



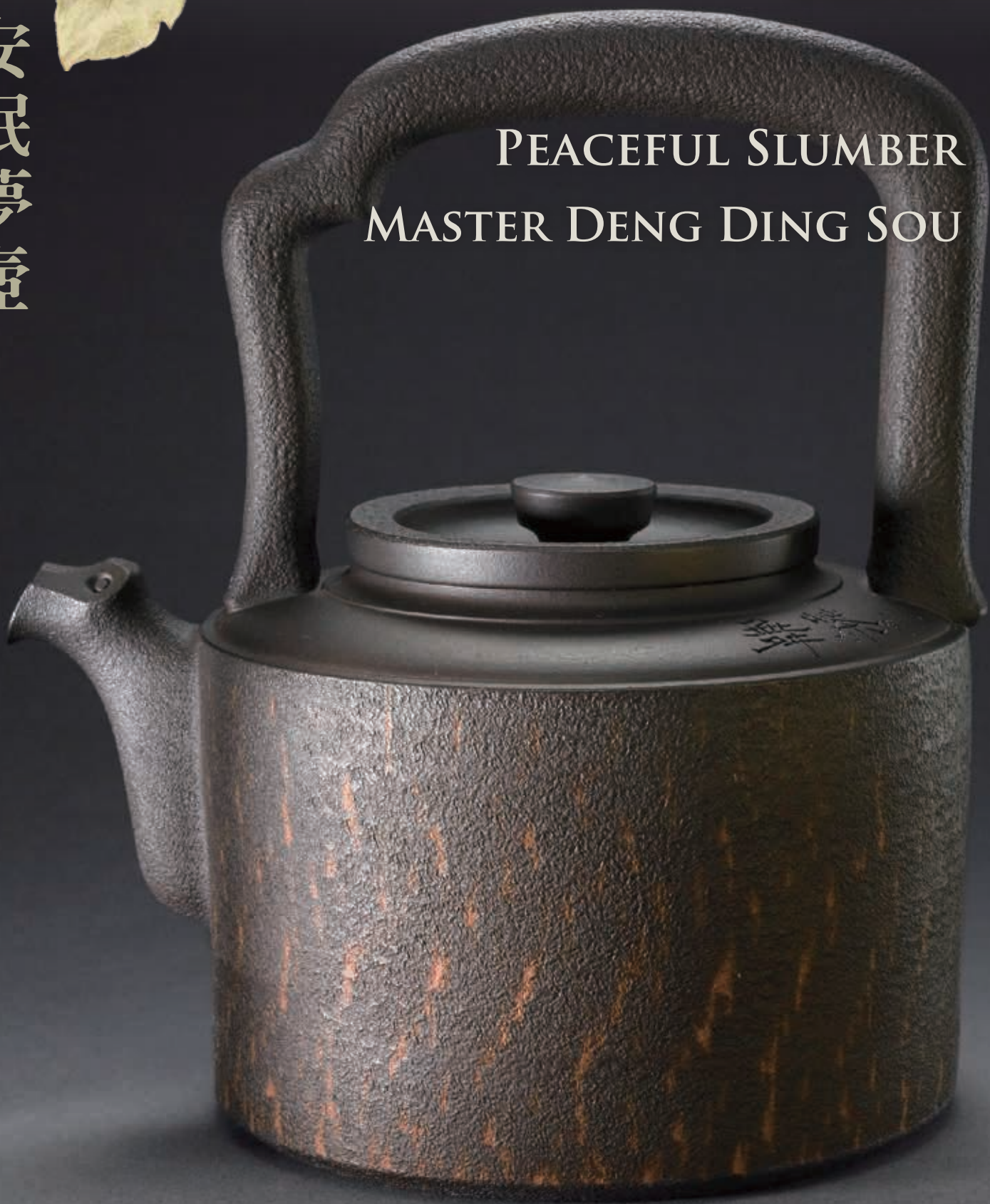
Global Tea Art

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE
November 2014

安眠夢壺

PEACEFUL SLUMBER
MASTER DENG DING SOU



Contents

ISSUE 34 / NOVEMBER 2014

GLOBAL TEA HUT

Tea & Tao Magazine



PEACEFUL SLUMBER

This issue is all about GABA tea, and especially our favorite GABA, “An Mian” or “Peaceful Slumber”. We’d also like to introduce you to a wonderful GABA producer, Mr. Yu San He. Along with this unique tea and its amazing producer, we’re also going to meet our favorite teaware artisan in Taiwan, Master Deng Ding Sou! You could say we’re sleeping to dream of gorgeous pots!



LOVE IS CHANGING THE WORLD BOWL BY BOWL

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Letter from the Editor

In November, the Autumn rises and metal rules. We tend to turn towards more and more aged puerhs and aged oolongs. We also find ourselves drinking more tea, as the body and spirit prepare for winter. In the summer, the heat in Taiwan is strong so the autumn is always one of our favorite seasons—that's because, next to winter, we drink the most tea in the autumn!

It is such an inspiration to see this community growing so organically. Every direction we turn, Global Tea Hut members are meeting, sharing tea and fellowship around the world. And as this energy continues to expand, we will eventually be able to take this magazine to the quality level we've been dreaming of: with more travel to remote tea regions to introduce you to the history, processing and appreciation of new teas. The tea world is vast, and we want to cover more and more of it, so that we can learn about this Leaf we all adore, deepen our love and strengthen our connection to Nature, ourselves and each other. We also hope to find rarer teas in that process, not to mention connecting and supporting organic farmers throughout Asia—the real tea masters!

We would like to ask you to continue helping us by sharing Global Tea Hut with your friends and families. Not only does this mean a better envelope, it also means that we will together build a gorgeous tea center in the mountains of Taiwan—there to promote harmony and tea spirit for generations... *If all of us find one member a month, we will be able to start building in the coming year.* And finding one member a month shouldn't be so hard, especially as these magazines, teas and community all continue to improve! We would like to bow to those of you who have put so much effort already into sharing and expanding this beautiful community! It is wonderful to see all the positive influence our work has had on the world.

We aren't making these magazines to produce a product. There is no end game for us, as this is all non-profit and the goal is to produce a center for you to enjoy and learn from. In other words, *this is a labor of love and you are the object of that love, my gorgeous tea brother or sister!*

Of course, another very productive way that you can help us is to get in touch and tell us what you think about the Global Tea Hut experience. Any ideas for improvements? How do you like the videos we're publishing each month along with these magazines? Didn't know there were videos? Then tell us how we can improve communication... In that way, we can improve this experience for everyone and help this community grow closer together while at the same time expanding it!



Wu De

This month we are going to explore a tea that all of you whom have visited our center know and love: GABA. We love nighttime tea sessions, especially around the full moon. If you are free the next day, nothing beats an all-night session—especially in or around bamboo—enjoying some aged teas. But GABA is relaxing, and helps you get a good night's sleep, which means it is often the tea we turn to when a guest arrives in the evening and we want to serve them some tea, but don't want to keep them up.

Also, in this issue, we're going to introduce you to one of our all-time favorite tea masters: Deng Ding Sou. Master Sou is an amazing artist, friend and soul who has done so much for the tea world and our center over the years. He is such a great tea brother; one we hope you all have the good fortune of sharing tea with at some point. He has a great sense of humor, is always smiling and is very generous with his heart, his work and his passion for tea. Not every teaware artist works with such a deep love for and devotion to the Leaf.

So let's delve in to this month's amazing, ecologically-grown organic GABA tea and this incredible issue of tea wisdom, beautiful teaware and tea people. It was all put together with a love for the Leaf and a deep love and respect for each and every one of you. If you haven't yet come over for tea, *you're invited!* And until then, we're together in spirit, at least at every one of your Global Tea Hut sessions...

SPRING 2014

GABA TEA

Pinglin, Taiwan

“An Mian” is one of the teas we find ourselves drinking quite regularly at the Hut, especially for evening or nighttime sessions. It’s a magical tea, from a rich and diverse ecology. We’re very excited to introduce or reunite you with the world of GABA tea!

茶道

As we often remind our readers, choosing a tea that suits a particular occasion is an important skill for anyone who wants to master the art of serving tea. Which guests are coming and at what time of day? Which season is it and what’s the weather like? One tea or many? With or without a meal? All of this will influence us as we poke around in cake boxes and tea jars, looking for the perfect tea or teas to suit the occasion. And of all these considerations, time of day is one of the most influential. I know many people become uneasy about drinking tea later in the day. Many times this is because of their relationship to caffeine. Regardless of the reason, some teas are less suited for evening drinking, usually because they increase awareness and leave us feeling energetic, while other teas that help us settle down are often more suitable for the evening or night (unless you want to stay up). So where do we turn for evening or nighttime tea? Well, you can choose a nice shou puerh, an aged sheng tea, or sometimes even an aged oolong like a Wuyi Yancha of particularly fine vintage. Many of these teas are rare and expensive, though, and best

suited for equally special occasions. More often than not, we find ourselves gravitating towards our GABA jars when an evening or nighttime session is called for.

GABA tea is the result of one of the most unique innovations in tea-processing to date. It’s a rather exceptional category of tea. Tea merchants like to associate various teas with all kinds of health claims, and in most cases this is just a sales pitch. We find that Tea is not generally a medicine that yields these kinds of specific results, or if it does it is quite secondary in our approach to the benefits of Tea. GABA, however, really does have a special effect that stands out from other teas, in that it brings great relaxation and sometimes a comfortable drowsiness. Despite the strong comforting energy that GABA brings to the table, it is not inflexible, suiting many kinds of tea sessions, by day or night. But in the spirit of its calming energy, which we so often turn to in the evening, we have named this month’s tea “Peaceful Slumber (*An Mian*, 安眠)”

GABA is unusual in that it comes in two different forms; it is sometimes processed as a ball, which

means it must be brewed in a pot, and also as a striped tea, which is often nice to have directly in a bowl. This is just one more reason it is such a great tea to have on hand, because it is appropriate for different situations. *An Mian* is the striped variety, which means you can brew it in a bowl or a pot.

