

**TEA - Cha: ORIGINS  
AND LEGENDS OF  
TEA.**

**Christine Merritt, Ph.D.**



❁ Tea was an early trade item from China. During the middle of the 19th century each Chinese trading ship traveling to North America carrying approximately 1000 tons of tea. The name for tea originally came from the pronunciation of the character from the port of Xiamen, or Amoy dialect, *te*. Today in China it is referred to as cha and in fact working class northern English also refer to tea, the national drink, as the colloquial cha or char, “*Want a cup of char, luv?*”

🌸 *“Tea tempers the spirit, calms and harmonizes the mind; it arouses thoughts and prevents drowsiness, lightens and refreshes the body and cleans the perceptive faculties.”*

CHA CHING (The Book of Tea.)

LU YU 8th Century AD

 SHEN NONG

 MEDICINE BUDDHA

 DIVINE FARMER

❁ Shen Nong, or Divine Healer, had a human body but the head of an ox and he reigned for 120 years. Legend tells of Shen Nong's transparent stomach where he could view his food intake. He tasted thousands of plants and herbs, taught people how to identify the plants and select certain plants for cultivation. He is really the Father of Agriculture. Shen Nong brought millet, medicinal herbs, the first plough and of course tea to the Chinese,

謝安



謝安

❁ A true warrior, like tea, shows his strength in hot water.

- *Ancient Chinese proverb*

❁ Drinking a daily cup of tea will surely starve the apothecary.

- *Ancient Chinese proverb*



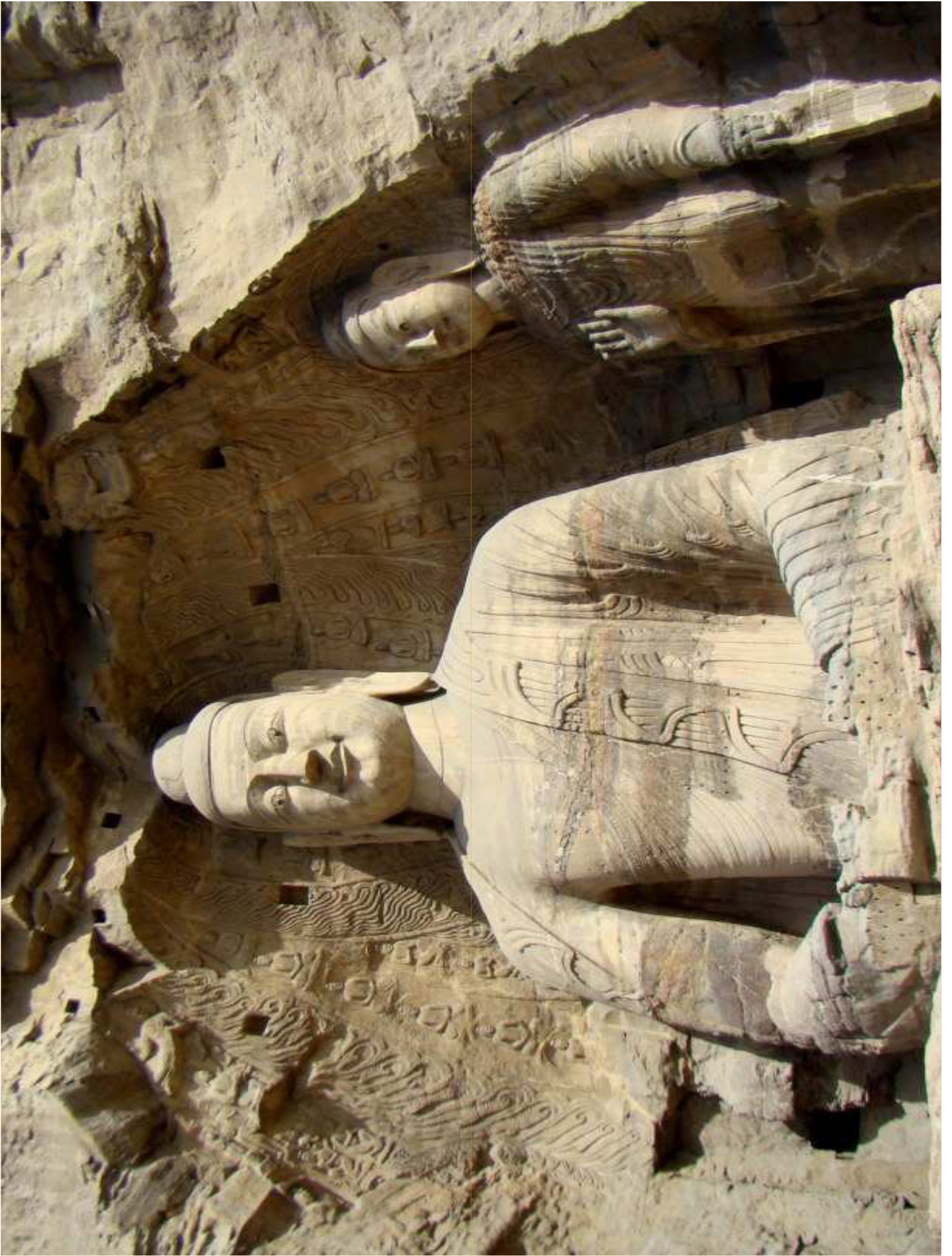
The history of tea dates back to ancient China, almost 5,000 years ago. According to legend, in 2732 B.C. Emperor Shen Nong discovered tea when leaves from a wild tree blew into his pot of boiling water. He was immediately interested in the pleasant scent of the resulting brew, and drank some.

