



# Global Tea Hut

NEWSLETTER #20  
SEPTEMBER 2013





# Who We Are

We are a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting, cultivating and expressing an awakening of harmony through tea. We believe that tea wisdom which has no connection to any financial motivation, good or bad, is very necessary in this modern world and therefore strive to build schools, centers and other tea spaces in the true, ancient spirit of tea—leaves, water and wisdom shared without any personal profit. There are several facets of what we do. Below are our main and current projects, branching from our roots outward:

## *Global Tea Hut*

Global Tea Hut is one of our main sources of income, helping to support all of our projects. Members around the world donate money and then tea farmers, merchants or tea lovers donate tea. We connect the two gift-givers. For a minimum donation of twenty dollars a month, members receive a special tea, a newsletter and a gift. All the work involved is voluntary and the tea is donated, keeping expenses to a minimum. We have found that this Global Tea Hut connects tea lovers around the world, and that if you share in the tea with a desire to connect, you will clearly feel the community in the bowl. In joining Global Tea Hut, you can help support all our projects, drink a unique living tea each month, be a part of this community, read about the teas, this tradition and a life of tea and stay connected to our energy and activities here and abroad. For more information visit: [www.globalteahut.org](http://www.globalteahut.org)

## *The Leaf*

Our free, online magazine about tea hasn't had a new issue in over a year, but it will be restarted very soon with an all-new ninth issue. The Leaf focuses more on tea information, differentiating it from these more casual/personal GTH newsletters. It is currently electronic only, though we offer free hard copies to the visually impaired. For more information visit: [www.the-leaf.org](http://www.the-leaf.org)

## *Tea Sage Hut*

This is our current center, located in Miao Li, Taiwan. Each year, we host over one hundred visitors from all around the world. At the Tea Sage Hut, guests come and drink tea, eat vegetarian food and have a bed should they need it. We have weekly tea classes and daily meditation sessions each morning and evening. We also help coordinate travel around Taiwan and put guests in touch with tea farmers, tea and teaware shops and events. All instruction, room and board, and hugs are free. We operate on a donation basis, and guests are free to leave as much or as little as they like for future guests, knowing that their visit was supported by past guests and hoping to pay the experience forward. For more information visit: [www.teasagehut.org](http://www.teasagehut.org)

## *Light Meets Life*

In December, we were donated three acres of gorgeous land in the mountains of Da Hu, Taiwan. The land has a waterfall, sakura trees, cliffs, views and abundant verdure. Light Meets Life will be the name of our future, expanded center. It will be a great place to learn about and drink tea as well as to meditate. We plan to have an ecological, organic tea garden for educational purposes and a communal farm to grow our own food. Our new center will be run on similar principals to that of the Tea Sage Hut, only on a larger scale.



# September 2013

**I**n September, the weather begins to cool and our teas start to turn darker, our water flowing into roasted Oolongs like Cliff Tea, Taiwan Red Water (*Hong Shui*) Oolong or aged Oolong. The Year starts turning towards winter, and the autumn is time for gathering energies for the coming darkness. As the days grow shorter and cooler, many of us will be taking out warmer clothes. This month is a time of rest for tea makers around the world, and for the tea trees gathering Earth and Heaven for a winter or spring harvest.

This month, we enter the Osthmanthus Moon. The Moon Festival, or Mid-Autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu Jie*), is one of the most important Chinese holidays of the year. The full moon of this month is considered to be the largest of the year, and family members gather to have picnics or meals and stay up to see the full moon, which is a symbol of abundance, harmony and luck. It is also a romantic time, and you'll see lovers out on benches holding hands celebrating the fullest moon of the year. Chinese people eat pomelo as a symbol of fortune and abundance. They are huge and delicious. We also eat moon cakes, which are traditional sweets with an egg yolk in the center, combining sweet and salty—like life. (We prefer the ones without the eggs, however, some of which are made with amazing pineapple filling!)

Every year, children hear a retelling of the story of Hou Yi and Chang'e, who lived during the reign of the emperor Yao, around 2200 BCE. Hou Yi was Heaven's archer and Chang'e was an attendant to the Mother of the West. They fell in love and were eventually married. Some of the gods were jealous of Hou Yi, however, and slandered him to the Jade Emperor who then banished the two lovers to live a mortal life on earth. Hou Yi hunted for the couple and they were abundant on earth. At that time there were ten suns in the sky. Each one was a three-legged bird that roosted in mulberry trees around the world. Each day, one of them would ride across the sky in Mother of the Sun's chariot. One day, however, they all rushed out together and dried up all the lakes and caused a huge drought, killing many people. Emperor Yao asked Hou Yi to shoot down nine of the bird-suns, which he did. The emperor gave him a pill of immortality as a reward, advising him to meditate and fast for a year to prepare himself. While he was away,

Chang'e noticed the light coming from the pill he had hidden and ate it. She floated up into the sky. Hou Yi tried to follow but couldn't. She floated up to the moon. Once there, she coughed up half the pill and asked the rabbit who ruled the moon to make some more elixir of life for her lover. If you look closely at this month's full moon, you can still see the Jade Rabbit pounding herbs to make the elixir for Chang'e. In the meantime, Hou Yi meditated enough to rise up and live immortally in the sun, longingly watching his beloved. The two are only united at the full moon of the Osthmanthus month, which is why this month's moon is the fullest and brightest of the year—testament to their love...

As a result of this story, Chinese people consider this to be a romantic month, and auspicious for weddings. According to legend, if you tie juniper branches together with a red thread and put them under your bed during the full moon, you and your beloved will stay together for all eternity.

You might also try the ancient moon meditation that Hou Yi practiced on the night of the full moon this month, perhaps also finding immortality. Begin by sitting facing the moon and stare at it for some time before closing your eyes. As you calm, imagine the moon growing larger and closer until it is hovering right over your head. Slowly imagine the moonlight entering through the crown chakra at the top of the head. Let its light fill your entire body, radiating calm and bliss and removing all blockages. Hold the image for as long as possible before opening your eyes and bowing to the moon...

*Bright moon, when was your birth?  
[teacup] in hand, I ask the deep blue sky;  
Not knowing what year it is tonight  
In those celestial palaces on high.  
I long to fly back one the wind,  
Yet dread those crystal towers, those courts of jade,  
Freezing to death among those icy heights!  
Instead I rise to dance with my pale shadow;  
Better off, after all, in the world of men...*





# YOUR TEA OF THE MONTH, SEPTEMBER 2013

*Spring 2013, Zhen Yan Rou Gui, Cliff Tea, Wuyi Mt., Fujian, China*

For hundreds of years, tea lovers have followed a journey leading into the northern wilderness of Fujian province, where cliffs and rivers touch the sky with a dancing grace that is otherworldly. The rocks here are covered in calligraphy, carved to commemorate dignitaries who came to pay respect to this land above the clouds, poems written by famous scholars and unknown travelers—each compelled beyond constraint, overflowing with the emotions such beautiful rivers, cliffs and bends in the sky inspire. And of course, there is the tea, called “Cliff Tea” for its liquor has within it all these elements.

Undeniably sacred, Wuyi is one of the only mountains in China where Daoist, Buddhist and Confucian temples abound in such close proximity. The powerful connection these mountains have to Nature, the incredibly rich mountain waters and the old tea bushes growing amongst these cliffs have gathered saints, sages and seers since time immemorial. There are Daoist caves that were once essential stops on meditation tours that led to immortality, and some say there are still hermits high up amongst the peaks of Wuyi even today. For hundreds of years, Buddhist monks and nuns have tended their own tea gardens here, helping to establish the rich tradition that has made this magnificent park an essential stop on any tea journey. On a visit, you can't ignore the influence these old temples have had, bringing a tradition of holiness and the smell of antiquity to the area. And yet, more often than that, you turn a corner and find yourself between two tall cliffs, the sun's rays visible strokes that gently end on the greenery and crystal waters—and then you realize that it is not the temples which have made this place sacred, but rather a mystical and mysterious charm which drew the wandering ascetics here in the first place.

But not all Wuyi tea is high-quality; not all of it is environmentally protected or processed by hand (or even with any skill). It is therefore important to understand a bit about the four grades of Wuyi Yancha and have some guidelines for identifying them:

## ***Zhen Yan***

The highest grade of Yancha all comes from within the protected park itself. Trees here tend to be older and grown with the proper distance between each tree so their roots have room to breathe, growing deep and wide to absorb all the wonderful nutrients of this amazing place. They aren't tended too much, and some of the small, terraced gardens are so surrounded by vegetation that the tea is not easily

discernable to the untrained eye. Of course, these trees are almost entirely organic and harvested by hand only once a year.

## ***Ban Yan***

This is what you could call “Halfway Cliff Tea”. It grows on the hills and cliffsides immediately outside the park itself. A lot of these gardens are planted in the traditional way—on terraces with a meter or so between each tree, which is left to grow strong and old. Some of these gardens are actually quite old as well and many are organic, though much less so than in the park.

## ***Zhou Cha***

Down in the flatlands between the park and the river that separates the village, several plantations of tea have been created. The soil there is rich and the humidity is adequate. Some of these trees are also very old, though less than the previous kinds of tea.

## ***Wei San***

Literally “Grown Outside”, this tea is grown in the flatlands surrounding the park and shares in none of the richness that makes Wuyi tea special. This tea is all lower altitude, inorganic, hedged and pruned little trees that are harvested into the ground, like in most tea-growing areas in the world. This tea is all about mimicking Wuyi tea, with heavy roasts to cover up any trace of flavor that could possibly infuse from the tea itself. Basically, these are farms that have, over the years, jumped on the “Da Hong Pao” bandwagon and converted their land to tea production to cash-in on the growing interest. We have some of this tea from a trip in 2001 that to this day still has not lost its roast, so that when you open the jar or brew the tea the roast-flavor and aroma is as strong as it was the day it was roasted.

Wuyi Cliff tea is traditionally only picked in spring and *Zhen Yan* is still harvested in this way. Some of the lower grades, however, are harvested more than once a year and sometimes not by hand. Oolong tea is the most refined of all tea processing, and quality depends as much on the skill of the craftsman as on the trees themselves.