We have all kinds of different late-night sessions here at the Hut. Sometimes, it’s been a long and busy day with work done in the morning, and we just want to have a little tea before going to sleep. Sometimes a guest has arrived late, but isn’t yet tired, and we want to welcome them with tea or help them adjust to the new time zone. On evenings when we are having an “editing party” for this magazine, we also usually drink GABA tea as we work. Sometimes we like to drink GABA to celebrate the unfolding of a full moon. Moon sessions are some of the best tea sessions, always have been, especially outdoors. If you ever get the chance, drink tea at night in a bamboo grove. That may sound exotic to some of you, but it is an experience every tea lover should enjoy once in his or her life. Bamboo and the moon have a mystical connection. The bamboo

shines silver and sings to the moon, creaking and clacking in rhythms that stir the soul to a poetry that waxes like the moon above. Incidentally, we've already chosen a particular bamboo grove on our land to devote to nighttime sessions once we build the new center, Light Meets Life. We'll probably install a stone tea table there. And you're all invited to the first full moon session held there!

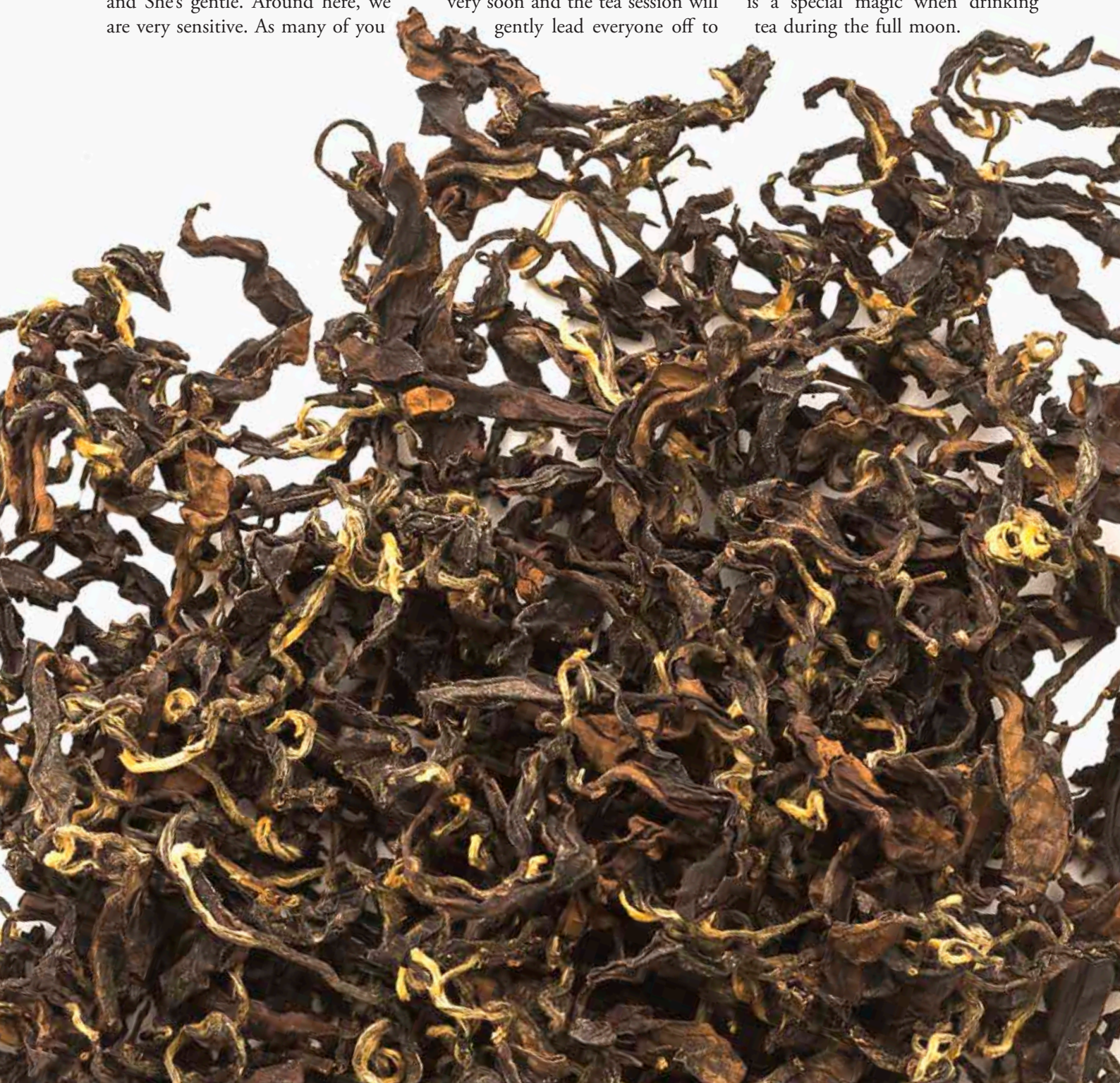
It is not necessary to drink GABA at night, and its effects are only very mild. It isn't an intoxicant. It's Tea, and She's gentle. Around here, we are very sensitive. As many of you

know, at the center, we eat light, vegetarian meals, refrain from intoxicants and meditate every day. To us GABA seems very relaxing, indeed. And like all things Tea, a lot of the energy of the session is influenced by the one brewing, the environment and focus of the session as well as the energy of the tea itself.

One way to direct this energy so that it will fit the occasion is through the music you choose. If you choose something sonorous and quiet, without vocals, like a shakuhachi flute album, eyes grow heavy with sleep very soon and the tea session will gently lead everyone off to

bed. When we have to work, like when editing these magazines, we invariably listen to our favorite jazz guitarist, Bill Frisell, whose music combined with the GABA leads us into a relaxed clarity and focus. For a celebratory session, we want to play something uplifting and light, so we can stay awake enough to enjoy one another's company, while the tea's sleepy energy will be waiting to find us after the session is over, allowing us to go to bed when we finish.

Some of the best tea sessions we've ever had were at night. There is a special magic when drinking tea during the full moon.



If you are lucky, and don't have anything planned for the next day, then it's great to stay up well into the night drinking a deep and powerful tea, like an aged puerh. But if you want to share in some of the magic nighttime energy without losing sleep, GABA is an excellent choice!

A Bit About GABA

GABA was first invented/discovered in Japan, around twenty to twenty-five years ago. Later, the processing methodology was imported to Taiwan, where production has increased steadily over the last few years. Most Taiwanese still haven't taken to GABA, though, so most GABA produced here is exported.

It is difficult to know in which category of tea GABA belongs. Oftentimes, GABA is listed as a kind of oolong tea, as it is primarily made from oolong varietals and is technically semi-oxidized, but the processing of GABA is so exceptional that categorizing it by varietal gets confusing. The Japanese usually make a less-oxidized version (though, as you'll soon see the ordinary term for withering, "oxidation", doesn't precisely apply to GABA), and from green tea tree varietals. In Taiwan, oolong varietals are used and the withering is heavier. Sometimes, the GABA tea made in Taiwan is so heavily oxidized that it more closely resembles red tea, further complicating the categorization of this unique

tea. Maybe, like puerh, it deserves its own category.

GABA (Gamma Amino Butyric Acid) is a naturally-occurring substance in our bodies. It is one of the main neurotransmitters for the Central Nervous System. It works to prevent over-excitement of the nervous system. Decreased levels of GABA in the brain have been documented to have direct correlation to various disorders of the nervous system. GABA also affects the endocrine system, and some new research is showing an increase in beneficial hormones as a result of GABA consumption.

All tea actually contains GABA. The processing that has come to be known as "GABA" encourages this chemical greatly. A green tea has

Chemicals & Tea

One of the questions every tea lover gets asked more than any other is "Does this tea have caffeine?" After being asked this question hundreds of times, you begin to wonder what the question really means. Often, when you bounce the question back, politely responding: "Yes. What does that mean to you?" you find that for many people "caffeine" is a gremlin or a snark. They aren't sure exactly what it is, only that they read somewhere that you shouldn't intake too much. Other, better answers are based on personal experience, like "It upsets my stomach". We like those answers, as they are truth to that person and their body. Still, it's important to remember that caffeine is not an isolated molecule in Nature. It doesn't exist in or by itself (what does, actually?). In other words, the caffeine in chocolate is different than the caffeine in soda, which is different than the caffeine in tea. Furthermore, every single tea has different caffeine—every steeping, really! And the other chemicals in tea or chocolate interact with the caffeine and change its constitution and psychosomatic effects.

For us, the issue with seeing Tea as caffeine is that it reduces Tea (and us) to chemical aggregates. So much of the sensations, experiences and energies Tea evokes are beyond what any reductionistic study of its chemical constituents can elucidate. This is not to say that caffeine is not real, or that the stomachache you get when you take it is not real either. (We might also wonder what, if any, of these symptoms are caused by consuming the chemicals in inorganic teas.)

Wu De often relates that when he was in his freshman year of college and drinking coffee, he developed an allergy to "caffeine", which upset his prostate. But in decades of tea drinking, he has yet to experience the same discomfort. Obviously, Tea suits his constitution. The point, however, is that reducing Tea to "caffeine" unfortunately causes a lot of people to pass on a particular tea that not only would not have aggravated them in the way "caffeine" usually does, but might have been the impetus for spiritual insight. And we think that all these aspects of caffeine apply equally to the chemical aspect of GABA tea.



around five to seven milligrams of GABA per hundred grams, whereas a tea processed as “GABA” can have as much as 250 milligrams. One of the things we love the most about GABA is that it is almost always organic. Several farmers have told us that when inorganic tea is used, the amount of GABA is significantly lessened. We even saw some data proving this, where organic tea produced as much as 100 more milligrams of GABA than the inorganic alternative. When drinking GABA, it is therefore easy to tell if the tea is organic!

Though it’s interesting to learn some of the science behind GABA, the experience is much more energetic for us. We aren’t living as aggre-

gates of chemicals, you and I. That isn’t our experience. And there is always a limitation to tea information, and an infinity within a tea ceremony. We experience GABA not as a long, hard-to-pronounce chemical, but as a calming energy that feels like it supports and encourages sleep, without forcing you to sleep. There is that and all the aspects of its preparation, sharing and drinking that cannot be put into words...

The defining step in GABA processing is the withering, which is done in a complete vacuum. As most of you know, tea processing is distinguished most simply by degree of oxidation—green teas have little oxidation, oolongs range the middle spectrum of semi-oxidized

teas, while red teas are more fully oxidized. GABA is withered, but it isn’t oxidized. Sometimes, Nitrous Oxide is used in the withering of GABA, further sealing the tea in an oxygen-free space. *An Mian* was not produced in that way, though. It was withered in vacuum-sealed bags.

