

THE STORY OF TEA...

Truths,

Myths,

Legends



SHENNONG

- Shennong is the mythological father of ancient Chinese medicine.
- According to legend, Shennong's mother encountered a dragon, and soon gave birth.
- Shennong was born with an ox's head and a human body, but this was no ordinary body—it was transparent, like crystal. Because of this, the effects of any food or herb could easily be identified upon entering him.
- In the remote ages of ancient China, people didn't know how to treat diseases, and many were left to die without any treatment. In order to save them, Shennong went into the mountains to test and record the effects of various herbs and medicinal plants.
- He tested hundreds of unique plants by extracting their juices with a magical whip. To counteract regularly poisoning himself, it is said that Shennong drank tea to detoxify his body.
- “Shennong's Herbal Classic” is the earliest Chinese herbal textbook, and Shennong is regarded as the founder of agriculture and medicine in China.

TEA ORIGIN - CHINA

- EMPEROR SHENNONG SET UP CAMP WITH HIS ENTOURAGE IN THE SHADE OF A LARGE TREE.
- THE COOK PREPARED A FIRE AND A POT WITH BOILING WATER OVER IT.
- THE HEAT OF THE FIRE BROUGHT SOME OF THE LEAVES OF THE LONG BRANCHES OF THE TREE TO DRY OUT.
- A FIERCE WIND GOT UP AND BLEW SOME OF THE LEAVES INTO THE POT WITH BOILING WATER.
- THE WATER TURNED GOLDEN AND A HIGHLY PLEASANT SCENT APPEARED.
- THE EMPEROR TRIED THE DRINK AND WAS DELIGHTED BY THE SCENT AND DELICIOUS TASTE.
- BEING IMMEDIATELY AWARE OF THE REFRESHING AND INVIGORATING EFFECT, THE EMPEROR LET OUT THE SOUND, "T'SA", WHICH MEANS GODLIKE AND UNTIL TODAY CHA IS THE CHINESE NAME FOR TEA.





TEA ORIGIN - JAPAN

- Bodhidharma, (Chinese: Ta Mo; Japanese: Daruma 達摩) was a Buddhist monk who traveled from India to China during the 5th or 6th century.
- He is known as the founder of Ch'an Zen Buddhism and of the shaolin fighting arts.
- Bodhidharma made the pledge of 7 years of meditation. He vowed not to sleep in these 7 years.
- Despite this vow, he fell asleep one night. When he woke up the next morning, he was so angered by his failure, that he cut off his eyelids and threw them to the ground.
- As soon as the eyelids touched the soil, immediately there grew roots which soon developed into a large bush.
- When Bodhidharma saw this wonder, he prepared himself a drink out of the leaves.
- People came from all around to see him and many followed the monk and prepared a drink from the leaves.
- The knowledge of the drink's refreshing and invigorating effect was spread everywhere.
- Until today the Japanese language uses the same character for eyelid and tea 茶.

TEA ORIGIN - INDIA

- Bodhidharma, Chinese: Ta Mo; Japanese: Daruma 達摩, was a Buddhist monk who traveled from India to China during the 5th or 6th century.
- Some thirty-five years earlier, he was born a Brahman of the Hindu faith and a prince of the southern Indian kingdom of Pallava, Kanchipuram.
- He converted to Buddhism in his youth and was instructed by his teacher to go to China.
- 500 C.E., the Bodhidharma took the vow not to sleep for 7 years.
- After 5 years of mental immersion it appeared that he could no longer fight the need to sleep.
- Knowing he would not be able to keep his vow, in despair, he grasped a couple of branches of the tree where he had made his camp. He put a few leaves into his mouth and chewed them.
- Immediately, Dharma experienced a refreshing and invigorating effect, his tiredness evaporated, and he could keep his vow.



DA HONG PAO OOLONG

- During the Ming Dynasty, the emperor's wife had grown gravely ill.
- He sought the advice of every doctor in the land to try and save his wife, however, nothing could be done to save the dying empress.
- He then offered a reward to anybody in the land who could save his wife.
- A farmer came to him with a tea which he had made from the leaves of a bush that grew on a high and steep cliff near his home.
- As soon as the tea touched the lips of the empress, she began to regain her health.
- The emperor was so pleased that he honored the farmer with a gift of his imperial red robes.
- In response, the farmer named the tea Da Hong Pao (Red Robe Tea).