The tea is withered indoors and outdoors on racks to ensure airflow from underneath. The specialty of Oolong



is that it is shaken around a bamboo tray to bruise the cells in the leaves. You can tell a masterfully shaken Oolong by looking at the edges: the best quality striped Oolong will only be slightly red around the edges, meaning that only this part of the leaf was bruised. Then the tea is pan-fried to kill green enzymes and to arrest oxidation. After that it is rolled to break down the cells and to shape the leaves. Yancha is rolled across ribbed bamboo trays with great skill. The tea is then roasted over charcoal for flavor. Yancha will be roasted more than once since the farmers cannot possibly process all the tea during harvest. They, therefore, give it a short roast to arrest the processing and store all the tea until the harvest is finished, at which time they can slowly roast each of the teas with the attention they deserve. The heavier roasts of Yanchas mean that the tea is better left for some time so that the roast can cool off. Traditionally, spring Yancha wasn't brought to market officially until Chinese New Year the following year (around February).

### *Tea of the Month*

Our Tea of the Month is a Rou Gui, which is translated as "Cinnabar", "Cassia" or sometimes even "Cinnamon". It is one of the more famous varieties of Yancha. Even a hundred years ago, there were more than 800 kinds of Yancha in the Wuyi area. Nowadays, there are only around sixty left. Rou Gui originally comes from Hua San within the park area, though ours was grown elsewhere in the park—it is definitely a *Zhen Yan*! This varietal of Yancha is one of the oldest, dating back to the Qing Dynasty. It has larger leaves

and a taste of Cassia, from where it gets its name. Our tea is half handmade, which means the leaves are picked by hand but processed with the help of modern machinery. Completely hand made *Zhen Yan* Cliff Tea would be too expensive to donate.

Yancha is notoriously difficult to prepare. It was made to be brewed gong fu (if you have such a set up). Learning to brew Yancha properly is one of the ways we learn how to make tea gongfu. You can brew it in a side-handle pot or bowl if you have to, but it will shine better when prepared gongfu style. When misbrewed, the tea will become sour. If you get it right, or thereabouts, you'll be rewarded with a dark, golden-amber nectar of the gods with a lasting fragrance and a Heavenly Qi.

The world of Yancha is deep and profound, and you could spend lifetimes brewing this tea without ever plumbing its depths. Such a life would not be wasted. Wuyi tea has been called the "Tea of Immortals" for centuries, drunk by Buddhist and Daoist mendicants alike. The wizened bushes deep in these scenic cliffs have ever been brewed into elixirs of meditation and life, sought out by travelers who traversed leagues of mountains, plains and rivers in search of their legendary golden sutras, whispered from quiet cups directly to the soul...

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





# THE POWER OF EXPERIENCE

Article by Shane Marrs

To gong fu or not to gong fu? To shower, or not to shower... the teapot? Which cups to use? Why even use a pitcher? And which heat source, for which water, in which kettle, for which tea? At what time of day, with how many guests, in which season, and of major concern: which pants should I wear? And does any of it really matter?

These questions regarding tea could go on forever, and the permutations of scenarios are ever-changing. The main reason I ask myself is because at some level they are important, and that level need not be restricted to being a full-time student of the Leaf while living at a tea center. (Everyone has to wear pants.) You may be asking some or all these questions too. Moreover, instead of just asking them, we can actually conduct experiments pertaining to them. We can ask simple, relevant questions and then proceed to find out the answers for ourselves, within the framework of our own sensory experience. (Cotton or poly-blend?) In fact, we can go right back to the basics and lay a foundation for our life of tea based on experiential understanding of why it is we do what we do. This may sound a little extreme, but if we take a simple look at how people are brewing tea today, you may just find there is a little blind faith and a lack of understanding behind what they are doing and why they are doing it. In any case, going back to the basics as it pertains to tea means going back to water: addressing the very medium through which Tea transmits Her wisdom to us, the very medium through which Tea and Human commune. We can ask ourselves, what really is suitable water for tea? Or simply, what makes good water?

It is true: we live in the age of information. However, we must not let not such simple questions be subject to a bunch of words thrown together on a page in some book or an app in some google. Instead, let the faculties of our own senses be an inner book of understanding, an inner google if you will, written by the hand of experience. Let this article not be the information you are looking for, but a signpost pointing towards your ability to cultivate experiential understanding. Of course, there are records describing the qualities of water as they relate to tea, but that's like reading that the nature of the Self is already enlightened. As Ram Das has said, a few weeks spent with your parents will quickly reveal the sharp difference between an intellectual understanding of what is true and an embodiment of Truth... "I'm an enlightened adult mom, quit calling me 'sweetie'! And yes, I want the poly-blend."

So too in the world of mathematics, the most elementary principles must be addressed with rigor in order

that they form an axiomatic foundation upon which the rest of math (and science) as we know it may be built. Furthermore, all subsequent levels of development can then safely draw upon the truth inherent in the level below in order to address more complex systems. (Finally, my degree in mathematics has been put to use in tea!)

What I'm alluding to here is gaining an understanding through experience, not via facts from a book. This goes for any aspect of life, but as *Chajin* (tea people) we can focus on tea. Of great value then, are the *Gong Fu Tea-Brewing Tips* featured in each edition of the Global Tea Hut newsletter. There are now twenty great experiments available from the time GTH started to where we find ourselves now. I stress the importance of earnestly conducting these experiments because, as a full-time student doing that myself, I am finally starting to realize the benefits of doing so. As a result, your connection to the Way of Tea may deepen, may develop more meaning, or may simply clear up some issues you've always looked past. Your understanding will be raw and real, which allows you to share that knowledge from your heart, not your head. Your level of sensitivity to subtle details will increase, be it towards the subtle qualities of water, or possibly even the sensitivity to detect whether your tea is clean or not. This can help you make more skillful judgments when sampling tea, not to mention that it will help you refine your own tea brewing skills. They are gong fu tea-brewing tips after all, which means tips on brewing tea with skill. In general, you will simply understand through your own experience what you are doing and why you are doing it. That's not common! Look around and see (without judgment) how people are preparing and serving tea. Why are they using a pitcher? What is the role of the strainer? Why use a gaiwan? (And what's with those pants?) See where there is blind faith, where something is being done out of sheer convenience or just lack of understanding. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with the above mentioned observations, but they're questions worth asking because more often than not, the answer is: "Well, I'm not sure," or, "Because I like these pants." Nor am I saying everything we do should be presupposed by experiential truth before doing it. Sometimes, you just want to strain tea from your gaiwan through a filter into a pitcher and then into your favorite mug. There's no right or wrong way to drink tea, but if you want a little more meaning infused into your life of tea, or if you're ever-more curious what brewing tea with skill is all about, then again I point towards the gong fu experiments and stress their relevance.

Furthermore, upon performing these experiments, there is this beautiful, dual understanding that comes as a result, which accounts for an external and internal reason



behind what we are doing. For many of the reasons we do what we do at the tea table, there is an outer aspect and an inner aspect, a practical reason and a spiritual reason, a Yin and a Yang.

Let me give one example. In one experiment, we tested the effect of pitchers on our tea. After all, why use a fairness-pitcher? Most people wouldn't even ask or have any idea why you would be asking. It's become an everyday tea accoutrement, used without question, though some have a practical reason for using a pitcher. For this experiment, we compared tea poured straight from the teapot into a cup to tea poured from the teapot into a pitcher and then into a cup. The results were pretty obvious as far as temperature, Qi and smoothness were concerned. Let's consider the external reason for using a pitcher: You gain a little convenience, a little consistency, and the ability to serve more people at one time, while sacrificing a little temperature, Qi, and smoothness. It seems a fair trade-off—the liquor is the same for everyone (hence “fairness pitcher”) and it

makes the tea easier to dole out. Now let's consider the inner reason behind pouring straight from the teapot into the cups: Note that, when using a pitcher there is no need to return the cups to a central location because the tea in the pitcher is uniformly infused and can be conveniently poured wherever the cups are. Without a pitcher, the cups need to be returned to the brewer who must gather them in order. One must skillfully pour (gong fu) the tea to achieve a balanced infusion in each cup (because the tea at first pour is less infused than the tea which pours out last) rather than relying on the convenience of the pitcher. This flow of returning, pouring into and serving the cups symbolizes the breath of the tea session—the very life of the session itself. It keeps the ceremony grounded, focused, centered, and maintains connection between host and guest. Like those gathered around the table, the cups are together and one, then apart and distinct—breathing in unison. You can witness for yourself how serving from a pitcher lends itself to dispersed conversations and loss of focus as opposed to



## *The Power of Experience*

a session served where cups are returned and served in ebb and flow. Knowing this, would you trade the convenience of a pitcher for the very breath of a tea gathering? Coming to conclusions and understanding like this is the real power achieved through these experiments.

This is not to discount the pitcher completely; there is a place for the pitcher and it's not just in serving milk. There is space at the tea table for the appropriate use of decanting into a pitcher. Now all of this may seem a little ironic in that I've stressed the importance of garnering your own understanding through your own experience, and here I am expounding the results of my experiment to you in intellectual detail. What I wanted to highlight, though, was the external/internal understanding that often exists in these experiments. Therefore, I especially suggest you try this experiment to confirm or disconfirm for yourself what I've written.

As a westerner, hailing from a scientific upbringing and education, I faced (and to some degree still face) the challenge of being objective when approaching these experiments. I feel as though, as soon as someone suggests to me what it is I should be looking for in these experiments, then that's exactly what I'm going to find, which flies in the face of the scientific method. For example, my teacher or peers might suggest what I should experience in a particular gong fu experiment, and I can't help but wonder if I would have experienced that had they not said anything. What's really happening is that my very thought process (of basically not trusting myself or my teacher/peers) is what

gets in the way of what there is to really be experienced. The desire for a blindfolded, objective approach is hollow and without faith. I should know better that these people aren't trying to trick me or misguide me. Some of these experiments require a great level of sensitivity and years and years of drinking tea to really know what to look for, and a little guidance from their vantage point is often needed by the novice. And so I say, heed the advice given in the instructions for each gong fu experiment. Have faith in your own personal experience but look for some guidance when treading uncharted tea territory from those who have steeped, brewed, and boiled before you. Email us some questions or look to our forum for more information.

Most important is to enjoy yourself. The experiments can be carried out seriously and with rigor. You can even document the results of your experiments in great detail, but the moment they become burdensome or trying, put everything down and have some bowl tea. Return to where it all started. Fill your belly with laughter, wear some comfy pants, and know Tea is just leaves and water.