After picking, GABA does go through some oxidation. This is necessary for most all tea production, because some of the moisture has to evaporate from the leaves so that they are limp enough to be processed. Freshly-plucked tea leaves are full of water, and therefore brittle. Processing them in this form would cause them to break apart, as with any leaf. The most glaring exception is, of course, green tea, which was traditionally made exclusively from fresh and unopened buds, which means that they can be dried immediately after picking, and ideally with as little oxidation as possible. Nowadays, a lot of green tea is made with leaves and buds to increase yield, and has to have some oxidation as a result. But such teas are always inferior to the pure-bud green teas. Anyway, GABA is oxidized to a degree. This brief oxidation is another reason why GABA is usually thought of as an oolong tea. *An Mian* was oxidized until around 30% of the moisture content was released. This usually takes between one and two hours, depending on the weather, time of day and humidity.

After the initial withering, the key part of GABA processing begins: several switches from vacuum-sealed withering to tossing (*lang chin*), which separate and further oxidize the tea. Usually, these two steps are repeated three times. The tea withers in the oxygen-free bags for around eight hours and is then tossed for four hours—in a large tumbling machine, of course (imagine tossing tea by hand for four hours!). After withering and tossing/oxidizing for so long, the tea gets a short rest.

At this point, the tea goes through similar stages as most all oolong:



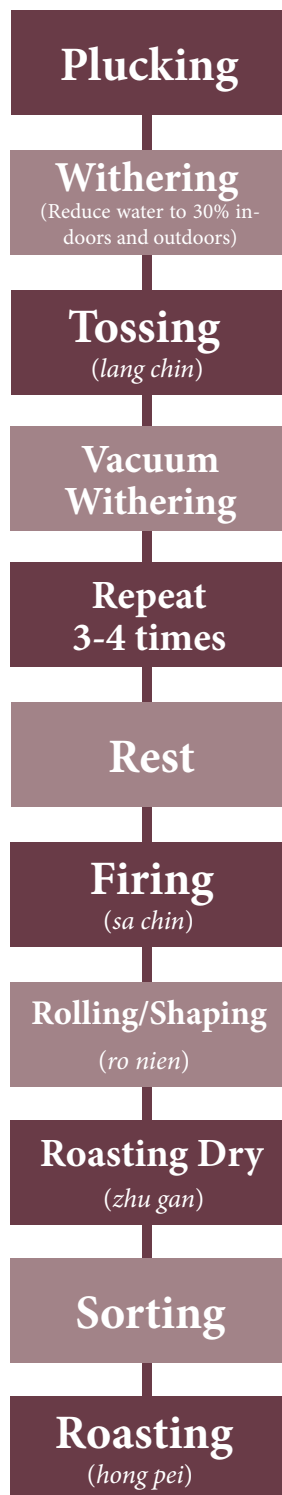
it is fired to de-enzyme and arrest oxidation, called “*sa chin*”, which literally translates to “kill-green” because this step kills green enzymes that make tea bitter. Then it is rolled, “*ro nien*”, to further break down the cells and shape the tea. As we mentioned earlier, oolong tea can either be striped or ball-shaped. This is due to the type of rolling that occurs at this stage. We have GABA teas of both varieties, and like them both. *An Mian* is our favorite, though, and as we said, She is a striped variety. If the tea is to be ball-shaped, it is rolled in a twisted-up bag, whereas striped oolongs are rolled across bamboo mats with ribs on them to break down the cells.

After the de-enzyming and shaping/rolling, the tea is roasted dry. This is almost always done in two stages, and *An Mian* is no exception to that. A lot of oolong is roasted deeply and slowly to bring out the best flavors, and the farmers don't have time to do that while freshly-plucked leaves are coming in large volumes. For that reason, they give the tea a brief roast, called “*zhou gan*” to dry it and arrest the processing. Then, once all the tea is finished, they can roast it properly with the right focus and attention. An improper roast can completely ruin an oolong. This final roast is called “*hong pei*”. Also, in the olden days, farmers often didn't roast their teas themselves. They would just *zhou gan* and then hand off this “rough tea (*mao cha*)” to merchants, shopkeepers or tea lovers who would then roast it to their taste or to suit their customer's tastes. Nowadays, that happens less often, though the best roast masters we know are, to this day, not farmers themselves!

Peaceful Slumber

An Mian is grown in Pinglin, in northern Taiwan. It is produced by Yu San He, a great farmer and dear friend. Since this is the first time we have ever introduced him in

Global Tea Hut, we've decided to devote a whole article to his story! (On pg. 11.) He's an incredible



farmer, with a great attitude and a deep reverence for Nature. His tea is way beyond organic, with great biodiversity surrounding his lush trees. A lot of his trees are in the middle place between what we call

“Living Tea” and organic plantation tea. Farms that fall into this middle ground are called “ecological gardens”.

As we have discussed often in these pages, Living Tea comes with a problem: *limited amount*. If all tea were Living Tea, there wouldn't be enough tea for everyone in the world. We need some plantation tea. We have to compromise to increase yield so that everyone will have tea to share. But there is no compromise worth making in environmentally destructive tea production. Such tea does provide for everyone in space, but not in time. It isn't sustainable, in other words. Using agrochemicals does increase yield and produce larger quantities of tea, but it degrades the land and destroys the environment, so that future generations of tea lovers won't have any tea at all. And that isn't *everyone!* Consequently, one of Global Tea Hut's most important aims is to promote Living Tea or organic plantation tea. This doesn't just mean certified organic tea, but all clean tea—certified or not. (This month's tea is certified, by the way.)

It's nice, however, to see more tea gardens that are also falling into a kind of middle category. They aren't quite Living Tea, but some yield is sacrificed so that the trees can have a bit more space, grow up a bit taller and live amongst a bit more biodiversity. Such “ecological gardens” are a refreshing sign of all the influence that green, environmentally-friendly living is having on tea people in Asia and around the world wherever such tea is drunk!

We hope that you remember a bit about the tea varieties of Taiwan, which we covered in the August issue of Global Tea Hut. If not, take the time to look through that issue, as it is packed full of awesome information about Taiwanese tea—packed like old men pack their teapots here in Taiwan, so over-full that the lids are popping up and won't close! To review quickly, there are varieties



Living Tea

Living Tea has six characteristics (we added the sixth in the last issue):

1. Living Tea is seed-propagated, as opposed to cuttings.
2. The tea trees have room to grow—upwards to produce large crowns, and between trees, allowing the plants to organize themselves.
3. Living Tea is grown in full biodiversity, surrounded by natural ecology.
4. Living Tea is, of course, grown without the use of any agrochemicals (the Terrible Trio: pesticides, herbicides or chemical fertilizers).
5. The relationship between the farmer and trees is one of respect and reverence. Within the character for Tea (茶) is the radical 'Man (人)', as Tea is a relationship between Nature and Man.
6. No irrigation or fertilizer of any kind (even organic fertilizer). This allows the trees to be independent, developing strong and deep roots that connect to the energy of the mountain.

of tea that were brought to Taiwan from Fujian long ago, and then some varietals that evolved specific to Taiwan. The greatest example of the former is “*Ching Shin*” or “Gentle Heart” oolong, while the paragon of the latter, Taiwanese varietals are the “Three Daughters of Taiwan”: Kingfisher Jade (*Tsui Yu*), Golden Lily (*Jing Shuan*) and Four Seasons Spring (*Si Ji Chun*). *Ching Shin* is the most famous of Taiwanese oolong varietals, used to make most of the high mountain oolongs from central Taiwan.

Mr. Yu does have some *Ching Shin* trees, but they are too fragile and the yield is too little to use such tea for GABA production. He says that since the market in Taiwan has not yet taken to GABA tea,

few to no farmers use *Ching Shin* to produce it. Also, he thinks a harder, more resilient leaf is required. He thinks that Golden Lily (*Jing Shuan*) makes the best GABA and primarily uses that. However, the production of GABA is both expensive and time consuming, especially for a simple farmer like Mr. Yu who owns minimal equipment and must have the big bags of tea vacuum-sealed at another farm each time it is withering. For that reason, he only makes GABA when he has enough volume on hand. And that means that he sometimes has to blend in some Kingfisher Jade (*Tsui Yu*). Our tea of the month is such a blend. We actually like the batches that have some *Tsui Yu* bet-

ter, as they seem deeper and more full-bodied.

An Mian is an amazing tea; it relaxes and soothes you in such a powerful way. GABA is a delightfully easy tea to brew, rewarding in unique flavors and aromas, with a relaxing Qi that has a dramatic effect on your physical relaxation. We hope that you enjoy sharing this beautiful tea with all of us around the world. Mr. Yu fully donated this month's tea, sharing it with joy and gratitude to all of you. He is very happy you will all be raising a bowl or cup of his tea this month!

Brewing Tips for This Month's Tea

Since this is a striped GABA, you can either put it in a bowl directly and add hot water or brew it in a pot and steep it. It is a very forgiving tea—you can't oversteep it or put too much. In fact, we like a strong bowl of GABA now and again. This tea is vibrant, from ecological gardens full of abundant biodiversity, and you can feel that in the bowl. Whether you use a pot or put the leaves right in a bowl, we'd say this is still more of a bowl tea, and recommend you drink it in that way.

