Your Guide to
China's
Dan Cong Oolongs

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Table of Contents

- An Introduction to Dancong Oolong Teas
- About the Shui Xian Tea Plant
- Dancongs with Floral Aromas
- Dancongs with Fruit, Nut, and/or Spice Aromas
- Miscellaneous Dancongs
Making sense of Chinese teas can be rather tricky. How things are translated is one issue. Multiple names being used is another. And the cultural inclination to be poetic about those names comes into play. The category of oolongs known as “Dancong” (or “Dan Cong”) is a great example. But hang in there - these teas are special enough to justify you making that effort to work your way through the maze of information about them. This guide will get you started.

The birthplace of Dancong Oolong Tea is FengHuang Mountain, part of the Phoenix Mountains. So, these teas are often called Fenghuang Dancong or Phoenix Dancong.
**What Is Dancong?**

“Dancong” in Chinese symbols is 单丛 and is often translated as “single trunk/bush” (depends on the translator). When they say “single,” they mean a single variety, which is *Shui Xian*, with the growers carefully selecting specific trees/bushes and tending them to produce certain traits in the finished product. This makes them different from *Wuyi Shui Xian*, *Zhang Ping Shui Xian*, and a number of others.

Some of the tea leaves used for making Dancong oolongs are from tea trees over 100 years old, according to several online sites. They have been able to expand on the number of these trees and bushes through grafting, creating a “family” of trees. The total output is pretty small and is one of the reasons the tea price tends to be high. Another reason is that their reputation is growing, and therefore so is demand (and fakery).

The mountain range, where this tea comes from, is called “Phoenix Mountains” so often these teas include “Phoenix” in their name (but that does not guarantee their authenticity - dealing with a reputable tea vendor is the best way to go). The other name for this range is “Fenghuang Shan” (or Fenghuangshan”) so you’ll see the teas offered under the name “Fenghuang oolong” sometimes.

Fenghuang Mountain is part of the Phoenix Mountains, and tea is grown at about 1,000 meters elevation near Chaozhou City, Guangdong Province on the south coast of China. The region has a mild, humid climate.

Dancong leaves are large and stalky. The color is that of a dark brown with a slight hint of red. The infused liquid is a clear golden color. The aroma evokes the fragrance of various flowers, fruits, or spices with an earthy, smooth taste and texture.

**History**

The story is that during South-Song Dynasty (南宋 Nan-Song), the Emperor went to Chao-shan (潮汕) and passed by Phoenix Mountain. He was thirsty, so his servant plucked the leaves from a tea tree and infused them. It quenched his thirst and made him very happy. Due to its leaf shape, which is similar to the beak of a bird, it was named “Beak Tea” (鸟嘴茶 Niao-zui Cha). Since then, it was widely planted and named a Song Cultivar (宋种 Song-zhong) because it originated in the Song Dynasty. The cultivar has lasted for more than 900 years. During the Ming Dynasty (明代 Ming-dai), it was a tribute tea to emperors.

**Growing Environment**

Phoenix mountains are made of biotite granites formed more than 137,000,000 years ago. The soil is red and yellow, with rich organic matter and good breathability, allowing the tea trees' to absorb nutrients. The mountain tops get heavy rain and fog for about 2 hours in early morning and at night. The humidity stays above 80%, providing plenty of moisture for tea growing. The average year temperature is around 17-18°C.

In Summer and Fall, pest are a problem, making holes in the tea tree leaves. In Winter, pests are frozen but their eggs survive so that the following Summer sees the young pests again attacking the tea trees. However, environmentalists have convinced these growers not to use pesticides that would save those trees.

