**Tea, Fragrance, and Music: Ephemeral Arts and the Formation of Scholar-Artist Communities in Northern Song China** by Sammy Li

**Exemplary table of interpreting the prosody of Chinese literary works with concerns of rhyme and/or euphony and tonal patterns (*ping*/*ze*)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of the Chinese literary work, the tonal pattern, and rhymes (if indicated)** | **Line** |
| **蘇軾《汲江煎茶》[[1]](#footnote-2)** |  |
| 活水還須活火烹 (*-aeng*)  | | — — | | — | 1 |
| 自臨釣石取深清 (-*aeng*)  (|) — | | | — — | 2 |
| … | … |
| 坐聽荒城長短更 (*-aeng*)  | | — — (—) | — | 8 |

This is a heptasyllabic regulated poem. Lines 1 to 4 constitute the first quatrain; lines 5 to 8 the second quatrain.

Every two lines are called “a couplet.”

The ending character of every even line should rhyme with the leveltones.

The grammatical structure of lines 3 and 4 (the second couplet) and lines 5 and 6 (third couplet) should be parallel.

The prosody of the poems:

Symbols of “—” and “|” indicate respectively the level tone (*pingsheng*) and the oblique tone (*zesheng*; including the *shangsheng*, *qusheng*, and *rushing*) of individual characters. Specific tonal patterns (tones divided into these two registers of *ping*/*ze*) have been well developed since the Tang period for the quatrains (*jüeju*), which have four lines in total and five or seven characters per line, and regulated poems (*lüshi*), which has eight lines in total and five or seven characters per line. This means that there is a specified tonal requirement for each character in each poem.[[2]](#footnote-3) Certain variations are allowed provided that they do not interfere with the tonal beauty of the literary works.[[3]](#footnote-4) A position to be filled with a character that should bear the level tone in the specified pattern but is filled by an oblique-toned character appears in this format: (|); a position to be filled with a character that should bear the oblique tone but ends up with a level-toned character appears: (—). The rhymes are based on the list of Middle Chinese transcription in the appendix of the Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction.[[4]](#footnote-5) William Baxter and Laurent Sagart do not intend to provide exact reconstructions of the sounds of individual characters, but they attempt to demonstrate the phonetic relationships of their pronunciations as recorded in the *Widened Rhymes* (*Guangyun*) and the *Explanations of the Classics* (*Jingdian shiwen*).[[5]](#footnote-6) Thus, in the main text we should not take their reconstructed rhymes as exact sounds. Occasionally their reconstructions are not consistent, but they, along with the identification of the Chinese categories of rhymes(*yunbu*), will indicate groupings of rhymes and euphonies that were intended by the original writers. Groups of euphonies frequently appear in the poems that do not require strict prosodic patterns. We will see that the writers often mixed groups of euphonies together to construct melodically pleasant patterns, which are not strictly rhymed.[[6]](#footnote-7)

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**Introduction**

**Cultures of tea, fragrance, and *qin* music today**

Tea, or *cha* in Chinese (botanical name *Camellia sinensis*), is the world’s most consumed beverage. Over many centuries and all over the world, diverse cultures of preparing and enjoying tea have developed. These varied tea cultures include the cultivation of tea bushes, drying, blending, and tasting of leaves, preparing and serving tea using a variety of vessels, cups, and other utensils, and, finally, creating the atmosphere for enjoying tea. Today, most of the world’s tea is grown in China, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, and East Africa. Some of these plantations have existed for hundreds of years. Tea bushes are also successfully cultivated in several other areas, including Southeast Asia and northern Europe.

The consumption of tea has been shown to have health benefits. Scientists have discovered that tea contains caffeine, tannic acid, vitamins, theaflavin, minerals, iron oxide, and carbohydrates, all of which have valuable nutritional qualities.[[7]](#footnote-8) These elements can quench thirst, aid digestion, cure hangovers, soothe pain, improve circulation and digestion, and help the drinkers stay calm but alert.[[8]](#footnote-9) The many different types and treatments of tea also contribute to a wide variety of tea flavours and styles. Tea consumption has significantly shaped humanity’s culture and health for more than a thousand years.

The health properties and cultural value of tea were first discovered in ancient China, and this book charts a sophisticated culture of tea drinking, accompanied by *qin* music and the burning of fine fragrances, that developed and was formalised during the Song Dynasties. Tea culture in East Asia can be traced back well over a thousand years. Lu Yu composed the first canonical text on tea, the *Classic of Tea* (*Chajing*), in approximately 780.[[9]](#footnote-10) The *Classic of Tea* laid down the theoretical and practical foundations for preparing and drinking tea and thus established Lu Yu as the founder of tea culture in the Sinosphere. Numerous classic texts on tea were written and published in subsequent periods. Authors and readers of these texts included emperors, officials, scholars, and traders – members of every political, social, cultural, and economic elite class in Chinese history. For over a thousand years, the trade in tea and horses between settled and nomadic peoples was of crucial political and military importance in multiple dynastic periods.[[10]](#footnote-11) Furthermore, the nutritional content of tea made an essential contribution to people’s health in areas where vegetables were scarce.

Elites and ordinary people in modern China continue to enjoy a great variety of tea, including green tea, *wulong*/*oolong* tea, red tea, and Puer tea.[[11]](#footnote-12) Popular ways of serving tea include *gongfucha* in Chaozhou; *yumcha* (tea with *dim sum*)in Guangzhou and Hong Kong; and in Japan, tea ceremonies (*chanoyu*), in which tea-whisking using powdered green tea (*matcha*) is practised, can be traced back to twelfth-century China.[[12]](#footnote-13) Artefacts related to tea have long occupied a high status in the material cultures of East Asia. The tea bowls with patterns of heaven’s eyes (*yōhen tenmoku* – patterns that formed unpredictably during kiln firing) that date to between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, for example, constitute a significant part of art collections in Japan.[[13]](#footnote-14)

The appreciation of fragrance is another global phenomenon. In modern times, one of the most popular artificial forms of generating fragrance is applying perfume, while in the past, cultural elites in China preferred burning aromatic substances (*xiang*), such as frankincense or sandalwood, to generate pleasing fragrances. They treated this practice as a type of art, composing texts to promote the cultural and artistic significance of generating fragrance. Although the production of fragrance is not deemed an artform in Western art history, its complicated production processes and fascinating end product make it a type of artistic practice worldwide. Cultural elites in China particularly welcomed aromatic substances imported from exotic places, including Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.[[14]](#footnote-15) The substances were expensive due to their rarity and high transportation cost, and the fact that they burned quickly made them even more costly. Nowadays, the burning of aromatic substances in China is limited mainly to the religious practices of offering incense to the deities,[[15]](#footnote-16) but its historical use in scholarly circles cannot be ignored.

The music of the *qin*-zither has largely remained confined to East Asia, as compared to the global acceptance of the cultures of tea and aromatic substances.[[16]](#footnote-17) Archaeologically excavated *qin* in China can date to the sixth century BCE.[[17]](#footnote-18) From then on, this type of musical instrument, which changed in design and production methods several times, assumed an important place in the lives of the scholar-artists and political elites. The *qin* has remained an essential musical instrument in traditional Chinese music concerts and has survived the impact of Western music in China over the past centuries.

The cultures of tea, aromatic substances, and *qin* music have played important roles in Chinese culture in both historical and modern periods. They reflect state-wide phenomena that should arouse our interest in the origins, history, and development of related activities and materials. Tea culture gained popularity in Tang dynasty China, reached a climax in the Northern Song dynasty, and later constituted one of the most important beverage traditions in the world. Tea was culturally, economically, and artistically related to the production of fragrance and music in the traditional scholar-artist communities. The scholar-artist communities established a reputation for artistic pursuits in the Northern Song dynasty and laid the aesthetic foundations for the Ming and Qing scholars to follow. These were all significant material and human agents that shaped Chinese history over the last one thousand years. They were interrelated in the lives of the Chinese elites in history, and these phenomena can be analysed from various perspectives.

**Key terms, main arguments, and approaches**

**Definitions of key terms**

The part of this book examines the processes of tea preparation, the burning of aromatic substances, and the playing of the *qin*, and how these practices were intertwined. The three practices were ephemeral art forms limited to the time and space in which they were practised and enjoyed.[[18]](#footnote-19) The art products generated from the practices were also short-lived or rapidly consumed, making retrieving historical records challenging. No matter the complexity of the process that led to its creation, unlike an art object which can endure through the centuries, a cup of tea was, of course, made to be consumed then and there. In the Northern Song period, people made the foam generated from whisking the tea the focus of artistic contests. Tea makers competed for the whiteness and stability of the foam, which could last from a few seconds to several hours. This book studies the five sensorial experiences: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, which are also ephemeral, through the examination of how people created, appraised, and enjoyed the three ephemeral arts of tea, music, and fragrance.[[19]](#footnote-21) These ephemeral experiences helped constitute enduring cultural memories or beliefs. These experiences, memories, and beliefs would become the mental driving forces in forming communities. I argue that these three practices were cultural, economic, and artistic constructs. In this context, construct refers to the result or object of the scholar-artists’ mental activities, such as conceptualisation, perception, impressions, and thoughts. This book cautions against taking the records left by the scholar-artists at face value and believing unquestioningly that their descriptions of themselves and their activities are unalloyed truths. Since we can only approach the scholar-artists’ physical and mental activities through their textual and visual records, we must not forget that the evidence we can glean from them was “constructed” by them.

**Main arguments**

In constructing the cultures, economies, and arts of tea, fragrance, and music, Northern Song scholar-artists strengthened their community bonds by sharing sensory experiences and emotions and performing these cultural practices together. In a broader sense, tea, accompanied by the appreciation of fragrance, *qin* music, rhymes and tonal patterns, was a cultural construct created by the Northern Song cultural elites. The acts of making and drinking tea, burning aromatic substances, playing *qin* music, and chanting poems reflected how the cultural elites shared common beliefs and sensory experiences of an idealized culture. The appearance of the foamy tea, its taste and fragrance, the sensation of the gestures when whisking the tea, the smell from the burning aromatic substances, the melodic and euphonic sounds of the *qin* music, the chanted rhymed literary works, as well as the feelings of the fingers when playing the *qin* were all the sensory experiences intimately associated with these cultural gatherings. Sharing the unique atmosphere of these events and perfecting the arts associated with them set the scholar-artist communities apart from the rest of society. The experiences were direct and important sources of the perception and construction of these cultures on the part of the scholars, officials, and artists. Their ideals were formulated and regulated in the many material and textual sources that can be further elaborated on by deduction and experimentation today.

Raw materials related to tea, aromatic substances, and *qin* were produced and distributed in large networks connecting tea farm owners, peasants, artisans, scholars, artists, officials, musicians, and people living in various states in East Asia. The production and distribution of these raw materials influenced the decisions of policymakers in these states. The production and distribution of the materials are termed an “economic construct” because, while the materials were not daily necessities in a nutritional sense, they were construed as necessary in the consumption economies. The materials and these large networks enabled active and frequent exchanges between people and states in East Asia. Through these exchanges, they constructed tea, fragrance, and music as essential economic elements. To the scholar-artists living in metropolitan areas, the raw materials were precious because of their fine quality and high transportation cost. The raw materials brought down from the mountains would subsequently be transformed into culturally and economically consumable products, which were exchanged among the scholar-artists and became objects of their artistic constructions. The tea garden owners, labourers, the state, governments at the central and local levels, artisans, other producers, merchants, coolies, and scholar-artists jointly constructed the economic value of the products.

Represented in various media, including verbal and visual media, the three types of ephemeral practices contributed significantly to forming a consensus and shared imagination of particular scholar-artist communities. The scholar-artists would participate in their *literati* gatherings and represent the sequence of the elegant artistic activities in paintings. Their predilection for reclusiveness, calm, tranquillity, and peace was reflected in their paintings and literary works. These values were accepted by scholar-artists of certain groups and passed on from generation to generation. These literary works were sometimes written as direct self-expression and sometimes as a medium of exchange by which the scholar-artists could share their views with their colleagues and peers and, in the process, consolidate their sense of belonging to a community.

While the scholar-artists expended great effort in expressing their emotions, beliefs, and aspirations in their artistic creation processes, the properties of the cultures of tea, music, and fragrance also shaped how these scholar-artists imagined themselves. Therefore, interactions existed between humans, materials, and the ephemeral arts. The scholar-artists’ shared sensory experiences and cultural practices reinforced the cohesion of their communities.

**Approaches**

The point of departure in this book is the procedure for making a good bowl of tea as prescribed by Northern Song cognoscenti. I begin by investigating various tea-making methods from the Northern Song period. Several people, including emperor Huizong and his subordinates such as ministers and palace servants, other royal elites, scholar-officials, artists, ordinary citizens, and northerners and southerners, had preferences concerning the choice of leaves, production and processing, colour, taste, fragrance, and consistency of the tea. As bowls, ewers, and the specificities of ceramics came to the attention of these tea lovers, selecting utensils for serving tea also became a topic of debate. Aromatic substances and music created an enjoyable atmosphere for drinking tea. Sources of aromatic substances and materials for making musical instruments directed the scholar-artists’ aesthetic ideas and trade in luxury items in the state.

All five senses were brought to bear in making and enjoying tea. The Northern Song scholar-artists theorised ways to enjoy tea and the tea’s colour, taste, smell, and consistency were emphasized in the texts. *Qin* music, euphoric and rhythmic sounds of chanting rhymed literary works, and the burning of aromatic substances that accompanied the tea banquet, were prioritized. So too was the feeling of control over the whisking of tea – a specific tea preparation method. Huizong and his subordinates regulated detailed steps of seven stages of tea whisking. Achieving tea’s desired colour, fragrance, and texture, however ephemeral they might be, required a sophisticated control of a series of rapid actions at each stage. This investigation leads us to a new field of research as we lay a foundation upon which to explore the history of human ephemeral arts and sensory experiences. Ephemeral activities were difficult to record before the invention of film. To adequately describe a sequence of complex actions in prose is challenging. In the case of this book, detailed records of tea-making processes that have been overlooked for a long time provide a window onto an ancient ephemeral art.

The five sensorial experiences would prove to be an effective means of changing people’s ideas and behaviours in line with the priorities of the ruling elites of the Northern Song state. The control of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch in the three practices discussed was used as a political strategy at the state level. The concrete tea cultures and the economic and artistic constructs of the tea cultures, such as paintings and literary works, were used as political propaganda for state policies. Similarly, the production of the other two cultures was a focal point of state policies and power struggles. The political elites gradually seized control of tea and aromatic substances to situate themselves at the centre of culture and power. They sought to establish a new elite culture involving these cultural and artistic practices. This book addresses the economic and political mediation between the central and regional powers by investigating the history of tea and ceramic production and circulation in Fujian. I illustrate how the central government established a state monopoly on the use of tea and aromatic substances at the local level, determining how the scholar-artists enjoyed tea, aromatic substances, and the *qin* music in the capital.

Scrutinizing the implementation of tea policies in Huizong’s court, I illustrate that the tea reforms during Huizong’s reign were successful government-led economic projects. Huizong and his subordinates not only exerted tighter control over tea production and trade, accruing substantial financial benefits from it, but also created a value-added strategy to promote tea cultures through writing. Their tea texts drew greater attention to the enjoyment of tea. This was a cultural strategy manipulated by the court. It may not be wise to blame Huizong only for all of his failures.[[20]](#footnote-23) Huizong wanted to regulate tea practices to seize financial and cultural power. He was an ambitious leader, and in attempting to gain control over the production of tea and trade in the precious herb, he gained some degree of success. Policies regarding the control of aromatic substances are also to be understood against this larger historical backdrop.

We need to empower the materials with more agency by turning our focus to material cultures, such as tea bowls, ewers, kilns, qin, and aromatic substances. These material cultures constituted Northern Song tea cultures in a macro sense and provided sources of inspiration and imagination to the scholar-artists’ composition of literary works, paintings, and calligraphy. This book does not merely dwell on the psychological and mental aspects of the elites by looking at their literary works about the said cultures but also illustrates how they interacted with related objects. The scholar-artists’ attitudes toward the differences in tea drinking practices in the south and the north can be seen as an attempt to construct contrasting cultural identities that were accordingly shaped by the material cultures related to tea. The appreciation and consumption of aromatic substances and *qin* music would aid in this process of identity construction.

**Formation of the scholar-artist communities**

The formation of communities and groups has received much attention from social scientists.[[21]](#footnote-24) How and why human beings form groups and what factors draw group members together to the exclusion of others are intriguing questions. The formation of specific communities has aroused the interests of modern sociologists whose insights this book will borrow. Gustave Le Bon’s perception of crowd psychology was the starting point for theorising this area of inquiry.[[22]](#footnote-25) Later, scholars in this field introduced a debate over structure and agency. As some scholars see it, a structure imposes social norms upon individuals and binds them together, while others argue that agency is intrinsic to individuals who possess the free will to form or reject groups.[[23]](#footnote-26) Anthony Giddens proposes “structuration theory” to account for both structure and agency and consider the two mutually interactive.[[24]](#footnote-27) Bruno Latour devised “actor-network theory (ANT)” to integrate more elements relevant to forming social groups.[[25]](#footnote-28) Human beings and objects, especially technology and science products, are considered actors in ANT. The formation of a network relies on the interplay between these actors. Thus, the people involved in community formation are certainly crucial actors, with objects also playing a role. People’s motivations for coming together and forming communities can be material or ideological. The material includes the objects and the environment or spaces that house the community, while ideology includes the social norms and thoughts that bind people together.[[26]](#footnote-29)

Latour’s ANT argues that there is “no group, only group formation” and that “objects too have agency.”[[27]](#footnote-30) Groups are in constant flux. Actors do not enjoy a stable and solid status. Rather, they mutually change and shape each other. Albena Yaneva expands Latour’s theory and opens a new dimension for designing studies.[[28]](#footnote-33) From Yaneva’s point of view, objects and designs should be seen as being empowered with the agency to enact and connect the social. These theories inspire the study of the formation of the Northern Song scholar-artist communities in this book.

The specific nature of the art historical study of the Northern Song scholar-artists represents an interesting case study for applying these sociological theories and opens new fields for research. First of all, regarding the structure and agency debate, it is too difficult to point out what dominated the formation of the scholar-artist communities. Instead, as Giddens suggests, it may be wiser to admit the mutually-shaping mechanisms of free will and social norms.[[29]](#footnote-34) The formation of the communities relies not only on the connection of the social networks of the scholar-artists but also on the materials they created and used. In the case of this book, tea, tea bowls, aromatic substances, and the *qin* are analysed within this framework to explore the formation of the communities. These tea-related objects should be empowered with agency as they played a vital role in enacting and connecting the social.[[30]](#footnote-35)Rather than seeing people and objects as unchanging, stable agents, a fluid process of mutually interactive practices, which makes people and objects constantly responsive to outside forces, helps us understand the ever-changing nature of community formation. There are no fixed communities, but communities are constantly in the process of being formed, shaped, and changed. This notion is essential to understanding the activities of the Northern Song scholar-artists discussed in this book.

I pay particular attention to two communities. The first included Emperor Huizong and his subordinates; the second included Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, and Huang Tingjian. Huang was a disciple of Su, who was, in turn, a disciple of Ouyang. Cultural and artistic transmission took place very often among them. Their friends, disciples, teachers, and peers formed a large group that played a vital role in the political, economic, scholastic, and artistic sectors of the Northern Song period. This book focuses on what the Northern Song cultural elites actually did:[[31]](#footnote-37) As long as they performed artistic activities and engaged in scholarly pursuits, they are the protagonists of this book.

The origins of the practice of identifying scholar-artists are worth noting.[[32]](#footnote-38) Since the Southern Song and Yuan periods, there has been a tendency to identify groups of authoritative and prestigious scholar-artists of the Northern Song. Art historian Shui Laiyou points out that the categorisation of “four great calligraphers of Northern Song” (“*Songsijia*”: Su, Huang, Mi Fu, and Cai Xiang) as a label of a group of artists was popularized by the Southern Song.[[33]](#footnote-39) Shui also argues that the “Cai” in the “four great calligraphers” was Cai Xiang, not Cai Jing, as is sometimes assumed. Ming dynasty scholars were also very interested in grouping scholar-artists. Zhu Yunming put Wang Xizhi, Wang Xianzhi, Ouyang Xun, Yan Zhenqing, Su, Huang, Mi, and Zhao Mengfu together in a group, even though not all of the artists were Song.[[34]](#footnote-40) Dong Qichang came up with another group consisting of Su, Huang, Mi, and Cai (Xiang).[[35]](#footnote-41) Entering the twentieth century, scholars have kept up the practice of identifying and grouping Northern Song scholar-artists. Ouyang Xiu, Cai Xiang/Jing, Su Shi, Huang Tingjian, Mi Fu, and Li Gonglin, however scholars posed different definitions, are still significant research targets.[[36]](#footnote-42)

Having given due consideration to the definitions of scholar-artist or *literati* artist given by modern art historians,[[37]](#footnote-43) this book adopts “scholar-artist,” a term suggested by Susan Bush and Robert Harrist,[[38]](#footnote-44) to refer to Ouyang Xiu, Su, Huang, and their circles of art producers, who were both *literati*-officials and artists in various senses. Occasionally, this book uses the term “*literati*” and “scholar-officials.” Traditionally, scholar-artists were expected to learn from Confucian classics, govern with philosophies acquired from the classics, read, paint, write, drink tea or alcohol, burn aromatic substances, play chess, and the *qin*.[[39]](#footnote-45) These mental and physical pursuits defined who they were and today help us identify what made a scholar-artist. “*Literati* painters” or “scholar painters” were only part of their identities or labels since these people also drank tea, made tea, and burned aromatic substances to create ephemeral art forms. They had close associations with each other and had frequent correspondences and interactions. Consequently, the scope of this book is broader than that of studies of traditional arts in relatively permanent forms such as painting and calligraphy, as we will consider other art forms, mainly tea, *qin*, and aromatic substances, which usually do not leave behind traces in the archaeological and textual record.