## *Seasonal Tea*

*A poem by Shane Marrs*

*Attuned to the seasons, we rest near home,  
Alignment with Nature, everywhere a throne.  
From winter to spring, so our tea,  
From Shou unto Sheng and Red unto Green.*

*Renewal of life and freshness astir,  
Reborn in us, a welcome winter cure.  
With spring the cold is finally unclung,  
Gently she cools us with young Sheng.*

*But not too hastily; the seasons are slow to change,  
Rainy May Red Tea is well within range.  
Shou in the night on a cold winter's eve,  
A calming delight, and one to achieve.*

*Listen to Nature for the seasonal song,  
Remember to open your greener Oolong.  
Steadfastly we drink and share in spring's bliss,  
As the days increase until summer solstice.*

*Hotter the sun, we enjoy whisked tea,  
Lest we forget Oriental Beauty.  
But he who brews Shou in the heat of June,  
Too hot you shall be, you drinketh too soon!*

*Uplifting and fresh in the early morning hour,  
Arise with the sun, fragrant tea fragrant flower.  
Which tea wants to drink us? Make no plan,  
As the man seeks the leaf, the leaf seeks the man.*

*On into Autumn, leaves dress the ground,  
Mulching the soil, red, yellow and brown.  
A beautiful time for all types of tea,  
By the fading migratory bird melody.*

*Charcoal-heated water penetrates tea leaves,  
Chill nearing our bones, sharp seasonal breeze.  
Each passing day with signs to demark,  
Tea's time to change from light to dark.*

*Amber coals in a brazier like a hearth in a home,  
Heating our water and warming our soul.  
Winter upon us, blankets of snow,  
Shou.*

*Winter is old, ending, and cold,  
Aging your tea is warming I'm told.  
Up to the test and thirty years bold,  
Black Tea leaves out of retreat unfold.*

*First blades of grass at winter's arrest,  
Seasons connected, so too host and guest  
Still too early for your favorite Green,  
Patience in tea is advice to heed.*

*That they with the seasons may wax and wane,  
And abound with bearing most humble and fain.  
Attuned to the seasons we rest near home,  
Alignment with Nature, everywhere a throne.*

*Silently spoken, Camellia's tune  
Through words communicate, through silence commune.  
Tea is a medicine, the balancing jewel,  
Drink tea by the seasons—renewal!*



## GONGFU TEA TIPS

September 2013

In previous issues, we've discussed the importance water has on making fine gongfu tea. A cup of tea is ninety-five percent water, after all. Learning to taste water is learning to taste tea, and an important part of any gongfu practice. It is also important to repeat experiments every so often, even after we have experienced them, as new and deeper levels will continue to unfold on our journeys. This helps keep us humble, learning and growing in sensitivity no matter how long we've been practicing or how far we've travelled.

Good water is like good tea in many ways: it splashes up to the upper palate, coats the mouth for a long time (try counting how long you can feel it in the mouth), slides down smoothly with little to no swallowing sensation and no pinch in the throat. Great water will also absorb into the body differently. It takes little to quench the thirst and the Qi spreads further and more evenly throughout the body. When we hike up the stairs in the mountains to get our water we are often sweating, hot and thirsty. But even a small cup of the great spring water can quench your thirst and leave you cool and refreshed.

Water for tea should not be too acidic or alkaline. Usually a pH of around 7 will do. You should also not use overly-filtered water as it is nice to have some minerals in the water (called "TDS" or "Total Dissolved Solids"). Too much, however, is also a bad thing, as the water will be heavy and may have a flavor. Also, certain minerals will solidify when the water is boiled, leaving a white residue on your teaware.

Beyond experimenting with different waters, alone and for tea, we also recommend trying different energetic influences on your water. You can use a water quartz crystal, charging it in the sun or full moon. One amazing experiment is to drink a tea you are familiar with and leave such a crystal out in the full moon and return to the same tea the next morning, only this time with water that has had the crystal in it for an hour or so. You will be amazed at how different the tea will be. You can also experiment with putting a jar of water itself out in the full moon and see what happens. You may want to use a glass jar to maximize the effect.

Dr. Eomoto's seminal book (essential for tea lovers) *Hidden Messages in Water* is a great place to read about the effects energetics have on water. In it, he demonstrates that words and symbols placed on one's water jar will change the vibration of the water and thereby affect our tea. You can experiment with stickers that have positive words, symbols, etc., on them. We have found that the flower of life symbol has a particularly strong influence on water for tea. If you can find a sticker made of real gold, and put it on your water

storage vessel, you will notice a significant change in the water. Sound and prayers also have an incredible effect on the frequency and structure of water. Try experimenting with some positive music near your water storage jar. We also put our hands on the jar and give the water gratitude and prayers before ladling it into the kettle to start a tea session. We've found this practice improves the water and the way in which we receive it.

Improving our water for tea is also improving ourselves, for like tea we are also made up mostly of water...

*Think of it in terms of vibration. It's easy to understand that language—the spoken word—has a vibration. Well, written words also have a vibration. Anything in existence has a vibration.*

*Beautiful words have beautiful, clear vibrations. But negative words put out ugly, incoherent vibrations which do not form clusters. Language is not something artificial, but rather is something that exists naturally. I believe that language is created by nature.*

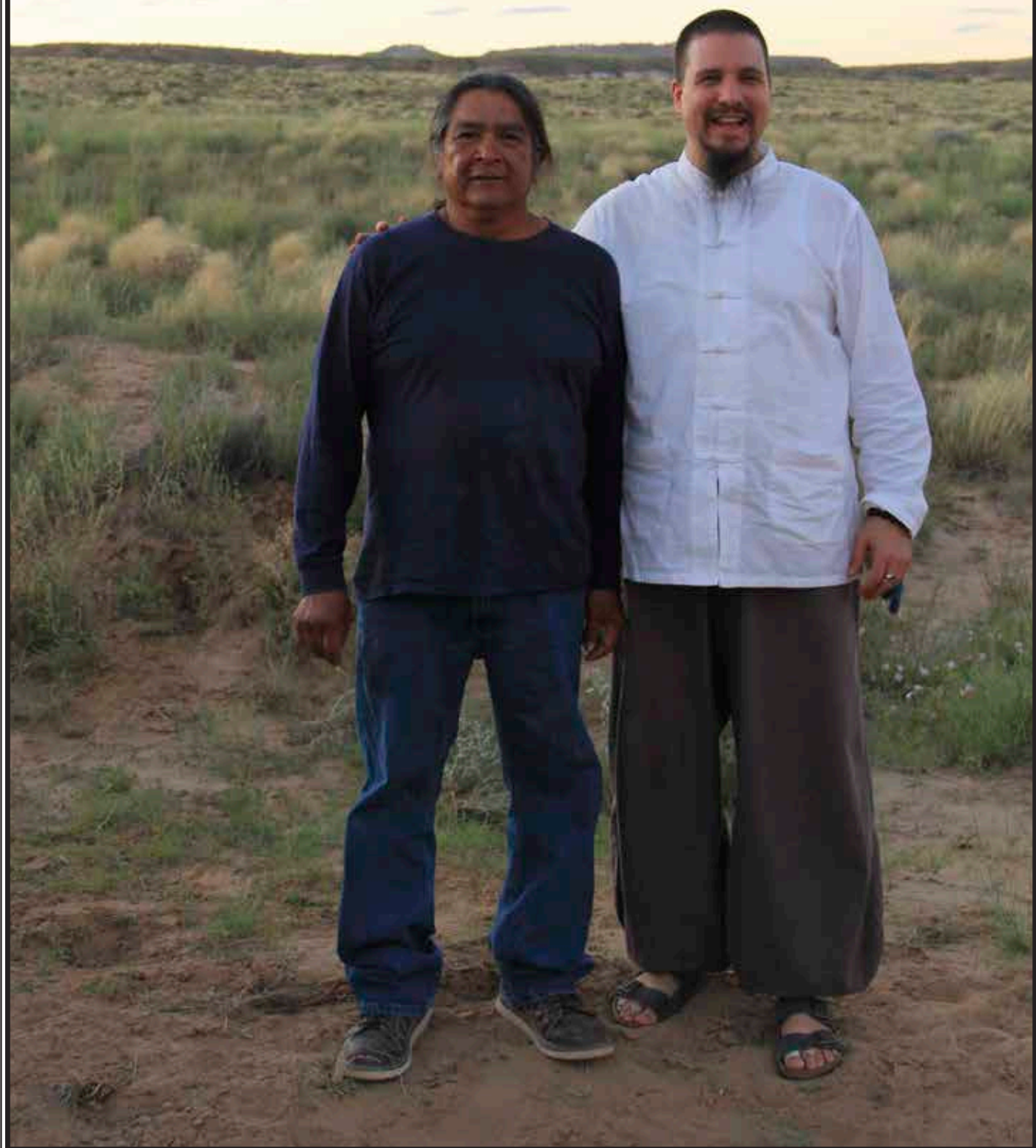
*No one particular religion has been able to secure the exclusive rights for the power of prayer. No matter who you are, we all have the ability to take advantage of this amazing and wonderful power. Once you realize this, you will then be filled with the desire to help others realize this as well. More and more people are resonating with this understanding, and this could result in a more wonderful future for mankind.*

— Masaru Emoto





*Hopi Shaman and Wu*





# THE LEGEND OF HOW OOLONG TEA BEGAN

*Article by Wu De*

The old man sipped his tea. He had never grown weary of that flavor. His father had picked Oolong tea, as had his father's father and grandfather. And his young grandsons would also one day pick tea just like his daughter did now. It all made sense in a comfortable kind of way. He was proud to be a farmer of Oolong tea, and took pride in the fact that it was the best tea in all the Kingdoms. Even the great emperor, Lord of Heaven and Earth, was said to prefer the taste of Oolong above all else. The old man nodded, agreeing with his own thoughts. He drained his cup and watched his two grandsons sprint across the yard towards the house, the dying sun infusing the sky behind them in the same sweet amber liquor he'd just finished.

The village boys were only clean right after a bath, and even then but briefly. The old grandpa didn't mind having them on his lap though. He loved the boys, as his grandpa had once loved him when he came home dirty and ruffled by a day of adventure. He too had once sat on his grandfather's bony lap and listened to stories. He smiled now at his own bony knees; It was a smile of contention. He was a part of something longer and greater than himself. His reminiscence of his family's legacy in tea put him in the mood to share it with the boys. He poured them each a cup of tea and laughed at the awkward way they held the cup, smelling the liquor as he had once taught them. He ruffled little Chang's hair. "Do you know what makes Oolong tea so special?" His bushy white brow flared with the question.

"I do," said the older Chen, not waiting for recognition. "It's because of the shaking."

"That's good, Chen," he sighed patiently. He poured them each another cup. "Let me tell you about the origin of Oolong tea." The boys ignored the tea and stared at him with rapt, glimmering eyes. Grandpa's stories were always the highlight of their evenings...