Tea trees grow near wild grass, bamboo, flowering fruit trees, etc. The leaves are said to absorb aromas and flavors from these nearby plants. Orchids, osthmanthus, stone fruits such as peach, and even ginger and cassia/cinnamon are evident.
### Processing the Leaves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Withering</strong></td>
<td>In bamboo trays, about 35°C, 10-20 minutes. On warm day done outside in sun; on cold/cloudy days done indoors. Influences flavor building; leaves release intense fragrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooling and Resting</strong></td>
<td>Withered leaves stacked in bamboo trays for several hours to cool down and rest. Space-saving arrangement also assures that leaves do not dry too quickly and so remain soft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oxidizing</strong></td>
<td>Usually done by a tea master. Starts oxidation by gently kneading leaves, breaking up leaf cells so juices react with oxygen in air. Usual oxidation level is 20-80%; Dancong is 50-80%.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stopping (“Kill Green”)</strong></td>
<td>Destroys enzymes, stops oxidation. Done with charcoal-fired ovens at 140-160°C. Tea master is careful that does not get a smoky flavor. Roasted until soft for next step.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Shaping Tea Leaves

- Rolled mechanically (only non-handmade step). Leaves are slightly twisted, not rolled into beads like other oolongs.

### First Roast

- Dries leaves, develops flavors. 80-90°C, about 10 minutes. Rests leaves so can dry at low temperature before final roasting.

### Final Roast

- Strong roast gives long shelf-life, adds toasty aromas. Roasting temperature must not be too high or too long or tea tastes burnt.

### Sorting

- Unsightly leaves and stems removed laborious by hand. A time for chit chat and to be cool out of the sun.
Infusing dancongs is as enjoyable as drinking them, especially with premium dancongs having beautiful, full leaves. The aroma and taste are clean, focused and refined. Proper infusing technique will help you enjoy that aroma and taste even more.

In Chao Zhou area, there is a unique technique for infusing tea leaves that is called the Chao Zhou infusing style or Gongfu infusing style (“gongfu” simply means “done with skill” - the Chaozhou infusing method earned its “gongfu” title because it was a technique originally developed for the infusing low grade/coarse teas, getting the most from them through skillful brewing.).

The Chaozhou gongfu tea infusing technique may date back as much as 3-4 centuries ago when small teapots became widely used. Some “tea scholars” say this technique back to Lu Yu in the Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.). Some of the water boiling methods/temperature and other aspects may have been adapted from Lu Yu’s Cha Jing.

This technique uses a higher ratio of tea leaves to water volume. The dancong tea leaves will be infused repeatedly with water heated to a full boil; each infusion will be for a brief time only (compared to the 4-7 minutes for some teas).

### Commonly-Used Chaozhou Infusing Technique

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Water Temperature</th>
<th>Steeping Time</th>
<th>Teaware</th>
<th>Number of Infusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About 195-200°F</td>
<td>Less than 45 seconds</td>
<td>Smaller is recommended</td>
<td>As many as 10 to 20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Optimum temperature for brewing, i.e., crab eye sized bubbling
Heated on a charcoal stove known as a 風炉.

Shorter time avoids oversteeping.
Flavors extracted from tea leaves when water added. Infuse longer for thicker, richer flavor.

Gaiwan, 50-100ml capacity, best.
Or dedicate a Yixing clay teapot to your favorite Dancong oolong.

Each will be a bit different in flavor and aroma.
Infuse until flavor profile is too weak.
### Some Factors to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tea Leaf Quantity and Swelling</th>
<th>Teapot Shape and Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About 7 grams of dry tea leaves.</td>
<td>Dry leaves need room to expand and infuse their essences into the water.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Swelled to about 110ml when water was added.**
- **Strong, intense:** 1 gram dry leaves + 10ml water.