TIEGUANYIN OOLONG

- There was a man named Wei Yin in Anxi County who worked diligently in his tea farm and believed in Buddhism. He always offered a cup of tea to Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, in his shrine at every sunrise as well as every sunset for several decades. One-night Guanyin appeared to him in a dream and showed him a unique tea plant between the gaps of rocks. The next morning, Wei Yin followed his dream walking along the creek side to the rocky place and found the tea plant between the rock crevices that he saw in his dream. With a great excitement, he brought the tea plant home, put it in an iron tripod, and began to cultivate it cautiously. He treated the tea as a family treasure and brewed the tea only for his important guests. A literati scholar came to have the tea with Wei Yin one day and asked: “What is this great tea?” Wei Yin told the scholar the dream and the discovery. He also told the scholar his intention to name the tea after “Iron Rohat,” the enlightened Buddhist Dharma protector, because the rocks where the plant was found looked like Rohats, and the plant was cultivated later in the iron pot.
- Shaking his head, the scholar said: “Some of the Rohats look too wrathful. How can you name such a precious thing like that? Guanyin appeared in your dream and directed you to the tea, it only suits its elegance to name

TAI PING HOU KUI GREEN TEA

- A mother monkey died of grief after losing her child.
- A local farmer kindly buried the monkey on his land.
- The farmer soon dreamt of the monkey guiding him to a place, deep in the forest, where a tea garden was.
- Upon awaking, he retraced his dreaming steps to verily discover a hidden garden of tea bushes which he plucked to make this tea.



JASMINE DRAGON PEARL GREEN TEA

- An orphaned brother and sister lived on the outskirts of Fuzhou.
- One winter, the brother got very seriously sick and no doctors could help him.
- An old woman told his sister about a magic dragon who was always helping people in need.
- The girl decided to go to the dragon's cave and ask for his help.
- The cave was surrounded by jasmine bushes of amazing beauty.
- She told the dragon about her problem and he promised to help her.
- Soaring into the sky, the dragon made an ominous cry & a pearl appeared on his neck, glittering on the sun.
- A small drop fell from the pearl onto the ground & a beautiful tea bush sprouted and started immediately growing.
- Dragon said to the girl that she should take care of the bush and he disappeared.
- It rained hard the whole day but the girl looked after the bush not leaving its side even for a moment.
- Finally, small long leaves appeared on the bush. The girl gathered from the most delicate leaves from the top of each branch, dried them next to jasmine flowers, and made delicate beads, like the one that hung around the neck of a dragon.
- Returning home, she brewed tea from these leaves & their house filled with the wonderful aroma of jasmine.
- Having tasted the miracle drink, her brother quickly recovered.



LONGJING 'DRAGONWELL' GREEN TEA

- In the year 250 AD, there was a drought that took hold a small village in Hangzhou.
- The local priest told the villagers that if they prayed to the Dragon who lived in a nearby spring then perhaps he will bring them rain.
- They believed that this spring led to an underground sea where the Dragon lived.
- It seemed only plausible that this creature could bring them the water from the sea.
- The villagers prayed and prayed until finally the rains came.
- In honor of the Dragon, t



JUN SHAN YIN ZHEN WHITE TEA

- The Fujian province was experiencing a dry spell which was threatening the lives of the villagers.
- It was believed that a celestial plant was growing in the Taimu mountain which was guarded by a black dragon.
- This plant was believed to be able to cure many kinds of illnesses and it would bring up water when the juice of this plant is dropped into the river.
- Many villages went looking for this special plant but failed and were transformed by magic into rocks .
- A young lady, whose two brothers also went there but had also been transformed into rocks, decided to risk her life.
- When she reached the mountain, the black dragon attacked her viciously, but she cunningly managed to kill the dragon.
- The young lady then plucked the celestial plant and dropped its juice into the river and onto the people who had been turned into rocks.
- They were transformed back into human beings.
- The grateful villagers transferred the plant from the mountain and planted it widely in their villages.
- Due to its silvery white color and needle shape, it was named Yin Zhen (Silver Needle).