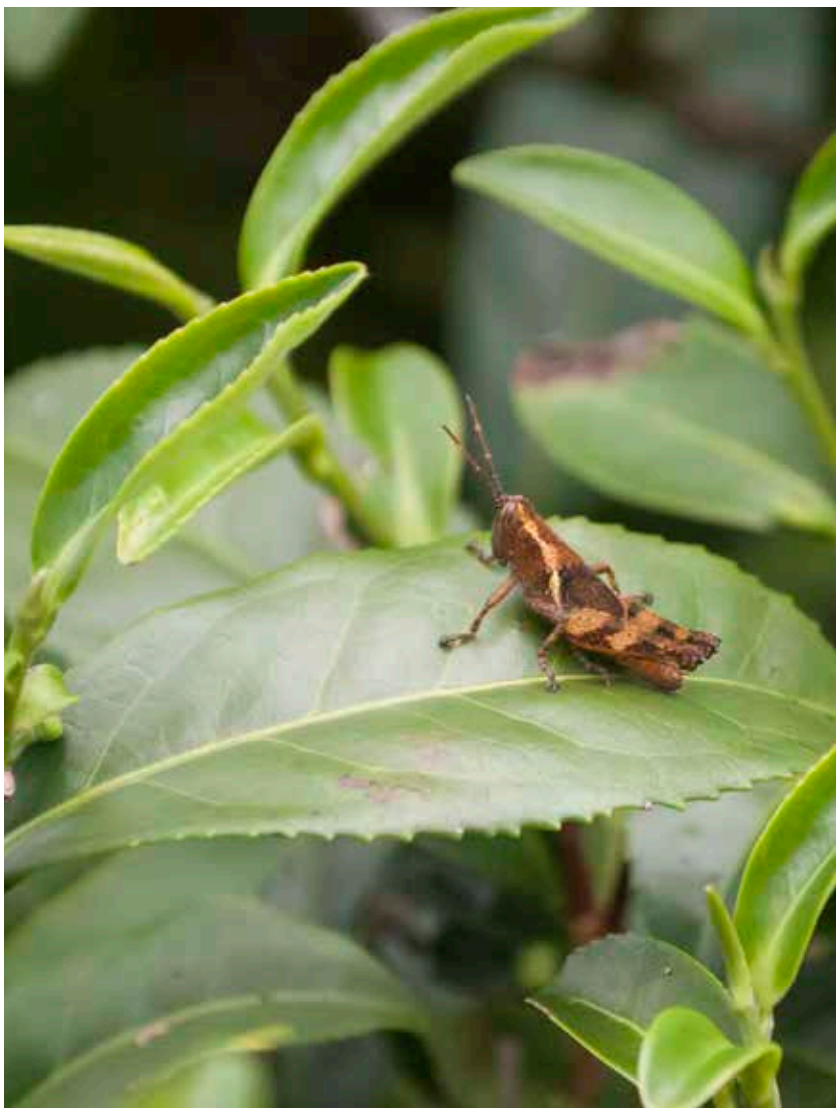
Besides the gift, tea and magazine, this month actually comes with another wonderful addition we'd like to share with you and your loved ones: an evening or nighttime tea session! When was the last time you had one? If you are used to drinking tea in the daytime, there is a magic to an evening or even late night session. We therefore recommend that you use this month's tea as the perfect opportunity to invite someone you love

to a late tea session. Pay attention to the differences in drinking at night.

GABA is the perfect tea to begin drinking in the evening, as it won't keep you up. In fact, most people sleep better after a bit of GABA. So choose a nice album, invite some good friends or family and share this month's tea one evening! Maybe you'll want to choose a weekend evening and make a night of it, or perhaps wait until the full moon and drink the tea then. If you can, why not have an outdoor session one evening, perhaps while watching the sunset? You could also meet somewhere special under the full moon and infuse your tea in moonlight as well as water. What an amazing month of Global Tea Hut it will be, as we all drink tea at night around the world! Let us know how it goes...

*The moon shone bright,
the night he called.
We scoffed at sleep,
popping off the lid.
He giggled down in my jar,
and promised to toast my Tea
throughout the watches of the night.
We took time to catch up,
and reminisce old times,
laughing and joking
the steepings away.
As the leaves unfurled,
so did our words.
But the bowls of silence
said more, anyway...
Soon he was snoring,
the old coot!
As for me,
well, there's always
morning Tea...*

— Wu De





RESPECT FOR GREAT NATURE FARM

Daniel Smith

Teas are much more rewarding when we can travel to the source and meet the producer. And this month's tea was made by a very special farmer, indeed: Mr. Yu San He. In this article, Dan introduces us to him through his land and magical tea.

茶道

Pinglin is a township about a half hour's drive east from downtown Taipei. But once you're there, it's hard to believe that it's so close. It seems to be another world, with beautiful rivers and stunning views down green mountain roads. Traveling there is like stepping back in time to a wilder Taiwan of five hundred years ago.

About two years ago, I was very fortunate to have been introduced to a wonderfully honest, down to earth tea farmer, whose tea gardens thrive there. Master Tsai introduced us on a day trip to Pinglin. Many of you have probably read about our dear tea brother, Master Tsai, in these beautiful Global Tea Hut envelopes. (If not, I recommend reading about him in the back issues, which are posted on our site for free!) And if you have visited Taiwan, you may have already met him in person. Master Tsai has done so much for organic tea awareness in Taiwan. And recently, he's also begun to influence tea production in Mainland China and Japan. Everyone involved with the Tea Sage Hut sees him as a brother on the same course of promoting sustainable organic plantation tea or Living Tea. He kindly and proudly looks at us in the same way

too! It's broad smiles and tea brotherhood whenever we're together!

It feels great to connect with the brotherhood and sisterhood at the center in Miaoli, and it's remarkably easy to connect with people and their communities worldwide while staying there, as you have already experienced through reading this magazine and being a part of Global Tea Hut.

That was such a beautiful and memorable weekend when Master Tsai introduced me to the producer of this month's tea, Mr. Yu San He. At that time, Antonio from Barcelona was enjoying a long visit to the center, and he came up to stay a few days with me in Taipei. We joined a group of Master Tsai's students on a day trip to Pinglin. Antonio and I were very glad to go along. We both felt very fortunate to be part of the group. Antonio and I had already become fast friends, and that camaraderie was felt throughout the whole group, crossing the language and culture barriers between Master Tsai's Taiwanese students and us.

It was just a ten-minute drive outside of Pinglin town, but it already felt like we were far into beautiful, undeveloped Taiwan. Antonio and I were all smiles. And it seemed the land was smiling back at us, thanking us for caring so much about it. We

explored the small gardens, breathed in the fresh air, smelled the earth and quieted down to connect with the space. Then we met Mr. Yu San He, who has become such an important brother to us.

Like us, Mr. Yu is also a meditator and a vegetarian. He's a very rare kind of tea farmer, too. From the first, he shines with a kind of directness, looking you right in the eyes in a way shier Taiwanese won't, and there's kindness in those eyes as well. He's quick to laughter, like any healthy person, but there's also a solid foundation of quiet pride and confidence that comes with following Nature's calling in being a responsible steward of the Earth. It's so great to have a genuine relationship with this man and his tea gardens. There are others like Yu San He, creating another movement of tea culture here, but meeting such bright and shining examples of how proper tea production should be conducted leaves you with a sense of hope. Sometimes, tea lovers who care about the Earth can get downhearted. When I feel that way, I find solace in Mr. Yu's bright smiles, the devotion he has to his tea and land, and of course the stunning gardens themselves.

The land around Pinglin is beautiful. This area lies in the northern

foothills of the high-altitude Xue Ba Mountains of northern Taiwan. It's a mountainous area with no highways or train routes that stretches southeast to Yilan and Hualian, and Hsinchu and Miaoli counties to the southwest. Rivers roll down through the area on their way to the ocean; and they're still charged with the high mountain energy. Most rivers in Taiwan are dammed and hardly recognizable, but here, they're still teeming with life. You also quickly realize just how much tea is grown in this area. There are tea gardens of various sizes around every corner. The small winding roads reveal one after another at almost every turn. If you take a walk through Pinglin town, you are sure to see many shops, with a few grandmas and aunties sorting through tea leaves—discarding the more mature ones and pulling off the larger stems.

“Baozhong, (包種)” tea is by far the most common type of tea produced here. Though the name ‘Wenshan Baozhong’ is famous locally and internationally, most Baozhong tea comes from Pinglin and Shiding. ‘Wenshan’ is the name of the district which also contains Muzha (famous for Tieguanyin) and it's right next door to Pinglin, Shiding and Taipei City.

Baozhong oolong is a Northern Taiwanese tea that dates back to the Qing Dynasty. The name “Baozhong” refers to the traditional paper packaging of the tea leaves that was used in sale and export. It also represents a well-known name for this regional tea. There is no true Baozhong tea from anywhere other than Northern Taiwan. There could be some people that make or sell tea from another part of Taiwan and call it “Baozhong Style”, but I think locals probably feel that there's something wrong in doing so. It is characterized by a light withering (oxidization) that produces pronounced yet pleasant, natural floral, cool and vegetal fragrances and flavors. Though it was more oxidized in the past, the modern day processing

style could be described as the greenest of the oolongs—falling somewhere between green and oolong tea. Though traditional Baozhong was most always more heavily oxidized and roasted, there may have been some very green batches in the early days too, as it has been described as a “*qing cha*, (青茶)” or “blue-green tea”, since the Qing Dynasty.

Pinglin and its tradition of Baozhong production have influ-

enced Yu San He. He very much sees a heritage in these traditions. The greatest portion of the tea he makes is Baozhong and his long experience of making it enhances all the red, green, Bai Hao Oolong (Oriental Beauty) and GABA tea he makes. He is very connected with his tea and the land in Pinglin, Northern Taiwan. His tea fields are just a few kilometers away from the largest natural water reservoir serving Taipei.



Mr. Yu's Tea is more than organic. It comes from ecological gardens.



Mr. Yu has been growing organically for over ten years, but the vast majority of the tea gardens in the area haven't been. Great amounts of pesticides and chemical fertilizers are sprayed there, in detriment to the ecosystem and the future of tea production in the region. He decided long ago to stop being a part of this problem, and has since become a bright example of someone who can produce fine tea without polluting the environment. He's also become rather well known nowadays, with several magazine and newspaper articles covering the positive impact he's having on the region.

Mr. Yu proudly refers to his tea farm as "Respect for Great Nature Farm". After getting to know him and this amazing farm, which is indeed filled with a reverence for Nature, I broached the subject of donating to Global Tea Hut and his eyes lit up—smiling on their own just moments

before his mouth followed. A few weeks later, Wu De, along with all the residents and guests at Tea Sage Hut, came up to meet Mr. Yu. As usual, he served us a delicious meal of organic vegetables from his garden just outside his centuries-old traditional Taiwanese courtyard home. We drank tea through a pleasant afternoon, smiling and laughing like old friends. Mr. Yu was so happy to see the previous issues of this magazine, and proud that so many people around the world would share his tea. He said he felt supported by the fact that so many people believe in what he's doing!

We took a drive up to see the gardens this month's tea comes from. Mr. Yu is always happy to share info of how the weeds, vegetables, insects and worms of the natural ecosystem are enriching the land. And, of course, he and Wu De hit it off and

spent hours talking together about Tea.

One noteworthy factor about his growing methods is that he doesn't use any organic fertilizer or irrigation. This is one of the characteristics of Living Tea, referred to as "*ziran nongfa*, (自然農法)" in Chinese (literally, "natural agriculture method"). It's based on a philosophy of letting the tea bushes struggle on their own, helping them as little as possible, and letting the weeds grow up around them. This encourages the trees to weave themselves into the local ecosystem, without any foreign agents, and grow stronger through it. I like to refer to such farming as "beyond just organic". It is much closer to Living Tea—full of vibrancy and harmony. I've been living in Taiwan for about five years now, and his teas are a few big, solid steps above any other organic teas I've experienced here.

