

# Global Tea Hut



## NEWSLETTER #7, AUGUST 2012

The new spiritual families are without borders, and share new insights and wisdom with great joy. We are open to vulnerability as a power, rather than something to be feared; or worse yet swept under the rug. And in seeking such an awakening of harmony and consciousness, there can be no exclusivity to our organization. In fact, we needn't make an identity of our tradition, but rather allow it to express itself through all the amazing things we are doing. This expression is apparent in the many Global Tea Hut members who are infusing the tea spirit into their music, movies, environmental and economic works, their growth and healing of others and themselves.

It has always seemed as if the darkness was on the verge of overrunning the world, but that's only because it is noisier than the light. The news isn't reporting the millions of meditators, the smiles and hugs, and the uplifted consciousness that is awakening globally. There are a tremendous amount of people cultivating and sharing spirit with others. Tea is also playing a role in this transformation of consciousness, amongst other medicines.

Tea is an ideal medium for healing the world and uplifting us, as it is adaptogenic, which means it heals whatever needs healing. Like the liquid that conveys its essence, it slips into all the cracks, wherever it's needed most. And not just within our bodies, but also between souls. Tea adapts amazingly to the environment it is brewed in: it can be celebratory, awakening, enlightening or encourage a deep and lasting stillness.

If we asked a Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist to sit in a room and discuss religion, they might emerge arguing. But if they went into that same room and discussed only the tea they were drinking, they would emerge brothers! Tea transcends sociocultural boundaries. It is the paragon of civilization, and always has been an emblem of peaceful discourse.

The wisdom tea transmits is nonverbal and timeless. There are sutras in these leaves—written in the veins. If we learn to read them, they lead us to higher aspects of ourselves. In walking through the old tea forests we transcend the illusory boundaries between ourselves and this Great Nature. It is there that the earth is

rounded again, and without any of the false and divisive lines we draw upon our paper maps.

This tradition of Cha Dao (The Way of Tea) is striving to cultivate, promote and express awakening through tea as a part of this global shift in consciousness. Our center is a place of solace and wisdom; and though our medium is always tea, we are open to learn and grow in any wisdom tradition. We use tea as medicine in the Native American sense of the word: as that which connects us to the oneness of this universe and our role on earth. Of course, this includes having a healthy mind, body and spirit, as these are the ways and means of achieving such a harmony, as well as the result.

*As the new consciousness emerges, some people will feel called upon to form groups that reflect the enlightened consciousness. These groups will not be collective egos. The individuals who make up these groups will have no need to define their identity through them. Whether they be enlightened businesses, charitable organizations, schools or communities of people living together, these enlightened collectives can be a vortex for consciousness that will accelerate the planetary shift.*

—Eckhart Tolle—



# 1 YOUR TEA OF THE MONTH, AUGUST 2012

## *2011 Spring Unprocessed Tea, Northern Taiwan*

Imagine a winding trail through some ancient forest. You can only see ahead and behind, as large banks rise up from the sides of the worn path. Oaks and maples lean up overhead, dappling the trail with sunlight that looks like a map of the stars cast across the ground ahead. Perhaps the leaves are changing, and their reds and yellows fill the world with more color than you know what to do with. Of course, you'll want to take your time—breathe in the fresh, untainted air and find great joy in the simple act of walking. Eventually, you come to a clearing with some rock terraces crafted so long ago that no one knows who made them. In seven neat rows rising up the mountainside you see rows of ancient tea trees, each about your own height. The morning is slipping away, so you get started: you collect leaves, gently pinching the juicy bud sets with your thumb and index finger and placing them into the bamboo basket you've brought. You wipe the sweat from your forehead, smiling up at the sky. This is good work... And when your basket is full, you climb down and spread out a blanket at the other end of the clearing where the sun shines brightest. You enjoy some food in the shade as your tea dries. Later that afternoon, you will collect the brittle brown leaves and take them back home to be roasted gently over a fire and finish the drying...

Try to carry the spirit and power of your vision into your tea room with this month's tea and you'll understand why this is one of our all time favorite teas here at the Tea Sage Hut. Sit and imagine those ancient days, as they are still here with us—steeping after steeping. Quiet your mind as you use your hand to scatter these leaves into a bowl, and meditate while you wait for your water to boil. The quiet stillness in this tea is deep and loud. It reminds you of our place within the natural cycles and helps cool the summer heat. Sit with it. It won't give up on you, not even hours later when it seems an eternity has passed...

This month's tea is about as close to the most ancient days of tea brewing as we in this modern time can find. It is a completely unprocessed tea. You could say it is a white tea, and may notice some whitish hairs on a few of the buds in the bag. But it really isn't even that. It is tea without the human refinement—without any ado. It was harvested from completely wild bushes in the north of Taiwan, which are all fifty to a hundred years old. The tea was most simply picked and then sun dried. There was no human processing to speak of, only leaves.

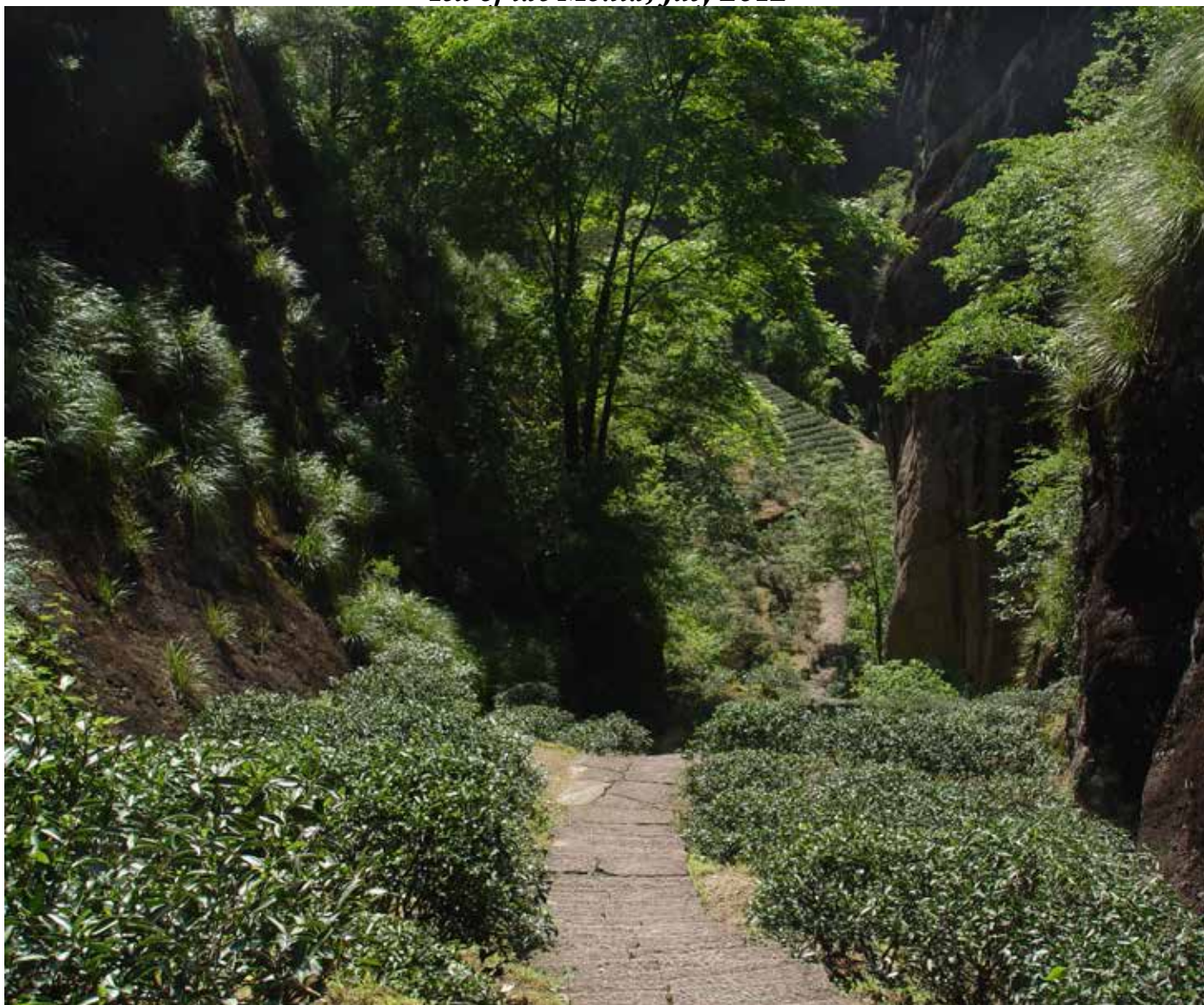
Our tea ancestors first started boiling tea and then processing it because the cell walls of plants are thick and strong. In order to get to the juice in the cells, they need to be broken down. This is why less processed teas, like Green and White Teas, for example, produce such a delicate, pale liquor. This tea is even lighter. The liquor is so light and flowery that if you approach it with anything but the quietest of minds, its essence will pass you by like a warm summer breeze.

There is something magical in drinking the simplest of teas. When we begin our tea journey, it is important to get in touch with tea as medicine. So much of tea is refined and stimulates us with amazing flavors and aromas. But tea was medicine for thousands of years before it was flavor. And it has so much healing power. It aligns us with Nature. For that reason, it is often nice to start one's tea journey by removing as much of the human element from the tea experience as possible; and learn to communicate with the spirit of this plant. That is why we often spend time teaching people to brew tea simply and without artifice: leaves in a bowl. And if you are a more seasoned tea drinker, there is still great power in returning to the simplest of all tea. And there isn't a more suitable tea for this than one which is completely unprocessed.

Tea speaks to us; we have receptors in our bodies and souls for it. It speaks of its origins and aligns us with Nature, especially living tea. Our intellectual selves always want to know a tea's human story: where it came from, who made it and how. But the drinking of it is more direct, and if you are paying attention you will see where it is from. Countless times, we have seen masters just smell a tea and know the region, mountain and even season it was harvested in. In our workshops, we have also witnessed more intuitive people describe in incredibly accurate detail the home of a particular tea without knowing anything about it, or tea in general for that matter. Tea gives its essence to us. It "wants" to be human, for lack of a better word. It evolved toward us, to meet us. One proof of this is that tea trees thrive when they are picked by humans, growing more and more vibrant crowns in response to human pruning (not over-harvesting, of course). Another is the way it communicates to our bodies and rests us in our hearts.

The universe only looks ordered through human eyes. The boundaries and categories we make aren't real; they are conceptual. This tea will soon be a part of you—what was "other" outside of you will be inside. And the forest it came from is also a part of the





tea, as are the water, sunshine and moonshine. Drink it all in. Set down the concepts, which serve a purpose but are often our masters. Use the mind as a tool, rather than being used by it.

There is no way to under or over-brew this tea. You can't add too many or too few leaves. It can be steeped and steeped all throughout an afternoon and, amazingly, still shine on. There is also no right or wrong water temperature. This tea can be brewed with hot or cooler water to produce different brews. It also compliments morning and evening sessions both. But you will have to quit it long before it quits you. The flavor is delicate, though the leaves are so robust. It has an uplifting Qi that lightens your soul from its terrestrial cage.

If you are going to share this tea with a friend or loved one, why not fill a single bowl with leaves and pass it around? There is deep connection in sharing a single bowl. And great connection in the presence and stillness you can share together. Let the medicine communicate an intention and you will find healing in your session.

Here are quite literally some forest leaves to scatter in your bowl. Let's drink them together, all of us. If we find our way up and back down that ancient forest trail, we'll all be better off for the time we've spent there together. We'll all get up from the tea space shifted, moving through our days with a bit of lightness and joy...