KEEMUN

- The name Keemun comes from Qimen county in southern Anhui province, .
- Qimen county produced only green tea until the mid-1870's.
- Around that time a young man in the civil service lost his job and despite being totally heartbroken and completely embarrassed by his shame, he remembered what his father told him – ‘A skill is a better guarantor of a living than precarious officialdom’.
- Following this advice, the young man packed up his courage and his bags to travel to Fujian Province to learn the secrets of black tea manufacturing.
- Upon his return to Qimen in 1875 he set up three factories to produce black tea.
- The black tea method was perfectly suited to the tea leaves produced in this warm moist climate with well drained sandy soil.
- Before long, the superb flavor of Keemun became very popular around the world.





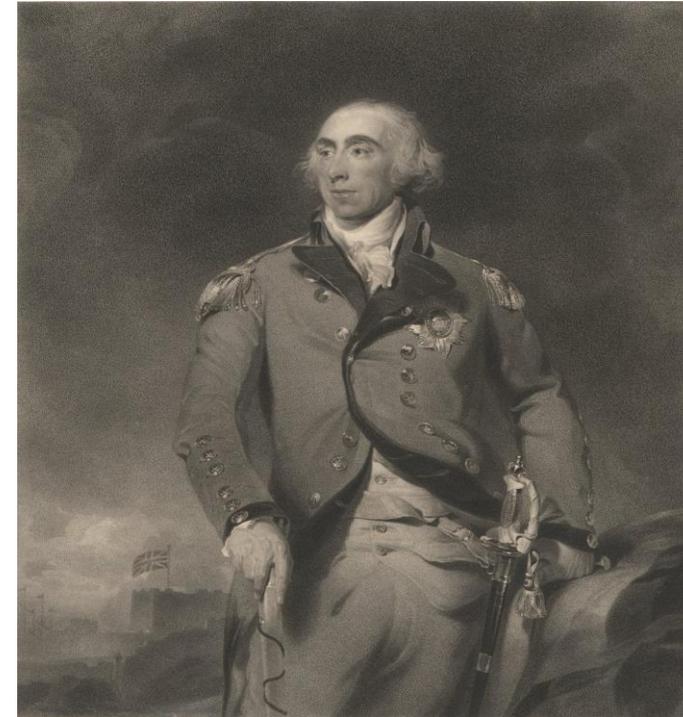
MILK OOLONG

- The moon fell in love with a comet passing through the night sky.
- The comet, passed by, burned out and vanished.
- The moon, in her sorrow, caused a great wind to blow through the hills and valleys, bringing about a quick drop in temperature.
- The next morning, after local tea farmers picked and processed their fresh tea leaves, they found it had developed an amazing milky character, which was attributed to the motherly character of the old moon.



BI LUO CHUNGREEN TEA

- The name Biluochun literally means “Green Snail Spring”.
- It is called so because it is a green tea that is rolled into a tight spiral, resembling snail meat, and is cropped early spring.
- The original name of Bi Luo Chun is Xia Sha Ren Xiang, meaning “scary fragrance”.
- It was so named when a tea picker who ran out of space in her basket, put the tea between her breasts instead.
- The tea, warmed by her body heat, emitted a strong aroma that surprised the girl.
- The Kangxi Emperor visited Lake Tai in the 38th year of his rule.
- He enjoyed the tea very much and decided to give it a more elegant name, Bi Luo Chun (Green Snail Spring).



EARL GREY

- The Earl Grey blend is named after Charles Grey, the British Prime Minister in the 1830s.
- In 1831, Charles Grey's men rescued a Chinese man from drowning and was gifted this unique tea blend.
- The Prime Minister enjoyed this unique blend and asked his tea merchants, headed by Richard Twining II to make it for his guest.
- Everyone was delighted by the distinctive hint of bergamot that gave this tea a unique taste.
- The tea was so popular that when it ran out, Richard Twining agreed to produce and sell this sought-after blend.
- In those days, it was called, Earl Grey's Mixture, and later came to be known as Twining's Earl Grey.
- However, crucially, Twining omitted to trademark the blend enabling others to enter the market.



THE STORY OF TEA

I strongly encourage anybody who is interested in serving tea to guests, in a gongfu style, to spend some time learning the origin stories, the legends and the myths of the teas they plan to brew for their guests.

When the mythical origin stories are combined with your own personal experiences, which you will accumulate throughout the years, you will be able to create a lasting memory and experience for your guests.

One day soon you will find your guest sitting on the other side of the tea table, utterly intrigued as they watch you brewing a tea, while explaining the intricacies of it; the terroir, the age, the cultivar...and finally the whole experience will be taking to the next level, while they intensely listen to the story of the tea being told...as only you can tell it!