，万汇得所。水递一事，亦日月之薄蚀，微僧窃有感也，敢以上谒，欲沮此可乎？」德裕颔之曰：「大凡为人，未有无嗜者，至于烧汞，亦是所短。况三惑、博塞、弋弈之事，弟子悉无所染，而和尚不许弟子饮水，无乃虐乎？为上人停之，即三惑驰骋，怠慢必生焉。」僧人曰：「贫道所谒相公者，为足下通常州水脉。京都一眼井，与惠山泉脉相通。」德裕大笑曰：「真荒唐也。」曰：「相公但取此泉脉。」德裕曰：「井在何坊曲？」曰：「昊天观常住库后是也。」因以惠山一罍，

This story was not only recorded by some Tang writers, but also frequently commented by some writers in later dynasties.⁴⁴⁰ The writers kept retelling this story for different purposes. For example, some of them wanted to appraise how good Li's taste was. For another example, some of them tried to describe how costly and controversial the spring water delivery was, so as to criticize this luxurious consumption. In *Kao pan yu shi*, Tu Long commented that Li was "too luxurious and demanding....and destroyed the grand morality."⁴⁴¹

Even though Tu Long was still criticizing this expensive activity, many scholar-official tea drinkers at Tu's time had abandoned this moral standard. Li Deyu and water delivery were not deemed to be as a negative image as it was during the time periods ranging from the Tang Dynasty to the early-Ming period, since many tea connoisseurs started to follow Li's practice of water delivery during the late-Ming era. This change may be rooted in a change of social atmosphere in the late-Ming society. F. W. Mote has noticed the "unprecedented level of consumption and enjoyment" in society, that "earlier norms of orderly social behavior no longer prevailed," and even many scholar-officials themselves were also aware of and have accepted this phenomenon.⁴⁴² Lu Ji (1515-1552), a Ming thinker who came from a scholar-official family, argued in his essay *Jin she bian*

昊天一罍，杂以八罍，一类十罍，暗记出处，遗僧辨析。僧因啜尝，取惠山、昊天，馀八瓶同味。德裕大加奇叹。当时停水递，人不告劳，浮议乃弭。

⁴⁴⁰ Chen Yaowen and Tian Yiheng of the Ming Dynasty both commented on this story. Tian, *Zhu quan xiao pin*, 37. Chen Yaowen, *Tian Zhong ji*, the Siku Edition.

⁴⁴¹ Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 335. 李德裕奢侈过求.....有损盛德。

⁴⁴² Mote, *Imperial China*, 770.

(*Anti-luxury Debate*) that extravagance can help people to make living easier, since it could create more job opportunities; however, practicing frugality would make the situation harder.⁴⁴³ Furthermore, Lu noticed that in the cities where people advocated extravagances such as Suzhou and Hangzhou, the poverty rate was lower than expectation.⁴⁴⁴

Such a social atmosphere of extravagance was also reflected in scholar-officials' daily practices of tea consumption and water drinking. Water delivery was widely accepted and practiced by scholar-official tea connoisseurs in the late-Ming era. Tian Yiheng has explained the way in which drinkers should fetch the spring water from the Mount Hui in the *Zhu quan xiao pin*, and he suggested that drinkers should send honest servants to fulfill this job so that they would not bring bad water from any places nearby.⁴⁴⁵ Another active practitioner of water delivery was Li Rihua (1565-1635), a scholar-official from Jiaxing, a prefecture considered as a hinge between Suzhou and Hangzhou, two of the most developed cities along the Grand Canal. As soon as Li received his *jinshi* degree in 1592, he became a friend of the Xiang family, the most influential and wealthiest family in town, based upon their obsessions with the collection of paintings. The distance between Jiaxing and Mount Hui was around 300 *li* by water,

⁴⁴³ Lin Li-yueh, "Lu Ji cong she si xiang zai tan: Jian lun jin nian Ming-Qing jing ji si xiang shi yan jiu de ji ge wen ti," *Xin Shi xue*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1994, pp. 131-153, 136-7.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁴⁴⁵ Tian, *Zhu quan xiao pin*, 37. 去泉再遠者，不能自汲，須遣誠實山童取之，以免石頭城下之偽。蘇子瞻愛玉女河水，付僧調水符取之，亦惜其不得枕流焉耳。故曾茶山《謝送惠山泉》詩：「舊時水遞費經營。」

which usually took travelers three or four days.⁴⁴⁶ Therefore, Li mentioned that, compared to tea tasters in Chang'an, tea connoisseurs in Jiaying had already taken advantage of its geography, due to the reason that the route between Jiaying and Mount Hui was much shorter than the one between Chang'an and the spring site.⁴⁴⁷ As a result, Li concluded that the spring water delivery as “convenient to acquire and the cost is not high. The labor it cost is even less than drawing water from well.”⁴⁴⁸

Furthermore, Jiaying's economic development in the Ming time also helped to support a quite extravagant lifestyle. *Da ming yi tong zhi* (Gazetteer of the Unified Great Ming), a gazetteer which was completed in 1461, had already described Jiaying as an affluent and prosperous area, where “all soils in the Wu region is supremely fertile. (Jiaying has the most fertile land in the Wu region. Therefore, once Jiaying has a good harvest, the Jianghuai region would be abundant; if Jiaying has a bad year, the whole region must behave frugally.) It attracts people with the profit of the fishery and salt... Residents are intelligent, gentle, and are substantially rich.”⁴⁴⁹ An advantageous geographical location and the rich endowment of natural resources had made Jiaying a

⁴⁴⁶ Huang Bian, *Tian xia shui lu lu cheng* (Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chu ban she, 1992), 204. Li Rihua, “Yun quan yue,” in *Shuo fu xu Vol. 29* edited by Tao Ting (Taipei: Xin xing shu ju, 1964), 65. 问渡松陵，不三四日而致。

⁴⁴⁷ Li, “Yun quan yue,” 1324. 昔卫公宦达中书，颇烦递水。

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. 取便费廉，用力省于桔槔。

⁴⁴⁹ Wu is the region with the core area around Lake Tai in Jiangnan Wu region is part of the ancient province Yangzhou in southeast of China. Jianghuai Region is a geographical area in China referring to the plain between the Yangtze and Huai Rivers, in the modern provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu. Li Xian, *Da ming yi tong zhi Vol. 39* (Taipei: Wen hai chu ban she, 1965), 2a-b. 全吴腴壤（嘉兴在全吴之壤最腴，故嘉禾一壤，江淮为之康，嘉禾为之歉，江淮为之俭）素诱鱼盐之利，人性柔慧，民俗殷富。

wealthy town, which laid a foundation for its continuous growth of commerce and consumption.

As one of the leading scholars in the Jiaxing prefecture, Li Rihua not only enthusiastically supported the editing of the local gazetteer, but also became an influential leader in tea drinking in this area who organized and promoted the routine practice of spring water delivery from the Mount Hui. Moreover, he even created *The Agreement of Spring Water Delivery* to establish and regulated this practice,

To deliver water from Mount Hui, three *fen* silver (1 *fen* =0.01 tael) should be paid for each jar, to compensate for the cost of transportation and labor. (Every fine jar is worth three *fen*, and each rough one is worth two *fen*. The lid to the jar is worth three or four *li* (1 *li* =0.001 tael). If one has prepared these by himself, then the cost of vessels is negligible.)

After the water arrives, everyone will be informed. You may carry it home by yourself. Silver is collected during the first ten days in the month. Water delivery occurs during the second ten days. In order to guarantee freshness, water will be delivered once every month. If you would like to do this, please put your name on the left, so that it's easier for us to make records. This is also for us to count the number of jars and pay with silver in accordance with the number.

Name ___ need ___ jars of water in the _____ month on the ___ day and pay _____.

Host of the Songyu Studio⁴⁵⁰

Li Rihua wrote this agreement in his hometown after he had retired from an official career. He enjoyed the leisure and had dedicated most of his time on paintings and antiques connoisseurship, as well as throwing himself into the pleasure of tea drinking

⁴⁵⁰ Li, "Yun quan yue," 1324. 运惠水，每坛偿舟力费银三分。坛精者，每个价三分，稍粗者二分。坛盖或三厘，或四厘，自备不计。水至，走报各友，令人自抬。每月上旬敛银，中旬运水，月运一次，以致清新。愿者书号于左，以便登册，并开坛数，如数付银。尊号·用水·坛。·月·日付。松雨斋主人谨订。

during these twenty-one years until he again served in the court of Emperor Chongzhen. Many details in Li's diary, the *Diary from the Pavilion for Tasting Water*, have shown that he has paid much attention to the quality of water especially when he was preparing for enjoying some good tea. For example, a monk named Liangxu came to his house with a package of newly produced *Putuo* tea, which was a tea quite inaccessible through the market due to its scarcity.⁴⁵¹ Li ordered one of his young servants to fetch three jars of clear water from the middle of the lake so that he could use this lake water to match up with the esteemed *Putuo* tea.⁴⁵² However, the spring water from the Mount Hui was still on the top of his preferred list. One day in the year of 1609, Li has recorded that "the people who took charge of water delivery from Mount Hui finally arrived. I've received more than 20 jars."⁴⁵³ In another diary entry written five years later, in 1614, Li noted, "with the shining moon in the last few days, the person who delivers spring water from Mount Hui comes to town."⁴⁵⁴ These two entries imply that the water delivery had been stably practiced for several years. Moreover, Li named one of the buildings in his house "weishui," which literally referred to water tasting, also suggesting that he paid lots of attention to the taste of water and tea.

⁴⁵¹ Li Rihua, *Wei shui xuan ri ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai yuan dong chu ban she, 1996), 33. 僧云：普陀产茶数十斤，此手焙者尤难得。

⁴⁵² *Ibid.* 万历三十七年，七月二十二日。海上僧量虚来，以普陀茶一裹贻余。余遣僮棹舟往湖心亭挹取水之清澈者，得三缶，瀹之，良佳。

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 400. 连宵皆有好月，惠山运水人至。

Furthermore, *The Agreement of Spring Water Delivery* also indicated that Li Rihua was not the only tea drinker who needed the spring water from Mount Hui. After the spring water arrived at Jiaying, everyone on the list was informed so that they could fetch their own vessels. There was no solid evidence to show who these people were; however, it could be inferred that these people were in friendship with Li Rihua. They might be the residents in the Jiaying city. *New Gazetteer of Jiaying* recorded that Li Rihua built his house, named *Tianzhi Hall*, in the eastern suburb near the waterway, where many other luxurious houses belonged to wealthy scholar-officials were located.⁴⁵⁵ In addition, he also established the *Xieshan Tower* next to the waterway for the convenience of the scholar-officials' interactions, such as literary and tea gatherings.⁴⁵⁶

On the other hand, even though Jiaying was a town with abundant water resources, good spring water was not common in town due to the fact that there were no nearby mountains. The mountainous area was an indispensable geographical condition for not only planting tea trees, but also providing good spring water. As mentioned above, Lu Yu used to categorize spring water from mountainous areas as the best water sources for tea drinking. Nevertheless, based on the local gazetteer that was edited by Li Rihua himself during the Chongzhen era, the Well of General Yan was the only place that produced good-quality ground water that tasted sweet and cold, and it was one of the few suitable water sources for tea-drinking in town according to late Ming evaluation of tea water.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁵ You Fu; Lu Zhihong, *Jiaying xin zhi* (Taipei: Cheng wen wen hua you xian gong si, 1970), 98. 恬致堂 太仆李日华之第，在春波门外螺丝浜，有六研斋紫桃轩味水轩。写山楼

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Cheng Menglei ed., "Yan jiang jun jing" in *Gu jin tu shu ji cheng (Fang yu hui bian Vol. 964), 2.*

However, Li Rihua also inferred that, at his time, the water in the river and the lake had not been seriously polluted yet in Jiaying. Nevertheless, if a tea drinker wanted to use water in the rivers or the lakes, he might need to row a boat to the center of the water where was away from the human activities, and then draw the water into a jar, and leave it for a whole night for the dregs to settle.⁴⁵⁸ Therefore, drinkable water was available in the city in general; however, none of these water sources reached the rigorous standard and the aesthetic principle of water tasting set up by the predecessors and their Ming contemporaries. Consequently, it was understandable for tea connoisseurs in Jiaying to organize delivery of spring water from Mount Hui, which was located hundreds of miles away. In addition to the aesthetic principle, the profound cultural meanings of the spring water from the Mount Hui, which was shared by the educated elite class, increased elite tea drinkers' attempt to pursuit water from the "second spring under the Heaven."

Compared to the scholar-officials who resided in Jiaying, where outstanding water sources were not regularly seen, their contemporaries in Hangzhou, which was a city with an abundant supply of high-quality spring water, still viewed the water delivered from the Mount Hui as a significant part of their daily life. The case of Feng Mengzhen (1548-1605), who had been Li Rihua's teacher, is very representative. After retiring from the official position Feng, a Jiaying native, decided to settle down in Hangzhou, a city in which not only Longjing, the very best tea, was produced, but also where the renowned Hupao spring and the Longjing spring (formerly named Longhong) were located.

⁴⁵⁸ Li Rihua, *Tianzhi tang ji* (Taipei: Guo li Zhong yang tu shu guan, 1971), 3395. 择其稍远舟楫初，甕汲停贮宿昔，即堪烹点，其胜井泉数倍。

However, being a Hangzhou resident, Feng was still fascinated by the Huishan Spring water and his addiction to the spring water was even more severe than that of Li Rihua. In *Kuai xue tang ji*, Feng mentioned “Out of the Huishan spring water for days, I finally got a jar of it from Jihua’s house. Brewing and tasting it, my thirst was finally relieved,” which implied that spring water from Mount Hui played an important role in Feng’s tea tasting.⁴⁵⁹ Like Li Rihua, delivery of spring water was practiced by Feng ordinarily, as he recorded “I asked Yu Tangqing (Feng’s friend) to fetch ten jars of the Huishan spring water.”⁴⁶⁰ Nevertheless, Feng appreciated spring water in Hangzhou as well. We may speculate that Feng had brought his habit from the place he grew up in this new city he was living; however, the other Hangzhou natives’ fascination about the Huishan spring water may help to dispel our doubt. Water delivery was widely recorded by some Hangzhou natives, such as Xu Cishu and Tian Yiheng.⁴⁶¹

In sum, above cases have shown that the appreciation of the Huishan spring water was widely accepted by the educated elite class. To fulfill their admiration of this water source, the scholar-officials would be willing to pay an impressively high cost of shipping spring water to the places they were living. These payments were not only rooted in the desire of a good tasting water for tea drinking, but also symbolized that the pursuit of a cultural meaning and identity shared by the scholar-official group had transcended those worldly issues such as transportation, labor costs and so on. However,

⁴⁵⁹ Feng Mengzhen, *Kuai xue tang ri ji* (Nanjing: Fenghuang chu ban chuan mei ji tuan, 2010), 88. 连日断惠泉，于季华宅得一罇，烹试，甚甦渴肠。

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴⁶¹ Xu Cishu mentioned water delivery in *Cha Shu*. Tian Yiheng talked about it in *Zhu quan xiao pin*.

when tasting spring water and drinking tea at home, the elite class had few chances to demonstrate their superiority on taste to the public. Only in a public space could the scholar-official tea connoisseurs perceive and present their advantage over other social classes on the theme of cultivation.

2. Travelling in the late-Ming era—Tours to the “Tea Springs”

Water delivery was utilized when the scholar-official tea drinkers had no opportunities to visit famous spring sites of tea and spring water in person. However, Wu Jen-shu argues that tourism had developed substantially during the Ming Dynasty, which means that not only the elite class but also the merchants and the commoners joined in the tourist activities.⁴⁶² In contrast with the more popular style of traveling that centered on the urban destinations, the scholar-officials, the elite class had developed their own style of traveling, which usually concentrated on their interactions with nature including famous mountains and rivers.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, outstanding springs were usually located in the mountainous areas. The most famous tea springs in the late-Ming era, such as the Huishan spring in Wuxi, the Longjing spring in Hangzhou, and the Hanhan spring in Suzhou, were all on the mountains. Compared to water delivery, which promoted the water tasting and tea drinking activities at home, traveling to spring sites functioned as a way of providing personal interactions with the spring water itself, their friends, and the

⁴⁶² Wu Jen-shu "Wan ming de lü you huo dong yu xiao fei wen hua: yi Jiangnan wei tao lun zhong xin (Travel and Consumption Culture in the Late-Ming China: A Case Study of the Jiangnan Region)" *Zhong yang yan jiu yuan Jin dai shi yan jiu suo ji kan* 41 (2003), 87- 98.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 87.

Buddhist monks. Moreover, traveling to spring sites made their lifestyle and elegant taste more visible to the public.

There are two purposes for the scholar-official to travel. On the one hand, to fulfill their civil service obligations, they had to travel to different places for government services, even crossed China for several times in their lives.⁴⁶⁴ On the other hand, as Wu has observed, since the Ming time, more and more scholar-officials took the advantage of traveling for the reason of government service and initiated their own casual style of traveling during their leisure time.⁴⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in the late-Ming period, their leisure traveling sometimes could be quite extravagant. Besides indispensable transport, such as palanquins, boats, and other necessities, the elite class sometimes carried as many consumer goods as they wanted to use on the road, all transported by their servants.⁴⁶⁶ Zhang Dai (1597-1679), who was raised in a wealthy scholar-official family in Shaoxing, recorded the objects that would be brought during the journey, such as food, including dessert, appetizers, rice, plated, incense burner, wine, and tea.⁴⁶⁷ Besides servants who delivered these materials, courtesans would also accompany the scholar-officials on the trip.⁴⁶⁸ Therefore, this style of traveling had prevented the elite class from a long-term adventurous style of traveling, and limited them in the short-term trips that were usually not too far from the urban areas. As a result, the tourist sites within the Jiangnan region,

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., 98.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 92.

⁴⁶⁷ Zhang Dai, *Langhuan wen ji* (Changsha: Yuelu shu she, 1985), 101. Wu, "Wan ming de lv you huo dong yu xiao fei wen hua," 101.

⁴⁶⁸ Wu, "Wan ming de lv you huo dong yu xiao fei wen hua," 103.

particularly the places around the cities of Suzhou and Hangzhou such as Mount Hui, Tiger Hill (Huqiu) and West Lake, became extremely popular during the Ming. Furthermore, since many productive writers were also residents in this region, their influence expanded through their publications with the help of the exploding woodblock printing business around China and reached readers outside of the elite class. Consequently, a flock of tourists would come to visit the places scholar-officials highly praised.⁴⁶⁹ Taking Tiger Hill of Suzhou as an example, while the scholar-officials visited this site to practice their elite-style traveling and tried to find peaceful places to enjoy their own pleasure, local travelers came to throw a party and broke the silence.⁴⁷⁰ However, scholar-officials were still able to be “apart from the laboring merchants and the common sightseer” based on their different preferences while traveling.⁴⁷¹ Even though when the scholar-officials had to share the same the tourist site and landscape with other people, they would still keep some specific perspectives and understandings. As mentioned before, the scholar-officials had developed a vocabulary to differentiate “elegance” from “vulgar”. Timothy Brook further argues that, in late-Ming time, scholar-officials labeled “the pleasure of travel as a ‘craving’ or ‘obsession (*pi*).’ This term had a precise meaning in elite circles where it communicated an obsessive enthusiasm for a culturally approved activity.”⁴⁷² As a culturally approved activity, the obsession of tea

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 109.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁷¹ Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 182.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 182.

drinking and the fascination with famous spring water not only played a significant role in tea connoisseurs' daily practice of tea drinking, but also contributed to the glossary of aesthetic principles, such as the idea of “zhen” (true).⁴⁷³ Furthermore, since the famous spring sites, such as the Huishan spring and the Hupao spring, were usually located in Buddhist monasteries and managed by the monks, traveling to these places also provided opportunities for the scholar-official tea drinkers to interact with the monks, who were not only considered as excellent tea makers and drinkers, but also the visits themselves helped “publicizing gentry identity,” Brook has pointed out.⁴⁷⁴

The “tea springs” were not only the destination of traveling, during which the scholar-official tea connoisseurs could publicize their elegant taste and cultivation, they also provided a space for them to communicate with each other on the themes of water tasting, tea drinking, literary writing and so on. Wen Zhengming's famous painting titled “Tea Gathering at Mount Hui” depicted four tea connoisseurs' gathering at the Huishan spring including Wen himself and his scholar-official friends Tang Zhen, Cai Yu, and Wang Chong.⁴⁷⁵ With all the tea vessels laid up on the table, a young servant was preparing the tea for the drinkers, while two tea connoisseurs were sitting around the Huishan spring, upon which was a thatched pavilion. This depiction of the spring was different from the real landscape, which included three pools in the shapes of octagon, square, and rectangle; however, it depicted an idealized image of a gathering around the

⁴⁷³ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 157. 可尽茶之真味矣。

⁴⁷⁴ Brook, *Praying for Power*, 215.

⁴⁷⁵ Wang Shugeng, “Wen Zhengming's Huishan cha hui tu,” *Nong ye Kao gu*, No.4, 1991: 177.

tea spring, which including the activities of water tasting, tea drinking, reading and communicating with old friends.

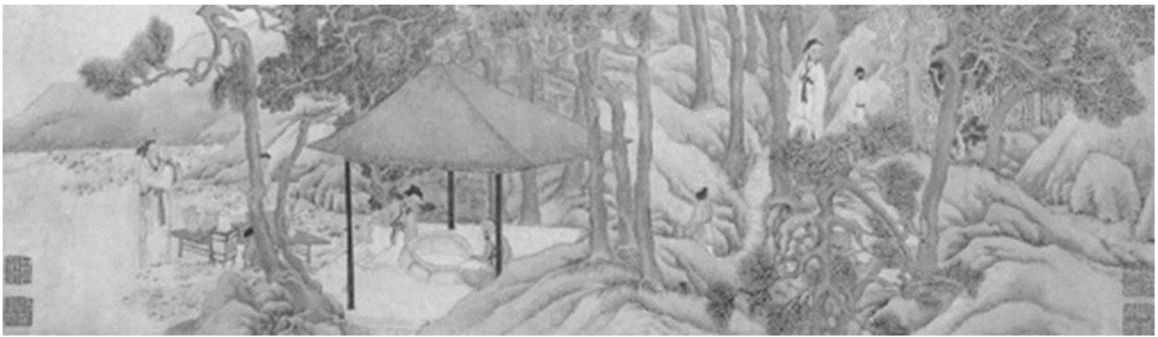


Figure 3.1 *Huishan cha hui tu jian* by Wen Zhengming⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁶ Source: Gugong bo wu yuan (The Palace Museum, Beijing)

Furthermore, famous spring water played an important role in gift-giving among the scholar-officials in a late-Ming context. The practice of collecting spring water for friends and the reception of bottled spring water were widely recorded in late-Ming literature. Moreover, presenting spring water as a gift was highly praised and considered as an elegant practice by the gift recipients.⁴⁷⁷ This gift, on the one hand, had profound cultural meanings, which I discussed above; on the other hand, the spring water contained no significant value, which distinguished it from other commodity goods that could be found in the market. In addition, through Yuan Hongdao and Qiu Zhangru's case, which had been mentioned before, we could sense that other than paintings, antiques, and all other objects which had substantial forms, spring water was harder to preserve or deliver, which also raised its cost.

In addition, spring sites as the destination for traveling provided a space for gatherings and interactions among the scholar-officials. Traveling offered scholar-officials opportunities to demonstrate their superiority over the commoners and merchants through emphasizing their own taste, elegance, and understandings in the public spaces. Tiger Hill, as well as Mount Hui, were located a few miles away from cities. There were three famous water sites in Tiger Hill, named Jian Chi (Sword Pool), Lu Yu Jing (Lu Yu well, also named Stone Spring), and Hanhan (also named Guanyin well). Like the Huishan spring water, the reputation of water sources in Tiger Hill can be traced back to at least the Tang Dynasty when Lu Yu ranked the Stone Spring as the third

⁴⁷⁷ Wu Zhihe, *Ming Qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo* (Taipei: Bo Yuan Press, 1997), 104.

best water source under heaven.⁴⁷⁸ With its reputation and a convenient location, Tiger Hill attracted plenty of visitors. Wu Zhihe tells us that “the visitors came here one after another, including celebrities, scholar-officials, merchants, and servants.”⁴⁷⁹ However, the scholar-officials were not satisfied with this crowded and noisy environment. Li Rihua used to describe his ideal space of tea drinking as quite isolated, and he wrote, “bed and desk are set up in a clean room, incense burner and tea ware are on the desk, and nothing else was there. When I am practicing meditation alone, the *qi* of pure spirit will gather around my body naturally.”⁴⁸⁰ Other late-Ming scholar-official tea drinkers also complained about noises; some even blamed their predecessors, who started to construct these places, because all these buildups made Tiger Hill available to more visitors, who destroyed the peacefulness of this place.⁴⁸¹ However, scholar-officials were still important visitors. For one thing, they could not resist the “tasteless but profound” taste of spring water and its cultural implications; for another thing, the tea springs still provided a comparatively ideal space for scholar-officials to enjoy the pleasure of tea drinking outside of their homes. Besides the water sources themselves, tea springs were usually managed by the Buddhist monks, with whom the scholar-officials could have dialogues. The relationship between the scholar-officials and the Buddhist monks could also differentiate the elite class from other pilgrims, who visited the temples and burned

⁴⁷⁸ Zhang, *Jian cha shui ji*, 2.

⁴⁷⁹ Wu Zhihe, *Ming ren yin cha sheng huo wen hua* (Yilan: Ming shi yan jiu xiao zu, 1996), 102.

⁴⁸⁰ Li Rihua, *Liu yan zhai san bi* Vol. 3, the *Siku* Edition.

⁴⁸¹ Wu, *Ming ren yin cha sheng huo wen hua*, 102.

incense.⁴⁸² Furthermore, since the tea spring usually located not far from where tea was produced, during the traveling to tea springs, water and tea were not the only things that they were enjoying with, but the tea pickers, tea makers and other visitors also became part of the landscape that scholar-officials were observing.