*\* As we mentioned last month, we recommend letting the tea get over its jet lag. Let it sit a week or two and become acclimatized.*

*Article by Steve Kokker*

I would venture a guess that many GTH newsletter readers would list personal growth pretty high up on their list of life priorities. Serious tea drinkers just tend to be 'that way'. The leafy path of Cha Dao has many resting places along its way for activities which lead to (using a loaded term) "self improvement": self-discipline, contemplation, seeing oneself clearly, mastering one's thoughts, reading, working on mutually beneficial and non-drama-laden personal relationships, and a host of other practices which nudge body, soul and mind a few notches upwards from our *samsara*-infused lives.

Yet disciplined practice aside, very often personal growth has much to do with just being at the right time and place. By being in nourishing circumstances just when we're open and receptive to receiving the nourishment, we offer a chance to inner transformations already in process to just... *happen* by themselves. Kinda beautiful, huh?

Of course, we can take the stance that there are no such things as perfect situations, that any situation we happen to find ourselves in is by definition the right one for us; growth happens in how we choose to respond to the present moment in whatever form it takes – do we fight against it, grin and bear it, transform it or cherish it, surrender to it?

However, there is something profound, even spectacular about finding ourselves smack in the middle of what feels like the best possible set of circumstances for a given moment. Those times always feel as if they were meticulously choreographed by an incredible set of coincidences. We smile and shake our heads and think, "I couldn't have planned it more perfectly!" We think back to that old Police album, *Synchronicity*, and wonder if it's correct to apply the word to our case. Very likely, though, we did our bit to find ourselves just there, just then. Author Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi would have it that in such circumstances, we are fully in 'flow' - whether we know it or not. This is a process we are actively engaged in, not a passive recipient of.

The art of personal growth therefore is partially about just showing up! Having a sense of when and where to be, and with whom (and conversely when not to be somewhere) is an art in and of itself. So too is the ability to remain open to that which is offered to us, knowing that to miss an opportunity is possibly to miss it forever.

Easier said than done. There are clues and signs around us all the time as to the inner changes our bod-

ies/organisms/spirits feel they're ready to make, and yet we can remain astoundingly, willfully blind to them. How often does fate knock at the door, hands gently outstretched with a kind gift of, say, insight or experience, and we simply, out of fear, pride, ignorance or just because our iPods are on too loud, ignore it?

### *Tea as Life Transformer*

I've now twice visited the Tea Sage Hut for month-long stays I would describe as nothing short of transformative. The first visit especially I'd call life-changing. Of course it's true, as my friends note, that I tend towards heavy usage of superlatives (every week the number of world's best tea/chocolate/film/song I've ever tasted/seen/heard grows exponentially), and I am often awash with the mere experience of experiencing. The Russians have a great word for this to which the English translation 'impressionable' doesn't quite do justice: '*vpechatlitelny*' (one who deeply takes in each experience). Yet hyperbole notwithstanding, "life-changing" is not overstating the effects of such a powerful teacher as tea, especially when its teachings come at exactly the right time and place.

I recently ended my second month at the Hut and am now back in the saddle of my regular life of busy-ness, head still spinning from all of what I learned and felt there. I wasn't alone in this feeling either. Although the Hut is open to casual visitors who wish to stay for a few hours or days and have a few seeds planted in their consciousness for later blossoming, it does seem to attract people who have found their way there at... just the right time and place. Beautiful souls who have come with emptied cups and open hearts, open to learning and growing and to letting tea be their guide on that journey.

I close my eyes and I see one such *Cha Ren*, all spirit and love, who has selflessly turned his own apartment into a tea center of sorts in order to spread good feeling to others in collaboration with the Leaf; another whose personal transformations have blossomed into a selfless dedication to farming the earth and soil so that others have an opportunity of sharing in unspoiled nature; yet another whose intimate, meditative approach to tea underscores his desire to spark positive transformation in others via tea drinking sessions; still another has already created a donation-based tea salon at his university, an oasis for others to enjoy Being, in company of tea.



## Taiwan State of Mind

These people, and others, are inspirational models of selfless living, examples of the good which can come of being other-focused, disciplined and dedicated. They've let tea—patient, forgiving tea—to be their teacher, guide and friend. So here comes the kicker: Cha Dao offers deep lessons about the value of practice, presence, self-discipline and sharing—all of which are invaluable in the very art of living. *How we do anything is how we do everything*; the Way of Tea is the way of living and being, and so much more than just tea preparation. Making tea becomes the portal to living a better life, becoming a better person.

One dear friend of mine here in Estonia who has found tea a powerful transformational tool recently wrote to me:

“I am everyday now doing a long tea ‘session’. What an inexhaustible well of nuances and information, and in so many dimensions! Each time, it's like meeting with a new character who has something to teach. Some are like old friends, casual and comforting. Others are like strict teachers, hard to please, punishing inattentiveness and sloppiness with bitterness and distaste.

I've been through many lessons. Some wonderful, some rather unpleasant. And not just about taste.

But also smell, lighting, my posture, how I hold a cup, 4  
how I breathe, my motivations and intentions...”

That tea can teach us such things is perhaps an obvious lesson, and it's a lesson also learned when applying gong fu to any activity we choose, but it's one that becomes crystal clear at the Hut.

### Tea Sage Hut

So how does one ‘learn’ all this at the Hut? Certainly not in a directed, obvious way. At first I thought (my mind might have even hoped) that a daily schedule might look something like this:

\*9am - 10.15 Yixing pots: History and Spectroscopy Analysis of Mineral Composition

\*10.30 - 12.00 Gong Fu Party Tricks III (for those who have completed Level II)

\*12.00 – 13.15 Qi Gong, Feng Shui and Selfless Living in 8 Easy Steps

...etc...

Structured education is something the mind can comfortably understand; it's easier to allow growth and learning via the mind than via the heart or soul—





areas which tend to reside outside our mind-delineated comfort zones. As most of us have already learned, the deepest and most lasting growth occurs outside of these comfort zones, and so too do the most meaningful tea/life lessons occur outside of a classroom-like setting. As many beneficial discussions at the Hut happened in the kitchen, while laughing hysterically at silly jokes, on tea shopping jaunts, or in meditative silence as they did in the gong fu tea room asking pointed questions.

While my first visit resulted in me connecting to an approach to tea that I had unwittingly been searching for over a long period of time, this second visit solidified my dedication to the tradition as practiced at the Hut (all of what you read about in these newsletters). The two main themes which seemed to follow me around this time were the need to surrender to one's own growth (that things in life which make us most uncomfortable are just those which can enact the greatest changes if we avail ourselves to them, an often painful process we need to surrender to); and the need to clear our lives of debris and unnecessary distractions in order to give room for those beneficial changes to occur. (We often clutter our lives with responsibilities, object, and people in order to sabotage the more difficult process of personal growth.)

Sure, there is also *a lot* of really useful, practi-

cal tea instruction which *happens* at the center, but it exactly just happens—it's not scheduled or forced. The issues and themes which arise spontaneously tend to be just those that the listeners are most in need of hearing. In other words, they happen at just the right time and place... like everything does when we're in tune with what our higher selves are trying to tell us.

Back here in Estonia, then, I pour a cup for the brothers and sisters I met who are on parallel journeys of development with tea their spirit guide. The taste is bitter... and oh, so sweet...





# THE PYRAMID OF MEDICINE

*Tea Drinks Man*

*Article by Barnaby Gallagher*

Once upon a time in ancient China, all Earthly medicines were arranged to form a great pyramid. At the top of this pyramid sat a single leaf of tea. It was placed there by a god, and quickly blew away. No mortal eyes did see it, but for a time the leaf was there, and the pyramid was complete. Perfection is a fleeting thing, and while perfection lasted, the hierarchy looked like this:

First was tea, balanced atop five Peaches of Immortality, which rested on Phoenix feathers, Dragon bone dust, Lingzhi Mushrooms, and so on. Seven Daoist scholars argued many days and nights to reach an agreement as to how these medicines would be arranged. They were very wise, all masters of the realm of books. Every combination of yin and yang, plant and clay, was carefully considered and weighed.

As they discussed the comparative merits of each kind of medicine, they drank tea.

"All things under heaven are equal," the seven agreed. "Then by what merits will establish their rank?" asked Feiyan. For three hours they meditated on this, until Ziying opened his eyes to speak "That which is most subtle in its effect, shall be considered great. The sick-est man requires the most crude medicine. The perfect action is gentle, and in the proper time and place. Softness is the way of the Dao, so softness shall be considered great."

With this there was no argument, and the pyramid grew.

On the top they arranged celestial things. The Immortal peaches, medicine for the most virtuous, that ended aging for those who ate them. Phoenix feathers would return a person to health, if burned as incense during the month they were to die. Dragon bone dust, taken with food, grants protection to humans from the influence of the five elements. These were followed by herbs, resins, mushrooms and berries of all kinds. Then came cannabis, tobacco, coca, and alcohol, which formed the blurry line between medicine and poison. Beneath that were strong intoxicants of every kind, many of which are illegal today. Solutions that drive sane people mad, but are also known to make mad people sane. And venoms from all species of spider, plant, scorpion, and snake, from which an apothecary may craft an antidote.

At the bottom of the pyramid was gold; a pure poison that corrupts the hearts of human beings.

Satisfied that their task was complete, the seven scholars sent word to the Yellow Emperor. He

arrived in three days time, along with the entirety of his court. The Emperor's attendants danced and celebrated, taking detailed notes on the arrangement of the divine structure. They were prepared to study, and to derive volumes of esoteric knowledge from the geometries and relationships the pyramid contained. But after studying it no more than two minutes, the Emperor ordered everyone out of the square. He meditated for five days in silence at the base of the pyramid. On the morning of the sixth day he ordered all writings on it burned, and retreated into the mountains where the seven were instructed (under pain of death) to meet him there for tea.

They found the Yellow Emperor alone. Eight bowls were in front of him. The seven approached cautiously, bowed very low, and allowed him to serve them tea. After several bowls in silence, the Emperor spoke, startling them:

"Dragon bone dust; what are its virtues?"

"It grants invulnerability to the five elements, your majesty," replied Cheng

"What good is that!?"

The seven stared in disbelief.

The Emperor continued. "To be invulnerable to the five elements is to cease relationship with them. In order to interact, one must be vulnerable, so that one may be moved. Dragons are invulnerable to the five elements because they have mastered them! For humans to use them for such a purpose would be the same as avoiding poor grades by leaving school. And in time they would fade from this world, as Dragons are beginning to."

The Emperor poured another round of tea, they drank silently, and then he spoke again:

"Phoenix feathers; what are their virtues?"

"They return life at the natural time of death," answered Feiyan

"What good is that!?"

Again, the seven were surprised.

"To use the feathers of the Phoenix is to postpone a natural end. In order to achieve rebirth, one must fully die. Death is but a shedding of what is no longer needed. Sometimes a body is no longer needed. The Phoenix dies fully, and is reborn. Rebirth before death is like sowing a field with last seasons crop still growing on it!



The Emperor carefully removed all the old leaves from his teapot, and added new ones.

"Tell me the virtues of the peaches of immortality."

"Those who eat of them do not age," said Ziying

"What good is that?!"

"The body stays youthful forever," said Ziying

"Should it always be spring? Should larders never empty? Should we drink tea on this mountain endlessly?

Every moment in life is precious. To remove its transience is to remove its value. It is like inflating currency. If my Empire had an infinite number of gold coins, the value of one coin would be nothing. The greatest curse is to never change. The goal of life is returning to the Dao, not staying asleep in separation without end!"

The Emperor removed a Jade dog from the table and added a polished stone. He poured another round of tea.

"Despite all I have said, the pyramid is nearly perfect. Everything is in the proper place. Nothing under heaven is without purpose; and the peach, the feather, and the bone of dragons are divine medicine. But you have forgotten something which brings everything into alignment. Drink tea and meditate on this. If you cannot tell me before sundown, all of you will be executed. I cannot have such stupid doctors in my Great Empire!"

Hours passed, and the sun fell lower in the sky. Many suggestions were given, but few things under Heaven were not in the pyramid already. Some of the seven began to wail and cry. A few were bravely re-

signed to their fate. Ziying was most prepared to die. As the sun began to touch the mountains in the west, he looked straight into the eyes of the Emperor and said, "I don't know."