As many of you know, we need some tea produced at higher yields so that everyone can have tea. That means compromise. Organic plantation tea serves a very important function, producing larger quantities of tea so that everyone can share in this medicine. Not all tea can be Living Tea, in other words. But it is also nice to see the emergence of this middle ground, which we call "ecological gardens": tea that is constrained and compromised in some ways, but less so than most plantation tea, including organic ones.

Mr. Yu's bright spirit shines through his land and tea. It is a beautiful demonstration of how tea is a merging of Heaven, Earth and Man. Walking through his gardens, you can feel the influence that the farmer has on the land he stewards. Tea is a conversation between Man and Nature, and this month's tea is a beautiful discussion about gratitude and love. I hope you feel Mr. Yu's spirit in this tea, and through it connect to some of the vibrancy and natural power of Taiwan's rolling northern hills...





Mr. Yu's bright spirit shines through his land and tea. It is a beautiful demonstration of how tea is a merging of Heaven, Earth and Man.



AND BEGIN TO ABSORB PEACE

Steve Kokker

Last month we began exploring the poem that preserves our gongfu methodology, discussing it line by line. Here, Steve looks deeply at the second half of the first line, proposing a way to spend our time waiting for our water to boil.

茶道

Last month we focused on the importance of heat in tea brewing. There are so many aspects to that, and so many experiments that you can do to recognize the difference a little heat brings to tea brewing. We did one involving a preheated and regular cup, focusing on the difference preheating the cup brings to the tea liquor. Hopefully, you noticed that the pre-heated cup was very different. There are many other experiments that we have covered over the years that deal with heat in gongfu tea. If you are new to Global Tea Hut, you may want to look through some past issues on our website and try out some of the other experiments we've offered, like showering the pot, preheating the pot, etc.—all of which help you to develop a deeper appreciation for the role fire plays in gongfu tea.

In our tradition, the practice and way of gongfu tea is preserved in a poem:

*Preserve the heat and begin to absorb peace,
With slow, gentle and graceful movements,
And a heart free of obstructions,
Everything is finished in one breath.*

Over the coming months, we thought we could discuss this poem a bit, line by line, starting with the first. There is a lot to unpack, and though we've practiced and worked with this poem for years, we haven't yet found a bottom. It is a treasure trove of deep and lasting teachings, from how to pour gongfu tea to how to live. Last month we discussed the "preserve the heat" part of the poem. This month we would like to delve into "begin to absorb peace".

Since ancient times, boiling water for Tea has always been a period for meditation. They say that the sound the water makes when it begins to boil is "the wind soughing the pines" and many old poems have lines like, "The wind soughing the pines summoned me back from my meditation". This means that the water started boiling, bringing the mind back from introspection to the beginning of tea. We always teach students that they should never lift

the kettle until the heart is at peace. It is so rewarding to take the time to begin to absorb some peace as the water boils. If your heart is not at peace, you will never properly brew tea. And if you are going to have a conversation over tea, a bit of silence at the beginning will make your time spent with friends and loved ones so much more rewarding.

By absorbing the peace of this moment, without anything else to do but enjoy some tea, we let go of our problems and worries. Nothing can serve the coming tea preparation as much as that. If we start with a peaceful mind, we ensure that our movements will be graceful, we protect our teaware and ensure that we'll prepare the tea in the best way we can. Of course, we will make mistakes along the way.

Awareness of the Kettle

Here are a few little tips about how to avoid an over-boiling kettle of water. We've all had the situation where our kettle suddenly comes to a full boil and sputters and spurts all over our burner in the middle of a tea session. Sure, the Zen of "anything goes" always conveniently

rules, right? But at the same time, if the goal is smooth, gongfu tea service, then this is far from ideal.

Eyes sometimes fly open at the distraction, and attention has for sure been taken from whatever moment our guests were experiencing. Even if it is just for a few seconds, and even if this does certainly not ruin the session, it is not ideal. If a ballet dancer trips on stage during a performance, it doesn't ruin the evening and life goes on quite happily—but it wasn't mastery. Skill was missing and, above all, grace and fluidity were interrupted. And, the human brain being highly attuned to noticing everything wrong in a situation, this bit will be remembered.

So, how can we avoid this?

The short answer is the same as for anything: *awareness—calm, focused awareness*. And the longer answer is: *get to know your teaware intimately so that you are fine-tuned to it...* And don't worry about your finger tips! Wu De always suggests that beginners occasionally tap hot teaware or put their hands into the teapot and feel the hot water. Of course, this is within reason—don't burn yourself. The idea is to get used to some heat so you don't drop a lid or pot if it is hot.

Before I go on, some of you might be wondering: there is one way to see if the water is boiling that is so obvious and simple, so why

do we need to write so much about it? You may be thinking: "Want to know if the water is about to boil? Well then check if the water is about to boil! Just lift the lid and see!" But I'd say that should be a last resort. Not horrible, but not ideal. Again, it causes people's attention to be distracted, even if slightly. It also takes your attention away from the service and the guests. It also is likely to cause some clanking as the lid is taken off and placed back. The act itself is often not beautiful (though it can be done gracefully too): removing the lid, peering over the pot and moving your head back and forth to get a better view through the steam, squinting, placing the lid back...

“*Since ancient times, boiling water for Tea has always been a period for meditation.*”



The problem with this method is that it keeps you reliant on this method in the future and actually doesn't really tell you when boiling will happen if you are not familiar with the boiling process. You may have to open the lid two or three times to keep checking—it's clunky, distracting, uneven, and un-poetic.

My method of choice is touch. Use your fingertips and place them on a chosen spot on the kettle (my favorite spot is at the top of the kettle body, just away from the lid) and after a while, you get to know very

precisely the intensity of the heat (measured in how long you can keep your fingers on it before you need to remove them). This requires getting to know your kettle well, as each one will have a slightly different texture and 'heat feel'. It is also subtle, silent and unobtrusive. No one pays attention to this, and the session proceeds gracefully. It also sharpens your sensitivity! Depending on the kettle, you can also grab the handle and feel the vibrations. Each different degree of heat has a different vibration and

feel, and as you get to know the kettle this method will also be reliable.

Other good methods involve two of the other senses: visually assess the boiling point by the presence and speed of steam emerging from the spout, or through your gorgeous ears by the sound the kettle makes. These are also skillful, non-disruptive means. You'll notice, for example, that when steam emerges in a steady stream from the spout but not much from the hole in the lid, the water is basically boiling with small bubbles beginning to break the sur-



face. Once the steam is pushing out forcibly from the hole in the lid, it's boiling too aggressively already. Also, sound-wise, you will notice in many (not all) kettles a steadily increasing sound as the water gets hot, then a sudden, little lull (drop in sound). That's your cue to keep a careful watch; it has just got hot enough to use and is soon about to boil.

Your experiment for this month is to try a few tea sessions in which you practice more “absorbing peace” as the water heats up. Try getting to know your kettle through your

senses, rather than disturbing the session by repeatedly lifting the lid. Compare these sessions to the others in which you didn't meditate while the water was boiling. How were they different? How was the tea itself affected? Did it taste different? Feel different?

By attuning yourself to the peace that is this space, you will definitely serve an improved brew. But like all gongfu tea tips, this one has to be experienced...



保持

恆溫





GABA TEA

Q & A

Lindsey Goodwin

We're sure that many of you have some questions about GABA, since most guests usually ask about it. Lindsey helps answer some of the most common questions about GABA, and perhaps we'll all relax into our session more as a result.

茶道

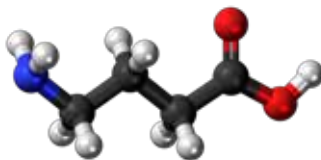
In drinking GABA tea at Tea Sage Hut and in serving GABA each full moon and new moon, I have seen an enormous range of responses to this beautiful tea, and have received a lot of questions about its unique interactions with our brain chemistry. Although I usually view teas holistically rather than focusing on their component parts, GABA tea contains such a unique chemical component that it is well worth making an exception. Not surprisingly, this component is the tea's namesake.

What is GABA, anyway?

GABA, which is also known as γ -Aminobutyric acid, is a chemical compound that is naturally made by and used in the brain. It is made by Gabaergic neurons using a precursor of vitamin B6 (meaning that vegetarians and vegans may have less of it, and may benefit more than others from drinking GABA tea).

Its molecular formula is $C_4H_9NO_2$. On a chemical level, it looks like a zig-zag of four carbon molecules with a nitrogen molecule sticking up like a head with two horns (two hydrogen molecules) on

one end and a forked tail of two oxygen molecules on the other end. It's dotted with hydrogen molecules (which are quite small compared to carbon, nitrogen and oxygen molecules). Two hydrogens are bonded to the nitrogen molecule and each of the three carbon molecules in line after it, and one is bonded to an oxygen on its tail.



The appearance of the pure chemical GABA is simple enough, like so many other chemical compounds, it is a white microcrystalline powder.

GABA has been synthesized since 1883, when it was used for plants and microbes. It wasn't until 1950 that humans realized GABA is also used in our own brains and bod-

ies. Its roles in human life are not entirely known, yet there are a few interesting discoveries that science has made about what GABA does in the brain and body.

What does GABA do in the brain?

GABA's main effects come from its powerful ability to block brain signals, or neurotransmissions. It is known as the chief inhibitory neurotransmitter in mammals, and is active in all vertebrates, which means that between you and your pets, it blocks a lot of signals (unless your pets are slugs!). You might be worrying that blocking signals in the brain sounds bad, and that would likely be because you haven't drunk GABA yet. GABA often dispels worry, and if you've drunk a good, organic GABA before, then you know that there's nothing to fear about it blocking neurotransmissions!

GABA tends to block signals that would otherwise cause what many people would consider to be negative states or problems. Through reducing what's known as 'neuronal excitability,' GABA induces relaxation, decreases anxiety, increases alpha waves in the brain (signals which

also increase during meditation) and improves your overall mood.

What does GABA do in the body?

In some studies and in the experience of myself and others who have drunk GABA with the Global Tea Hut community, GABA's benefits include relieving pain, reducing symptoms of PMS, stabilizing blood pressure, burning fat and treating ADHD.