The Buddhist monks played an important role in tea-making and spring water management during the late-Ming era. On the one hand, as tea makers, the monks were respected by scholar-officials with their taste of tea and their skill of making tea; on the other hand, the monks had to spend time on managing the spring sites. The monks had been the best tea makers because of their long history of tea drinking; moreover, the Buddhist monasteries and temples were usually located in mountainous areas more suitable for growing tea and where spring water often originated. High-quality tea produced by the monks had been highly valued in the market or sometimes invisible in the market, because the best tea was so restricted by its natural environment. Like the Huqiu tea, most of the famous teas produced by Buddhist monks were acquired by local wealthy and powerful families as soon as it was made; therefore, there was not much genuine tea circulated in the market. However, spring water had different feature compared to the production of tea. Firstly, water was a free cost source. Even though the monks were managing it, they did not charge a fee for it. The scholar-official tea connoisseurs who were obsessed with spring water often came to the spring to draw water, sometimes drawing water day and night. Some tea drinkers had expressed their gratitude to the monks' generosity in letting them draw as much water as they could from

⁴⁸² Wu, "Wan ming de lü you huo dong yu xiao fei wen hua," 109.

the spring.⁴⁸³ The scholar-official tea connoisseurs also developed personal relationships with the monks in specific monasteries so that their water delivery could be supervised by monks. In order to guarantee the water they got was the best and was not changed by their own servants, monks used a strip of paper to seal the water jars.⁴⁸⁴ However, like the scholar-official tea drinkers who were annoyed by too many visitors, the monks were not patient enough when the water-takers came one after another.⁴⁸⁵ It seems that the preference of peacefulness and quietness were shared by the scholar-official tea drinkers and the Buddhist monks; therefore, their hatred of vulgarity may have set up the foundation for their friendship, since they view each other groups as an “elegant” one.

However, the boundaries between different social classes was not rigid. The commoners with outstanding sensual sensitivity and excellent expertise in water tasting and tea drinking could gain lots of respect from the elite class. The story of Min Wenshui was one such example. Min Wenshui was born as a commoner and later resided in the city of Nanjing. His reputation spread when local tea drinkers found his expertise in discerning different teas and his skill in innovating a new tea, named Min Laozi tea. Min’s ability and skill attracted many scholar-official tea connoisseurs, particularly those who were proud of their taste, sensual sensitivity, and elegant lifestyle. Both Zhang Dai and Li Rihua expressed their admiration of Min in their writings. Zhang dedicated an

⁴⁸³ Wu Zhihe “Ming dai huqiu cha zhi xing shuai” in *Zhong guo cha yi lun cong* (Taipei: Da li chu ban she, 1985), 151.

⁴⁸⁴ Wu Zhihe, *Ming ren yin cha sheng huo wen hua* (Yilan: Ming shi yan jiu xiao zu, 1996), 101.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

essay to record his visit with Min in *Tao an meng yi*.⁴⁸⁶ Zhang proudly mentioned that he had to wait for a long time to drink a cup of tea and talk about tea with Min. During this tea meeting, Min tried three times to test Zhang about his taste and sensitivity about tea and water. Only after Min realized that Zhang Dai was truly good at tea and water tasting, did he accept Zhang as a friend.⁴⁸⁷ Li Rihua also showed great respect to Min Wenshui in his *Written after Reading Min Wenshui's Tea Works*, which was collected in *Tan zhi tang ji*. Min Wenshui played a role not as a commoner but as a very knowledgeable person with expertise and sensitive perception of both water and tea.⁴⁸⁸ The appreciation of Min may also raise another issue. What were the elite class or people from wealthy scholar-official families really concerned about, social status itself or “elegant taste/sensual sensitivity?”

During the late-Ming period, the pursuit of famous spring water embodied the aesthetic principle in scholar-officials' daily life. From the Tang Dynasty to the late-Ming time, following the development of tea drinking, the selection of drinking water also experienced several changes, which represented that the tea drinkers' sensual understandings became more and more sophisticated. Spring water remained as a cost-free object in the commercializing society of late-Ming China, which differentiated it from other commodity goods. This feature of spring water also allowed it to possess a privileged position in scholar-official tea drinkers' daily practices. The delivery of spring water from the famous spring sites and traveling to the sites were both important ways for

⁴⁸⁶ Zhang Dai, *Tao an meng yi* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chu ban she, 1982), 24.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ Li, *Tianzhi tang ji* (Taipei: Guo li Zhong yang tu shu guan, 1971), 3174.

the scholar-official tea drinkers to fulfill their cultural imagination of the past; meanwhile, to build an identity with their contemporaries through the same understandings of things and cultivation.

Chapter Four

An Elegant Object in a Studio: Scholar-officials' Taste and the Development of Yixing Teapots in the Seventeenth Century

Corresponding to the shift in imperial taste from cake tea to loose tea at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), Yixing stoneware teapots emerged during the mid-Ming period and quickly became the most valuable tea vessels among consumers, mostly the scholar-officials. Previous studies have shown the scholar-officials' role in consuming and making the teapot of Yixing a new luxury good by praising its rustic quality and elegance in their widely-circulated connoisseurship literature. This chapter intends to explore the interaction between scholar-officials' taste and potters' innovations in teapots by examining the privileged Wu family of Yixing and its family members' personal connections with well-known local potters, such as Shi Dabin and Xu Youquan. This chapter argues that the scholar-officials were not only consumers but also patrons who participated in the creation of new designs of teapots. As consumers and patrons, they influenced potters' designs from two aspects: the size and the style of the inscription. In addition, with the help of scholar-officials, Yixing potters were no longer treated as ordinary potters in the society, but a specific group of artisans with outstanding talent, who were called "Yixing potters" by consumers of Yixing teapots.

The Changed Tea and the Changing Tea Wares

The first Emperor of the Ming Dynasty, Zhu Yuanzhang (r. 1368-1398), banned cake tea as a tribute on the grounds that its production was too labor intensive. He ordered that four types of whole-leaf tea be sent to the court as tribute.⁴⁸⁹ With a grassroots background, Zhu's taste of tea was not refined. However, with the influence of the changing imperial taste, the quality of loose tea improved significantly. Once free of the obligation to produce tribute cake tea, tea producers in China concentrated on growing and selling better quality loose tea; however, the production of cake tea still continued in some regions.⁴⁹⁰

With the decline of its caked and powdered forms, tea was generally brewed in a way that was different from earlier methods before the Ming time. Steeping loose tea in boiled water to extract its herbal essence became the chief method when the drinkers consumed tea. To make a bowl or a pot of tea, water was boiled in a water pot on a brazier or stove fueled with charcoal. Tea was first rinsed in a colander with boiled water to remove all the dust. Then the warm but drained tea leaves were transferred to a stoneware teapot, which later would be filled with hot boiled water. After steeping for a while, the tea was poured into small tea cups or tea-bowls, but the tea leaves remained in the teapot. After the end of the first round, additional water was poured into the teapot for the next infusion. This process could be repeated many times until the herbal essence was

⁴⁸⁹ James A. Benn, *Tea in China: A Religious and Cultural History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 91.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

exhausted and the tea did not taste strong enough.⁴⁹¹ One of the main differences between new and old styles of tea drinking was consumption of the leaves themselves. Tea leaves were left behind in the process in the Ming style; powdered tea particles were consumed along with hot liquid during the Tang and Song dynasties.⁴⁹²

Different ways to consume tea resulted in varied ways of using tea wares. Compared to the typical method of tea drinking in the late-Ming period, the process of tea-tasting in the Tang and Song dynasties was much more complicated. The complication implied that tea connoisseurs in the Ming era had drastically simplified the tea vessels they often used, as well as the whole procedure of tea tasting. The understanding of Tang-style tea drinking has been significantly transformed by the reappearance of one set of the Tang imperial tea wares found in 1987 in the crypt under the pagoda at Famen Monastery about 140 kilometers west of the Tang capital Chang'an.⁴⁹³ This series of metallic tea wares includes two lidded baskets, a tea brazier (stove), a pair of fire tongs, a silver-gilt spoon, a silver measure, a silver-gilt canister, a tea grinder, a silver-gilt tea sieve, a salt container, and a silver turtle shaped tea powder container.⁴⁹⁴ Through the inscriptions on the bottom of some utensils, we are able to know that they were made in the imperial workshop in 869.⁴⁹⁵ Furthermore, some inscriptions on these tea instruments also have

⁴⁹¹ Beatrice Hohenegger, *Steeped in History: The Art of Tea* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2009), 11.

⁴⁹² Benn, *Tea in China*, 173.

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 63. Cheng Xiaopin, "Cong cha wen wu kan tang chao shi qi de cha wen hua feng su." *Nong ye kao gu*, no.4 (2003): 114.

⁴⁹⁵ Benn, *Tea in China*, 63.

indicated the name of the emperor who donated them. In addition, these tea wares were decorated with Buddhist patterns, such as “lotus flowers, representing the Buddha and spiritual purity; paired flying geese, indicating the soul; and the flying heavenly horses and favorable clouds, suggesting the heavens.”⁴⁹⁶ They all suggest that this tea set was not designated for daily tea consumption, but for the purpose of Buddhist ritual.

However, we can still build an image of the Tang-style tea drinking through these materials with the help of Lu Yu’s *the Classic of Tea*:

To boil tea using his (Lu Yu’s) method, one begins by taking a tea cake in bamboo tongs, toasting it by the brazier, then grinding the tea, and sifting it to produce a fine powder. The water for tea is heated in a round cauldron on a brazier, and at the first boil, described as “fish eyes,” a pinch of salt is added to it. At the second boil, known as “strung pearls,” one reserves a dipperful of the boiling water. At the third boil, one should introduce the powdered tea into a small whirlpool in the cauldron created by rapidly stirring the water with the tongs. Then, the tea is served by ladling it out into bowls, each topped with a generous amount of froth.⁴⁹⁷

In addition to these metallic tea wares, Patricia Karetzky has pointed out, “Cups of blown glass and porcelain were uncovered in the vaults.”⁴⁹⁸ However, compared to the extravagant silver-gilt, glass and porcelain ones, the less-expensive ceramic tea wares were more popular outside of the imperial palace.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ Patricia Karetzky, "The Tea Ceremony in Tang China," *Calliope* 14, no. 3 (2003): 40.

⁴⁹⁷ Benn, *Tea in China*, 112.

⁴⁹⁸ Karetzky, "The Tea Ceremony in Tang China," 40.

⁴⁹⁹ Cheng, "Cong cha wen wu kan tang chao shi qi de cha wen hua feng su", 116.



Figure 4.1. Tea wares found in Famen Monastery.⁵⁰⁰

⁵⁰⁰ Source: Famen Temple Museum

Zhongguo wen wu wang, "Famen si chu tu tang chao cha ju," Zhongguo guo ji abo wu guan, accessed Mar 12, 2018. <http://www.chnmuseum.cn/tabid/1836/InfoID/77500/frtid/111/Default.aspx>

During the Tang and Song dynasties, the most popular utensils for tea were ceramic tea-bowls. In the Tang Dynasty, among all of the mentioned tea-bowls, Xing (Hsing) and Yue (Yueh) tea wares were most admired by tea connoisseurs. Xing wares were produced in modern Hebei Province. Yue tea wares were made in South China. Gu Kuang (? 725-? 814), the author of *Cha Fu (The Rhapsody of Tea)* compared Yue wares with jade; Lu Yu, who favored Yue ware above Xing ware, compared Xing ware with silver and snow.⁵⁰¹ The metaphors of jade and silver suggest that Xing and Yue tea wares were different colors. In *Science and Civilisation in China*, Joseph Needham has pointed out that the popularity of these two kinds of tea wares explains “how tea types were savoured in contrasting ceramic bowls and cups, white Hsing (Xing) porcelain acting as a foil to red tea and greenish-blue Yueh (Yue) ware complimenting green tea.”⁵⁰² This idea of consuming specific tea with tea wares in particular colors not only existed in the Tang dynasty, but was also inherited by the tea connoisseurs in the Song Dynasty; moreover, this idea was still influential among tea consumers until the early-Qing Dynasty, at least.

The most valued tea utensils in the Song Dynasty were dark-bodied and dark-glazed stoneware Jian (Chien) tea bowls. Jian tea bowls were produced in the Jianyang county of the Fujian Province, where the most valuable Song-dynasty tribute tea was produced. In contrast to the emperors of the Tang Dynasty, the Song emperors preferred white-colored

⁵⁰¹ Lu Yu, *Cha jing* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991), 9. 若邢瓷類銀，越瓷類玉。邢不如越一也。若邢瓷類雪，則越瓷類水，邢不如越二也。邢瓷白而茶色丹。越瓷青而茶色綠，邢不如越三也。Gu Kuang, "Cha fu." In *Quan tang wen*, by Gao Dong (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1983), 5365. 越泥似玉之甌

⁵⁰², Joseph Needham and Ling Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China* Vol. 5. (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 271.

cake tea to red or green colored tea, and this change of imperial taste resulted in a boom in Jian tea ware production because the dark-color tea vessels provided the best effect for white tribute tea.⁵⁰³ In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the potters developed new technologies, including adopting the use of thicker glazes, using less wood ash in the glaze recipes, and elevating kiln temperatures higher than that was general in the Tang Dynasty.⁵⁰⁴ These new technological transformations turned the black-bodied and black-glazed wares to the tea bowls with glaze effects of “remarkable oily brown-black streakiness, similar to animal fur.”⁵⁰⁵ The glaze effects which were most mentioned and admired in tea literature were so-called “you di” (oil-spot), “tu hao” (hare’s fur) and “zhe gu ban” (partridge feather).⁵⁰⁶ Furthermore, different from Xing and Yue kilns, Jian ware kilns were exclusive for making tea wares.⁵⁰⁷ This connection between Jian wares and tea-drinking not only suggests that the making of tea wares had become an independent industry, but also implies that ceramics production began to be involved in the world of tea-drinking.

The appreciation of stoneware in tea-drinking did not decline like metallic tea wares experienced after the fall of the Tang imperial family; however, its status had improved significantly in tea connoisseurs’ minds in later centuries. Cai Xiang, the most well-known tea connoisseur, writer, and the supervisor of tribute tea production of the Song

⁵⁰³ Cai Xiang, *Cha lu*, (Taipei: Yi wen yin shu guan, 1965), 6. 茶色白，宜黑盞。

⁵⁰⁴ Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 269.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

Dynasty, stated in *The Record of Tea (Cha lu)* that, “The most crucial function of the bowl is to keep the tea warm for a long time, so that it would not get cold.”⁵⁰⁸ This statement implies that consumed as a hot beverage, the capacity of the utensil to keep the temperature of tea was highly valued by tea drinkers. The use of metallic material, except for the use of tin, was not popular in the making of tea ware, due to its inefficacy in keep the temperature of tea. Furthermore, the Ming sumptuary legislation also affected the popularity of jade, gold and silver vessels among tea consumers. The entry titled “Prohibition on the Use of Utensils” in *Ming History* records that, “in the sixteenth year of the Zhengde reign (1521) it was decreed that officials of the First and Second Rank might not use vessels of jade, but only of gold. Merchants and practitioners of craft skills might not use vessels of silver and were in all respects to be as the common people. However, stoneware was available to all consumers.”⁵⁰⁹ The sumptuary law allowed stoneware gaining an advantage over precious metallic wares in terms of having wide-ranging consumers.

Teapots had not been used in tea drinking during the Tang and Song dynasties. Karetzky observed that “no teapots have been found” from the Famen monastery during the excavation.⁵¹⁰ Meanwhile, in *the Classic of Tea*, Lu Yu has listed twenty-four objects under the category of tea wares, including the tea-bowls, brazier, tea grinder and so on, without mentioning teapots.⁵¹¹ Furthermore, when an emperor of the Northern Song

⁵⁰⁸ Cai, *Cha lu*, 6. 燂之久热难冷，最为要用

⁵⁰⁹ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 149.

⁵¹⁰ Karetzky, "The Tea Ceremony in Tang China," 40.

⁵¹¹ Lu, *Cha jing*, 5.

Dynasty, Zhao Ji (Huizong, 1082-1135) was composing *the Treatise on Tea*, this outstanding tea connoisseur discussed many tea wares that had been using at his time, such as tea grinder, tea-bowl and bamboo whisk. However, one object, which was neither mentioned by Lu Yu nor seen in the collection of Famen monastery, called water vase/water pitcher, emerged on his list. Emperor Huizong further explained the function of this utensil, which said, “The mouth of the sprout should be tiny and oval with a teardrop angle. Such a vase will cut the water flow with ease, ending a pour without losing a drop. This is very important because it requires precisely seven gusts of hot water to create the perfect froth across the surface of the tea. A single drop of water would therefore disturb the foam whisked over the surface of the tea liquor.”⁵¹² This description of an ideal water vase has suggested that tea and water were prepared separately during this period, while powdered tea was placed in a tea-bowl, boiling water was prepared in a pitcher. The painting titled *Ming yuan du shi* (Figure 4.2) by Liu Songnian (?-?1225) also depicted an image of the Song-style tea drinking, in which one consumer held a water pitcher while pouring hot water into a tea-bowl. Therefore, this Song style of tea preparation still differed from the way later became popular in the Ming Dynasty, the period in which tea connoisseurs began to adopt and appreciate a new tea vessel, the teapot.

⁵¹² Zhao Ji, "Emperor Huizong's Treatise on Tea." *Global Tea Hut: Tea and Tao Magazine*, (2016): 41. 嘴之未欲园小而峻削，则用汤有节而不滴沥。盖汤力紧则发速有节，不滴沥，则茶面不破。



Figure 4.2 *Ming yuan du shi tu* attributed to Liu Songnian.⁵¹³ In this Song-Dynasty painting, one consumer held a water pitcher while pouring hot water into a tea-bowl.

⁵¹³ Source: Gugong bo wu yuan (National Palace Museum, Taipei).

The Wu Family and the Origin of Yixing Stoneware Teapots

Introduction to Yixing and its Local Tea during the mid-Ming Period

Gu Yuanqing (1487-1565), a famous tea connoisseur, book collector, and publisher based in Suzhou, states in the preface of *Cha Pu (A Guide to tea)*,

By nature, I love drinking tea. As a young man, I got acquainted with Wu Xinyuan in Yangxian (Yixing) and Guo Yangzhuo in Qinchuan (Changshu). These two masters are fanatic tea connoisseurs. They taught me the methods of storing tea, roasting tea, boiling water and making tea, and all these methods are simple and easy to master.⁵¹⁴

Yangxiang, the place where Master Wu Xinyuan came from, was the former name of the county of Yixing, which is a town located on the west side of Lake Tai (*Taihu*).⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ Gu Yuanqing, Preface to *Cha pu*, ed. Qian Chunnian (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ba she, 2001), 82. 余性嗜茗，弱冠時識吳心遠於陽羨，識過養拙於秦（琴）川。二公極於茗事者也。授余收焙烹點法，頗為簡易。

⁵¹⁵ According to *Yixing xian zhi (The Gazetteer of Yixing County 宜興縣志)*, the Yangxian county was first set up by the Chu State during the warring-state period. In the Qin Dynasty, Yangxian was a part of Kuaiji prefecture. During the Eastern Han Dynasty, it became part of the Wuxing Prefecture (吳興郡). In the Western Jin period, to praise the merit of Zhou Qi (258-313) who stamped out three rebellions, the emperor Hui (259-307) awarded him with the land that covered six counties, including Yangxian, Guoshan, Linjin, etc., Yixing (義興) was adopted to be the new name of this area. The Prefecture of Yixing was set up in the year of 422 during the Southern Dynasties. In the Sui Dynasty, the Prefecture of Yixing was abolished, and the name of Yangxiang County was replaced by a new name, Yixing. In the Tang Dynasty, the name of Ezhou (鵝州) was given to this area, and Ezhou had jurisdiction over two counties, Yangxian and Linjin. During the Northern Song Dynasty, in order to avoid using the second emperor's personal name, Guangyi (光義), the character of 義 was substituted by 宜. Since 1369, the second year in the reign of the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty, Yixing county was within the jurisdiction of Changzhou prefecture (常州府). Ruan Shengji, *Yixing xian zhi* (Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1970), 20.

However, tea drinkers in the Ming period still preferred to use its former name Yangxian on the ground that this name reminded them that this county had a special position in China's tea history. Tea producers in this county once made one of the best tribute tea during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), which was called the Yangxian tea.⁵¹⁶ Lu Tong (795-835), an outstanding poet and important tea connoisseur of the Tang Dynasty, wrote a poem after receiving a gift of leftover tribute tea from a high official who was taking charge of tea plantations in Yangxiang, and the poem says, "before the emperor tastes the tea from Yangxian, the common plants dare not to blossom."⁵¹⁷

During the Tang Dynasty, Yangxian tea, as all other top-rank tribute tea such as Guzhu tea and Mengding tea, was a type of cake tea.⁵¹⁸ By the eleventh century, even though the Song Dynasty had established an inspired variation on the Tang art of tea, cake tea kept its status as the mainstream of tea production and consumption. In the sixteenth century, even though it had been more than a century after the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty announcing the abolition of cake tea as an imperial tribute in 1391, the cake tea had not died away yet. The art of brewing and drinking cake tea was still popular among some social elites. Yangxian tea had remained its shape, which

⁵¹⁶ Ruan, *Yixing xian zhi*, 396. 唐贡山在在县东南三十五里，临罨画溪，以唐时产茶入贡故名，金沙寺即在其下。啄木岭在县东南七十里，唐湖常二守贡茶相会之地。李栖筠为州有僧献佳茗，陆羽以为芬香冠绝他境，可供尚方，始供万两。

⁵¹⁷ Lu Tong, "Yu chuan zi ji" in *Si bu cong kan ji bu* Vol. 2 (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1929), 3a. Translated by James A. Benn. Benn, *Tea in China*, 91. 走筆謝孟諫議新茶 天子須嘗陽羨茶，百草不敢先開花。

⁵¹⁸ Tribute tea production and distribution were recorded by Mao Wenxi in *Cha pu*. Mao Wenxi, *Cha pu*, ed. Ye Yu (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ba she, 2001), 13.

originated in the Tang Dynasty. Furthermore, different from other popular loose teas such as Longjing and Huqiu, which were processed by the technique of *chaoqing*, Yangxian tea was still processed by the method of steaming.⁵¹⁹

Wu Lun, Yangxian Tea, and other Scholar-official Tea Connoisseurs

Respected by Gu Yuanqing as a master of tea, Wu Xinyuan alias Wu Lun (*zi Daben*), was a member of the Wu family in the county of Yixing. The Wu family originated during late Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), when Wu Lun's great grandfather, Wu Deming (*zi Chongliang*), who had a military background, decided to settle down in Yixing.⁵²⁰ Wu Yizhong (*zi Zhengfu*), Wu Lun's grandfather, was a commoner, but he was educated and started a career of teaching.⁵²¹ Not until the generation of Wu Lun's father, had this family become a scholar-official family. Wu Yu (*zi Shangpu*), Wu Lun's father, was selected to study at the National Academy through the annual recommendation and was later assigned a position in the Ministry of Revenue.⁵²² Wu Yu had two sons: Wu Jing (*zi Dachang*), who studied hard and later was also recommended to study at the National

⁵¹⁹ Steven D. Ouyang "Tea in China: From its Mythological Origins to the Qing Dynasty" in *Steeped in History: The Art of Tea* (Los Angeles: Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2009), 50-1.

⁵²⁰ Shanghai tu shu guan edited., *Zhongguo jia pu zong mu* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 2008), 926. 始遷祖德明，字崇亮，元至正間自汝陰遷居宜興荊溪。 .

⁵²¹ Ruan, *Yixing xian zhi*, 346. 以中教授為業。

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 347. 由歲薦入國學任戶部主事，權課淮上，雖族姓親故市舶往來毫無徇縱。

Academy like his father; Wu Lun, who was not very interested in the civil service examination, later became a recluse and a tea master.⁵²³

Wu Lun's biography in the local gazetteer and his epitaph do not record his exact birth year. However, we know that he died in the first year of Jiajing's reign (1522-1566), at the age of eighty-three.⁵²⁴ His birth year was probably 1440, the fifth year of Zhengtong's reign (1436-1449). According to the local gazetteer and his epitaph, Wu Lun was a forthright and energetic person with moral integrity.⁵²⁵ He was a recluse (*yiren*) with elegant taste, and he enjoyed tea drinking and practiced calligraphy in two villas which were built outside of the Yixing County.⁵²⁶ However, his reclusive life did not make him unknown, but was still a celebrity in the county. People in town could recognize him even though he would not come to town except in an emergency because he usually had two pets accompanied him, one deer and one white crane.⁵²⁷

Even though a recluse, Wu Lun was able to make friends with many Jiangnan elites and scholar-officials through his father and brother who studied at the National Academy. Furthermore, the reclusiveness was also the reason why Wu Lun could build up his reputation among the Jiangnan elite group. Some scholars have indicated that the idea of

⁵²³ Ibid., 356. 貢生，性謹厚，讀書好古，言韜不苟。

⁵²⁴ Wang, Ao "Wu fu jun lun mu biao." In *Guo chao xian zheng lu*, ed. Hong Jiao (Taipei: Taiwan xue sheng shu ju, 1965), 5141. 正德丁丑得封如仕官仕进礼部员外郎。又以□□诏例加封，命下而卒。嘉靖壬午十月九日也。

⁵²⁵ Ibid. “风神散朗，操履修潔。

⁵²⁶ Huang Zhijun, *Jiangnan tong zhi*, Vol. 7 (Taipei: Hua wen shu ju, 1967), 26-7. 創別墅二于溪山間，南曰樵隱，北曰漁樂。

⁵²⁷ Wang, "Wu fu jun lun mu biao," 5141. 非公事未尝一入城府。乡人遥望之，辄曰，吴隐君来也

being a recluse was popular among the people during the Ming Dynasty. On the one hand, the accomplished scholar-officials desired to be free from service obligations, so that they could pursue a meaningful life of personal cultivation and engagement with the arts; on the other hand, for educated men without any higher degrees, being recluses were the assets for them to win recognition and material support from the powerful by showing their talents.⁵²⁸ Born in an established family, Wu Lun enjoyed an artistic life without bothering with the civil service examination and wealth. In this ideal and artistic life, he was able to cultivate his talent for tea drinking. He was later respected by many scholar-official tea connoisseurs in the city of Suzhou, including very influential ones at the time, such as Wang Ao (1450-1525), Wu Kuan (1435-1504), Shen Zhou (1427-1509), and Wen Zhengming (1470-1559).

Wu Lun's expertise in tea drinking was well-recorded in his epitaph which was composed by Wang Ao who was a friend of the Wu brothers and also one of the leading literary figures in the city of Suzhou. Wang received the *jinsshi* Degree in the eleventh year of Chenghua (1475) and was ranked the third place among all the participants in the examination. According to Wang, Wu Lun showed a strong preference to locally produced cake tea, and he was easily able to tell the differences between local cake tea and cake tea produced in another area.⁵²⁹ Furthermore, Wu Lun was enthusiastic about making tea himself, and he insisted on storing, brewing and drinking cake tea following the Tang way, which was remarkably different from the much more simplified but more

⁵²⁸ Tsao, *Remembering Suzhou*, 121.