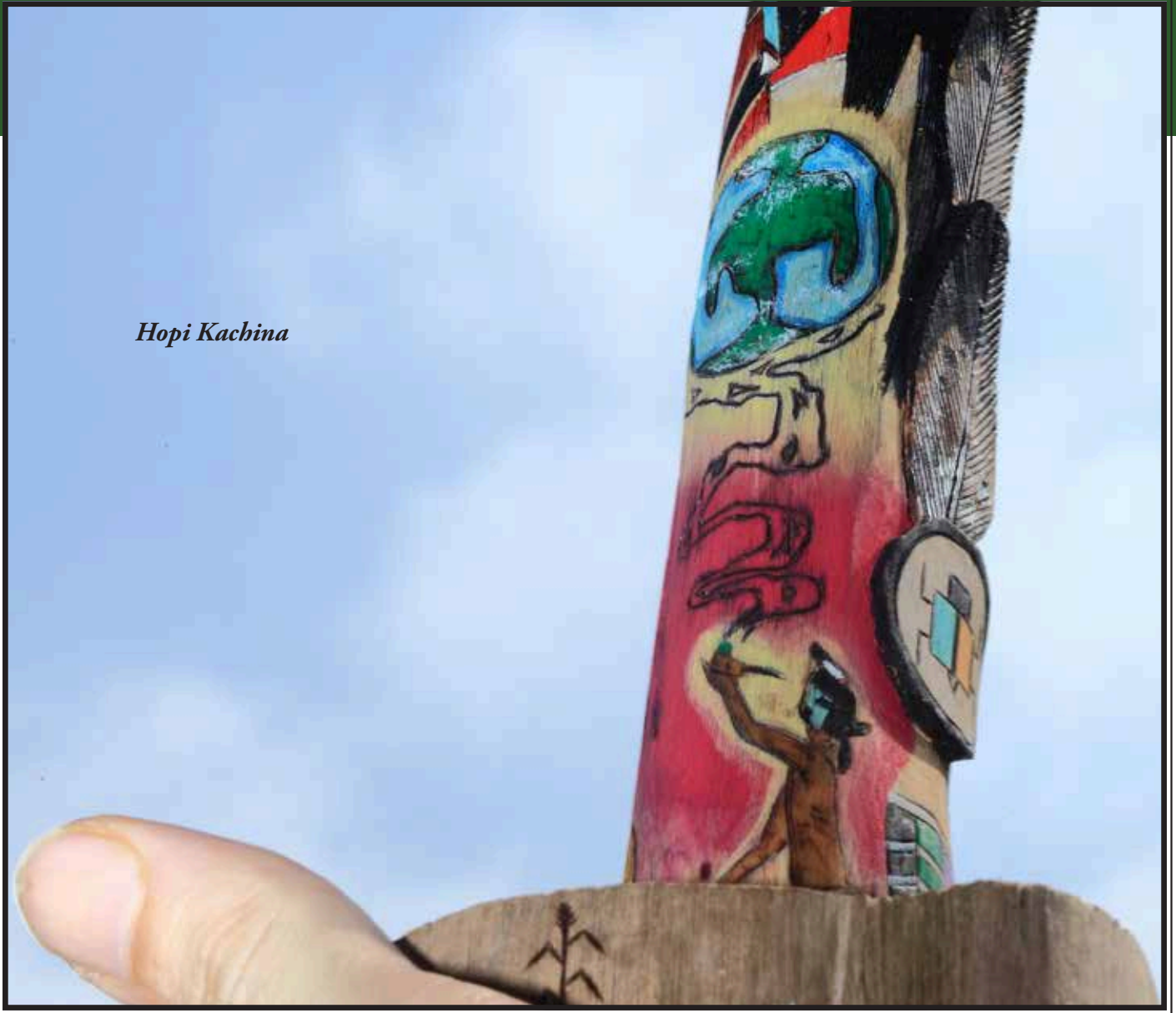
"Long, long ago people here picked tea just the way they do now. And they fried, shaped and withered it just the same too. But they didn't know how to shake it the way we do. Oolong tea wasn't

the great treasure it is today, and the farmers had a hard time selling it." He looked at the children in mock-seriousness. "And the children had to work all day instead of playing by the river." The older one moaned and the younger Chang gasped in disbelief. "At that time there was one farmer named Wu Long Wang. He actually liked hunting much more than picking tea. He was young and loved to daydream, and rarely brought home his quota of leaves. And that was why he was nicknamed 'Wu Long,' or 'Black Dragon,' because he always took so long to gather his leaves that he was tanned dark by the sun. His family was always complaining. No one thought any good would ever come of him. He did occasionally redeem himself, though, by bringing home a good catch to share for dinner. Wu Long Wang took his bow with him everywhere. He wasn't any good at picking tea or farming, but he sure was a great shot with that bow. In fact, the village's annual archery contest was the only time everyone liked Wu Long Wang. The rest of the year he was a just a lazy dolt." He paused to remind Chen of the virtues of hard work.

"One day Wu Long Wang's father told him that he had better bring back a whole basket of tea leaves or he'd break his bow over his head. Wu Long Wang worked hard all morning and afternoon and filled his basket with the best leaves he could find. Just as he was about to sit down and be lazy, he saw the biggest, plumppest rabbit he'd ever seen. It noticed him and darted away. Wu Long Wang sprinted after the rabbit, without even thinking of setting down the basket of tea on his back. Half of the leaves flew out behind him in a trail, but he didn't stop; He had to have that rabbit." The old man paused dramatically to let the boys imagine the chase. "Finally after an hour or two, the rabbit grew tired and Wu Long Wang used his bow to shoot it. He was so proud he didn't even stop to rest, but skipped merrily back to the village. He showed his father the rabbit, but his father only had eyes for the half empty basket of tea. He grabbed Wu Long Wang's bow and..." the old man mimicked breaking the bow over Chen's head and both the boys laughed. "Wu Long Wang went to bed with no dinner. He was very sad. For two days and nights, his father refused to speak to him. On the third morning, the village elders were all waiting for



### *Hopi Kachina*



Wu Long Wang when he woke up. He thought he was in big trouble for sure. To his great surprise they all shook his hand, congratulating him and asking him if he had slept well. He looked at them confused.”

“Wu Long Wang’ they said, ‘the tea you picked two days ago was the best tea we have ever had. All of the elders in the village have tasted it and agree that it is heavenly. You must show us where you picked it.’ Wu Long Wang showed them where he’d found the tea, but they had picked that tea before. They asked him to tell them exactly what had happened that day.” The old man set Chang on the ground next to his brother and leaned in, “and do you know what they found out?”

“I do, I do,” said Chen excitedly, “All the running had shaken up the tea leaves and that’s why they tasted so good.”

“Clever boy.” He patted Chen’s head. “And from then on, we have always shaken the tea. The village elders were so happy with Wu Long Wang that they named the new tea ‘Oolong’ after him. He was allowed to hunt and daydream for the rest of his days, as he pleased.” He looked at the boys and asked, “Do you know the moral of the story?”

“Yes Grandpa, I remember,” replied little Chang: “Daydream a lot, but don’t forget to jump at the rabbit when it comes!”





# Light Meets Life

## 光壽無量

We had an extremely successful month in August, raising a lot of awareness and energy for Light Meets Life. We held tons of amazing events, workshops and tastings in LA. Deep gratitude to all the brothers and sisters who helped make these events possible, whether hosting or serving. There was great tea and fellowship—a tremendous amount of heart-opening at all of the gatherings, and people were moved to support us.

We plan to use some of the resources we raised to apply for our own non-profit status in the States. As of now, we are sponsored under another non-profit, which kindly helps us, but takes a percent of the money we raise as a fee. Getting our own non-profit status will help facilitate raising money exponentially. The process is incredibly involved. If any of you know of someone who would be willing to help *pro bono* please contact us...

We are having an expert look at the land this month to determine if we have geothermal activity on the land. Our land borders the areas of Da Hu and Tai An, the latter of which is one of the most famous hot spring areas in Taiwan. If we find such energy on the new land it would enable us to heat and to some extent power the new center. Also, it means that we could have a hot spring bathhouse, which would be an amazing addition to the center. The hot springs in the area have rich mineralized water that can help heal people during their stay. We have discussed building a wood-fired Japanese bathhouse, if we can't have hot springs, as an alternative. We could use some prayers for this process! The man who is helping us look is doing so voluntarily, which is good because it is usually an expensive process. May the goddess of this land support a hot spring for us!

The ideal way for you to help support us in the coming three months is to order some of the Light Meets Life Puerh cakes. Our cost, including shipping to the States, is around twenty dollars. We are offering them at cost, but anything above that will go to support the construction of this amazing center. We have around one hundred of each of the three cakes in Los Angeles and can ship to anywhere in the States. We also have some in Taiwan that can be sent to countries closer to here. We thought we'd include the descriptions one more time in this issue. They are amazing teas, with great energy behind them and before them as they translate into this beautiful center we are building for all of us!

### *Shen Nong's Brew*

*Shen Nong* means "Divine Farmer" in Chinese. He is the legendary emperor who ruled China for a thousand years, teaching the people to farm, boil water and the use of medicinal herbs—bringing them civilization. He most likely represents the collective wisdom of all the tribal chiefs and shamans of pre-civilized China. They say he discovered tea while meditating in the forest. A single leaf fell into his boiling pot of water, and he exclaimed: "This is the ruler of all medicinal herbs!"

The first cake is a 2007 organic Lin Cang Shou Puerh blended with Kun Lun snow chrysanthemums. It is very rare to find a shou Puerh that is organic and has some old-growth raw material, especially since the price of such old tree tea has gone up recently. In 2007, however, it was still possible. The five years have also helped to mellow out the tea, adding depth. Snow Chrysanthemum tea is a rare and highly sought-after high altitude flower tea from



Kunlun Mountain, Gansu Province, China. The flowers are picked and sun-dried once a year (late summer), then hand-sorted into various grades. This is the highest grade available, and it brews a lovely liquor with a strong sweet and spicy flavor. It is thought that properties within the chrysanthemum flower have a calming effect that aids sleep. In the Traditional Chinese Materia Medica, Snow Chrysanthemum is said to restore respiratory fitness, regulate blood pressure and prevent cancer.

### *Lu Yu's Classic*

Lu Yu wrote the oldest known book on tea, called simply "The Classics of Tea". In it he extolled the virtues of tea, discussed water and fire, processing and preparation methods and a deep and spiritual love of tea. One of the most poignant aspects of the book was when he declared that tea was the only time of day that he could rest assured that at that very moment he was sharing the same activity with the august emperor himself—ultimately, expressing the equality inherent in a life of tea. The tea space is one where we leave behind the dust of the ego: our names, our jobs, our social or economic status, our gender—none of it matters in a space of one heart!