With this the Yellow Emperor grunted, and threw his bowl at Ziying's head, shattering it and splashing tea on everybody.

And in that moment Ziying became enlightened. "Tea!" Feiyan exclaimed.

Ziying, with his face still dripping, began to speak.

"Drinking tea heals the spirit.

Preparing tea allows one to master the elements.

Serving tea cultivates selflessness."

Their test complete, six of the scholars were invited to the palace to practice medicine. Ziying moved to the mountains and became a hermit and calligrapher. He waited out his final incarnation painting ten thousand unique characters for the word "tea." The day before he died, he gave his last piece to Feiyan. She studied the scroll for many years, never fully grasping its meaning. One day she accidentally spilled tea on it, and the ink became runny. With this minor change, she immediately understood the pictogram.

And in that moment Feiyan became enlightened. That scroll is impossible to translate, but using words we might say that it read:

*"Drink tea until no one is drinking tea."*

# THE SEVEN CLASSES OF TEA

## *A Map to the Land of Tea*

Perhaps a friend brought you to tea, or you were passing by a tea shop on some trip and your eye was drawn to a certain pot or cup; maybe the Eastern exoticism enticed you to tea—the rich flavors, aromas and sensations. And nothing has been the same since that first sip. The doorway cracked and you saw opened before you a vast and clear world waiting to be explored.

For thousands of years we've been ensorcelled by the Leaf: it has built and destroyed empires, been the currency of nations and wars, spanning the vast human spectrum from greed and selfishness to the highest of spiritual states. And when you include the hundreds of generations devoted to the farming and processing of tea, the creation of myriad teapots, cups, whisks and scoops, you can appreciate just how immeasurable the tea world is, as if looking into this new world you first only noticed that there were beautiful flowers and trees in the vicinity of the doorway, but later looked further and saw mountains and rivers, villages and cities beyond.

Amongst the many genres of tea, there is one called Oolong. Continuing our metaphor of tea as a land you've begun to explore, we might say Oolong is a city in this foreign place. Oolong is a great and bustling city, one of the biggest in Tea. It is grown on several mountains, one of which is the famed Mt. Wuyi province of Fujian, China. The Oolong tea produced there is called "Cliff Tea" or "Rock Tea" and is one of the brightest and richest of all Oolong teas. And there are hundreds of kinds of Cliff Tea, each with its own distinct bush, flavor, aroma, etc. The point being that one kind of tea, Oolong, is grown on dozens of mountains, and that any one of those mountains produces a plethora of teas, each an adventure in and of itself. We discuss this only to demonstrate just how huge the tea world is, encouraging you to develop an appreciation for the rich history, culture and spirit in tea, as well as a patience in your exploration, since there are lifetimes of tea to be drunk.

We know that many of you are just starting this journey into tea and thought it might be helpful if you had a rough map of the terrain to help guide you. Before we give you that, though, we thought the more poetic description of Her grandeur would inspire you to travel on. It is also important to note that the map is not the terrain, and the categories of tea we are using here, and their descriptions, are only general overviews. You'll need a more detailed map when you get to each of the tea cities, in other words. Some teas rest near the borders of one category or another, whilst a few defy all

categorization, especially with all the experimentation that goes on in modern tea production. Nevertheless, knowing the different tea processing methods and the basic categories of tea can help start you off in the right direction.

Throughout history, different tea scholars have categorized tea into different groups—some have five, some six and some seven. It isn't important how many we use. For the purpose of this article, we'll be discussing tea in seven main groups: White, Green, Yellow, Red, Oolong, Black & Puerh.

Especially in the West, we find that there is sometimes a slight confusion in written tea materials about the nature of these categories. It is often said that all tea is a single species, *Camellia Sinensis*, and that the differences in the categories of tea are all to do with *how* the tea is processed. There is some truth in this, which is why it is so published throughout the tea world, but it is also potentially misleading as well. Let's clarify some of this before we map out each of the kinds of tea and their processing.

As we mentioned in previous articles, there are essentially two kinds of tea trees: small leaf and big leaf. The big leaf trees are the original tea trees. They have roots that extend very deep and straight down, and have a single trunk leading to their crowns. Small leaf tea, on the other hand, is more like a bush, with roots that extend outwards and many trunks. As tea migrated north and east from its birthplace in Southwest China—whether naturally propagated or carried by man—it, of course, adapted to the new conditions and climate (*terroir*) it was transplanted in. This movement towards a bush with smaller leaves was mostly to do with the colder and colder climates; and in fact, you can see that the leaves actually get smaller and smaller the further north tea migrates, until you reach Japan where the leaves are so small that when rolled they look like tiny threads or needles.

It can be confusing when tea people say that the categories of tea are strictly defined by processing methodology because the seven kinds of tea weren't invented at once, but rather evolved over time *in response* to the variations in the plant as it changed *terroir*. It is a very modern, and in many ways unhealthy practice to tell Nature what to do. Traditional farming was always about accepting the bounty of Nature with gratitude, rather than coercing her to give certain kinds of foods in certain amounts. Consequently, ancient tea farmers were conversing with their trees and adapting their skills to suit the tea they plucked. Cliff Tea processing





was developed in response to certain bushes, in other words. And while you could potentially process any tea in the world in the same way you process a Wuyi Cliff Tea—and some people are doing that very thing, even right outside Wuyi province—it will never be the same as genuine Wuyi Cliff Tea. So is Cliff Tea a kind of tree or a kind of processing? It's hard to say, which is why the issue is complicated.

In this day and age, farmers are more and more trying to set themselves apart by processing tea in unique ways: taking tea from trees that have been used to make Puerh for hundreds of years and processing the leaves like Red Tea, for example. And sometimes the results of these experiments are amazing—even beginning whole trends in the industry, like the movement towards greener Tie Guan Yin in Anxi province, as well as in Taiwan, over the last two decades. For the most part, however, these experimental teas rarely compete with the traditionally processed teas of a region. The fact is that the processing of each particular kind of tea evolved over hundreds of years by skilled craftsman who were conversing and listening to the local leaves and refining their skills to produce the tea in the way that best suits it. There are exceptions, however, and it is important for innovation to continue, especially when the adaptation occurs in the true spirit of tea.

We wanted to clarify that Taiwan Oolong tea, for example, is a kind of bush as well as a processing method (actually many kinds of bushes) before we begin exploring the different categories of tea. In this article, the seven kinds of tea we are discussing relate only to the processing methodology and therefore do not take into account all of the regional variations or the different kinds of trees there are in the world. We could easily have a hundred or more categories of tea, and this would then turn into a book. We think the analogy of a map is perfect here, as you can then think of this article as the most general of aerial views, showing only major mountains and big cities. As such, it is a good place to start if you are just getting to know the country, but eventually you will also want to get some more detailed maps that explore all the roads and lanes of all the big cities, and even the small hamlets as well.



## SEVEN CLASSES OF TEA

*White Tea*

White Tea is the simplest of all tea. All tea starts oxidizing the moment it is picked, but white tea is traditionally thought of as the least oxidized of all tea. There is, at least, no intentional oxidation. The tea is picked and dried. It is most often dried in a controlled way, though traditional White Tea was sun dried in the province of Fujian, where they say White Tea began. Like Green Tea, which we will discuss next, the highest quality white teas are often all buds, while lower grades contain a mixture of buds and leaves. The tea is called “white” because the buds of certain tea varieties have white hairs on them, which lend the small buds a whitish silver appearance. As there is no processing to break down the thick cell walls, the only way to get at the real juice of this tea would be to boil it, which no one does these days. Instead, we steep this tea at lower temperatures. This produces a light-yellow, golden to clear liquor that is often floral and fragrant. The Qi often enters the body through the aroma and/or mouth.

*Green Tea*

Green Tea has a bit more processing than White Tea. It is processed in many different ways depending on the region. Basically, though, it is picked and then goes through some form of heat to arrest oxidation. This could be steaming, baking or most commonly pan-frying. It is then dried. The best Green Teas are often also only composed of buds. If the Green Tea also includes leaves, it will be fried and then rolled before drying. The rolling breaks down the cell walls and oxidizes the tea slightly. The rolling for a Green Tea will always be significantly less than for other teas. The liquor of this tea can be clear to yellow or even vibrant green, depending on local variations. The Qi often enters the body through the aroma and/or mouth.

*Yellow Tea*

Yellow Tea is only produced in a few places and is therefore one of the rarest kinds of tea. It is almost always made of buds alone, requiring much more work than leaf and bud teas. It is processed a lot like Green Tea, with the added step of “sealing the fragrance”. This entails draping a wet cloth over the tea and steaming it. Tea is very sensitive to aromas around it, so the tea is in



## Seven Classes of Tea

essence releasing and reabsorbing its own fragrance, or “sealing” it in if you wish. The liquor is golden and fragrant. Great Yellow Tea can be amazing. The Qi often enters the body through the aroma and/or mouth.

### *Oolong Tea*

Oolong Tea is the pinnacle of tea processing. It is the most involved of all the methodologies, and requires the greatest skill. Oolong is partially oxidized tea. As it requires the most complicated processing, there are also greater variations—minor and major—from region to region. Basically, Oolong Tea is picked and then goes through indoor and outdoor withering in order to dehydrate/soften the leaves and oxidize them. The most distinguishing feature of Oolong occurs during the withering, in which the leaves are shaken in bamboo trays to bruise the edges. The best Oolongs have a red ring around the edges of the leaves, as a result of masterful shaking. The shaking oxidizes the tea in a particular manner. The tea is then pan-fried to arrest oxidation and kill various green enzymes that make tea bitter. (Since green tea doesn’t usually have this “kill-green” stage, it is often more bitter and astringent.) The fried tea is then immediately rolled to break down the cells and further oxidize the tea. Finally, traditional Oolong is charcoal roasted, though there are many greener, unroasted Oolongs around these days.

Oolong is either striped or balled. If it is balled Oolong, it is rolled into tightened balls of three or more leaves using a cloth wound up into a tight, round shape. This tradition began in Anxi, Southern Fujian and then spread from there to Central Taiwan. If it is striped, the rolling occurs across ribbed bamboo mats, which creates long, twisted stripes of tea.

There are many levels of oxidation in Oolong tea. It is a vast and populated city of Tea. There are so many varieties: from greener to traditionally roasted, striped to ball Oolong, and even Oriental Beauty, which we all drank together two months ago. Oolong is the most refined and elegant of teas, and best prepared gongfu style. It can be light or dark, and the Qi almost always flows through the aroma and mouth, rising upwards.

### *Red Tea*

Red Tea is what people in the West mistakenly called “Black Tea”. Of course, names aren’t important. Tea is called many things in different languages—a rose by any other name... But in this case calling Red Tea “Black Tea” will cause you problems as you explore the world of tea, for as you can see below there is another genre of tea called “Black Tea.” And so if you call Red Tea “Black Tea” then what do you call Black Tea itself?

Some say that the reason for this error lies in the fact that Europeans carried the Red Tea back to Europe by ship, which took a long time and the environment in the cargo holds further oxidized, or even fermented the tea. Actually, the primary reason for the confusion comes from the fact that European traders were only allowed within two hundred meters of the dock during early trade with China. Consequently, they never saw the tea trees, processing, etc. and all they knew about tea came from the broken pidgin of the dock merchants that sold it to them. This, of course, caused all sorts of confusion.

Red Tea is picked and then goes through pre-processing piling. The tea is withered in deep piles for anywhere between twelve and twenty-four hours. This greatly oxidizes the tea. Then the tea is rolled for a long time—up to ninety minutes—which produces a thick paste on and around the leaves, further oxidizing the tea. Sometimes the tea is re-piled at this point to fully oxidize it. Red tea can be oxidized to various degrees depending on the region, but it is almost always the most oxidized of all teas, and often fully-oxidized. There are other variations in some regions, like smoking the tea to add flavor.