⁵²⁹ Wang, "Wu fu jun lun mu biao," 5141. 偏嗜茗饮，其出必阳羨倾渚（顧渚），非其地者辄能辨之。

popular way of drinking loose tea that was promoted by the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty.⁵³⁰ In the epitaph, Wang carefully described Wu Lun's procedure of preparing tea,

He always stored the tea in dark and cold place after selecting it. He always heated water to short of boiling. The way he made tea was not merely included by *the Classic of Tea*. His stove, cauldron, brazier, stoker and fire tongs were exquisitely made and with elegant taste of antique. He himself treasured these tools very much. The space could accommodate to four or five people. He spooned a little amount of tea and distributed to the drinkers. The tea became richly foamy after whisking, and the drinkers finished drinking by three or four sips. If drinkers desired to just drink more, he would start serving again. He never let the guests drink their fill.⁵³¹

The tools Wu Lun used, such as the cauldron, the brazier, and the stoker, more often appeared in tea literature written in the Tang and Song Dynasties but were barely mentioned during the Ming Dynasty.⁵³² However, his interest in Tang style tea drinking was not alone and was shared by other people during his time. Wang Ao was one such person. Wang Ao, who resided in Suzhou, traveled to Yixing very often, and he sometimes joined the gatherings held by Qiu dong hui lao, which was a society participated by twelve local scholar-officials at the Hall named Dong qiu yu wan.⁵³³ Their gatherings were well-organized and planned not only for entertaining and literary

⁵³⁰ Ibid. 人又曰，其古陆鸿渐之流耶。”

⁵³¹ Ibid. 其掇之必蔭藏之，必温烹之，必法有茶经所不载，其爐灶，融鬲，灰承，炭挝，火策之属亦皆精绝古雅，甚自贵重。坐容四五人，勺少许，沫饽纷馥，三四啜已罄。必啜者有余思。始复进。终亦不令饫也。

⁵³² About tools for the Tang and Song style of tea drinking, see *Cha ju tu zan* edited by Shen an lao ren. Shen an lao ren, *Cha ju tu zan*, ed. Ye Yu (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ba she, 2001), 72.

⁵³³ Wang Ao, "Dong qiu hui lao ji lue." In *Yixing xian zhi*, by Shengji Ruan (Taipei: Cheng wen chu ban she, 1970), 401.

activities, but also for edifying local masses.⁵³⁴ The members of this society were all accomplished officials of Yixing, and Wu Lun's brother Wu Jing, as an imperial scholar (Hanlin xueshi), was one of them. Wang was acquainted with Wu Lun when they together visited the Shanjuan Cave, which was one of the famous tourist sites located outside of the town. Wang recorded, when departing from Yixing, Wu Lun gave him a tea stove/brazier (cha lu) and a larger brick tea stove (cha zao) as gifts.⁵³⁵ Therefore, the reclusive tea connoisseur impressed Wang, and thereafter, Wu Lun's reputation as an exceptional tea connoisseur spread beyond the county of Yixing.

Wu Lun also became friends with another Suzhou-based cultural leader, Shen Zhou, a talented and renowned painter, as well as a famous recluse at the time. In contrast to Wang Ao, who achieved the *Jinshi* degree and served prominent position in the central government, Shen Zhou did not have any degrees. However, his family was prestigious and wealthy enough to support his pursuit of cultural talent. Shen's grandfather became acquainted with a Buddhist monk named Da ji, whose lifestyle of simplicity and modesty was impressive and was highly complimented. Moreover, Da ji's taste and skill in tea drinking significantly impacted on Shen's grandfather, who later also became fascinated by tea drinking. Influenced by Shen's grandfather, the members of the Shen family not

⁵³⁴ Wu Qi, "Wan ming xiang huan de jiao hua guan yi ji shi jian kun jing," *Journal of Historical Science*, 2014, Issue 02, pp.21-30: 22. 凡归于乡者, 岁时有会所, 以敦契谊、畅情怀、崇齿德, 而示乡人以礼也。示乡人以礼者所以接之于道, 作敬上而远于斗办也……尊让洁敬而接乡人于道, 斯君子之所重也, 非特燕游之乐而已。

⁵³⁵ Wang Ao, "Wu fu jun lun mu biao," 5141. "余昔过宜兴与君邂逅荆溪间, 同余游善卷还过其家。余归吴, 贻茶炉茶灶。"

only inherited an elegant taste of tea, but also adopted a simple but cultivated lifestyle.⁵³⁶ Like Wu Lun's epitaph, Shen's epitaph was also composed by Wang Ao, and Wang described Shen as not only a respected painter and a connoisseur, but also as knowledgeable about every possible subject, including Confucian classics, geography, medicine, fortune telling, legends, Buddhism and Daoism.⁵³⁷ Furthermore, Shen and his family were also the promoters of the popularly elegant lifestyle among social elites of Suzhou, which included reading books, tea tasting, painting connoisseurship and playing music.⁵³⁸ Shen's choice of lifestyle, focusing on self-cultivation and seclusion, as James Benn has pointed out, led to an engagement with tea connoisseurship.⁵³⁹ On the one hand, Shen's passion for the art of tea was presented in his works when he incorporated tea-related themes into his paintings, such as "Ji quan zhu ming tu" (*Drawing spring water for Brewing Tea*), which depicted a young servant holding a water pitcher and a long stick heading for the spring site.⁵⁴⁰ On the other hand, he also traveled to Yixing several times in his life to share the pleasure of tea drinking with his recluse friend, Wu Lun. The friendship between these two recluses could be observed through their collaboration on the scroll painting titled "Wu zhong qi jing tu" (*The Marvelous Landscape of Wu Zhong*,

⁵³⁶ Wu Zhihe, *Ming Ren Yin Cha Sheng Huo Wen Hua* (Yilan: Ming Shi Yan Jiu Xiao Zu, 1996), 8.

⁵³⁷ Tsao, *Remembering Suzhou*, 11-2.

⁵³⁸ Wu, *Ming Ren Yin Cha Sheng Huo Wen Hua*, 9.

⁵³⁹ Benn, *Tea in China*, 181.

⁵⁴⁰ Liao Jianzhi, *Ming dai cha wen hua yi shu*, Taipei: Xiu wei chu ban she, 2007, 139.

1500), in which Shen completed the main part of the painting while Wu Lun contributed a postscript.⁵⁴¹

Wu Kuan (1435-1504), the top scorer of the civil service examination held in 1472 and one of the three cultural heroes in Suzhou at the time, also shared the same fondness for Tang-style tea with this group of drinkers. Furthermore, he even owned a tea estate, and picked and baked tea himself. His literary collection contains a “Love song to tea,” which “extolls his companion’s devotion to the beverage.”⁵⁴² The poem says,

This Old Man of Decoctions loves tea as he loves alcohol,
Thinking nothing of three *sheng* or even five *dou*
When “before Spring Hall” is opened, there are no surplus item,
Just a tea stove and a tea mortar (the original translation is ladle).
In the hall, tea is brewed with nothing extra,
To the end of the day, teacups are never far from my mouth:
The only servants at this banquet are the tea boys;
The only people who come in the gate are companions in tea.
In thanks for tea there are poems and we study Lu Tong;
Brewing tea, there are *fu*, drafted like those of Huang Number Nine.
The Classic of Tea’s Continued Chapters we don’t lend to people,
The Tea Manual Supplements slip from our hands.
Tea planted on ordinary days, we don’t have anything to do with,
We know the acreage of tea plantations below the mountains.
People of the world may roam the countryside in search of tea,
But here we have no problem.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴¹ “Shen Zhou Yixing zhi you yu ji you hua zuo,” *Zhong guo shu hua*, no.10, 2016, accessed Mar 10, 2018.
http://www.183read.cc/magazine/article_1388093.html

⁵⁴² Benn, *Tea in China*, 182

⁵⁴³ Ibid. Wu, *Ming Ren Yin Cha Sheng Huo Wen Hua*, 14. 汤翁爱茶如爱酒，不数三升并五斗。先春堂开无长物，只将茶灶连茶臼。堂中无事长煮茶，终日茶杯不离口。当筵侍立惟茶童，入门来谒惟茶友。谢茶有诗学卢仝，煎茶有赋拟黄九。《茶经续编》不借人，《茶谱补遗》将脱手。平生种茶不办租，山下茶园知几亩。世人可向茶乡游，此中亦有无何有。

On one hand, the usage of tea mortar in this circumstance suggested that Wu Kuan was consuming powdered tea instead of loose tea. On the other hand, as James Benn has pointed out “his self-conscious enjoyment in a kind of nostalgic tea connoisseurship that celebrated the verse of Lu Tong and Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), while reveling in the total absorption in the minutiae of expertise in the topic of tea.”⁵⁴⁴ Besides the nostalgia of the Tang and Song tea connoisseurs, Wu Kuan communicated with his contemporaries through the medium of tea. For example, he sometimes received the Yangxian cake tea sent by Wu Lun, and he left many records and poems of enjoying tasting this tea in many different circumstances, such as his trip to the Mount Hui and his stay in Beijing as the Minister of Rites.⁵⁴⁵ In his poem titled “Tasting Yangxian Tea,” Wu Kuan expressed the confidence of his skill of brewing Yangxian tea, because he was trained by a recluse tea expert, Wu Lun.⁵⁴⁶

Wen Zhengming, a talented man from a distinguished family in Suzhou, a student of Wang Ao, Wu Kuan and Shen, and one of the most achieved artists, also developed a friendship with Wu Lun, even though Wen was thirty years younger. Wen continued the Suzhou elite’s relationship with this Yixing tea connoisseur. Among Wen’s poems, two were written after he received new Yangxian tea sent by Wu Lun from Yixing. Like Wu Kuan, Wen also expressed how he cherished the friendship with Wu Lun and his valuable

⁵⁴⁴ Benn, *Tea in China*, 182.

⁵⁴⁵ Wu Kuan, *Paoweng jia cang ji* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1929), Vol. 24, 5b.

⁵⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 自得山人宣妙诀，一时风味压南州。（吴大本尝论煎茶法）

gift Yangxian tea.⁵⁴⁷ Furthermore, Wen also wrote an inscription on Shen Zhou's unfinished painting about his trip in Yixing, which described his sorrow about the death of both Shen and Wu Lun.

The cultural identity of this group of tea drinkers was built on the ground of their common interests in the Tang-Song-style tea drinking and their nostalgia of their Tang-and-Song tea connoisseurs. However, the cultural identity of the scholar-official class could be simply built on the basis of tea drinking and its aesthetic principle in general. In a discussion on the relationship between tea consumption and the scholar-official class, Wu Zhihe argues that tea drinking played a significant role during the scholar-official gatherings, in which tea drinking could create an environment and support all other elegant activities, such as writing poems, discussing about meditation, and spending time at sites of natural beauty.⁵⁴⁸ Furthermore, tea was preferred by some scholar-officials, who believed that tea and tea drinkers were intrinsically better and more elegant than wine and wine appreciators. Yuan Hongdao stated, "those who can appreciate tea are superior, and those who enjoy talking are inferior, but those who love drinking wine are the worst."⁵⁴⁹ For a "tea addict" like Yuan, who tried to taste all famous tea and spring

⁵⁴⁷ Wen Zhengming, *Wen Zhengming ji*, (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1987), 178-9. 《谢宜兴吴大本寄茶》：“小印轻囊远寄遗，故人珍重年乐题。暖含烟雨开封润，翠展枪旗出焙齐。片月分明逢谏议，春风仿佛在荆溪。松根自汲山泉煮，一洗诗肠万斛泥。”《是夜酌泉试宜兴吴大本所寄茶》：“醉思雪乳不解眠，活火砂瓶夜自煎。白绢旋开阳羨月，竹符新调惠山泉。地垆残雪贫陶谷，破屋清风病玉川。莫道年末尘满腹，小窗寒梦已醒然。”

⁵⁴⁸ Wu, *Ming qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo*, 13. Benn, *Tea in China*, 181.

⁵⁴⁹ Yuan Hongdao, "Yuan Zhonglang sui bi" in *Yuan Zhonglang quan ji* (Taipei: Wu zhou chu banshee, 1960), 22. 茗赏者上也，谭赏者次也，酒赏者下也。

water, it was still hard to accept an invitation to a tea gathering from a dilettante drinker, since the atmosphere a dilettante tea drinker created was unable to meet scholar-officials' needs.⁵⁵⁰ Therefore, on the one hand, the knowledge and aesthetic principles of tea drinking shared by a group of drinkers helped them to build a cultural identity based on the same discourse of tea tasting. Even though neither Wu Lun and Shen Zhou was a degree holder, they were considered as important members of the elite group, because "they were perceived to act like members of the elite."⁵⁵¹ On the other hand, this group could be exclusive to the drinkers without enough understanding of this activity or their taste and aesthetic principle did not fit the scholar-official group.

Wu Lun's friendships with these Suzhou elites were not only significant to the status of the Wu family in a circle of scholar-officials in the Jiangnan Region, but also crucial to the development of Yixing teapots since the late-sixteenth century. Suzhou, with its abundant talents, prosperous industry and commerce, had been firmly established as one of the leading cities in China since the end of the fifteenth century. Tsao Jr-lien argues in his dissertation that, both Wang Ao and Shen Zhou were among the most important members of the first generation of the leading literary figures in the city who created a particular lifestyle of the cultural elite.⁵⁵² Its cultural influence made Suzhou the fashion capital of the country, especially in the Jiangnan region.

⁵⁵⁰ Wu, *Ming qing shi dai yin cha sheng huo*, 13.

⁵⁵¹ Michael Marme, *Suzhou: Where the Goods of All the Provinces Converge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 11-2.

⁵⁵² Tsao, *Remembering Suzhou*, 9.

Historians have divided the vogues of Suzhou into three categories. The first kind was items for practical use, such as clothes, furniture, and other necessities. The second type includes arts and crafts produced by the best artisans. The third category was in the realm of art.⁵⁵³ The focus of the vogues was all about “taste,” which was the criteria created by the elite class to distinguish themselves from people from other social classes. Both Wu Jen-shu and Craig Clunas have noticed that, when facing the “social emulation” from the merchant class, the elite class brought up the topic of “taste” in their writing and practiced it in their daily life. The “invention of taste,” as Clunas argues, was the mechanism through which the literati were able to retain cultural power, by appreciating objects more important than the mere fact of ownership.⁵⁵⁴ Tea tasting was an important part of the conversation on “taste.” On the one hand, all kinds of literary genres were connected with tea---songs, plays, lyric poetry. On the other hand, as James Benn has pointed out, “high levels of aesthetic attention were brought to bear on tea artifacts,” such as tea wares.⁵⁵⁵

The Mystery of Gong Chun: The Invention of Yixing Stoneware Teapot

The popularity of Yixing teapots was pushed forward by the elite class in Suzhou in the second half of the sixteenth century. However, talking about its origin, we need to go

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁵⁴ Wu Jen-shu, “Ming dai ping min fu shi de liu xing yu shi da fu de fan ying,” *Xin Shixue* no. 3, 1999: 55-109. Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 71-2.

⁵⁵⁵ Benn, *Tea in China*, 172.

back to Yixing. According to Zhou Gaoqi (1596-1645) and Wu Qian (1733-1813), both scholars studied the pottery history of Yixing, the teapot had a mysterious origin that the technique of making teapots was first developed by a monk from the Jinsha Temple which was located forty *li* from Yixing. Since it has been a long time, no one knew the name of the monk. Some potters said that the monk was a relaxed and quiet person, who was in the habit of staying with the people who made pottery. He developed a series of teapot-making techniques, which were briefly described by Zhou and Wu Qian, “(he) prepared clay and further refined it, then lumped and shaped the clay with hands to build the body. To make the shape of the main body more precise, (he) used a compass gauge, and then scooped out the clay from the center to produce a hollow vessel. (He) assembled the spout, the handle, the lid, and the handle on the lid to the body one by one. (He) enclosed the greenware in a ceramic container and fired it in the kiln. Since then, this technique was spread and applied by other people.”⁵⁵⁶

Wu Lun, the tea master, had a son in his 40s. Wu Shi (1481-1545), an intelligent, well-educated young man with a refined taste of tea, received his *jinsi* degree at the age of twenty-three. However, in the same year, his mother passed away, and he needed to leave his position to mourn her for three years. Within three years after his mother died,

⁵⁵⁶ Zhou Gaoqi, "Yangxian ming hu xi" In *Zhongguo gu dai tao ci wen xian ji lu*, by Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 1521-1557 (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 1529. Wu Qian, "Yangxian ming tao lu." In *Zhong guo gu dai tao ci wen xian ji lu*, by Zhong guo guo jia tu shu guan, 1009-1063 (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 1016. 抔其细土，加以澄炼，捏筑为胎，规而圆之，剝使中空，踵傅口、柄、盖、的，附陶穴烧成。

Wu Shi mourned and studied at the Jinsha Temple, while his servant Gongchun (供春) was serving him.⁵⁵⁷ When Gongchun was free of his duty, he secretly began to apply the monk's practice during his own pottery-making process. In order to shape the main body of the teapot, he also sieved the fine clay and lumped it into a ball, and then used a spoon to empty the center of the body.⁵⁵⁸ Furthermore, Gongchun relied on his fingers to smooth both the inside and the surface of the teapot, which resulted in some vague patterns of his fingerprints on the body.⁵⁵⁹ The fingerprints later became a very important characteristic of the Gongchun teapot, which was utilized by the connoisseurs to distinguish the authentic products from the fake ones that circulated in the market.⁵⁶⁰ Wu Qian further described the features of all the genuine Gongchun teapots could be found at his time (the reign of the Qianlong Emperor during the Qing Dynasty, almost two centuries later) and concluded, "they are all in the color of chestnut and looked like old metal...they might be touched by divine inspiration."⁵⁶¹ In addition, both Zhou and Wu Qian had indicated in their texts that the two characters of Gongchun's name were also written as 龚春, since the surname of Gongchun's grandson had been proved to be Gong (龚). In many texts written during the Ming and the early-Qing Dynasties, both characters were commonly used; however, Zhou and Wu both suggested that 龚 was an

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 1530. 供春，学宪吴颐山公青衣也。颐山读书金沙寺中，世外其孙龚姓，亦书为龚春。人皆证为龚。予于吴周聊家见时大彬所仿，则刻供春二字，足折聚讼云。

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 供春于给役之暇，窃仿老僧心匠，亦淘细土抟胚。茶匙穴中，

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 指掠内外，指螺文隐起可按，胎必累按，故腹半矣。

⁵⁶⁰ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1017. 视以辨真。

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.* 栗色暗暗，如古金铁，敦庞周正，允称神明。

orthographic error. Zhou's explanation was based on his visit to the Wu family in Yixing, where he had a chance to observe a teapot made by Shi Dabin (1573-1648) in the style of Gongchun. The inscription on that teapot was 供春. Both Zhou and Wu agreed that this fact was enough to settle this dispute on names. Besides the dispute about name, the veracity of this narrative also became controversial in recent years. The suspicion was raised on the ground of a different understanding of the meaning of "Gongchun" by Xu Aorun, a scholar from Taiwan, who inclines to believe that it was Wu Shi himself, instead of his servant, who created the Gongchun teapot. Xu argues that the reason Wu Shi did not stamp his own seal on the teapot was because he was influenced by the popular idea that scholar-officials with certain social status should not devote themselves to craftsmanship.⁵⁶² As Xu has pointed out, Gongchun might be the name of a teapot style, but not the name of the servant who made it.⁵⁶³

No matter whether it was Wu Shi or his servant who first created a stoneware teapot that fit the taste of the scholar-officials, the Wu family played a significant role in the transformation of tea wares occurred in the early-sixteenth century. This transformation not only occurred within the Wu family, but also corresponded with the trend of tea consumption in Chinese society. Furthermore, it guided the practice of tea drinking among the elite class to a new direction and generated a new discourse of aesthetic principles based on this newly created product. As mentioned before, Wu Lun and his scholar-official friends were still fascinated with the Tang-style tea drinking. This

⁵⁶² Xu Aorun, *Xu Ao run zi sha tao yi lun wen ji* (Taipei: Ying ji tang ren gong yi chu ban she, 2008), 35.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid.*, 13.

fascination, in Clunas's opinion, was a phenomenon connected to the elite's passion to revive the art of traditional Han Chinese after a century of Mongol rule.⁵⁶⁴ However, Wu Shi, the next generation of Wu Lun, had been adapted to the new trend of drinking loose tea. Examining the structure, the Yixing stoneware teapot was specifically designed for consuming loose tea, since the hole between the spout and the body somewhat functioned as a sieve to separate the liquid and leaves. The water pitcher, which is similar to the teapot in its shape, was invented long before the emergence of the Yixing stoneware teapot. When tea drinkers practiced the Song style tea drinking, they only need a vessel for containing boiling water; however, as the practice of drinking loose tea was widely adopted by the consumers, a new utensil was designated to accommodate to steeping tea leaves in boiling water.

Besides its function of steeping tea leaves, several criteria based on the scholar-officials' taste and aesthetic principles contributed to the development of Yixing teapots. Zhou has indicated in "A Brief History of Yangxian stoneware Teapots" that, "in the last century, silver, tin, ceramics from Min and Yu were discarded in the fashion of teapot-making; at the same time, the Yixing stoneware became popular. (Besides the consumption of loose tea,) this is the other example to demonstrate that the people of our generation had surpassed our predecessors."⁵⁶⁵ Furthermore, Zhou claimed that compared to jade and golden pots, which were dazzling and could stun drinkers' eyes, the best

⁵⁶⁴ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 72.

⁵⁶⁵ Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1530. The ceramics from Min refer to tea-bowls produced in Jianyang of the Fujian province. The porcelains from Yu refer to porcelains produced in the Ru kiln of the Henan province. 近百年中，壶黜银锡及闽豫瓷，而尚宜兴陶，又近人远过前人处也。

Yixing teapots are able to avoid this vulgarity.⁵⁶⁶ Zhou's understanding of the relationship between jade/golden vessels and the vulgarity was common among the scholar-official tea connoisseurs in Suzhou and nearby areas during the late-Ming Dynasty. Wen Zhenheng also pointed out that golden and silver tea vessels could not be even ranked in terms of their vulgarity.⁵⁶⁷ On the one hand, the elegance of Yixing stoneware teapot partially depended on its appearance. Wen argued that the teapots with an antique looking in a style of the rustic-simplicity were elegant and suitable for tea drinking, and three second-generation-potters after Gongchun, named Zhao Liang, Shi Peng and Li Maolin, whose works had been highly valued by the scholar-official tea connoisseurs, were all renowned for their mastery of rustic-simplicity during the teapot-making.⁵⁶⁸ On the other hand, the Yixing stoneware teapot could also maintain or even increase the flavor and the scent of tea in accordance with scholarly taste. For example, Wen used to comment "The best teapot is made from clay, not only does not take away aroma, but also has no ripe tea odor."⁵⁶⁹ Xu Cishu (1549-1604), a famous tea connoisseur based in Hangzhou, argued that the superiority of Yixing clay depended on its quality of "wu tu qi (无土气)," which meant that the Yixing clay would not release any earthy smell that could affect the aroma and flavor of tea.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 不但杜工部云「倾金注玉惊人眼」，高流务以免俗也。

⁵⁶⁷ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 161. 金银俱不入品。

⁵⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 形制古洁者，取以注茶，更为适用。Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1530. 三家多古拙。

⁵⁶⁹ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 161. 壶以砂者为上，盖既不夺香，又无熟汤气。

⁵⁷⁰ Xu, "Cha shu," 155. 盖皆以粗砂制之，正取砂无土气耳。

The Wu family, The Hall of Zhu'e and the Writings on Yixing Stoneware Teapot

In 1520, Wu Shi built the Hall of Zhu'e to celebrate his father's eightieth birthday.⁵⁷¹ This hall not only functioned as a tea-tasting space, but also an art gallery for presenting family's painting collections and a museum for displaying the Yixing stoneware teapots. After the death of Wu Shi in 1545, the ownership of this hall was transferred to the descendants of Wu Jing, the brother of Wu Lun. Fortunately, the good taste of tea within the Wu family remained. Almost a century after Wu Shi's death, the great-grandson of Wu Jing, Wu Honghua (1608-1646), who received his *Juren* degree in 1639, held a reception for a visitor named Zhou Gaoqi and some other scholar-official friends at the end of the Chongzhen's reign. Zhou's article entitled "A Brief History of the Yangxian Stoneware Teapots", mentioned above, was finished during this visit to the Zhu'e Hall. As a scholar who was interested in the history of pottery-making, Zhou noted in a verse entitled "Guo Wu Dimei Zhu'e tang kan hu ge (Appreciating the teapots in a visit to Wu Dimei at the Zhu'e Hall)," that Wu Honghua (*zi* Dimei) not only had made this space a museum of teapots so that many scholar-official friends who visited Yixing or the Wu family could appreciate the art of teapots, but also introduced the knowledge of teapot-making, including the potters' names, their styles and the history of Yixing teapots, to the scholar-official visitors.⁵⁷² Furthermore, the Wu family continued to contribute to the

⁵⁷¹ Xu Aorun, "Ming ji yi tan san jie zhi yi—Xu Longwen kao," *Xu Aorun zi sha tao yi lun wen ji* (Taipei: Ying ji tang ren gong yi chu ban she, 2008), 83.

⁵⁷² Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1531. 荊南土俗雅尚陶，茗壺奔走天下半。吳郎鑿器有淵心，會聽壺工能事判。源流裁別字字矜，收貯將同彝鼎玩。再三請出豁雙眸，今朝乃許花前看。高盤捧列朱萼

production of Yixing stoneware teapots by inviting some famous potters to work within the household, such as Xu Youquan (1573-1620?) and his apprentice Xu Wenlong (1618-1666?).⁵⁷³ In other words, the Wu family became patrons of some potters and artisans, and the Zhu'e Hall had been turned into both a place of exhibiting the teapots and a workshop for designing new teapots.

The collecting and making of teapots in the Wu family continued even when there was chaos brought by the dynastic transition in the mid-seventeenth century. The building itself was largely destroyed; however, the son of Wu Honghua, Wu Meiding (1631-1700) reconstructed the hall and revived this family tradition during the early-Qing Dynasty. Wu Meiding was the author of an article entitled “Yang xian ming hu fu” (“The Rhapsody of Yangxian Teapots”), which reviewed the relationship between the development of teapot and his family history while discussing different potters and their styles.⁵⁷⁴ Furthermore, he stated that he wrote this rhapsody on the ground that his guests were curious about the origin of the Yixing stoneware teapots, and as a descendant of the Wu family, he felt obliged to spread the knowledge and preserve its early history for later generations.⁵⁷⁵

Potters, Elite, and New Designs of the Yixing Stoneware Teapot

堂，匣未開時先置。卷袖摩挲笑向人，次第標題陳幾案。每壺署以古茶星，科使前賢參靜觀。指搖蓋作金石聲，款識稱堪法書按。某為壺祖某雲孫，形制敦龐古光燦。

⁵⁷³ Xu Aorun, “Ming ji yi tan san jie zhi yi,” 85.