This cake is a 2013 Wu Liang. The Wu Liang Mountains peak out at about 3300 meters, making them the tallest mountains in Simao prefecture. The Wu Liang mountain range is in the county of Jing Dong, which borders both Lin Cang and Da Li prefectures. This tea is grown in the area of Wu Liang known as Zhong Cang village at an altitude of 2300 meters. The trees are around 200 years old. These tea gardens are remote and pristine, untouched by any of the environmental problems that other parts of Yunnan face.

Even when young this tea is full in the mouth giving the drinker a persistent warmth and lubricated mouth feel. It's never harsh and never drops off suddenly, thus revealing the healthy characteristics of the trees and environment from which it came. This tea will develop gracefully through years building its character and providing the drinker with ever more complex textures as it ages.

This tea was compressed with traditional stone presses in a small tea factory near Kunming. The tea was also sun-dried according to ancient ways.

### *Baisao's Single Bowl*

Baisao was an eighteenth century tea sage whose bright spirit illuminates our tradition in more than name alone. A Zen monk for most of his life, at the age of forty-nine he traded in his robes for what was paradoxically the more Zen-infused life of a roadside peddler of tea. His bowls were steeped in the ancient and priceless Spirit of Tea, unclouded by money, theory, ritual or even mind itself—a spirit from before the first fingers plucked the first leaves. And those who came by his wayside hut just might have passed by the old man so strangely donning the crane

robes of an ancient Taoist hermit, but for the way the spirit twinkled invitingly in his eyes or the softness of his hands as he poured his tea into worn and cracked bowls... And after such a bowl, the passerby left changed somehow, though perhaps not able to grasp the importance of what exactly had shifted their perspective. Commenting on the famous poem by the tea saint Lu Tong called "Seven Bowls" in which Lu Tong describes the higher and higher reaches of each successive bowl of fine tea, Baisao cheekily declared that "Old Lu Tong needed seven bowls to get there, but you'll only need the one of mine..."

The last cake is an Ai Lao. These mountains rise to about 3200 meters, making them second only to Wu Liang Shan as the highest mountains in Simao prefecture. The Ai Lao mountain range is in the county of Jing Dong, which borders Chu Xiong prefecture. This tea is grown in the area of Ai Lao known as Wang Jia village at an altitude of 2200 meters, making this some of the highest altitude Puerh in existence. The trees are healthy 200-year-old trees growing naturally on steep hillsides and ridges. These tea gardens are arguably some of the remotest tea gardens in all of Yunnan. Lack of roads and access has kept the environment of this area in good condition.

The tea itself is filled with hints of an orchid aroma, and a strong mouth-feel. Honey and grass essences are also present in this thick, soupy tea. This tea (in its young age) is subtler than the Wu Liang Lan Xiang cake, with less bitterness and a stronger aroma. The leaves are fatter and burlier than our Wu Liang tea. It features lots of hairy buds that make it somewhat resemble its close neighbors, Jing Gu Mountain teas.

Like the Wu Liang, this tea was also compressed with traditional stone presses in a small tea factory near Kunming. The tea was also sun-dried according to ancient ways.

If you want to purchase any of the cakes, contact us at: [globalteahut@gmail.com](mailto:globalteahut@gmail.com)

Should any of you wish to contribute or have any ideas for ways to help us realize this vibrant dream of Light Meets Life, please contact us. You can donate at the Center page of our GTH website or send a check to:

**Global Tea Hut West**  
**2441 Beverley Ave. #6**  
**Santa Monica, CA 90405**  
**United States**

Or [contact](#) us for other ways to support.



# MY ADVENTURE IN THE CITY OF ANGELS

*Article by Wu De*

**M**y trips to the City of Angels are always a whirlwind of service, soul family, deep bonds and even deeper personal transformation. Sometimes it's difficult to process my own insights amidst the fury of events, ceremonies, workshops and, of course, tea with some of my favorite people on earth. I always spend a week afterwards resting and working through what I have experienced, the challenges I've faced and opportunities to be a better servant of tea and this tradition. No matter what the challenge(s), my trips to LA always leave me inspired and uplifted. And it's no wonder I keep going back, even when I have standing invitations to go elsewhere.

This trip was even more magical for four powerful reasons. First, Joyce went along with me. It was the first time she had ever been to LA, and also the first time she got to see what I do when I am away. Knowing how hard I work and meeting the community we are building helped to ease her mind about me traveling so much, and inspired her to participate in the center more, knowing now that the ones who come here leave and continue to plant seeds in other places as well. She sat in her first workshop and was deeply moved, later expressing that it was one of the major highlights of the trip. It also helped that all the soul family there showered her with much-deserved love and fun. She had a great time and told me on the way home that she connected deeply with some of the community there, like me recognizing that she had another home.

The second incredible aspect to this trip was going to visit the Hopi Indians in Arizona and making tea for an elder at what they consider to be the center of the universe. They are an amazing people—star beings—with otherworldly eyes and a simple, direct language that somehow communicates great depth and experience outside of any content. I left feeling confused about what, exactly, I had learned from Gerald, the Shaman and Hopi leader, knowing, however, that I had learned so much. It is hard to put a finger on the content of what I learned, as the trip was more of a shift in perception. And that, I suppose, was the greatest lesson: that the tea ceremony also can be a contentless, silent space and that a tea ceremony/workshop can also focus more on shifting awareness and perspective rather than adding content or information to people. I had already been focusing on this, but the magic of Hopiland inspired me to make this overt and tell the participants that the content wasn't as important as one's outlook during and after a workshop.

The Hopis live on three mesas in the deserts of Arizona. A big part of why they have been left alone up to modern times is that the area is remote and rather inhospita-

ble. It is essentially a desert. And the Hopi dry farm, which means no irrigation. The rain there accumulates in smaller gray clouds, and it only rains in one area at a time rather than the entire gray-sky downpours we're used to in Taiwan. This taught me one of the deepest life lessons: when our life becomes too luxurious, we stop relying on the Creator. The Hopi live in such an inhospitable place in part to preserve their reliance on Spirit and to preserve the juju they use to pray for rain, corn and to avoid unnatural death, like being bitten by the many rattlesnakes around. There is a faction on the reservation committed to progress and modernization, but for the most part it felt as if the traditional arts, ceremonies, lifeways and worldview were still thriving amongst some of the Hopi—a worldview that sees our life in terms of harmony with Spirit and Nature, and utilizes ceremony, ritual and medicine to motivate Nature and to shift one's orientation towards the trials and tribulations of existence. There is great truth in this. To thrive spiritually, we need a certain degree of hardness, simplicity if you will. When a bed is too soft and comfy, it is more difficult to wake up early and meditate. I was deeply inspired by the Hopi commitment to live in such an amazing place—pristine and vast—and to do so with determination and Spirit, not buying into a lot of the negativities that the mainstream society around them is selling.

We shared tea in silence out on the cornfield, surrounded by the corn—their children—and one of the largest and most open skies I'd ever seen. There was nothing that needed to be said. You don't need to tell a shaman who spends his days in a desert cornfield praying for rain that this medicine can help connect him to Nature. He understood. We then shared some delicious food and some tobacco, smoking prayers for the world. He blessed us and said that the ceremony had affected the entire reservation. Around that time, one of the brightest shooting stars I'd ever seen streaked across the entire sky, bursting in a rainbow spasm of crystalline dreams. And for a moment, I wasn't a person in a desert—I was the desert.

The third life-changing aspect of this trip to LA was that my dear brother Steve showed up from Estonia for a few days to meet all the beautiful people there. This was the first, historic connection of two of the tea communities that are growing around the world. I hope that this is the beginning of a trend, and that the Russians will also come to LA and the Americans to Russia (or Spain to see Antonio, etc.). It was really powerful to see our tea tradition meeting in an international way, and sewing seeds of brotherhood even amongst such distant friends. And how easily they connected, as if they had known each other all along. Colin mentioned that a couple weeks before when he





heard that Steve was coming he realized that it seemed as if an old friend was coming over to hang out, rather than that he was meeting someone for the first time. That made me a bit moist-eyed, confirming our life's work and the power that tea has to bring people together in heart space.

Last but not least: my dear brother and sister Jarod and Emily got married, which was a huge part of why we had gone to LA in August in the first place. They spent a lot of time planning and preparing for their wedding, and they are both gorgeous souls, so of course it was one of the most amazing weddings I have ever attended. It lasted two days: the first day we held a tea ceremony, where they shared their love nonverbally. The entire crowd of family and friends, many of whom had never had tea before, sat in silence while they shared three bowls together, and then the couple served three bowls to the audience, which we all shared in so that we too could ingest some of their love and be inspired by it. After that, people were in a heart space—having just drunk their love—and shared many heartfelt blessings and wishes for the new couple.

The wedding itself was stunning. It was in a Japanese Zen garden and officiated by Emily's stepmom, who did an amazing job: she asked us all to be silent for a minute and evoke great presence to witness this amazing one-time sparkle shimmering on this great ocean of being. Their ceremony was incredibly honest, and a beautiful reflection of all they both are—humorous, serious, intent and passionate for each other and life. I literally laughed, cried and shouted for joy in thirty minutes, leaving inspired to live and love more.

All of the events this trip were a huge success. We had several large parties and workshops spread all over LA. We raised a ton of financial energy to go towards building Light Meets Life, had many people become members of this Global Tea Hut and raised a lot of awareness for all our work. We also deepened our bonds with dear friends. I got to know many of you better, and feel honored to have you in my life. I cried a few times during the trip and I do so now—deeply grateful for your presence and for the amazing community of tea brothers and sisters we have created there in LA. If anyone in this Hut is thinking of heading to LA for any reason, reach out to this amazing group of people and you will be so happy you did. I feel uplifted to be friends with them, and going there these last few years has taught me so much about myself, tea and spirit. If you've caught just a shimmer of the warmth, love and growth that I experience traveling to LA ever single time, then you know why I keep going back, even when the world and circumstances point to other points of the compass. My internal heart and my own oracle always confirm what my experience later proves: that LA is home.

*Most of the pictures throughout this issue are from our trip to LA. They were masterfully taken by Ganga the Great. Enjoy!*





# A LIFE WITHOUT TEA

Article by Lindsey Goodwin

I love Tea. I love Tea like I love Wu De or my mom, my best friends or Merlin. Some may find the idea of that to seem obsessive. But not you, of course. As a reader, you're likely in the same (tea) boat as me. And if you're like me, you may feel, at times, like Reverend Sydney Smith did around 200 years ago:

*Thank God for tea! What would the world do without tea! How did it exist? I am glad I was not born before tea.*

It would seem fortuitous we were not “born before tea.” (Before the birth of tea? Before the advent of tea drinking? I'm not exactly sure what he meant, but I can relate to the feeling behind it.) I, for one, am glad that this Now allows the gentleness and love of Tea to reach us. But as you can see from this enthused statement from Mr. Smith, tea can (and often does) generate a dependence. An attachment, if you will. And this is where we need to tread carefully...