Much of the Red Tea in India, Sri Lanka and other places outside China is processed by machine in what is called CTC (Cut Tear Curl). This low-quality tea is shredded up and oxidized in machines, primarily for use in tea bags which are meant to release all the tea has to offer in a single steeping. We wouldn’t recommend buying such tea, though.

The long rolling really breaks down the cell walls, which means they can release more of their essence. This is why Red Tea is richer, darker and has a more full-bodied liquor. Because of this, Red Tea is often best drunk in the morning. The Qi is often more in the body.

### *Black Tea*

Up until recently there weren’t many kinds of Black Tea left in the world, and only three famous ones: Liu Bao, Liu An and Hunnan “Thousand Tael” Tea. Recently, however, a few older kinds of brick tea processing from other regions have been revitalized. The main characteristic of Black Tea is a post-production piling. Unlike the pre-production piling of Red Tea, this is more like composting and involves bacteria. It is therefore “fermentation,” rather than “oxidation.” The tea is usually processed by picking, withering, pan-frying and rolling. The methods of piling vary in each of these teas, but all require moisture and temperature to facilitate bacterial growth. The liquor of black tea is dark and rich, with a warming Qi that spreads out from the chest.



*Puerh*

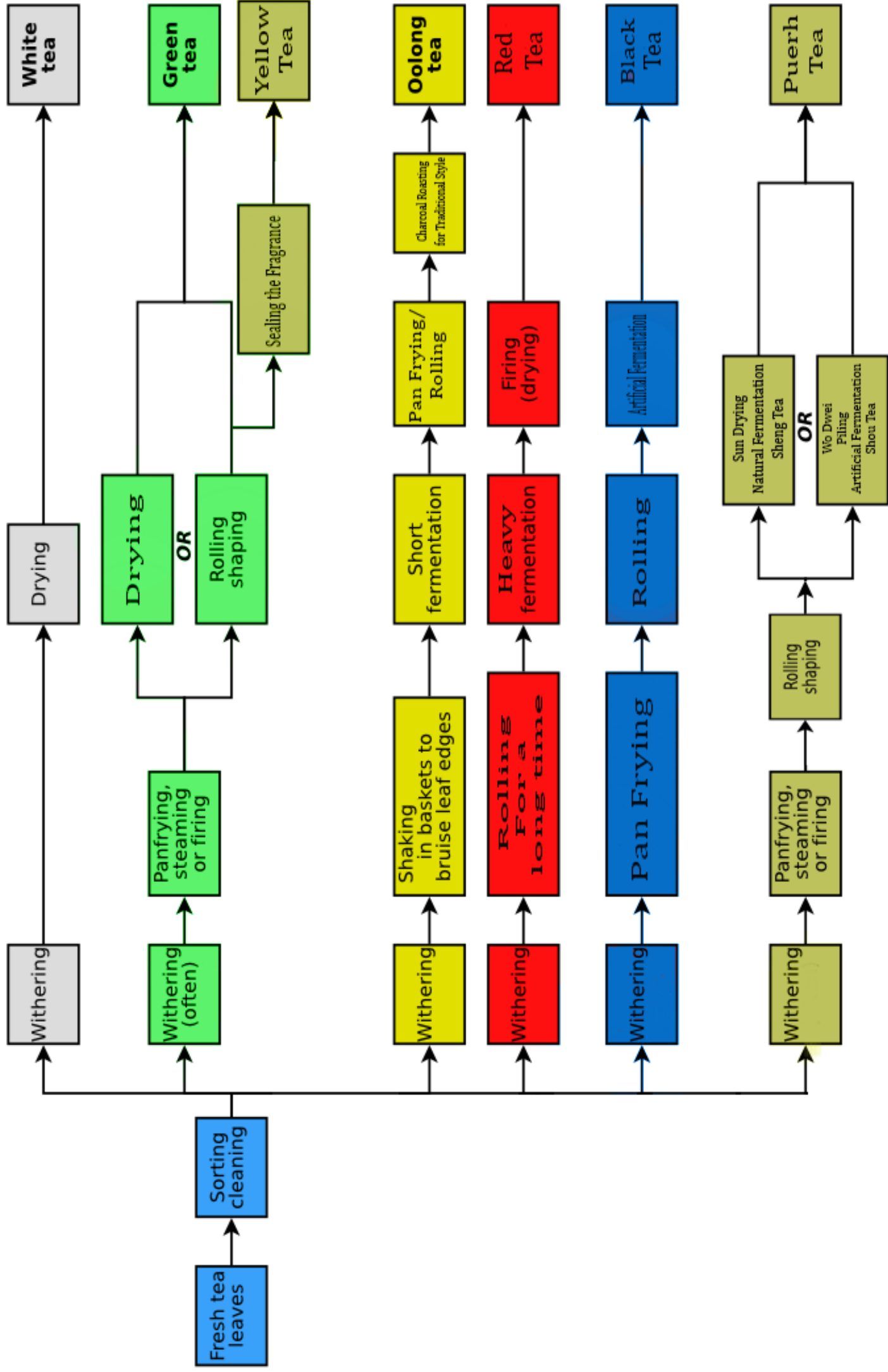
Puerh Tea is sometimes put into the Black Tea category, but it should actually have a category all its own. Traditional Puerh is made from large-leaf, old-growth trees in Yunnan province, the birthplace of all tea. The tea is picked and then withered to soften the leaves and oxidize them a bit. This withering can be done indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather. Then, tea is pan-fried to kill the green enzymes and arrest oxidation. It is next rolled to break down the cellular structure and further encourage oxidation. Finally, traditional Puerh Tea is sundried. At this stage it is called “rough tea (*mao cha*).” Puerh Tea is then often compressed into cakes, but can remain loose as is.

Puerh tea is unique because the trees in the jungles of Southwestern China are covered in hundreds of species of molds and bacteria before the leaves are even picked. The relationship Puerh Tea has with these microbes is magical, allowing it to ferment over time as it ages. All tea can age, and improve over time, but none like Puerh. Puerh Tea transforms completely over time, changing from a bitter, astringent liquor to a deep and dark brew that is full of more Qi than any other kind of tea. Nowadays, tea drinkers mostly feel that even twenty or thirty-year-old Puerh is ancient. But there was a time, and not so long ago, when tea drinkers only drank Puerh Teas that were above seventy!

In the 60's, and then officially in 1972, several Puerh factories were working to try to speed up the fermentation of Puerh artificially. Of course they weren't successful. How could science ever create the magic of seventy or a hundred years? What they did do, however, was create a new kind of tea, called “Ripe Puerh (*shou*).” Ripe Puerh is processed like traditional “Raw Puerh (*sheng*)” only with the added step of post-production piling. They moisten piles of rough tea (*mao cha*) and then cover the pile with a thermal blanket, trapping heat and moisture and speeding up the bacteria's work. This is much like composting. This idea to artificially ferment the tea post-production came from the Puerh factory owners' and researchers' trips to Black Tea factories. Because Ripe Puerh was developed out of Black Tea production, many authors put all Puerh in the Black Tea category. The problem with this, however, is that it ignores all the Raw Puerh (*sheng*), which is nothing like Black Tea; and is furthermore the traditional, and by quantity and quality the greater kind of Puerh Tea as well. It is, therefore, much more logical to give this unique tea its own category altogether.







This month we thought we would share three of the basics of all tea brewing, gongfu or otherwise. These are useful tools to incorporate into your tea practice. If you find you have been doing otherwise, it would be a good idea to right yourself so you don't form habits that will later be more difficult to break. Sometimes we may not understand why the masters suggest a particular methodology, only to realize the important role it plays when we've developed further. Give these principals a try and see how they improve your tea brewing.

The first and most basic principal of tea brewing is to divide your tea space in half right down the center. Then make a commitment that you will do everything on the left side with the left hand and everything on the right side with the right hand. One reason for this is that it is impolite to turn your back on any of your guests, which you will invariably do when you reach across the left side of the table with your right hand or vice versa. Also, it is important for us to respect our teaware. If you reach across the left side of the table with your right hand, you will be blind on the return journey and your elbow or arm is likely to bump or catch on something. Furthermore, it is essential that our whole body be centered in tea brewing, so we should make a greater effort to involve our strong and off hand both. This brings grace and completeness to our brewing.

Second, all movements of the right hand are counterclockwise and all movements of the left hand are clockwise. This is to do with the way our body works, and is a principal of martial arts like Taichi as well. Try rotating your arms both correctly and contrary and see how uncomfortable it is when your elbows rotate inwards if you are going the wrong way; as well as how smooth it is to rotate your arms correctly.

Thirdly, it's best to keep our kettle on our off hand side. Most of us are right-handed, so this means using your left hand to hold the kettle and pour water. As mentioned above, this involves both sides of your body. It is important that the tea be poured into cups from the strong hand, for Qi reasons. If we also use the same hand to pour water, our tea brewing becomes stuttered and lacks a graceful smoothness. In other words, if you use only your right hand, you will have to pick up and set down the teapot lid, pick up the kettle and pour the water, set the kettle down and return the lid and pour the steeped liquor. This requires a jerky motion of pauses and starts. When the left and right hands work in conjunction, the whole process flows so much more smoothly. Rocking back and forth ambidextrously from hand to hand, side to side, the right hand grabs the lid, the left adds water, and then before the kettle is even put down the lid is back and the pot is up and pouring in the right hand.

You can try some experiments brewing in both ways and see the awkwardness of doing it contrary compared to how smooth it is when you let things flow the way they were meant to. These ancient ways weren't created, but rather discovered in harmony with the way tea brewing best flows unobstructed...





*Silver Ginbin*





# THE IMPORTANCE OF A TEACHER

*Article by Lord Kaiya the Blameless*

All of us have known someone in our lives who loved to answer questions without saying anything useful, often with a smirk or an evil grin. If your father was like this, then you might have asked something along the lines of: “How do I put together this toy?” After an assessing glance at the box, the torturous reply would inevitably be something like: “You take those pieces and make a robot!” Well that’s great and all—the destination is important to know—but what good is knowing the destination if we don’t know how to get there? I realized this month that I had done this (minus the evil grin, I promise) with my last article: “Humility is very important, so be humble instead of proud.” Umm, ok yeah that’s clearly a good idea, but how? The answer is simple, and this answer really applies to any and all ‘but how?’ questions you’ll ever ask: find a teacher.

For me, however, even this simple act itself almost took more humility than I had at first, and I’d have to say it was the first really big hurdle in the beginning of my journey here. After all, I had grown up indoctrinated with ideas of ‘self-sufficiency’, ‘independence’, ‘the self-made man,’ and similar concepts from a young age, and had taken them to heart. I came to love competing with others and demonstrating superiority in anything and everything, always careful to manage my life well so that I could be ‘independent’ and get by without anyone’s help. I read tons of books and knew enough about almost any conceivable subject of conversation to say something relevant or insightful, and considered these insights to be ‘mine’, as though I had written the books! I ‘taught myself’ almost everything, or so I believed. This sort of foolishness is a huge part of why the capacity to humble myself to a teacher and my capacity for humility in general was so low. When I got to Tea Sage Hut, there were numerous areas of my life where I had a lot of room to grow (I even recognized some of them!) but the moment my teacher would confront me on those aspects—same quality that the day before I was telling myself I’d like to grow out of—I would rise up in defense of my own neurosis, or worse deny them.

Even now, it’s almost as though there is an alter-ego inside me who would rather spend five, ten, fifteen years, (however long it takes!) to ‘figure it out by myself’ than to bow before another person and admit that I have something to learn from them. “You might as well admit he’s better than you!” The ego quietly, venomously, whispers. It’s about as sensible as signing up for a required course, then refusing to buy the book or go to the lectures. To have any chance at all, I would just have to find another book or listen to someone else’s knowledge on

the subject anyway! Otherwise, there is really no chance I’d figure it out at all, especially if the lesson is difficult and of great value; and even if I did get it one day, I would have wasted a great deal of the precious little time I have in this life for the sake of something of infinitely lesser value: my pride. I might as well open a business trading diamonds for lumps of coal.