⁵⁷⁴ Wu Meiding, “Yangxian ming hu fu” In *Yangxian ming tao lu* by Wu Qian, 1030.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 有客过阳羨，詢壺之所自來，因溯源流，狀其體制，牘其名目，并使后之為之者考而師之。是為賦。

During the development of Yixing stoneware teapots, the Wu family definitely played a crucial role in adapting teapots to an elite taste and circulating the knowledge of teapot-making in their network. For this reason, the artistic and economic value of the teapots could be recognized by the other scholar-officials and was later accepted and appreciated by other consumers from the whole society. However, the significance of artisans and potters, especially their agency and creativities during the process of designing new teapots, should not be neglected either. Joseph Needham has noticed that, prior to the eighteenth century, little information about the daily life of potters existed.⁵⁷⁶ Mei Yaochen (1002-1060), the Song Dynasty Neo-Confucian poet, was one of the few scholar-officials who depicted the image of potter's harsh life in his poetry,

Pots cover every inch of space before the door
But there's not a single tile on the roof.
Whereas the mansions of those who wouldn't soil their fingers with clay
Bear tiles overlapping tightly like the scales of a fish.⁵⁷⁷

The potters were not able to express their feelings toward the poverty and inequality that they had suffered through literature for themselves on the ground that they had little access to education.⁵⁷⁸ Needham has also indicated that, outside of the state-owned workshops, most of the ceramics were without any signature, for most of the potters were illiterate.⁵⁷⁹ In the Ming Dynasty, even though some ceramics were produced in the state-owned workshops, the signatures on the base of those ceramics were not potters' names,

⁵⁷⁶ Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* Vol. 5, 19.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.* 陶者 陶尽门前土，屋上无片瓦。十指不沾泥，鳞鳞居大厦。

⁵⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

but reign marks which were monopolized by the state to enhance the concept of defined imperial usage.⁵⁸⁰ Dagmar Shafer, a German historian, has pointed out that the monopoly of the reign marks on state-own products was much stronger in early-Ming Dynasty; however, since the mid-Ming Dynasty, as the political control loosened, private industries “found ways to build upon and extend state marking practices, particularly the reign mark symbolism, into a varied landscape of marks that signified quality, individual creativity, and private ownership.”⁵⁸¹ The Yixing potters’ own design of inscriptions on the teapot body and seals on the base perfectly illustrate Shafer’s statement; or it is not an exaggeration to say that, it was the Yixing potters who first brought and applied this new practice in the world of ceramics outside of the state-run workshops.

There were two types of inscriptions on the Yixing stoneware teapot. One type was the individual seals placed on the base of the teapots, and the other was the customized inscriptions on the bodies of the teapots. This new practice of inscribing, on one hand, was significantly influenced by the imperial reign marking tradition; on the other hand, it was the consequence of the mutual respect between skillful and creative Yixing artisans and their patrons, the scholar-official tea connoisseurs. The relationship between artisans and scholar-officials in mid and late-Ming dynasty has become significantly different from previous periods. Clunas has pointed out, “A distrust of, and even a distaste for, the social role of artisans and their products has deep roots in traditional Chinese political economy,” since the artisans were seen as “the essentially redundant extremities” in

⁵⁸⁰ Dagmar Schafer, "Inscribing the Artefacts and Inspiring Trust: The Changing Role of Markings in the Ming Era." *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: an International Journal*, 2011: 239-265, 250.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 249.

contrast to the roots, the farmers.⁵⁸² Even though the social categorization “artisan” remained formally a menial one through the Ming dynasty, but the status of certain named “star” had risen, such as Pu Zhongqian (bamboo-carving) and Lu Zigang (jade-worker).⁵⁸³ Tsao also argues that there was a much closer connection between the scholar-officials and very talented commoners since the mid-Ming dynasty, such as the relationships between Wang Ao and Shen Zhou, the friendship between tea master Min Wenshui and some scholar-official tea connoisseurs.⁵⁸⁴ This change of the social hierarchy was brought up in a context that the importance of the discourse of taste had been raised by the elite class when they were feeling the anxiety of their superiority in the society by facing an emulation from another class. A new criterion has been created based on the senses, the bodily experiences and the consumers’ understanding towards objects, and this actually meant that the commoners with outstanding taste and elegant lifestyles could be placed high up; meanwhile, the wealthy and powerful but senseless persons could be placed at the bottom. However, the judgments of taste and elegance were subjective. Tsao also pointed out that social relations could be developed on the basis of shared appreciation of aesthetic moments and artistic skills.⁵⁸⁵ The elite’s praises on the master artisans and their extraordinary taste and skills were a representation of this change. The hierarchy of senses obliterated one’s background and education, but ranked a person in accordance with his or her understanding of life and beauty. In the field of tea,

⁵⁸² Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 141.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*, 147.

⁵⁸⁴ Tsao, *Remembering Suzhou*, 7.

⁵⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 157.

these cross-class connections were even more prominent. For example, the famous commoner tea taster, Min Wenshui was highly respected by most of the scholar-officials in the Jiangnan region, and the interactions between the elite themselves and Min were recorded by many in detail.⁵⁸⁶ Like Min, several other potters from Yixing also enjoyed the appreciation from scholar-officials, one of the most admired potters was Shi Dabin (1573-1648). Shi Dabin (*hao* Shaoshan) was a Yixing native potter, whose father Shi Peng was also an important potter during the Wanli era (1573-1620).⁵⁸⁷ With the knowledge of making teapots transmitted by his father, Dabin started his early career by making the Gongchun-style teapots, which were well-known for the style of rustic simplicity, but later he was able to make teapots in different styles with the Yixing clay in varied colors.⁵⁸⁸

Furthermore, Shi Dabin contributed two significant innovations to the designs of the Yixing stoneware teapots, which helped these tea vessels became more suitable to the taste of the elite class. The first innovation on the Yixing stoneware teapot stemmed from the inscriptions. Jonathan Hay has noticed that “the artisans analogized the surface-scape to a mounted calligraphy, and shifted the contextual point of reference from the writing desk as the site of production to the display surface as the site of consumption. The labor of writing was evoked as one more thing that could be commanded or bought.”⁵⁸⁹ As mentioned before, there were two types of inscriptions on the teapot. The first type of the

⁵⁸⁶ See Min Wenshui and his relationship with Zhang Dai and Li Rihua in the third chapter.

⁵⁸⁷ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1018.

⁵⁸⁸ Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1532. 初仿供春得手。诸款具足。

⁵⁸⁹ Hay, *Sensuous Surface*, 211.

inscription, which was usually poems written by scholar-official customers, are inscribed on the body of the teapots. The second type was the signatures of the potters, frequently appearing on the bottom of the teapot. The former type could be seen as the result of the potters' attempts to customize the teapots for their tea-connoisseur clients; meanwhile, the latter type functioned as the identification mark influenced by the tradition of the state-own workshops. Among some of the early works of Shi Dabin, which were found in the tombs of some scholar-official family members, the seals that inscribed "Dabin" on the bottom were the only inscription appeared on the teapots. For example, one of these early Dabin teapots was found in a tomb of a scholar-official named Hua Shiyi (1566-1619) in the suburb of modern-day Wuxi.⁵⁹⁰ Another hexagonal teapot with a signature of Dabin, which was excavated among the archaeological findings of a Ming tomb in 1968 near Yangzhou, also suggested that Shi had not yet adopted the design of inscribing on the surface of the teapot body by 1616.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁹⁰ Wuxi shi bo wu guan, "Jiangsu Wuxi xian ming Hua Shiyi fu fu mu." *Wen wu*, Issue. 7, 1989: 58.

⁵⁹¹ Jiang Hua, "Jiangdu ming mu chu tu Shi Dabin liu fang zi sha hu," *Wen Wu*, 1982: 91.

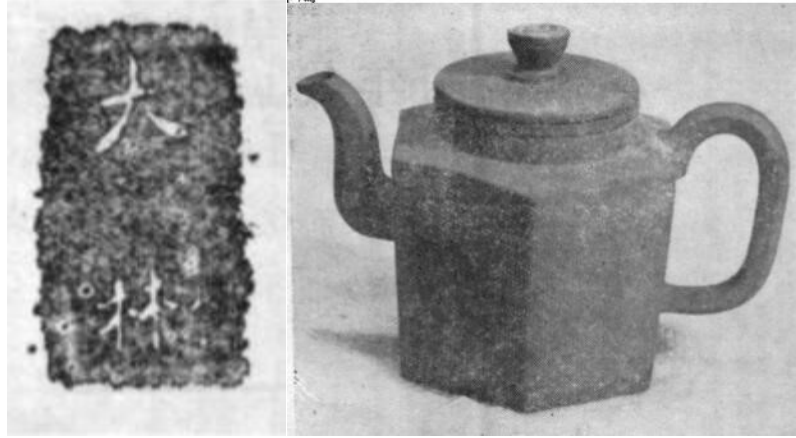


Figure 4.3 This teapot with an inscription of Dabin on the bottom was found in a Ming tomb near Yangzhou in 1968.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹² Ibid.

A new design of inscription on the body of the teapot emerged during Shi's visit to Loudong (modern-day Taicang of the Jiangsu province), a place where many tea connoisseurs resided. Wu Qian did not mention whether Shi had personally met with Chen Jiru (*hao* Meigong, 1558-1639), Wang Xijue (1534-1614) or Wang Shizhen (1526-1590), both of whom were well-known local elite in Loudong; however, it was clear that Shi, at some points, had heard of some of their theories of tea tasting and decided to make some new changes to his teapots.⁵⁹³ Since most of the artisans and potters were not trained to be calligraphers, Shi like all of his contemporary potters, either stamped or carved his personal seals at bottom of the teapots with a bamboo knife during the early stage of his career. During or after this visit, Shi has adopted the idea of inscribing calligraphic works on the bodies of teapots; however, to achieve this, Shi needed to practice his skill of calligraphy. According to Zhou Gaoqi, Shi first asked other men of letters to create calligraphic works directly on the teapot with their brushes and ink; Shi, then, followed the strokes and carved the characters on the surface of teapots by his bamboo knife. After years of practicing, Shi not only could handle the skill of carving the characters directly on his teapots by using his knife, but also had mastered an outstanding skill of calligraphy. Zhou Gaoqi even compared Shi's writing style on the teapots with Wang Xizhi's works (303-361), the most admired calligraphic works in China of all time.⁵⁹⁴ Furthermore, Gao pointed out that the uniqueness of Shi's writing style also

⁵⁹³ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1019.

⁵⁹⁴ Li Jingkang and Zhang Hong, "Yangxian sha hu tu kao." In *Zhong guo gu dai tao ci wen xian ji lu*, by Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei fu zhi zhong xin, (Beijing: Quan guo tu shu guan wen xian suo wei

helped distinguish his teapots from other teapots that were circulating in the market. For one thing, Shi's carving skill and writing style helped his works stand out from other works created by other famous potters because of his unparalleled talent.⁵⁹⁵ For another thing, Shi's writing skill also became his trademark that differentiated his genuine works from counterfeits. In this case, Shi Dabin's inscriptions and seals on teapot shared the similar functions with the reign marks that were usually applied to ceramics produced by some state-owned workshops which, as Shafer has noticed, "it was only in the Wanli period that reign marks became pertinent issues within a larger context of ideas about copies, fakes, originality, and creativeness in material production."⁵⁹⁶ However, unlike potters who worked for state-owned workshops, Shi Dabin and other Yixing potters decided to stamp their own names on teapots rather than use reign marks. This development in teapot-making not only represented that the production of best-quality potteries had shifted from state-owned workshops to private workshops and individuals, but also implied that the surface of potteries was no more a space to present the imperial power but a place to display the creativity of individual craftsman and the originality of each artefact. Furthermore, the customized inscriptions also suggested that the surface of artifacts also became consumer goods, as Hay has argued, had become an important space to expose the consumers' preferences, taste, and their cultivation.⁵⁹⁷

fu zhi zhong xin, 2003), 3498. 铸壶款识，即时大彬初倩能书者落墨，用竹刀画之，或以印记，后竟运刀成字，书法闲雅，在黄庭乐毅帖间，人不能仿，鉴赏家用以为别。

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁶ Shafer, "Inscribing the Artefacts and Inspiring Trust," 252.

⁵⁹⁷ Hay, *Sensuous Surface*, 211.

The Shi Dabin's other great contribution to the Yixing stoneware teapot, which was consistently mentioned by his contemporary scholar-official tea connoisseurs in their articles, was his effort to transform the teapots from larger ones to smaller ones. Like the adoption of the inscription on the body of the teapot, this new idea of changing the size was also rooted in Shi's willingness to take pieces of advice from scholar-official tea connoisseurs, who were also his major clients. Wu Qian has recorded that Shi preferred to make larger size teapots before he visited Loudong. After learning some new theories from scholar-official tea connoisseurs there, he began to make smaller ones that were catered for individuals to consume in the process of tasting.⁵⁹⁸ The Loudong tea connoisseurs' theories about the size of teapots, specifically that the smaller teapots could bring better bodily experiences to drinkers, was widely accepted by tea connoisseurs during Shi's time. This phenomenon also corresponded with the newly emerged trend that the tea connoisseurs' needs to limit the number of guests during the tasting, so as to create a simpler and more elegant environment to enjoy tea drinking and dialoguing, the details of which will be discussed in my next chapter. Besides these Loudong tea connoisseurs, the appreciation of smaller teapots has been shared by tea drinkers from other regions earlier. Xu Cishu (*zi* Ranming, 1549-1604), a Hangzhou-based tea connoisseur, explained in *the Commentary on Tea*, a manual about tea tasting later collected, annotated and published by Chen Jiru, that, "it is appropriate for teapots to be small, while it is not suitable for a teapot to be too large. If it is small, the teapot can hold the fragrance; if it is large, the aroma will dissipate easily. A teapot of approximately

⁵⁹⁸ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1019.

half-liter volume is the most suitable. If the drinker prefers to enjoy the tea alone, then the smaller teapot the better.”⁵⁹⁹ Xu again emphasized the importance of the size of teapots in his conversation with his friend Feng Mengzhen (*zi* Kaizhi, 1548-1605), another tea fanatic residing in Hangzhou. Xu and Feng received their *jinshi* degrees in the same year (1577) and both were later dismissed from office and forced to stay away from court. They also shared the same opinion that tea leaves should not be steeped more than three times because the third- and forth-steep tea would be like “a mature woman with many children” compared to the first-infusion tea like a graceful thirteen-year-old virgin, and the second-infusion like “a beauty at her prime.”⁶⁰⁰ Therefore, it was better to steep tea leaves in a small teapot, so that the second infusion would not exhaust all the essence of tea leaves. It was better to leave the fragrance within the teapot. For the leftover tea leaves that could be steeped for the third time, according to Xu and Feng’s evaluation, were still good enough to “clean the drinker’s mouth after a meal,” but if the drinker did not need to clean his mouth, then it was acceptable to discard them.⁶⁰¹ However, if a drinker used a large teapot, filled the whole teapot and guzzled tea that has cooled down, while he was only pursuing the strong taste of bitterness, he was no different from a craftsman or a farmer who need to do hard work. Xu further concluded that to sip tea

⁵⁹⁹ Xu Cishu, “Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu,” in *Bao yan tang mi ji*, ed. Chen Jiru (Shanghai: Wen ming shu ju, 1922), 182. 茶註宜小，不宜甚大。小則香氣氤氳，大則易於散漫。大約及半升，是為適可。獨自斟酌，愈小愈佳。

⁶⁰⁰ *Ibid.* 余嘗與馮開之戲論茶候，以初巡為停停裊裊十三余，再巡為碧玉破瓜年，三巡以來，綠葉成陰矣。開之大以為然。

⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.* 所以茶註欲小，小則再巡已終，寧使余芬剩馥，尚留葉中，猶堪飯後供啜漱之用，未遂棄之可也。

while using a smaller teapot was the only way to understand the taste of tea.⁶⁰² Since Chen Jiru annotated Xu's manual, it is reasonable to assume that Xu's idea had some impact on Chen; moreover, Xu's writings and his evaluation on tea had been recognized by other scholar-official tea connoisseurs. Besides Chen's publication, Xu's comments on the size of teapots also appeared in *Ming ji*, a tea treatise first edited and circulated among the scholar-official tea connoisseurs and was later published in the early 1600s by Tu Benjun (1542-1622), a scholar-official and a tea lover from Ningbo of the Zhejiang province.⁶⁰³

After Shi's transformation of teapots had been finished and received recognition from many scholar-official tea connoisseurs, the popularity of these teapots quickly reached an extremely high level. Zhou Gaoqi used "almost every table has a teapot on it" to describe scholar-official tea connoisseurs' enthusiasm for Shi's works.⁶⁰⁴ Shi and his works became sensations in the late-Ming literature about objects. Even though tea connoisseurs' opinions were not unanimous, the comments about Shi's and other potters' work became an indispensable part of every piece of these writings. Xu Cishu notified his readers that "in former years, people cherished Gongchun teapots, but nowadays most people prefer Dabin teapots."⁶⁰⁵ Xu further explained, the superiority of Yixing teapots

⁶⁰² Ibid. 所以茶註欲小，小則再巡已終，寧使余芬剩馥，尚留葉中，猶堪飯後供啜漱之用，未遂棄之可也。若巨器屢巡，滿中瀉飲，待停少溫，或求濃苦，何異農匠作勞。但需涓滴，何論品嘗，何知風味乎。

⁶⁰³ Hsu Kuang-tai, "On the Origin, Development, and Publication of Tu Benjun's *Ming ji* in the Wanli Era," *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*, Issue 12 2013: 36.

⁶⁰⁴ Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1531. 幾案有一具。

⁶⁰⁵ Xu Cishu, "*Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu*," 182. 往時龔春茶壺，近日時彬所制，大為時人寶惜。

came from their material, the Yixing clay, which usually did not release an earthy smell when steeping tea; however, only the potters with excellent skills were able to handle the complicated procedure during the production. For potters who used clay from elsewhere, or with average skill, their poor-quality teapots would immediately release the earthy smell, which would destroy the taste of tea and pleasure of tea drinking, due to the reason that the average potters were not experienced enough to control the temperature of their kilns.⁶⁰⁶ Wen Zhenheng, a taster and the great-grandson of Wen Zhengming, a cultural hero of Suzhou, intended to have a positive attitude toward all the Yixing teapots in general, and he ranked the Yixing stoneware teapots on the top of his list. However, Wen did not consider Yixing products perfect by arguing that “Gong Chun teapots are the most expensive; however, their style is unrefined, also lack smaller size ones,” but the teapots “made by Shi Dabin are yet too small, only if one can find an antique looking and with a feature of rustic-simplicity which can hold half a liter of water, that would be most suitable for pouring tea.”⁶⁰⁷ Some of Shi’s works had been recognized by Wen as elegant objects because of their antique looking, rustic-simplicity, and more importantly, their size that better accommodated to the bodily experience of tea connoisseurs. From Xu Cishu and Tu Benjun to Wen Zhenheng, who was active in the 1620s, one can witness the transformation of Yixing teapots within this period of two decades. Begun as mere scholar-official tea connoisseurs’ theories and suggestions, Shi’s effort and practice to

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid. 余細砂，及造自他匠手者，質惡制劣，尤有土氣，絕能敗味，勿用勿用。蓋皆以粗砂制之，正取砂無土氣耳。隨手造作，頗極精工，顧燒時必須為力極足，方可出窯。然火候少過，壺又多碎壞者，以是益加貴重。火力不到者，如以生砂註水，土氣滿鼻，不中用也。

⁶⁰⁷ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 161.

transform the teapots had helped Shi to achieve a status that “neither the potters who were before him nor the ones after him could compete with.”⁶⁰⁸ Not only as a potter, Shi’s artistic achievement and the elegance of his works were valued even more since the 1640s, two decades after the publication of Wen Zhenheng’s *Treatise on Superfluous Things*. Zhou Gaoqi, through a perspective of a scholar who specifically interested in the genealogy of Yixing teapots, has concluded that “His (Shi’s) works became the standard of great elegance. He has the eyes that others don’t have.”⁶⁰⁹

Thanks to the rise of a literate book-consuming public and an expansion of the publishing industry in the late-Ming era, scholar-official tea connoisseurs’ role in the popularization of knowledge on tea was reinforced by the newly flourished reading public in the late-Ming society. Tea connoisseurs, such as Xu Cishu and Chen Jiru, were not only tea lovers with outstanding writing abilities, but also local celebrities, who were respected by communities beyond the group of tea drinkers. Xu, as he has recorded, wrote *The Commentary on Tea* for his friends as well as his readers for their enthusiasm for tea drinking.⁶¹⁰ “Demand for such knowledge provided a ready market for those who wrote on the subject,” Jamie Greenbaum has concluded through his studies on Chen Jiru.⁶¹¹ For a tea connoisseur like Chen, who chose to give up his career of being an

⁶⁰⁸ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1019. 前后诸名家并不能及

⁶⁰⁹ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1019. Zhou, "Yangxian ming hu xi," 1531. 遂于陶人标大雅之遗，擅空群之目矣。

⁶¹⁰ Xu, "Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu," 188. 友人有同好者，數謂余宜有論著，以備一家，貽之好事，故次而論之。

⁶¹¹ Greenbaum, *Chen Jiru*, 162.

official and took an alternative path of being a mountain recluse, writing, editing, and publication became more significant for him to present his status as an elite to the public. Chen displayed his knowledge of tea connoisseurship in two ways: first, he showed his familiarities with tea classics that contain a large amount of the information on tea history; second, he presented his ability to understand the newly developed aesthetic trend and value. For the former type of knowledge, as we have discussed in the chapter of water tasting, one needs to first understand the classical texts and then learn to taste water physically. Therefore, in the case of water tasting, even though tea connoisseurs had revived or even became creative on the old practice of water delivery, their knowledge remained systematically the same as the knowledge produced by several centuries ago. However, the knowledge of Yixing teapot had only been initiated for less than a century. Xu and Chen had both presented their images of being successful aesthetes to their readers through their tea literature, in which they exposed and proved their manipulation of knowledge to two things in the world of tea: its history and its new fashion.

Scholar-official tea connoisseurs' self-promotion in the literature and their promotion of this newly-created object to the reading public helped elevate the price of teapots to an unimaginable level. As Clunas has pointed out, the price of Yixing teapots has exceeded most of their contemporary ceramics in the market.⁶¹² Other popular artifacts, such as fans, lanterns, jade products, paintings, or even the mostly mentioned antiques, the price was not commonly recorded in late-Ming books, including the guidebooks of things and social elite's personal anthologies; however, the price of Yixing teapots, particularly

⁶¹² Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 132.

Shi's teapots, attracted much attention. Yuan Hongdao, the active and celebrated author and tea taster, commented on this new fashion of the Wu county (Suzhou) in his essay written in the 1590s that, "the price of a clay pot (wa ping) made by either Gongchun or Shi Dabin has reached two or three thousand copper coins."⁶¹³ Yuan's commentary, on the one hand, described a newly-emerged popularity of Yixing teapots; on the other hand, implied that the name of this new product have not been established yet. Wen Zhenheng named these teapots "stoneware/sand teapots (sha hu)" in the 1620s. The adoption of the name Yixing teapots had to wait until the early-Qing Dynasty. Zhang Dai, in his nostalgic work *The Dream Recollections of Tao'an*, called these vessels "Yixing pots." Moreover, when Zhang decided to sell one Yixing teapot he owned, which was made by one of the three top names of Yixing, the price had reached between five and six tales of silver.⁶¹⁴ Not only was he surprised by its price, but Zhang also was shocked by the fact that the products with unexpected high price came from such inexpensive material.⁶¹⁵ However, this unimaginable price only applied to those fine products created by a group of top potters. Zhou Gaoqi and Wu Qian had both listed the names of these potters in their studies of the genealogy of Yixing teapots, in which, they both agreed that Shi Dabin, Xu Youquan (1573-1620), and Li Zhongfang were the top three among thirty late-Ming

⁶¹³ Yuan Hongdao, "Shi shang" in *Yuan Hongdao ji jian jiao* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1981), 731. 瓦瓶如龚春、时大彬，价至二三千钱。龚春尤称难得，黄质而膩，光华若玉。.....猥子转相售受，以欺富人公子，动得重费，浸淫至士大夫间，遂以成风。然其器实精良，他工不及，其得名不虚也。

⁶¹⁴ Zhang Dai, *Tao'an meng yi* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1982), 17. 器方脱手，而一罐一注价五六金。

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.* 则是砂与锡与价，其轻重正相等焉，岂非怪事。

Yixing potters who had been recorded besides Gong Chun.⁶¹⁶ Their masterpieces, as Wu Qian has observed hundreds of years later during the Qianlong era, were as valuable as objects made with gold and jade; furthermore, Wu has pointed out that none of his contemporary potters were able to present such exquisite workmanship like those late-Ming top potters could do.⁶¹⁷

Xu Youquan and Li Zhongfang were both apprentices of Shi Dabin. Li Zhongfang was the son of Li Maolin, another early-generation Yixing potter who was dedicated to teapot-making. Li eventually became the best apprentice of Shi.⁶¹⁸ According to Zhou and Gao, those teapots that people believed to be Shi's products could be possibly made by Li, because Li's workmanship was good enough to compete with Shi's; therefore, Shi Dabin sometimes would carve his own name on Li's teapots. This resulted in a confusion among the contemporary and future consumers.⁶¹⁹

Different from Li, who was born and raised in a family with a craftsman background, Xu grew up in a scholar-official family. Xu's father invited Shi Dabin to work in his house since he was extremely enthusiastic for Shi's teapots. One day, Xu's father tried to force Shi to make a clay buffalo for entertainment; however, Shi immediately refused to obey. Xu Youquan, however, grabbed one of Shi's lumps of clay and went outside of the

⁶¹⁶ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1019. 陶肆謠曰：壺家妙手稱三大。謂時大彬、李大仲芳、徐大友泉也。

⁶¹⁷ Wu Qian, *Tao xi ke yu* (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1936), 38. 自明季始盛，上者至与金玉等价。百余年来，名辈既尽，时工所制，率粗俗不雅，或涂以丹黄，无一可入清玩者。

⁶¹⁸ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1020. 及時大彬門，為高足第一。

⁶¹⁹ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1020. 今世所传大彬壺亦有仲芳作之，大彬見賞而自署欸識者，時人語曰李大瓶時大名。

house. On his way, Xu encountered a buffalo in the shade of a tree who, with one leg bent, was about to stand up. Xu observed and soon sculpted the whole scene he saw with the lump and presented to Shi. Shi was surprised by Xu's talent and expressed his amazement that Xu's skill, one day, may become better than his.⁶²⁰ Eventually, Shi accepted Xu Youquan to be one of his apprentices.