The term scholar-artist is also applied to Huizong and Cai Jing. As an emperor, Huizong should perhaps not be identified as an official of the *literati*, although he was very erudite and skilful in almost every type of art associated with this class of person. Whether Cai Jing was the “Cai” in the list of “four great calligraphers” has been controversial,[[40]](#footnote-46) but he demonstrated artistic abilities that could rival Cai Xiang’s. The sociological theories mentioned above provide new insights into the cases of Huizong and Cai Jing. They may not fit into the long-held definitions of scholar-artists. However, if we take the formation of the scholar-artist communities as a process characterised by interactive and changing elements, it is possible and worth exploring how Huizong and Cai Jing shaped the formation of one particular scholar-artist community.[[41]](#footnote-47) This book does not adopt a fixed and static view of the scholar-artist communities and does not readily exclude those traditionally not identified as scholar-artists because this would limit the investigation of how the communities were formed and changed.

**Community formation involving people, materials, experiences, and ephemeral practices**

Beyond the ideological and material factors that bind communities, there is a third element that is worthy of investigation – ephemeral experiences. Ephemera include actions/practices and sensorial experiences. How ephemeral practices and sensory experiences connected the scholar-artists is a central question in this book. For example, art historian Max Loehr offered an excellent summation of Su’s social circle, including Wen Tong, Li Gonglin, Wang Shen, Huang Tingjian, and Mi Fu.[[42]](#footnote-48) How and why this coterie or community formed involved a variety of reasons. For example, factional or partisan politics compel officials with similar interests to bind together as they face the same enemies.[[43]](#footnote-49) Officials who shared the same objectives, out of concern for the public good, would choose to create their circles.[[44]](#footnote-50) These reasons for coming together as a community can be categorised as ideological. However, communities that connect people through shared sensory experiences and actions, such as making tea, burning incense, and playing *qin* together, require study.

The formation of the Northern Song scholar-artist communities involved much more than the concept of an imagined community as articulated by Benedict Anderson.[[45]](#footnote-51) Although Anderson is primarily concerned with modern history and politics, especially nationalism, his concept of an imagined community has been extensively applied in studying other periods.[[46]](#footnote-52) The study of the scholar-artist communities poses challenges to the imagination of community because elements such as body, materials, the ephemerality of actions and practices, and sensorial experiences are brought into these discussions. However ephemeral they were and however scant their traces in the textual records may be, they were nonetheless concrete elements of the community formation process and, as such, should pique our interest. By studying how the scholar-artists prepared and enjoyed tea, we will discover that studying a community involving people, materials, experiences, and ephemeral practices provides an alternative approach to current, standard art historical research of the Northern Song.

Unlike the emphasis on how social norms influence people, this book adopts the view that forming a community provides standards, requirements, expectations, and inspiration to those involved.[[47]](#footnote-53) For example, we do not know if Su Shi really liked the smell of the popular aromatic substances used at the time, but we do know that he and his disciple Huang Tingjian exchanged numerous poems about the fragrance of aromatic substances. Su’s mentor Ouyang Xiu obviously did play the *qin*, but we do not know how well Su played. These questions are perhaps unanswerable, but whether Su liked these practices or not, an individual who wished to be labelled as a scholar-artist did what other people of his community did and fulfilled what the community required and expected of him. The sense of belonging to a community and the satisfaction of being recognised as a group member would propel one to join in shaping and forming the community. Internalizing the expectations and inspirations of the community would also turn this individual into an “expected” and “inspirer” in his turn. This is why community formation is a process characterised by the social embodiment of relations, power exertion, and mutual change.

In this book, the idea of individual creativity is challenged along these lines. When we credit Northern Song painters, calligraphers, and poets for their original pursuits of aesthetics and individual voices,[[48]](#footnote-54) we will have to re-examine the origins of their inspirations and re-consider in what sense their expressions were original and unique. Many paintings, calligraphic works, and poems served as art for correspondence; the *qin* music and burning aromatic substances were not purely for personal enjoyment but incorporated into settings of receiving guests. Hosts and guests alike would participate in creating these forms of art. Materials, shared sensorial experiences, and actions and practices performed would serve as inspirations for everyone involved in the art creation process. The over-emphasis on individuality and authentic expressions of individual freedom in the Northern Song encounter theoretical challenges in the study of the formation of the scholar-artist communities.

Sensory experiences, if shared by a group of people, would mean the same experiences to everyone; ephemeral practices, if approved of and conducted by a group of people, would also mean everyone in the group is performing the same series of actions. For instance, the taste of tea might render an individualized experience of astringent-sweetness to everyone, but if a person shared the same vocabulary with the rest of the group members, they could be said to have shared the same experience of the astringent-sweet taste of the tea. The practice of whisking tea would also imply that they repeatedly turned their wrists and fingers to control the whisk to stir the tea. We treat these repetitive experiences and practices as the shared, common agency of the group.

**Sources and review of the field**

This book utilises four main types of evidence to discuss the cultures and community formation of the Northern Song artist-scholars. The first is textual records, such as the tea texts compiled by Huizong and other scholar-officials. Artefacts and material remains, such as tea leaves, utensils, kiln sites, *qin*, and aromatic substances, form the next source of evidence. In the discussion of the tea preparation processes, simulation experiments and ethnographical studies that imitate the Northern Song tea-making methods serve as complementary references. However, we use modern substitutes due to the inaccessibility of Song-period tea leaves and utensils. Paintings in circulation and archaeological remains of painted murals are also utilised, but with caution, because indirect artistic representations of the cultures in question may not fully reflect reality.

English language scholarship on the history of tea in East Asia is relatively uneven in its coverage.[[49]](#footnote-55) Scholars have thoroughly explored the history of Japanese tea ceremonies and investigated material cultures related to Japanese tea customs in considerable detail.[[50]](#footnote-56) However, the rich culture of tea in China, including tea utensils, theories, and the history of tea practices, merits much more attention than it has received thus far.[[51]](#footnote-57)

The past few years have seen the publication of several new studies on China’s tea cultures in English. Paul Smith’s book *Taxing Heaven’s Storehouse* remains an authoritative work on the history of the political and economic control of the tea industry.[[52]](#footnote-58) Victor Mair and Erling Hoh’s study of global tea history is aimed at the general reading public. Nonetheless, it reveals many long-ignored facets of tea cultures and offers a comprehensive perspective to investigate how the different parts of the world were linked by tea. They explore multiple aspects of tea history, including the origins of tea, the development of elite and popular tea cultures in China, and the tea trade.[[53]](#footnote-59) Zhang Jinghong’s study of Puer tea adopts an anthropological approach to investigate the contemporary development of the Puer tea industry in China.[[54]](#footnote-60) Bret Hinsch’s 2016 book, *The Rise of Tea Culture in China: the Invention of the Individual*, looks into the history of tea from the Tang to Song periods.[[55]](#footnote-61) Hinsch emphasizes the development of individualism and studies how the Chinese *literati* used tea culture to express their individuality. James Benn uses religious texts to explore tea history in a recent English language monograph on China’s tea cultures.[[56]](#footnote-62) Benn’s monograph is a religious and cultural history of tea, and he emphasizes the importance of Buddhism and other aspects of the interior lives of tea drinkers. Based on his discussion of Buddhist religious pursuits, we can further explore how political elites created an exclusively scholarly community built around tea and constructed the process of preparing and appreciating tea.

Books with chapters devoted to the study of tea history of China in a global context are numerous. The most recent example is “Tea Spreads to China,” the second chapter of George van Driem’s monograph, *The Tale of Tea*. It presents a comprehensive overview of how people cultivated tea cultures in China and offers another integrated historical study of tea cultures worldwide.[[57]](#footnote-63) His monograph is an impressive work of scholarship and offers many indispensable linguistic references.

Contemporary Chinese scholarship on tea is, in contrast, relatively comprehensive. The two edited volumes by Zheng Peikai and Zhu Zizhen are the most comprehensive compilation of classical tea texts in this field.[[58]](#footnote-64) They trace the history of the writers who wrote about tea and the history of the various versions of the most important texts.[[59]](#footnote-65) We may rely on their efforts in using these tea texts to delineate a more detailed history of tea. General discussions of tea history continue to be published by Chinese academics. These scholars delineate a general history of tea cultures in China and devote much of their studies to the trade in tea and horses in Chinese history.[[60]](#footnote-66) There are many detailed studies of tea cultures during particular periods. Guan Jianping and Shen Dongmei are prominent scholars working on the cultural history of tea.[[61]](#footnote-67) Liao Baoxiu is also interested in the tea practices and utensils of the Song period.[[62]](#footnote-68) Her reconstruction of tea practices using textual and visual sources has transformed our understanding of the field.

At the same time, scholarship in both Chinese and English has suffered from methodological inadequacies. Textual historians are very familiar with primary textual sources, yet some rely excessively on poetry and other literary works, ignoring the question of the validity of these sources. Literary works, full of metaphors and exaggeration, may convey messages with oblique meanings, undermining their value and reliability as historical source material. Moreover, scholars may differ in their interpretations of even single phrases in these classical Chinese texts where individual words and phrases are dense with allusions. These different interpretations are occasionally contradictory and can cause significant problems in exploring tea cultures in China. Translating the primary Chinese texts into other languages may help scholars reflect on these different interpretations. However, an adequate body of translated works from the Chinese primary sources has not yet been produced.[[63]](#footnote-70) Using visual and material evidence such as paintings, murals, and surviving tea utensils can generate similar problems. Current historians of Chinese art have not developed a strong interest in the visual representation of tea in paintings, while at the same time, textual historians are not capable of critically examining the validity of visual sources. It is not uncommon for textual historians to cite scenes of tea practices depicted in paintings as direct evidence to support their reconstruction of historic tea practices but fail to reflect upon the fact that painters also had agendas when they produced the paintings.

The field of study of tea cultures in China is vast and has encountered several challenges and criticisms. Numerous questions remain unanswered. For example, how was liquid tea expected to look when served in the Northern Song? This may never be satisfactorily answered, but posing the question alone indicates several interesting and innovative research directions. What qualified as a cup of good tea, how was one to prepare a cup of good tea, how were tea utensils to be used, how was tea planted and picked in historical periods, and finally, why do these questions matter? These questions do not just concern a technical study of tea preparation but could lead to future research projects that may be the focus of interdisciplinary studies involving textual history, art history, material cultures, botanical studies, and other fields. This book seeks to answer some of these questions.

Scholarly publications dedicated to the history of aromatic substances are relatively few and far between, and their focus is somewhat scattered. Scholars of the history of aromatic substances are concerned with the geographical sources of the substances, production, transportation (as the substances were mainly imported from distant regions), design and production of incense burners, manuals of aromatic substances (*xiangpu*), and the cultural implications of using the substances.[[64]](#footnote-71) Yang Zhishui and Liu Jingmin are among the few scholars who productively write about the history of aromatic substances in Chinese. However, the lack of textual materials about the substances and the difficulties inherent in attempting to describe the olfactory experience of smelling the burning substances probably hinder scholars from publishing more on this topic.

Histories of *qin* music, the *qin* as an instrument, playing techniques, and related cultural implications and values have received their share of attention from scholars writing in Chinese and English. An early scholar of the *qin* was Robert Hans van Gulik, who laid the foundation of this field in English scholarship when he first published his book, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute*, in 1940.[[65]](#footnote-72) Rulan Chao Pian’s 1967 book, *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* expanded the scope of the field and included a detailed discussion of the finger techniques (*zhifa*) of playing the *qin* and *qin* notation systems.[[66]](#footnote-73) If unexplained, the *qin* notation systems would read like encrypted texts to a layman. In explaining the systems to the Western world, scholars have introduced the significant chapter of *qin* music into world music history. More recently, Yang Yuanzheng has been one of the most productive *qin* historians, contributing studies of the history of *qin* manuscripts, philology, early notation systems, designs and production techniques, and melodies and songs related to the *qin*.[[67]](#footnote-74) Yang’s comprehensive approaches to the study of the *qin* are inspiring and important and suggest trajectories of how research about the *qin* can be developed in the future.

In order to achieve a holistic understanding of the activities of the scholar-artists, I integrate these studies carefully to create a narrative of the three interrelated cultures, even though studies of specific areas are still underdeveloped. I adopt a research orientation that explores how historical cultural elites dedicated their energy and time to pursue all three activities, how they enjoyed them in social and political gatherings, and how they constructed their image in relation to these practices. An organic integration of the surviving traces is necessary to reconstruct the cultural scene in question. A more critical evaluation of the artistic activities and creation of the Northern Song scholar-artists should bring new light to the field. Expanding the art history field to include more ephemeral forms is a new avenue of research. This book enriches the history of the three cultures in question and provides a new assessment of certain sociological theories of community formation.

**Chapter 1 – A cultural construct: The relationship between tea, fragrance, and music**

I begin by analysing the interrelationship between tea, fragrance, and music. Northern Song cultural and political elites treated tea, fragrance, and music as significant interrelated elements.[[68]](#footnote-75) Textual and visual evidence dating to this period attests to this notion. Emperor Huizong (1082-1135), the eighth emperor of the Northern Song dynasty, was one of the most famous tea lovers. Cai Jing, his Grand Counsellor, helped him reform state policies regarding tea production and trade. They both contributed significantly to the creation and development of Northern Song tea culture. Cai was older than Huizong, and they generally maintained very close and good relations until Cai’s death. As recorded in the *Comprehensive Collection of Essays of the Song Dynasty* (*Quan Songwen*)and Zhuang Zhuo’s *Anthology of Chicken Ribs* (*Jilei bian*), Huizong honoured Cai by visiting his house several times.[[69]](#footnote-76) In an anecdote recalling a visit by Huizong to Cai’s house in the ninth lunar month of 1119, Huizong personally prepared tea for Cai and others. Huizong liked serving his subordinates tea.[[70]](#footnote-77) He and his subordinates composed a classic tea text, *Treatise of Tea during the Daguan Reign* (*Daguan chalun*; hereafter *Daguan Treatise*), between 1107 and 1110. It laid the theoretical and practical foundation for tea aesthetics in the Northern and Southern Song dynasties. The earliest version of the *Daguan Treatise* appeared in Tao Zongyi’s *On the Outer City* (*Shuofu*).[[71]](#footnote-78) The text was attributed to Huizong, but it is more likely that it was created by a group of subordinates who were very familiar with the highly detailed tea preparation processes.

Cai Jing, in his *Note on A Banquet in the Extended Blessings Palace* (*Yanfugong quyan ji*) records eight types of luxury items and elegant entertainments available at the Palace, including *qin*, Chinese *Go* (*weiqi*), calligraphic works, paintings, tea, elixirs, classics, and aromatic substances.[[72]](#footnote-79) The Extended Blessings Palace was built in 1113–1114 and was mainly used for hosting imperial banquets.[[73]](#footnote-80) These luxurious appointments reflected the significance among the highest echelons of society of the association of the *qin*, tea, and aromatic substances, along with other items treasured by scholar-artists.

Associating *qin* music with drinking tea and burning aromatic substances was also a prevailing practice among scholar-artists of lower ranks. They enjoyed *qin* music, tea, and fragrances from burning aromatic substances and recorded their enjoyment in various formats. The title of one of the poems written by Mei Yaochen, a famous scholar, artist, and official, is *In­­­­toning the Same Rhymes, Resonating with* *Shao Buyi, After the Rain, Gathering of Brewing Tea, Viewing Paintings, and Listening to the Qin*.[[74]](#footnote-81) The first line of this poem reads, “Playing the *qin* and viewing the ancient paintings, time is still needed to brew the tea”. While they played the *qin* and viewed the paintings, the water was heated. This was a time-consuming process. Eventually, they drank tea together. While the poem describes an imaginary scene, its title at least gives us an idea of the procedure of a tea gathering. Su Shi recorded a gathering at his friend Sun Shujing’s house where they drank beer, brewed tea, burned aromatic substances, and used a special brush called *Zhuge bi* to paint or write calligraphy.[[75]](#footnote-82) Su’s association of tea drinking with the burning of aromatics also reflected the popularity of these activities among scholars, artists, and officials, which is evident in numerous anecdotes, notes, prefaces, and titles of literary works of these cultural elites.

Paintings collaboratively created by Huizong, Cai Jing, and other court painters are evidence of the interrelationship between the cultures in question.[[76]](#footnote-84) Huizong and Cai, who jointly prescribed reforms to practices surrounding the preparation and consumption of tea, also collaborated on two paintings depicting scenes of tea consumption, fragrances being used, and the playing of the *qin*. One of the works is the *Painting of a Literati Gathering* (*Wenhui tu*; hereafter *Literati Gathering*), attributed to Huizong and housed in the Taipei Palace Museum, depicting a scene of a gathering of *literati* with tea being served (Fig. 1.1a and Fig. 1.1b). We do not know whether this painting captures an actual gathering, but we can treat it as an idealized scene depicting a gathering of *literati*. The artists and the composer of its colophon poems constructed a gathering that would have taken place among the *literati*. A *qin* painted in black lacquer and a *ding* tripod are laid on a table under a willow tree at the centre of the painting (Fig. 1.1c). The unattended *qin*, probably unwrapped from the white cloth alongside it, may suggest that the banquet takes place after playing the *qin*. The tripodmay be an incense burner used during the concerto or an antique for the guests’ viewing.[[77]](#footnote-85) The main protagonists around the large square table are probably high status scholar-officials, although we may doubt whether Huizong is among them. There are numerous utensils on the large table, including tea bowls, saucers, cups, ewers, and containers for fruits, flowers, and probably aromatic substances. The presence of these materials suggests that the fragrance from the tea, flowers, fruits, and burning of aromatic substances must have diffused throughout the banquet

Near the large table are sets of tea utensils on two smaller tables (Fig. 1.1b). We can easily identify two ewers with ornate spouts and, between them, a ladle. These are placed on the table on the right. On the table on the left are several light-coloured tea bowls, on saucers or pedestals of a darker colour. One servant in blue clothing uses his right hand to pick up something from a jar using a ladle while he holds a bowl on a saucer in his left hand. These bowls have thin walls and do not hold heat well. Tea drinkers use two hands to hold the saucers to avoid touching the hot bowls directly. To the left of this table is a large charcoal stove with two ewers for boiling water. Further to the left is a young servant drinking from a bowl he holds in his left hand.

The painting depicts a sophisticated and elegant tea gathering for the elite, as suggested by the utensils, the settings, participants’ clothing, *qin* music, and even the way the saucers are held. The evening would have begun with the *qin* concerto, followed by drinking alcohol, enjoying a fine banquet, and end with imbibing tea. The composing and recitation of poetry may have punctuated every phase of the gathering. Tea, alcohol, and fruits may have been served simultaneously. During Huizong’s visit to Cai’s house in 1119 mentioned above, Huizong not only prepared tea for all those present, but he also gave an olive to Cai and a cup of alcohol (probably beer) to Tong Guan, while his consort served pieces of fruit.[[78]](#footnote-86)

There are doubts about who created the painting an when. Art historian Chen Jiejin suggests that the painting may be a Ming copy of a Northern Song model because at the bottom of the painting is depicted a servant holding a large blue-and-white porcelain basin of the type that emerged only in the fourteenth century.[[79]](#footnote-87) However, another art historian Yi Ruofen doubts that the basin is blue-and-white porcelain.[[80]](#footnote-88) Yi claims that the painting accords with the style of the imperial painting academy during Huizong’s time and thought it was directly related to Huizong.[[81]](#footnote-89) Chen echoes this point, suggesting that the painters might have used earlier Northern Song paintings as models. The trees and rocks in the background, the arrangement of the human figures, tea utensils, and the tea preparation process depicted in the painting all attest to Northern Song provenance. Despite his doubts, Chen admits there must have been an earlier painting depicting similar content. It is also the consensus that the original version of *Literati Gathering* is one of the most important paintings attributed to Huizong, although Huizong might have merely painted a small part of the painting or contributed a colophon poem to it.

There are two colophon poems at the top of the painting, suggesting that Huizong and Cai collaborated on the painting. They also indicate how well-received Cai’s poetry and calligraphic work were. Ordinarily, a subordinate’s work could not be put in as prominent a position as the emperor’s. The one to the right was composed by Huizong:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **徽宗《題文會圖》** | **Huizong, Inscription on *Literati Gathering[[82]](#footnote-90)*** |
| 儒林華國古今同 (-*uwng*)  — — | | | — — | Confucian scholars glorifying the state is common in both ancient and modern times. |
| 吟啄飛毫醒醉中 (-*uwng*)  | | — — | | — [[83]](#footnote-91) | Sober or inebriated, they chant, pluck [the string of the *qin*], and brandish the writing brush. |
| 多士作新知入彀  (—) | (|) — — | | | Numerous talents, innovative in cultivation (educating the public), know that they would be recruited [by the emperor]. |
| 畫圖猶喜見文雄 (-*uwng*)  (|) — (—) | | — — | What a delight it is to see a painting in which the eminent ones of superior literary power appear. |
|  | [The words “同,” “中,” and “雄”, belong to the *-uwng* rhyme (*dongyun*).[[84]](#footnote-92)] |

*Guoyu* 4.61. The character “hua” 華 is read as an oblique tone. 入彀, literally means being within the shooting range of the arrows, here it means being controlled by the emperor himself, see *Tang zhiyan* 1.3. This phrase originated from Tang Taizong.

The one to the left, by Cai, reads:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **蔡京《臣京謹依韻和進》** | **Cai Jing, *Intoning the Same Rhyme, Minister Jing Resonated and Submitted [this Poem]*** |
| 明時不與有唐同 (-*uwng*)  — — | | | — — | This enlightened reign [of ours] is different from the Tang. |
| 八表人歸大道中 (-*uwng*)  | | — — | | — | The talents from distant places all come to congregate on the main avenue. |
| 可笑當年十八士  | | — — (|) | | | Pitiful were the eighteen scholars of yonder times. |
| 經綸誰是出羣雄 (-*uwng*)  — — (—) | | — — | Which of them, with their discourses on the classics, would come out on top of other eminent scholars? |
|  | [The words “同,” “中,” and “雄”, belong to the *-uwng* rhyme (*dongyun*).[[85]](#footnote-93)] |

When Tang Taizong established the Academy of Literacy and Learning, he invited eighteen scholars, including Du Ruhui, Fang Xuanling, and Lu Deming, to be fellows of the Academy, and ordered Yan Liben to produce portraits of the eighteen scholars. These paintings were called the *Portraits of the Eighteen Scholars* (*Shiba xueshi xiezhen tu*). *Jiu Tangshu* 72.11a.