**Flat Xu Bian pot -** does not allow leaves to expand very much at all.

**Xiao Ying pot -** round interior allows leaves to swell fully, liquid has more dissolved tea.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tea Loading</th>
<th>Pouring Water</th>
<th>Pouring Tea</th>
<th>Savoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Load pot 80% full with tea leaves forming a ball. Crush some before putting in pot, then load full leaves. They infuse faster, richer.</td>
<td>Never pour hot water directly into the middle of tea ball or liquid will be overly bitter. Add quickly in circular motion around rim of pot.</td>
<td>Teapots must have very quick pours. If a pot has too slow a pour, the tea that has not been poured yet will become oversteeped.</td>
<td>Fill tiny thin cups 70% full. Bring cup to lips, sip using upward air sucking motion, drawing tea into mouth. Helps aroma fill mouth and nose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use tea that is rough and coarse, such as Wuyi Yancha, dancong, instead of rolled teas such as Tie Guan Yin. The infusing process should be undisturbed and align the Essence (精), Qi (气), and Spirit (神). Tea ware requirement is more specific, the movements are decisive and non-slipshod. The procedures of Chaozhou infusing is almost as strict as that of the Japanese approach towards tea brewing procedures and ceremonies.

**Preparation of Infuser**
- Have focus, attention, quietness.
- Place cloth for wiping pot on your right thigh.
- Place cloth for wiping cups on your left thigh.
- Place 2 square cloths on table.

**Selecting Teapot**
- Teapot sits in deep bowl.
- Use a pot that is more porous, lower fired, with a lid that fits well.
- Pot should not be too big, just enough for about 3 or 4 cups of tea.

**Preparing Teapot**
- Pour boiling water into the pot to heat it. Discard water in a container (called the fairness pitcher). Dry pot by tapping it on the cloth on right thigh and fan until pot is totally dry.
- Add tea leaves. Put lid on pot and pour hot water over pot to bake tea leaves, removing excess moisture.
- Add hot water to brim in circular motion. Place lid securely on pot. Discard this first infusion, it is just to “wake up” the tea leaves. Set pot on a square cloth on table, hold finger over airhole on lid, rock pot from side to side to mix water with leaves. Pour into chahai. Add water to pot, rock. Repeat until leaves are all spent.

**Storing and Aging**
There is some debate out there about what an aged oolong is. Some say it is oolong that has been purposely stored after processing is finished; others say it is unsold tea that is stored and then brought back out under the name “aged oolong.” One source says it is better to let them sit for a year or two due to the high firing they undergo during processing. This takes away the burnt, rough, and overly dry characters in the flavor so they steep up instead a liquid that is round, full-bodied, and deep when infused in the gongfu style. Some vendors will press these aged oolongs into brick shapes similar to how pu-erh teas are done.
Dancong oolongs come from *shui xian* tea plant cultivars. The Romanized name is sometimes spelled “shui xian” and sometimes “shui hsein.” It is interpreted various ways, such as Water Goddess, Water Fairy, Water Sprite, Narcissus Flower, or Chinese Sacred Lily.

Most *shui xian* cultivar plants are grown in the Wuyi Mountains of Fujian County, with sub-cultivars grown in the Phoenix Mountains of Guangdong Province (the best are said to be from Mt. Wudong) just south of Fujian Province. *Shui xian* is also grown in Taiwan, the small island nation off the coast of Guangdong Province, China. Tea masters there use the leaves to produce Narcissus teas based on the min nan style of *shui xian* oolong. They are rarely seen outside of Taiwan and many even have narcissus flowers mixed in with the tea leaves.
Varieties

- **Fenghuang shui xian**
  used to make Dancong oolongs.

- **Lao cong shui xian (hsien)**
  tea plants as old as 200 years, well-tended and treasured by the locals, and the leaves are said to make the best quality teas.

- **Fujian min bei shui xian**
  cultivated as a bush, grown outside Wuyi Shan area or in Min Bei (northern Fujian Province).

- **Fujian wuyi shui xian**
  grow as tall trees; tend to have a dark colored liquid with a heavy honey fragrance.

- **Fujian min nan shui xian**, also called “se zhong shui xian”
  fairly easy to grow and has been propagated to a rather wide area, but the best ones are few and far between.
# Dancongs with Floral Aromas

## Apricot Flower Fragrance (Xing Hua Xiang) Dancong

A rare varietal hand-picked and hand-processed by Huang Ruiguang and his sons on their high elevation plot in Wudongshan. The meticulous 24-hour hand turning process perfected by Huang Ruiguang brings out the peak aromatics in this unique tea, a balance of rich jasmine florals and fruity apricot flavor with a hint of cooling cedar.