GABA is also widely recognized as being directly responsible for the regulation of muscle tone (meaning that it promotes lean muscle growth), and there is some scientific speculation that GABA could enhance immunity under stress.

There is a lack of clarity in the scientific community about whether GABA can cross the blood-brain barrier in significant levels, and whether or not taking GABA orally can impact the brain. Are GABA's benefits all in our heads (and unreachable by tea)? Some scientists

say so. Whether the benefits of taking or drinking GABA come from its direct interactions with the body outside the brain (which may be the case, as a study with rats showed that GABA-reactive systems included areas of digestion, reproduction and more) or from interactions in the brain itself, the results are often clear to those who drink it.

What are the emotional and spiritual effects of GABA?

As I mentioned before, the chemical compound known as GABA increases the alpha-waves in the brain. This is a portion of what happens in the brain during meditation, and some people find that GABA can be very beneficial not only to relaxation and a restful sleep, but also to meditation practice or inducing a meditative state of mind.

In tea sessions, I've also seen emotional effects such as increased joy, gratitude, a feeling of safety, a bet-

ter ability to cope with and process emotional pain and/or a clearer perception of one's path.

Can I serve GABA to children?

In some studies with mice, GABA has been shown to have different effects for developing and developed brains. In developed brains, it often induces the results I've outlined above. However, in developing brains, it may cause a more excited state. This means that it may cause a more excited set of emotions and feelings as well. There is no firm conclusion on this from the scientific world. Instead of relying on shaky science, we recommend either avoiding GABA with kids or (if your instincts tell you it's a good idea) trying a very small amount of GABA with your child on an evening when an early bedtime is not essential and seeing what happens.



MASTER DENG DING SOU

Wu De

Master Deng is our favorite teaware artisan. His work seems like pure channeled Tea spirit. It demonstrates a nice balance of aesthetic and functional grace. Moreover, Master Deng is an amazing Tea brother, with a great sense of humor. We're very proud to show his work here.

茶藝

Through scenic tea mountains, down a simple village road and tucked away in a small garden studio lives one of Taiwan's greatest treasures, a potter that has contributed so much to the culture of tea here and abroad that it's difficult to find the words to express his influences. For authors there are always some topics and people that we long to write about yet falter since we hold the topic in such high esteem that we're worried we won't do it justice. As a tea lover and author living in Taiwan, Deng Ding Sou is just such a topic, and not just because of his awards or fame, but because he truly is an important and amazing person. I always knew that one day, I would write this article, approaching it now as ever with excitement and trepidation both. I don't want to just list his achievements or put forth his biography, which has been done in countless other articles—I hope to capture a bit of his distinct personality and the effect it has had on modern tea culture here. If I succeed, this tour through his life will leave you with as much respect as I have for him—as a friend, tutor, fellow tea lover and artist.

Deng Ding Sou was born in Jiayi County in 1959. From an early age his artistic talent was recognized. He grew up painting, practicing calligraphy and dabbling in other art forms. He started working in clay at a very early age, and fell in love almost immediately. He also fell in love with Tea at an early age. He studied ceramics with different teachers around Taiwan for many years. In 1981, he started an apprenticeship under Master Chen Jing Liang to learn ceramic art. His teacher taught him more than just the technical skills of molding teapots, using a potter's wheel and kiln, or even the unique knowledge of stones and ores that his tradition passed on—his master also encouraged a spirit of independence in Master Deng, suggesting that he utilize tradition as but a stepping stone for his own creative endeavors.

It wasn't long before the student was shining brightly on his own, and his unique approach to tea culture and teaware in particular started to make him famous. There are two aspects of Master Deng's character that separate him from other artists in the tea world. As I contemplated

and realized why he was so special, it dawned on me that perhaps these are the very traits that have always pushed the brightest artists of the tea world to the front of the crowd, now as in ages past: Firstly, Master Deng doesn't create out of any financial motivation. If having passed through his years of the cliché 'artistic suffering' isn't enough, one need only follow his career. His compassion for the people of Taiwan and his courage to experiment with new trends and ideas—to come to know that he is someone who creates for the love of clay, and would do so alone on a mountain with nothing but home-grown herbs and vegetables as he would appreciate and awarded, as he is. In fact, his fame has done little to change his personality or way of life: he still lives in the mountains in his simple studio, still teaches for free, and his shelves are filled with pots and good teas, not the many awards he's received. And those teas bring us to the second factor that makes a great artist of teaware: Master Deng is as true a tea lover as ever there was. Far too many artists that create teaware do so because it is lucrative.

Many sculptors and potters in China and Taiwan get involved in making teaware because it sells. They bring their skills in painting, glazing or design to teapots and often make very beautiful teapots, cups, pitchers, etc., but the problem is that much of this teaware doesn't function well. Destined to sit on shelves and look nice, much like the ceramics in the traditions many of these artists migrated from, such teaware is dulled by the fact that it won't ever embrace Tea or bring joy through sharing. The best teaware has always been used, and antique pots and cups glow with life because they have made so much tea, and brought so much joy to tea lovers over time. The true tea lover is saddened by the cup that is behind glass, knowing that it is dying. Even priceless antiques are preserved and cared for in the tea world—because they are alive; they are handled with care and respected as they participate in our tea sessions. That life is much of their elegance and the true measure of their craftsmanship.

Master Deng always puts function first and aesthetics second. He says, "If you can't use the teaware I have created, I might as well make a vase or pot for you to display. I could do that as well. I chose to make teaware because tea is my greatest passion in life. I myself drink tea every day, so I know what it is like to buy a pot that you thought was so beautiful only to get home and find that it doesn't pour well or leaks. There is one pot like that which sits on my shelf there." He sighs and points to an elegant pot, "it sits there collecting dust and still disappoints me when I pass it, glancing at what could have been." Not only is Master Deng's teaware inspired by a true love for tea, it also is based upon decades of mastery over the art. In other words, he is also a tea master. Learning about the deepest intricacies of gongfu tea and practicing every day for decades with the eye of an artist has given him

countless ideas. "I watch the tea ceremony with an artist's eye: when a pot breaks or doesn't function well, when a lid stand doesn't hold the lid well or when a pitcher pours improperly or decreases the temperature of the water too quickly, I always think 'How could I fix that?', and then I experiment." Looking around his studio, I realized that this was the understatement of the decade! There are broken bits everywhere, failed attempts and countless sketchbooks filled with inventions and designs.

These days, Master Deng actually does more inventing than he does artwork. His own handmade pots,

pitchers, cups, etc. are often made as templates that are then produced in limited quantities by factories throughout Asia. He showed me one of his sketchbooks and I was amazed to see five corrections, in so many pages, to problems I myself have encountered in my own tea preparation, including a new design for a tetsubin he is developing with a Japanese company that will prevent the spout from dripping or leaking and has a gorgeous wooden—rather than metal—knob, so you can remove the lid without tongs. I asked him about it and he led me to a shelf filled with about ten such tetsubins that he had

"If the inspiration for artistic creation derives from life and from culture, then each of the ceramics that I create is a portion of my soul—a hyperactive soul that is constantly bounding around, never at rest. If the works that I have produced have helped to make people's lives better in any way, then that is only an accidental reflection of the good side of my personality."

—Deng Ding Sou



rejected, adjusting things before sending them back to the producer. His clever smile in such moments is unforgettable.

The mixture of stone and teaware

For ages, it has been known that stoneware is ideal for tea. The two most famous kinds of teaware, Yixing and porcelain, are both stoneware. There are many reasons for this: on the most subtle level the spiritual master would say stoneware is elemental, and its use related to the Earth and the Qi such teaware imparts to the tea liquor. The scientist would perhaps argue that the porous quality of stoneware, at least in unglazed pots, allows it to absorb the oils in tea and enhance future brewings; the potter would say that stoneware has less reduction which makes it easier to fit lids to pots, hand-mold handles, etc.; the tea lover would reply that stoneware has a simple aesthetic that fits well with tea preparation. The truth is that all of these reasons, and many more, courted the marriage between stoneware and tea culture over time.

Master Deng learned ceramics in a tradition that blends various kinds of stones with clay to produce unique and innovative textures and styles of pottery. With his love for tea and childlike brilliance and inquisitiveness, it wasn't long before he began to explore the possibilities that certain kinds of stones were suitable to certain aspects of tea preparation, rather than just decorative addition. Again, it's always function first with Master Deng. "After all, everyone who loves tea knows that Yixing teapots are so great because the stone ore that they are derived from is so special. I realized that the Earth is filled with many kinds of stone and ore. Why not experiment? Perhaps some of them would end up making great tea." Master Deng

spent decades exploring the relationship between various teas and stones like volcanic basalt, andesite, turquoise, and many, many others. "Some stones enhance water or keep the heat in the pot, while others are purely decorative", he said. When I asked for more details, Master Deng smiled and said that much of that information was secret. It is traditional for Chinese master artists to be copied, and the more famous they are, the more this holds true. And Master Deng is *very* famous! Nevertheless, he told me that he does pass all of this on to his students freely.

Master Deng said that such stoneware was a powerful expres-

sion of elemental wisdom. The Earth element in the tea ceremony is represented by the teaware, and such stones are deep statements of this. He allowed me to drink some mountain water from a few of his cups and I was amazed to find that each cup changed the texture, smell and/or flavor of the water dramatically. When we later sat down for tea, he brewed the same tea in an average porcelain pot and then in a stoneware pot designed for that kind of tea. I was again astonished at the improvement it made. He smiled and poured the tea from the earlier, porcelain pot into a stoneware pitcher of the same kind as the second pot.





“In a ‘rock teapot’, the pot becomes a canvas on which the ceramicist can express himself. Employing a wide range of different stone materials, the teapot maker uses the firing process to create textures and patterns that combine the beauty of traditional brush painting with the elegance of oil painting. These pots have the simple beauty of earth and stone, and the radiance of metal. They may be speckled with spots of light, like scattered stars in the heavens, or they may display the warm luster of ancient bronze or gold vessels; bold wild patterns are complemented by exquisite attention to detail. In these pieces, the beautiful aesthetic qualities of ceramics and metals are united as one in a new way. The multiple strata of visual effects, from the dark and subdued through to the shinningly radiant, create a form of self-expression that is based around natural elements, and over which the human artist can never hope to exercise complete control. Each piece has its own unique character, and no individual piece can ever be replicated exactly; this is where the special charm of rock teapot creation lies.”