Huizong recognised Cai as a prominent figure in poetry and calligraphy, while the emperor himself was considered one of the best artists for his calligraphy, painting, and other cultural pursuits.[[86]](#footnote-94) Huizong so admired Cai’s poetry that he could recall one of Cai’s poems composed two decades earlier. Cai’s calligraphic works appear on the same steles as Huizong’s. This would have been considered an immense honour. Huizong collected some of Cai’s calligraphic works and preserved them carefully in a box wrapped in silk.[[87]](#footnote-95) It therefore comes as no surprise that their calligraphic works appear together on the same painting.

The two colophon poems are closely related. First, they both express similar concerns about recruiting new talents.[[88]](#footnote-96) Second, Huizong’s poem hints that the *qin* was played, poems were recited, and calligraphic works were written, even though the painting did not show all these activities. The audial elements of the *literati* gathering include *qin* music and the chanting of both poems. We can see clearly that Cai’s poem shares the same rhyme as Huizong’s. The basic tonal patterns are also the same, with minor variations. In this way, Cai’s poem resonates with Huizong’s in terms of the content, rhythm, and rhyme, which listeners would easily recognise when the poems were recited aloud.

It is not clear when precisely *Literati Gathering* was created. However, the light-coloured tea bowls in the painting suggest that it might have been painted before the compilation of the *Daguan Treatise*, in which Huizong and his subordinates regulated the tea practices and suggested using dark-coloured tea bowls.[[89]](#footnote-97) The painters were not intentionally creating a painting to reveal Huizong’s favourite tea preparation process. Rather, they were interested in the banquet scene depicting a *literati* gathering in which they converse, imbibe alcohol and tea, and enjoy a moment of leisure in a beautiful garden with trees and rocks. The alcohol makes them tipsy, but the tea energizes them, and these changing states are referred to in Huizong’s poem.

Cai also composed the colophon poem for *Painting of Listening to the Qin* (Tingqin tu; hereafter *Qin Listening*) housed in the Beijing Palace Museum (fig. 1.2a). It shares the same rhyme scheme but not the same tonal patterns and appears on another painting also attributed to Huizong:

|  |  |
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| **蔡京《聽琴圖》** | **Cai Jing, Qin *Listening*** |
| 吟徵調商竈下桐 (-*uwng*)  (—) | (|) — | | — | [A *qin* melody with] chanting in the key of *zhi*, [a *qin* melody called] *diao* in thekey of *shang*, the parasol-tree [*qin* played on]. |
| 松間疑有入松風 (-*uwng*)  — — | | | — — | A surging wind seems to be sweeping through the pine grove. |
| 仰窺低審含情客  (|) — (—) | — — | | [A guest] raised [his head] to glance [at the sky], [another] lowered [his head] in contemplation, their [hearts were] full of sentiments. |
| 以聽無絃一弄中 (-*uwng*)  | | — — | | — | There listening to a melody played on a stringless [*qin*]. |
| 臣京謹題 | Minister Jing respectfully inscribed |
|  | [The words “桐,” “風,” and “中”, belong to the *-uwng* rhyme (*dongyun*).[[90]](#footnote-98)] |

吟, if it is read as “yín” interpreted as a noun, meaning “[a *qin* melody with] chanting,” it should be contrasted to another *qin* melody type called the “yîn” 引, whose character is read as an oblique tone. The reconstruction of the Middle Chinese pronunciation of 吟 is “ngim,” while 引 is “yinX.” See Baxter and Sagart 2014. The two sounds are not identical but euphonically similar. Examples of these *qin* melodies are *Zuiweng yín* and *Lienü yîn*. For various names of the *qin* melodies, see the *Twelve* Qin *Melodies* (*Gucao shierzhang*), anonymous author, in QYYL, 1-17; the *Book of the* Qin(*Qinshu*), anonymous writer, in QYYL, 93-9. These two texts date roughly to the Song period. 竈下桐 refers to the *qin* made of parasol wood retrieved from the bottom of a stove. This refers to the story of Cai Yong in the Eastern Han dynasty, who once heard the cracking sound of burning timber coming from the bottom of a stove. He thought that this piece of timber was an excellent piece of material for making a *qin*, rescued from the fire, and turned it into a *qin*, which eventually produced beautiful tones. *Soushenji* 13.167. 松風, literally meaning the wind passing through the pine forest. Here it can refer to two layers of meanings. The first layer implies a *qin* melody,[[91]](#footnote-99) “*Wind Entering the Pine Forest*” (*Feng ru song*), *Tongzhi* 49.6. Poems and lyrics using the name “*Feng ru song*” are plenty, such as the monk Jiaoran’s *Song of Wind Entering the Pine Forest*, *Yuefu shiji* 3:60.876. The second layer can signify the sound of water boiling for making tea. For the origins of this expression, see the Tang dynasty monk Pi Rixiu’s poem, *Brewing Tea* (*Chazhong zayong – zhucha*), QTS 2:611.1548; See also Su Shi’s poem in QSS 14:791.9160; and another poem attributed to Su Shi, DPXJ 3.21a. 無絃 refers to the stringless *qin* collected by Tao Qian. *Jinshu* 94.21a.

Fig. 1.2a shows the *Painting of Listening to the Qin* (*Tingqin tu*; hereafter *Qin Listening*) housed in the Beijing Palace Museum. Although controversies about the authorship and dating of this painting persist,[[92]](#footnote-100) scholars such as Zhu Jiajin, Xie Zhiliu, and Xu Bangda believe that this is a work from Huizong’s time and that Huizong might have played a role in the creation of this painting.[[93]](#footnote-101) Xu Bangda claims that the painting was created during the Xuanhe period.[[94]](#footnote-102) This book treats *Qin Listening* and *Literati Gathering* as products of the Northern Song court painters.[[95]](#footnote-103) Huizong may have contributed a small part, or perhaps nothing, to the two paintings. However, he is still credited with their creation. He may be depicted as a protagonist in the paintings, but we cannot clearly ascertain his role.

Art historian Wang Cheng-Hua has provided a detailed analysis of the political meanings and iconography of the painting.[[96]](#footnote-104) She suggests that the *qin* player is Huizong, while the two sitting officials might be members of the court. She further describes the incense burner on a high table next to the *qin* player (fig. 1.2b) and gives an account of the flower contained in the *lì*-container on the rock as white jasmine, which blossoms in the summer.[[97]](#footnote-105)

The two paintings are closely related in depicting and alluding to tea, aromatic substances, and the *qin*.[[98]](#footnote-106) The presence of music is very obvious in *Qin Listening*, while the place of fragrance is also conspicuous because of the depiction of the incense burner and the blossoming jasmine. The association of music and fragrance from an incense burner is also robust because the *qin* and the incense burner in the form of a tripod are depicted together in *Literati Gathering*. Tea is obliquely hinted at in Cai’s colophon poem in the Qin *Listening*. Most scholars focus only on the first layer of the implications of the “pine wind” sweeping through the pine forest, which refers to a *qin* melody or perhaps simply refers to the sound of the wind.[[99]](#footnote-108) For our purposes, the second layer is more interesting. It alludes to the sound of the boiling water used to prepare tea (see the literary references above).[[100]](#footnote-109) The repeated use of the character “*song*” (pine) and the mention of the *qin* sound are not indicators of the poet’s poor literary skills.[[101]](#footnote-110) Instead, it points to a sequence of activities in a *literati* gathering. As suggested by *Literati Gathering*, the serving of tea came after playing the *qin*, when alcohol was drunk during the banquet. Could the *qin* player and the sitting officials, depicted in *Qin Listening*, be drinking tea after music, with the little servant make tea for them? It is highly likely to be the case, as we can infer from the allusion to the sound of the pine wind in Cai Jing’s poem. If we recall Mei Yaochen’s poem cited earlier, “time is still needed to brew the tea” when the *qin* gathering is going on, the guests could vaguely hear the sound of boiling water for making tea.

All in all, the music from the *qin* and the chanting of the poems with such measured and pleasing tonal patterns and rhyme, the fragrance from the aromatic substances, flowers, fruits, and tea, the visual enjoyment of all the luxurious items, the tactile sensations of the fine furnishings and utensils in the richly appointed room,[[102]](#footnote-111) and the taste of tea, fruits, and other delicacies constitute important symbols of the sensory experiences in the two paintings. They revolve around the themes of idealized tea cultures and *literati* gatherings. Tea, aromatics, and the *qin* were closely related as they represented the material sources of almost all the sensory experiences enjoyed by the cultural and political elites at the *literati* gatherings.

**Tea**

Motivation for appreciating tea

We now know the benefits of drinking tea and can easily understand why people drink it. Drying the leaves helps preserve the Vitamin C the tea contains – an essential ingredient for people who lack fresh vegetables and fruits in their diet.[[103]](#footnote-112) Scurvy, an illness common among nomadic peoples and sailors before the modern age, is known to cause emotional instability, physical weakness, fatigue, bleeding, sores, gum disease, poor healing of wounds, dental problems, and even death. All these symptoms can be alleviated by drinking tea.

People in Northern Song China, however, did not have our knowledge of the nutritional and medicinal value of tea. Why, then, did they drink tea from the many beverages available? They could have drunk pure water to quench their thirst or a robust and intoxicating beverage such as beer or medicinal or non-medicinal concoctions. What was so enticing about tea? Apart from its health benefits, we should consider the role of tea in the eyes of elites and commoners of the Tang-Song period and look for explanations for its popularity. Drinking tea was not only a conscious health choice; it had cultural, economic, and artistic meanings, which I discuss in chapters one, two, and three respectively. Religious reasons and its ability to be preserved were not the primary motivations for tea drinking.

**Not merely religion**

Zhu Zizhen, Victor Mair and Erling Hoh, James Benn, and George van Driem argue that Buddhists, Daoists, and other religious groups played an essential role in turning the act of appreciating tea into a fashionable trend.[[104]](#footnote-113) It must be remembered, however, that these figures maintained a distance from the secular world. It would appear that spreading tea culture to a broader public was caused by scholars, officials, and artists who interacted with religious people and adopted their tea-drinking habits. As Ronald Egan observes, tea was limited to a small circle of literary writers, including recluses, immortals, and Buddhists in the Tang dynasty. This book argues that tea became universally popular under the Northern Song when tea was often consumed by people from various walks of life, including scholar-artists in office, royal family members, recluses, religious persons, and commoners.

**Not merely health**

In his *Classic of Tea*, Lu Yu mentions that the flavour of tea is of the cold energy (*han*), which can help quench thirst (*ke*) and cool one down when one feels hot energy (*re*).[[105]](#footnote-115) People with headaches, dry eyes, and body aches can drink tea to alleviate discomfort.[[106]](#footnote-116) However, Lu’s promotion of drinking tea for the sake of drinking tea implies that drinking tea was not a universal custom for the elites and commoners of his time. Had it been popular, Lu Yu would not have had to write his text to promote it. For their part, Cai Xiang and Huizong were not primarily concerned with tea’s medicinal qualities in their tea text. Perhaps, by the Northern Song period, drinking tea had become an essential part of their lives, and they did not see the need to expend any effort to promote the medicinal benefits of tea (although they were still interested in promoting specific types of tea). We can investigate the historical connections between tea and medicine to determine whether the Tang-Song people drank tea for its health benefits.

Tea was excluded from many traditional Chinese medicinal texts before the Song.[[107]](#footnote-117) It is not included in famous medical texts such as Zhang Zhongjing’s *Treatise on Exogenous Febrile Disease* (*Shanghan lun*), Sun Simiao’s *Essential Prescriptions Worth A Thousand Tael of Gold* (*Qianjin yaofang*), Wang Tao’s *Arcane Essential Prescriptions from the Imperial Library* (*Waitai miyao fang*), Chen Shiwen and others’ *Prescriptions from the Imperial Pharmacy* (*Taiping Huimin Heziju fang*; hereafter “*Imperial Pharmacy*”), and the *Classified and Collected* Materia Medica (*Zhenglei bencao: chongxiu Zhenghe jingshi zhenglei beiyong bencao*; hereafter “*Materia Medica*”) compiled by Tang Shenwei and others.[[108]](#footnote-118) These Chinese medicinal practitioners did not regard tea as a medicinal herb. Instead, they proposed numerous other herbs that provided health effects that were very similar to those of tea.[[109]](#footnote-119) The implication is that these other herbs could well substitute tea.

To neutralize the effect of hot energy, for example, a person could drink various decoctions made from herbs and roots. To the traditional Chinese medicinal practitioners, there were different types of discomfort associated with hot energy. Zhang Zhongjing put forward a scenario in which a person feels the effects of decidedly hot energy (perhaps a fever). His body is hot; he feels thirsty; he may sweat and recoil from coldness. In this scenario, he needs to drink an infusion of cassia bark tree twigs (*Guizhi tang*; *guizhi*, LPN of *guizhi*: *Cinnamomi ramulus*)[[110]](#footnote-121) and other plant substances that cause the patient to sweat. If the person is still thirsty and anxious, they can take the white-tiger concoction with *ginseng* and other ingredients (*Baihu renshen tang*). If the patient suffers another set of symptoms, including chills, a “slippery pulse”, and feeling cold despite being in a warm environment, they should take the white-tiger decoction. This decoction consists of common anemarrhena [*zhimu*, Latin pharmaceutical name (LPN)]: *Anemarrhenae rhizoma*), gypsum (*shigao*, LPN: *Gympsum fibrosum*), liquorice root (*gancao*, LPN: *Glycyrrhizae radix et rhizoma*), and rice (*gengmi*).[[111]](#footnote-122) One would boil these ingredients with water until the rice became edible and drink the warm decoction three times a day without consuming the herbal residue. Wang Shuhe, the compiler of Zhang’s *Treatise*, notes that the taste and energy of common anemarrhena are bitter and cold, that of gypsum sweet and cold, and that of liquorice root and rice sweet and neutral. Why did later generations not drink the liquorice root decoction, or even the common anemarrhena or gypsum decoctions to quench thirst and reduce hot energy?

Food and medicine are inseparable in the eyes of traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. Sun Simiao was among the early practitioners proposing exploiting ordinary food's medicinal properties. Chapter 26 of his *Essential Prescriptions* is devoted to “Recipes of Food as Prescriptions (“*Shizhi*”).[[112]](#footnote-123) In Chapter 21, Sun also introduces prescriptions of decoction to quench thirst.[[113]](#footnote-124) Some of these decoctions can quench thirst and remove the hot energy inside one’s stomach.[[114]](#footnote-125) One of the prescriptions, the decoction of tuckahoe and others (*Fushen tang*), includes tuckahoe, common anemarrhena, and common lophatherum herb (*danzhuye*, LPN: *Lophatheri herba*).[[115]](#footnote-126) The physical characteristics, taste, and energy of the dried and processed common lophatherum herb are similar to those of the processed tea buds and leaves. Some of the herbs included in the prescriptions are perfect substitutes for tea as they serve similar functions and occasionally are much better alternatives.

Wang Tao, in the Tang dynasty, proposed seventeen prescriptions to quench thirst and cited many other prescriptions to cure other illnesses.[[116]](#footnote-127) Chen Shiwen in the Northern Song provided many more similar prescriptions that could have been known by medicinal practitioners who were contemporaries of Cai Xiang, Huizong, and others.[[117]](#footnote-128) Some of the prescriptions might have been added in the Southern Song, but the application of specific herbs, such as lotus seed (*lianzi*, LPN: *Nelumbinis semen*), could have had a much earlier origin. The nature of lotus seed is neutral, while its taste is sweet and astringent.[[118]](#footnote-129) The lotus-seed decoction could help quench thirst, reduce anxiety and depression, and soothe one’s stomach.

The *Materia Medica* by Tang Shenwei and others was recompiled and re-edited at various times, but a part of its title, *Zhenghe* (a name of one of the periods of the reign of Huizong), suggests that scholars in Huizong’s time could have been aware of these medicinal theories practices. Tang and others propose coastal glehnia root (*shashen*, LPN: *Glehniae radix*), whose energy is slightly cold and has an astringent taste.[[119]](#footnote-130) This plant-based medicine helps remove hot energy, ward off drowsiness, cure stomach troubles, headaches, and heart pain, and strengthen the lungs. They also claim that long-term consumption of the root benefits one’s health. They continue by mentioning that the raw roots in the Yellow River basin are believed to offer medicinal functions similar to those of tea. While tea grew in the deep south of China during the Song period, *shashen* roots were more readily available as they could be found in northern China.

**Not merely preservation**

Other Northern Song herbal medicine was easily transported and could be preserved for a long time. The drying and processing methods (paozhi) of Chinese herbal medicine can be traced to as early as the Western Han period and are still practised today.[[120]](#footnote-131) There are records of how medicine could be dried and processed in the Western Han medical text, *Fifty-two Prescriptions* (*Wushier bingfang*), excavated in 1973 from Tomb 3 in Mawangdui in the Hunan province.[[121]](#footnote-132) This text stipulates that one must select the appropriate parts of the raw herbal materials to be dried and processed. Some can be dried only in direct sunlight, and others in the shade. When most of the water inside the plant materials has dried up, some need to be ground or crushed into powders, and others need to be baked, fried, or roasted to dehydrate them completely. Alcohol, vinegar, honey, milk, or other substances might be added to the baking, frying, or roasting of a specific animal or plant material. We know that at least since the Western Han period, herbal medicine drying and processing techniques were already in use. These techniques could be applied to herbal medicine and tea buds and leaves.[[122]](#footnote-133)

In approximately the fifth century, Lei Xiao and others wrote texts about the drying and processing of medicine, but these texts are either lost entirely or only available in scattered fragments included in other medical texts. Extracts of his work are included in Tang Shenwei and others’ *Materia Medica*. Ming and Qing medicinal practitioners selected entries supposedly written by Lei and others and recompiled them into *Master Lei’s Treatise on Drying and Processing* (*Leigong paozhi lun*; hereafter “*Lei’s Treatise*”),[[123]](#footnote-134) which became one of the foundational texts of Chinese medicine. The medical texts drafted by Sun Simiao, Tang Shenwei, and others at a later stage significantly enriched and elaborated on the drying and processing methods. These sophisticated methods were clearly useful references for tea makers to turn raw buds and leaves into preservable tea.

To sum up, there were many substitutes for tea to quench thirst, reduce hot energy, and ward off drowsiness. One could drink decoctions made of lotus seeds, coastal glehnia roots, tuckahoes, anemarrhena, gypsum, liquorice roots, lophatherum herb, and others. Some of these substitutes, like coastal glehnia roots, could be found easily in northern China and did not incur expensive transportation costs. While tea could be preserved for a long time, other herbal medicines with similar health benefits could definitely be treated in similar ways with the same result. Why did the decoctions of lotus seeds, coastal glehnia roots, or tuckahoes not become popular beverages like tea? Other factors seem to have been at play.

Lu Yu and his contemporaries can be credited as some of the first authors to describe the popular cultural practice of tea appreciation. Out of the many possible candidate herbal infusions, he and his contemporaries promoted tea, distinguishing it from other medicinal herbs. More importantly, they also emphasized tea-making methods and utensils to codify the act of appreciating tea and transform it into a ceremonial practice rather than merely arguing that tea had medicinal functions. Lu was the founder of the Tang -period tea practices and the first recorded proponent of tea as a beverage with a special status. Drinking tea as a cultural act, rather than a dietary act for health, began in Lu’s time and reached a climax during the Northern Song period when it received further elaboration and codification at the hands of many more scholar-artists, officials, royal personages, and commoners.

Tea as a cultural construct

**Tea preparation and appreciation**

By this time, the tea preparation and appreciation process had become a cultural construct.[[124]](#footnote-135) The scholar-artists strengthened the cultural construction of tea by forming their own communities. Unfortunately, our knowledge of how tea was prepared during the Northern Song period is limited due to the fact that tea is perishable and no identifiable tea buds or leaves remain from the Song period for us to test. However, we have tea utensils; visual sources, such as paintings and murals, which depict tea or tea-drinking scenes, and textual records, including essays dating from that period, such as Cai Xiang’s *Records of Tea* (*Chalu*),[[125]](#footnote-136) the *Daguan Treatise*, and others. These utensils and textual sources aided in the cultural construction of the practice of tea appreciation and scholar-artists’ interactions in the context of making and enjoying tea.

I focus on four aspects of tea practices and appreciation. The first is the tea preparation process. It involves preparing all the materials, including processed tea and utensils, for tea ceremonies, contests, or ordinary tea-drinking activities. The second aspect emphasizes the standards of the appearance, colour, fragrance, and texture of tea and the nature of the foam that comes from whisking the tea, which was called *diancha* [tipping (water into the) tea; hereafter, “tea-tipping”]. Thirdly, I explore the functions of tea utensils and study how they are made to cater to the special needs of tea practices. Finally, I analyse how a new elite tea culture was constructed within the royal courts according to specified aesthetic standards

From 2017 to 2020, I conducted experiments in Hong Kong to simulate the tea preparation procedures mentioned in the *Daguan Treatise* (Appendix I to IV). I did not aim to reconstruct or re-enact the entire tea preparation process. I do not regard my experimental simulation procedures as definitive versions of Huizong’s style or propose standards for future reconstruction experiments. I nevertheless needed some carefully controlled examples to serve as complementary data for understanding the tea preparation and appreciation procedures described in the textual record. The data obtained from these experiments contributed to making up for the lack of available and reliable sensory descriptions in modern scholarship on the tea preparation process and appreciation of fine tea in the Northern Song period.