## Gardenia Fragrance (Huang Zhi Xiang 黃枝香)

Characterized by its particularly fruity aroma and a subtle fragrance of flowers. It has a unique and rare intensity. The leaves are slightly twisted, not rolled into beads. Huang Zhi Xiang is a sub species of Shui Xian. The tea plants are clones of an old Fenghuang Dan-cong tree more than 600 years old. A limited amount of 30-to-50-year-old trees were propagated from that old Dancong tree, so the production is very limited. Natural, strong gardenia aroma. A medium-roasted tea. Store at normal temperature for a long time.
Ginger Flower Fragrance (Jiang Hua Xiang 姜花香)

Heavenly Fragrance (Tong Tian Xiang 通天香)

Natural ginger flower aroma produced by a tea master with long years of experience and skill. Also called Tong Tian Xiang, which means its aroma is so lingering and longlasting that it can reach up into the sky. A natural, high ginger flower aroma and taste; delicate tea liquid with lingering ginger flower taste in the mouth. It can be infused over 10 times.

Ginger Aroma (Jiang Mu Xiang)

A naturally occurring hybrid of Fenghuang area Shui Xian selected over a period of 200 years. Grows around 1,200 meters elevation in north Fenghuang near Tou She village. The plants grow naturally, reaching a height of 3-4 meters.

Taste is complex, powerful, refined, elegant, with a sweetness, spiciness (like raw ginger), floral notes (like Ginger Flower), bitterness, and astringency. The liquid is gold-orange, very thick, easily going 10+ infusions. Infused leaves are still mostly green with some wilted brown (typical of traditional Dancong processing).
This medium mountain oolong is grown at about 1,200 meters elevation. The varietal is called "Nan Jiang Xiang" (Wild Ginger) because of the aroma and taste having some likeness to Wild Ginger. Dancong Oolong's varietals are numerous, this one is quite rare and grows well at medium to high altitude.

The taste is incredibly complex and powerful, while remaining refined and elegant. There is sweetness, spiciness (similar to raw ginger), floral notes (like ginger flowers), and a little bitterness and astringency. The tea is very thick and lubricating. You can easily get over 10 infusions when infusing gongfu style. Tea liquid is golden-orange, the steeped leaves are still mostly green with some wilted brown (as is typical of traditional Dancong processing).

Extraordinary fruity aroma and subtle ginger blossom fragrance. It is a sub species of Shui Xian. The leaves are slight twisted, not rolled into beads.

A medium elevation Dancong grown at about 850 meters altitude near Zhong Ping Village in the Wu Dong mountains northwest of Fenghuang town. Picked and processed in April from 25-30 year old tea bushes, then carefully processed.

The tea is processed like a traditional Dancong, but with minimal oxidation to preserve the teas creamy, floral jasmine-like aroma.

Although this tea bears the name "Jasmine Aroma", no jasmine flowers or oils of any kind were used to achieve the effect. It's not a true jasmine tea, but it does have the faintest, most subtle similarity. Most of the tea is green, viscous, sweet, bitter, floral, and slightly astringent. Good creamy body, pungent taste and aroma.
**Honey Orchid Fragrance (Mi Lan Xiang 米蘭香) aka Peach Orchid Fragrance or Snow Orchid Fragrance ***

The most well-known Dancong style. Uses the Bai Ye varietal. The leaves are larger and broader than may other varietals and are expertly processed over a full month to give them a special thick, sweet and floral (orchid) aroma. The finished dry leaf is a deep brown color. The infused leaves are also more brown (and less green) than most other Dancong oolongs. This higher degree of oxidation due to roasting brings out the delicious honey and orchid taste and keeps the special character of this tea stable for at least two years.