Buddhism defines attachment (or *rāga*) as one of the “three poisons.” It is said to be comprised of desire, passion and greed. The other two poisons in Buddhism are ignorance (*moha*, comprised of confusion, bewilderment and delusion) and aversion (*dvesa*, comprised of anger, aggression and hatred). In becoming dependent on tea, we develop an aversion to NOT having tea, and we begin to define the presence or absence of good tea around the poles of pleasure and pain, drawing ourselves deeper and deeper yet into the realm of *dukkha* (suffering, stress, anxiety or dissatisfaction). Some people suffer because they desire tea they don't have. One might stress out because they are greedy for more and more tea. Others feel anxiety because they cannot always have and share all the tea they want, whenever they feel the desire arise to have or share tea. And when served a tea that is not up to snuff, people sometimes feel dissatisfaction because they would rather be drinking another tea, a “better” tea, one that they are more passionate about drinking.

So much wanting and so much aversion all at once! How do these opposites work together to generate such suffering? It would seem that Buddhism and contemporary social sciences agree on the mechanism behind this tea conundrum. As Ron Leifer, M.D., explains it:

*The antithetical pair of desire and aversion are the twin foundations of modern behavioral psychology. The basic principle of behavioral psychology is that organisms are polarized around pain and pleasure. The desire for pleasure and the aversion to pain are regarded as the basic bipolarity of mind and the basic*

*motivations of behavior. In this respect, behavioral psychology echoes Buddhism. Add self, or ego, to the pair and one has the nexus of our negativities.*

Ah, what a trap! Tea, why would you do such a thing to us! ... But it wasn't tea that created this mess. It was, as Leifer explains, our egos.

I've seen egos lay traps for people in the form of tea desires many, many times. Often, when we take guests on tea and teaware buying trips around Taiwan, I see desire glowing red-hot in their eyes, feel their energy shift out of presence and into a projection of future happiness, and sense the restlessness and lack of ‘completion’ in their being. Occasionally, I can discern their pulse quickening as they contemplate a particularly expensive purchase, and almost every time, I can see the same kinds of thoughts running through their heads (or hear these thoughts spilling from their lips). I can recognize this trap in part because I've seen it in others again and again, but mostly because I've seen it many times more than that in myself.

I mentioned in a previous GTH newsletter that I spent a year not buying any tea. This wasn't because I didn't want to buy tea. It was because accumulating tea had become a fixation that had sapped the joy from actually drinking tea. And that's a terrible tragedy for a tea lover, indeed! So I went a year without buying tea and learned a lot from it.

But that doesn't mean that I am beyond desire and aversion when it comes to tea. No, no... I still find myself craving tea and (even more so) teaware, especially now that I've settled down after so much travel.

And I periodically find myself in a state of physical dependence of tea. Some years back, I found a short-term solution to this and other *dukkha*-generating cravings for edibles: fasting. While I don't advocate extreme fasting, I do find that a progressive fast once every year or so can clear away dependence on the physical aspect of tea (as well as sugar, dairy and other dependence-triggering foods and drinks). A progressive fast can be a wonderful practice for bringing these cravings into sharp focus, examining them up close and letting them go. This kind of release keeps us from reducing Tea to a beverage, or a pleasing collection of chemical components (as in, “Man, I need some caffeine! I'll drink some tea...”). Regularly going a few days without tea can have a similar, but more targeted, effect.

The last time I went on a “tea fast,” I was on a trip in Okinawa for my brother's wedding. I remember making a decision before I left that I would not pack any tea or teaware with me. I contemplated something tea master Sen no Rikyu said:





*Imagine your life without tea, and if it's any different than it is now, you have yet to understand tea.*

Since I was traveling, my schedule was very different from normal. However, I noticed that despite the busyness of all the wedding activities, there were clear shifts in how I spent my time and focused my attention. For example, I wasn't drinking tea for hours on end, but I was spending a lot more time reading spiritual books and meditating. I also noticed that my 'everyday' conversations became richer and deeper, perhaps making up for what I sensed was lacking in time away from Tea. It seemed that in the absence of tea drinking, I was slipping seamlessly into activities which were similar in vibration, intention and mood.

During that time, I was reminded of a story about desire and tea:

*A student asked his guru, "And what to do about desire?" The guru replied, "You want tea? Don't drink tea."*

At first, in the throes of craving for tea, I thought, "Ah, if only it were so simple!" And yet, I realized, it is so simple. I wanted tea. I didn't drink tea. I realized that when you want tea and you don't drink tea, you have the opportunity to get past the desire for it. The possibility of seeing Tea for what She is (an abundant, beautiful, giving plant spirit offering wisdom and peace, and not a mere 'thing' to be desired) and you for what you are (a small part of the infinite that is already connected to tea in more ways than you could possibly imagine) is opened in the absence of Tea (yet almost entirely because of Tea).

This is not to be confused with detachment, or not caring about Tea. It is something entirely different; transcending desire through non-attachment. With this understanding, you can see the act of drinking tea for what it is (you becoming Tea and Tea becoming Human). You can see that it would be impossible for you to ever possess Tea, and that there's no reason you should even WANT to possess Tea. (Why on Earth would you when Tea can

## *A Life Without Tea*

become you and you can become Tea?) You can see that getting into buying tea is often an ego trap of having more and 'being' more, and furthermore that wanting tea is a lack of acceptance of what is; a trap of desire and suffering.

Despite these realizations, an overcoming of craving for tea and an adjustment to a different way of accessing the divine in my daily routine, my life WAS different without tea. (In other words, I still don't understand Tea!) Seeking clarity, I turned then to a passage from Wu De's *Zen & Tea One Flavor* in which he describes a tea monk:

*... if you then call him a 'Teaist,' he'll put his pot and kettle aside and serve you some cabbage soup.*

I believe this is closer to the crux of the matter. Tea, it would seem, is truly understood, when it becomes an access point through which ALL things are recognized as holy. The pot of tea, the cabbage soup... all are the Tao, all are Love, all are the Divine expressed in physical form.

I'm not at a point of truly understanding Tea yet. Although I overcame desire for tea during a short trip abroad, I still craved it soon after my return home. And although I could peer into what a life without Tea might look like, what I saw WAS markedly different from my life now. I'm sure there are many years yet to go before I will actually understand what Rikyu meant about a life without tea, but in the meantime, I'm happy to drink up with joy and gratitude for the abundance of Tea in my life!



*Hopi Tea at the Center of it all!*









# HOW DOES AN ESTONIAN TEA SHOP CELEBRATE ITSELF?

*Article by Steve Kokker*

**I**n Estonia there is a tradition called “Summer Days” where companies (pretty much every company in the country, big or small) will shut down operations and take their entire staff on a day or two trip outside the city. It’s meant for bonding and to say thank you, but it’s often an excuse to party hard, often with a barbecue grill, lots of booze and toe-tapping fun games like karaoke, tug of war or bobbing for apples strung with string from workmates’ belts. Anything to coax shy Estonians out of their shells. At their best, they offer a few days respite from the city, a chance to get to know their workmates in ways other than via moments around the coffee machine and in general meetings.

Having been raised in Canada, I always found this tradition quaint, perhaps a tad odd and sometimes forced. Yet enviable at the same time. Certainly a step up from annual Christmas cocktail parties or the occasional Friday eve at the local bar! Why don’t we make more of an effort to promote mutual understanding and fun in North America?

In any case, as a business owner I had managed sneakily to avoid this tradition all these years, as for a while my business was solo and then for many years a project headed by the dynamic duo of me and Triin. Neither of us wanted to go bobbing for apples on each other or hear our renditions of *I Just Called To Say I Love You*, so a lunch here and there counted as Summer Days for us just fine. This year, however, the number of people involved in our Chado teashop and tea importing business is up to about seven... and one day our newest employee Silje asked quite matter-of-factly, “So when is our Summer Days holiday?”. I must admit I at first laughed as I thought she was joking, then saw that her expression never changed as she waited for an answer. I coughed and said decisively, “Well, I’m not sure yet,” and from that grew what eventually became our two-day outing to a little island called Aegna, just off the mainland.

How does a teashop celebrate such events? Us four guys and three gals were definitely anomalies at the camping ground-holiday center where we were staying. Unlike the others, we had no hot dogs, thumping oom-pah-pah music or cases of beer. Instead, we earned the suspicion and strange glances of other guests by spending much of our time inside a small, mosquito-netted tent by candlelight, sipping from tiny cups, mostly in silence and sometimes to the tune of music which certainly only cult members listen to. At other times we could be observed engaged in tickling fests, climbing trees, taking photos of moss, searching each other’s bodies for ticks, hugging or eating food which only a rabbit

could love. We didn’t need our morning chakra-opening yoga exercise routine in the forest to get the others whispering behind our backs.

We all had a chance to serve tea to each other as well. These tea sessions were our main events. All seven of us got to serve each other whatever tea we chose in whatever style. It was an excellent way to share some joy, express oneself, open up to others and step out of comfort zones by practicing that which is too rarely practiced. For most, it was the first time serving so many people and there were a few shaky hands, a few klanky noises and spilled drops of tea, but in the end only radiant smiles, gratitude and good feeling remained. I am more used to serving tea than others there yet still it was challenging to keep performance anxiety at bay and struggle with a temptation to proceed at a pace faster than the heart’s.

I felt deeply touched throughout the weekend by how much we all so obviously enjoy each other’s company and how we are all on a very similar life vibe of trying to become better humans. It is good, open hearts and the spirit of tea which has brought us all together, and what a simple, deep joy it was to share such moments of humanity with other beautiful beings. We all left a little dizzy with happiness, and with more than a little feeling of Wow at having found each other and tea—each other through tea. I had a few near-teary moments of gratitude for having such an incredible collective in my life (I scarcely want to use the word ‘employee’); far from a situation of a top-down boss-worker scenario, we are an assembly of like-minded co-workers who are doing our best to develop our foundations as decent people and spread that in the language of tea to many others. It feels very much as we are doing that and often, even as the daily grind can get relentlessly punishing, I close my eyes in head-shaking, stunned gratitude at the opportunity to do so.

I’ll now let the others share their experiences, for theirs is the voice which reaches out to so many, which has the power to shape and change lives positively...