Yixing Potters and their Patrons

Shi's relationship with Xu's family represented an important phenomenon in the development of Yixing teapots during the late-Ming dynasty. Some scholar-official tea connoisseurs passionately invited Yixing potters to their households, in which Yixing potters continuously making teapots under the patronage of scholar-official families, similarly to the interaction between the Wu family of Yixing and their servant Gong Chun. Art historians have illustrated the lives of some Ming professional painters whose livelihood depended largely upon commissions from their patrons. For example, painter Qiu Ying (1494-1552), known today as one of the Four Great Masters of the Ming dynasty, had at least three patrons in whose houses he lived and worked as a painter-in-residence.⁶²¹ Patrons could influence the appearance of a painting commissioned by

⁶²⁰ Ibid. 徐友泉名士衡故非陶人也，其父好时大彬壶，延致家塾。一日强大彬作泥牛为戏，不即從，友泉奪其壶土出门而去，適見樹不眠牛将起，尚屈一足，注视捏塑曲盡厥形状携以眎，大彬一見惊嘆曰：“如子智能異日必出吾上。”

⁶²¹ Ellen Johnston Laing, "Qiu Ying's Other Patrons," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Oct. - Dec. 1997: 686.

stipulating the subject of a painting.⁶²² Top Yixing potters also had chances to work as potter-in-residence during the late-Ming era. For example, Shi was not only once patronized by the Xu Youquan's father, but also stayed in Yang Chunfu's household for a while, according to a record attributed to Xu Yinglei.⁶²³ Jiang Bofu (ca.1600-1644), another apprentice of Shi Dabin, was supported by a scholar-official when he visited Suzhou. Jiang could also possibly be patronized by Chen Jiru, since Chen suggested Jiang to adopt a new and more elegant character to replace his old name.⁶²⁴ Xu Youquan and his apprentice Xu Longwen (1616-1666?) also worked under the sponsorship of the Wu family of Yixing at the Zhu'e Hall intermittently from the 1630s to the 1650s.⁶²⁵ In terms of the outcome of the patronage, the newly adopted designs of inscriptions, which was discussed before, was significant to the flourishing Yixing teapot industry. Like Qiu Ying and his patrons, Yixing potters were commissioned by their scholar-official patrons during their stays.

⁶²² Ibid.

⁶²³ Xu Yinglei, "Shu Shi Dabin shi" in *Ming wen hai*, the *Siku* Edition.

⁶²⁴ Wu, "Yangxian ming tao lu," 1022. 蒋伯畴名时英，蒋后客于吴，陈眉公为改其字之敷为畴。

⁶²⁵ Wu Meiding, "Yangxian ming hu fu," 1031. 若夫综古今而合度，极变化以从心，技而进乎道者，其友泉徐子乎？ 缅稽先子，与彼同时，爰开尊而设馆，今较技以呈奇。 Zhou Rong, "Yixing ci hu ji," in "Yangxian ming tao lu" by Wu Qian, 1025. 《宜兴磁壶记》周容 余寓阳羨，主人致工于园，见且悉工。（许龙文）曰，僧草创，供春得华于土。发声光尚已时为人敦雅古穆，壶如之，波澜安闲，令人喜敬，其下俱因瑕就瑜矣。今器用日烦，巧不目耻，嗟乎似亦感运升降焉。二旬成壶凡十，聚就窑火。予构文祝窑 文畧曰：“器为水而成 火光明德 功繇土以立 木亦见材”。又曰：“气必足夫 阴阳 候乃持夫昼夜，欲全整体以致用，庶含光以守时”。云云。是日主人出时壶二，一提梁卣，一汉觥，俱不失工所言。

However, one can still observe scholar-officials' different attitudes toward the painters and the potters. Professional painters, even ones with a humble background like Qiu Ying, were much more easily to be accepted by the elite class. Ellen Laing's research on art patronage in late-Ming Dynasty shows that some scholar-officials, like Wang Shizhen from Loudong, cultivated a special type of sponsorship, in which a patron "enjoyed the social company of a number of artists; they participated in his literati activities, poetry sessions and parties; he asked them to do an occasional picture, and bought others from them; and apparently even helped promote the new genre of travel picture by inviting artists to accompany him on his travels in order to record the interesting sights along the way in a pictorial album."⁶²⁶ Even though it remained as a commercial relation, the painters were able to participate the gatherings of scholar-officials in such circumstances. These events not only supported their living, but also created a space to expose their talents, so that their status of being outstanding painters could be recognized by their patrons' other scholar-official friends, who could help them spread the information. However, Yixing potters who served as potter-in-residence were facing another situation, in which they had to stay at a certain place where they had an easy access to clay, tools, and kilns. Therefore, the mobility of Yixing potters influenced their accessibility to the networks created by men of the letter like the painters could do. In a few cases, only the scholar-officials who were interested in teapot-making would visit their workshops, talk with the potters, and write about teapots and Yixing potters.

⁶²⁶ Ellen Johnston Laing, "Sixteenth-Century Patterns of Art Patronage: Qiu Ying and the Xiang Family," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Jan. - Mar. 1991: 6.

Furthermore, the professional painters had the ability to draw the style of paintings which the scholar-officials themselves would create; therefore, the resonance between the two parties was hard to ignore. This connection also elevated the status of a late-Ming painter from an artisan who possesses marvelous artistic techniques to an artist who shared the same value with the elite class during the artistic creation. However, different from painting, the scholar-official tea connoisseurs, even ones most obsessed with the teapots, their activities and writings related to this topic never touched their own experiences of making teapots themselves. This could support two assumptions: first, scholar-official tea connoisseurs were more interested in the style of teapots and history of teapot-making, and they enjoyed the roles of consumers and patrons rather than being a teapot-makers. Second, the earlier attitudes towards potters and other artisans were changed; however, the attitudes had not changed so dramatically in the late-Ming era, which meant that the elite class was still treating the pottery-making as a practice, which would make their hands dirty rather than a way of artistic production.

However, compared to other potters, generally referred to the potters worked outside of the areas of Yixing, Yixing potters had the potential to enjoy personal fame and better working conditions, both of which helped attract many potters from elsewhere to come to Yixing. Chen Zhongmei, a potter who was born in Wuyuan of the Huizhou area and later worked in Jingdezhen as a potter, gave up his career in this most prosperous ceramic town and came to Yixing. Wang Zhideng (1535-1612), a student tutored by Wen Zhengming, also recorded in *the Commentary of Jingxi* that many of the Yixing potters were not local residents, but recently came from Yongdong (in modern Zhoushan of the

Zhejiang Province).⁶²⁷ By analyzing the reason why Chen Zhongmei and other potters made their decisions to become Yixing potters, Wu Qian came to a conclusion that the Yixing's teapot industry could help potters build up their names in the market and society, since Yixing potters designed their own styles of teapots and stamped/carved their own names on the teapots, which became an important ways to express their individuality to their consumers. However, potters in Jingdezhen had no chance to write their own names on their works, because it was a convention to stamp the imperial name instead. Unlike being a potter in Jingdezhen's factory-like workshops, being a teapot-maker in Yixing meant more chances to demonstrate one's individual talent and more freedom in artistic creation.

With the popularity of Yixing teapot in the late-Ming commodity market, the status of their potters had changed from anonymous artisans to popular figures that scholar-official tea connoisseurs chose to write about. In most of the cases, tea connoisseurs focused on the style of teapots, praised their exquisite craftsmanship, and combed the genealogy of the development. These writings about Yixing teapots were mostly composed in a circumstance that scholar-official tea connoisseurs did not meet any Yixing potters in person. However, records show tea connoisseurs were enthusiastic about their personal observation about Yixing potters. For example, Zhou Rong (1619-1692), the author of *A Record of Yixing teapot (Yixing cihu ji)* and a Ming loyalist, kept an account of his visit to the Zhu'e Hall and his conversation with Xu Longwen, the

⁶²⁷ Wang Zhideng, "Jinxi shu" in *Yangxian ming tao lu*, ed. Wu Qian, 1057. Jingxi refers to Yixing. 陶者甬东人非土著也。

potter-in-residence at the time, who introduced the history of Yixing teapot to Zhou. Another interesting example was provided by Xu Yinglei, a poet and a *jinshi* degree holder (1616) from Suzhou. Xu described himself as a quite different person from other scholar-officials who were indulging in rising material aspirations in a context of late-Ming consumer culture.⁶²⁸ Xu's dislike of superfluous things impacted on his attitude towards Shi Dabin's teapots, which he described as, "feeling disgusted with and only if by smashing them would I feel happy."⁶²⁹ Besides this, Xu felt disgusted with Shi and his personality even more. When Shi Dabin was staying in Yixing and working for Yang Chunfu (Xu's friend), Xu visited Yang's house. Xu tried to figure out why Shi's teapots were so costly, therefore he recorded this conversation with Yang Chunfu,

One day, I met him (Shi) at the studio of Yang Chunfu. He is simple and rustic, with dark face and dirty clothes on. I asked Chunfu: "how can he charge exorbitant prices like this by his excessive skill?" Chunfu answered: "He comes from a family of potters. By chance, he could create fine pieces. At first, he did not possess such extraordinary skill, so he did not charge such high prices. By nature, he loves drinking alcohol. All the money he earned paid for the wine shop. He likes to drink unrestrainedly with village elders. He only stopped when he exhausted all his money. In addition, he is very lazy, when he suffers from a period of destitute and cannot borrow money from anywhere, he will pawn his supply of rice and firewood. Even if the buyers invested heavily, he would not respond. In addition, there are large numbers of buyers. Gentries from all directions often send letters to the county magistrate for the request of his teapots. Even if Shi worked day and night, exhausted his effort, he still could not meet the demand. Naturally, the

⁶²⁸ Xu Yinglei, "Shu Shi Dabin shi," in *Ming wen hai*, ed. Huang Zongxi, accessed Mar 10, 2018.

<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=en&chapter=275978&remap=gb>

犀象金牛之器非不贵重，商周彝鼎非不甚古，余性不能好也。

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.* 犀自余来阳羨有客，示以时大彬壘，甚小，而其价甚贵，余心恶之曰，必击碎之为快。

demand made the price so high. Shi only desired for wine, how can he understand the whole situation?”⁶³⁰

Xu Yinglei's curiosity and Yang Chunfu's observation provide readers a detailed description of Shi Dabin's personality and his life as a Yixing potter. As a teapot-maker, even though his personality was not well received by his patrons, his skill and works attracted lots of scholar-official clients, who helped push up the price. Xu's article was collected by Huang Zongxi (1600-1695), a Ming loyalist and a philosopher, who tried to preserve the diversity of Ming literature. Huang's father, Huang Zunsu (1584-1626) got the *jinshi* degree in 1616 and became an important member of the late-Ming scholar-official community. Huang Zongxi followed his father's path after his father was persecuted to death in prison as a member of the Donglin Academy, and Huang also became quite active. At the age of thirty, Huang got acquainted with Chen Zhenhui (1604-1656) of Yixing, a scholar-official tea connoisseur who shared the same family background with him. It is reasonable to assume that it was through Chen, Huang had become much familiar with members of Yixing scholar-official community and, furthermore, the Yixing potters, because Chen himself was obsessed with Yixing

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.* 一日遇诸杨纯父斋中，其人朴野黧面垢衣。余问纯父渠何以淫巧索高价若此。纯父曰，是渠世业，渠偶然能精之耳，初无他淫巧，渠故不索价。性嗜酒，所得钱辄付酒家，与所善村夫野老剧饮，费尽乃已。又懒甚，必空乏久又无从称贷始闭门竟日埴始成一器，所得钱辄复沽酒尽，当其柴米贍。虽以重价投之不应，且购者甚众。四方缙绅往往寓书县令必取之，彼虽穷昼夜，疲精神，力不给，故其势自然重价如此。渠但嗜酒，焉知其他。

teapots.⁶³¹ Therefore, the readers can have the access to an observation of Shi Dabin from a different perspective besides the description of his style.

Furthermore, unlike his contemporary tea connoisseurs, Xu was not able to and was not even bothered to understand the value of Shi's teapots. For Xu, the art of painting and calligraphy was much more valuable, and the calligraphic works written by Zhu Yunming (1460-1526) and the paintings created by Tang Yin (1470-1524) belonged to the divine class. Compared to these two categories of justified art, teapot-making was "a trivial skill which is not worth mentioning."⁶³² Nevertheless, Xu was still shocked by the fact that with such a trivial skill, one can make himself a celebrated figure in the society. Furthermore, Xu believed that both Zhu and Tang were not only famous for their talent, but also for their carefree personalities which were highly valued by late-Ming elite class. However, Shi was just addicted to alcohol, which lacked the nature of elegance which should have belonged to every accomplished artist.⁶³³ Different from most of the popular manuals focusing on consumer objects, Xu's comment on Shi and his teapots represented a late-Ming alternative opinion but a more traditional understanding of artisans and

⁶³¹ Chen Zhenhui, *Qiu yuan za pei* (Taipei: Hualian chu ban she, 1965), 2. 时壶名远甚，即遐陬绝域犹知之。其制始于供春壶，式古朴风雅，茗具中得幽野之趣者，后则如陈壶、徐壶，皆不能仿佛大彬万一矣。一云：供春之后，四家董翰、赵良、袁锡，其一则大彬父时鹏也。彬弟子李仲芳，芳父小圆壶，李四老官，号养心，在大彬之上，为供春劲敌，今罕有见者。或沦鼠菌，或重鸡彝，壶亦有幸有不幸哉！

⁶³² Xu Yinglei, "Shu Shi Dabin shi." 今观时大彬一艺至微，似不足言。

⁶³³ *Ibid.* 吾吴中祝希哲草书，唐伯虎画并称神品，为本朝第一。又并有文章盛名，然其人皆日坐松竹间，散髮裸饮，其胸中翛然无一事，当盛暑，虽以台使者之重造门迫之不屑也。今观时大彬一艺至微，似不足言。然以专嗜酒故能精而以成其名，况于书与画而况于文章而况于学圣人学佛者也。

objects. If Wen Zhenheng's *Treatise on Superfluous Things* suggested that calligraphy and paintings, like teapots or other objects, all fell into the commodity sphere, then Xu's statement offered the readers another explanation of the relationship between the works of art and commodities suggested by some late-Ming scholar-officials.⁶³⁴

Xu's ideas about things might not be popular or representative in the late-Ming era; however, it was significant to know that there was still a gap between arts and artifacts, even if the artifacts had been adapted to a series of theories on connoisseurship. The "invention of taste" and the adoption of newly created knowledge did not become prevailing quickly. Exceptions did exist among some scholar-officials, and it took time for the whole society to take a new knowledge and a new taste for granted. To rethink about the status of Yixing potters, it was raised from an unnamed group of potters to a group of celebrities. This promotion of status was accomplished with the efforts by both the potters and their clients—scholar-official tea connoisseurs.

⁶³⁴ Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, 118.

Chapter Five

Consuming Space in late-Ming China: The Pleasures of the Teahouse and the Joys of Exclusiveness

It took centuries for tea to become the national drink of China. First originating in Sichuan in western China, tea soon developed into a popular drink along the Yangzi River area. Geographically, tea remained a drink for southerners, due to the division between the north and south previous to the Sui Dynasty. Discursively, northerners treated tea as an inferior drink to dairy drinks such as yogurt, because the north had political, economic, and cultural advantages over the south.⁶³⁵ Tea gained its popularity in the north with the help of Chan Buddhism, which came to China in the sixth century. The status of tea was legitimated by the imperial court, Buddhist monasteries, and the masses during the Tang Dynasty. In the Song Dynasty, the teahouse became a new and phenomenal business in urban areas. However, the teahouse was not a space exclusively designated for tea consumption. It also served as a multi-functional place, providing accommodation and entertainment for its clients, as well as space for drinkers to socialize and exchange information. Evans argues that the “sociability” associated with tea is one of China’s greatest legacies to the world.⁶³⁶ However, the intention of creating spaces for

⁶³⁵ Evans, *Tea in China*, 35.

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

tea drinking was not always to increase socialization. In the late-Ming period, scholar-officials tea connoisseurs expressed their willingness to create private spaces in urban areas for the pleasure of tea tasting. These small and reclusive cells were called *chaliao*. The invention of this space, on the one hand, was influenced by late-Ming understandings and pursuits of reclusiveness and exclusiveness; on the other hand, it was indicative of a series of aesthetic principles and understandings of space that tea connoisseurs applied in their practices. In addition, these aesthetic principles of reclusion and understandings of space were also applied to the decoration and consumption of other spaces, such as the studio, the guest-hall, and other open spaces, even public teahouses.

Space for Tea Consumptions in Tang and Song Dynasties: from Monasteries to Noisy Cities

As early as the Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE), tea may have been recorded as a commodity in a text entitled *Tong yue (Slave's Contract)*, which was a famous piece of early Chinese humor.⁶³⁷ Its author Wang Bao (?-?), a Sichuan native, composed a list of duties, including “brewing tea” for guests and “buying tea from Wuyang,” for a newly purchased slave.⁶³⁸ However, since the character of tea (茶), in some versions of this text, is also written as tu (荼), which refers to a type of bitter vegetable, there is controversy over the question of whether it was tea or bitter vegetable being traded in the market during the Western Han period. Considering that Wang’s house was thirty kilometers

⁶³⁷ Benn, *Tea in China*, 25.

⁶³⁸ Ibid. Shi Shenghan, “Tongyue jiao zhu,” *Nong ye kao gu*, No.2, 2010: 219-223: 220. 烹茶茶具 武阳买茶

away from Wuyang, travel to Wuyang took four days on the road.⁶³⁹ Therefore, modern historians assumed that the slave must fetch a processed commodity rather than bitter vegetable from a distant market.⁶⁴⁰ Furthermore, another record in *Hua yang guo zhi*, the earliest gazetteer of the Sichuan area written between 348 CE and 354 CE, also suggested that Wuyang had been a county which was famous for its tea production.⁶⁴¹ Moreover, the gazetteer mentioned that not only Wuyang, but also Fuling, Nan'an, and Mengshan were all important tea trade centers in Sichuan.⁶⁴² However, no further information has been provided about the circumstances in which people would drink tea at that time.

Even though tea was easy to find in the markets in Sichuan since the Han Dynasty, it was not an accepted daily drink for northerners in China. Centuries after the Han Dynasty, tea remained a drink only for southerners. One episode in *Luoyang qielan ji*, a text to memorialize the Buddhist monasteries in the city of Luoyang after the fall of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534) composed by Yang Xuanzhi in the year of 547, told a story about tea drinking in northern China. Wang Su, a member of the aristocratic Wang family of Langya that had moved to southern China one century earlier, chose to serve for the emperor of the Northern Wei namely Tuoba Hong (aka Yuan Hong, 467-499) for

⁶³⁹ Marco Cesera, "Discussing an Early Reference to Tea-Drinking in China: Wang Bao's Tongyue." *Annali di Ca'Foscari Serie Orientale* 25 XXXI, no. 3, 1993: 203-211, 209.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Guan Dexiang. "Cong Wang Bao Tongyue tan xi han dai zhong ye Sichuan tian zhuang shang pin jing ji," *Zhongguo nong shi*, No. 4, 2010: 25-47, 43. 武阳出名茶。涪陵郡.....出名茶。

⁶⁴² Ibid.

personal reasons.⁶⁴³ After entering this northern state, Wang, born and raised in the south, had not yet adapted to northern food such as mutton and yoghurt-drink, so he was still consuming food and drink from the south, such as carp broth and tea.⁶⁴⁴ When gentlemen of the capital saw that he could down one *dou* (10 liters) of tea at one sitting, they nicknamed him the “louzhi,” which referred to a bottomless cup, to describe his high capacity of tea.⁶⁴⁵ Years later, in an imperial banquet held by the emperor, who respected Wang a lot, the emperor noticed that Wang has consumed a great deal of mutton and dairy products just like an average northerner.⁶⁴⁶ Surprised, the emperor asked Wang to comment on the differences between the carp broth and mutton, as well as yoghurt-drink and tea. To flatter the emperor, Wang responded, “mutton is the finest food on the land, and fish is the best of the water tribe. People have different preferences, but they both are delicacies. Nevertheless, there is a difference in their tastes. Mutton is like a big country the size of Qi or Lu, and fish are like small states such as Zhu and Ju. However, tea is not good enough, and it is only fit to be a slave of yoghurt.”⁶⁴⁷ The emperor’s sixth son Yuan Xie joined the conversation and said to Wang, “You do not really esteem the big

⁶⁴³ W. J. F. Jenner, *Memories of Loyang: Yang Hsüan-chih and the lost Capital (493-534)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 213-4. 劝学里东有延贤里，里内有正觉寺，尚书令王肃所立也。肃字忝懿，琅琊人也，伪齐雍州刺史奂之子也。瞻学多通，才辞美茂，为齐秘书丞，太和十八年背逆归顺。时高祖新营洛邑，多所造制，肃博识旧事，大有裨益，高祖甚重之，常呼王生。延贤之名，因肃立之。

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 215. 肅初入國，不食羊肉及酪漿等物，常飯鯽魚羹，渴飲茗汁。

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 京師士子道肅一飲一斗，號為漏卮。

⁶⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 經數年已後，肅與高祖殿會，食羊肉酪粥甚多。

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 216. 羊者是陸產之最，魚者乃水族之長。所好不同，並各稱珍。以味言之，甚有優劣。羊比齊魯大邦，魚比邾莒小國，唯茗不中，與酪作奴。

states of Qi and Lu, as you prefer small states of Zhu and Ju.” Wang replied, “one cannot help liking the best things of one’s home.” Yuan Xie invited Wang to his house by saying, “I invite you to my house tomorrow. I will serve you with Zhu and Ju (small-states) foods with ‘the slave of yoghourt.’”⁶⁴⁸ This was why tea was often known as “laonu,” the slave of yoghourt.⁶⁴⁹

Although Yuan Xie promised to offer southern foods and tea for Wang Su in the banquet, Yuan despised tea in the depth of his heart. Liu Gao, the palace counsellor, made a practice of drinking only tea out of admiration for Wang Su’s style. Yuan Xie said to him, “instead of the eight princely foods, sir, you like a drowned slave (shui’e). You could rightly be compared to the man by the sea who followed the foul smell or the woman who practiced frowning.”⁶⁵⁰ Yuan also teased a southern slave in his household in this way. From then on “everyone was ashamed of drinking the tea provided at banquets given by the court and the nobility, except the refugees from the other side of the Yangzi River who had come from afar to submit; they still liked it.”⁶⁵¹

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid. 彭城王謂肅曰：“卿不重齊魯大邦，而愛邾莒小國”。肅對曰：“鄉曲所美，不得不好”。彭城王重謂曰：“卿明日顧我，為卿設邾莒之食，亦有酪奴。”

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid. 因此復號茗飲為“酪奴”。

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid. 時給事中劉縞慕肅之風，專習茗飲。彭城王謂縞曰：“卿不慕王侯八珍，好蒼頭水厄。海上有逐臭之夫，里內有學顰之婦，以卿言之，即是也”。 “The man by the sea who followed the foul smell” refers to people with peculiar preference of unpleasant smell. “The woman who practiced frowning” refers to refers to Dong Shi copying Xi Shi as she clutches her chest and wrinkles her brows but is still despised by the villagers. This is an analogy for someone who, without understanding other people’s strength and their own weakness, tries to copy others, achieving a very unsatisfactory result.

⁶⁵¹ Ibid. 其彭城王家有吳奴，以此言戲之。自是朝貴宴會，雖設茗飲，皆恥不復食，唯江表殘民遠來降者好之。

The record clearly shows two opposite attitudes toward tea. On one hand, the northerners in China had not accepted tea as a daily beverage during the sixth century, and still considered it a non-mainstream drink only consumed by those drinkers, who have sworn their allegiance to the Northern Wei while retaining their southern lifestyles. Tea appeared at some important events like imperial banquets and receptions; however, it was not a legitimated drink in the court, since its appearances were always related to the humiliation of its drinkers and their southern origins. Therefore, there were a considerable number of names containing negative meanings that were given to this drink in a Northern Wei discourse.

On the other hand, even though the Northern Wei imperial family played a significant role in promoting the construction of Buddhist monasteries in their territory, the connections between tea and Buddhist practices were built up no earlier than the arrival of Bodhidharma, the “founder” of Chan Buddhism, in Luoyang during the sixth century.⁶⁵² In the traditional Buddhist story found in the tenth-century transmission record entitled *Record of the Patriarchal Hall*, Bodhidharma, the third son of a great South Indian king, followed his master’s injunction and began his journey to China.⁶⁵³ Bodhidharma’s first stop was Canton in South China, and within a few days, he made his way to Nanjing, the capital of the Liang Dynasty (502-557). Even though the Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty (464-549) was also a Buddhist, Bodhidharma was disappointed

⁶⁵² Jeffrey L. Broughton, *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 2.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

by the emperor's inability to understand his doctrines and proceeded northwards.⁶⁵⁴ He finally settled down at Mount Song near Luoyang and spend nine years on the western peak of the mountain.⁶⁵⁵ Bodhidharma not only brought Chan Buddhism to this area, but also began the abstemious trend initiated by Chan doctrines.⁶⁵⁶ However, tea had played no role in the founding era of Chan Buddhism in China, considering the fact that the Indians have not obtained knowledge of tea production until the nineteenth century. The method of using tea to keep Buddhist monks awake and aid their meditations must not have been established by the earliest generation of Chan practitioners.

Tea became an accepted daily-life drink for China's northerners because of the rapid development of Chan Buddhism in this area. Furthermore, the negative references of tea also disappeared from the northern China discourse. Tea first became a monastic drink and later was noticed by people outside of Buddhist monasteries. *Fengshi wen jian ji* (Records of Things Seen and Heard by Mister Feng), a late-eighth-century book of hearsay and personal experiences written by Feng Yan, who was recommended to be a *jinshi* degree holder in 756, depicted the route that finally led tea to a larger range of drinkers.⁶⁵⁷ In the sixth volume of his book, Feng summarized,

Southerners like to drink tea, but at first few northerners drank it. During the Kaiyuan era (713-741), there was Master Demon-Queller (Xiangmo) of Lingyan monastery on Mount Tai. He strongly propagated the teaching of Chan. To study the practice of Chan, it was important not to sleep and not to eat in the evening, so he allowed practitioners to drink tea. Drinkers carried,

⁶⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁶ John Evans, *Tea in China*, 33.

