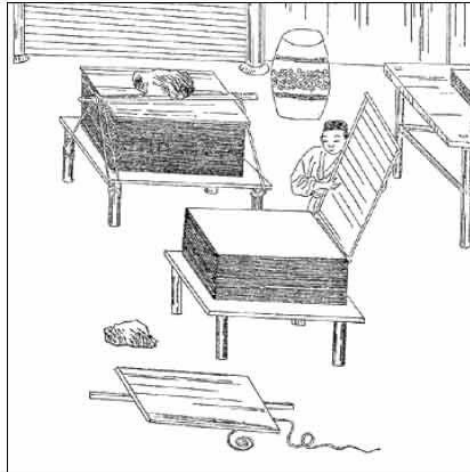
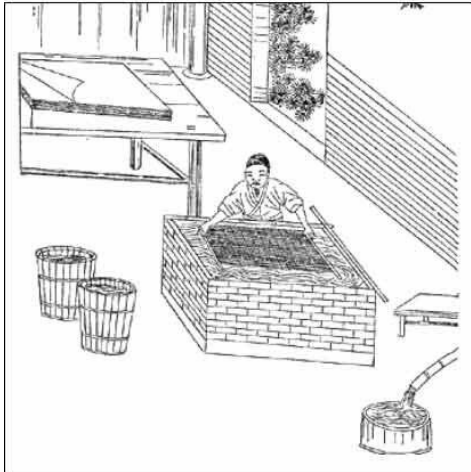




The Making of Calligraphy Paper

Sophia Dreps and Sutton Mock



Xuan Paper Production

Location:

- Jing County, Anhui Province, Eastern China
- Unique water quality and mild climate

Key Ingredients:

- Bark: Tara Wig-Celtis or Blue Sandalwood
- Rice Straw

Material Properties:

- Strong, smooth surface
- Ability to absorb water and moisten ink
 - light strokes vs heavy ones
- Ability to fold repeatedly without breaking

Historical Significance:

- Origins: Tang Dynasty (618-907)
- Made strictly by hand
- 'Paper of Agers' or 'Kings of Paper'
- Today: Taught in local schools



Jing County, Anhui Province

Material / Fabrication Process

Traditional Process:

- Includes more than 100 steps
- Takes 2 years to complete

Process Broken Down:

- Cellulose (Binding Agent)
- Wood Ash (Calcium Carbonate)
- Lignin (Substrate)
- Water (Solvent)

Types:

- Shengxuan "raw Xuan paper"
- Shuxuan "ripe Xuan paper"
- Banshuxuan "half-ripe Xuan paper"

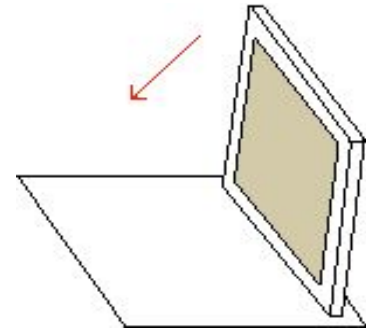
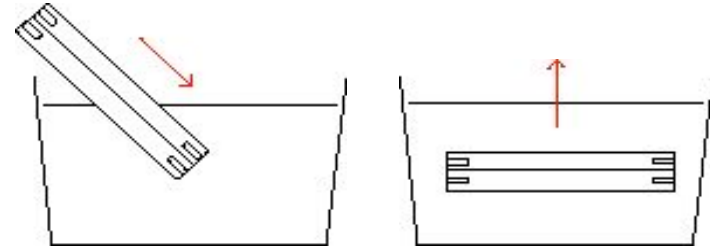
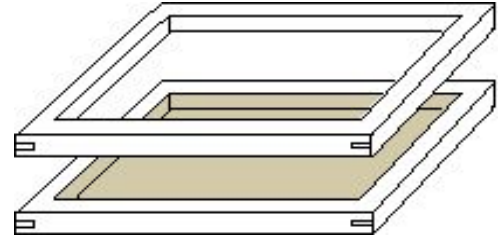
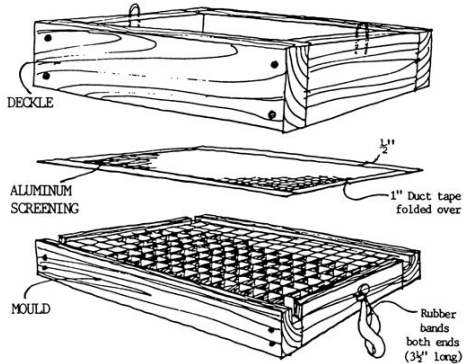