**Preparation of tea-drinking materials**

The tea maker’s first and most critical task is to select the best tea buds and leaves and transform them into drinkable tea. Tea in the Song period, including Huizong’s highly-acclaimed “White Tea” (*Baicha*) from Jian’an, was unfermented and, in terms of today’s categorisations, would be considered green tea.[[126]](#footnote-137) Once the tea cakes reached the end consumer, it was time to gather the materials required to prepare the tea for drinking. This was no simple matter and was an idealized and standardised procedure appears in the *Daguan Treatise*. The tea drinker first slices an appropriate portion of tea from a tea cake. He then takes out a sieve with holes small enough to separate the smaller from the larger tea cake crumbs. The sliced portion of tea is then placed onto a crusher, where it is crushed repeatedly. The *Daguan Treatise* suggests that crushers made of silver are the best choice, followed by wrought iron. Cast iron was not favoured because black dust was likely to be hidden in gaps in the crusher, affecting the tea’s colour. In *Lei’s Treatise*,Lei and others stipulated that some specific plant materials should only be processed and treated in containers and with tools made of specific materials. For example, driedadhesive rehmannia root tuber (*dihuang*, LPN: *Rehmanniae radix*) should be steamed in a container made of willow wood, which is put on top of a porcelain pot. The dried *dihuang* should be kept away from copper or iron vessels.[[127]](#footnote-138) Lei and others believed that the close contact between the dried medicine and specific materials would alter their medicinal properties. The specification of the materials of tools and containers probably originated from the *paozhi* technical corpus.

The colour of the tea bowls was essential: the *Daguan Treatise* suggests that, while dark and blue glazed porcelain bowls were often favoured, bowls with “hare’s fur” (*tuhao*) patterns are the best because this type of bowl would reveal the colour of the tea most clearly. The ideas come from Cai Xiang, but the authors of the *Daguan Treatise* paid particular attention to the depth, width, and overall volume of the tea bowls because these dimensions are all relevant in determining the amount of water to be poured into the bowls that would change the colour and the foam of the tea. Requirements for the bamboo whisk, metal ewer, and ladle are all spelled out in detail.

The quality of the water is vital to the taste of the tea. Therefore, the *Daguan Treatise* provides specific criteria for good-quality water. Good-quality water should be pure, light, and clean, with a lingering sweetness after the initial astringency.[[128]](#footnote-139) The authors preferred water from mountain springs to water from wells, while water from rivers was the least desirable. The temperature of the hot water is crucial for making good tea. In the text, terms like “eyes of fish and crabs” in water-heating and “grain patterns and crabs’ eyes” are most likely indicators of water temperature.[[129]](#footnote-140) The authors suggested that hot water should be judged by “the rapid consecutive bouncing of eyes of fish and crabs.”[[130]](#footnote-141) It is clear that they consulted the works of Lu Yu and Cai Xiang in this respect. This metaphor might refer to the bubbles generated from boiling the water. Appendix II shows the shape of the bubbles in the water at different temperatures in one of our water-boiling experiments.[[131]](#footnote-142) From approximately 35°C to 60°C, there are only tiny bubbles. From 60°C to 85°C, there are more bubbles, and they become larger, and the size of the bubbles can be compared to that of the eyes of fish and crabs. (The fish and crabs in question are most probably freshwater fish and crabs found in inland waters in China.) At this temperature range, the small bubbles appear and vanish quickly and do not remain long, while larger bubbles can stay for a longer time. Increasing the water temperature to about 90–95°C, the bubbles rise rapidly and continuously. At 97°C, when the water is not far from the boiling point, the bubbles are much larger than the size of fish eyes. We may surmise that when the authors of the *Daguan Treatise* spoke about “rapid consecutive bouncing of eyes of fish and crabs,” they may have been referring to water heated to 80–90°C. The authors also suggested that a little new water be added when the water becomes old (too hot). The water thus mixed would be used after re-heating it for a while. In summary, the authors did not favour water at boiling point. Instead, the most appropriate temperature of water to make tea was in the 80–90°C range.

Lu Yu and Zhang Youxin of the Tang dynasty, as well as Ye Qingchen and Ouyang Xiu of the Northern Song, all discussed what type of water would be the best to make tea. During the Tang dynasty, Lu Yu argued that mountain water was the best, river water was the second, and well water was the least preferred.[[132]](#footnote-143) He also proposed an ideal water temperature range for making tea, using the fish eyes analogy. Although Lu Yu’s method of making tea was different from that of the Song period, he laid the foundation for theorising the use of water. Zhang Youxin, Ye Qingchen, and Ouyang Xiu wrote about waters from different regions and listed their favourites from among these regional waters,[[133]](#footnote-144) but did not specify the water temperature. Only Cai Xiang, in his *Records of Tea,* mentioned the difficulty of controlling water temperature in making tea.

The *Daguan Treatise* authors wanted to distinguish themselves from the famous tea writers of previous generations. Their focus on water quality implied that mountain and well water from any region could be used to make tea, just as long as the water was pure, light, and clean, with a lingering sweetness after the initial astringency. This new analytical approach to water for brewing tea overturned the approach focusing on the water from specific regions.The *Daguan Treatise* authors thus liberated tea makers to use water from their own regions. This empowering act enabled scholar-artists to promote their tea, thus strengthening their connection with the local community with the help of tea and local water.

**The appearance of the tea**

Tea appreciation means much more than tasting it. Tea appreciation requires the tea drinker to enjoy tea with the four senses of taste, sight, smell, and touch. Multiple layers of cultural values are also embedded in the proper appreciation of tea. The *Daguan Treatise* authors were the first to set up a complete tea-making procedure and theorise and standardise the terminology for the aesthetic appreciation of tea (Appendix III). Colour and shape are the two main focal areas in visual appreciation.

In the “Tipping” (“*Dian*”) chapter, the *Daguan Treatise* authors described their preferred method for making tea with the term *diancha*. This character *dian* should be understood as *tipping*.[[134]](#footnote-145) The “*dian*” in *diancha* implies a change followed by a rapid return to the original position. When people performed the *diancha*, as described in the *Daguan Treatise*, they used an ewer to pour water into a tea bowl. They briefly lowered the spout of the ewer, pouring in just a tiny amount of water. They would then quickly right the ewer and its spout back to the level position so that the rest of the water remained in the ewer. They would repeat this action several times. Consequently, *diancha* can be translated as “tipping tea” or “tea-tipping,” as it implies the tea maker’s single action of rapidly pouring a light, thin stream of hot water into the bowl. As described in the Daguan Treatise, a practised tea maker would repeat this action of “tipping [hot water into the] tea” and whisking the tea paste with hot water in seven stages until the tea generated a surface foam.

The *Daguan Treatise* is the first text to propose and standardise the seven stages of water pouring and tea whisking in the tea-tipping process.[[135]](#footnote-146) The text focuses primarily on the colour and consistency of the tea foam as it is stirred up by whisking the tea paste with the water each time it is poured into the bowl, stating that the balanced control of the hand over the whisk is significant because a loss of balance would ruin the colour and texture of the foam. The term “water’s feet” (*shuijiao*) was used to refer to incomplete coverage of the surface of the tea by the foam. My experiments demonstrated that if the tea is not correctly whisked, the foam produced does not last or cover the entire surface of the tea (Fig. 1.3 and Fig. 1.4). The reason is that when the tea maker uses old water (water that is too hot) or when the movements of his fingers and wrist are not coordinated, the porridge-like surface (*zhoumian*, which means the surface foam) of the tea does not coagulate, and the “power” of the tea fizzles out. Although the “mist and cloud” (*wuyun*) spread, it is likely that “water’s feet” will emerge.

The general tea-tipping process, according to our reading, is as follows (see also Appendix III):[[136]](#footnote-147)

In order to set up the “foundation” of the tea’s [foamy] surface, a tea maker has to gently tip an appropriate amount of water into the bowl containing the tea powder and mix to produce the tea paste. Then he whisks the tea paste and gradually strengthens the power [of the tea]. Once the tea maker has stirred up the foam well, [the result] is like the fermentation of the yeast of the sprout, the stars, and the moon. [We are not sure how the metaphors of stars and the moon are applied to the foam, but we know that the first whisking produces favourable conditions for the creation of the surface foam and prevents the appearance of the “water’s feet”.]

The second pouring of hot water should circumscribe the tea surface once. [The tea maker] must pour quickly and then stop decisively, all without disturbing the surface of the tea. If the tea maker whisks the tea energetically, the colour will spread, and the tea will resemble a cascade of pearl beads.

The tea maker needs to use the same amount of hot water in the third pouring, but the whisking needs to be light and even. The “grain patterns and crabs’ eyes” will gradually emerge; by now, the tea will have assumed 60–70% of its final colour. [We postulate that the grain patterns and crabs’ eyes refer to the foam formation at this stage.]

Less hot water should be used in the fourth stage while the whisking slows down and generates “light clouds” (*qingyun*).

In the fifth stage, more hot water can be added, while the whisking should be light but penetrating. If [the foam] is still not completely formed, the tea maker should whisk the tea harder. He can slow down and moderate his efforts if the foam is completely formed. In this stage, “mist and snow” (*ai*, *xue*) are generated, and the tea reaches its final colour.

The tea maker does not do much in the sixth and seventh stages. If “milky dots” (*rudian*) are stirred up in the sixth stage, he should slowly whisk the tea and remove them by bursting the “milky” bubbles. The tea maker can stop at any time during the seventh stage. At this point, the “milky fog” (*rumu*) rises, spreads, and covers the entire tea surface as if “biting” the edge of the bowl. As compared to “water’s feet” that appear when the foam does not cover the entire surface, “biting” the edge of the bowl implies that the foam fully covers the surface. “Milky fog, light clouds, mist, and snow” imply that the desired tea colour is white or milky white.

The colour and shape of the tea foam receive far more attention in the “Tipping” chapter of the *Daguan Treatise* than in all previous tea texts. We know from Cai Xiang’s work that there were tea contests in the Fujian area in which people competed for the best colour and consistency of the tea foam, but the specific contest criteria and requirements were not laid out. There was no clear, detailed official rule to regulate the result of the teacontests until the publication of the *Daguan Treatise*.

The colour of tea was very important to the Northern Song tea makers too. Cai Xiang once claimed that the most desirable colour was white, the second best a greenish white, and the least desirable a yellowish white.[[137]](#footnote-148) The *Daguan Treatise* posits that variations in natural conditions and human efforts would lead to different colours. It prioritizes pure white, then greenish white, and greyish white. Yellowish white was considered the least desirable.[[138]](#footnote-149) It is evident that the *Daguan Treatise* authors followed Cai Xiang’s criteria for tea colour, while Cai’s standards might have originated from the Fujian local standards.

The Northern Song tea makers would have meticulously selected appropriate tea types, crushed and ground the tea powder, and determined the amount of tea powder and hot water to be used and the frequency and time of whisking. These variations change the tea colour, form, and consistency of the foam and influence how long the foam covering the tea surface lasts. The tea-tipping practices might have originated in Fujian, but the imperial court adopted them. Regarding the water temperature, Northern Song people did not have modern methods and instruments for measuring temperature, so they relied on visual clues of the number of bubbles and the rate at which they formed and burst. Cai Xiang complained in his *Records of Tea* that controlling the hot water was very difficult and that Cai and his fellow tea makers often had difficulty deciding when they needed to stop heating the water. The *Daguan Treatise* authors suggested that “the rapid consecutive bouncing of eyes of fish and crabs” in the water should indicate the desired water temperature range. However, as Cai noted, “the eyes of fish and crabs” bubbles are inside the ewer while the water is heating. Given that there were no translucent ewers in the Northern Song, how could one observe the bubbles?[[139]](#footnote-150) Consequently, the Northern Song tea makers continued to grapple with numerous variations. Making tea foam of the desired milky white colour and consistency spread over the entire bowl and lasting for a long time was a complex challenge. There were so many variables that nobody could consistently achieve the best result in tea contests.

**Taste, texture, and fragrance of the tea**

The taste, texture, and fragrance of tea were as significant to Northern Song tea drinkers as they were to those of the Southern Song. The art of appreciating a bowl of good tea in that period was a complex experience involving almost all the senses. Taste and texture were measured by *gan* (lingering sweetness after astringency or bitterness), *xiang* (fragrance in the mouth), *zhong* (heaviness or substance), and *hua* (smoothness).[[140]](#footnote-151) It seems strange that the *Daguan Treatise* authors mention *xiang* in their chapter on taste (“*Wei*”) despite having another chapter with the title “Fragrance” (“*Xiang*”). Therefore, the *xiang* in the “Taste” chapter probably differs from the *xiang* in the “Fragrance” chapter. The “Taste” chapter primarily concerns the taste or flavour of the tea, so we understand *xiang* in this chapter to be the fragrance lingering in the mouth. We interpret “heaviness” as the density and substance of the flavour and “smoothness” as the ease with which the tea passes into the mouth and down the throat. I recruited five student volunteers to taste tea prepared with the tea-tipping process and invited them to comment on its taste, texture, and fragrance using questionnaires. They did not know how the tea was prepared before the test.[[141]](#footnote-152) These blind tests yielded some interesting results.

I found that, depending on how it is done, the tea-tipping process can significantly alter both *gan* and *xiang*. Tea whisked frequently and for longer had less *gan* and *xiang* to the taste, possibly because both dissipated. The density and substance of the flavour, *zhong*, might be primarily determined by the amount of tea powder or water. Regarding the *hua*, the higher the whisking frequency was, the smoother the tea. These test results were subjective judgments made by the five volunteers in a climate-controlled room in the summer of 2020 in Hong Kong. Different tea drinkers in different circumstances will have different taste preferences. However, the frequency, time, and speed of whisking, as well as the amount and temperature of the water, among other factors, definitely need to be considered when preparing for tea-tipping.

Like Lu Yu’s time, when various tea-making methods existed, multiple methods became popular in different strata of society in the Northern Song period. In his *Classic of Tea*, Lu Yu criticised other tea drinkers for the “vulgar” practice of brewing tea with scallions, ginger, jujube, citrus peel, hawthorn, or mint to enrich the flavour.[[142]](#footnote-153) Tao Gu recorded a special tea brewed with lychee, pine cone, and duck feet in his book.[[143]](#footnote-154) Su Che wrote a poetic response to his older brother, Su Shi, criticising the vulgarity of northerners who brewed tea flavoured with salt, milk, peppercorns, and ginger.[[144]](#footnote-155) Putting aside the fact that Su Che’s principal intention was to ridicule northerners’ tea-drinking habits, his poem reveals that northerners sometimes adopted completely different methods of making tea rather than following the purist tea-making traditions of the South. Su Shi describes how commoners (older women and children) would add ginger and salt to brewing tea.[[145]](#footnote-156) Differences between northerners and southerners within the Northern Song empire, between the Chinese and non-Chinese, between elites and commoners, and even among the elites became symbols with which groups could differentiate themselves and form communities of like-minded individuals to the exclusion of others.

The authors of the *Daguan Treatise* represented one of the elite communities that prioritized the pure taste of tea. The taste of tea, in their opinion, should not be adulterated by adding any other ingredient. Variations in taste could derive from subtle differences in the treatment of the brewing water and the whisking technique but not from additions like ginger or salt.

The proper standard of fine tea, for them, was tea that preserved its pure fragrance. The *Daguan Treatise* authors argued that tea had a unique fragrance, and other aromatic substances, such as camphor (*longnaoxiang*) and musk (*shexiang*), could not be compared to the fragrance of tea. This argument followed Cai Xiang’s suggestions in the *Records of Tea* that a Fujian local would never mix camphor with tea paste for fear that the camphor would overpower the tea.[[146]](#footnote-157) Cai also advised tea makers to avoid adding other aromatic herbs to preserve the pure tea fragrance. Cai reiterated Lu Yu’s position because both wanted to maintain the tea’s pure taste and fragrance. The *Daguan Treatise* authors followed these preferences and rejected all other alternative tea-making styles. We have to note, however, that these preferences and inclinations were limited to one group of tea drinkers. Other groups advocated for the addition of aromatic substances to the tea. For example, makers of tribute tea would habitually mix camphor with tea paste.[[147]](#footnote-158) In brewing and whisking the tea, rare fruits and aromatic herbs would also contribute to the fragrance that pervaded tea gatherings.

We should note that the *Daguan Treatise* authors created two new categories of tea appreciation. First, the fragrance/*xiang* mentioned in the “Fragrance” chapter most probably refers to the fragrance that infuses the air, distinct from the fragrance that lingers in the mouth. In the “Fragrance” chapter, the authors described the rapid diffusion of fragrance that soon follows the preparation of tea in the bowl and how the fragrance, in turn, pleasantly evokes the coming of autumn.[[148]](#footnote-159) The authors separated these two kinds of *xiang* and created a new standard of appreciating the fragrance in both the mouth and the air. Second, the authors emphasized the texture of the tea foam, which was to be drunk along with the tea. The milky white foam stirred up in the tea-tipping process resembles fog, mist, and clouds. The foam “bites” the bowl’s edge and covers the entire surface of the tea. The thick tea foam and the *zhong* and *hua* sensations introduced Northern Song tea drinkers to a very different sensory experience that was only attainable to tea drinkers who had mastered the tea-tipping method. The *Daguan Treatise* authors emphasized that one should drink the tea only once it has obtained the qualities of lightness, purity, floating, and blending (*qing qing fu he*). This probably means that the tea is light and pure with no sediment because the tea maker has thoroughly whisked the tea paste with water. The foam floats to the top but blends flawlessly with the tea below. The texture of the foam, though the *Daguan Treatise* does not devote a chapter to it, was one of the principal concerns of the authors. They attempted to create innovative categories and standards for tea appreciation.

**Special functions of tea utensils in the tea-tipping process**

The tea makers required special tea utensils in the tea-tipping process. Lu Yu proposed a set of utensils in his *Classic of Tea*, but since tea-making using the Tang method was so different from that of the Song period, Lu Yu’s descriptions of utensils were not helpful to the Northern Song tea makers. The Northern Song authors described in detail the advantages and disadvantages of the materials used in making sieves, crushers, bowls, whisks, ewers, and ladles. The success or failure of the tea-tippingprocess rested on scrupulous attention to these details.

**Bowl and colour**

Having conducted the simulations of the tea-tipping method, we now have a better understanding of why dark and blue glazed porcelain bowls were favoured in the *Daguan Treatise*. Cai Xiang suggested using dark glazed bowls made in Jian’an (called *Jianzhan* or Jian bowls), especially those with a hare’s fur pattern because the thick walls of these bowls would retain heat (Fig. 1.6). The *Daguan Treatise* authors followed suit. Cai also stressed that bowls from other regions with thinner walls or a purple glaze were less desirable. Moreover, he argued that green or white glazed bowls were less suited to the purpose.

When placing the tea powder, usually green, into the dark bowl, the Northern Song tea maker could easily see how much he had put in because of the colour contrast between the vessel and the powder. Next, he would tip a little water into the bowl and make the tea paste. As he tipped water into the bowl little by little and started whisking, the white foam that was stirred up would also stand out against the colour of the bowl. We recall the literary descriptions in the *Daguan Treatise,* where the foam is described with metaphors such as stars, the moon, clouds, mist, snow, and the milky fog. These descriptions were possible only if the tea and bowl colours contrasted sharply. The drinker would immediately notice the white foam when a bowl was presented to the drinker, with the tea foam covering the entire bowl surface. Then, with every sip he took, the tea line would retreat down the bowl, and more of the bowl patterns would come into view. The tea maker and drinker would thus interact with the bowl in various ways. The former, in particular, would use such interactions to amuse and entertain the drinker. We can well imagine how the foam and the patterns of the three Southern Song *yōhen tenmoku* bowls in Fig. 1.7, albeit of a later date, would match perfectly in the eyes of a Southern Song tea drinker.

**Ewers and subtle sensations**

While Cai Xiang and the *Daguan Treatise* authors thought that ewers made of gold or silver were best, emphasis on gold and silver ewers reflected the inclination of the cultural elites to show off their power and wealth. Silver ions and nanoparticles would have reduced the bacterial content of the tea, but it is doubtful whether tea drinkers could distinguish water with or without silver ions.[[149]](#footnote-160) Blind tests conducted in the future may perhaps help answer this question.

On the other hand, the spout of an ewer is of paramount importance to the tea-tipping process. The *Daguan Treatise* authors were well aware of this feature and diligently applied themselves to discussing the benefits of the appropriate spout for an ewer. They theorised in the text that the mouth of the spout, or the nozzle, should be large and vertically oriented so that the hot water could be poured out in a powerful but tightly controlled stream. The bottom of the spout, which is linked to the body of the ewer, was to be round, small, and steep so that the tea maker could have proper control of the amount of hot water to be poured out and would not splash the foam. The authors explained that if the hot water was poured out powerfully and precisely, and if the speed was carefully controlled, the tea/foam surface would remain intact (i.e., no water’s feet would form). This is one of the most noteworthy observations, backed by numerous actual practices, in the *Daguan Treatise,* providing guidance for tea makers in identifying the most appropriate ewers and tipping water.

From our simulations, it is clear that when a tea maker lacks adequate control of the flow of hot water to be tipped into the bowl, the water disturbs the surface foam. There should be neither too little nor too much hot water. A tea maker needs to carefully control the amount of hot water with fine hand-eye coordination. Since tipping is very quick, and the tea maker has to pull the ewer rapidly back to a horizontal position to stop the flow of water, the shape of the ewer spout is critical, and the tea maker must gain a subtle mastery of the tipping action. The two ewers shown in Figs. 1.8 and 1.9, in the collection of the Hunan Provincial Museum, feature an interesting nozzle design. Unlike the spouts of ordinary ewers, they are not straight. The nozzle is curved, and the part linked to the body of the ewer is steep. Their spouts are relatively long and circular, thin and slender, meaning the water poured out would also have taken on a fine flow. This spout design gave the tea maker better control of the water flow.

Regulated tea practices and politics of the tea culture

Huizong and his subordinates regulated the tea-tipping process with a complete set of procedures. They laid down standards concerning the colour, fragrance, taste, and texture of the tea and the utensils to be used. The *Daguan Treatise* was a politicised text focusing on the role of tea in establishing a new elite culture. Emperor Huizong’s appreciation for tea and other cultural pursuits situated the royal elites at the centre of the state.[[150]](#footnote-161) The *Daguan Treatise* authors gave their tea standards and preferences high political status to which they wanted the rest of society to subscribe. They institutionalized tea-making practices and tea-drinking preferences through the dissemination of the text.