⁶⁵⁷ Lu Jianzeng, "Preface to *Feng shi wen jian ji*" in *Feng shi wen jian ji jiao zhu* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2005), 11. 封氏演，唐代宗时人，与陆长源友善。天宝中，同张柬之曾孙繹在太学，先后举进士。

brewed, and drank tea wherever they went. Since then, people followed this trend and it gradually became a custom.⁶⁵⁸

Master Xiangmo Zang was one of the second-generation disciples of Master Hongren (ca. 601-675), who was born in Jiangling in southern China. He later became one of the important figures developing the Northern School of Chan. Moreover, Xiangmo Zang's own teacher, Master Shenxiu (ca. 606-706), honored by Empress Wu Zetian, had also resided on Mount Dangyang in Jiangling (in modern Hubei Province), famous for a tea named "nanmu" (Southern wood).⁶⁵⁹ Jiangling, located on the middle reach of the Yangtze River, was not only accessible to Sichuan, where tea first became a commodity, but also was connected to the lower-Yangtze delta, where tea consumption soon became popular. It was possible that Xiangmo Zang inherited the interest in tea from Chan masters who were influenced by this southern tradition. Xiangmo Zang's adoption of tea in Buddhist meditation also suggested that tea's function to stave off sleep noted by earlier observers was acknowledged by larger audiences.

In northern China, the custom of tea drinking was first adopted by people living in the east and then moved westward. As Feng Yan has noticed, the consumption of tea in northern China "began from Zou, Qi, Cang, Di, and gradually reached the capital (Chang'an)."⁶⁶⁰ The county of Zou and the prefecture of Qizhou are located in modern

⁶⁵⁸ Feng Yan, *Feng shi wen jian ji jiao zhu* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 2005), 51. 南人好飲之，北人初不多飲。開元中，泰山靈巖寺有降魔師大興禪教，學禪（一本無“學禪”二字。）務於不寐，又不夕食，皆許其飲茶。人自懷挾，到處煮飲，從此轉相倣效，遂成風俗。Part of the translation comes from James Benn. Benn, *Tea in China*, 50.

⁶⁵⁹ Benn, *Tea in China*, 51.

⁶⁶⁰ Feng, *Feng shi wen jian ji jiao zhu*, 51. 起自鄒、齊、滄、棣，漸至京邑。

Shandong Province, the region in which Master Xiangmo first taught Chan doctrines. The prefectures of Cangzhou and Dizhou are located in the modern Hebei Province. These four places were all important cities along the lower Yellow River. Feng also observed that people began to set up shops in urban areas and that selling brewed tea had become a business. “Regardless of consumers’ religious backgrounds, they would get a drink once they paid,” Feng commented.⁶⁶¹

Besides being a common commodity and drink for urban residents, tea was well accepted by the Tang imperial court. Two pieces of evidence illustrate this. For one thing, the tea sets found in the Famen Monastery for Buddhist offerings were generously supported by the Tang imperial family.⁶⁶² For another thing, the emergence of tribute tea suggested a legitimization of tea’s status in the Tang political system, while implying that members in the Tang imperial court had also become consumers of tea.

However, since northern China was not as suitable as the southern areas for growing tea trees due to climate and geographical reasons, all teas were delivered from southern areas. Feng has pointed out, “The teas [they sell] come from the Jianghuai Region. The ships and carts carrying teas arrived one after another. The teas pile up like mountains, and they are varied in types and colors.”⁶⁶³ Feng’s description also explicitly stated the fact that the drinking of tea was booming in the northern area. Not only influenced by the

⁶⁶¹ Ibid. 城市多開店舖，煎茶賣之，不問道俗，投錢取飲。

⁶⁶² The fourth chapter discusses more details of this tea set.

⁶⁶³ Feng, *Feng shi wen jian ji jiao zhu*, 51. Jianghuai is a geographical area in China referring to the plain between the Yangtze and Huai Rivers, in the modern provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu. 其茶自江、淮而來，舟車相繼，所在山積，色類甚多。

Buddhist practice, the expansion of tea consumption was also a consequence of the reunification of China's south and north in 581 at the beginning of the Sui Dynasty. The newly constructed Grand Canal connected two parts of China together, particularly the lower-Yangtze River and the capital area. These waterways facilitated the shipping of tea and allowed tea from the south directly reached Luoyang. Liu Shiyan (?-812), a Luoyang native and a poet of the Tang Dynasty, described his excursion with the poet Meng Jiao (751-814) to Luoyang's northern suburb :“[We] ground bamboo-shoot tea from Yue to a fine powder, and brewed tea at the bank of a chilly creek.”⁶⁶⁴ Bamboo-shoot tea came from the Yue area (in modern Zhejiang Province). The highest-ranking bamboo-shoot, the Purple Bamboo-shoot tea, was selected to be one of the tribute teas by the Tang imperial court. Liu's writing suggested that not only the members of the imperial court, but also tea drinkers outside of the imperial palace had access to this drink from the Yue area, located on the southern end of the Grand Canal.

Feng also noticed the significant role that Lu Yu had played in the promotion of tea drinking in becoming a national drink. According to Feng's essay, besides being the author of the first monograph on tea, Lu Yu was also the designer of a set of tea vessels. Feng noted, “Lu Hongjian (Lu Yu), originally from the Chu Area (the modern Hubei Province) wrote *Chalun (A Discourse on Tea)*, which talks about the medical functions and benefits of tea and the methods of brewing and roasting tea. He created a tea set including twenty-four items, and he uses a basket called ‘dutonglong’ to store all of

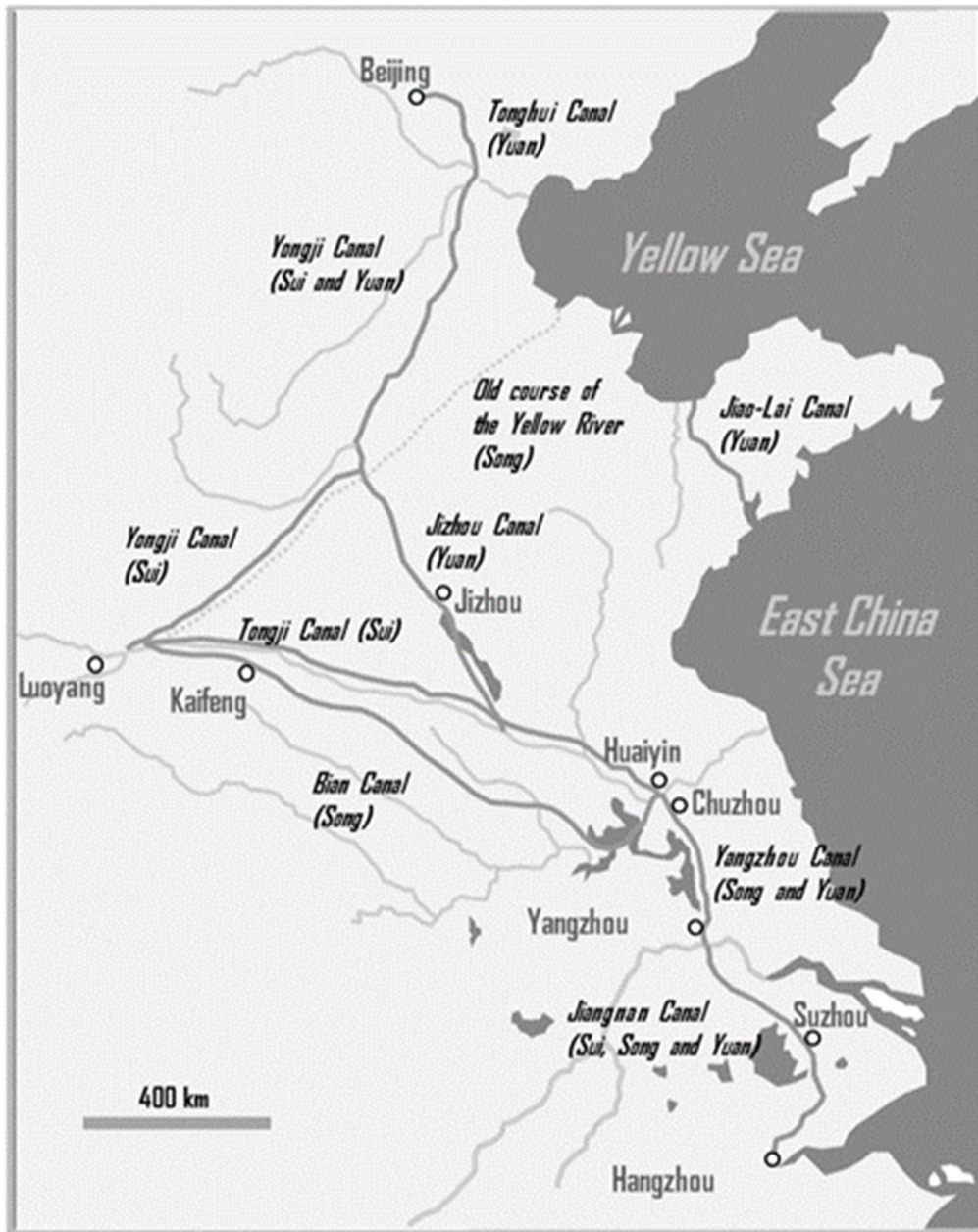
⁶⁶⁴ Liu Yanshi, “Yu Meng Jiao Luo bei ye quan shang jian cha” in *Yu ding Quan tang shi* Vol. 468, the *Siku* edition. 《与孟郊洛北野泉上煎茶》云：“粉细越笋芽，野煎寒溪滨”。

them.”⁶⁶⁵ According to Feng, people from near and far shared the same craving for Lu Yu’s design of tea set, and “almost every tea lover possesses a set of them.”⁶⁶⁶ Chang Boxiong, another late-Tang tea master who polished and propagated Lu’s writings, also contributed to the spread of tea drinking, so that “tea gained its popularity. All aristocrats and officials consume tea without exception.”⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶⁵ Feng, *Feng shi wen jian ji jiao zhu*, 51. 楚人陸鴻漸為《茶論》，說茶之功效並煎茶炙茶之法，造茶具二十四事，以“都統籠”貯之。

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 遠近傾慕，好事者家藏一副。

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 有常伯熊者，又因鴻漸之論廣，潤色之。於是茶道大行，王公朝士無不飲者。



Map 5.1 Grand Canal System⁶⁶⁸

⁶⁶⁸ Source: adapted from Delfs, R. (1990) "Arteries of the Empire," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 15 March 1990, pp. 28-29.

However, Lu Yu's knowledge of tea was also influenced by Chan Buddhist practices.⁶⁶⁹ The popular saying "Chan and tea have but a single taste" (Chan cha yi wei) best describes the relationship between Chan Buddhism and tea.⁶⁷⁰ James Benn has indicated that "because the rise of tea was paralleled by the emergence of a new and distinctive mode of Buddhist practice and rhetoric, the two became intertwined in the cultural imagination and tea drinking was understood to be almost synonymous with Chan."⁶⁷¹ Benn also noted, "although Buddhists might not have consciously pledged themselves to transform the drinking habits of the empire, they were closely involved along every step of the way."⁶⁷²

Buddhist monks began to play important roles in the transformation of China's sacred landscape since the Tang Dynasty. For example, some Buddhist monasteries opened up new land for tea plantations and utilized tea as their major revenues; at the same time, pilgrimages to mountain monasteries that grew their own tea were vitally important in the spread of tea culture.⁶⁷³

It was during the Song Dynasty when tea drinking began to appear in the literature of Chan Buddhism. However, the Song-dynasty literature has shown that tea was a basic

⁶⁶⁹ Benn, *Tea in China*, 101.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 215

⁶⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁶⁷² *Ibid.*, 215.

⁶⁷³ *Ibid.* Michael Robins, "The Inland Fukien Tea Industry: Five Dynasties to the Opium War," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* 19, 1974: 121-42, 138. Sun Hongsheng, *Tang Song cha ye jing ji* (Beijing: She hui ke xue wen xian chu ban she, 2000), 24.

daily necessity in Chan monasteries when these works were composed.⁶⁷⁴ “Qinggui” (Pure Rules), a genre of literature that compiled the rules of monastic disciplines for Chan monks, is significant to our understandings of the role that tea had played in a monastic setting. *Baizhang qinggui*, a series of pure rules attributed to Master Baizhang Huaihai (749-814) of the Tang Dynasty, and *Chanyuan qinggui* (Pure Rules for Chan Monasteries), edited by a Song-dynasty monk named Zongze (?-?), were considered the two most important guidebooks for Chan practices. In them, the use of tea was explicitly regulated in different ritualistic procedures. Liu Shufen’s studies have shown that the way that tea was consumed in monasteries was not isolated from the outside world. For instance, during the Song Dynasty, Chan monasteries followed the new trend in tea drinking and adopted the method of “diancha” (point tea), which meant that drinkers had abandoned the Tang method in which tea powder was boiled together with the water, but rather prepared water and tea powder separately. Liu also indicated that the ritual emphasizing the hierarchy in the Song imperial court influenced the Chan monasteries. For example, the seating arrangement in the monastic rituals strictly followed a hierarchical order.⁶⁷⁵

In contrast to the tea consumption in laymen’s daily life, the tea gathering in Chan monasteries has been highly ritualized during the Song period. *Pure Rules for Chan Monasteries* contains specific descriptions of procedures and requirements for a formal tea gathering (Chahui) and its etiquettes (Chali). Formal tea gatherings were held before,

⁶⁷⁴ Benn, *Tea in China*, 128.

⁶⁷⁵ Liu Shufen, “*Chan yuan qing gui zhong suo jian de cha li yu tang li*,” *Zhong yang yan jiu yuan li shi yu yan yan jiu suo ji kan*, Vol. 87, No. 4, 2007: 629-670, 655-6.

during, or after four most important Buddhist festivals, including the first and the last day of the Rains Retreat (Vassa), the winter solstice, and the new year.⁶⁷⁶ The guests needed invitations from the monastery to participate in a tea ceremony. Before entering the samgha hall (sengtang), in which the tea ceremony was conducted, the guests were obliged to know where their assigned seats were.⁶⁷⁷ After entering the hall and sitting down, the guest would see a tea set prepared for them on the table, including a tea bowl, a decoction bowl, saucers, a tea tray, tea powder, and medical pills for tea (cha yao wan), incense, flowers, and an ewer filled with boiling water.⁶⁷⁸ The ceremony proceeded around the image of the “holy monk,” which was a common feature of the samgha hall in Chan monasteries.⁶⁷⁹ The key elements in the tea ritual were obeisance, burning incense, and circumambulating the hall.⁶⁸⁰ Tea was not served until all these three steps had been finished for the first time. In the second round of ceremony, the host would serve every guest a bowl of tea, a bowl of the decoction, and medicinal pills (cha yao wan) in the order of the seating arrangement. Furthermore, there were three circumambulations within this round. Each of them represented the host’s different instructions to his guests:

⁶⁷⁶ In China, the Vassa (Anju 安居) begins on the fifteenth day of the fourth months and ends on the fifteenth day of the seventh months. Liu, “Chan yuan qing gui Zhong sui jian de cha li yu tang li,” 641.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., 647.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid. The definition of “cha yao wan” is still in controversy. Some scholars believe that it is a type of dessert or confection. However, Liu emphasizes its medicinal functions. It may function as an elixir. Decoction (tang) is another important drink in the tea ceremony. Liu also suggests that it is a medicinal drink. Liu, “Chan yuan qing gui Zhong sui jian de cha li yu tang li,” 106.

⁶⁷⁹ Benn, *Tea in China*, 140. Liu, “*Chan yuan qing gui Zhong sui jian de cha li yu tang li*,” 648. 圣僧龕

⁶⁸⁰ Benn, *Tea in China*, 140. Liu, 650.

to encourage drinking, to drink, and to refill the bowls.⁶⁸¹ Besides circumambulations, there were two burnings of incense during the ceremony. The first burning was intended to summon the sages and ordinary people of the ten directions.⁶⁸² The second one served to invite the monks. After the tea and decoction were finished, the servants took away all the vessels. The host withdrew and stood to the side, and the guests would express their polite and stylized gratitude to the host, thus ending the ceremony.⁶⁸³ Monastic tea ceremonies, as Benn has pointed out, “were conceived as very solemn rituals with little room for spontaneity or relaxation.”⁶⁸⁴

Compared to the solemnity and the sense of ritual created by a monastic tea ceremony, daily tea drinking in urban and rural settings were more casual, lively, and entertaining. There were two spaces in which most secular tea consumption took place, at home and in teahouses. Wang Anshi (1021-1086), a statesman and poet of the Song Dynasty, argued that “tea is as useful as rice and salt, without which people cannot live a day.”⁶⁸⁵ A similar statement was made by Lin Jiong, a Southern-Song scholar, who commented, “people have become accustomed to it for a long time. For them, one day without tea is like one day with no food.”⁶⁸⁶ Not only as an indispensable daily drink, tea

⁶⁸¹ Liu, “*Chan yuan qing gui Zhong suo jian de cha li yu tang li*,” 651.

⁶⁸² Benn, *Tea in China*, 140-1.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁶⁸⁵ Wang Anshi, “*Yi cha fa*” in *Lin Chuan ji*, Vol. 70, the *Siku* Edition. 夫茶之为用，等于米盐，不可一日以无。

⁶⁸⁶ Lin Jiong, “*Que cha*” in *Gu jin yuan liu zhi lun xu ji*, the *Siku* Edition. 习之既久，民之不可一日无茶犹一日而无食。

also began to play an important role in customs and daily manners. Evans has pointed out, “Chinese tea etiquette remained essentially as it had been since it was formalized by the Song.”⁶⁸⁷ For example, serving “greeting tea” upon a visitor’s arrival became a sign of the host’s hospitality.⁶⁸⁸ Furthermore, tea has played a crucial role in betrothal ceremonies since the Song period. Tea expert Xu Cishu of the late Ming recorded the reason, “once planted, tea trees cannot be moved but can produce seeds. The ancients used tea in the ritual of their weddings because they consider tea as a symbol of steadfastness and fertility.”⁶⁸⁹ This long-lasting tradition was still in practice until the Qing Dynasty, and it has not only implied that tea has been given an important position in secular ceremonies, but has also found a place in the performance of Confucian ethics.

Evans has stated, “the Tang invented the Tea Master, the Song the teahouse.” Tea shops first originated during the late-Tang period, and their function was limited to serving brewed tea to customers. However, before the end of the Song Dynasty, the place for serving tea had developed into a multi-functional public space, in which consumers could not only drink a bowl of tea, but also find food, accommodation, and entertainment, and even conduct their business. The term teahouse appears in documents with different names in different regions, including chafang (tea rooms), chalou (tea balconies), chapu (tea shops), chayuan (tea gardens), chasi (tea shops) etc.⁶⁹⁰ Historians view the booming of the teahouses in the Song Dynasty as one of the most phenomenal consequences of

⁶⁸⁷ Evans, *Tea in China*, 86.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁹ Xu, *Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu*, 19. 植必子生，古人結婚以茶禮，取其不移置子之意也。

⁶⁹⁰ Wang, *The Teahouse*, 5.

great progresses that were made in economic development and urbanization.⁶⁹¹ In his study of thirteenth-century Hangzhou (Lin'an), the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty, Jacques Gernet stated, “the intense commercial activity, the extreme density of population, and the constant influx of visitors explained why there were so many places where the inhabitants and travelers alike could eat, meet and amuse themselves.”⁶⁹² Teahouses were one of the urban facilities that created space for these needs, along with restaurants, hotels, and taverns.⁶⁹³

The records of teahouses also increased substantially during the Southern Song Dynasty.⁶⁹⁴ These records have shown the multi-functional quality of teahouses. *Mengliang lu*, a southern-Song description of the urban life in Hangzhou, provided an observation of teahouses in Hangzhou through the eyes of its author, Wu Zimu (fl. 1300). Wu was a Hangzhou native who lived through the chaotic transition from the Southern Song to the Yuan Dynasty. This book represented Wu's nostalgia of Hangzhou in its prime time. In the book, he recorded,

Delicatessens in Bianjing (the capital of the Northern Song) had famous paintings hanging on the wall, so that they could attract visitors who

⁶⁹¹ Sun, *Tang Song cha ye jing ji*, 227-231. Gernet, *Daily Life in China*, 49.

⁶⁹² Gernet, *Daily Life in China*, 49.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Some examples can be found in *Dongjing meng hua lu* by Meng Yuanlao, *Wulin jiu shi* by Zhou Mi, *Meng liang lu* by Wu Zimu, and *Du cheng ji sheng* by Guan pu nai de weng. Meng Yuanlao, *Dong jing meng hua lu* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu dian wen xue chu ban she, 1956), 26. Guan pun ai de weng, *Du cheng ji sheng* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu dian wen xue chu ban she, 1956), 109. Zhou Mi, *Wu lin jiu shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu dian wen xue chu ban she, 1956), 443. Wu Zimu, *Meng liang lu* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu dian wen xue chu ban she, 1956), 262. 《东京梦华录》孟元老、《武林旧事》周密、《梦梁录》吴自牧、《都城纪胜》灌圃耐得翁

would stay as diners. Nowadays, teahouses in Hangzhou are like this too. There are different flowers arranged appropriately for every season and paintings created by celebrated painters hanging on the wall to decorate their façades. They sell extraordinary tea and unique broth in all four seasons. In winter, they additionally provide ground tea with the seven treasures (qibao leisha), savory crullers (sanzi), and scallion tea (cong cha), or sell the salted rice-ball soup. In summer, they sell the plum-flower wine soaked in snow and tonic that protects against heat At present, teahouses have flower display racks, on which are dwarf evergreens. They decorate the front of shops. Percussion instruments are played to tempt passers-by. The tea is served in bowls of fine porcelain placed on lacquer trays. There is no silver tea ware. In the night market on the main street, peddlers sell tea and broth from carts for the convenience of visitors. Young men from wealthy families and officials at leisure gather at the tea balconies and practice musical instruments Renqing (social gathering) teahouses are not primarily for serving tea or broth; however, tea becomes an excuse to charge more money. There are teahouses specifically for pimps (wunu) and for *xinglao* (leader of a guild) to recruit workers. There are three to five teahouses on the main street that have courtesans on the upper floor, called “hua chafang (flower teahouse).” There are five noisy teahouses, including the teahouse owned by Pan Jie gan located in the southwest, Yu Qilang Teahouse, Zhu Kulou Teahouse that is north to Baoyou Ward, Guo Silang Teahouse in Taiping Ward, and Zhang Qixiang gan Teahouse on the northern end of Taiping Ward, all of which are inappropriate for gentlemen to set foot in. Furthermore, Huang jianzui juqiu Teahouse which is next to Zhang’s Noodle Restaurant, Lady Wang Teahouse in Zhongwa also named Yikugui Teahouse, Dajiecheer Teahouse, and Jiang Jianyue teahouse, are suitable for scholar-officials to gather with friends.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹⁵ Wu, *Meng liang lu*, 262. 汴京熟食店，张挂名画，所以勾引观者，留连食客。今杭城茶肆亦如此，插四时花，挂名人画，装点店面。四时卖奇茶异汤，冬月添卖七宝擂茶、撒子、葱茶，或卖盐豉汤；暑天添卖雪泡梅花酒，或缩脾饮暑药之属。今之茶肆，列花架，安顿奇松异桧等物于其上，装饰店面，敲响盏歌卖，止用瓷盏漆托供卖，则无银盂物也。夜市于大街有车担设浮铺，点茶汤以便游观之人。大凡茶楼多有富室子弟、诸司下直等人会聚，习学乐器。人情茶肆，本非以点茶汤为业，但将此为由，多觅茶金耳。又有茶肆专为五奴打聚处，亦有诸行借工卖伎人会聚行老，谓之‘市头’。大街有三五家开茶肆，楼上专安著妓女，名曰‘花茶坊’，如市西南潘节干、俞七郎茶坊、保佑坊北朱骷髅茶坊、太平坊郭四郎茶坊、太平坊北首张七相榦茶坊，盖此五处多有

Wu Zimu's description suggested the diversity of teahouses in Hangzhou during the Southern Song Dynasty. These teahouses were serving clients from different social statuses and varied economic conditions. Teahouses not only served tea, but also provided meals, broth, and wine. Moreover, teahouses played an important role in entertaining Hangzhou tea consumers. In teahouses, clients were able to find music, plays, storytelling, gambling, and even prostitutes.⁶⁹⁶ Furthermore, teahouses also provided space for merchants to conduct their business over steaming bowls of tea, for guild leaders to recruit new workers, and for artisans to find jobs. Last but not least, some teahouse owners have realized the importance of aesthetics in the business. In order to attract and retain more customers, they decorated the space with paintings and plants. One thing we need to pay attention to is that among a variety of teahouses, scholar-officials and members of the elite class intended to avoid noisy and inelegant teahouses and limited their consumptions only in teahouses which were suitable for their tastes. When teahouses were public and accessible to all consumers, customers began to shape the business through their choices. In the Song Dynasty, the aesthetics of space have become a concern for business owners because the consumers' desires and aesthetic preferences played a more and more important role.

吵闹，非君子驻足之地也。更有张卖面店隔壁黄尖嘴蹴球茶坊、又中瓦内王妈妈家茶肆又名一窟鬼茶坊、大街车儿茶肆、蒋检阅茶肆，皆士大夫期朋约友会聚之处。

⁶⁹⁶ The information about story-telling in teahouses can be found in Huang Changchun, "Cha guan shi hua," *Nong ye kao gu*, No. 4, 1991: 102.



Figure 5.1 “Qingming Shanghe Tu” (Along the River During the Qingming Festival) by Zhang Zeduan⁶⁹⁷ This image in a long scroll presents a teahouse in Bianjing (Kaifeng) during the Northern Song Dynasty. There are four drinkers in the room and two tea bowls on the table. Space is plain and not decorated.

⁶⁹⁷ Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/86/Alongtheriver_QingMing.jpg

Teahouses in Bianjing had not played roles as prominent as they did in Hangzhou, the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty. Literature produced in these two dynasties illustrate the difference. In *Dongjing meng hua lu*, a book to celebrate the prosperity of the Northern Song capital, teahouses were described briefly under the category of food and drinks; however, in Wu Zimu's book, teahouse was recorded as an independent category paralleled with wine house, restaurant etc.⁶⁹⁸ This phenomenon also suggested the commercialization and specialization of serving tea in urban areas in this period.