Xuan / Rice Paper / 宣紙

Make Your Own:

- Pulping
 - Rice Straw
 - Bamboo
 - Mulberry
- Sheet Forming
 - Deckle and Mould
- Drying

PAPERMAKING - DECKLE BOX



Process of Making

1. Harvest Plant Material



2. Trim / Soak



3. Shred



4. Boil



Process of Making

- Natural bleaching
- Lye water solution



WOOD
ASH



CAUSTIC
SOLUTION



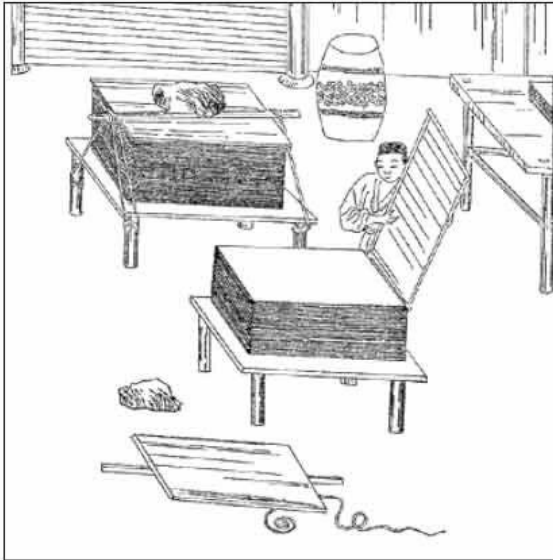
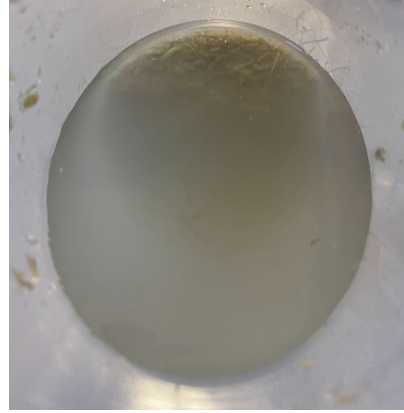
Process of Making-

Final Product



Shaping the Paper

- Add water to the pulp
- Align the deckle and mold
- Place Framing into the mixture, lift
- Carefully remove the paper from the mold
- Transfer to flat surface
- Let the paper dry (at least 24hr)



The Difficulty of the Craft

- Going into papermaking, we realized that it would not be easy to create a paper that usually takes years to perfect.
- However, in this process we could really learn the difficulties of the craft.
- We also learned that there is a reason that very few people can master this skill.
- We have gained a newfound appreciation for masters of Xuan paper making.



Calligraphy on Different Types of Paper

Traditional, made with Bark:

- Thicker Paper, with a smooth and rough side.
- Smooth side is used to write or paint on.
- Made from traditional materials, bark of the blue sandalwood tree and rice straw.

Bamboo:

- Thinner and slightly transparent
- Has a slightly textured appearance
- Much cheaper than traditional paper



Rice Paper Sculpture by Zhu Jinshi

Display and Preservation

- Xuan Paper works of Calligraphy/Paintings were stored or displayed as scrolls. Rarely were they stored as sheets or books.
- If the owner was wealthy, the paper would be mounted on fine silks to frame and preserve the artwork. Luckily, Xuan Paper is extremely durable, which makes this preservation process very simple.



Interesting Fact



It is well known that traditional Xuan Paper from the Anhui Province is of an extremely high quality, and was highly sought after in the past.

- But did you know that European Spies once tried to steal the secret of making perfect rice paper? A group of outsiders spied on the traditional paper making process in Jing County, and then upon their return, published a book about all of the secrets to making the paper.
- In 1909 some foreign spies even took samples of the Blue Sandalwood Tree to try to grow in their own country, in order to make the paper at home. What they didn't know was that the trees were unable to grow outside of the Anhui province, and thus the fibres could not produce quality paper.
- The minerals in the water, as well as the overall climate of the province is why the paper from the Blue Sandalwood is the quality that it is.

Video

[Zhu Jinshi \(The Allure of Matter\) - Smart Museum of Art](#)

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