



eco-cha
TEA CLUB

Eco-Farmed Dong Pian Jade Oolong Tea

Harvest: Small batch
Season: January 2017

Region: Songboling, Taiwan
Elevation: 400m

Oxidation: Light-medium
Roast: Unroasted

*Flavor: Fresh herbal aroma. Smooth vegetal/mineral character.
Minty/savory finish.*

BREWING GUIDE:

 9g

 300ml

 95°C

 4 minutes

GARDEN

This batch of Jade Oolong tea was harvested in January from a plot of organically grown Tsui Yu (Tai Cha #13) tea plants. Tsui Yu is a hybrid cultivar with a distinctive herbal, complex character. We were lucky to discover this batch of Dong Pian, or late winter harvest of this cultivar that is slowly being phased out by the more prolific strains of Jin Xuan and Four Seasons Spring.

TASTING NOTES

Our friend who is an organic tea farmer kept this batch separate from his normal practice of combining winter and spring harvests for his high grade produce for retail sale. We discovered that he still had a small amount of this harvest left when we visited his farmhouse a few months ago and inquired if he had any unique batches of tea to share. In classic local manner, he modestly replied that he had a batch of Dong Pian Tsui Yu that was harvested last January. Dong Pian in

Chinese basically means late winter harvest, and Tsui Yu is a hybrid strain that is translated as Jade Oolong. We tasted it and were captivated by its character, and were delighted to be told that there was enough tea to be shared with the Eco-Cha Tea Club!

The late winter growing season causes slow growth rate and results in a distinct composition in the tea leaves. Typically, Dong Pian harvests are processed as a very lightly oxidized tea, due to the fact that the leaves are a bit "tougher" and are not as prone to oxidation. But this batch is sufficiently oxidized, giving it a broader spectrum of flavor and depth of character. The brewed leaves exude a heady herbal bouquet, with a balanced vegetal/mineral character on the palate. The tea has a smooth, full-flavored mouth feel, and offers a bold savory/minty finish.

The name Jade Oolong comes from its registered name in Taiwan as Tsui Yu, or Tai Cha #13. It's a hybrid strain that was developed by the Taiwan Research



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and Extension Station at the same time as Jin Xuan/Tai Cha #12, aka Milk Oolong. Jade Oolong was determined to be worth registering and marketing as a viable tea strain due to its distinct floral character in its flavor profile. It also offers a 20% higher yield than Qing Xin Oolong, the classic "original oolong" cultivar that is still most prevalent in Taiwan for Oolong Tea production.

Jade Oolong is now becoming increasingly rare however, as a result of the popularized Four Seasons Spring strain that offers a much higher yield than Jade Oolong, and also has a very prominent floral character when made as a "Green Oolong", i.e. a lightly oxidized, unroasted tea. It is generally acknowledged that Jade Oolong makes a distinctly better quality tea than Four Seasons Spring, especially when processed as a Dong Ding Oolong, i.e. more oxidized, and roasted. But it is a less hardy strain than Four Seasons Spring, produces less yield, and has a shorter life span. We feel that the distinctive flavor of Jade Oolong makes

for a better quality tea than both Jin Xuan (Milk Oolong) and Four Seasons Spring. This is another reason why we were excited to find this batch of Eco-Farmed Dong Pian Jade Oolong Tea to share with the Eco-Cha Tea Club.

THE STORY OF THIS TEA

The crop that we are sharing with the Eco-Cha Tea Club this month was harvested in January, which makes it a relatively rare batch of tea in that it was harvested well after the winter harvest. In Taiwan, harvests that occur after December 21st are referred to as "Dong Pian", which is a name that connotes a new leaf growth that is stunted by the winter season. This late winter crop offers a distinctive character based on the slow growth of the new leaves on the tea trees.

This farm has been organically certified for many years. However, the farmer has opted to simply call his tea "naturally farmed" in order to not be restricted by the retailing of his produce as certified organic. In fact, he is a pioneer of organic



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tea farming in this region, but his decades of experience have led him to forego marketing his product as such. We are inspired by his stance in the industry, and are following suit by adopting the term "eco-farmed" to represent his produce.

The climate at this elevation allows for harvesting year-round, but the sustainable methods employed on this farm allow the tea trees to not be over-burdened by continual harvests. Constant fertilization to produce new growth provides maximum yield, but these trees are allowed to produce new growth without being harvested at least twice annually. This not only results in better quality, but also prolongs the life of the plot of tea. Off season growth without fertilization strengthens the roots of the trees, making them hardier and compels them to gain nutrition directly from the soil by growing deeper roots. This farming practice, along with the unusual late winter harvest, is what makes this batch of tea a specialty.