The Song-Yuan dynastic transition did not terminate the development of teahouses in Chinese society. During the Yuan Dynasty, teahouses still played an important role in people's social life, and they were constantly appeared in literature produced within this dynasty, such as dramas.⁶⁹⁹ However, a new but short-lived function of teahouses emerged under the rule of Yuan caused by Yuan's new financial system, which mainly relied on the newly issued paper money (baochao) by the government. Two problems were brought by this system. For one thing, it resulted in a nationwide counterfeiting currency flood of the fourteenth century, which diminished the credibility of paper money; for another thing, this paper money, usually in large denominations, was not friendly to people whose needs were to fulfill their small daily transactions.⁷⁰⁰ Therefore,

⁶⁹⁸ Leng Jili and Le Wenhua, "Lun liang song du cheng de yin shi shi chang," *Nanchang da xue xue bao (Social Science)*, No.1, 1997: 111-116, 115.

⁶⁹⁹ Chen, Xuxia, "Yuan qu zhong de cha wen hua yin xiang," *Hebei Xue kan*, Vol. 25, No. 6, 2005: 124-129, 125.

⁷⁰⁰ Shen Jiaben, *Da Yuan sheng zheng guo chao dian zhang* (Taipei: Wen hai chu ban she, 1974), 313. 《大元圣政国朝典章》户部卷六<禁治茶帖酒牌>: 至元三十一年(1294)三月十八日, 江南行省准中书省咨御史台呈, 切见至元钞法自二贯至五文, 分为一十一等。大小相权, 官民甚以为便, 即今所在

to protect the benefit of selling tea and wine and simplify the procedure of daily transactions, both teahouses and wine shops began to issue their own vouchers to replace the paper money as early as the 1290s.⁷⁰¹ Even though the Yuan emperor ordered a ban on the circulation of vouchers, the vouchers later became the private paper money circulating in local society and led to the disappearing of using government-issued paper money in local societies in the year of 1356.⁷⁰² The popularity of vouchers in local society was a representation of the significance of teahouses and wine shops in Yuan people's daily life. Their consumption in both two spaces were indispensable and generated an important part of their daily transactions.

Consuming Space: Tea Consumption in Teahouses and Building Private *Chaliao* in Late-Ming China

In contrast to previous dynasties, in which teahouses had played a lively role in people's social life, they became invisible in historical records in the first half of the Ming Dynasty. Wang Hongtai has pointed out that the re-emergence of teahouses in the cities did not happen until the mid-sixteenth century. For instance, Tian Rucheng (1503-1557)

馆关到钞本甚多，小钞极少，又为权势之家及库官库子人等结揽私倒，得及细民者能有几何？致使民间以物易物及私立茶帖面帖竹牌酒牌，转行相使.....所据私茶帖面帖竹牌酒牌等类，省会合属禁断，相应乞照祥实施。

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Ibid. Li Gewen, "Yuan dai wei chao chu yi," *Hebei Shifan Daxue Xuebao*, Vol. 23, No. 4, 2000: 112-6, 115.

recorded, “a few years ago, there were taverns, but no teahouse in Hangzhou; however, when wealthy families held banquets, there were some specialists serving tea, and these specialists were called ‘chaboshi (Tea Doctor).’”⁷⁰³ Tian continued,

In the twenty-sixth year of the Jiajing Reign (1547), a person from the Li clan opened a teahouse. It attracted drinkers from all directions. Since Li gained a huge profit from the teahouse, people from near and far imitated him. Within a dozen days, more than fifty teahouses were opened. However, tea was only a pretext. Customers immersed in alcohol and music, Teahouses were no different from taverns.⁷⁰⁴

Gu Qiyuan (1562-1628) also discussed the re-emergence of the teahouse in Nanjing. In the Song Dynasty, the descendants of the Xu Kai (920-974), a famous scholar of the Southern Tang Dynasty, had run a teahouse named Xu Shilang in the Mount She area. However, Gu also indicated, “recently, people became aware of the existence of teahouses, but they did not know they were in the city during the Song time.”⁷⁰⁵ Both Tian and Gu’s writings suggest that the popularity and public nature of teahouses in the urban areas had been lost since the beginning of the Ming Dynasty. Consumptions in teahouses also receded from people’s daily practices and social life.

Moreover, *chaboshi*, tea serving specialists, who had played important roles in teahouses during the Song and Yuan dynasties, only served in private banquets in early-

⁷⁰³ Tian Rucheng, “Xi hu you lan zhi yu” in *Xi hu wen xian ji cheng* (Hangzhou: Hangzhou chu ban she, 2004), 555. 杭州先年有酒馆而无茶坊,然富家燕会,犹有专供茶事之人,谓之“茶博士”。

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 嘉靖二十六年三月,有李氏者,忽开茶坊,饮客云集,获利甚厚,远近仿之。旬日之间,开茶坊者五十余所,然特以茶为名耳。沉湎酣歌。无殊酒馆也。

⁷⁰⁵ Gu Qiyuan, *Ke zuo zhui yu* (Beijing: Zhong hua shu ju, 1991), 106. 徐常侍铉无子,其弟锴有后,居金陵摄山前开茶肆,号徐十郎。……人第知金陵近日始有茶坊,不知宋时已有之矣。

Ming time, instead of being active in public teahouses.⁷⁰⁶ As the same as the disappearance of teahouses from urban areas, the receded profession was caused by the inactive urban culture in the first half of the Ming Dynasty. Wang Hung-tai has noticed that, since the Jiajing reign, the urban society began to revive. Teahouses gradually appeared again in a few cities, such as Nanjing and Hangzhou, because these cities had comparatively developed consumption of tea and urban culture, through which teahouses were able to survive.⁷⁰⁷ In the late-Ming period, the number of teahouses increased substantially in these cities. However, this number did not surpass the number of taverns until the Qing Dynasty.⁷⁰⁸

The types of teahouses were not very different from the ones in the Song Dynasty. However, the stratification of consumers became more and more visible in the late-Ming period. There was a clear division between the elite class and drinkers from other classes. Consumers from the elite class excluded themselves from other drinkers and appreciate the art of tea in a certain type of teahouses specifically designated in accordance with their taste. Their choices made these high-end teahouses stand out in this period. The owners of high-end teahouses paid more attention to the artistic nature of tea drinking. The environment they created, on the one hand, was different from a monastic tea

⁷⁰⁶ The roles of Chaboshi are explained in Liu Xuezhong's article entitled "Zhong guo gu dai cha guan kao lun (A study of Teahouses in Traditional China)." Liu Xuezhong, "Zhong guo gu dai cha guan kao lun," *Nong ye kao gu*, No. 4, 1995: 85-90, 86.

⁷⁰⁷ Wang Hung-tai, "Xiao fei de Kong jian yu Kong jian de Xiao fei," *Shanghai shi fan da xue xue bao* 37, No. 3, 2008: 49-57, 50.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

ceremony, which focused on rituals and solemnity. On the other hand, it was different from popular teahouses that emphasized on inexpensive drink, food, and entertainment. The art of tea was presented in the high-end teahouse in several ways. First, the quality and the taste of tea played the most important role in attracting customers. The teahouse owners used high-quality tea (e.g. Songluo tea, Lanxue Tea), spring water from Mount Hui, teapots produced by Yixing potters, and the most professional tea servers, to create the elegance of teahouses.⁷⁰⁹ Secondly, they tried their best to create an elegant environment for consumers. They improved the decoration of teahouses. For example, a teahouse in Nanjing named Wuliu Ju (Five Willows Residence) had an environment that resonated with its name. Located on the river bank, the building was decorated in elegant ways, and consumers could also enjoy and appreciate the beautiful scenery through the windows. Near the building, there were the five willow trees standing in the water.⁷¹⁰ On the other hand, the owners would control the number of their consumers to guarantee the experiences of tea drinking. They are quite similar to the exclusive men's clubs which began to appear in early modern London and Paris, functioning as "the forum for 'private talk' among preselected and like-minded members of the urban elite."⁷¹¹ Consequently, a teahouse of this kind was not able to serve many drinkers daily.⁷¹² The problem originating from this business model was how a high-end teahouse could survive based

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁷¹⁰ Wu Yingji, *Liu du jian wen lu*, the *Siku* edition. 金陵栅口有五柳居，柳在水中罩笼轩楹，垂条可爱。

⁷¹¹ William Rowe, *Hankow: Conflict and Community in a Chinese City, 1796-1895* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 60.

⁷¹² Wu, *Liu du jian wen lu*, the *Siku* edition. 然饮此者日不能数。

on a comparatively small number of consumers. However, no records provide an answer to this question, and the expenses in these teahouses remained a mystery. Nevertheless, considering the fact that the tea, spring water, and vessels the owners selected were all highly desired items in the market, drinkers' daily costs could be considerable.⁷¹³

During the late-Ming period, limiting the number of guests was a popular idea in tea tasting. Many late-Ming tea connoisseurs explained the aesthetic principle behind this choice. In the preface to *Chadong*, Chen Jiru quoted a statement of Huang Tingjian, a Song-Dynasty artist and official, who argued “Drinking alone, I acquire the spirit of tea. Drinking with two or three friends, I acquire the delight of tea. Drinking with seven or eight people is like giving alms to those who are thirsty.”⁷¹⁴ Zhang Yuan (?-?), a late-Ming recluse and tea connoisseur, also expressed a similar opinion in his book entitled *Chalu (The Record of Tea)*, written in the 1590s. He commented “it is important to have fewer guests during tea drinking. Too many drinkers will be noisy. The noise will reduce the elegance and fun. Sipping alone is a divine experience. Drinking with one person is extraordinary. Drinking with a group of three or four people is fun. With five or six people, the activity of drinking becomes shallow. Drinking with seven or eight people is

⁷¹³ The price of these items is discussed in the other chapters of the dissertation. The price of tea is mentioned in the first and second chapters. The third chapter talks about the cost of spring water delivery. The price of tea vessels can be found in the fourth chapter.

⁷¹⁴ Huang Tingjian, “Huang Shangu ji” in *Zhongguo gu dai cha dao mi ben wu shi zhong*, 1045. Chen Jiru, “Preface of *Cha dong*” in *Cha ban shu xiang* (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ban she, 2001), 213. 独饮得茶神，二三人得茶趣，七八人乃施茶耳。

called giving alms.”⁷¹⁵ Tea connoisseurs’ attitudes toward the environment of tea drinking played a significant role in promoting the emergence of high-end teahouses.

Beside influencing the business of teahouse, the idea of exclusiveness and the aesthetic principles it generated from influenced more on the construction of private space for tea drinking. The term *chaliao*, which refers to a small tearoom, appeared often in scholar-officials tea connoisseurs’ writings during the late-Ming. Different from a teahouse serving public needs, *chaliao* were only designed for private and individual uses. A tea connoisseur could decide in which teahouse he wanted to consume tea, but he was not able to design the space as the way he wanted. However, to build a private tearoom, tea connoisseurs were allowed to fully control the design of space in accordance with their own needs and practiced their aesthetic principles.

Tea connoisseurs in previous dynasties did not pay as much attention to the construction of their own spaces as late-Ming tea connoisseurs did. The idea of building private space for tea consumption was also influenced by garden building, a practice first begun in the Song Dynasty which was revived in the second half of the Ming Dynasty among scholar-officials. Clunas has noticed that since the 1520s “the category of gardens divorced from ideas about productive property expanded greatly, and one in which the number of people involved in the practices of aesthetic horticulture greatly increased.”⁷¹⁶ This new way of looking at gardens turned the garden to “a series of views,” a space to

⁷¹⁵ Zhang Yuan, “Cha lu” in *Zhongguo cha ye li shi zi liao xuan ji*, 142. 饮茶以客少为贵，客众则喧，喧则雅趣乏矣。独啜曰神，二客曰胜，三四曰趣，五六曰泛，七八曰施。

⁷¹⁶ Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 67.

look at, to replace “the integrative mix of land management types (fruit, vegetables, rice, mulberries).”⁷¹⁷ The rise of aesthetic values of gardens and their decreasing value in production both suggested the changed functions of gardens. A place of production had become a space to invest in. The gardens were decorated with rare rocks, square ponds, sinuous streams, towers, delicate bamboos, fine grasses, potted flowers etc., all of which were luxurious decorations.⁷¹⁸ Scholar-officials’ enthusiasm to invest in gardens generated one of the most prominent luxury consumption behaviors during the late-Ming era. Clunas’ study on Wen Zhenheng’s *Treatise on Superfluous Things* suggests that “the garden is presented not as a single coherent site, with boundaries and consistent internal features, but as a bundle of scattered characteristics, each one of which is subject to the types of discrimination on the grounds of taste.”⁷¹⁹ Within a garden, several facilities contributed to the presentation of the owner’s understanding of elegance and vulgarity. For instance, Wen discussed his aesthetic of space in the opening section of *Treatise on Superfluous Things*, entitled “Dwellings and Cottages.” Starting from the gate, the author described the ideal space through the route of a visitor. Wen talked about windows, steps, balustrades, screen walls, then moved to the main structures, including halls, mountain chapels, small dwelling, Buddha halls, bridges, small tearooms (*chaliao*), chambers for playing the qin-zither, washing chambers, alleyways and courtyard, towers and belvederes, and finally terraces.⁷²⁰ *Chaliao*, in Wen’s evaluation, should be located “next

⁷¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁷²⁰ Translated by Clunas. Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, 167.

to a mountain chapel.”⁷²¹ Inside this small room, a set of tea vessels was arranged. It was necessary to train a young servant who was specialize in tea serving, so that drinkers could focus on casual chats and midnight meditations.⁷²² Furthermore, Wen concluded, “(to build a tearoom) is a priority mission for a recluse. None of these details should be neglected.”⁷²³

Chaliao, as a type of building, was not mentioned in any texts produced before the late-Ming period, but was likely to have been invented in the sixteenth century and soon became a new fashion among scholar-official tea connoisseurs. The *liao* (a small room) was not even a common structure during the late-Ming period. In *Yuan Ye* (the *Craft of Gardens*), “the most important and the richest piece of theoretical writing on gardens in the Ming period,” the author Ji Cheng (1582-1642) listed more than fifteen types of regular structures; however, *liao* was not recorded.⁷²⁴ Compared to these listed structures, which were often adopted in urban areas, *liao* first and only appeared as an important facility in Buddhist monasteries as early as the Song Dynasty. In the Buddhist context, *liao* functioned as a cell for a monk to live and meditate. *Liao* was supposed to be a small space, as the Southern-Song poet Lu You has described his life in poverty by writing “my house is as narrow as a monk’s cell.”⁷²⁵ The connection between tea and

⁷²¹ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 27. 相傍山斋

⁷²² Ibid. 内设茶具，教一童专主茶役，以供长日清谈，寒宵兀坐。

⁷²³ Ibid., 27-8. 幽人首务，不可少废者。

⁷²⁴ Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, 138. Ji Cheng, Chen Zhi, *Yuan ye zhu shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo jian zhu gong ye chu ban she, 1981), 5-8.

⁷²⁵ Lu You, “Pin ju” in *Han yu da ci dian* ed. Luo Zhufeng (Shanghai: Han yu da ci dian chu ban she, 1994), 1685. 《贫居》囊空如客路，屋窄似僧寮。

monastic cells was built up during the late-Ming period. Yang Shen's (1488-1559) explanation of *chaliao* was "a place for monks to drink tea."⁷²⁶ Yang experienced a life of exile for more than three decades and did not further describe the detail of *chaoliao*. However, tea connoisseurs living in the Jiangnan region, who enjoyed abundant life, had developed the idea of *chaliao* theoretically and practically. Li Rihua of Jiaying suggested that the tearoom must be clean and decorated with no excessive furniture.⁷²⁷ Tu Long of Ningbo paid more attention to tea vessels within the room. He recommended placing fourteen necessary tea vessels in the room, including one tea stove, six tea bowls, two water pots, and ten other items.⁷²⁸ Xu Cishu of Hangzhou emphasized the arrangement of things inside the space. For example, Xu suggested to "set up a table for placing the water pot and the basin, then set up another table for the rest vessels. Next to the table, arrange a shelf, so that the drinker can use the tea towel that hanging on it."⁷²⁹ In addition, due to the storage of charcoal and the use of fire in the room, Xu noticed the risk; therefore, he suggested that fire prevention should have the highest priority.⁷³⁰ These tea connoisseurs

⁷²⁶ Yang Shen, "Cha liao" in *Yi lin fa shan* ed. Luo Zhufeng (Shanghai: Han yu da ci dian chu ban she, 1994), 383. 僧寺茗所曰茶寮。

⁷²⁷ Li Rihua, *Liu yan zhai san bi Vol. 4*, the *Siku* Edition, 6a. 洁一室, 横榻陈几其中。

⁷²⁸ Tu Long listed thirteen items in the book. It is obvious that he was still practicing tea drinking in the Tang-and-Song way. The more popular way of tea consumption has been much simplified in the late-Ming time. More details of the differences have been explained in Chapter One. Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 321.

⁷²⁹ Xu, *Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu*, 14. 寮前置一几, 以顿茶注、茶盂, 为临时供具。别置一几, 以顿他器, 傍列一架, 巾幌悬之, 见用之时, 即置房中。

⁷³⁰ *Ibid.* 炭宜远置, 勿令近炉, 尤宜办, 宿乾易炽。炉少去壁, 灰宜频扫, 总之以慎火防蒸, 此为最急。

treated *chaliao* seriously. Moreover, they believed it one of the most important factors to the pleasure for tea drinking and considered it the most ideal space to enjoy tea drinking.

However, all of these tea connoisseurs' understandings of *chaliao* were influenced by their predecessor, a retired official named Lu Shusheng (1509-1606). Lu's essay, entitled *Chaliao ji* (The Record of Chaliao), was the earliest essay that focused on this small private space of tea drinking. He talked about the decoration of the room, the choice of partners, and recorded his activities in this space. Lu Shusheng, originally from Huating County of the Songjiang Prefecture (modern Shanghai area), got his *jinshi* degree in the twentieth year of the Jiajing Reign (1541). Known as a hardworking and responsible official, he was invited by the court to serve as a high-ranking official several times. However, he always felt reluctant to accept these offers.⁷³¹ In 1572, disappointed by powerful eunuchs who disrespected him, Lu determined to retire from his position in the court. Even though Zhang Juzheng (1525-1582), the grand secretary at the time, tried to detain him by once again suggesting that the court offer him an important position, Lu decided to leave without any hesitation. However, as an official famous for the integrity, Lu still tried to admonish the emperor before his official retirement, and he suggested the emperor make improvements on ten things.⁷³²

⁷³¹ Zhang Tingyu, *Ming shi in er shi wu shi* (Shanghai: Kai ming shu dian, 1935), 523. 万历改元，中官不乐树声，屡宣诣会极门受旨，且频趣之。比趋至，则曹司常事耳。树声知其意，连疏乞休。居正语其弟树德曰：“朝廷行相平泉矣。”平泉者，树声别号也。树声闻之曰：“一史官，去国二十年，岂复希揆席耶？且虚拘何益。”其冬，请愈力，乃命乘传归。辞朝，陈时政十事，语多切中，报闻而已。

⁷³² *Ibid.*

Leaving behind all the unhappiness brought by court politics, Lu Shusheng started a life of a recluse in his hometown, in which he built a garden named Shiyuan (The Garden of Comfort). Since Lu was extremely fond of tea connoisseurship, tea became one of the major themes in his life of retirement. Lu's *chaliao* was located in the garden, on the west side of the Xiao Pavilion (Xiao xuan). Inside the room, there were appropriate tea vessels, such as tea stove, water bottles, and dispensers. Lu belonged to a generation of tea connoisseurs who experiencing the changing ways of tea drinking. Like his contemporaries the Wu brothers of Yixing (Yangxian), he was still very interested in the Tang-and-Song style of tea drinking.⁷³³ The vessels he paid attention to were also different from those we find decades later. Lu studies this way of drinking tea from his friends in Yangxian, the way that was largely recorded by Lu Yu in *the Classic of Tea*.⁷³⁴ Not only a tea connoisseur, Lu was also a Buddhist practitioner. His closest friend in tea drinking was a Buddhist monk named Mingliang who came from the Zhongnan Mountains. Lu was aware of the importance of whom he drank with, as he emphasized that brewing tea was a serious practice and it required a companion "whose morality was paralleled with his taste of tea."⁷³⁵ Monk Mingliang was no doubt an expert in tea tasting. After a journey to Mount Tianchi, he brought back Tianchi tea and presented it to Lu as a gift. Furthermore, he was also a practitioner of this Yangxian method of tea preparation;

⁷³³ About the Wu brothers, details have been discussed in the third chapter focusing on tea vessels.

⁷³⁴ Lu Shusheng, *Chaliao ji* (Taipei: Yi wen yin shu guan, 1966), 1. 园居敞小寮于啸轩埤垣之西，中设茶灶，凡瓢汲罍注濯拂之具咸庀。

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 3. 煎茶非漫浪，要须其人与茶品相得

however, his skill was much better than Lu, as Lu had recognized.⁷³⁶ With the same method, Mingliang was able to make the tea that matches the standard of “qing (purity),” because his method would not let the color of tea turn dark.⁷³⁷ His tea was pure enough to be a match for a man who has reached the status of *samadhi*, Lu commented.⁷³⁸ Lu Shusheng suggested that it was better not to use this space only by himself. He recommended that the pleasure of tea should be shared with friends. The ideal situation was to choose one who was better at brewing tea to conduct major procedures, while the other one helped him with less important tasks, such as drawing and boiling water.⁷³⁹ Besides a place for drinking tea, this space was also used for chatting and meditation with a friend.

However, tea connoisseurs of later generation seemed not likely to prepare tea by themselves or collaborate with their friend very often. They intended to hand over this job to their young servants (*tongzi*). *Tongzi* had become a topic in the discourse of late-Ming tea connoisseurship, and they played important roles in the process of tea drinking. These *tongzi* were carefully selected and well-trained by tea connoisseurs. In addition, they did not have other duties, but only concentrated on preparing and serving tea.⁷⁴⁰ Not only did they serve for their masters on a daily basis, but they also fulfilled their duties

⁷³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2. 授余烹点法甚细。余尝受其法于阳羨士人，大率先火候，其次候汤，所谓蟹眼鱼目，参沸沫沉浮以验生熟者，法皆同。而僧所烹点绝味清，乳面不黦，

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2. 僧所烹点绝味清，乳面不黦，

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.* 是具人清静味中三昧者。

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, 1. 择一人稍通茗事者主之，一人佐炊汲。

⁷⁴⁰ Wen, *Zhang wu zhi*, 27. Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 321. 当教童子专主茶役。教一童专主茶役。

when there were tea gatherings.⁷⁴¹ With the emergence of young tea servants, tea connoisseurs could choose to free themselves from all the procedures of tea preparation and servings. As I argued in the first chapter, the de-ritualized practice of tea drinking in the late-Ming period emancipated tea connoisseurs from focusing on the movements of their bodies and let them to fully concentrate on sensing the tea and the beauty of the surroundings. While their bodies were freed from tea ritual, their sensory organs would concentrate on the taste on tea. Even though Tu Benjun still argued that preparing tea by oneself was a better way to control the quality of tea, he reported that most tea connoisseurs had transferred this task to young servants.⁷⁴² The fun of brewing tea has been replaced by the pleasure of merely tasting it during the late-Ming period. Moreover, these young servants became the “chaboshi” in private spaces.

Late-Ming tea connoisseurs preferred to emphasize its reclusiveness. For instance, Li Rihua stated, “Incense is burning in silence and tea vessels are placed on the table. Nothing else is in the room. When I meditate alone, the pure *qi* would naturally gather around my body. Once the pure *qi* gathers, the muddy and evil *qi* would disappear.”⁷⁴³ Reclusion, a popular idea and a practice among China’s scholar-officials, experienced a change during the late-Ming period. As Clunas has observed, “there is an equally long tradition of the acceptance of the fact that real reclusion in the remote depths of the

⁷⁴¹ Xu, *Xu Ranming xian sheng cha shu*, 15. 然對客談譜，豈能親蒞，宜教兩童司之。

⁷⁴² Tu Benjun, *Ming ji in Cha ban shu xiang* (Harbin: Heilongjiang ren min chu ban she, 2001), 184. 凡事俱可委人，第貴成而已。惟瀹茗須躬自執勞，瀹茗而不躬執，欲湯之良，无有是處。

⁷⁴³ Li Rihua, *Liu yan zhai san bi Vol. 4*, the *Siku* edition, 6. 炉香茗瓿，萧然不杂他物，但独尘凝想，自然有清灵之气来集我身。清灵之气集，则世界恶浊之气，亦从此中渐渐消去。

countryside is not a real option for those possessed of social obligation.”⁷⁴⁴ Even though the countryside remained the first choice of a location for making a home theoretically, it was not the location most frequently chosen in practice. “The symbolic dissociation of the elite” from the agricultural area was matched by “a growing tendency for landlords to abandon the countryside in favor of the city as the sixteenth progressed,” Clunas concludes.⁷⁴⁵ For example, Lu Shusheng’s residential garden was quite secluded and inaccessible to visitors; however, it was still located within the city wall of the prefectural city. Other scholar-officials’ residential gardens were also constructed in urban areas instead of built in mountainous or rural areas.⁷⁴⁶

The idea of “shi yin (city recluse)” was not only influenced by the social development, but also justified by the Buddhist thought that “remoteness from the world was not a matter of physical distance but of inner mental state.”⁷⁴⁷ Clunas has pointed out, “the convenient effect of the deployment of this idea was to allow the upper reaches of the Ming elite to eat their cake and have it, to enjoy the kudos of eremitism without eschewing the cultural, social, and security benefits of life in or near to a major urban center.”⁷⁴⁸ A residential garden was supposed to play an important role in the practice of city reclusion. However, only a few scholar-official tea connoisseurs, such as Lu Shusheng, were able to retain the garden’s relative inaccessibility to visitors. Clunas

⁷⁴⁴ Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, 91.

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴⁶ For examples, Li Rihua’s villa was built in the eastern suburb of Xiushui County and Feng Mengzhen’s house was built on the west side of West Lake, etc.

⁷⁴⁷ Clunas, *Fruitful Sites*, 93.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

suggests that a garden in a city was seen “a locus of conspicuous consumption” in early modern China.⁷⁴⁹ Therefore, “in search for status and power,” a gentleman would use this space to proclaim his wealth and taste to a wide audience.⁷⁵⁰ The relatively private nature of the garden was interrupted in this situation. Since a garden functioned as a space for socializing, *chaliao* became a haven for its owner, the only asocial space in the garden, to practice reclusion in a noisy city.