Shen Nong named the brew "ch'a", the Chinese character meaning to check or investigate. In 200 B.C. a Han Dynasty Emperor ruled that when referring to tea, a special written character must be used illustrating wooden branches, grass, and a man between the two. This written character, also pronounced "ch'a" symbolized the way tea brought humankind into balance with nature for the Chinese culture.



# **BODHIDHARMA** **(*DA MO*)**

Another legend places the origins of tea on the Bodhidharma (*Da Mo*), who also brought *kungfu* or *wushu* to China from India.



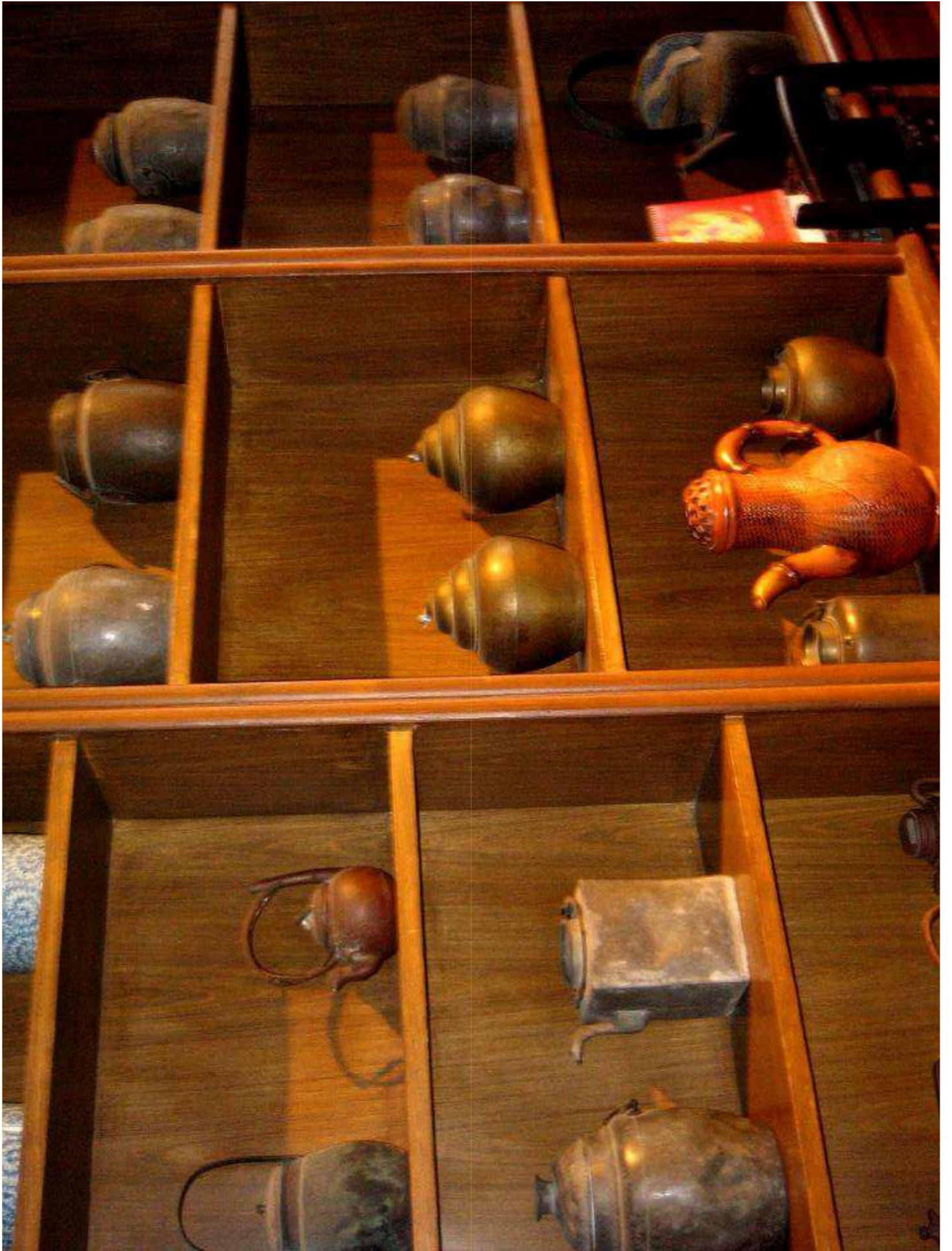
**Once upon a time in order to keep awake while meditating, he cut off his eyelids. The eyelids fell to the ground and on that spot, sprouted tea bushes.**

