

Title: The Silk Road
A Walk through My Life's Journey

Writer: Calyn Tan Jen Ai

Tip Tap, Tip Tap
Walking down the road,
I stumble upon a crossroad.
Which road should I take?
My curious heart whispers,
"Go, explore the unknown"

I walked and walked the road,
On smooth pavements, on rocky roads.
Over the mountains, under the seas,
Not knowing what is ahead of me.

Along the way, I see people,
Similar yet different,
They spoke a language I could not understand,
I smiled, they smiled back.
Then I realized that's how easy communication can be.

I stumble upon a fallen tree,
Someone came by to help me,
That day, 2 different cultures met,
I learned a new thing
and gained a new friend.

The Great Silk Road;
A man's journey into the unknown,
Traversing through boundaries,
Bridging different cultures,
Leading to a new world of discoveries.
In many ways, it bears resemblance to my life's journey.

Tip tap, Tip tap,
Walking down the road.
I stumble upon a crossroad.

Which road should I take?

The common road?

The road less travelled?

Or turn back home?

I will take the road that defines me,
even if it means taking the road less travelled.

Who knows someday,

My road will create a chapter in history

Title: Song Luo Tea on the Maritime Silk Road

Writer: Leo Lin

There is a popular ancient verse in China, saying that you should never sigh in fear for the long way along Maritime Silk Route, since the long distance between Hangu and Bandung does not stop it from being prosperous. Stretching from China's southeast coast, the Maritime Silk Road winds all the way through countries in Southeast Asia and Indian Ocean, and finally reaches to East Africa and Europe. Apart from the well-known Maritime Silk Road, there is a kind of world-famous green tea closely related to it, namely Song Luo Tea. It was born in Song Luo Mountains in my hometown, Xiuning County, which is a typical ancient county in Huizhou and surrounded by charming green hills and clean waters. Well, if you are not so familiar with Song Luo Tea, here comes a chance to smell it through the vast history. Nine years ago, escorted by a large cluster of people, a matchlessly valuable sample of tea walked slowly into a showroom of Zhuang Yuan Ge in Xiuning County, Anhui Province. It's much more than an ordinary kind of tea due to its extraordinary history. After more than two centuries' quiet sleep with East Indiaman Gotheborg, Sweden shipwreck on the seabed, Song Luo Tea finally returned home.

In the 18th century, on the Maritime Silk Road notable for Sino-Western trade, a large Sweden merchantman, which is East Indiaman Gotheborg from Europe, was fully loaded with tea, silk, porcelain and other Chinese commodities, but unfortunately it stuck on the rocks and sank into the sea. Thus it called an end to the marvelous sea voyage of Chinese tea and porcelain, which were buried underwater for hundreds of years. With the advances in technology in 1987, East Indiaman Gotheborg was salvaged from the seabed after more than two centuries. To people's surprise, 370 tons of tea was still there inside the merchantman and some of it hasn't even been oxidized during such a long period of time. And more amazingly, some of it was still drinkable, giving off light and refreshing aroma of tea when made with boiling water. And Song Luo Tea was right among the magical tea.

After a legendary more than two-century absence, Song Luo Tea was back at her lovely home, along with innumerable memories and vicissitudes on the Maritime Silk Road. We have to admit what a miracle it is to smell this faint scent of tea on the Maritime Silk Road once again, which was preserved in good condition even by sea water. Song Luo Tea came from Song Luo Mountains in Xiuning. As recorded by Xiuning County Annals, there was a mountain called Song Luo Mountain in Wan'an, Xiuning County. Near the foot of this mountain lied a Langyuan Village and the villagers made their living by tea planting. Among them was a monk who grasped the essence of Guo Di's method of making tea. Thus this kind of tea was named as Song Luo tea and enjoyed quite a reputation at the time.

Since then, Song Luo Tea has been time-honored and was in full flourish during Ming Dynasty. As commented by Xie Zhaozhe, a famous naturalist and poet at that time, the good tea in the world today includes Song Luo, Hu Qiu, Luo Jie, Long Jin, Yang Xian, Tian Chi and so on. It's beyond dispute that drinking Song Luo was in widespread fashion and it was even used as royal tea at court in the Ming Dynasty. Ming Dynasty is exactly an era when loose tea rose sharply in China. As a consequence, Song Luo was not only

popular across China, but also counted as the major kind of tea among exported tea. According to an order of British East India Company, which is traced as the earliest one, Holland merchants had started transporting Song Luo Tea from Guang Zhou Province to Europe for sale as early as 1606. What' more, it's distinguished as contributing to the biggest imports from China and being the earliest Chinese exported tea. Once again, history saw the glory of Hui Tea. And Song Luo Tea found on the East Indiaman Gotheborg is absolutely solid proof how influential Hui Tea was in the world at that time.

As for me, this discovery of Song Luo Tea on the Maritime Silk Road means quite a lot. It has stirred up my deepest pride in tea aroma refreshing for centuries and national tea shining in the whole world. Spanning over two centuries, the sample of Song Luo Tea is no longer green, but still splendid with a glow on the Maritime Silk Road, brighter than ever.