**Fragrances and aromatic substances**

Appreciating the fragrances of tea, flowers, food, and aromatic substances was part of high culture during the Northern Song period. This appreciation of refined fragrances went hand in hand with tea culture. The *Daguan Treatise* stresses the importance of tea’s pure, unadulterated fragrance. This emphasis underlines that the “vulgar act” of blending tea with other aromatic substances, such as camphor and musk, must have been a widespread practice.[[151]](#footnote-162) Enjoying the fragrances that emanated from the whisked tea and the burning of aromatic substances was an everyday activity among the Northern Song cultural elites.

It is difficult to study how people enjoyed these ephemeral fragrances because very little textual and material evidence is left to us. We are usually reduced to relying on synaesthesia-based analogies, metaphors, and implications to describe smells, but related textual sources of olfactory experiences are not as plentiful as descriptions of visual experiences. Actual aromatic substances from the Northern Song are scarce, and whatever we find cannot be used today. Even if we were to burn them, the fragrance obtained would be different from that in the Northern Song because of their age. Inevitably, we have to rely heavily on textual descriptions of aromatic substances. There are two main types of sources available – the manuals of aromatic substances(*xiangpu*)that are devoted to the descriptions of types, sources, and applications of aromatic substances and the fragmented descriptions of aromatic substances in medical texts.

The Northern Song period saw the emergence of the *xiangpu* genre for the first time in Chinese textual history. Ding Wei composed the *Legends of the Heavenly Aromatic Substances* (*Tianxiang zhuan*; hereafter “*Legends*”), which laid the foundation for the composition and structure of later *xiangpu*.[[152]](#footnote-163) Ding reported on the customs of the places where he served as a government official. As the fiscal commissioner (*zhuanyun shi*) of Fujian, Ding was in charge of producing the so-called “Large Dragon-phoenix Tea” (*Dalongfengcha)*, the tea-camphor mixture mentioned in Cai Xing’s *Records of Tea*.[[153]](#footnote-164) We do not know whether Ding invented this mixture, but we can ascertain that it was a widespread practice among certain tea drinkers. We can speculate that certain members of the royal family and political elites welcomed this practice too. This is because tribute tea was offered to members of the royal family, distributed to high elites, and enjoyed by all. Ding’s preference for aromatic substances originated here. During the reign of Renzong, Ding Wei was banished to Ya Xian on Hainan Island, an area of primary importance in producing aromatic substances. He composed *Legends* during his sojourn there.

The original edition of Ding’s *Legends* has not survived butwas incorporated into Hong Chu’s *xiangpu*.[[154]](#footnote-165) Shen Li’s earlier work, prior to Hong’s *xiangpu,* was also devoted to studying aromatic substances.[[155]](#footnote-166) Hong’s *xiangpu* was, however, much more widely circulated and won him fame as an expert in aromatic substances. Hong Chu is of interest to us because of his relationship with Huang Tingjian, who formed part of one of the most famous scholar-artist communities. Hong, a nephew of Huang, was born in Jiangxi Nanchang[[156]](#footnote-167) and died in exile on Shamen Island. Huang and Hong were well-known experts in aromatic substances. After Hong, Ye Tinggui,[[157]](#footnote-168) Chen Jing,[[158]](#footnote-169) and others also wrote their *xiangpu*. Some of these texts have not survived, while others restated the content of previous works.

As for surviving material evidence, there are the actual aromatic substances and incense burners. Except for the well-documented substances, including those that archaeologists have excavated, we have no reliable method for dating aromatic substances. There are aromatic substances, such as musk skin from the Shōsō-in collection in Japan, which were documented to date to the eighth century.[[159]](#footnote-170)

The 1974 discovery of the remains of a Southern Song shipwreck in the Houzhu Harbor in Fujian Quanzhou yielded about 2400 kilograms of aromatic substances, including sandalwood (*tanxiang*, LPN: *Santali albi lignum*), tambac or aloe wood (*chenxiang*, LPN: *Aquilariae lignum resinatum*), frankincense (*ruxiang*, LPN: *Olibanum*), rosewood (*jiangzhenxiang*, LPN: *Lignum dalbergiae odoriferae*), and ambergris (*longdanxiang*).[[160]](#footnote-171) It is possible that the ship sank while transporting goods from Southeast Asia to Quanzhou. Fortunately, the shipwreck was buried in mud, slowing the oxidization process and preserving these otherwise perishable aromatic substances.[[161]](#footnote-172) They help us better understand the composition and use of aromatic substances in the Song period but do not diminish the importance of textual sources regarding how Song elites enjoyed the fragrances from the aromatic substances.

In *Legends*, Ding Wei describes the aromatic-substance burning practices of the Confucianists, Daoists, and Buddhists.[[162]](#footnote-173) The Buddhists burned aromatic substances to honour the descent of the Buddhas, while the Daoists burned them day and night in their rituals. Aromatic substances made of tambac, rosewood, frankincense, and camphor were mixed and burned to produce the fragrance.[[163]](#footnote-174) We know that Northern Song emperors and commoners in the Zhejiang and Fujian areas were devoutly religious, and the burning of aromatic substances in religious settings is unsurprising.[[164]](#footnote-175) What is more interesting here is how the elites used the burning of aromatic substances to enhance the culture of tea preparation and enjoyment.

Several aromatic substances were used by Chinese people from the archaic period to the Northern Song period. They had diverse origins, including domestic and exotic sources. The aromatic substances widely consumed in Northern Song China mainly came from Southeast Asia and the deep south of China, such as Hainan Island and Guangxi. Ding Wei traced the origins of the appreciation of floral fragrances to the Shang-Zhou periods,[[165]](#footnote-176) but these are more likely legends than reliable records. The enjoyment of fragrances from plant and animal sources seems to be a human universal. In Tang and Northern Song China, aromatic substances were used medically. Aromatic substances in the Shōsō-in collection, which might also have come from China and date to the eighth century, were found alongside medicine in the southern and western chambers of the Northern Storehouse.[[166]](#footnote-178) Historian Wang Huifang notes that the medical use of rosewood as *jiangzhenxiang* was first recorded in Tang Shenwei and others’ *Materia Medica*, while the use of sandalwood as *tanxiang*, tambac as *chenxiang*, and frankincense as *ruxiang* could be traced to Tao Hongjing’s (456-536) *Supplementary Notes of a Famous Medicinal Practitioner* (*Mingyi bielu*).[[167]](#footnote-179) Similarly to the case of tea, medical uses for aromatic substances were of secondary importance. The literary descriptions of the origins, identification, processing, and use of aromatic substances, along with the proper use of incense burners, were part of a complex cultural construction to appreciate aromatic substances.

Identification of the aromatic substances

Numerous types of aromatic substances were recorded in various *xiangpu*. Ding Wei’s *Legends* and Hong Chu’s *xiangpu* can be used to investigate how scholars identified aromatic substances. Ding categorised the plant-based aromatic substances into four types, *chenxiang*, *qianxiang* (a type of aromatic timber named “*qian*”), *shengjie* (“immaturely knotted”), and *huangshu* (“yellow and mature”).[[168]](#footnote-180) He also described the appearance of these aromatic substances, traced their origins, and elaborated on their features.[[169]](#footnote-181) Since textual descriptions of the fragrances of the substances had been very limited before his time, Ding had to utilise analogies and imaginative associations to refer to the features of the substances. These references signified the beginning of a long tradition of textual descriptions in the form of *xiangpu*. For example, Ding used the colour and gloss of a type of timber called “dark-patterned timber” and “yellow wax” to refer to the appearance of *chenxiang*. He cited other descriptions of *chenxiang* from indigenous people, such as “eyes of an ox,” “horns of an ox”, and “heads of chickens.”[[170]](#footnote-182) When he mentions the botanical origin of the *huangshu*, he indicates a tree with a trunk like a poplar and leaves like holly.

By citing the indigenous peoples’ descriptions, Ding showed how erudite he was. Another reason that Ding took the trouble to record these strange terms to describe aromatic substances was because he wanted to impress upon his readers their exotic provenance. Supporting evidence comes in two forms. First, there was a long history of the medicinal use of aromatic substances, as mentioned in the medical textual tradition.[[171]](#footnote-183) Lei Xiao and others, for example, mentioned *chenxiang* and musk in their medicinal processing practices.[[172]](#footnote-184) However, Ding did not consult this medicinal tradition. Second, describing the features of the aromatic substances in the form of animal parts conveyed a sense of exoticism and strangeness to the readers.[[173]](#footnote-185) Readers could imagine the plants without ever having seen them.

Ding emphasized the unique pleasures of enjoying aromatic substances. Just as the authors of the *Daguan Treatise* and others separated tea practices from the medical tradition. Ding also invented a “new” recreational tradition for using aromatic substances distinct from their medical use.[[174]](#footnote-186) For Ding and his followers, enjoying aromatic substances was as worthwhile and satisfying as enjoying tea. In this way, the tea and aromatic substances were “liberated” from the medicinal tradition and became objects of pleasure and enjoyment in their own right. Preparing and enjoying aromatic substances also became a cultural construct.

Despite the numerous medical texts he cited, Hong Chu’s *xiangpu* laid another essential foundation for the fragrance culture. Hong divided his *xiangpu* into four sections: “Categories of Fragrance,” “Peculiarities about Fragrance,” “Matters about Fragrance,” and “Methods of [Producing] Fragrance.” This division recalls Lu Yu’s, Cai Xiang’s, and Huizong’s construction of the cultural practices of enjoying tea, making the enjoyment of fragrances a sophisticated cultural act. The first two sections of Hong’s *xiangpu* list numerous aromatic substances from botanical or animal sources. The third and fourth sections, “Matters” and “Methods,” however, elaborate on ways to elevate the cultural status of fragrance enjoyment. Elegantly designed incense burners, fragrance pouches, fragrant beds, pavilions of four types of aromatic substance, and many other luxuriously decorated, fragrant objects all helped to heighten the enjoyment of fragrances. This is similar to tea appreciation, accompanied by beautifully decorated bowls, ewers, crushers, and other objects. The methods of producing aromatic substances appropriate for specific occasions are also stipulated. Readers of Hong’s *xiangpu* would know what fragrance to use in a given context. This set them apart from other elites who did not use fragrances as well as distinguishing them from the unwashed ordinary working people. A community of fragrance lovers was easily formed and this community would be more enduring because fragrance was a powerful cultural and physical marker.

Hong’s approach made aromatic substances available for daily cosmetic use and health products. Indeed, he cited historical and contemporary medical texts to support his claims about the medicinal functions of the substances, but he also indicated their every day, non-medicinal applications. When one has blurry eyes and an agitated heart, Hong would recommend camphor because it brightens the eyes and calms the heart.[[175]](#footnote-187) The medicinal functions of other substances, such as tambac and musk, were not considered powerful enough to cure serious illnesses.[[176]](#footnote-188) Like camphor, they were mainly indicated for masking foul odours, relieving nausea, and improving sleep. These uses are not powerfully medicinal. Instead, they reflected Hong’s perspective that aromatic substances were products to improve their users’ standard of living. It is no wonder that his *xiangpu*, probably a health guidebook, became one of this genre’s most widely circulated texts.

Formulae for mixing aromatic substances

The guidebooks of aromatic substances gave scholars the formulae they needed to mix the substances to produce unique fragrances suited to various occasions and contexts. For example, in his *xiangpu*, Hong Chu indicates the “Method of Fumigating the Imperial Garments of the King of Shu” and the “Method of Scenting the Canopy of Li Yu, Ruler of the South of the River.”[[177]](#footnote-189) He specified the types and quantity of ingredients to mix in these two entries. For the “Shu King’s Method,” one needed to mix tambac, sandalwood, musk, and other aromatic substances (one tael for each item), grind them into powder, mix the powder with honey, and refine the mixture slightly.[[178]](#footnote-190) For the “Li Yu’s Method,” one would grind one tael of tambac and ten pears in a silver container, then steam it three times until the pear juice dries up.[[179]](#footnote-191) After drying and processing, the mixed aromatic substances were ready for use. These drying and processing treatments, similar to tea, originated from procedures used to prepare herbal medicines.

In *Lei’s Treatise*, Lei Xiao and others provided clear guidelines for selecting and processing aromatic substances.[[180]](#footnote-192) For example, they indicated that withered tambac does not make the grade. Tambac that sinks to the water’s bottom ranks higher, but if it sinks and floats in the middle of the water, it is of a lower grade.[[181]](#footnote-193) During the seven hundred years from Lei Xiao to Chen Shiwen, medical texts came up with more precise guidelines for selecting, processing, and preserving aromatic substances. Chen Shiwen and his colleagues in the *Imperial Pharmacy* listed some aromatic substances mixed with other herbs to produce medicine and some substances consumed in pure form.[[182]](#footnote-194) The aromatic substances consumed in pure form were usually ground into powder, mixed with honey, and burned. This practice followed the established tradition of processing and preserving medicine.

If properly treated, the aromatic substances could be preserved for longer and retain their medicinal properties and, most importantly, their fragrance. By recording these treatments in the *xiangpu*, Hong and his contemporaries made the formulae easily accessible. Fragrance lovers could follow the procedures to produce their own versions of fragrances to impress others.

Incense burners, containers, and use of aromatic substances

The methods of mixing aromatic substances were relatively simple, and the ingredients were easily accessible to the elites of the Northern Song Empire. Elegant utensils were essential to the fragrance culture, and Hong and his contemporaries listed many types. Incense burners are, of course, the most important.

The incense burner has a long history. *Boshanlu* incense burners were very popular in the Western and Eastern Han dynasties. Northern Song designs were based on these burners.[[183]](#footnote-196) Northern Song incense burners were usually ceramic or made of bronze, but glazed porcelain burners were by no means rare.[[184]](#footnote-197) A green and white porcelain burner in the shape of a lotus dating to around 1061 (Fig. 1.10) was excavated among the foundations of an iron pagoda at Hubei Dangyang Yuquan. When it was unearthed, there was still incense ash in the burner,[[185]](#footnote-198) a sign that this burner was actually used by the living and was not simply a burial item. The lotus design of the Yuquan burner was probably drawn from the canon of Buddhist lotus designs. Designers of later generations referenced the gilt silver and bronze incense burners excavated at the Tang dynasty sites of the Temple of Dharma Doors and the Temple of Dharma Kings in Henan and Shaanxi.[[186]](#footnote-199)

Food, flowers, and other materials also yield pleasing fragrances. Fragrance lovers could easily mix and blend the different aromatic substances and produce their own versions of fragrance. *Li Yu’s Method* tells us that fresh fruits, such as pears, and other botanicals could be mixed with tambac.

At the bottom of *Qin Listening* is a container in the shape of a *lì*-container on the rock with a twig of blossoming jasmine inside.[[187]](#footnote-200) One can imagine the pleasant fragrance that pervades the air.[[188]](#footnote-201) We do not know what types of aromatic substances were used in the burner in *Qin Listening*. Our limitations in describing olfactory sensations aside, we can postulate that the mix of jasmine and burning fragrances must have been unique and pleasing. One of the non-medical functions of popular aromatic substances at the time was to repel insects that might otherwise have bothered the *qin* player and his two guests. The *qin* player succeeds as the host of the gathering in offering his guests a unique sensory experience. The *lì*-container on the rock could well be a container for aromatic substances.

The scent of the burning aromatic substances can also be used to fumigate various objects. The “Shu King’s Method” mentions how the substances were mixed but not how they were used in practice. In another entry, “Method of Fumigating with Scent”, Hong describes the detailed process of fumigating clothes.[[189]](#footnote-203) An incense cage allowed scented fumes to emerge from its slats. Clothes were put on top of the cage, while a jar of boiling water was placed beneath the cage. An aromatic cake was then suspended on top of the boiling water. The steam would heat the aromatic substances, and the scent would rise to perfume the clothes. The clothes would then be folded and put away to be worn the next day. The scent would linger for several days, according to the text.[[190]](#footnote-205) In his notes, the Southern Song poet, Lu You, recalls a practice in the Xuanhe royal palace of grinding powder of ambergris and tambac and mixing them with wax to be turned into candles. Hundreds of these candles were lit, providing light and releasing a pleasing aroma that would pervade the palace.[[191]](#footnote-206) Another anecdote from the same source attests to women of noble families holding two aromatic balls holding aromatic balls entering the royal palace onboard ox-carts. Their maidservants would also stand beside them on the carts holding aromatic balls. The aroma would linger along the route of the carts for miles. According to the accounts, even the dust and the ground would become scented.[[192]](#footnote-207) Even though we cannot validate the authenticity of these anecdotes, they reflect how people were using aromatic substances at the time.

The perfumed bodies and clothes of the royalty, officials, and other members of political elites must have distinguished them sharply from the commoners and been a source of coherence among the elite community.[[193]](#footnote-208) Fragrance-loving readers of the various *xiangpu* were scholars, officials, and members of the political and cultural elites. Every time they burned aromatic substances, they reiterated their elite identity and reasserted their status through the use of these powerful olfactory symbols.

Narratives concerning the burning of aromatic substances

The hosts who provided the fragrances and the guests who enjoyed them probably possessed shared cultural knowledge. The preparation and enjoyment of aromatic substances was a cultural construct led by officials, royalty, and cultural elites. They established standards for the preparation and use of aromatic substances and promoted them widely through the publication of the *xiangpu*. Aromatic substances had mild medicinal functions, such as removing feelings of nausea and improving sleep. However, their cultural functions were more impressive and comparable to tea.[[194]](#footnote-209) Similar to the cultural construction of tea in the textual and painting traditions, the aromatic substances were the subject of remarkable narratives. Scholars created discourses on how aromatic substances were prepared and used in the texts. In this way, they controlled the discursive power to signify the cultural functions of aromatic substances. The *xiangpu* also offered guidelines for fragrance lovers on identifying and purchasing appropriate aromatic substances. The paintings depicting the aromatic substances conveyed overt and covert narratives about how the substances were used to connect elites of the same community.

***Qin* music and prosody**

This section concerns the cultural construction of *qin* music and the prosody of literary works as music. Music, tea, and fragrance are brought together based on the sources discussed in the preceding sections. It is a common scholarly consensus that *qin* music was an important musical genre in the Northern Song period, but modern scholars rarely treat rhymes and melodies in literary works as a type of music.[[195]](#footnote-210) In the following paragraphs, I focus specifically on the rhythmic and melodic properties of the poems and show how the rhyme and tonal patterns of the poems reveal how Northern Song elites formalised music as a culturally constructed product. I also explore how cultural elites pursued the ideals of production and appreciation of music that accompanied the cultures of tea and fragrance.

*Qin*

**Motivations**

In the eyes of Northern Song political elites, music was produced for different reasons. To the emperors, whose primary concern was maintaining their rulership, music was believed to cultivate a compliant mindset in their subjects and was, naturally, incorporated into their political agendas. Musical instruments were thus constantly modified to fit their reform policies. The *qin* and bronze bells were the two types of musical instruments that most captured the attention of the Northern Song emperors. After the techniques of tempering bronze bells to achieve the twelve equal semi-tones of the chromatic scale (*shierlü*) were lost in the third century BCE, and before Prince Zhu Zaiyu of the Ming dynasty successfully demonstrated the relationship between mathematical and chromatic scales in the 16th century, the chromatic scales were constantly changing in China; musical theorists were obsessed with the mathematical relationship between string lengths of the *qin* and musical intervals.[[196]](#footnote-211) In the Northern Song, they erroneously believed that chromatic scales could be calculated on similar lines as Pythagorean ratios. Until the 16th century, the twelve equal semi-tones of chromatic scale were never successfully obtained. Before this, the custom was to constantly adjust the tonality of musical instruments to produce absolute pitch. Bronze bells and stringed *qin* were among the instruments that could produce absolute pitch and were often used to tune other instruments. A traditional belief traced to the compilation of the *Annals of* *Lü Buwei* in approximately 239 BCE claimed that absolute pitches and the “perfect” (equal temperament) chromatic scale were associated with cosmic harmony, seasons, weather, agricultural cycles, and political stability.[[197]](#footnote-212) This belief prevailed as an imperial ideology in China; the Northern Song emperors would spare no effort to attain the “perfect” chromatic scale to achieve political stability. In this way, bronze bells, stringed *qin*, arithmetic, and measurement were harnessed to produce “harmonious” music.

Adjusting the length of strings on instruments was believed to be useful in adjusting incorrectly calculated musical intervals of the chromatic scale. Before Huizong’s time, the basic unit of measurement was the length of an ear of millet.[[198]](#footnote-213) Lining up a certain number of ears of millet one by one determined the length of a string, which eventually defined the musical intervals. It was found that plucking various ratios of the lengths of the string set by positioning the bridges of the *qin*, such as 1:2, 2:3, or 3:4, would produce pleasing intervals. Ratios other than these intervals would be wrong because they could not be calculated easily. These issues became much more complicated. The theorists then went through the calculation repeatedly. In Huizong’s time, along with Cai Jing, the musical theorist Wei Hanjin proposed using the lengths of Emperor Huizong’s fingers as basic units of measurement.[[199]](#footnote-215) The length of an ear of millet was believed to be from nature, and so too were the dimensions of the august body parts of the Son of Heaven. At first, the measurements of Huizong’s fingers were not revealed to the musicians because a servant of Huizong thought that details about the emperor’s body should not be public knowledge.[[200]](#footnote-216) To safeguard this secret, incorrect measurements were given to the theorists, who failed to attain the pleasing intervals they had hoped for. Eventually, Huizong’s actual finger lengths were revealed, and pleasing intervals were claimed to be attained.

Since the music chaptersof the *History of the Song Dynasty* (hereafter *Song History*) are primarily concerned with the political implications of music and choreography,[[201]](#footnote-217) the processes of the adjustment of the string lengths and ratios are not specified and are difficult to reconstruct. It is clear that Northern Song musical theorists would have attempted to calculate the musical intervals of the chromatic scale and modify the related musical instruments accordingly.