**If one looks closely at pictures of Bodhidharma, artists often portray his eyes without lids.**









***“In Grantchester, in  
Grantchester....***

***...stands the Church  
clock at ten to three?***

***And is there  
honey still for tea?”***

**The Old Vicarage,  
Grantchester.**


**Rupert Brooke. 1912**

***“ ‘ Take some more tea,’ the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.”***

**Alice in Wonderland.**

**Lewis Carroll**



 *“...and afterwards did send for a cupp of Tee (a China drink) of which I never drank before.”*

**Samuel Pepys' diary**

 - **25 September, 1660**



- ❁ The Book of Tea written in 780 AD makes reference to the West Lake area as a tea producing area.
- ❁ Dragon Well tea (*lóngjǐng chá*) grown on the misty mountain slopes near West Lake (*xi hu*) in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. *Bì luó chūn* is tea from Suzhou and Hangzhou and the second most prized tea after Dragon Well tea. *Bì luó chūn* is green, shaped like a snail and available in the Spring.

❁ In ancient China, Imperial Dragon Well tea, tea only for the Emperor, was carefully picked by young virgins using gold scissors to cut the first leaf, which were placed in golden baskets. Legend also tells of virgin tea-pickers plucking the youngest tea leaves from tea bushes with their teeth.

- ❁ DRAGON WELL TEA (*lóngjǐng chá*) gets its name from a dragon (*lóng*) that lived in a local spring fed well.
- ❁ Once upon a time long, long ago in ancient China there was a drought and things were getting desperate. The farmers had been praying fervently for rain. In despair, a local Taoist monk pleaded with the dragon to save them.



❁ The dragon took pity on them and created rain clouds so the rain poured down upon the crops and watered the parched plants and people. The farmers called their village *Longjing Wenchā* or Dragon Well Tea Village in honour of the dragon and his good deed.