What a silly game on which to waste this brief moment of a life we’ve been given! There isn’t even such a thing as ‘by myself’, ‘independently’ or ‘self-taught’ in the first place. Even the greatest geniuses of all time rely on all the knowledge of the past. Without all the accomplishments of past geniuses, using their experience and knowledge as teachers, the modern genius could never achieve his accomplishments. If you sent Thomas Edison back to the Stone Age, he could never have created the light bulb. And this doesn’t even touch the billions-of-years-old chain of universal events that brings us all into being in the first place. A Nobel Prize winner’s mother is as responsible for his discovery as he is, and perhaps they would even admit that, though how many live that wisdom?

As Carl Sagan once put it, “If you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the entire universe.” I didn’t bring my own mind into being, so why should I take credit for its creativity? There is no individual credit because nobody acts without the entire history of every aspect of the universe acting with them. So I brewed a perfect cup of tea and someone was moved into stillness, into communion with their True Self and with Nature, and it even changed their lives; wonderful! But before I start to get giddy with ‘my power’, I had better take a moment to thank first of all the person I just served for their willingness to learn and the fact that they sat down at all, then the cups, and the pot, and the tea, and the water, and whoever made that cup, and whoever preserved it this long til now, and the earth that formed the clay for a billion years before that, and the sun and the moon and the farmer and the farmer’s family that preserved the knowledge to process this tea, and on and on unendingly until I realize I am far too small a part of this process to start feeling big, though I was no less necessary than any of the rest of those pieces either.

It’s taken a lot of butting my head against that wall of not wanting to lower myself since I got here, a lot of reverting back to the idea that I can do these things by myself, though I’m okay (maybe) accepting a teaching about those things over there. There is a saying that you have probably all heard that “we are all students, and we are all teachers”. There is a similar saying in Zen that “A

master can be a student of all.” Ironically, these quotes are favorites of both the worst students and the best students, but for different reasons. When I got here, I fell into the former category: to me, quotes like these were good expressions of exactly why I didn’t need a teacher at all.

“That’s right,” I thought. “I am already a teacher, I teach myself things all the time, what do I need a master other than myself for?” But the truth is my life was a huge list of people with whom I was and was not willing to learn. Those I listened to and those I didn’t listen to, all of which really amounts to the same thing as if I were reading a book and circling all the parts that enhanced the beliefs I already had while at the same time denouncing the rest of the book. Then, on top of that, I was taking credit for those ideas! In line with the tendency to believe I could do everything on my own, I was copping out of bowing to a teacher by pointing to these catch lines. But I might as well have said, “I’m going to be a master blacksmith today.” It takes years of hard work and apprenticeship to accomplish such mastery. And there is no mastery of anything without first mastering our pride. It was with this realization, that I didn’t really have what it took to be a student just yet, and a recognition of the prideful and unproductive way I was really relating to all those potential teachers, that I finally realized the importance of choosing one teacher, one relationship, in which I was going to practice bowing all the time. Even if a lesson is something I don’t need to work on, even if it is

something I have already achieved, it’s irrelevant to waste time considering; that simple act of practicing humility and the opportunity to practice it are of tremendous, inestimable value in truly learning future lessons as well. And now I am finding that it is not only influencing my ability to accept and learn the lessons from the teacher I’ve made an intention with, but increasingly all the infinite lessons that are available from the other teachers in my life are growing more available and meeting less resistance as well. The more and more I surrender myself to the process of being a student in this one relationship, the more I practice and keep my commitment to not deviate into resistance and the more that habit is spilling over into my other relationships, to the benefit of all.

Let’s face it; how many of us can say that there is not one single person in the world, not one person who can push a button that makes us push back? Probably, there are more such people than not. How many relationships and situations arise in your life, even on a daily basis, where you react without thinking about it and are unconscious, for at least a few moments, if not hours or days, instead of looking for the lesson this moment is trying to teach you and experiencing gratitude toward that person or situation rather than resistance?

The natural question, then, is how to choose a teacher? If everyone and everything can be a teacher, and I need to choose one to practice with before I can benefit from all of them, who should it be? Well, for one thing, it should probably be someone that has an intention to



## *The Importance of a Teacher*

19 teach you, rather than someone who only teaches you incidentally. Someone with experience and knowledge, as well as the desire to see you grow. Yes, you could choose a person in your life who just happens to be blessed with the ability to push your buttons and make a decision to learn about yourself from that interaction. But then you have only yourself to answer to. Nobody is going to be there to support you or warn you when you deviate or make a mistake; no one to encourage you and keep you motivated. Not to mention, if you find a teacher who intends to teach you, then it is far easier to maintain practice simply because you know ahead of time that this person is only pushing your buttons because it's in your own interest, never out of a genuine desire to hurt you. An intentional teacher pushes you because they love you, so it's not as difficult to remember to be grateful as it is when someone is trying to hurt you. This is the difference between a "teacher" and a "teaching."

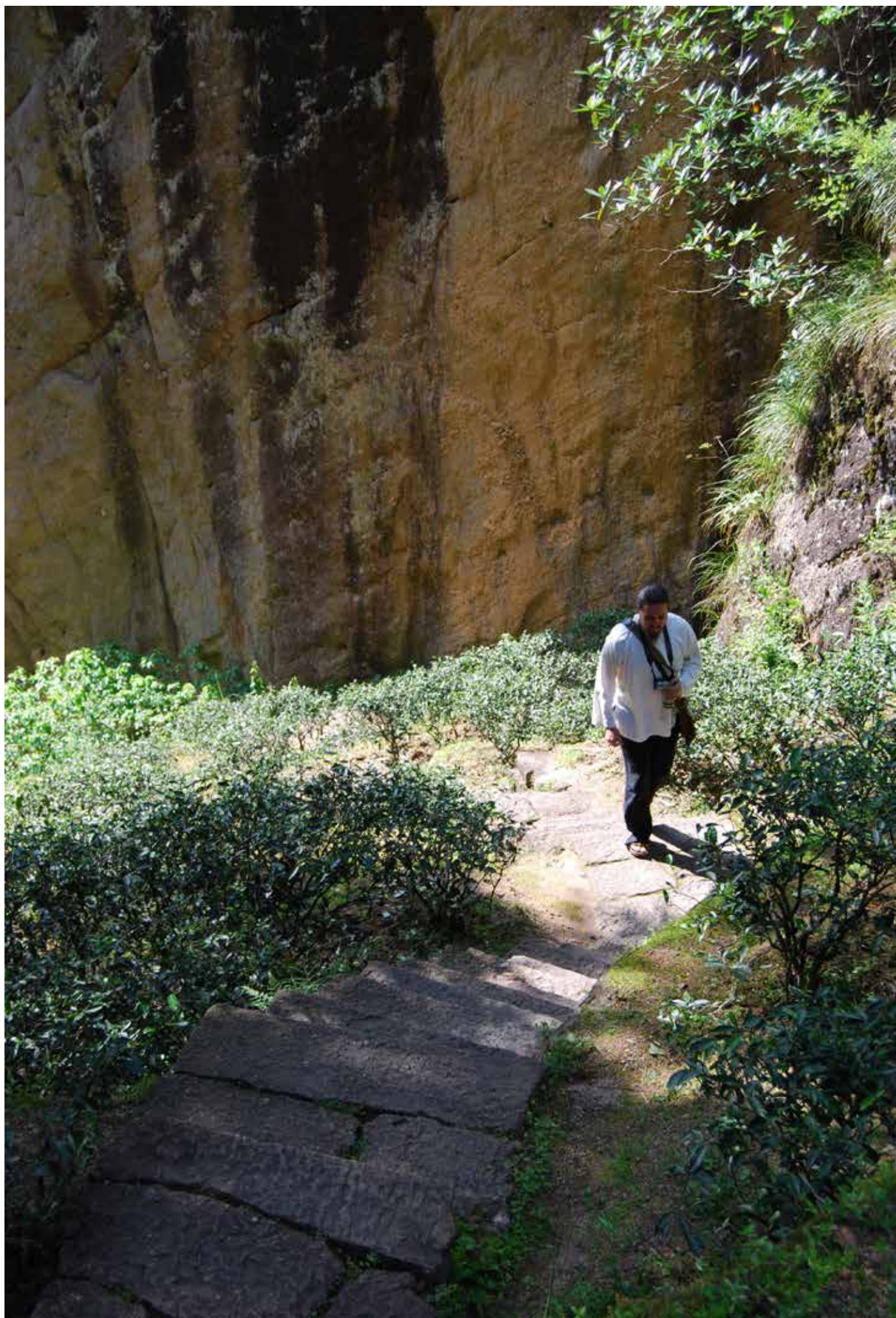
There is a saying that "when the student is ready, the master appears." If you are truly ready for it, you will find that the perfect teacher for you is already readily available. They've probably been knocking on your door for some time, and will continue to do so in one form or another your whole life until you recognize them. I missed out on the first such opportunity in my life, my father. A master carpenter, he often sought to teach me

what he knew, but I had a dozen reasons why I'd rather do nothing instead, and here I am a decade later only just now learning many of the same lessons through tea I could have learned then through carpentry. And that's the point: all the time wasted in refusing to have a teacher doesn't accomplish anything besides putting off the moment when you will accept one and get to work. In the meantime, you have to live with the unpleasantness of all those unlearned lessons in your life, so in fact the easiest thing you can do is to start working!

I suppose that ultimately, my advice is that if you have a teacher, first recognize that you indeed need the water of wisdom in your life. Then start digging your well wherever you are with the shovel you already have. Beyond the tendency to deny the need to dig in the first place, there is a tendency to criticize the shovel and convince ourselves that we have to go find a different shovel to dig with. But this is just the same game we've been talking about dressed up in another outfit. "I am ready to be a student, but the trouble is all these teachers are no good," goes the reasoning, when in reality any of the shovels will take you down to the water if you just stop making excuses. The fact of the matter is that we all need that water in order to live, so start digging; the sooner you dig, the sooner you'll quench your thirst!









# A BOWL AND A BED

Article by Jarrod Quon

*“There is always a bowl and a bed waiting for you.”*

These simple words uttered at the end of a tea session would turn out to be some of the most influential in my life.

Like many of us, my journey into tea began with a chance meeting over tea with Wu De. I was in Venice Beach, CA at Temple Tea and was just coming to drink some new tea and check out what a Chinese tea ceremony was like. I was sitting at a long wooden table cut from a single tree and I experienced my first Puerh in years.

I had forgotten my first experience with Puerh, thinking only of the tea from years of Chinese restaurants and the few dates long ago with girls and agendas. Tea was then just an excuse to get together, spend time with a pretty girl and pretend to be interesting, or to wash down some Kung Pao Chicken. The experience of losing a whole day to one tea session with a girl was buried deep in my memory. But now sitting, and sipping from my bowl, I remembered the mystery that began to blossom in me. “What is going on in this bowl?”

The world dropped away, my body started to hum and buzz, arms and face tingling, a calm excitement grew, and a clarity revealed itself. As I continued to drink bowl after bowl a peace and stillness grew in my heart and the words Wu De spoke seemed to sound more for me and less like just another thing I was checking out. As the session ended, I heard him speak right to me “There is always a bowl and a bed waiting for you.” In that moment I knew he was inviting me to come to Taiwan.

I have received invitations before, and many less outlandish and more reasonable, but this was the first and I hope not the last, that stirred something inside me and had me thoughtlessly answer, “Yes.” After that “yes” my life started to shift and things that normally would be dismissed out of hand were now shining brightly in my everyday life. A friend expressing their enjoyment of tea, a gig that paid the same amount as a ticket to Taiwan, my girlfriend talking about how I always wanted to travel the world. That simple “yes” would go on to alter the well-grooved path of my life and lead me to spend two weeks at the Tea Sage Hut in Taiwan. And while these changes in my life were visible on the surface, it was the others deep within that truly altered me had me, in order to bring the spirit of tea back to Los Angeles in my heart.