**Magnolia Fragrance (Yu Lan Xiang 玉兰香)**

A light-roasted oolong picked from more than 100-year-old tea bushes. Unique, natural magnolia aroma and honey taste, pleasing, lingering. The natural floral aroma of the variety of tea bush used in its production is akin to magnolia blossoms. A skilled tea master coaxes this natural aroma out of the leaves through withering, oxidizing, and roasting.

Leaves are picked from tea bushes over 100 years old at the end of April. Leaves are picked around noon and transported back to the factory for processing. No bitter heaviness. Mild, rich, and complex. A full-bodied flavor. This Dancong Oolong is a sub species of Shui Xian and the leaves are only slightly twisted, not rolled into beads.
Narcissus Fragrance (Lao Cong Shui Xian 老枞水仙) aka Old Bush

Ancestor of the Phoenix Dancong family. Long age helps the tea tree acquire rich minerals and bring stronger aftertaste to Lao Cong Shui Xian. Its flavor is subtle and can linger for at least half an hour. The first sip has a woody flavor, then nuts, finally a fresh and slightly flowery flavor.

Tea tree around 400-650 years old

Orchid Fragrance Cao Lan (草兰) (Cymbidium elegans Orchid)

A special varietal grown only in Jiao Di Village in the Wu Dong mountainous area of Guangdong. The entire production is done by fewer than 20 families, and the output is less than 300 kilograms per harvest.

The Cao Lan tea plant varietal has medium-large sized leaves with obvious ridges. They are sturdy and thick, so require extra rolling and breaking during processing. The liquid has an aroma and flavor reminiscent of a type orchid-like flower called Cymbidium elegans. It also has a very vibrant honey sweetness to counter the subtle floral vegetal bitterness.
Peach aroma on the dry leaf. Floral and milky aromas, some spearmint, the mouthfeel is very thick, smooth and creamy. Relaxing aroma of iris orchid and a bright yellow liquid. Sustains a rich flavor through multiple infusions and builds a pleasant sweetness at the back of your throat with each sip.

Alternatively called “Song Zhong Zhi Lan” or “Song Variety Iris”, because its mother bush is believed to originate in the Song Dynasty. Two very old examples of this cultivar are still living.

Can be infused more than 20 times and still have orchid flavor.

The tea plants grow at 600-1,000 meters elevation. A sub species of Shui Xian, slightly twisted, not rolled into beads.

Zhu Ye “Bamboo Leaf” Dancong is a special sub-varietal of Zhi Lan Xiang. The leaves are from 100+ year old trees growing naturally.

The name Zhu Ye or Bamboo Leaf was given to this tea because of its spindly long green leaves and fresh green feeling.

The aroma is like orchids, the taste is creamy and sweet with notes of honey and flowers.

From the Wu Dong Mountains at about 1,150 meters elevation.
Osmanthus Fragrance (Gui Hua Xiang 桂花香) Dancong

Gui Hua Xiang Dancong (literally “Osmanthus Aroma”) grows in the Phoenix Mountains. The tea consists of carefully plucked bud-with-three-leaves sets off of 100-year-old Gui Hua Xiang tea trees cultivated in Li Zai Ping Village and Jiao Di Village. This tea is characterized by an extraordinarily fruity aroma and subtle fragrance of osmanthus. This is a sub species of Shui Xian, and the leaves are only slightly twisted instead rolled into beads.

Making high-quality Gui Hua Xiang begins with sunny weather and a good tea making seasons to bring out the aroma. Tea farmers must process leaves using great skill to get the natural osmanthus aroma and taste. Often, production is only about 5 kilograms for the entire Spring season.

Some versions of this particular Dancong are scented, in a way similar to how Mo Li Hua (“Jasmine Aroma”) teas are. Osmanthus flowers are “baked” with the tea leaves. They thus impart their aroma to those leaves. Others get the fragrance naturally from the osmanthus flowers growing around them.
Pomelo Flower Fragrance (You Hua Xiang 柚花香)

On some lists in place of Gui Hua Xiang. This tea has a natural citrus aroma and a pleasant sweet lingering aftertaste.