The *Dasheng* (Grand Brightness) symphony was composed against this background.[[202]](#footnote-218) It is recorded in *Song History* that several cranes flew to the royal court when the *Dasheng* symphony was performed. Accordingly, Huizong issued an imperial decree to stress the importance of recruiting talented scholars from the lower strata of society. The emphasis on recruiting talent was considered, by Huizong and his ministers, essential to state harmony. A connection was then made between the new musical standards and cultivating and recruiting new talent for the state. In this way, *qin* music was imbued with rich political meaning.[[203]](#footnote-219)

Since talent recruitment was associated with *qin* music in the eyes of the emperors, *qin* players accordingly emphasized their cultivation of virtues.[[204]](#footnote-220) Morality, virtues, and high ethical standards were associated with *qin* playing techniques and knowledge about the *qin*. Scholarly records of *qin* players pay special attention to their virtues. For example, the *Qin History* (*Qinshi*), compiled by Zhu Changwen in 1084, provides a list of famous and virtuous *qin* players.[[205]](#footnote-221) Zhu himself was an excellent *qin* player and a *jinshi* degree holder, but he did not serve in the government and shied away from holding any office for thirty years. When he was forty-seven years old, he was recommended by Su Shi and others to become a professor and began his short civil service.[[206]](#footnote-222) In the “Narratives of History” (“*Xushi*”) chapter of *Qin History*, Zhu lamented that he wanted to compose biographies of *qin* players who were recluses waiting to be enlisted in the government.[[207]](#footnote-223) In the preface, he stated that the publication of the *Qin History* came at an opportune moment because the dynasty was experiencing a period of relative peace and social harmony, making it a suitable opportunity to compose music and establish rituals.[[208]](#footnote-224) Zhu’s promotion of virtuous *qin* players, who were also capable scholars and potential government officials, correlated with the emperors’ desires to recruit talent.

**Appreciating *qin* music**

I will now describe the features of the *qin* to explore deeper meanings embedded in the appreciation of *qin* music. The materials used to make the *qin* determine the volume and tonality of the music. Northern Song zither-lovers possessed a certain degree of knowledge about the *qin*. Since *qin* music is not loud and is thus appropriate for intimate concerts, listeners likely had ample opportunities to observe a host’s *qin*. The sound of the *qin* was not the only thing to be appreciated. The painted lacquer, jade or metal decorations, silk strings, and other features of the *qin* were all appreciated.

A Northern Song player would have preferred playing a Tang *qin*, although *qin* made during the Northern Song period were plentiful. Tang *qin*, especially those made by the Lei family of Sichuan, called “*Leiqin*”, were highly prized by scholars. Members of the Lei family, such as Lei Wei, Lei Yan, and Lei Jue, were said to produce top-quality instruments, but these artisans did not leave much in the way of historical records.[[209]](#footnote-225) The Lei family enjoyed high status in the *qin* player community and left many exemplary practices for Northern Song *qin* lovers to emulate. For this reason, a discussion of the *qin* played and appreciated by Northern Song scholars must be preceded by an investigation of Tang-era *qin*.

Since there are no surviving *Leiqin*,[[210]](#footnote-226) we must rely solely on textual evidence. First, *Leiqin* were expensive in the Northern Song period. Ouyang Xiu lamented that he could not afford a *Leiqin* until he was promoted to a higher rank in government.[[211]](#footnote-227) Second, the acoustic properties of the *Leiqin* were considered of exceptional quality. Su Shi collected a *Leiqin* with inscriptions noting that the Lei family made it in the tenth year of the Kaiyuan reign of Tang Xuanzong, namely 722, in Yazhou in Sichuan.[[212]](#footnote-228) Su commented on three unique features of the *Leiqin* – 1) the space between any two tuning keys on the right side of the *qin* was too narrow to put a finger between them; 2) the reeled silk strings could not be set loose; 3) the sound coming out from the sound holes is trapped inside the body of the *qin* and therefore has a lingering quality.[[213]](#footnote-230) These details may reveal qualities about the *Leiqin* but are insufficient to identify a true *Leiqin*.

There are very few surviving Tang *qin* because the wood and silk strings of the *qin* are perishable. However, some well-preserved *qin* can still be played and generate satisfactory sounds after being given new silk strings. The Northern Storehouse of the Shōsō-in held aromatic substances and medicine in the southern and western chambers, but its front and central chambers were used to house luxuriously decorated musical instruments, including well-preserved *qin*.[[214]](#footnote-232) It is claimed that the *qin* in the collection date to the eighth century. If so, they would likely resemble the *qin* used by Northern Song players.

Would a Northern Song musician play on a *qin* that was made in the Song period but imitated the design of a Tang *qin*? A *qin* named “Withered Wood, Dragon’s Roar” (“*Kumu longyin”*, hereafter “Dragon’s Roar *qin*”) in the Freer Gallery collection in Washington, D.C., has attracted much attention (Fig. 1.11). Based on their expertise, Wang Shixiang, a connosseur of *qin* music, dates it to the Tang/Song while another expert, Zheng Minzhong, dates it to the middle Tang period (approximately the eighth century).[[215]](#footnote-233) Yang Yuanzheng identified an ink inscription on an infrared photograph of the inner side of the belly of the *qin*.[[216]](#footnote-234) The ink inscription points to the year 1009, which may refer to the year of production, repair, or collection of the *qin*. We can ascertain that the *qin* existed before 1009. Without any information, this is the best dating result we can obtain (scientific analysis of the wood would not help much). The pegs and strings currently on the Dragon’s Roar *qin* are replacements of a later date,[[217]](#footnote-235) while the black lacquer was possibly applied when the *qin* was freshly made. The striated surface of the lacquer, as seen in the top sub-image in Fig. 1.11, caused by different tensions within layers of the painted lacquer, attests to its long history. There are usually thirteen *hui*-markers made of jade or metal, placed in thirteen sunken nodes next to the strings on the top of the *qin*. The Dragon’s Roar *qin* has only twelve, made of polished metal; the eleventh marker was lost, and in its place, only a sunken node is left behind.[[218]](#footnote-236)

The main body of the Dragon’s Roar *qin* consists of two wooden layers. Zheng Minzhong and Yang Yuanzheng have identified a part of the upper layer as being made from Cunninghamia (China-fir).[[219]](#footnote-237) Usually, the two wooden layers of a *qin* are glued together.[[220]](#footnote-238) However, the two layers of the Dragon’s Roar qin were joined using bamboo pins.[[221]](#footnote-239) Fig. 1.12 shows a CT scan of the *qin* showing the inner structure of the two attached wooden layers.[[222]](#footnote-240) The hole in the bottom layer to the left of the CT sub-image in Fig. 1.12 is one of the two sound holes underneath the *qin* called dragon’s pool (*longchi*) or phoenix’s pond (*fengzhao*). When a string is plucked, the vibration of the string and wooden layers creates resonance within the space between the tightly interlocked layers. The sound created emerges through the sound holes. Given this delicate structure, the volume of the sound produced by a *qin* is relatively low. Listeners need to sit close to the player to appreciate the music. Being so close to the player allows listeners to take in the decorations of the *qin* while listening to the music. The elaborate decorations of the *qin*, including the silk strings, the *hui*-markers made of either glittering metal or jade, the jade keys and pegs, and the shiny black lacquer on the body of the *qin* delighted listeners with a visual spectacle to complement the music.

Other surviving *qin* that date to the Northern Song period are few and far between. At the end of the twentieth century, Zheng Minzhong identified some Song *qin*,[[223]](#footnote-241) but Yang Yuanzheng contended in 2020 that only three extant *qin* can be conclusively dated to between 750 and 1000. If we count the Dragon’s Roar *qin*, the number goes up to four.[[224]](#footnote-242) From Zheng’s expert point of view, Song *qin* can be divided into three categories – *qin* made in official workshops, those produced in commoners’ workshops, and those of Tang provenance.[[225]](#footnote-243) For our purposes, it is interesting to observe that the presence of Song *qin* that imitated the Tang *qin* shows that the latter were very popular among Northern Song *qin* lovers.[[226]](#footnote-244)

**Q*in* music**

In his 1940 book, R. H. van Gulik described the tonality of the *qin* music as follows: “The music of the ancient lute as a solo instrument is widely different from all other sorts of Chinese music: it stands entirely alone…each note is an entity in itself, calculated to evoke in the mind of the hearer a special reaction.”[[227]](#footnote-245) The volume of the *qin* soundis relatively low, as compared to other instruments such as the *se*- and *zheng*-zithers. In van Gulik’s term, *qin* music is “not primarily melodical”.[[228]](#footnote-246) How did *qin* music actually sound to the ears of the Northern Song scholar-artists?

Reconstructing a playable *qin* melody from before the Ming dynasty is nearly impossible. First, *qin* dating to before the Ming dynasty are extremely rare; most of them have lost their original silk strings and other essential paraphernalia. Where the wooden plates used to make the *qin* have survived, the tonality has undoubtedly changed. Moreover, the complex notation of *qin* music is difficult for today’s musicians to understand.[[229]](#footnote-247) Earlier tablatures indicate the fingering techniques or finger movements for playing the *qin*. One of the earliest surviving tablatures is the well-known manuscript of the *Solitary Orchid in the Mode of Towering Rock*, which was created sometime in the seventh century and is now housed at the Tōkyō National Museum.[[230]](#footnote-248) Scholars have described this tablature as using full-ideogram notation (*wenzipu*) because it records pitches and finger movements in prose but does not notate rhythm or duration.[[231]](#footnote-249) Modern *qin* players have attempted to reconstruct a playable *qin* melody from this manuscript and others.[[232]](#footnote-250) These reconstructions rely partially on the players’ interpretations because the tablatures record information beyond what is deemed necessary by modern Western musical standards.

Given the rarity of *qin* tablatures and the difficulties reconstructing melodies from early periods, we have to rely mostly on textual descriptions that verbally describe *qin* music. Several texts that were compiled in the *Essential Records of the Qin Garden* (*Qinyuan yaolu*; hereafter “*Qin Garden*”) and *Comprehensive Anthology of Books about the* *Qin* (*Qinshu daquan*; hereafter “*Qin Anthology*”) describe melody categories of *qin* music. Multiple types of *qin* melodies are mentioned in *Qin Garden*, which dates to approximately the Song period.[[233]](#footnote-251)

Zequan, a Buddhist monk who was also a famous *qin* player, and others composed the illustrated *Monk Zequan’s Phrasings and Finger Techniques* (*Zequan Heshang jiezou zhifa*; hereafter “*Zequan’s Techniques*”), which was included in the *Qin Garden*.[[234]](#footnote-252) In their book, Zequan and others enumerated *qin* music categories, including *pin*, *diaozi*, and *cao*.[[235]](#footnote-253) For *pin*, the rhythm needs to be speedy. For *diaozi*, it resembles a slow *qu* to be sung. One begins each line of the *diaozi* with two slow tunes, continues with several tunes, follows them with a brief pause, and ends with one tune to connect with the following line. It appears that the *diaozi* had lyrics.

In contrast to the *diaozi*, the *cao* begins with one word for each line, followed by a brief pause, and ends with two tunes to connect with the following line. However, Zhu Changwen noted that the *cao* had no lyrics but rich and elaborate tunes.[[236]](#footnote-254) Cheng Yujian’s *Cheng Yujian’s Treatise of the* *Qin* (*Cheng Yujian qinlun*), which was included in the *Qin Anthology,* suggested analogies for these three styles.[[237]](#footnote-256) *Diaozi*, according to Cheng Yujian,was like eating olives, bland but not uninteresting, while *cao* resembled dramatic wind and rain which strikes your soul.

For the sequence of *qin* melodies performed at a gathering, Cao Zhi, the writer of the preface of the *Zequan’s Techniques*, had clear ideas. Cao was a grandnephew of Empress Dowager Cao (Cao Taihou), the second wife of Renzong.[[238]](#footnote-257) He claimed that, after obtaining Zequan’s manuscript, he published it and taught *qin* music for over thirty years. His background as a member of the extended royal family, his *qin* knowledge and skills, and his rich experience in teaching *qin* mean that Cao Zhi may have been a popular *qin* teacher and player in the royal court. Information about Cao Zhi is woefully limited, and we cannot state with certainty when he was born or whether he had a chance to teach Huizong the *qin*. Nevertheless, it was highly likely that Zequan’s book with Cao Zhi’s preface, which was widely circulated, might have featured in the *qin* curriculum in the royal court and that Huizong and other royals might have been exposed to this textbook.

Guests at *qin* gatherings engaged in a specific sequence of actions designed to heighten the experience. Before the *qin* concerto began, aromatic substances were burned to suffuse the air with fragrance. The fragrance would repel insects from the performance area and provide a pleasant environment for the player and listeners. This practice is also specified in Cao Zhi’s preface.[[239]](#footnote-258) A set of regulations regarding the sequence of melodies to be performed is also provided in the preface.

First, the *qin* player found calm and arranged the *qin* in front of him. He slowly tuned the strings and played one or two *diaozi* once the guests had settled down. The melodies were slow initially, became swifter, and gradually slowed down to a hiatus. Following the *diaozi*, a minor *cao* (*xiaocaonong*) was performed. By then, the player’s mind would have attained a harmonious state, and the warm-up exercises would conclude. The major *cao* (*dacao*) was performed with which he would lift the listeners’ spirits. According to the scholar Cao, one spirit-lifting *cao* was sufficient. If an encore were played, the listeners would understand the more profound messages conveyed in the melody.[[240]](#footnote-259) This sequence is logical and demonstrates the specific qualities of each of the *qin* melodies. We understand from this paragraph that, from a Northern Song *qin* musician’s perspective, the *diaozi* could serve as introductory pieces while the *cao* created the climax. The listeners’ mood would depend on what melodies the players performed, while the fragrance served as a psychological stabilizer. The discussion of *qin* music in *Song History* dwells on the political and cosmological aspects of music,[[241]](#footnote-260) with barely any mention of how *qin* music was played. Cao Zhi’s descriptions, by contrast, reflected the mindset of an actual *qin* player.

Other *qin* players, who were also scholars, officials, and artists, left records about how they performed and interpreted their *qin* music. Zhu Changwen’s *Qin History* gives clues about how *qin* music was constructed culturally. In Zhu’s book, Cui Zundu, Tang Yi, Fan Zhongyan, and Ouyang Xiu are all noted as excellent and virtuous *qin* players well-versed in the essential spirit of the *qin*.[[242]](#footnote-261) Cui Zundu and Tang Yi taught Fan Zhongyan to play the *qin*,[[243]](#footnote-262) while Fan and Ouyang were close friends and political allies in the government. Zhu historicized a *qin* lineage by connecting these scholar-artists, qin lovers, and players. Their multiple identities, linked by their *qin*-playing techniques and high moral standard, helped form a *qin* community.

Fan’s *qin* music preferences, which he inherited from Cui Zundu, emphasized purity, sternness, calm, harmony, smoothness, and aloofness, and the music was not to be too loud, brash, or flattering.[[244]](#footnote-263) The anthropomorphic character and moral implications of some of these terms are unmistakable, yet they were used as adjectives to describe *qin* music. Fan elaborated that if it were too loud, the music would become “brash”, however “pure” and “stern” it might be. If it were not “aloof” enough, the music would turn to “flattery”, even if it was “smooth” and “harmonious”. In turn, Fan’s perception of the *qin* is illustrated by another anecdote from Ouyang’s instruction in the *qin*.[[245]](#footnote-264) Ouyang once had an incurable illness caused by solitude and anxiety. He subsequently found diversion in playing the *qin* and gradually recovered his spirits. Ouyang’s recovery was claimed to be affected by the harmonious and pacifying quality of the *qin* music. When the heart was soothed, it would keep illness at bay. Zhu commented that Ouyang indeed understood the deeper principles of *qin* music.

By linking Fan with Cui Zundu and Tang Yi and putting the anecdotes of Fan and Ouyang together, Zhu constructed a community consisting of scholars, officials, and artists interested in the *qin*. Zhu’s *Qin* *History* supplied a perspective of how the Northern Song cultural elites appreciated *qin* music. It offers insights not present in the political and ideological descriptions of *Song History*. However, understanding Northern Song *qin* music by solely relying on its textual descriptions is unsatisfying. Below, I explore how the *qin* was actually played based on textual sources.

***Qin* playing techniques**

*Qin* tablatures produced during and after the Song period represented a relatively efficient way of recording *qin* music. In 1967, Rulan Chao Pian, a famous *qin* historian, offered detailed explanations and interpretations of the *qin* tablatures in her authoritative work, *Song Dynasty Musical Sources and their Interpretation*.[[246]](#footnote-265) In this noted work of scholarship in English, Pian described the Northern Song era as a transitory period. *Wenzipu* that had been passed down from the Tang dynasty were still used, while new notations that would later develop into the tablature formats we see today were being experimented with. One of the popular new notations is the so-called abbreviated-character notation (*jianzipu*) or pictographic notation. The *wenzipu* is written in prose in which complete, grammatically correct sentences are used to explain which string (*xianshu*), what position (huiwei) should be touched and plucked, and what hands and fingers should be used, while the *jianzipu* represented the same information using pictographs.[[247]](#footnote-266)

Early notations that indicate the *zhifa* or finger techniques can be traced to approximately the sixth century.[[248]](#footnote-267) *The* *Solitary Orchid* mentioned above and Zhao Yeli’s notations were among the early notations available to Northern Song *qin* musicians. *Finger Techniques of Tian Zizhi* and *Finger Techniques of Yang Zuyun*, which were compiled into Ming dynasty *qin* volumes,[[249]](#footnote-268) may appear to be Southern Song musicians, but they were actually compiled in the Tang period *wenzipu* tradition.[[250]](#footnote-269) *Zequan’s Techniques*, written by Zequan and others,was more likely created in the Northern Song period. We may rely on these books to explore the placements and movements of a Northern Song player’s hands and fingers while playing the *qin*.

A Northern Song player would consult the *wenzipu* since the *qin* books in the *wenzipu* tradition continued to be published from the Tang to the Ming period. However, given the complexity of capturing the series of ephemeral movements of the hands and fingers in prose, would an ordinary player still consult the *wenzipu* when a much more user-friendly format, namely, the *jianzipu*, was available? Similarly, would Huizong and other scholar-artists consult the *wenzipu*? Chances are that Huizong might not even have seen the *wenzipu* and that he saw only the *jianzipu*, and what his *qin* teacher taught him was actually a verbal translation of the *wenzipu*. The *wenzipu* contains records of a sequence of actions of the fingers and hands that could be very minute and subtle. Rapid changes in finger movements and positionings had to be noted with great care because any loss of information would affect the player’s rendition (this is part of what makes reconstruction very difficult).[[251]](#footnote-270) When the *wenzipu* evolved into the *jianzipu*, a pictograph would need to be interpreted. The interpretations, whether given by the teacher or interpreted by the player, were, in one way or another, translated versions of the *wenzipu*.

We can take Pian’s explanations of the *jianzipu* as examples.[[252]](#footnote-271) Below are excerpts of Pian’s explanation of the symbols for right- and left-handed techniques, general instructions, and the *gongche* notation:

1. 乇 for *tuo* 托. “The thumb [nail] pulls the string inward [toward the player].”
2. 尸 for *boh* 擘. “[The fleshy part of] the thumb hooks the string outward [away from the player].”…
3. 木 for *moo* 抺. “The index finger pulls the string inward.”
4. 乚 or 匕 for *tiau* 挑. “The index finger hooks the string outward.”[[253]](#footnote-272)

If Pian’s interpretations of the symbols are correct (as we assume them to be), a Northern Song player would have had such interpretations in mind, or his teacher would have explained them to him. Therefore, no matter what notations a player was reading, his fingers and hands were guided by the tablatures. The tablatures determined the qin players’ gestures. The gestures required for playing the *qin* were imitated and inherited. Individuals might have had the freedom to make subtle changes, but the hand and fingers’ general positioning, movements, and force were expected to be followed, as stipulated in the tablatures.

Zequan and others elaborated on the finger techniques and movements in their book,[[254]](#footnote-273) providing detailed illustrations of the contact points of the silk strings. These texts survive thanks to the advanced publication technologies developed in the Northern Song period. One of their elaborations on finger techniques, besides recording the necessary information required in the *jianzipu*, reflected the emphasis they placed on a player’s attention to detail when playing the *qin*:

Whenever a player lays down the fingers [on the strings], he applies force only after he has put his fingers on top of the strings. He should not plop down his fingers from mid-air, nor should he pop out his fingers; [if he has done so,] what he can do is to rest the fingers on the next strings. The essence of the finger techniques is to press [the strings] as if [to push them] into the wooden plates and pluck the strings as if to break them. When the left hand presses strongly, the right hand slightly plucks; when the left hand presses slightly, the right hand strongly plucks. Slight plucking should aim at the position between the fifth and sixth *hui*-markers; strong plucking should aim near the bottom of the bridge. In this way, the plucking resembles the way terrapins walk and cranes dance.[[255]](#footnote-274)

The elaborations from Zequan and others greatly enriched the tablatures recorded in either the *wenzipu* or *jianzipu* format. The tablatures recorded the instructions in fixed formats, but the players still had to learn from their teachers and perfect their skills by learning from experience. Players were required to gain technical know-how, such as the subtle movements of the fingers, the directions in which they should move, the different degrees of force to apply, and the positions where the fingers should stay or from where they should exert force. This knowledge and experience are similar to that of whisking tea – the emphasis on the subtleties of the actions and feelings of the fingers constitute the essentials of the correct technique and mindset.

The actions and feelings of the fingers determined the tonality and volume of *qin* music. The structure of a *qin* and the silk strings provided a broad spectrum of possible tones. In the *Book of Music* (*Yueshu*), compiled by Chen Yang in approximately 1100 and presented to the royal court in 1003, eleven types of tones are identified.[[256]](#footnote-275) They include so-called “timber tones”, “floating tones”, “harmonic tones”, and “loose tones”. These tones are described in the volume in the following terms:

Pressing a string with a finger of the left hand: along with the vibration of the string when pressing the string, the finger of the left hand presses the string until it touches the wooden board while plucking it with the right hand. [This will] make a faint thundering sound – such is the timber tone.