—Deng Ding Sou



To my surprise, even a minute in the pitcher had almost the same effect as the stoneware pot itself on the tea: the tea was smoother, moister in the throat and tasted cleaner and brighter.

The 1991 earthquake

Early in the morning of September 20th, 1991, Taiwan was hit with a massive earthquake of 7.7MS. The prone island often suffers major and minor trembles, though nothing like this one. When the day dawned, the rest of the world sadly watched the news: thousands had been killed or injured, while a huge crowd of others were left homeless. The earthquake's epicenter was in central Taiwan, near

the city of Taichung, but most of the loss occurred in Nantou and Yunlin counties, which are central to the tea industry and culture of Taiwan.

Of course, all Taiwanese were affected by the news and relief efforts were begun domestically and abroad. Having so many friends whose farms or businesses had been directly affected by the earthquake, Master Deng also decided to get involved. He moved to Nantou County and started to help at some of the farms. Together with his students, he purchased large quantities of the volcanic ore and stone that had been uprooted during the quake and used it to produce teapots. He started using his name and art to hold shows around Taiwan and abroad, generating relief and awareness through art.



While this was already more than what most were doing, Master Deng realized as he lived in Nantou longer that it wouldn't be enough. "I thought of the old proverb that if you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day; but teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime", he says. Master Deng opened his studio and with it most of the secret knowledge he had inherited and developed over the years to the citizens of Nantou. Anyone affected by the earthquake was free to come and learn pottery, use his kilns and develop a new trade for him or herself.

Immediately, students were eager to learn from Master Deng. Today, their stoneware pottery is found all over Nantou and has not only provided a financial basis for rebuilding much of what was lost, it has also helped to attract valuable tourism to this part of the island, allowing for the creation of other forms of industry as well. Some of his students have gone on to fame of their own. I met one who had lost his home in the earthquake. He said his life had lost all meaning and he had turned to drinking day and night. He needed direction, which he found in clay. "It was easy. Most of them love tea, and every tea person loves good teaware—so it wasn't as if they were uninterested. It was the clay that really healed them", says Master Deng modestly.

Most of the tea farms are rebuilt now. Master Deng still stays in Nantou teaching pottery to this day. We traveled to a few local tea farms and plantations and it was obvious that everyone, even the next generation, respected him, knowing the contribution he has made to Taiwanese tea and tea culture over the years, and especially through troubled times.

The Guyi teapot

Of Master Deng's many contributions and innovations to tea culture, none is as famous as his legendary



Guyi teapots. I asked Master Deng about them and he said, “About twenty five years or so ago I started drinking tea avidly. I delved into the process of extracting the best liquor from tea leaves. After I acquired some skill at brewing tea, I started to think about how I could design a teapot that would meet my tea-making needs and would be uniquely my own.” Like any lover of tea, Master Deng began to collect antique *zisha* teapots from the legendary “Pottery City”, Yixing. One day when he was pouring tea for himself and his teacher the lid fell off one of his favorite teapots and cracked on the table. Most all people who drink tea seriously for some time must pass through the loss of some treasured teaware, broken or cracked by our clumsiness as we learn the process of gongfu tea. At first, Master Deng was also distraught, looking down at his loss in awe (which funny enough is just how I reacted when I broke one of my Yixing some years ago); but then, as is its wont, inspiration capri-

ciously struck, flashing through the clouds of loss. We can only imagine Master Deng’s gaping mouth slowly sculpting into a grin.

He told his teacher he had to go and quickly raced home to do some drawings. What resulted was the first ever *Guyi* teapot. The *Guyi* teapot is unique because the spout is on the bottom of the pot, rather than the side, which allows gravity to pour out the tea. As Master Deng began to experiment with this new teapot, new innovations followed over the years. He improved the rest that the pot sits in, perfected the seal to trap the air by holding one’s finger over the button, and started designing new ways of decorating and even adding his knowledge of stoneware to create some *Guyi* of that variety. From his own description of *Guyi* teapots:

“As with traditional teapots, the Guyi pot exploits the power of air pressure. By covering or uncovering the air holes, you can control the flow of water

within the teapot. With the Guyi pot, however, the tea flows out from an opening near the bottom of the pot. Because water naturally tends to flow downwards, the flow is smoother, and it is much easier to ensure that all of the water has been removed from the pot. (At the same time, because the teapot is always in a horizontal position, there is no need to worry about the lid falling off).”

The *Guyi* teapot was an immediate success in Taiwan, and even though Master Deng invented it so that we wouldn’t break the lid of our favorite pot, I think its success was more because of the effect it has on tea preparation, especially when brewing the tight ball-shaped oolong tea that is so common in Taiwan. When brewing ball-shaped oolong tea, the key to making great tea is to have the balls all open at the same time, uniformly, so that each releases its essence together in a symphony of flavor and aroma. In the first few steepings, as the balls are still open-



ing, this can be difficult to do with a normal teapot because the balls often shift to the side when we are pouring, which sometimes traps some of them and prevents them from opening at the same time as the others. This problem can also be solved by skillful pouring of the water over the tea and teapot, but I have found that a nice, round *Guyi* teapot really does the job excellently. Because the ball-shaped leaves never shift, and the steeping pours out through the bottom, every steeping—including the initial ones—are all even and pure representations of that tea. I especially like the designs he has made that are rounder, allowing for more space for such oolong tea to unfurl.

As Master Deng mentioned above, the *Guyi* pot also helps to ensure that all the water drains from the pot. If, like me, you enjoy having your tea over long periods of time and enjoying it slowly, this can be important with certain kinds of tea. If the water isn't all removed, the leaves will stew in the pot and detract from future steepings and/or reduce the amount of steepings one gets from a tea. In that way, a *Guyi* teapot can help increase a tea's patience. This just furthers Master Deng's trend of putting function before form. *Guyi* teapots can be exemplary of all great teaware because they are aesthetically pleasing and function well in equal measure.

Because of its popularity, in the late 90's Master Deng started designing series of *Guyi* pots to be made from molds. He has made one series per year, creating only about 500-600 pieces, which are then shipped to different regions of Taiwan and abroad. The pieces are numbered and the molds are destroyed after the process so that they can never be replicated. Even these production pieces are often worth money these days.

As mentioned earlier, it is often the mark of a master in the Chinese arts if he or she is copied, and of course Master Deng's success, coupled with the fact that he has so

freely passed on his wisdom to so many students, has resulted in the creation of many kinds of *Guyi* teapots in Taiwan and abroad. Some of them mimic his style and design, while others are even made of plastic or glass and meant to provide convenience. When I traveled to America for the World Tea Expo in the summer of 2007, I was surprised to see many devices for steeping tea that were (probably unknowingly) based on Master Deng's invention. I told him about that and he was happy. He said, "The idea is a good one and it should be shared and used." I think that more than just copying him, many ceramicists and other artists have also been inspired to try new things and innovate because of the success Master Deng has achieved with his inventions. Master Deng's *Guyi* teapots have shown other artists that tradition should be a guide rather than a master, and when it is possible and rewarding, creative ingenuity can create great teaware.

A True Tea Brother

Master Deng and I sat down for tea after our interviews, glad to have the formal stuff over with so that we could go back to being friends and brothers in tea. As an author and student of Tea I find that my taste in friends is much like my taste in tea and teaware. The artists, producers and tea drinkers that attract me the most are the ones who truly love Tea. Without knowledge of tea brewing, teaware never really reaches the level of mastery; and the same can be said about the teaware that is made commercially, without a deep passion for Tea and Nature. Nowadays, many tea businesses are using the "we love tea culture" ideal as a marketing philosophy, suggesting to customers that they sell out of love for tea rather than for money. Master Deng is way above all such vulgarization. He is unpretentious, warm, friendly and humble. As soon as you sit down for

tea with him and see his childlike joy as he opens a homemade tea canister inscribed with the words "Crappiest stuff on Earth", which he assures you is to mislead potential thieves from the fact that this jar actually holds the "good stuff"—when you see that smile, you cannot doubt his passion for tea. Master Deng's carefree and unimposing personality, innovative and inventive mind and his skill with stone and clay have merged, like leaves and water, with his love for tea, and like his pots made a lasting brew that stays in the throat and returns to the memory long afterwards.







2014 LIGHT MEETS LIFE CAKES

Lincang & Fengqing, Yunnan

Our more affordable cakes have arrived! Both of these cakes will be used to support the building of our new center, Light Meets Life. They were made in larger quantities than the Limited Edition Ai Lao from ancient trees, so they're more affordable.



茶道

For the second year, we've pressed our own Light Meets Life cakes to help build our new center. Of course, our center is still committed to being a non-profit school that does not sell tea or teaware. We view these pressings as a donation-based drive, rather than as part of a shift towards becoming tea merchants. None of the proceeds from these cakes will be used to maintain our current center or for any other project. We keep all LML funds in a separate account in the States to be used in building our new center when enough has accumulated.

Of course, the best way that you can support our endeavor is to help spread awareness of Global Tea Hut. When GTH membership reaches around 2,000 members, we will be able to start building a new, bigger and brighter center. This will be a place we can all retreat to, learn about Cha Dao and gather in celebration as a global community devoted to preserving and promoting the spirit of Tea.

We have done some meditations to connect to the spirit of these old trees in Yunnan—the source of all Cha Dao. The trees are in alignment with a center that will help edu-

cate people about plant medicine, respect for Mother Earth and harmony between humans and other life forms. Their energy will consequently be a part of Light Meets Life, as they give their leaves to encourage us.

We hope that you find a special joy in these teas, knowing that in drinking them you are also helping to create a new center for all of us to benefit from. They are great teas, and even better for the energy that they represent!

As most of your know, we also produced a rare, limited edition Ai Lao sheng puerh from 1000-year-old trees. For information on that cake, please visit our site. Opposite is a short description of each of the more affordable cakes we made this year, both of which are available now.



The minimum donation for these cakes will be \$25 USD + shipping. If you buy a few, we can calculate and decrease the shipping. There are no handling charges. We are also offering a special price of \$160 USD for a tong (seven cakes) of either tea. Both of these teas and the ancient-tree Ai Lao are up on our site. Email us for details or if you have any other questions:

globalteahut@gmail.com

SHOU PUERH WITH SNOW CHRYSANTHEMUMS

The first cake is a 2012 Lincang shou puerh blended with Kunlun snow chrysanthemums. It is very rare to find a shou puerh that is clean and has some old-growth raw material, especially since the price of such old-tree tea has gone up recently. Shou tea is almost always a blend of tea from various regions, making it hard to regulate. This tea was produced in 2012 and aged for a couple years before compression this summer.