Tuberose Fragrance (Ye Lai Xiang 夜来香)

Named after the tuberose flower which blooms at night. This flower’s heavy scent is used in perfumes and is the inspiration for the varietal name.

The tea leaves are picked from older tea plants growing uncultivated at 1,180 meters. It’s an aromatic Dancong grown for centuries in and around Shi Tou Jiao Village.

The original “Mother Tree” is 300 years old and grows just outside of the village. Leaf size is largish, processing style is light wither and low temp short roasts. Tea liquid is yellow-gold, thick bodied, and highly infusible.

Yinhua Fragrance aka Honeysuckle Fragrance or Duck Dung Fragrance (Ya Shi Xiang)

From old tea trees. Fragrance can be described as flowery and slightly milky. One of the best Feng-huang Dancong varieties. From the Feng-niao mountain. These high quality leaves can be infused more than 40 times.

The soil where these tea plants grow is yellow with chalky mineral content, and the plant leaves are dark green and long, like duck’s feet. However, the name “duck dung” was meant to keep people from stealing the tea. The name stuck for awhile and then was changed to Yin Hua. Recently, some tea vendors have gone back to the “duck dung” name, or even cruder versions, as a marketing gimmick.

This tea is a Wuye Dancong, due to the dark green tea leaves, so it is called Dark Leaf.
**Dancongs with Fruit, Nut, and/or Spice Aromas**

**Almond Aroma (杏仁香) made from Ju Duo Zai Varietal**

A rare varietal of Dancong grown by a few families in Fenghuang Phoenix Village, Wu Dong Mountains, and characterized by small-medium sized leaf, dark green appearance, with very large sawtooth edges. Ju Duo Zai is in fact the least grown varietal of Dancong.

After picked and processed into maocha, leaves are roasted, stored, and roasted 2 more times at low temperature. This roasting is very gentle, and infused leaves are still mostly green color.

The taste is sweet and fruity with a slight bitterness and no astringency. There is a slight roasted marshmallow sweetness and the tea lingers in the mouth and throat lubricating it even after you’ve completed your tea session.

**Almond Aroma (杏仁香) (Ping Keng Tou 杏仁香)**

Grown in Ping Keng Tou (平坑头) Village at 870 meters elevation. Tea trees and bushes are uncultivated, 20-40 years old. One of many Dancong varietals around for centuries. During the roasting process smells like roasted almonds. Crisp, bittersweet, honey and cream notes.

**Almond Aroma (杏仁香) (Xing Ren Xiang 杏仁香)**

Leaves are plucked from carefully-selected Ju Duo Zhai tea trees around 80 years old and processed by tea masters. They infuse liquid with full, rich, deep natural almond aroma and taste, light honey mixed in, a complex mouthfeel.

Tea trees growing at higher altitudes have smaller and thinner leaves. These are easier to process and are tight and thin in their dry form. They can infuse many times and take several infusions before untwisting fully, a sign of the tea masters’ processing skill.

Ju Duo Zhai tea trees around 80 years old
Both a “tea type” and a genetically unique cultivar of the tea plant. A Wuyi oolong tea that is twisted, not rolled. Originally from Anxi County in Fujian Province and first cultivated during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). It has been grown for a long time in Wuyi and Fenghuang and, more recently, also in the Nation of Taiwan.

“Rou Gui” means “cinnamon” or “cassia bark” (a pseudo cinnamon with a similar flavor) and refers to spicy taste and sweet fragrant aroma.

Experts say the firing and oxidation levels have more to do with the tea’s lasting flavor than the tea cultivar used. Even so, a good tea master knows how to work with that cultivar to bring out its own particular flavor characteristics. Roasting levels also make a difference. Two processing standards are now used:

1. Traditional, with typically spicy
2. New consumer standard that gives the leaves a mixed color and a more fruity aroma.

All medium- to high-roasted Wuyi rock tea can be stored for over 2-3 years. In fact, the high-roasted tea can be stored for at least 4 years. Keep them sealed in an airtight container and away from excessive heat and cold.