Besides being an aesthetic space in which connoisseurs enjoyed tea, the aesthetic principles developed from the connotation of *chaliao* became a widely-recognized standard for late-Ming tea connoisseurs. In a study of *chaoliao*, Wu Zhihe has summarized these aesthetic principles: the interior design of the space should be comfortable, elegant, with a sense of reclusiveness, and clean; at the same time, the exterior should be filled with fresh air, exposed to good light, and properly decorated with trees (bamboo) and flowers.⁷⁵¹ These principles have also been applied to other relatively private spaces for tea drinking. Wu has categorized these spaces into three types: scholars’ studios, the guest hall of a house, and semi-open spaces such as pavilions.

The first type of space was scholar-official tea connoisseurs’ studios. In contrast to *chaliao*, a studio was a multi-functional space, in which a tea connoisseur could read, write, meditate, rest, and socialize with friends. Tea played an important role in scholar-officials’ practices in a studio. For instance, tea was a great company for scholars’ late-

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid., 96.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁵¹ Wu Zhihe, “Ming dai cha ren de chaliao yi jiang,” *Shi xue ji kan*, No. 3, 1993: 15-23, 15.

night reading and meditation. Mo Shilong (1539-1587), an active artist from an elite family and a fellow-townsmen of Lu Shusheng, depicted an image of his reading in the studio at night. “Even the happiest thing in my life cannot be compared with reading books on a cold night,” Mo said.⁷⁵² He set up a fire to keep warm and read by candlelight. Mo continued, “all of a sudden, a feeling of loneliness comes to my mind and pure thought enters my flesh and bones. Sitting for a while, my spirit would get better only if I have a cup of tea nearby. Occasionally, I can hear the young servant snoring, but I consider it music. Sometimes, I can hear the wind blowing through bamboo groves and birds in the mountain making sounds. My exhaustion soon disappears, and I often wander until the dawn.”⁷⁵³ A studio was usually built in a remote corner of a garden. As Ji Cheng has suggested, this choice not only helped the owner to find a quiet and relatively isolated place to study, but also let him find the delight of nature inside and around the studio.⁷⁵⁴ These two features have both contributed to scholar-officials’ pursuit of reclusion. Furthermore, as Wu has noticed, tea played a more important role when the owner’s friends were coming. “I burn incense and brew tea after the arrival of my guests,” a Ming recluse named Zhou Hui (1546-?) recorded.⁷⁵⁵ Zhou built his residence on the west bank

⁷⁵² Mo Yinglong, “Bi chen,” the *Qi jin zhai cong shu* edition, 4a-b. 人生最乐事，无如寒夜读书。

⁷⁵³ Ibid. 拥炉秉烛，兀然孤寂，清思彻入肌骨。坐久，佐一瓯茗，神气益佳。尔是闻童子鼻息，足当数部鼓吹。或风生竹树间，山鸟忽囀，倦魔都尽，往往徘徊达曙。

⁷⁵⁴ Ji, *Yuan ye zhu shi*, 67. 书房之基，立于园林者，尤拘内外，择偏僻处，随便通园，令游人莫知有此。内构斋、馆、房、室，借外景，自然幽雅，深得山林之趣。

⁷⁵⁵ Wu Zhihe, “Ming dai cha ren de chaliao yi jiang,” 17. 客至，则焚香煮茗，治共相饮，壶奕觞咏以为乐，虽久而弗厌也。

of the West Lake, where it was surrounded by bamboos and cypresses.⁷⁵⁶ He arranged vessels and drank with his friends in the studio, in which he had collected classics of different schools.⁷⁵⁷ In addition, they played chess and recited poems together. Wu regards studios like this as the space to present the owners' knowledge, lifestyle, and cultivation.⁷⁵⁸

The second type of space was the guest hall in a house. If the primary aesthetic principle of space for tea drinking was its reclusiveness, then it was not easy to attain this criterion in a guest hall. Wu has pointed out that when a tea connoisseur was not rich enough to afford his own studio or *chaliao*, the guest hall would be the only place within a house that was suitable for tea drinking.⁷⁵⁹ However, these guest halls should be decorated in elegant ways. Lu Yun'gu, a friend of Zhang Dai, was a good tea taster who was running a pharmacy and clinic in Shaoxing.⁷⁶⁰ Behind the shop, he had a small but elegant space for tea drinking. Zhang explained the surrounding of this space, "daylight penetrates the window. There are green trees, dense shades, and diverse in-season flowers. Under the window, there is a short wall, on which are some bonsai."⁷⁶¹ Noticing the garden was decorated by trees and stones, Zhang thought that every arrangement in this place was like a piece of art created by Ni Zan (1301-1374) or Huang Gongwang

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid. 晚岁筑书室于西溪，而环以竹松，日徜徉其间。

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid. 室中所蓄，惟经史子集及百氏之书

⁷⁵⁸ Wu, "Ming dai cha ren de cha liao yi xiang," 17.

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁶⁰ Zhang Dai, "Lu Yungu zhuan" in *Zhang Dai shi wen ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1991), 285.

会稽宝祐桥南，有小小药肆，则吾友云谷悬壶地也。

⁷⁶¹ Ibid. 窗下短墙，列盆池小景。

(1269-1354), two outstanding painters of the previous dynasty.⁷⁶² Because of his exceptional understanding of the principle of tea tasting, Lu attracted many local tea connoisseurs to this elegant space. In a biography of Lu, Zhang expressed that he was honored and fortunate to become a friend with Lu, because Lu was not enthusiastic about expanding his social circle.⁷⁶³ Zhang was one of the three tea connoisseurs who was invited to this place. The friendship between Zhang and Lu lasted for thirteen years, and these tea lovers gathered in this small space almost every day, except when they were forced to do something else.⁷⁶⁴ Even with a limited budget, Lu's working on decorating this space brought him considerable attention in Shaoxing. Wealth was not the decisive factor in creating a suitable environment for tea tasting; understanding the aesthetic principles played a more important role in supporting the pleasure of drinking.

The third type of tea-drinking space was the outdoor space, in which tea connoisseurs had the closest connection with nature. Wu has noticed that there were two types of structures that usually appeared in the discourse of outdoor tea tasting. One was called *ting* (pavilion), and the other was named *xie* (a pavilion or a house built on a terrace or on water). Wu has pointed out that the main purpose of using these two spaces was for “pure and elegant appreciation of natural scenes and objects (*qingshang*)” and “joyful leisure (*yixian*).” Therefore, there was no need to deliberately decorate these spaces; however, the two spaces should fulfill some aesthetic principles. For instance, Tu

⁷⁶² Ibid. 木石点缀，笔笔皆云林大痴。

⁷⁶³ Ibid. 云谷深于茶理，相知者日集试茶，纷至沓来，应接不暇。

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 286. 非大风雨，非至不得已事，必日至其家。啜茗焚香，剧谈谑笑，十三年于此。

Long argued that a pavilion should be “simple, elegant, and durable.”⁷⁶⁵ The ideal pavilion should be surrounded by orchids and bamboos and built under an old pine tree.⁷⁶⁶ Tu called it a pure and elegant space.⁷⁶⁷ On the other hand, Wang Ao had described the leisure life of Shi Mingyuan, a gentleman who Wang befriended after his retirement. According to Wang, Shi built a garden, in which he could grow agricultural products himself.⁷⁶⁸ To share his hobbies with friends, Shi built a pavilion in a grove of pine trees and bamboos. If there were guests coming, they would gather and drink all day, so that everyone could feel the joy.⁷⁶⁹ Even in a productive garden, Shi had designated a small space where he and his friends could enjoy the nature and tea at the same time. Decades later, a reclusive painter named He Liangjun (1506-1573) recorded his journey to Lingying Daoist Monastery with his friend Sheng Zhongjiao. He remembered “Zhongjiao brought fragrant tea and led a guest named Xu Xijian to come. We sat and gathered in a pavilion burning incense and drinking tea. Zhongjiao made ink and painted.....We viewed scene from above and felt reluctant to leave until the sunset.”⁷⁷⁰

⁷⁶⁵ Tu, *Kao pan yu shi*, 320. 淳朴雅观且耐久。

⁷⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 外护兰竹一二条，结于苍松翠盖之下。

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 雅称清赏。

⁷⁶⁸ Shi was about the same age as Wang Ao. In the early-fifteenth century, most of the gardens still functioned as places to grow agricultural products. The transition from a producing space to an aesthetic space have been explained earlier.

⁷⁶⁹ Wang Ao, *Zhen ze ji*, the *Siku* edition, 5a-b. 晚构一亭于松竹之间，客至相与宴饮，怡然终日。

⁷⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 仲文携香茗，领客徐西涧继至，相与宴坐亭中，焚香吸茗。仲交和墨点笔作云林小景.....留连览眺，迨暮方归。

He's description presented an image that a recluse would dream about: drinking and painting in the mountains.

The principles behind consumption and construction for tea drinking presented scholar-official tea connoisseurs' perception of their own status in the social world. Bourdieu argues that a group can define its relative position within the "social space," which is "constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within that universe."⁷⁷¹ Bourdieu further states, "the active properties that are selected as principles of construction of the social space are the different kinds of power or capital that are currently in the different fields. Capital, which may exist in objectified form - in the form of material properties - or, in the case of cultural capital, in the embodied state, and which may be legally guaranteed, represents a power over-the field."⁷⁷² *Chaliao*, teahouses designated for scholar-official tea connoisseurs, and other spaces for tea drinking all played important roles in the discourses of tea and taste. The consumption of these spaces served for the purpose of distinction; moreover, the writings on the topic guaranteed scholar-official tea connoisseurs' status as leaders and dominated the field of tea connoisseurship.

The Concept of *Chaliao* after the Dynastic Change

⁷⁷¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* Vol. 14, No. 6 (Nov. 1985), 723-744: 723-4.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, 724.

As the concept and designation of *chaliao* spread along with the publication of scholar-official tea connoisseurs' writings, *chaliao*, as a term, received attention from audiences and writers. Re-examining the meaning of this term, we can see that it gradually shifted away from its original meaning. In some Qing texts, *chaliao* has become a term to describe a public space for tea consumption, and it often appears paralleled with another term called *jiusi*, which refers to the tavern.⁷⁷³ A Suzhou scholar named Ye Tingguan (1792-1869) described a scene he saw in Hubei Province that “local people set up dozens of *chaliao* along the lakeside to serve for visitors.”⁷⁷⁴ The appropriation of a term created in the previous dynasty, on the one hand, shows the influence of these late-Ming literature of tea; on the other hand, implies that definition of *chaliao* had changed in the discourse of tea. The aesthetic meanings and social functions of this small private space of tea drinking did not play important roles to tea connoisseurs during the Qing Dynasty. The reasons for this change in the meaning of *chaliao* would be complicated and need a further study.

⁷⁷³ Wei Zi'an, *Hua yue hen* (Fuzhou: Fujian ren min chu ban she, 1981), 36. 彤雲閣是上下兩層，溪北最高之處，四面明窗，俯瞰柳陰中，漁莊稻舍，酒肆茶寮，宛如天然圖畫。

⁷⁷⁴ Ye Tingguan, “Hankou hou hu shi” in *Ou pi yu hua* Vol. 3, 48. 《鸥陂渔话·汉口後湖诗》：春時彌望皆菜花，亦稱黃花地。土人沿緣設茶寮數十處，以待游客。

Conclusion

The Ming Dynasty was the period in which tea production experiencing significant changes. The founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who preferred loose tea, established the basis for the new development of the tea market. This shift of imperial taste gradually influenced the taste of scholar-official tea connoisseurs. During the late-Ming period, tea connoisseurs were enthusiastic about creating a new discourse of tea tasting, which emphasized on the “true flavor” of tea. Practices influenced by the idea of “true flavor” differentiated the late-Ming tea tasting from previous dynasties. These new changes not only happened in the ways of tea preparation and tasting, but also appeared in the production of tea, the choice of water, and the selection of tea vessels.

By stressing the merits of the Ming way, scholar-official tea connoisseurs not only did play the role of consumers, but also became promoters of certain goods, which were suitable for the elite taste. Discursively, tea literature, as an important medium between elite authors and their non-elite audiences, helped tea connoisseurs gain cultural capitals that distinguished themselves from non-elite groups. Furthermore, tea gatherings, through which tea connoisseurs communicated with others and strengthened existing bonds, helped them improve social capitals that maintain their social elite identity. In addition, since wealth and degrees were not the only two factors to define the social status in late-Ming society, commoners and artisans with recognized sensibilities and facilities for cultured pursuits would be accepted as one member of this elite group. Through

networking and patronage, “accumulating social capital could open up opportunities and allow upward mobility,” Bret Hinsch concluded.⁷⁷⁵

Our contemporary way of tea drinking is deeply influenced by the late-Ming way. However, when examining the development of tea production and consumption within this period, we can find so many changes. Some commodities rose to the top in the market, such as Longjing tea and Yixing teapots, while some of them declined and even disappeared from the market, such as Luojie tea. Some of them survived; however, consumers’ attitudes toward them became different, just like Songluo tea. Late-Ming scholar-official tea connoisseurs, for their part, played active roles in these transformations, in which they dominated the fashion of tea drinking through establishing a series of aesthetic principles.

In addition, the de-ritualized and simplified tea-drinking process and the emergence of tea servants emancipated drinkers from bodily movements and allowed drinkers to focus on their sensory experiences. These two changes that appeared in the late-Ming Dynasty were significant to the development of tea connoisseurship thereafter.

⁷⁷⁵ Bret Hinsch, *The Rise of Tea Culture in China: The Invention of the Individual* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 139.

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Glossary

Bai zhang huai hai 百丈怀海	<i>Cha lu</i> 《茶录》
Baiyu she 白榆社	<i>Cha lun</i> 《茶论》
Baiyue 白岳	<i>Cha pu</i> 《茶谱》
Baiyun 白云峰	<i>Cha fang</i> 茶坊
Ban zhu an 斑竹庵	<i>Cha hui</i> 茶会
Bao chao 宝钞	<i>Cha li</i> 茶礼
Beishan 北山	<i>Chaliao ji</i> 《茶寮记》
Beiyuan cha 北源茶	<i>Cha liao</i> 茶寮
Ben wei 本味	<i>Cha lou</i> 茶楼
Bianjing 汴京	<i>Cha lu</i> 茶炉
Cai Xiang 蔡襄	<i>Chan cha yi wei</i> 禅茶一味
Cangzhou 沧州	<i>Chan yuan qing gui</i> 《禅苑清规》
Cao cha 草茶	<i>Chang Boxiong</i> 常伯雄
Cha boshi 茶博士	<i>Changxing</i> 长兴
<i>Cha dong</i> 《茶董》	

Chao yao wan 茶药丸	Dafang 大方
Chaoqing 炒青	Dan 淡
Chapu 茶铺	Dangyang 当阳
Chasi 茶肆	Di quan 地泉
Chayuan 茶园	Diancha 点茶
Chazao 茶灶	Dizhou 棣州
Chen Chaojue 陈朝爵	Dong qiu yu wan tang 东丘娱晚堂
Chen Jiru/Meigong 陈继儒/陈眉公	Dong Xiaowan 董小宛
Chen Zhenhui 陈贞慧	Dong ding jie 洞顶芥
Chizhou 池州	<i>Dongjing meng hua lu</i> 《东京梦华录》
Chong'an 崇安	Dongshan 洞山
Cixi 慈溪	<i>Dou cha tu</i> 《斗茶图》
Cong cha 葱茶	Du tong long 都统笼
<i>Da guan cha lun</i> 《大观茶论》	E'zhou 鹅州
Da ji 大机	Famen 法门（寺）
<i>Da ming yi tong zhi</i> 《大明一统志》	Fang Yizhi 方以智

Fang Zigong 方子公

Gulian Spring 谷帘泉

Feng Kebin (zi Zhenqing) 冯可宾(字祯卿)

Guo Yangzhuo 过养拙

Feng Mengzhen 冯梦祯

Guyu 谷雨

Feng Qizhen 冯启震

Guzhu zisun 顾渚紫笋

Feng Yan 封演

Guzhu 顾渚

Fenghuang 凤凰(岭)

Han Chang 韩昶

Fengshi wen jian ji 《封氏闻见记》

Han han quan 憨憨泉

Fenning 分宁

Han'gao 含膏

Fuling 涪陵

Hangzhou 杭州

Gan 甘

He Liangjun 何良俊

Gongchun 龚春/供春

he 和

Gu Qiyuan 顾起元

Hongren 弘忍

Gu ya 古雅

Hua chafang 花茶坊

Gu Yuanqing 顾元庆

Hua yang guo zhi 《华阳国志》

Gu Zijian 顾子兼

Huang Daoyuan 黄道元

Huang Gongwang 黄公望

Huang Longde (zi Xiangming) 黄龙德

(字骧溟)

Huang Tingjian (zi Luzhi) 黄庭坚(字鲁直)

Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲

Huang Zunsu 黄尊素

Huating 华亭

Hu xiao yan 虎啸岩

Huishan quan 惠山泉

Huizhou 徽州

Huqiu 虎丘

Huzhou 湖州

Ji Cheng 计成

Ji Shu 畸墅

Jian/Chien tea ware 建盏

Jian'an 建安

Jiancha 煎茶

Jiang Bofu 蒋伯芩

Jiang Zigan 姜子幹

Jianghuai 江淮

Jiangling 江陵

Jiangyin 江阴

Jianning 建宁

Jianyang 建阳

Jie cha hui chao 《芥茶汇抄》

Jie cha jian 《芥茶笺》

Jin ping mei 《金瓶梅》

Jin she bian 《禁奢辩》

Jin'gen 金根

Jing ya 静雅

Jinglü Tang 净绿堂

Jinsha Temple 金沙寺

Jiusi 酒肆	Lingyan 灵岩 (寺)
Jixi 绩溪	Lingyin 灵隐 (寺)
<i>Kao pan yu shi</i> 《考槃馀事》	Lingying Guan 灵应观
<i>Kuai xue tang ji</i> 《快雪堂集》	Linjin 临津
<i>Kuai xue tang ri ji</i> 《快雪堂日记》	Liu Gao 刘缙
Langya 琅琊	Liu Jue (zi Xifan) 刘珣 (字希范)
Lan xue cha 兰雪茶	Liu Songnian 刘松年
Lao nu 酪奴	Liu Yanshi 刘言史
<i>Lei zheng zhi cai</i> 《类证治裁》	Liuhe cha 六合茶
<i>Leng lu yi hua</i> 《冷庐医话》	Liuxia (Hui) 柳下 (惠)
Li Deyu 李德裕	Long Ying 龙膺
Li Maolin 李茂林	Longhong 龙泓
Li Rihua 李日华	Longjing 龙井
Li Zhongfang 李仲芳	Longnao 龙脑
Lin Jiong 林颙	Longtuan 龙团
Lin'an 临安	Loudong 娄东

Louzhi 漏卮

Man tian fei 满天飞

Lu Hongjian 陆鸿渐

Mao Xiang 冒襄

Lu Ji 陆楫

Mei hua yin 《梅花引》

Lu Junce 陆君策

Mei Yaochen 梅尧臣

Lu Shaoheng 陆绍珩

Meng Jiao 孟郊

Lu Shusheng 陆树声

Meng liang lu 《梦梁录》

Lu Tong 卢仝

Mengding 蒙顶

Lu Yu 陆羽

Mengshan 蒙山

Lu Yun'gu 鲁云谷

Miao hou Luo jie 庙后罗芥

Lu 鲁（国）

Min Wenshui 闵汶水

Lu'an cha 六安茶

Ming ji 《茗笈》

Luo Lin 罗廩

Ming yuan du shi 茗园赌事图

Luo Yin 罗隐

Mingling 茗岭

Luo jie 罗芥

Mo Shilong 莫是龙

Luoyang qie lan ji 《洛阳伽蓝记》

Mount She 摄山

Luzhou Fu 庐州府

Mount Song 嵩山

Nan'an 南安

Nensang 嫩桑

Ni Zan 倪瓚

Peng Sunyi 彭孙贻

pi 癖

Purple Bamboo Shoot of Guzhu 顾渚紫

笋茶

Qi 齐（国）

Qian Chunnian 钱椿年

Qibao leicha 七宝擂茶

Qimen 祁门

Qinchuan 琴川

Qing ya 清雅

Qinggui 清规

Qingshang 清赏

Qingzhou 青州

Qipanding 棋盘顶

Qiu dong hui lai 丘东会老

Qiu Ying 仇英

Qiu yuan za pei 《秋园杂佩》

Qiu Zhangru 邱长孺

Qizhou 齐州

Renqing 人情

Rizhu 日铸茶

Rugao 如皋

Sanzi 馊子

Sengtang 僧堂

sha hu 砂壶

Shanjuan 善卷

Shaoxing 绍兴

Shaoxing 绍兴

She xian 歙县

Shen Yiji 沈翼机	<i>Tan ji cong shu</i> 《檀几丛书》
Shen Zhou/Shen Shitian 沈周/沈石田	Tang Yin 唐寅
Sheng Zhongjiao 盛仲交	Tao Wangling 陶望龄
Shengjin 胜金	Tian cha 甜茶
Shenxiu 神秀	Tian quan 天泉
Shi Dabin 时大彬	Tian Rucheng 田汝成
Shi Mingyang 施鸣阳	Tian Yiheng 田艺蘅
Shi Peng 时朋/时鹏	Tianchi cha 天池茶
Shi yin 市隐	Tianmu cha 天目茶
Shiyuan 适园	Tianzhu 天竺寺
Shuangjing 双井	Ting 亭
Shui pin 《水晶》	<i>Tong yue</i> 《僮约》
Shui'e 水厄	Tongcheng 桐城
Songjiang 松江 (府)	Tongzi 童子
<i>Songxi lun hua tu zhou</i> 《松溪论画图 轴》	Tu Benjun 屠本峻
	Tu hao 兔毫盏

Tu Long 屠隆

Wen Zhenheng 文震亨

Tuoba Hong/Yuan Hong 拓跋宏/元宏

Wu Chenchen 吴振臣

wa ping 瓦瓶

Wu Deming/Wu Chongliang 吴德明/吴崇亮

Wan bao quan shu 《万宝全书》

Wang Anshi 王安石

Wu guan 五官

Wang Ao 王鏊

Wu Honghua 吴洪化

Wang Bao 王褒

Wu Jing/Wu Dachang 吴经/吴大常

Wang Daokun 汪道昆

Wu Kuan 吴宽

Wang Shizhen 王世贞

Wu Lun/Wu Daben/ Wu Xinyuan 吴纶/
吴大本/吴心远

Wang Su 王肃

Wu Meiding 吴梅鼎

Wang Xijue 王锡爵

Wu Yizhong/Wu Zhengfu 吴以中/吴正夫

Wang Yuesheng 王月生

Wang Zhen nong shu 王祯《农书》

Wu Yu/Wu Shangpu 吴玉/吴尚璞

Wei shui xuan ri ji 《味水轩日记》

Wu Zimu 吴自牧

Wen dao 闻道

Wu 吴(县)

Wen Zhengming 文徵明

Wuling 武陵

Wuliu ju 五柳居

Wunu 五奴

Wuxing 吴兴

Wuyang 武阳

Wuyishan 武夷山

Wuyuan 婺源

Xiang 香

Xiangmo Zang 降魔藏

Xiao Chibi 小赤壁

Xiaoxuan 啸轩

Xie Zhaozhe 谢肇淛

Xie 榭

Xieyan 蟹眼

Xin 心

Xin'anjiang 新安江

Xing/Hsing 邢窑

Xinglao 行老

Xiong Mingyu (zi Liangru) 熊明遇(字良孺)

Xiuning 休宁

Xixi 西溪

Xu Cishu 许次纾

Xu Deyin 徐德音

Xu Gui (zi Maowu) 徐桂 (字茂吴)

Xu Kai 徐锴

Xu Longwen 许龙文

Xu Maowu 徐茂吴

Xu Shilang 徐十郎

Xu Xijian 徐西涧

Xu Xulin (Qingxian) 徐旭龄(谥号：清献)

Xu Yinglei 徐应雷

Xu Youquan 徐友泉

Yi lan xiao jing 《猗兰小景》

Xuanwu 宣武（帝）

Yi qi yi qiang 一旗一枪

Xuanzhou 宣州

Yi wu 意物

Xue Yingqi 薛应旗

Yidu 益都

Xue Yue Mei 《雪月梅》

Yijing 宜荆

Xunzi 《荀子》

Yin Yingyin 殷应寅

Yang Chunfu 杨纯父

Yiren 逸人

Yang Xuanzhi 杨銜之

Yixian 怡闲

Yangxian 阳羨

Yixian 黟县

Yao Bodao 姚伯道

Yixing ci hu ji 《宜兴瓷壶记》

Yao Gongshou 姚公綬

Yixing 宜兴/义兴

Yao Shaoru 姚绍儒

You di 油滴盏

Yao Shudu 姚叔度

Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙

Yao Yiyuan 姚一元

Yu Huai 余怀

Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠

Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道

Ye Qingchen 叶清臣

Yuan Ke 元恪

Yuan Xie 元勰	Zhao Liang 赵梁
<i>Yuan ye</i> 《园冶》	zheguban 鸚鵡斑
Yuan Zhongdao (zi Xiaoxiu) 袁中道(字小修)	Zhen wei 真味
Yuan Zhongdao 袁中道	Zhen xiang 真香
Yue/Yueh 越窑	Zheng Kewen 郑可闻
Zeng 甌	Zheng wei 正味
Zhang Bingfang (zi Jiu'e) 张炳芳 (字九娥)	Zheng zhi 徵知
Zhang Chao 张潮	<i>Zheng ming</i> 《正名》
<i>Zhang wu zhi</i> 《长物志》	Zhengqing 蒸青
Zhang Yuan 张源	Zhongling Spring 中泠泉
Zhang Zhongchu 张仲初	Zhongnan shan 终南山
Zhang Ziyuan 张子渊	Zhou Hui 周暉
<i>Zhao dai cong shu</i> 《昭代丛书》	Zhou Rong 周容
Zhao Ji 赵佶	<i>Zhu quan xiao pin</i> 《煮泉小品》
	Zhu Yunming 祝允明
	Zhucha 煮茶

Zhu'e tang 朱萼堂

Zhui bai qiu 《缀白裘》

Zhuju 郝莒

Zongze 宗贇

Zou 邹（县）

Zui gu tang jian sao 《醉古堂剑扫》

Zun sheng ba jian 《遵生八笺》