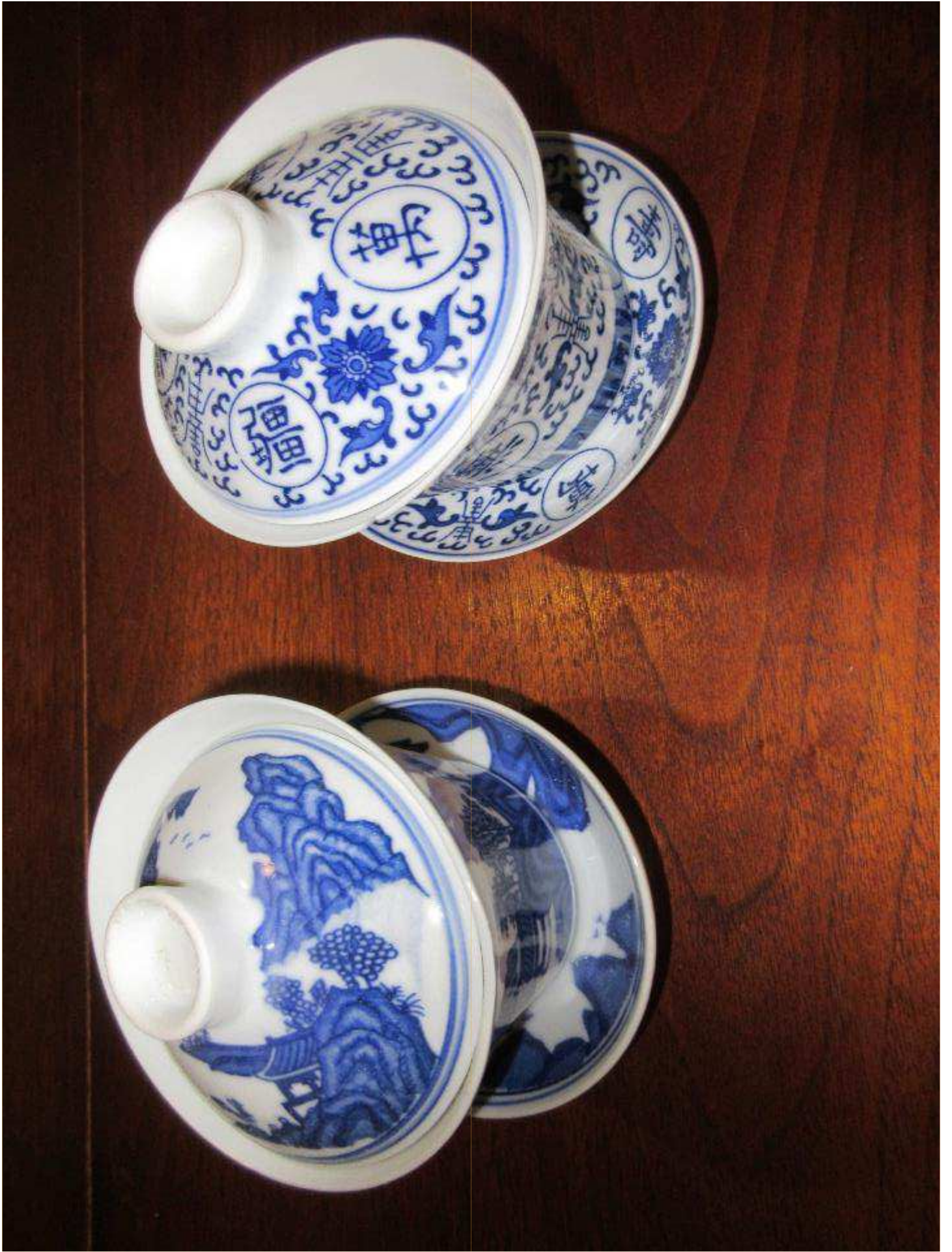
❁ West Lake Dragon Well tea leaves are still hand picked today and dried and in summer the first newly picked leaves are usually saved for the villagers. Prices for this fine quality tea can range from 200 Yuan/kilo (US\$28) to 1000 Yuan/kilo (US\$139). A tea-plant has to have 5 years of growth before the leaves are ready to be picked. However, if the tea-plant is 30 years old, it will no longer be productive.

❁ In order to rejuvenate this old plant, the old trunk is cut off so that fresh new stems can emerge from the roots. In this continued revitalization, a tea-plant may provide excellent leaves for roughly 100 years. In the Hanzhou area, leaf picking starts in March and lasts through October. The leaves are picked from the plants every 7 to 10 days. A skilled tea picker can collect just over 1lb of green tea leaves in a day, but probably she does not use her teeth and probably she is not a virgin.

- ❁ The art of making tea is called *Cha dao* and it is always made in a teapot (*Chá hú*). The best teapots in China are the Yixing boccaro.
- ❁ Yixing pots are known for their different forms, colours and the unique molding patterns and have been around for centuries. Boccaro clay has a dark red colour after firing, the striking colour is due to iron and other elements.

❁ YIXING, the ancient pottery and stoneware teapot capital of China, is a small town west of Lake Taihu in Jiangsu Province. Yixing clay is in fact *ZISHA CLAY* meaning purple sand - only found in China. The clay is produced by erosion from weathering of mountains that settles in lakes and rivers where it is impacted by the water. Over time, geological upheaval lifts the clay for retrieval. Thus, for 1,000's of years the unique purple sand clay deposits in and around Yixing have supported a thriving pottery industry. Silica, alumina and other trace minerals are the basic elements in these clay pots.

❁ The elegant but practical YIXING TEAPOT was the first brewing vessel of its kind, handcrafted by Jiagsu, a monk studying at the Golden Sand Temple (*Jin Sha*) near Yixing in the early 1500's. Dutch traders first brought Yixing tea pots to Europe. These particular pots withstand rapidly changing temperatures and can hold boiling water without the pot cracking, compared to the classic European Delft earthenware at that time. These Chinese pots had a profound influence on western ceramics and famous companies such as Wedgewood in England.



❁ Tea-drinking was first introduced to the court of King Charles II by his Portuguese wife, Catherine of Braganza. The Portuguese had been trading directly with China for over 100 years by this time, and were already familiar with the drink.