Matured Rou Guis tend to be milder than the fresher ones. In fact, if you get a batch that is somewhat astringent, you can store the leaves for about 3 years and then try it.

While not famous like Da Hong Pao, Rou Gui (like Shui Xian) is still flavorful and a great quality tea while saving you money. The better quality versions of this tea are starting to go up in price as people learn more about them. The more elite versions, in fact, compete with gongfu grades of Si Da Ming Cong.

This style of tea tends to be great with seafood.
Qun Ti Xiang (群体香) ***

Has a fruit aroma produced by nature. This aroma smells like mix of all kinds juice, however, it lets you experience different fruit flavors in one cup of tea, like peach, nut, and lychee. The mountain where it grows is covered by heavy fog in the early morning and at dawn. The mountain also has rich minerals in the special rocky red soil. This magical aroma can only be produced by Phoenix Mountain rock and fog which give birth to this special fruit aroma. This tea absorbs rich minerals from the rocky earth. Enjoy a fruit tea without putting any fruit into the tea.
### Miscellaneous Dancongs

#### Ba Xian (八仙) aka “Eight Immortals”

From the Wu Dong mountains at elevations of 500-700 meters. The special varietal **ba xian** contains 53 distinct aromatic molecules. The minerals sucked up through the roots from the rocky soil produces an intensive taste of fruit that lingers.

There are eight original plants of this varietal, dating back to the Song dynasty. Only one survived and is regarded as the “mother plant” for all **ba xian** plants. They grow around a few villages in Wu Dong, and only small amounts of this tea style are produced.

“Wild Ba Xian” grows at 900 meters (Middle Mountain) above Da An Village. The leaves are from a small stand of trees growing naturally for more than 50 years. They grow in among rocks and take in minerals from those rocks.

#### Bai Ye (白叶单丛) (White Leaf)

Grows wild at 1,000+ meters elevation near Chaozhou. The plants have a curved large appearance, light yellow-green crowns. Aroma is both floral and honey, heavy pungent nectar quality. Taste is thick, pure, sweet aftertaste. Wild grown Baiye Dangcong absorbs rich minerals and wild flower flavor. They are scattered over the high mountains, not tended by humans. Natural taste like orchid, peach, and honey.

**Traditional processing:**

1. Pick tender shoots (1 bud to 2-3 leaf ratio).
2. Wither in sun 30 minutes, then in shade 1 hr.
3. Shake leaves 15-40 times.
4. Wok fry (200°C), 4-5 mins., stir constantly.
5. Rolling and breaking the leaf for 18 minutes.
6. Drying in hot room at 100°C.

#### Chou Shi

Chou Shi means “dehydrate.” This tea style is created using a new way of processing that is similar to Anxi Tie Guan Yin. The leaves are picked, and before wilting, they are fried to start the kill-green process. They are then rolled briefly by hand and then put in a special dehydrator to stop the wilting process entirely. The result is a very green and very aromatic dancong with a very sweet taste, with some vegetal, almost Tie Guan Yin like, feeling.

An appealing, light, refreshing green style flavor suggesting ripe apricots and yellow melons (such as canary melon). Long, clean, sweet aftertaste. Flavor notes suggest the sweet floral characteristics of green-style oolongs such as semi ball-rolled oolongs from Anxi and Taiwan, and Baozhong from Taiwan.
Da Wu Ye (大乌叶)
(Big Black Leaf, Snowflake, Duck Dung Fragrance)

Grown almost exclusively in Phoenix Village in Wu Dong Mountains. A medium leaf varietal and natural hybrid of local “Ya ShiXiang” bushes and “Shui Xian” varietal. The lowest harvest quantity per bush of any Dancong. The tea trees are 100-300 years old. The liquid has a high magnolia aroma followed by a sweet fruit aroma like sweet apricots. Pale yellow liquid. Winter harvested versions are very lightly oxidized, giving them a green leaf with a fruity and floral aroma and flavor with a creamy mouthfeel.