Pluck a string with the right hand, while the left hand softly taps it. [This will] softly make a light, pure sound – such is the floating tone.

[Pluck a string with the right hand while] the left hand does not press or pluck any strings. [This will] make a sonorous sound like a tinkling bell – such is the loose tone.[[257]](#footnote-276)

The different combinations of the movements of the fingers from both hands can generate a wide range of tones.[[258]](#footnote-277) Any slight variations of the combinations will bring forth a different tone. An experienced player could create and master his own finger techniques and perform using his unique combinations.

The various combinations of finger techniques create numerous musical properties unique to the *qin*. One of these distinct properties is microtones.[[259]](#footnote-278) Modern Western musical scores are now taken as a standard notation system. However, the Western system does not notate all the musical properties used in different historical musical traditions. Chinese *qin* musical notation records microtones in a way that modern Western musical scores cannot. The notations in the *wenzipu* and *jianzipu* indicated specific strings, positions of the strings, corresponding *hui*-markers, movements, the direction of movement, force, and the feeling of the fingers. All this served to record minute variations of specific pitches and pitch progressions.

**Audial distinctiveness and finger feelings**

The musical focus on harmony was another cultural construct of the elites. However, if all *qin* musicians followed the principles of harmony, so many different types of melodies, songs, and sets of playing techniques would not have existed. If musicians were only allowed to play melodies that met the standard of harmony, Cao Zhi would not have needed to regulate the sequence of melodies to be played; Zequan would not have defined the rhythms of the melodies, and Cheng Yujian would not have described the *diaozi* as similar to eating olives, while the *cao* lifted the spirits. Harmony was a cultural ideal advocated by a particular community of scholars and artists, but *qin* music during the Northern Song period was varied and diverse.

Rather than characterising *qin* music as part of a distinctive Chinese culture, it is more appropriate to describe the production and appreciation of *qin* music as a cultural construct. Emperors, officials, scholars, musicians, and people of mixed identities at different levels had their own interpretations of *qin* music. The conglomeration of their interpretations helped form the *qin* culture in the Northern Song dynasty. Nevertheless, besides political and ideological constructs, their focus on the auditory distinctiveness of the *qin* and the finger feelings made the appreciation of the *qin* a unique cultural practice. Their emphasis on the microtonality and minute pitch variations generated by the complex combinations of finger techniques reflected how important they considered touch and feel while playing the *qin*. Feelings from the fingernails, skin, muscles of fingers, palms, wrists, arms, shoulders, and almost the entire upper body constituted a particular set of physical experiences for *qin* players. The verbal and textual transmissions of their experiences guided others to participate in the cultural construct of *qin* music.

Prosody

**Perceptions of rhymes and tonal patterns**

The theorisation and categorisation of rhymes and tonal patterns have drawn scholarly attention since the introduction of Sanskrit into Chinese-speaking areas from approximately the third to the fifth century.[[260]](#footnote-279) The publication of dictionaries of rhymes (*yunshu*) attests to the extensive interest in this topic.[[261]](#footnote-280) We know words of the same rhymes or euphonic words sharing similar vowels can produce pleasing auditory experiences when grouped and spoken aloud. If they are put in the rhyming positions of a poem or used in sentences in prose, rhythmic and melodic rhyming patterns will be produced when they are recited.[[262]](#footnote-281) The tonal differentiation of characters also serves a similar purpose of revealing their tonality. In the Sui-Tang period, famous dictionaries such as Lu Fayan’s *Spelling Rhymes* (*Qieyun*) (601) and Sun Mian’s *Rhymes of the Tang* (*Tangyun*) (751) were compiled.[[263]](#footnote-282) In the Northern Song period, more rhyme dictionaries were published. One of the authoritative dictionaries was *Widened Rhymes,* compiled by Chen Pengnian and others in 1008 during the reign of Zhenzong. Another famous government-authorized dictionary is the *Collected Rhymes* (*Jiyun*), compiled by Ding Du and others in 1037 during the reign of the succeeding Emperor Renzong. All these rhyme dictionaries were projects sponsored by the state.

One can argue that the rhyming and tonal patterns were political constructs initiated and maintained by the state. Nonetheless, cultural elites, especially scholar-artists and music lovers, appropriated the rhyming and tonal patterns to enjoy and share their pleasing effects. Chen Pengnian and others’ *Widened Rhymes*, in addition to their own preface, contains prefaces by Lu Fayan and Sun Mian.[[264]](#footnote-283) Together, these prefaces reflected an intention on their part to construct a lineage of rhyme dictionaries. In Lu Fayan’s preface, he recalls how he had a discussion with his colleagues about the importance of standardising rhymes. They agreed that the topolects throughout the entire state were too diverse, which caused misunderstandings between people of different regions and prevented people from gaining historical knowledge.[[265]](#footnote-284) Sun Mian, in his preface, criticised Lu Fayan’s work for mistakes and missed rhymes. Sun called for rectifications to advance the cultural achievements of the state and took it upon himself to correct and expand the dictionary based on Lu’s work.[[266]](#footnote-285) Sun was writing about 150 years after Lu. Pronunciations had changed over that period causing Sun to deem it necessary to incorporate these changes into his expanded and rectified version of the dictionary.

The *Widened Rhymes* was also a product of this context. Beyond the politics of standardising the sounds of words and reducing communication problems between different dialects, the preface of the *Widened Rhymes* also introduces a musical consideration to the discussion:

*Spelling rhymes* was based on the Four Tone Registers [author’s note: *ping*, *shang*, *qu*, *ru*]. The use of characters sharing the same initial consonants or sharing the same rhyme finals is aimed at beautifying literary works whose rhymes and tones are superior to those of the ancients. There were people who did not know the nature of literature and set the Five Pitches [at the bottom of] the feet [author’s note: i.e., ignoring the value of the Five Pitches]. The Five Pitches are the sounds of the Five Elements and the harmonious [conglomerate] of the Eight Musical [instruments], into which changes of the Four Tone Registers are embedded. The Five Pitches are to be set as the cornerstone, thus the musical scales, referencing characters to modify pronunciations, and [identifying] voiceless and voiced characters [are made possible].[[267]](#footnote-286)

We need not tackle the complicated methods the Northern Song scholars used to construct the phonetic values of characters. What we are concerned with here is the introduction of the concept of the Five Pitches (*gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*,and *yu*) to the phonetic construction methods in which the compilers of the rhyme dictionaries were interested, namely, the musical properties of the pronunciations that Chen Pengnian and his colleagues cared about and attempted to associate with their works. How, then, did the musicians contemporary to Chen perceive the Five Pitches? Zequan had this own ideas about the Five Pitches in the *qin* music:

There is a distinct key for each *cao* melody of the *qin*, such as the *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, and *yu*. One does not change the strings when [playing according to] the Five Pitches. The *gong* key is harmonious and flat; the *shang* key is pure and sharp, and has shorter rhythms; the *jue* and *zhi* keys are slow and lamenting; the *yu* key has resentful tones.[[268]](#footnote-287)

These musical and phonetic values and associations would make greater sense if we brought *qin* music into the discussion. As we know, the *qin* and the bell music were set as pitch standards by Northern Song musicians. The inclusion of musical values in Chen and his colleagues’ work in dictionary compilation was no surprise.

**Melodies in the three colophon poems**

This section concerns Northern Song cultural elites’ use of the rhythmic and melodic properties of rhyming and tonal patterns to produce audially pleasing and prosodically serious literary works. The colophon poems on the *Literati Gathering* and Qin *Listening* are examples.

The two colophon poems of the *Literati Gathering* follow the same *-uwng* rhyme and even use the same rhyming characters, but scholars rarely discuss tonal patterns.[[269]](#footnote-288) We can see the patterns of the level- and oblique-tonal combinations in the poems. They signify the rising and falling of the tones of the characters and, therefore, the ups and downs of the rhythms of the lines. The tonaland rhyme patterns of the poems would constitute standardised prosodic properties that were pleasing to the ears of the cultural elites because they were educated to follow the rhyme and phonetic values set in the *Widened Rhymes* and *Collected Rhymes* sanctioned by the state. In order to resonate with Huizong’s poems, Cai Jing followed almost the same tonal and rhyme patterns. That is to say while reciting poems composed by Huizong and Cai Jing, listeners repeatedly heard the same melodies. We should not underestimate the importance of repeating the same melody to the listeners’ memory because hearing the melody two or three times would naturally strengthen the listeners’ impression of the melody. We recall that in Cao Zhi’s preface to *Zequan’s Techniques*, he emphasized the importance of encores so listeners would better understand the deeper meaning of the melody.[[270]](#footnote-289) The same principle is at work in chanting the poetic melodies because the poems are not merely groupings of characters but also contain prosodic properties.

Cai Jing’s poem inscribed on the *Qin Listening* follows the same *-uwng* rhyme but adopts different rhyming characters and a different tonalpattern. Was this a tribute to the two poems on the *Literati Gathering*? If the *Literati Gathering* (painted before 1109)predates the Qin Listening (before 1120), then Cai’s *Qin Listening* poem was paying homage to the two *Literati Gathering* poems by adopting the same rhyme. If the three poems had any relationship, the melodic functions of chanting, whose pleasing sounds and rhythms impressed the listeners, could not be ignored.

1. QSS 14:826.9567. For English translation, see the main text. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. See Wang Li 1979: 1-97. See also Cai Zong-qi 2008b: 169-72, 2008c: 387-92, 2014, and Cai Zong-qi ed. 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Wang Li 1979: 63-71. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Baxter and Sagart 2014: 327-78. For a more updated and comprehensive list, see the list in Baxter-Sagart Old Chinese reconstruction, version 1.1 (20 September 2014) http://ocbaxtersagart.lsait.lsa.umich.edu/. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. See Wang Li 1981: 55-75. Tang Zuofan 1991: 75-202. Goh 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Cai Zong-qi 2008a: 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Zhu Chongsheng 1985: 4; Blofeld 1985: 185-94; Yamamoto et al. eds. 1997; Lee and Kader 2000; Cabrera et al. 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Xie et al. 2009; Xie et al. 2012; Jia et al. 2015; Huang et al. 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. ZLCH, vol. 1: 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Zhu Chongsheng 1985: 72-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Zhang Jinghong 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. James Benn 2015: 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Three exhibitions, which took place in 2019 and presented three tea bowls that are identified as Japanese national treasures, are deemed as some of the most important events in that year’s Japanese art world: “Living in Zen and the Daitokuji Ryūkōin Heritage,” March 21 to May 19, 2019 at Miho Museum; “Bizen Swords – The Flower of Japanese Swords,” April 13 to June 2, 2019 at Seikadō Bunko Art Museum; “Masterpieces from the Fujita Museum: A Brilliant Universe Reflected in A National Treasure Yōhen-Tenmoku Tea Bowl and Buddhist Art,” April 13 to June 9, 2019 at Nara National Museum. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. SS 13:186.4539. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Habkirk and Chang 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The *qin*-zither, or *guqin*, is different from the *se*- and *zheng*-zithers. These two types of zither will be indicated when necessary. *Xiang* is translated as “aromatic substances” in this book as there is no exact equivalent term in English. “Incense” may connotate incense sticks that are commonly used nowadays. Many of today’s incense sticks are artificial chemical products that do not produce a pleasing fragrance. The Northern Song *xiang* is different from today’s incense sticks and the *xiang* could consist of many types of aromatic substances. Their differences and the application contexts will be explained in the following chapters. But for the containers of the aromatic substances, the popular translation of *xianglu* as “incense burners” will be kept in this book. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Yang Yuanzheng 2015b. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. For a dictionary definition of “ephemeral,” see Simpson and Weiner 1989, vol. V: 322. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Simpson and Weiner 1989, vol. XIV: 977. *Cf*. Howes ed. 1991, 2005, 2018; Mark Smith 2007; Karmon 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
20. Ebrey 2014: 471-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
21. Le Bon 1960[1895]; Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Hurrelmann 1988; Archer 1988, 1995; Ritzer and Goodman 2004: 378-407; Latour 2005; Yaneva 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
22. Le Bon 1960[1895]: 23-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
23. See a summary of the debate in Ritzer and Goodman 2004: 378-407. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
24. Giddens 1984: 25. See also Bourdieu 1977; Archer 1988, 1995; Ritzer and Goodman 2004: 379-85. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
25. Latour 2005: 1-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
26. Benedict Anderson 2006[1983]: 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
27. Latour 2005: 27-42, 63-86. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
28. Yaneva 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
29. Giddens 1984: 25. Ritzer and Goodman 2004: 379-87. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
30. Latour 2005: 63-86. Yaneva 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
31. See Silbergeld 2015: 490, 493. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
32. See a more comprehensive reflection of the identification of scholar-painters and *literati* paintings in Silbergeld 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
33. Shui Laiyou 1984; Cai Xianliang 2010. Cai Xianliang argues that there was a prioritization of the four in Xu Youren’s list: Cai, Su, Huang, and Mi, see Cai Xianliang 2010: 124-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
34. Cai Xianliang 2010: 127. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
35. See Dong Qichang’s calligraphic work, *Dong Qichang xingcao shulin Songsijia juan*, collection of the Beijing Palace Museum, 29.3x258.7 cm, accession number (no.) not available. See https://www.dpm.org.cn/collection/handwriting/230646.html, accessed on May 15, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
36. McNair 1998; Egan 1989, 1994; Harrist 1995; Sturman 1997. See a review of related definitions in Silbergeld 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
37. Loehr 1961a; Bush 1971: 1-13, “scholar-artist.” Murray 1993: 1, “*literati* artists,” 1993: 2, “painter official.” Murray described Ma Hezhi as a “painter and scholar,” 1993: v. Harrist 1995: 3-4, “scholar-artist.” Bickford: 1996: 3-4, “scholar-painting.” McNair 1998: xiv. Murck 2000: 3, “scholar art,” 2000: 4, “*literati* painting.” Silbergeld 2015. Descriptions of the artistic activities of *shidafu*, by Harrist (1995: 4) and Sturman (1997: 1), are also foundations of the definitions of scholar-artists. See also Bush’s citation and discussion of definitions of *literati* painters, given by T’eng Ku, Aoki Masaru, and James Cahill in Bush 1971: 1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
38. Harrist 1995: 3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
39. McNair 1998: xiv. Besides these cultural activities, the scholars also engaged in making concrete objects, such as inkstones. See Ko 2017: 5-9. Ko astutely argues that “artisan-scholars” as a concept should serve as a means to correct the long-held assumption of the great distinctions between artisans and the intellectuals. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
40. Shui Laiyou 1984: 34, 38-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
41. Bickford 2006: 454, 513. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
42. Loehr 1961a: 153. “Regarding their social relations, Su Tung-p’o and his friends – Wen T’ung, the bamboo painter, the whimsical and antiquarian Li Lung-mien, the wealthy and gifted Wang Shen, the tremendous calligrapher Huang T’ing-chien or Mi Fu who as a painter outshone them all – clearly formed a coterie of scholars and officials.” [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
43. He Zhongli 2007: 171-250. Bol 1992: 32-75, 212-53. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
44. Murck 2000: 28-50; Powers 2015: 362. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
45. Benedict Anderson 2006[1983]: 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
46. Desai 2008: 183. Ge Zhaoguang 2005. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
47. *Cf.* Le Bon 1960: 79-116. Giddens 1984: 25. Murck 2000: 28-50. Powers 2015: 364. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
48. Egan 1994; 2006b. See also Murray 1993: 1-2, “unique personal expression.” McNair 1998: xiv, “outward manifestations of inner character.” [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
49. History of tea as a global phenomenon has received much attention, see Ellis 2015; Rappaport 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
50. Jennifer Lea Anderson 1986. Varley and Kumakura eds. 1989. Pitelka ed. 2003. Pitelka 2005. Cort and Watsky eds. 2014. Ching et al. eds. 2017; Farris 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
51. Many eminent historians of the Song dynasty overlook the significance of tea cultures. Patricia Ebrey’s two authoritative and famous monographs, *Accumulating Culture* and *Emperor Huizong*, do not evaluate the tea texts in detail. See Ebrey 2008; Ebrey 2014: 299-300. Ronald Egan does mention Northern Song scholars’ detailed tea practices but focuses rather on poetry that mentions tea. See Egan 1994: 171-2, 174; see also Egan 2013: 69-86. Ignoring the study of tea practices often hinders our understanding of tea appreciation described in poems, such as the works of Su Shi, who was a great tea lover. Egan does not consider tea appreciation as a type of aesthetic pursuit in the Northern Song (2006). He has an unpublished paper on tea, see Egan, “Huizong’s Tea Manual: A Discourse on Tea from the Daguan Reign Period,” *Food and Culture at Court Conference,* University of California, Los Angeles, 2013. But its original online source cannot be accessed anymore. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
52. Paul Smith 1991. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
53. Mair and Hoh 2009. *Cf*. Chen Chuan 1984. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
54. Zhang Jinghong 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
55. Hinsch 2016: 4, 6-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
56. James Benn 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
57. Driem 2019: 39-153. See also Chapter 6 in Mair and Hoh 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
58. ZLCH. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
59. Livio Zanini provides some criticisms of Zheng and Zhu’s edited volumes, see Zanini 2017: 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
60. Huang Chunyan 2002: 193-205. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
61. Guan Jianping 2001. Shen Dongmei 2007. Shen Dongmei discusses in detail tea picking, processing of tea, identification and preservation of tea, procedures of tea contests (*doucha*), and the utilization of tea utensils. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
62. Liao Baoxiu 1996. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
63. See Steven Owyoung’s translation of biographies of Lu Yu, https://www.tsiosophy.com/2013/11/biographies-of-lu-yu-translations-and-texts/ accessed on May 17, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
64. Milburn 2016. Yang Zhishui 2014. Liu Jingmin 2004; 2006; 2007. Haw 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
65. van Gulik 1969. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
66. Pian 1967. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
67. Yang Yuanzheng 2010; 2014; 2019; 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
68. The Buddhist monks also shared very similar practices. See Liu Shufen 2004, 2006, 2007; James Benn 2015: 117–44. I focus on the scholar-artists’ practices in the secular world. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
69. QSW 109:2364.177-8 or JLB 2.43-4. See also Ebrey 2014: 327-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
70. See Ebrey 2014: 29, 298, 327-8. See Zhu Chongsheng 1985: 46-53 for how other emperors served tea to their subordinates. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
71. *Shuofu* 93.30a-55a. ZLCH, vol. 1: 103. See also You Xiuling 2003. Zheng Peikai and Zhu Zizhen (DATES?) reject the notion put forward by some scholars (for example?) who claim that Huizong himself did not compos the *Daguan Treatise* on the grounds that they present no definitive evidence. A Northern Song author, Xiong Fan, claimed in *Xuanhe Beiyuan gongcha lu* that Huizong composed twenty chapters that were collectively known as the *Chalun* (*Treatise of Tea*). See ZLCH, vol. 1:116. We can believe that the *Chalun* text was related to the Northern Song royal court, but currently available literature does not provide a definitive answer to the authorship problem of the *Daguan Treatise*. Whether the entire *Daguan Treatise* was written by Huizong or was the result of a collaboration remains a mystery. For the purposes of this discussion I tentatively attribute the creation of the text to Huizong and authors under his patronage. See also Cheng Guangyu 1976: 432-3; You Xiuling 2003: 262-5.

    In addition to agreeing with You Xiuling’s points, I support his claim that the current version of the *Daguan Treatise* was composed during the period when tea contests were very popular. This is because the authors were familiar with the tea preparation processes and they knew how to create a layer of foam on the tea, how to select the best crushers, and how to use ewers with specially designed spouts and so on, all of which is demonstrated in the following sections. This could not have been possible in periods when the tea was prepared in other ways. But the last three chapters of the current version of the *Daguan Treatise* merit further discussion.

    For a partial English translation of the text, see Blofeld 1985: 34-7; Ebrey 2014: 299-300. There is an annotated English translation of parts of the text of the *Daguan Treatise*, but no translator is specified (see Global Tea Hut 2016: 35-48, http://archive.globalteahut.org/article/694, accessed on September 19, 2020). Although this translation is not a philological interlinear translation and occasionally omits difficult-to-translate phrases, the translators’ interpretations of some key words in the original text are worthy of consultation. For a scholarly annotated Japanese translation of the treatise, see Nunome and Nakamura 1976: 193-226; see also Fukuda ed.1974: 108-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
72. Cai’s essay anthologized in the *Huizhu lu*, *yuhua*, 1.577. See also QSW 109:2364.178-9; Huang Zien 2015: 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
73. Huang Zien 2015: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
74. QSS 5:257.3172. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
75. QSW 91:1973.35. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
76. See the definition of Huizong’s collaborative paintings in Bickford 2006: 490-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
77. Fumes above the tripod are very vaguely depicted. They may be the fragrance from burning aromatic substances inside the tripod. See Li Kongzhao 2018: 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
78. QSW 109:2364.177-8 or JLB 2.43-4. See also Mair 2016: 311. Victor Mair suggests translating this period’s “*jiu*” to beer, brew, or ale, instead of “wine.” See also Charles Benn 2002: 140-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
79. Chen Jiejin 1996: 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
80. Yi Ruofen cited other scholars’ arguments that the servant is not holding a blue-and-white porcelain basin. It is possibly crystal, agate, or a plain white porcelain. See footnote 56 in Yi Ruofen 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
81. Yi Ruofen 2006: 253-78; Yi Ruofen 2008: 358-9. Yi Ruofen cited other scholars’ arguments that the servant is not holding a blue-and-white porcelain basin. A crystal, agate, or a large white porcelain can be possible. See footnote 56 in Yi Ruofen 2008. Why is this repeated? [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
82. For a different version of the translation of the two colophon poems, see Ebrey 2014: 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
83. The pronunciation of the first character of this line, “yin,” is very complicated. In most of the cases, it is read as a level tone, JY 4.279, meaning “chanting” as a verb. But in rare cases it can also be read as an oblique tone, JY 6.444, also meaning “chanting” as a verb. In keeping with the tonal pattern of the poem, which was probably also intended by Huizong, I choose the obliquetone here. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
84. *Guangyun* 1.21 to 1.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
85. *Guangyun* 1.21 to 1.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
86. Ebrey 2014: 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
87. Ebrey 2014: 327. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
88. Ebrey suggests that the painting was used by Cai to flatter Huizong. Ebrey 2014: 210. See also Chaffee 2006: 32, 47.. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
89. ZLCH, vol. 1: 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
90. *Guangyun* 1.21 to 1.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
91. This layer of meaning is evinced in Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 89-90; Zheng Minzhong 2003: 28; Huang Jie 2019: 17-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
92. Since the 1930s, Huang Binhong, Zhu Jiajin, Ma Heng, and others have been debating whether *Qin Listening* is an authentic Northern Song painting or a forgery. See CCTV 2004-2019; CCTV 2019. Unfortunately, these scholars and critics did not produce any writings in this regard. For textual discussions about the authenticity of the painting, see Xie Zhiliu 1957 (Northern Song); Ecke 1972: 96-199, especially p. 151 (eighteenth century); Xu Bangda 1979 (Northern Song); Yang Xin 1980 (Northern Song); Zheng Minzhong 2003 (Northern Song); Huang Jie 2019 (problematic). [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
93. CCTV 2004-2019; CCTV 2019; Xie Zhiliu 1957; Xu Bangda 1979; Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 82-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
94. Xu Bangda 1979: 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
95. New discoveries may emerge in the future that may overturn today’s critical and art history standpoints that the *Literati Gathering* and Qin *Listening* are genuinely Northern Song paintings. When I mention and cite the *Literati Gathering* in this book, I refer to the original model painting, if it exists at all, of the current painting that is stored at the Taipei Palace Museum, but, one must allow the possibility that the Taipei version is already the original one.