The first two days in Taiwan, I went through the expected transitions from changing sides of the globe, struggling to keep my eyes open during lunch, waking up at 3 AM, and a general sense of confusion. However, even through my jetlag I was still experiencing something different than I expected: The center is open to the pub-

lic, and many times a day several different faces would wander in for a bowl of tea or two; or just to check out what was going on—from a pair of French Canadians, to students and friends, to an incredibly foul-mouthed hermit. Each of them had their own stories and reasons and issues, but each of them was served a bowl with a smile and given love and space. My tired body was slowly waking to the realization that there is something special happening in the mountain town of Miaoli, down a little alley, just waiting for anyone to stop in.

As the days continued and my body woke to this new life, Wu De’s smiling face, the aroma of burning incense, the feel of a hot bowl of tea in my hands, it all started to melt the hardness and cynicism around my heart that I had spent many years forging. I found myself joining in discussions, meditations, weekly outings, movie nights, tea reviews, and tea lectures. I was surprised by how much joy came from all of these activities. Had you asked me before, I would have only authentically been interested in movie nights and would never have thought I would sit through a three-hour lecture on tea in Taiwanese untranslated, let alone find deep peace and wisdom in it.

I came to love seeing each person who lives at and runs the center coming day and night, living their lives in service to tea. I couldn’t help but join in. At first I lived out my secret fantasy of being a monk and living a life of quiet service—praying and meditating and being at peace with everything. However, this fantasy was quickly interrupted by the most amazing thing: the students’ problems and complaints were no different from the ones I brought from LA and was hiding under my fantasy. Troubles with their loved one, not enough time in the day to do what they wanted, things going wrong and things not turning out the way they wanted. How could they be at peace and continue to serve with all of these things going on? I was pretending to ignore my problems but the others were voicing them and discussing them in each moment and meeting. Seeing them deepen their journey into themselves and into tea was so intoxicating to me, as were their victories and setbacks all placed on the altar and burned up in their service to tea. Each moment a teacher, each experience a chance to look within, each interaction a mirror of themselves. I started to share more about myself and my life—faster than I have ever known—and as I shared my true concerns and fears, the center seemed to grow warmer and more comforting, the people more caring and loving, and the tea wiser and more profound.



I then remembered a major reason for coming to Taiwan was to travel, so I set off from Miaoli and journeyed into the heart of Taiwan, bringing with me the warmth and love of the center. As I visited Taipei and the museums and tea houses there, I got a sense of the pride the Taiwanese have for their homeland. But it wasn't until riding a scooter into Taroko Gorge that I truly understood the beauty of this island. I sped along the valley roads occasionally glancing up. I felt I was riding through an ancient Chinese scroll painting. I would stop and wander up a path and see dragonflies, butterflies, crickets, birds I could not even begin to place, monkeys, misty cliffs, lone trees creeping out of the side of a rock face; it was all there. I felt enormous connection to the sages of old, viewing what they had meditated and lived hundreds of years ago, and experiencing what I imagine must have been the same reverence and humble joy before such vistas.

As this connection pulled me deeper into the gorge, my old fears and concerns began to loom once again, as clouds approaching the full moon, threatening to block out all the light and beauty from before. "What am I doing?" "How am I going to get back?" "I don't know where I am going or even how to speak the language." I searched for the warmth and love of the center, only to find more clouds. I had left Miaoli with two bags and a desire to travel, but little in the way of plans or any idea of how to go about it.

Once again, it was a thoughtless "yes" that brought the answer. A "yes" to a Taiwanese mother and daughter from New Jersey that helped me find a place to stay, a "yes" to a retired Taiwanese English teacher who offered to drive me over the highest mountain road in Taiwan to the beautiful and famous Sun Moon Lake, a "yes" to a Beijing graduate student who offered to share his hostel room and day with me, a "yes" to the lunch, tour, and interview with the owner of Sun Moon Lake Tea Company who opened his factory to me. The kindness and generosity of every person humbled me greatly and was as great a teacher as the many hours I had spent at the center with Wu De over a bowl of tea.

Now, back in Los Angeles, my previous life has gripped me all over again: Deadlines, friends, my fiancé, work, and family. The clouds once again seem to be threatening to block out the beauty and serenity of the moon. How do I bring the peace and joy that resonates and fills the walls of the center back to my apartment in the City of Angeles?

A thoughtless "yes"



The moon rose over the monastery, dripping silver light all along the flying roofs, trees and even on the garden stones Chen was walking along. He couldn't sleep, so he meandered through the garden, looked up at the moon and remembered his breath coming in and going out. His mind knew all the reasons why such excitement was trite; his life would only return to simplicity after the ceremony was over, but he couldn't help but feel that being fully ordained from a novice to a true monk was the biggest event of his life. And there was still the last teaching with the abbot himself. Some said it was like a test. He had been warned that he would only be ordained if and when he fully understood the most important of lessons. He wasn't as worried about meeting the abbot, he'd always liked the old man, and Chen was a great student if anything. He knew he wouldn't have any trouble memorizing, reciting or understanding whatever was needed to impress the abbot. And yet, the whole transformation was in his nerves, moving with enough force to get him out of bed. The beautiful full moon and the neatly trimmed garden, stones, river and koi fish were quickly calming his body down to where his mind knew it should be. He knew none of this was important, knew that it was just another changing moment in a great and fluid ocean of experience, but knowing and being aren't always the same thing. "I guess that's why I'm a novice," he thought.

After the morning meditation and chant, Chen decided to eat his breakfast alone. He took it out into the garden. Dew glistened on the grass and the flowers and bushes vibrantly contrasted with the darkness the place had offered the night before. He couldn't stop the nervous feeling that was shaking his porridge, and didn't bother. He lifted his gaze to the horizon and allowed himself to draw in some of its beauty. A few minutes later and the summons came for him. He was asked to meet the abbot in his quarters.

Chen cleaned his bowl slowly and meandered through the monastery with slow determination. He remembered when he was first brought to the monastery as a boy. He had hated the whole idea and cried during the entire trip. He remembered looking out at the distant mountains from the back of the jouncing ox cart as his father rubbed his arms and spoke gently of the great fortune and honor he was bringing to his family. Not everyone was accepted into this monastery. Once a monk, the villagers thought, he would bring merit to all their households. His parent's reputation would be established and his younger sister would have a better marriage. He understood much more of this now, but the sting of parting with his mother and father still bristled inside him. None of that mattered. He wasn't here for them anymore, anyway. He wasn't nervous on behalf of the distant village,

lost in an emotional well that he drew from less and less each year, he was nervous because he wanted this more than anything.

The abbot was kind and gentle. His wrinkled flesh seemed to mirror his inner softness. He smiled and gestured for Chen to have a seat on one of the cushions that surrounded a knee-high table hewn from a boulder long before this abbot took up residence here. Chen sat down and put his palms together in greeting. He breathed deeply and looked at the abbot. The old man's smile slowly withdrew. He placed an old, worn clay kettle onto a charcoal stove to heat up water for tea. Placing his hands together on the table, he pursed his lips and looked Chen over for some time. The silence seemed to stretch outwards and pull apart the moments, allowing extra time to flow in. The old abbot cleared his throat, "Chen, when you have come to understand your final lesson, you will be ordained. It was this way for all the monks that went before you into silence. This ordination won't be a celebration, but a bridge over which you will pass. From now on your only words will be those that are chants of the spirit; your only thoughts of peace and depth—your very being will focus the serenity and teaching of the masters before you." He paused and smiled. Chen relaxed a bit and smiled back. "But first, you will need to understand the most important lesson you've learned until now. More important than the Precepts or the Noble Truths; more important than the ancient texts and all their commentaries." The abbot reached under his side of the table and pulled up a small wooden box. He flipped the latch and opened it. Inside, on a yellow cushion, there were some dark leaves. He gently picked them up and put them into the small teapot that rest before him. He raised the kettle from the stove and poured water into the pot. His movements had all the grace of the dancers Chen had seen as a child. The water seemed to stroke the leaves and the pot, raising banners of steam around in spirals just as the dancing women had. The abbot closed his eyes and flared his nostrils with a deep draught of air before pouring the golden liquor into two small cups. He placed one of these before Chen and gestured with his hand.

Chen looked down at the reddish-golden brew and watched the steam swirl off the surface, carrying the smell of blossoms upwards to his face. He inhaled the perfume and shut his eyes in pleasure. It was one of the best smells of his life. He sipped the gorgeous tea and enjoyed the sensations it caused in his mouth and throat. The tea seemed to pour upwards through his head in waves of energy. It was bliss. The abbot poured one more steeping and then relaxed his back into a straighter, more meditative posture. Chen followed suit and began meditating as

he had been taught since he was a boy. First he focused on the space between his upper lip and nose, feeling the air as it passed in and out. Then he began to focus on the sensations in his body, the quieting thoughts in his mind and the peace that began to drift through him calming and slowing the world down. The tea seemed to amplify his meditation and resonate through his body in waves.

Over the course of a couple hours, the abbot poured steeping after steeping and the magical leaves never lost their darkness or flavor. But Chen had long ago left behind all the tastes and smells the tea had to offer, drifting on its current to deeper meditations than he had ever had before. Finally, when the gong for lunch rang throughout the monastery, the abbot looked up at Chen and raised an eyebrow in askance. Was this a question? A test? Should he describe what he had experienced? The confusion jolted him back to the present. The abbot's eyebrow slowly released its question and he smiled. He reached over and patted Chen on the shoulder. "Come back again tomorrow," he said. Had Chen failed? He put his hands together, bowed and left the room quietly. He was a bit shocked. What had just happened?

Chen spent the next day in contemplative silence. Novices were technically allowed to speak, but he had lost all interest in chatting with the other hopefuls. He wondered if the abbot was somehow reading his mental state and judging his readiness for a life of devotion. Again he asked himself if he had failed. Perhaps the abbot was just asking him to be more mindful so that he could ask him a question. Chen meditated all night, without rest.

After breakfast the next day, the summons once again came. Once again the wizened old abbot put the kettle on the stove. This time Chen noticed more about the room than he had before: the warm wood smell of the charcoal stove, the golden crevices in the abbot's soft hands that spoke of kindness, the veins in the ancient stone table and the view of the garden out the small window. The abbot brought forth the leaves, made obsequious gestures to them once again and then set about brewing the tea just as he had the day before. The tea tasted richer today. Chen noticed many other flavors, smells and sensations than he had the day before. Beneath the flowery smell there were hints of loam and



25 earth. He also noticed the way the tea affected his breath after he had swallowed it; and as he slipped into a meditative state, more gracefully than the previous day, he also noticed the way the tea's energy flowed through his body upwards and downwards, leaving out the extremities.

The two sat for a few hours, this time beyond even the gong for lunch, which reverberated through Chen in an odd way. Finally, the abbot's smile had returned. It was the first notice he had taken of Chen. Unlike yesterday, there had been no greeting—just straight to the tea. Chen wondered if the question would come now, or if perhaps the abbot was gauging his meditation, his awareness, to see if he was fit to be a monk at this most prestigious of monasteries. He fumbled for an answer, looking at the abbot in quizzical embarrassment as the old, white eyebrow once again rose in a gesture of wonder. Chen obviously wasn't seeing what he was meant to do. The abbot was gentle though. He smiled and patted Chen on the sleeve, patiently asking him to return again the next morning.