Da Wu Ye varietal Xue Wu Ye

The name is from its unusually large deep green leaves. This limited seasonal harvest is picked in early winter during Han Lu (寒露), when the mountain air is cold and the days are shorter. This yields a unique, intense sweetness and full sparkling texture. While the spring picking is mineral-focused, this harvest is full of intense floral notes and a deep green flavor to complement the sweet aftertaste.

Dong Fang Hong (东方红)
(Oriental Red)

Grown in Phoenix Mountain, Chaozhou, China’s Guangdong Province. It grows wild in the very rocky area in Phoenix Mountain and has a rather high flower aroma. The name “Dong Fang Hong” (Oriental Red) means very good quality and famous, since it was liked by a former dictator of China. The tea’s history goes back more than 300 years, before that name was given to it, and originally given a slang name by the local farmer.

Dong Fang Hong tea plant
**Ji Long Kan (Chicken Cage)**

Made from the Ji Long Kan, a unique varietal exclusively growing at about 900 meters elevation in the village of Zhong Ping (Feng Xi area). Originally a Fenghuang Shui Xian varietal but naturally crossed with other tea trees and now distinct. The tea garden is comprised of trees that grow uncultivated, 60-400 years old. The tallest and oldest is about 5 meters tall and 4 meters wide.

The taste and experience is unique and elegant. The aroma is floral with notes of cream and stone fruit. The liquid is thick and creamy, coating the tongue with an elixir-like essence.

**Lao Xian Ong (老仙翁) (Old, Venerable Immortal)**

The Lao Xian Ong Dancong varietal has been around for over 1,000 years. The oldest living tree is in Li Zai Ping, this “Mother Tree” is 400 years old and still producing. They grow at around 1,150 meters (“High Mountain”) elevation.

A medium-small leaf size, dark-olive color. Rolled tight during processing. The tea is sweet, bitter, with a strong pungent taste and strong huigan. The aroma is more subdued when compared with Song Zhong or Xing Ren Aroma Dancongs.

**Song Zhong (宋种) aka Sweet Potato Dancong**

Has been planted since the Song Dynasty. It is said that in Song Dynasty, emperor Song traveled to Phoenix Mountain, he drank water infused with wild leaves and found it very refreshing and tasty. From then on, people planted this tea tree and called it Song Zhong, meaning the plant from Song Dynasty.

Phoenix Village is home to original four surviving “Song Zhong” trees growing there since the Song Dynasty. A naturally occurring hybrid of Shui Xian and often called “Sweet Potato Dancong” and has a sweet nectar like taste.
Xue Pian (雪片单枞茶) (Snow Flake)

Centuries ago, Phoenix mountain was so cold that snow fell in early Winter. The tea leaves, covered with light snow, looked like Xuepian (literally “snow flakes”). Frost and snow make the tea leaves smell better with a natural high orchid flavor. This tea comes only from Phoenix Mountain and is produced in early Winter.

From Xiong Di Zai (Brothers) Village

From near Xiong Di Zai (brothers) Village. The tea plants are 80-150 years old and grow uncultivated at 1,250 meters elevation. The varietal is from a pair of trees that grew side by side in the village centuries ago. The pair of trees produced for over 100 years, but one died. The surviving tree was propagated in the village where it’s still picked today. Taste is strong, thick, sweet, with notes of orchid. The liquid is a deep golden yellow color and has a very strong milk aroma (nai xiang) in the aftertaste.

From Yang Mei Shu Village (杨梅树)

Harvested during the first flush of Spring. A middle mountain (800 meters elevation) Dancong growing in Yang Mei Shu Village. There are also some areas above the village where tea is grown. The villagers call the varietal “Yang Mei Shu” and say that it has grown there for centuries and it therefore it’s own distinct varietal.

The tea is processed in much the same manner as other Dancongs, with some light oxidation, that yields a fruity and floral golden tea soup with a creamy body and ultra high level of aroma. The after-finish is sweet and the taste/aroma of the tea stays with the drinker long after the session is done.

Only 6 kilograms in total produced!