    I take the Qin *Listening* as a genuine Northern Song court painting because its rich details are so convincing that it would be very difficult for any forger of later periods to create. The extensive studies by the scholars mentioned above demonstrate that a forger must master a wide body of knowledge about the rich details of the Northern Song to produce a painting like *Qin Listening*, which was unlikely before the twentieth-century. A forger would need toknow about Huizong’s physical appearance based on portraits of Huizong, which ended up in the Nanxundian collection in the Qing dynasty (see Yang Xin 1980; Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 83, and footnote 27-31). Very few painters would have access to these portraits. They would also need to be aware of Huizong’s preference to be shown as a Daoist or his preference that the *qin* player be represented in Daoist robes because he favored Daoism (Yang Xin 1980; Zheng Minzhong 2003: 26).They would need to be familiar with the inscriptions of Huizong and Cai Jing (Xie Zhiliu 1957: 20-1). Although Huang Jie casts doubt on Cai’s signature (2019: 17), he still admits that the calligraphy on *Qin Listening* resembles Cai’s other genuine works. The forger would need to be familiar with the appearance of garments, incense burners, contemporary *lì*-containers, black-lacquered *qin*, furniture, vegetation, rocks, and the seat pads made monkey hair from Sichuan, which were favored by the political elites at the time (Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 83-5, 88-9; Zheng Minzhong 2003: 25-7).Finally, the forger would have to possess very sophisticated painting skills. A highly skillful and knowledgeable forger before the twentieth-century might have fulfilled one or two criteria mentioned above, but to fulfill all five would be highly unlikely. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
96. Wang Cheng-hua 1998. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
97. Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 83, 88. In this book the “incense” in the phrase “incense burner” refers to the aromatic substances. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
98. Regarding the validity of these sources of evidence, the textual sources cited at the beginning of this chapter are very reliable because they were marked with clear dates and authorship. For the two paintings, the current academic consensus is that they can date to the Northern Song and were created under Huizong’s patronage. Although this view may be overturned in the future, they can be integrated into a large pool of materials incorporating many other types of evidence that the cultures of tea, fragrance, and *qin* music were interrelated in the Northern Song. The paintings are not isolated pieces of evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
99. Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 89-90; Zheng Minzhong 2003: 28; Huang Jie 2019: 17-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
100. The allusion of the *qin* melody *Feng ru song* was possible, but it also raises doubts. Why the poet used the third character of the second line, “*yi*” (seemingly), to describe there was a *qin* melody, while there was actually a *qin* being played? I thus believe that the second layer of implications that the water-boiling sound for making tea was more likely the intended message. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
101. Huang Jie 2019: 17-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
102. For a discussion of the seat pads, see Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 84-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
103. Yamamoto et al. eds. 1997; Lee and Kader 2000; Cabrera et al. 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
104. Zhu Zizhen 1996: 43-7; Mair and Hoh 2009: 35-6; Benn 2015; Driem 2019: 59-61, 90. See also Fang Hao 1964 and Cheng Guangyu 1988a: 16-26 for the impact of religious persons on tea cultures. Mair and Hoh, and Driem point the origins of tea to the Himalayan area, Southeast Asia, and southwestern China. See Mair and Hoh 2009: 27-31, Driem 2019: 1-38. But these origins do not have direct impact upon the Tang dynasty tea drinkers. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
105. These *han*, *ke*, *re*, and other symptom descriptions cannot be directly correlated with today’s understanding. The tentative translations provided here are for the easy understanding of the English readers only. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
106. ZLCH, vol. 1: 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
107. Lu Yu mentioned the medicinal functions of plants that he believed to be tea by citing medicinal texts from the *Tang bencao* (*juan* 13), *Zhenzhong fang*, and *Ruzi fang*, see ZLCH, vol. 1: 17. However, the authors of these medicinal texts used terms such as *ming*, *tu*, and *kucai*, but not *cha*. Lu Yu had to argue to associate *tu* and *kucai* with *cha*. Since these texts are now lost or incomplete, it is very difficult to explore whether *cha*, or tea (*Camellia sinensis*), in our discussion, was regarded by these authors to be medicine. Except for these records, tea was hardly included in other medicinal texts. Guan Jianping argues that *ming* entered the perspective of medicinal practitioners (2001: 103-4), but whether *ming* referred to tea is still in doubt. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
108. *Shanghan lun* (*ca*. 200, see ZJSHL); QJYF (*ca*. 652); *Waitai miyaofang* (752); THHF (1078); and ZLBC (1083-1249). The compilation and re-compilation, annotation, and editing of the Chinese medicinal texts could range from several years to hundreds of years, but it is possible to trace the structures and foundations of the texts to the original authors and compilers. In this book, I refer to the original authors and compilers before the Southern Song Dynasty. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
109. It is noteworthy that the Chinese did not make a sharp distinction between herbal medicine and ordinary daily beverages. This continues to this day, for example, in the form of *liangcha* (a herbal cold energy decoction) that is consumed as an ordinary beverage in today’s Guangdong and Hong Kong. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
110. ZJSHL 2.50-1, 57. The LPNs of the Chinese herbal medicines mentioned in this book are referenced from the website of the Chinese Medicinal Material Images Database created by the School of Chinese Medicine, Hong Kong Baptist University. See SCM, HKBU 2012. We have to note that the medicine, vegetation, and animals mentioned in the following cited texts may not exactly correspond to the substances that bear the same names today. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
111. ZJSHL 4.116-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
112. QJYF 26.498-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
113. Prescriptions in the English context refer to the medical treatment, while in the Chinese context a *fang* can be understood as a medical prescription or a recipe. See QJYF 26.498. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
114. QJYF 21.407-13, see examples in QJYF 21.407-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
115. *Fushen* is a part of tuckahoe or Indian buead (*fuling*, LPN: *Poria*). QJYF 21.408. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
116. *Waitai miyaofang* 11.194. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
117. THHF 6.106-9, *Xixin san*, *Bazheng san*, and others. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
118. THHF 5.100-1; see also SCM, HKBU 2012: lotus seed. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
119. ZLBC 7.207. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
120. For the traditional and modern techniques of drying and processing Chinese medicine, see *Leigong paozhilun*; Xu Chujiang 1985; Wang Xiaotao 1998; Li Chunxing 2000; Lu Yongxiang et al. eds. 2004; Cao Hui et al. 2013; Gong Qianfeng 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
121. Zhou Yimou 1994: 163-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
122. Guan Jianping 2001: 30-50. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
123. *Leigong paozhilun*, i-vi. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
124. *Cf*. Ko 1994: 5, and her citations; Dorothy Ko argues that gender, specifically in the Chinese context in her book, could be conceived as a cultural construct. *Cf*. Ko 2017: 61-78, where it is stated that the way how scholars textualized the stonecutters’ knowledge and ranked the inkstones represents a type of cultural construction. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
125. See Cheng Guangyu 1976: 415-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
126. Unfermented tea includes green tea that is processed with a series of actions: withering, rolling, and drying. Partially fermented tea includes white tea (different from Huizong’s *Baicha*), which is processed by heavy withering and slight fermentation. Fermented tea includes red tea that is processed by withering, rolling, fermenting, and drying. After rolling, post-fermentation can generate dark tea, like the Puer tea. See Zhang Jinghong 2014: 205-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
127. *Leigong paozhilun* 1.24. See also Lu Yongxiang et al. eds. 2004: 37-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
128. “*Qing qing gan jie*.” There is no equivalent in English to translate “gan” here. I follow Zhang Jinghong’s interpretation, see Zhang Jinghong 2014: 221. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
129. “*Yumu xieyan*” and “*suwen xieyan,*” ZLCH, vol. 1: 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
130. ZLCH, vol. 1: 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
131. This serves merely as one of the many references because the shape and size of the bubbles are determined by various factors including but not limited to the type of water, the capacity of the container, and the temperature of the surrounding environment. The temperature ranges listed here are for reference only. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
132. ZLCH, vol. 1: 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
133. ZLCH, vol. 1:35; 70-1, 73-4. See also Ceresa 1993a. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
134. *Cf*. James Benn 2015: 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
135. Cai Xiang’s *Records of Tea* mentions tea contests in the Fujian area but, unlike the *Daguan Treatise*, it does not delineate any detailed procedure for the tea-tipping process nor does it attempt to create any standard. See Nunome’s discussion of the tea-tippingpractices in the *Records of Tea* and *Daguan Treatise* (1995: 223-34). [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
136. The English description of the process is based on the original Chinese text but is not a direct translation. We only aim at providing a summary. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
137. ZLCH, vol. 1: 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
138. ZLCH, vol. 1: 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
139. ZLCH, vol. 1, 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
140. See a discussion of the *wei* of tea in Ceresa 1995: 269-84, especially pp. 276-81 for the discussion of the *wei* of tea during the Song period. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
141. These volunteers age between 20 to 30 and have tea-drinking habits. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
142. ZLCH, vol. 1:13. James Benn’s translation of these condiments is: “onion, ginger, jujube fruit, citrus peel, dogwood berries or peppermint”. See James Benn 2015: 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
143. ZLCH, vol. 1:67. The duck’s feet here should have been salted. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
144. Qian Shilin ed. 1989: 120-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
145. QSS 14:796.9219-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
146. ZLCH, vol. 1:77. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
147. ZLCH, vol. 1: 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
148. ZLCH, vol. 1: 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
149. Choi et al. 2008. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
150. *See* Ebrey 2008: 351. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
151. We have to note that “mixing tea with aromatic substances” was different from “mixing tea fragrance with that of aromatic substances.” In the former case, the tea was blended with powder of camphor and they became a mixture. In the latter case, the tea was separately prepared with the camphor or musk. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
152. *Tianxiang zhuan*; Liu Jingmin 2004; 2007: 150-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
153. ZLCH, vol. 1: 76, 77, 79, 83, 115-6. SHYJG 6:136.5327. Liu Jingmin 2004: 158-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
154. *Tianxiang zhuan*; *Xiangpu*. See also Liu Jingmin 2006; 2007: 186-97. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
155. Liu Jingmin 2007: 181-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
156. *Xiangpu*, “Appendix,” 271-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
157. *Mingxiang pu*. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
158. *Chenshi xiangpu*. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
159. Fu Yunzi 2000[1941]: 27. See also Tokyo National Museum 1999: 135-6, item nos. N112, N113, and N114. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
160. Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan ed. 1987: 26-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
161. Fujian Sheng Quanzhou Haiwai Jiaotongshi Bowuguan ed. 1987: 4, 14-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
162. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 34-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
163. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 34-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
164. SS 7:41.2177, 7:42.2210. See SHYJG 8:200.7875 (*juan* 14760); the compilation of the numbers of Daoists and Buddhists in Zhang Huaying 2013: 254-5, and chart 3-1. See also Ebrey 2014: 131-58. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
165. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
166. Fu Yunzi 2000: 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
167. Wang Huifang 1987: 122-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
168. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
169. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 36-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
170. *Tianxiang zhuan*, 36-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
171. *Leigong paozhilun* 2.79; 3.98-9, 121. THHF 5.83; 8.128; 10.164-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
172. *Leigong paozhilun* 2.79; 3.98-9, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
173. This is similar to the creation of a monster combining the body parts of different animals into one. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
174. *Cf*. Hobsbawn and Ranger eds. 1983. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
175. *Xiangpu* 1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
176. *Xiangpu* 1.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
177. *Xiangpu* 2.41. The names of these historical figures were used for commercial branding and promotion and needed not be associated with any real Shu king and Li Yu. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
178. *Xiangpu* 2.41. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
179. *Xiangpu* 2.41. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
180. *Leigong paozhilun* 2.79; 3.98-9, 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
181. *Leigong paozhilun* 2.79. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
182. THHF 5.83; 8.128; 10.164-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
183. Liu Jingmin 2007: 353-8; Liu Jingmin 2002. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
184. Liu Jingmin 2007: 367-78; see also Liu Jingmin 2005a. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
185. Hubei Sheng Yuquan Tieta Kaogudui 1996: 54-5, and the color plate of the incense burner, n.p. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
186. Shaanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiuyuan et al. 2007, vol. 1: 120-9; vol. 2, color pls. 58, 62-8. See also Liu Jingmin 2005b: 293. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
187. Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 83, 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
188. Wang Cheng-hua 1998: 88-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
189. *Xiangpu* 2.48. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
190. *Xiangpu* 2.48. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
191. *Bishu manchao*, 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
192. *Laoxuean biji* 1.14. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
193. Liu Shufen 2007: 660. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
194. Enjoying tea, especially for those who advocated for pure, unadulterated tea, required being able to distinguish different types of fragrance. The mixture of tea with camphor or musk, for example, was to be avoided. For those who did not emphasize the purity of tea, the mixed aroma of tea, camphor, or musk, and other substances might provide pleasant smells at the tea gathering. The ability to distinguish types of fragrance was thus an ability exclusive to the cultural elites, regardless of the way they preferred to take their tea. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
195. See the discussion of rhythm in Cai Zong-qi 2008c, 2014, and Cai Zong-qi ed. 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
196. Bagley 2005: 87; 2015: 57-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
197. *Lüshi chunqiu* 1:26.258-60; for an English translation, see Knoblock and Riegel 2000: 136-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
198. This was proposed by Fan Zhen, see SS 9:126.2937-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
199. SS 9:126.2937-8. See also Lam 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
200. SS 9:128.2988-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
201. Ebrey 2008: 155, 159-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
202. SS 9:129:3001-2; SS 9:126.2937-8. Lam 2006. Ebrey 2008: 155, 159-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
203. Along these lines of thoughts, it is no surprise that each string of the *qin* was thought to represent a kind of virtue or a social stratum in the eyes of the emperors. SS 9:126.2954; SS 9:126.2944-5; SS 10:142.3341-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
204. van Gulik 1969: 26-7. Qin Xu 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
205. For Zhu Changwen’s life, see DPQJ 53.735-6. Zhang Huaying 2013: 140-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
206. Su Shi made a special mention of Zhu’s virtues in a recommendation letter that he wrote for the latter. DPQJ 53.735-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
207. *Qinshi* 6.48-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
208. *Qinshi* 1.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
209. *Yunyan guoyan lu* 2.62. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
210. See Zheng Minzhong 1989: 21; 2001a: 36; 2001b: 13, 15 and 2001c: 13-5. Zheng claimed that there were twelve extant *Leiqin* in 2001. The criteria to identify a *Leiqin*, as listed in the discussion in the main text and in the sources cited by Zheng, are not comprehensive or definitive. These criteria rely heavily on the personal experience of experts. Experts may be able to identify the approximate production periods of a *qin* but associating a *qin* with the Lei family on the basis of the criteria discussed is far from convincing. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
211. QSW 34:718.96-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
212. QSW 91:1974.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
213. QSW 91:1974.46. See also Li Mingzhong 2000a: 97. Zheng Minzhong 2001a: 36. Zhang Huaying 2013: 101-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
214. Fu Yunzi 2000: 18-26. See also the seven-stringed *qin*-zither in Tokyo National Museum 1999: 123, item no. N102. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
215. Zheng Minzhong 2000b: 4. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 60-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
216. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 59-85, for the inscription see p. 61 and 66. Yang Yuanzheng believes that it is the date of manufacture. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
217. Zheng Minzhong 2000b: 3; Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 72-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
218. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
219. Zheng Minzhong 2000b: 5; Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 72, 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
220. *Seng Juyue qinzhi*, 650-1; Zhang Huaying 2013: 307-8; Zhu Huipeng 2012: 128-59; He Zhiling 2013: 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
221. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 72. See also Tang Jianyuan 2000: 41. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
222. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 173-9, Appendix 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
223. Zheng Minzhong 1999; 2000a; 2002. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
224. Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
225. Zheng Minzhong 1999; 2000a: 24-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
226. Zheng Minzhong 1999: 31-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
227. van Gulik 1969: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
228. van Gulik 1969: 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
229. The invention of musical notation was as important as that of writing systems. Besides music generated from instruments, lyric songs did not appear with musical scores until the fourteenth century. The *Songs of the Whitestone Daoist* is a rare compilation of the lyric songs with musical scores. See He Changlin 2009[1983]: 57; Yang Yuanzheng 2019: 88. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
230. TB1393. See Yang Yuanzheng 2010; 2014. There is another early manuscript called *Fingering Techniques of Playing the* *Qin* housed in the Hikone City Museum (V633). SeeYang Yuanzheng’s works cited above. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
231. Yang Yuanzheng 2014: 32. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
232. Yang Zongji was among the first players to provide his own reconstructed version. Zhang Huaying 2013: 390-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
233. See the *Gucao shierzhang* in QYYL, 1-17; and the *Qinshu* in QYYL, 93-9 (94-6 specifically). Names such as *Zhennü yîn*, *Liangfu yín*, *Wenjun nong*, and *Wenwang cao* are mentioned. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
234. ZQHS, 18-63. Zhipan in his *Fozu tongji*, compiled in 1269, provides a very short biography of a monk called Zequan. This year this monk died, 1045 CE, is mentioned (*Fozu tongji* 12.201). He might be the same Zequan we discuss here. See also Si Binglin 2011.

     The meaning of the “*jiezou*”in the book titleis similar to the current meaning but with some differences. It connotes cadences that are grouped into various phrases. Therefore, I use “phrasings” to refer to the “*jiezou*” in the translation of the book title. In other places, depending on the context, I use “rhythm” to translate “*jiezou*.” Although this book is attributed to Zequan, he might have composed only parts of the current version of the book. Subsequently the book was added to and elaborated upon by others. See also Zhongguo Yishu Yanjiuyuan Yinyue Yanjiusuo Ziliaoshi ed. 1994: 34, entry no. 1276. Their dating of the book (*ca*. 1080 CE) is about right. (Please check this reference. It is incomplete and confusing) [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
235. ZQHS, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
236. *Qinshi* 6.47. It seems that different *qin* masters might have their own definitions and categorizations of *qin* music. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
237. *Cheng Yujian qinlun*, 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
238. ZQHS, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
239. ZQHS, 19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
240. ZQHS, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
241. SS 10:142.3341-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
242. *Qinshi* 5.40-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
243. *Qinshi* 5.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
244. *Qinshi* 5.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
245. *Qinshi* 5.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
246. Pian 2003[1967]. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
247. Zhang Huaying 2013: 388. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
248. Zhang Huaying 2013: 389; Yang Yuanzheng 2010; 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
249. For *Yang Zuyun zhifa*, see QSDQ 8.13-5. See also Zhang Huaying 2013: 389, 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
250. Zhang Huaying 2013: 389. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
251. We can imagine that if we use English to describe the series of actions of playing the *piano* and replace the musical scores with the Chinese *wenzipu*, a one page score could easily turn into over ten pages of *wenzipu*. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
252. Pian 2003: 82-98. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
253. Pian 2003: 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
254. ZQHS, 20-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
255. ZQHS, 20-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
256. See also Zhongguo Yishu Yanjiuyuan Yinyue Yanjiusuo Ziliaoshi ed. 1994: 34, entry no. 1277. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
257. *Yueshu* 2.4:143.545. These three types of sound resemble three modern sound desciptions: open string notes, overtone harmonics, and stopped string notes. Translations are by Yang Yuanzheng 2020: 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
258. For a later generation corpus of finger techniques, see *Yuexian qinpu zhengyin*. Notations of this period were much richer and more elaborate and illustrations of the finger techniques were also provided. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
259. He Changlin 2009: 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
260. Wang Li 1981: 55-75. Tang Zuofan 1991: 21, 75-81. Goh 2015. See also the debate between Mair and Tsu-lin Mei 1991 and Zhang Hongming 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
261. Zhang Weiyi 2008: 107; Li Chunyan 2010: 105. Goh 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
262. See Cai Zong-qi 2008c, 2014, 2015a, and 2015b. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
263. See also the *Jingdian shiwen* compiled by Lu Deming in *ca*. 590. *Qieyun* was originally written by Lu Fayan and re-edited and expanded by Wang Renxu in 706. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
264. GY, “Preface,” 12-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
265. GY, 12-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
266. GY, 15-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
267. GY, “*xu*,” 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
268. ZQHS, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
269. See Cai Zong-qi 2008c, 2014, and the articles in Cai Zong-qi ed. 2015. This field awaits more investigations. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
270. ZQHS, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)