This time, Chen spent the entire afternoon and evening in meditation. The tea had seemed to inspire an alertness in him. He stayed in the meditation hall, recognizing time only by the increasing shadows through the slit windows, the moonlight and then the bright rays of dawn. At sunrise he rose and strolled through the garden. He found, to his surprise, that the questions, ordinations and test had all drifted away. It didn't matter after all. One didn't need a ceremony, a robe or even a monastery to live a life devoted to enlightenment. A simple forest hut would suffice. He even began to pack his bags and prepare for the journey mentally. He knew he would be no more or less comfortable by himself in a hut than here in the garden. During the past months he had already begun to withdraw more and more from the community of novices. He thought this had been because his studies were increasingly difficult, or because of the upcoming vow of silence, but he now realized that in a life of spirit none of that mattered, only his own meditation did. He vowed that today when he went to see the abbot he would make it the last trip. He wanted to just enjoy the powerful tea and the quiet it instilled. If he had to leave the next day, or if he was ordained, it was of no consequence really. He also knew that this was perhaps what had been expected of him all along.

When he arrived to the abbot's quarters he sat and observed his breath as the water heated up. When the abbot bowed to the tea leaves, Chen also did and mentally thanked them for helping him to understand all that he had come to realize through the past few days' meditations. Again, he found that he was able to experience much more of the tea this time. A stray thought passed through his head, wondering whether it was just a familiarity with the tea or an increased sensitivity. This time he noticed a slight bitterness in the aftertaste that

wasn't unpleasant at all. He also seemed to be aware of the entire room, every movement—every breath swelling his being until he could feel the water pouring over the leaves, their essential oils dispersing into the pot, cup and even his body.

After a few hours of tea drinking and quiet meditation Chen bowed to the abbot. There was no question or test, just tea between friends. The abbot smiled profusely. "Now you understand, my brother" Chen hadn't failed to notice the term reserved for fellow monks. "The scriptures, teachings and methods are all secondary to the life that lives them. Even this lesson, about being peace rather than thinking it—even this is not as important as the life and experience you live, the tea you drink, the water that prepares it and the gentle steam that unfurls from its liquor." The abbot paused and held Chen's hand gently. "Now you are truly ready to live such a life."



茶禪一味



其  
酒



I recently had the opportunity of meeting someone again who I had not seen for some time, and it reminded me of the way in which we can change without recognizing it. Such meetings are almost always a bit strange. If the encounter is brief and superficial, you most likely will only notice the physical changes: lost or gained weight, children, hair, wrinkles, style of clothes, and so on. If the encounter leads to lunch or dinner or something else, (tea perhaps?) then you have a chance to dig a bit deeper into the more personal changes they've undergone. In this case, I had a chance to witness both; first the surprise at the physical changes, and next, over tea, the discovery of the deeper internal changes.

Now in this case, although there were some very apparent physical differences, the time-frame was short enough that these were pretty superficial, nothing to inspire a double-take. But as we got to talking and spending a bit of time together, I quickly realized that this person had changed tremendously on the inside, and furthermore that they didn't seem to be aware of it. It is always easier to see something in someone else than it is to see it in yourself. This is almost the only good reason to spend any time looking at anyone other than yourself at all. I try to make it my practice that whenever I spot something in another person, I then look for it in myself, and this is exactly why this practice is important. When something is within me, that means I live with it every day, and the things I see every day are easily overlooked; but when you look at someone else, or haven't seen someone in a while, their qualities or changes really stand out. This is important because without recognition of our own changes, we not only stagnate in a delusion of a constant identity, but we are also limited in our ability to empower ourselves and make the most meaningful contribution to the world that we can.

I realized that when I look in the mirror each day to brush my teeth, without a thought there is this recognition happening: "That's me, I'm the same as I was yesterday!" Or maybe sometimes there is a specific thought there. I notice that pimple rising on my nose or that my hair is doing something funny it wasn't doing before, but these tiny physical changes never amount to me thinking: "Wow I'm a totally different person!" And this isn't even touching the deeper, inner aspects of myself that are also developing and building too slowly to see. Yet there can be no doubt; I am growing, I am changing, and just as I see so clearly the changes in another, if I pay closer attention I should be able to find

the changes in myself. But where to look? Where to find a mirror that can peer into those depths? Why tea, of course!

This is one of the many beauties of tea as the great connector, the bridge between the spiritual and the mundane, the Earth and the Heavens. With roots drinking in the power of one and leaves outstretched to bask in the power of the other, tea touches both sides, giving each cup the capacity to reflect either one in its depths, depending only on our desire to see. And look I have. As it happens, gauging my progress in tea is really easy, because I have a Wu De around. And I have noticed that whereas initially he used to do things like point suddenly behind me and scream, "MY GOD! LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!" and toss the tea over his shoulder, he later progressed into actually drinking it while appearing to struggle painfully to achieve a deep meditative state. Nowadays, I've finally risen to the level where he merely grimaces and turns green from time to time! But since this is too easy, I suppose we should take a look elsewhere as well.

Now on the surface level—the level of pimples and haircuts—I frankly can't see the differences in my tea. This is the tea that I make for myself. It seems to me that I've always made it about this well; I know I don't enjoy drinking my own tea any more than I did before. And if I was learning about tea only at this level, the level of making it for my own enjoyment, this would be the limit of what I could get out of it. But this is a tradition of *serving* tea, and I think I've just realized a new aspect of why this is so important, literally just now. Because it is only in serving tea to others that I can really witness the deep and meaningful changes my tea has obviously undergone when I wasn't paying attention. It seems so obvious now, but serving tea is the insight into the profound side of tea I was looking for!

I can remember when I first started making tea, admittedly with no intention of service at all, and the way the tea sessions would go. For one thing, the tea ceremony itself was just one drawn-out procession of whatever I wanted: the cups I wanted, the tea I wanted, the pot, the music, and so on. There was not even an inkling of the idea that these decisions should be made with the tea (my only guest at first) in mind. I didn't even recognize the tea as a guest at that time. I was very fortunate that I spent almost no time at all in this phase before finding the school here and beginning to learn that tea had something greater to offer, if you were willing to in turn offer it to others.



After that, things started to happen. I suddenly found that occasionally, opportunities to make tea for other tea-lovers or passersby began to arise. At first, my habit of treating tea as a casual pleasure pervaded, and the sessions weren't so much moving or transforming as they were pleasant gatherings of friends; energetically they were on the same level as getting together for a casual lunch at a spot with some good live music perhaps. I can't say that I remember the specific session in which it first happened, but at some point the sessions started to change. There were periods of prolonged silence even with guests who were not tea drinkers, and who were typically very chittery and chattery. There were sessions where three kettles were drunk in meditation and total silence, even in the absence of music, with more experienced tea people who nonetheless didn't always make such sessions their habit all the time. To me, the tea tasted pretty much the same, but clearly it was changing significantly.

Although these sessions were powerful, I still didn't see any far-reaching impact arising from them. They seemed to be like any other moments to my eye; moments of presence and awareness yes, but moments that passed away into oblivion like any other moments, never to be heard from again. They appeared to have great power at the time, but no power later on. I know better now. I will never forget, however, the first time I had the privilege of serving tea and finally witnessing an impact, a clear and lasting influence, that arose directly out of the tea.

Another student and I were driving a new guest who had just arrived at the train station to the center. We stopped at home to pick something up on the way when it started to rain, so we decided to wait it out over tea. The rain, chilliness of the evening, and presence of a guest led me to choose a deep and powerful tea, and it took only one bowl to quiet all the questions, observations, and commentary which naturally arise



29 when someone has newly arrived in a foreign country seeking something. After some time spent in the silent communion, I had grown comfortable in my capacity to serve, so I offered to teach our guest how to hold his bowl. This simple and practical lesson then naturally developed into a deeper lesson about our practice of treating our bowl with respect and care, listening to how it wishes to be picked up, set down, filled and emptied, is important because eventually this practice will spill over into the way we relate to all objects, and beyond. That's just a paraphrase, but the point isn't to try to convey that lesson here. I remember how at the time, the words just spilled out of me without thought, and later I realized that I had listened to the same lesson in almost the same words many times over the last few months at the center. But the truly miraculous thing about that session was that after the lesson was given, our guest was completely transformed, and not just for a moment.

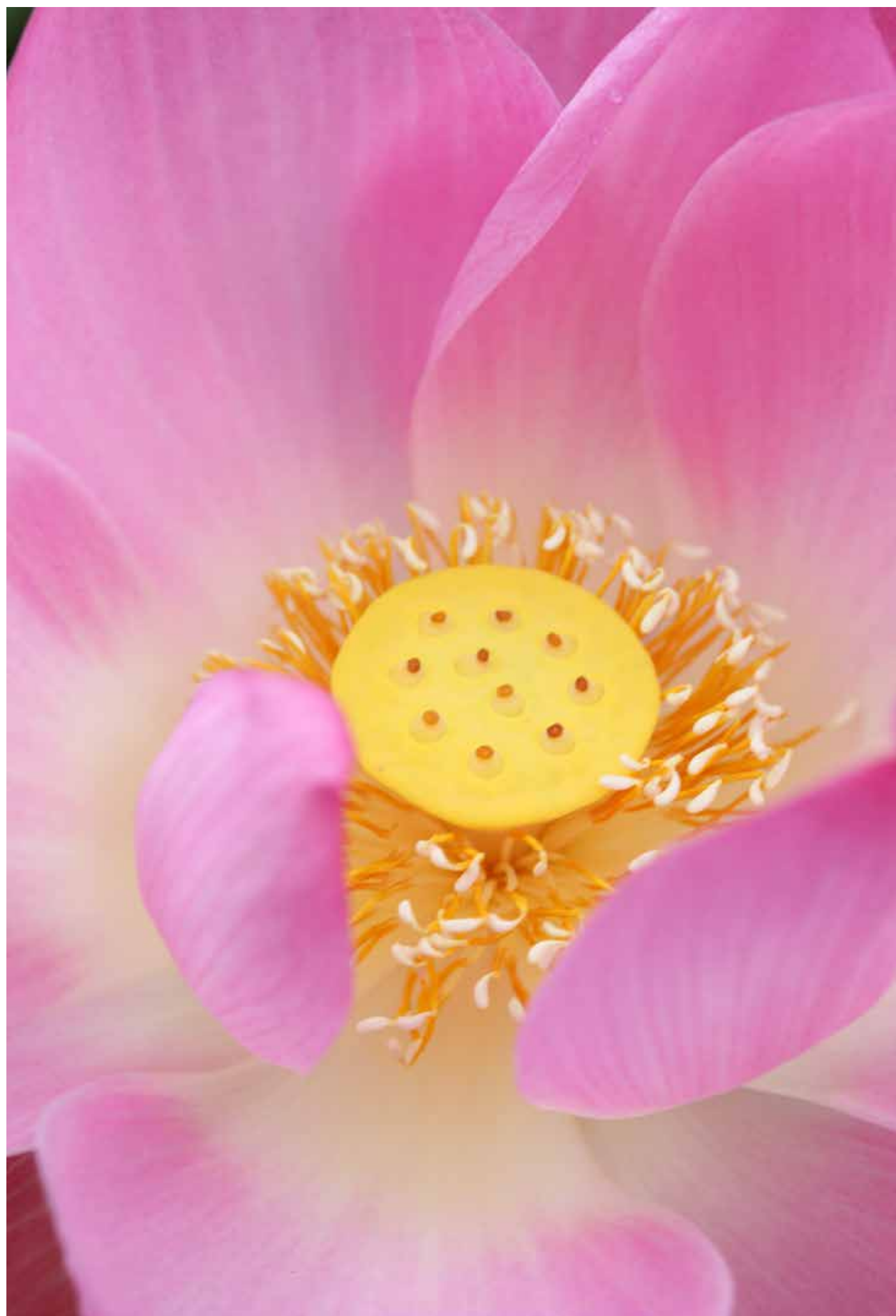
It's not so unusual for a group of people sitting down, at one of our outings perhaps, to listen to such an instruction and handle their bowls more carefully for one, two, maybe three steepings, then go right back to the way they were doing it before, or some haphazard way more often than not. But not only did our guest proceed to pick up his first bowl after that lesson with every cell of his body straining to be in tune with it, he set it down that way as well. Then he did it again, and again, and again...I watched in amazement as he visited us for nearly two weeks and not only did he never once fail to pick up and set down his bowl in this way, but I could see he was doing his best to practice "relating" to other "objects" in his life instead of "using" them. During his visit, he asked us to perform a ceremony for him symbolic of his desire to be a part of this tradition and make it a part of his life even where he lives now on the other side of the world, and he is one of our dearest brothers today.