❁ At first only small amounts of tea were imported to England, and for some years it remained a luxury item drunk for its medicinal properties as much as for pleasure. It began to grow in popularity in England from about the 1720s, when it was sweetened with sugar grown in the West Indian slave plantations. Thereafter the tea, sugar and slave trades grew alongside each other.

❁ Tea remains our cup of tea here in the UK. According to the *United Kingdom Tea* - 60 million of us down 160 million cups of the stuff each day.

❁ I got nasty habits; I take tea at three.  
**Mick Jagger**

❁ They pay little attention to what we  
say and prefer to read tea leaves.  
**Nikita Khrushchev**

❁ Under certain circumstances there are  
few hours in life more agreeable than  
the hour dedicated to the ceremony  
known as afternoon tea.

❁ **Henry James**

❁ Before I left the USA, I read a research paper by Japanese scientists who had worked on the efficacy of green tea in relation to cancerous tumours in rats. Components in green tea, the catechin polyphenols, had stopped tumour growth. The tumours were not killed, but didn't get any bigger. Black tea has the same compounds but not so much as in green tea.



❁ During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), teapot making flourished and tea was made in a pot rather than an individual cup. The teapot was very popular among the Chinese literati and scholars and this practice was quite prolific during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911). Some of these scholars worked with craftsmen to have their own custom designed teapots.



❁ Green tea leaves in a cup can be refilled with hot water four times and then the leaves can be eaten as they are “*good for health and good for skin.*”









❁ BRICK TEAS, or CAKE TEAS, are bought usually in a large flattened circle of compressed dark leaves. PU'ER TEA (*fang cha*) from Yunnan Province is a brick tea, supposedly invented by 8th century horseback traders who steamed, dried and compressed the leaves into rectangular cakes for easier transport.



全国免费防伪查询电话  
800-830-5036

首家大树熟茶 净含量 357克

中国著名品牌

# 班章之春

全球限量发行366666饼

Yunnan Kunming Ruipinhao Tea Industry Co., Ltd

云南昆明瑞聘号茶业有限公司





# 瑞聘號普洱茶

“瑞聘號”稀有古茶，生長在雲南海拔1700米以上，生長期長，溫差大，歷史悠久，是茶中精品。其特性：外形帶毫，壯實老而勻整，生茶15泡以上，湯色透明細膩，茶氣充足，水感重，幽香，生津快，回甘悠遠。生茶越陳越香，越陳越滑，實屬精品好茶。熟茶每盒送後心即神貼。此款古茶，有消食、解毒功效，且以解煙毒、解酒、減油脂、減肥、降脂、降壓、助消化著稱。

普洱茶有其獨特的加工序，鮮采的茶葉，一般都要經過殺青、揉捻、干燥、堆積、揀選、分篩、精製等几道工序后，成為普洱毛茶。这时的毛茶，韻味索然，悅目而欠整理。毛茶制作后，經過渥堆轉熟的，就成為“熟茶”。再經過一段相當長時間的存放，待其堆積穩定，便可貨賣。干倉陳放5-8年的熟茶已被譽為上品。

普洱茶生動的韻致，且時間越長，其內香及活力亦發顯強和穩健，因此形成普洱茶越陳越香的特性，也成為普洱茶愛好者收藏普洱茶的傳統。



❁ One of the best brick teas comes from INNER MONGOLIA. Mongolian brick tea is usually boiled with fresh milk and a little salt and sometimes butter is added.



❁ Another favourite tea was EIGHT TREASURE TEA (*babao cha*) favoured by the HUI minority. 8 (*ba*) is a lucky number in China. Eight Treasure tea helps in clearing the lungs, soothing the throat and other things. It is a unique colorful blend of 8 ingredients comprising chrysanthemums, green tea, jujube, Chinese wolfberries, dragoneye fruit, rock sugar, raisins and Tremella-a fungus. This tea has a fruity, slightly sweet taste that is rather refreshing.



❁ *Babao cha* - Eight Treasure Tea is very common in Qinghai, Henan Province and popular with the large Muslim population.

❁ I grew up in England, a nation of tea drinkers. Tea is drunk by more people in the world than any other drink and is regarded as the antidote for all things, soothing, comforting, welcoming.

❁ TEA BREAKS have a 200 year old history in the UK. British factories introduced a tea break in the middle of the afternoon shift as they found that after workers had a tea break, production rose, instead of traveling on the downward slope.

❁ British hospitals will offer patients a cup of tea after emergency treatment - all part of the national healthcare service.

❁ Funerals, weddings, christenings, births, hospitals, factories and labs all supported by that good old English invitation, “*Want a cup of cha love?*”

❁ There is an old war time song, ‘*Everything Stops for Tea,*’ sung by Jack Buchanan