## ***Tea Friends***

*By Triin Juurik*

I guess it does not matter how long someone has been preparing tea alone, it does not prevent the tingling of butterflies dancing in one’s stomach when about to serve tea for many people.

To pour tea for seven friends and workmates on that beautiful summer day on an island far from the city





center was a valuable lesson. Especially when taking into account that the majority of us served tea to so many for the first time only. I had a chance to do an early morning session, and the tea I chose was light and flowery. I guess besides the great pleasure to serve tea, it was also a check-point to see and observe my own growth on this Way of Tea. When you sit down and take some deeper breaths, then it's certainly time to let go: To enjoy the unknown, face the fears, loosen the inhibitions. It's also important not to try to think about the teachings of the books and the advice shared by the teachers, and just observe what has actually stuck with you. Let hands make the moves though the heart and enjoy the moment. Try to notice and listen to the messages and remember them. Although we all saw shaky hands, broken cups and spilled tea, we didn't forget that life should not be taken too seriously and that one of the most important things in life is to have a sense of humor. Giggles and laughs are beautiful things, especially when directed to yourself. And the main thing of course was to celebrate some great friendships and bond through lovely talks!

## *Letting Go*

*By Siim Loog*

Aegna. What a beautiful time it was. Jumping into the unknown, letting go of everyday reality and enjoying the power of being with loved ones. As we drank tea so many times during our two-day trip, I will talk about two major moments that I experienced; we may even call them visions.

The first powerful, and I might even say life-changing, moment was on the second night when Steve made us five-element tea. The magical setting and beautiful human beings sitting in silence allowed me to go deeper within, allowed me to see more clearly. As I was drinking the first two or three bowls, I felt lighter and calmer; I felt the wind blowing in the tree tops; I felt... myself! Later on, sitting silently, eyes closed, I saw a vision of me, resting on the edge of a cliff, all dark beneath. I was drinking tea and smiling calmly. This darkness, over the edge of a cliff represented my fears and the great unknown, which lies deep within me and which I haven't dared to touch. As I was sitting on the edge, watching what was going on down there, I felt good, I felt that I am reaching somewhere, a new milestone in my life. I have always tried to be the shortcut guy, to find a quicker way, always looking for an option to avoid facing what is bubbling secretly in the hidden Pandora's box, where all my fears lie. (Just do not touch that box!) And I have done a very good job with this attitude, but now walking on this path, it is time to face everything that is hidden in me. Enjoying this vision, I was woken by a calm movement by dear Steve. He wanted water...

The second vision was on the next morning while serving tea, when I faced one of my biggest fears in this life, which we can define as something like this: "doing-something(tea, cooking, serving wine, etc.)-in-front-of-the-people-who-know-the-right-way-to-do-it-phobia"! This has been with me from my childhood. Even in school I didn't want to show other people what I was working on because maybe they would criticise my work or tell me to







## *Estonian Summer Days*

fix it. Oy, the fruits of our ego! So there I was, serving tea, in silence, to Steve, Triin and to all others who know how to make good tea. I was totally out of my comfort zone! But you got to do what you got to do! So I did it. I served tea proudly, with shaking hands but proudly, and during the last bowls I was finally able to let go. I closed my eyes and there I was again on the edge, but this time jumping into the darkness to swim together with my fears... I was ready to climb onto the next level, where there is one fear less, and I've conquered it. Those days with people I love gave me the opportunity to do so, to let go some of the silly stuff in me.

As you can see, this period in my life is about conquering my deeper issues. First, I needed to collect them and now, years later, I have to free them. Why do we constantly do it, this collecting of fear? Just to sit more comfortably in our comfort zones, to watch how life passes? I don't have the answers but I feel that if I want to live this life to the fullest, I need to let go of them. Besides those two moments, I enjoyed countless laughs, many hugs and much love. I hope this event will evolve into a beautiful tradition in which we all can learn and grow...

### *A Humbling Tea Weekend*

*By Timo Einpaul*

As Steve expressed it, the main goal during those three days was that each person would get the opportunity to serve tea to others, and in doing so, share oneself. Although practical issues and wordly matters were discussed, the focus was always on something more fundamental—communion with one another, the tea and the marvelous surroundings. Some sessions were held in silence, some in mostly laughter—whatever the particular occasion called for. I remember serving tea the very first night we got there—an aged *hei cha* in a side-handled pot. We sat on the ground with some candles being the only light source. We waited for the water to boil. Being largely deprived of the sense of sight, one quickly learned to use one's ears to hear when the water started boiling, and when the teapot was filled with water to the top. Some glances and smiles were exchanged but no more was necessary. A natural silence fell upon us. It felt joyous to serve tea for so many people, but above all for these people: my brothers and sisters in tea.

In my everyday life I try to keep the doors of my home open to anyone (the same for my heart), be it convenient or otherwise, but I cannot expect to control which gifts my guests bear—it is up to them if they leave by the door their bills and deadlines, wins and losses, joys and sorrows, or the meaningless quarrel they had with a loved one that morning. All one can do is to sweep and to brew, at least so it would seem to me, creating a supportive atmosphere for all of us to shed off the chatter. I have a tendency to accept far too many gifts, and often lose my balance, lose myself, and my tea practice weakens as well. There is a great rejuvenating power in taking a tea retreat, sharing bowls with fellow tea-lovers on an idyllic island, serving and being served

tea by people who take refuge in the same spiritual practice as you do. Coming back home I could feel the difference when brewing tea. I was much more centered and mindful, much more aware and present with tea and the moment at hand, as well as able to convey these vibrations to my guests.

### *Island insights*

*by Jaanus Leplaan*

It's always a pleasure to find myself in the company of tea loving friends. A weekend spent on a small island with the Chado teashop collective was no exception. In addition to the tea drinking marathon, laughing festival and the stone skipping event—a semi-official national sport of Estonian tea lovers—it also contained some insights and realizations. Here are mine:

#### *Realization #1*

Life truly is too short to spend it doing things you don't love! And I say "love", not "enjoy". While doing things you love is not always easy or enjoyable, things that you might enjoy at the moment (like watching TV or devouring a bucket of ice cream) aren't always the things you really love or want to devote yourself to in the long run.

#### *Realization #2*

Serving tea to fellow tea wayfarers is not as easy as it sounds. Although it may seem like the most natural and enjoyable thing to do, it is not without its challenges. Being present and at the same time remembering all the details takes practice.

#### *Realization #3*

Working alongside people who share similar values makes life so much more enjoyable and interesting! There are so many different ways to learn and develop as a person, but my favorite has to be sharing experiences with friends. I've been with the teashop from the very beginning, working part-time and helping out as much as I could. But it is only recently that I quit my day job as a café manager and became a full time member of the Chado gang. During these few months following my career change I've observed a few interesting changes: I now love my work more and enjoy even the smallest of details. I've met some kind and interesting people and found myself in situations and places that I otherwise wouldn't have had the chance to be a part of or visit. It seems to me that by making a decision to change one aspect of my life has made a noticeable difference in other aspects as well.

It is the people who we share tea with that make life such an interesting journey. I am truly grateful for every day I get the chance to serve tea to people from all over the world who have found their way into our tiny tea shop on the edge of an old town in a city full of coffee drinkers.

## *Estonian Summer Days*

### *Stage Fright*

*By Maarja Koovit*

Chado's weekend trip to Aegna was in many ways meaningful for me. First of all, it was my very first time on the tiny island north of Tallinn (even though I've been living in Tallinn for all my life). Secondly, I had just arrived back in Estonia from my exchange semester in Germany two nights earlier and the Chado family were the first dear people (aside from my biological family) I met in Estonia. Last, but not least, I hadn't actually had proper tea with anyone but myself for five months.

I have been working at Chado for a bit more than three and a half years, which is longer than about half of our team of great people have been in the company. I have mostly been working part-time, since I also need time to study in University, but I definitely have learned a lot more about tea and myself than you would think is possible to learn as a part-time worker. Still, I feel pretty silly and green behind the ears when I compare myself to my co-workers, and I paid extra attention to the others serving tea on Aegna before it was my turn. I felt kind of scared and nervous about my "performance". I watched others pouring the water and steeping tea so gracefully and I honestly felt more like an elephant in a porcelain store...

I prepared some Kagoshima Sencha as a casual midday tea for our group, and bit by bit, as I was cooling the water and filling cups with steeped tea, my worries melted away. It wasn't really a "come what may" state of mind I found myself in, since I was still trying to follow the tea-serving tips I had gotten from others, but I knew it was my family I was serving tea for. It was great to just relax and do my best in order to make them feel good. There was no need to impress anyone, since they had all accepted me as myself long before I served them tea. I know I have a long way to go in terms of making and serving tea in a perfect manner, but it will come to me, step by step. Aegna was the perfect place for finding the peace of mind that will help facilitate that...

Timo was the first to serve tea to all of us and from that moment something changed and I started to see the process of serving tea differently. I was the last one to serve tea, so I practiced being lucid in the moment and tasting the tea as long as possible. And when I prepared the tea I didn't think about anything. I just enjoyed the taste.

The biggest realization that I brought back with me from that trip was that people are autonomous in their feelings. It's impossible to get the same feeling and describe how I felt in Aegna, but the main idea that I learned was that in these tea moments that I experienced on Aegna I was at peace within myself. And any time I have prepared tea after Aegna, I've tried to pour in peace...



### *At Peace*

*By Sille Paas*

I am the newest member of the Chado tea family, so before going to our trip to Aegna I was really nervous. I tried to prepare my tea in many different ways, but still felt insecure and I was afraid of so many things. I hadn't poured for eight people before. I tried to serve my tea with different borrowed cups, gaiwans and pots but in the end still decided to bring my own little gaiwan and cups. So until the very last moment, I didn't feel confident. Ten minutes before my session I ran to the meadow and tried to find some blue flowers to make it look prettier, and when I served my first round of tea my hands shook a lot. The calmness came into me when I tasted my own tea. I was happily surprised because I got the taste I was looking for.







# SERVING TEA IN ENGLAND

*Article by Nick Dilks*

As I got off the train and wheeled my huge trolley of teaware along the concrete pavement at Manchester train station, I was suddenly back in the bustling energy of this vibrant Northern city. I had left here four years ago for my Asian adventure after thirteen years of living and working at the largest Buddhist center in Europe. For those of you who haven't visited, Manchester is an uber-cool mixture of gritty northern English history, football madness and avant-garde, stylish culture. It is a thriving place. Strangely enough, the catalyst for this was an IRA bombing in the late 90s, the year before I arrived, which blew out the windows of our newly-built Buddhist center! After this, the inner city was rebuilt and the renaissance began.