Even more incredibly, as recently as two days ago, I was present to witness the continuing repercussions of that tea session. The third student who was drinking tea with us that day, another resident here who had already heard the same teaching given almost as often as I had, witnessing the impact that taking in and living the lesson had on our guest, began practicing it for the first time as a result! We've been drinking tea together for a few months since then, and neither of us, I must admit, have picked up every single bowl with that same level of reverence each time. But every once in a while I have witnessed her reach for the bowl, then stop and remember as the hand slows down its approach, grasping the bowl gently like a baby bird, or setting it down as such after drinking. In those moments I always find myself transfixed, as I realize that this act has not only carried on and changed the lives of those two people in a way that is as clear as day before my eyes, but it has come full circle and

impacted me as well. I too slow down and reach gently for that bowl, eyes moist in the recognition of the power of tea. And all this is really only a small microcosm of what really came out of that session and that whole visit.

It may seem such a small thing that we overlook it; someone changing the way they pick up a bowl, which then changes the way someone else picks up a bowl, so on... This is like tea served to someone who was angry a moment ago and finds their anger dissipating; or tea served to someone who loves to talk endlessly about trivialities now finding themselves in silence for a few minutes of communion with themselves. Perhaps the former will get angry again later and the latter will be chattering away again. But the truth is always deeper and vaster, stretching far beyond our ability to see in linear time. It's important to remember this and have faith that even when we can't see the impact of a tea session that the impact is there. It's also important to remember to polish our mirrors and deepen our practice so that we can better see the impact we are having, ever reevaluating ourselves and our practice.

Above all, don't sell yourself short in an affected attempt at humility. This does nobody any good. If we don't recognize our own growth, how can we put our abilities to work? And never let yourself be convinced that your tea isn't making a difference. Tiny changes add up, good or ill; they are drops in a jar. Given enough time, a person, a community, a society, a culture, the world, the galaxy and eventually the whole Universe are transformed...



When you begin down an Eastern path, and Cha Dao mostly heads East, you quickly realize the important role language can play in our thinking, and consequently our insights. For the most part, we come to love the ancient spiritual words in languages like Sanskrit and Chinese—for their subtlety and breadth. There is one English word we’ve come to like better than its Eastern equivalents, however: “Enlightenment”. When most people think of “Enlightenment” they see in the word the “light” and are reminded of the light in us, which we all travel towards. But “light” in English has another meaning: not heavy! Being enlightened means, literally, lightening up! Don’t take yourself serious, or anything else for that matter. There is an old Indian saying: “beware the spiritual/religious man that takes himself seriously!” And many of you know how we here do so love laughter and humor. We thought that these newsletters might be getting a bit heavy and that we would enlighten them up.

### *Testimonial from a Satisfied Customer*

Just two months ago I signed up for an annual membership to Blame Kaiya, thinking I would try it out, since others are always demanding that I take responsibility for my own actions (which is, of course, absurd!). I knew that it was all their fault, and was looking for someone to take the blame for all I do. Then, I slipped on some water and broke my leg. It felt so good to blame Kaiya for this. I called the hotline and shouted at Kaiya for intentionally and purposely breaking my leg. I can’t tell you how valuable this has been for my healing process, knowing that it wasn’t my fault at all and that it was done *to me* intentionally. All my resistance to it was lifted and I relaxed into a healing hatred so natural to me. I am completely satisfied with the way the folks at Blame Kaiya took fault. They even allowed me to complain for hours on the phone about my woes, and for no extra charge. I can’t recommend this service enough. It has allowed me to be the cantankerous, victimized, faultless perfection I’ve always known I was, not to mention validating how wronged I have been!

-Mortimer J. Snerd, Miao Li, Taiwan-





**Blame Kaiya™**

Call now: 1-800-BOOBERY

*Your membership card will look like this:*



**Blame Me!**  
**It's all my fault!**  
**I did it all!**

This card demonstrates irrefutably that (Your Name Here) is not to blame at all in this, as it was entirely and completely *Kaiya's* fault. He did it, so go talk to him about it!

Contact Kaiya and he'll be happy to tell you he did it,  
and that you, sir (or madam), are a MORON!

*From now on, we plan to introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you each month in these newsletters. We hope that this helps us all get to know each other better. It's also to pay homage to the many manifestations that all this wonderful spirit and tea are becoming, as the tea is drunk and becomes human. The energy of the tea fuels some great work in this world, and we are so honored to show you some glimpses of such beautiful people and their tea. We thought we'd introduce you to the talented Jarrod Quon.*

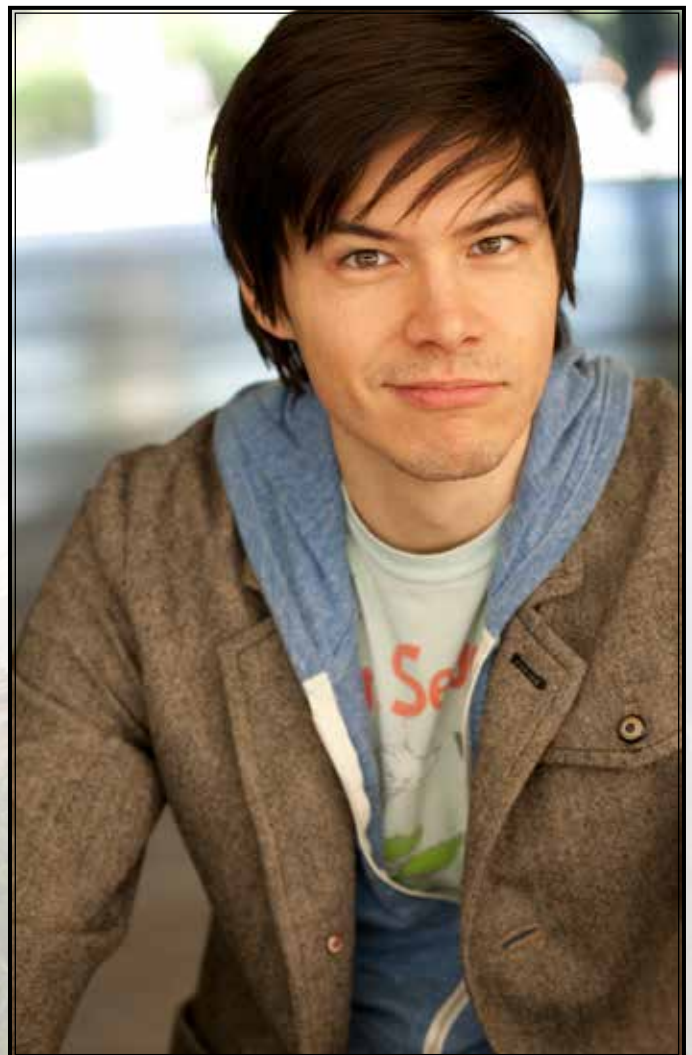
I was born in Portland, OR to a Caucasian woman and Chinese man who named me after an actor. As karma would have it I have been a performer all my life and enjoyed and lived for laughter and applause. So it is of little surprise that I spent much of my time in school studying theater and comedy. From Shakespeare to improv to street performance I studied it and performed it. This lead me to many different schools in far off places like the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts, San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater, Whitman College in Walla Walla WA, and now Los Angeles where I currently am being taught by life in the mecca of the entertainment industry. I have appeared on a TV show, and made a few movies and commercials.

Tea has only recently had a noticeable impact on my life, and with my meeting Wu De and traveling to Taiwan to study tea, I began to fulfill the rest of my karma of being born half Chinese. I am now bringing the two parts of my life together by creating a documentary about the world of tea this magazine speaks of and bringing it back to Hollywood so the rest of the world can know the love, peace, and connection we experience with each bowl.

The film will follow the journey of the Leaf, from sunshine to leaf to basket to factory to store to bowl to man and then back to nature. This is the story of tea's journey through man, not man's journey through tea. As we follow along, the leaf will share with us the many things that it deals with that seem so small and

insignificant yet play a very large role in the creation of each leaf and each bowl of tea. The many great masters of tea that we have read of in these pages will be our guides and interpreters as we follow along on this journey. They will reveal the subtleties and great wisdom of the path tea takes and in the end have us know how precious each moment of life is and how a simple bowl of tea is the best way to remind us.

[email: jarrodquon@gmail.com](mailto:jarrodquon@gmail.com)



The Global Tea Hut website now has a forum up, where we can all discuss this month's tea and ask or answer questions, as well as share our experiences. It is a great way to meet some of your brothers and sisters in the hut. Come and join us:

[www.globalteahut.org/forum](http://www.globalteahut.org/forum)

*(We are also on Facebook and Twitter now!)*



We have launched the new video series! The first video is an introduction to this Global Tea Hut. You can visit our Youtube channel via the GTH website or watch the video on the new page at our site. We will be launching regular videos starting in August, with tutorials, interviews, introductions and much more about this love of the Leaf!



There are currently 100 people in Global Tea Hut from all around the world: countries like Spain, Russia, Estonia, Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada, USA, the U.K. and Taiwan. Our accountant, Kaiya the Magnificent (and Merciful) says that once we get to around 120 people all our financial worries will vanish and we'll live happily everafter, forever and ever...



If any of you are interested in seeing these newsletters in color, you can read them on the Internet at the GTH website, under the link for 'newsletters'. Some of the photography is worth taking a peak at.



You are all welcome to visit our center in Taiwan. All classes, as well as room and board are completely free of charge. We have tons going on. You can read more at:

[www.teasagehut.org](http://www.teasagehut.org)

We have used some of your contributions to buy an amazing 100+-year-old matcha grinder. We are experimenting with grinding several kinds of tea for boiling and whisking. We've ground an aged-oolong matcha so far and are doing an aged Puer next. We plan to share some of this magic with you all soon!



We have given out 5 scholarships for a free year of GTH to people who want in but cannot afford the cost. If you know anyone else interested, please let us know. It is a great joy to expand this community!



Wu De will be in Estonia this October/November! We are doing some amazing tastings and workshops there. Come and join us if you are nearby.  
*Contact Steve for more information!*



Let us know about what you think of Global Tea Hut so far, either by contacting us or expressing your thoughts on the new forum. We would love to hear your comments or criticism. We are here to serve and make this experience better for everyone, bringing us all closer together.

[www.globalteahut.org](http://www.globalteahut.org)  
[www.teasagehut.org](http://www.teasagehut.org)  
[www.the-leaf.org](http://www.the-leaf.org)

***Be happy!***





## TEA SAGE HUT PROJECTS

### Our center

- Expenses (essentially covered by local donations and Global Tea Hut)
- Food and entertainment, trips and gas for visitors who wish to see Taiwan
- Bowls and tea for every guest to take home
- A Puerh Cave on the third floor
- A library of vintage teas for future students to study from
- A Large collection of various teawares to learn from

### Future Center

- Mountain land (probably around 200,000-300,000 USD for the size we need)
- Building (expenses unknown at this point)
- Gardening (both landscaping and vegetables for eating)

### Publications

- *The Leaf, Tea & Tao Magazine* (Online and free at: [www.the-leaf.org](http://www.the-leaf.org))
- Translations of some Chinese texts for free distribution
- Printing of pamphlets and introductions for free distribution
- The purchase of copies of Wu De's books: *Faces of the Master*, *Tea Wisdom*, *Way of Tea* and *Zen & Tea, One Flavor* for free distribution at our center

### Videos

- We still need around 500 USD worth of equipment
- We are also looking for a way to better host/share the videos