I felt a pang of nervousness at the prospect of returning to my old spiritual home, as the trolley jolted on the rather inconvenient cobbles of the backstreets. I had left all those years ago feeling that I had come to the end of my connection there. My heart had moved on. I felt restricted in the role of an ordained priest, and yearned to be free of all the (perceived) constraints of the Sangha's group mentality. I did not want to leave forever, but I had to get away. I was going through the motions, doing what I was supposed to do, and I could do this no longer. If I came back, it would be to practice and share Buddhism from inspiration and love, or I would not come back at all.

As I opened the door, the peaceful vibrancy of the incense-filled reception hall was wonderfully familiar, and an old friend greeted me with a big smile. Within minutes, I had met many old buddies. It was good to see them again. There seemed to be no judgment in their eyes about my vanishing act, just friendliness and delight at my return. I soon relaxed; it was good to be back. It had been a last minute decision to return to England, so I had not given the center much notice. They had sent out a general email to people about the tea session I was going to give later that afternoon. I wasn't expecting many people to come, maybe about eight at most, but I was in for a shock!

By the way, if any of you are thinking of putting on a tea day, I would recommend leaving twice as long as expected for the set up. I had left myself two hours, and I finished with five minutes to spare. Things like extension cables can be very difficult to find in new places! Two kettles and heaters, tea cloth, tea boat, teapot mat, scoop and stick, tea lid rest, bowls, ornaments, fifteen liters of supermarket spring water, music and tea. *Pheew!*

I had brought ten bowls thinking that would be more than enough. My plan was to have an introduction explaining what I was up to in Taiwan at the Tea Sage Hut, and

then to introduce bowl tea with some Sun Moon Lake Red in the bowl. I would allow a few questions and then slowly guide things into silence with a bit of choice music in the background to make things easier for any nervous people. Then I would brew some tea from the side-handle pot, talk about this style for a while, a little more silence, and then space for some questions at the end. The whole thing would last three hours. I would then finish by giving the bowls away along with some awesome tea to drink at home.

Within ten minutes there were ten eager faces opposite me and more people waiting outside! I even had to go upstairs to get my favorite extra bowl. There was a real mixture of people from all over the world: Estonia, India, France, Australia and South America. Once again Tea's universal appeal was apparent. Only about half were from the Buddhist center, and others had heard somehow and walked in off the street. It was fun to share what little I 'know' about tea with others, and it made me appreciate how much I had learned through being around Wu De and the others at the tea center these past few months. Anecdotes and stories flowed from my mouth in a way that surprised me, though I was also very careful to explain how inexperienced I am. This actually seemed to put people more at ease, so I must remember to be humble more than once a year. It seems to have a good effect on people!

What really impressed me was how earnestly some people wanted to learn about tea beyond the infamous tea bag. As most of you know, tea occupies a very central place in British culture. From colonial 'high' tea at 4pm at the Ritz to 'builders' tea sloshing over the tabloids on construction sites during *tea* breaks across the land. Tea is everywhere still. Tea with TV, tea with a 'fag' (which is a cigarette in England rather than the American meaning). The morning brew to wake up; the evening brew to wind down. "By heck! I could do with a brew," is a phrase you often hear from passersby. Even though coffee has lured away some poor souls, most British people still enjoy tea throughout the day after their morning treacle (dark coffee). But, the overwhelming majority (96% according to the UK Tea Council) drinks from tea bags. And about 98% take it with milk; 30% add sugar. Hardly anyone, as far as I could observe, drinks organic tea from old trees in the more meditative style I have become accustomed to. What I could see in front of me, though, was a bunch of people who wanted to find out what tea had to offer beyond milky bag tea. For instance, they seemed really interested to hear how much power ancient trees still have in their leaves; how plantation tea is processed and weakened on the way to the tea bag; how pesticides and other chemicals seep into tea trees and damage them, the world and us too. They were really keen





### *Super Cha Tongs!*

to try the tea that I had brought and everyone agreed that it had a very different energy to the tea they were used to. People were also interested in the spiritual, mythical side of tea: How the monks of old would harvest their own tea and drink it from the same bowls they used for lunch; how tea has been used as a medicine and an aid to meditation for thousands of years; how Zen Masters admonish their heady students to 'Have a cup of tea!' And how Zen and tea are 'one flavor'.

It was really heartening to have such an appreciative crowd, and to see that many shared my own inexplicable desire to integrate tea into their journey. Soon the noise of people outside became quite loud and an old friend popped his head through the door and said, "*Prabhasvara* (my Buddhist name), there are about ten people out here waiting!" I hadn't even had time to go into silence with the first group, but I asked them if they wouldn't mind swapping. We had been about an hour. I gave them some tea (but not the bowls!), swapped emails with some, and then another ten awesome people came in. I had only had time to sprinkle some leaves in the bowls before another friend came in and said, '*Prabhasvara*, there are loads of people waiting next door!'

So things did not quite work out how I imagined, but thirty people got at least an hour each trying some great tea and talking about the many things a more conscious

approach to tea has to offer. The response was great news for me, and I hope great news for our tradition too. I have been feeling more and more inspired recently to start something over in England when the time feels right, and I know Wu De would like to have another center in the U.K. From this first dipping of my tea into the waters of England, it certainly seems like there could be a very strong interest from the post-colonial Brits should anyone decide to bring the treasures of our tradition to those lands.

On a personal level, it was great to reconnect with my old Buddhist center through tea. When I left years ago, I was fed up with all of the 'headiness' around the center, the rights and rituals, the study, the rules. How awesome to just drink tea. Serving tea is probably the most useful Dharma teaching I've ever had the privilege to share with people!



*Each month we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you 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. This month we thought you could finally meet Lindsey's friendly and warm boyfriend, the astonishing **Rudolph-Merlin Bernd Govinda Von Trott Zu Solz** (Yes, that is his real name! You can call him Merlin, though.)*

Although I never would have guessed it, in retrospect, it makes sense that Tea would be such a big part of my life. I was always deeply connected to what I consumed because I grew up on an organic farm. I grew up drinking organic herbal infusions grown and prepared by my mother and organic teas (but never coffee). And since age 15, I was a Zen meditator with dreams of traveling to Asia.

Before I connected to Tea Sage Hut, I already understood that tea was a peaceful, natural means of connection and sharing. Drinking tea with friends had become a regular activity for me (although I have to admit we were drinking Yogi Tea teabags with milk!).

In the spring of 2012, I traveled through India, a country known for its love of tea. High up in the Himalayas, as the snows were just beginning to thaw, I met Lindsey, who was on a journey researching tea. We quickly fell in love and through our bond, I began to see the spiritual side of tea. On our first date, we drank Puerh with Buddhist monks. Within a week, we were regulars at a little Japanese tea cafe in Leh, where we would sip organic Japanese teas and eat Tibetan tea foods with a panoramic view of the snow-covered mountains. Before we parted ways, Lindsey showed me how to make simple bowl tea and gave me some tools and organic tea leaves to begin my own tea practice as I continued my travels and returned home.

Within one year of our first encounter, I found myself surrounded with tea in nearly every aspect of my life. I drink tea everyday, share Global Tea Hut teas and newsletters with my mom each month, and often serve tea to friends. And, when I listen to Tea, I also find a deeper connection to myself, Nature and the present moment. This is a continuation of the connection and sharing that I already knew to be a part of Tea. But there's much more to Tea... I found in Tea a tool to integrate meditation into my day to day life. She gives me a way of finding a meditative mind, not on my meditation cushion, but in action. In the silence of a tea session and in listening to Tea's nonverbal communication, I've found a way to listen to my heart. Within that space, I've also realized that Tea doesn't judge. She's such a loving teacher, and through Her love and patience, I can be more patient and loving to myself and to others. That's something I want to do more, and to share with others as well.

Today, I am writing this from Tea Sage Hut. The last time I came to Taiwan, my main motivation was seeing Lindsey. But in being here, I ended up making much more space for Tea in my life. This time, I've come to Taiwan not only to visit Lindsey, but also very much to learn more about the deeper aspects of a life of tea. This visit has inspired me to connect with more of my tea brothers and sisters around the world and to spread the Way of Tea in my home country of Germany. If any of you are visiting Germany, contact me!

I'm grateful for Wu De and his students, who provide this Tea space and give people the opportunity to walk on this path. I'm thankful that they are doing this with all their hearts. And I'm looking forward to returning here a third time! [merlin.v.trott@t-online.de](mailto:merlin.v.trott@t-online.de)





The Global Tea Hut website has a forum, 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 a great video series online now. There are many videos about this tradition, tea brewing, the center and Wu De's travels and work. They are all very inspiring to watch. 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 all the time so check back!



There are currently 200 people in Global Tea Hut from all around the world: countries like Spain, Thailand, Russia, Estonia, Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada, USA, the U.K. and Taiwan. Our accountant, Kaiya the Magnificent (and Merciful) says that things are abundant nowadays so we should all live happily everafter, forever and ever! Membership will be limited to 250ish members!



If any of you are interested in seeing these newsletters in full 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 peek 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 may have changed all the shipping to unregistered post due to an inflation in the cost of Taiwanese shipping. What this means is that you won't have to sign for GTH anymore; it will just be left on your door or in your mailbox. This may mean that some get lost, and we can't track them, so you will have to let us know if you don't get your GTH.



Wu De is traveling to Estonia and the Ukraine in mid-October for around three weeks, until early November. There will be workshops, interviews, lectures and ceremonies in Tallinn, Tartu, Southern Estonia and Kiev. For information contact Steve: [maadlus@infonet.ee](mailto:maadlus@infonet.ee)



As you can see we are shifting our GTH services around: changing the format of these newsletters and the printer. (Hopefully you see this as improvement—we do!) We also had to switch envelopes, as the post office doesn't make the old ones anymore (but that means we can draw on the new ones). Please contact us or use the forums and let us know what you think!



Our center here in Miao Li, Tea Sage Hut, has a new kitchen (now with a Vitamix thanks to Mia!). As many of you know, this was a long time coming. The new kitchen is gorgeous, complete with a kitchen god, new cupboards, stone counters, a Kuanyin and much more.

[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!***



## Our Projects

### Our Center (Tea Sage Hut)

- ~~Expenses (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 storage “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 (Light Meets Life)

- ~~Mountain land (We got it! Check this one off)~~
- Building (we will need from between 1,000,000-2,000,000 USD)
- 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 need around 500 USD worth of equipment (contact us if you have some equipment to donate)
- We are also looking for alternative ways to better host/share our videos online