Snow chrysanthemums are a rare and highly sought-after high-altitude flower 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 and regulate the blood. And in Western medicine, they are said to help prevent cancer. The two are an amazing elixir combined, and as many of you found out last year, a classic tea.



OLD-GROWTH, WILD RED TEA (DIAN HONG)

The second cake is a “*Dian Hong*” or red tea from Yunnan. This tea is very similar to the Global Tea Hut tea of the month we sent you called “Golden Vajra”; it is actually from the same producer and garden, but different season (the tea we sent you in May was autumn tea and this is spring, so it is more vibrant and full-flavored). She comes from the wild forests of Lincang, in Feng Qing County. The trees are between fifty and one hundred years old. They are protected trees sometimes used for puerh production, and are pure *Assamica*. Many of the red teas from Yunnan are hybrids that were pressured to produce more buds, making them “tippy”, which makes the tea sweeter. This tea, however, is not “tippy”. There aren’t as many buds, which lends the tea a bit of the depth, Qi and astringency of a puerh. It also means that the tea would be an excellent candidate for aging. We are very excited to share this amazing tea, and see how it changes over the

years. It is one of our favorite Yunnanese reds to date!

In most cakes, compression of teas other than puerh is a gimmick to cash in on the popularity of puerh tea. However, with Yunnanese reds (*Dian Hong*) that are made from old-growth raw material (*mao cha*), there is a very real “ageability” to the tea. And tea ages better in cake form. This is so easily demonstrable when comparing the same puerh tea loose and compressed after some years.

It probably has something to do with a better environment for the microbes, as well as the steam used in compression, which makes a good environment for them to thrive. (If you remember from the Five Characteristics of Puerh in our September issue, the relationship between puerh tea and the microbes that cover the trees is essential.) Also, there are subtler, energetic effects which is why so much more tea back in the day was compressed.



TEA DAO WITH MUSIC

Mike Baas

Tea and music have been married for millennia, perhaps starting with the wandering sages who carried their gu ching slung over their backs, cloudwalking ancient China. And it's great to see this relationship thriving even now!

茶道

Being a musician for nearly all of my life, I have had a long and intimate relationship with the art of music. I started playing the piano by ear as a very young boy. I picked up string instruments once my hands were big enough to handle them. My impulse towards music shined through improvisation, writing songs on the fly, getting wrapped up in the moment of the music and letting it speak through my hands and my voice. Yet when Tea found me a year ago, it was during a time where I had taken a long hiatus from music. I had effectively replaced music with meditation. I rarely played and barely even listened to music. I felt like it was a distraction from the deep work I was doing daily on myself.

When I took up Wu De's encouragement to drink Tea every day for a week, I found myself strongly resisting "adding" a new element to my life throughout that week (although I enjoyed it very much!). I had constructed my life around the idea that I needed as bare of an experience of the present moment as I could get in order to progress properly, which meant no "enhancements" of any kind: incense, flowers, gods and goddesses, music or Tea.

It took a few months to give myself full permission to drink Tea and to understand it as an important tool that I could use to benefit and deepen my meditation practice. Restricting myself to an unadulterated present, my heart was in the right place, but it was still very hard. Tea quickly began to open my hardened heart. My inability to practice loving-kindness meditation (*metta*) was solved. I eventually found the right proportion of Tea and meditation in my life and as I mellowed out and balanced myself, I found my way back to the joy of music.

Tea consumed in an environment conducive to cultivating mindfulness will invariably enhance one's sensory experience quite strongly. I am not qualified to present an explanation of how Tea's alchemical magic does this exactly. My experience, however, is that as Tea quickens my tie to the present, my senses follow suit and wake up. I become aware of momentary sensory information much more dramatically than I do without Tea. When we participate in a Tea ceremony, we consume the elements of the Tea stage (*chaxi*) in addition to Tea itself, delighting in the presented objects that serve to imbue rever-

ence, presence and calm awakening to our senses.

In the process of participating with Tea, I am drawn into the *chaxi*—the sight of the flowers, teaware and table setting, the smell of the incense and the brewing Tea. When I pick up my bowl, I feel the heat of the water in the bowl touching my hands. As I lift the bowl to my mouth, the profound smell of Tea hits my nose. It alerts my Qi to an imminent change and as the Tea hits my tongue, the Qi moves in whatever way Tea decides it should in that moment. All the better, though, if this experience includes the ears!

The choice of sound in one's Tea stage, whether one chooses the sound of music or the sound of silence, can distinctly set the course for emotional reward. Living Tea does not directly provide the hearing sense with information, imparting itself only to the other four senses, yet it yields a sense of hearing that acts in accordance with Nature itself, *actual hearing. Tea activates hearing.*

When we introduce music to Tea-soaked ears, we will invariably find it speaking to us in a deep, authentic way. In the practice of Tea Dao, one can leave the interaction with the steeping cup behind and

simply listen, perhaps as we never have before. Following the moment-to-moment movement of music in a meditative Tea-infused state, I have experienced profound insight into the nature of Reality, equivalent to that generated by purely observing sensation (*vedana*) in a Vipassana meditation session. These moments of insight, coupled with the opening of my heart through Tea, were the

validation I needed to fully embrace the Way of Tea.

It became clear that music could act as a friend on the path of Dhamma just as well as Tea could. Both music and Tea soften the blade on the razor's edge of a life of meditation. Gratefully, my heart is now open enough to allow them the space to soften me. My meditations have deepened as a result.

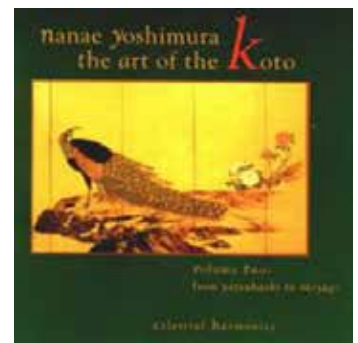
Although any and all music can be experienced along with Tea, the contemplative spirit of a Tea ceremony awakens through more subtle frequencies. In musical terms, this means sound without constant, sharp dynamics.

I have compiled some of my favorite Tea music below that fits this description:

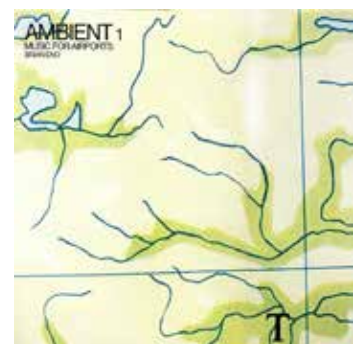
Kifu Mitsuhashi, *The Art of the Shakuhachi, Vol. 1* In the hands of a skilled player, the humble bamboo flute, or shakuhachi, produces nearly quintessential Tea music. The shakuhachi is capable of producing sound ranging from beautifully soothing and droning sustain to spontaneous, surprising inflections of the human breath flowing through its wooden hollowness. The instrument has a fascinating history wrapped up in stories of mendicants traveling around Japan, blowing the flute as a means of achieving enlightenment through its sound. Here, Kifu Mitsuhashi plays a selection of traditional shakuhachi compositions in the spirit of these wandering monks that will surely set an introspective tone for a Tea ceremony.



Nanae Yoshimura, *The Art of the Koto, Vol. 1* This album is a perfect, lighter companion to “The Art of the Shakuhachi”. In these traditional songs for the koto, a plucked zither, you can hear the footsteps of the shakuhachi monks wandering around the Japanese countryside, perhaps stopping from time to time to prepare a bowl of Tea. I often choose to play this album when having Tea with someone for the first time.



Brian Eno, *Ambient 1: Music for Airports* Brian Eno, the father of “ambient music”, designed this album to be continuously looped as a sound installation, specifically to alleviate the anxiety of traveling passengers in an airport terminal. The first track “1/1”, in a Zen fashion, was crafted from a performance of two musicians completely unaware of one another’s performance, captured in a few synchronous moments of time, slowed down and looped in various ways. The end result yields a track filled with soft textures and deep silences, beautiful and optimistic, perfect for drinking cup after cup, morning or night.



Eliane Radigue, *Trilogie de la Mort* Composed over a period of eight years, three songs each one hour in length comprise Eliane Radigue’s masterpiece. Written on a single analog synthesizer, the ARP 2500, these slowly moving, infinitesimally changing sounds at first appear like a kind of background music, yet quickly you will find that they demand, like the best Tea ceremonies, your undivided attention. These challenging pieces offer the best opportunity for musical enlightenment!



Tea Wayfarer

Each month, we introduce one of the Global Tea Hut members to you in these magazines in order to help you get to know more people in this growing international community. 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 share glimpses of such beautiful people and their Tea. This month we would like to introduce the wonderful Amelia Franklin:

Before 2003, I was like most Westerners, especially those raised in the City of Angels, land of movie sound stages, and had never before seen loose leaf tea. To me, tea was merely a bag you haphazardly threw into a mug of hot water (the process redeemed only slightly when said mug was adorned with a cute kitten pawing at a ball of yarn). My dear friend Rachel and her family observed Shabbat every week, and every Friday night I was welcomed to a delicious free meal and a plentitude of Moroccan glasses of tea. Rachel and I would delve into the process of picking a tea pot, selecting a tea, and creating a space to serve. I was blown away by the fact that tea leaves could be steeped more than once. ‘You mean to tell me this awesome plant keeps on giving!?’ Needless to say, all the Friday nights of my teenage years were spent drinking tea, laughing, and playing monopoly with my best friend and her family!

Years later, Tea came pouring gracefully back into my life at the first annual Spirit Weavers Gathering, by way of Tien Wu. My job at the gathering was to create a playful, engaging and mystical environment for all the little kids there. By the end of my first day, I was coated in red paint, spattered in a colorful sprinkle of yarn and glue, and completely out-numbered by over a dozen energetic kids. Perhaps it was the hidden dashes of terror in my eyes or my zombie-like stance at the following morning’s breakfast, but Tien thankfully read my body language. She took my hand and guided me into her Lotus Tea Tent. what happened next is Tea history...

“Where were you when great Mother Earth called?” And with my first bowl of tea, I finally answered. She was hot and direct, carrying with her centuries of wisdom and healing. I could sense she already knew me and suspected this was what love at first sight felt like—love at first sip!! It wasn’t until a few months later that an opportunity to study Kundalini yoga and drink tea in Bali emerged, that I really began to proactively seek and follow my new direction. I was itching to get to the East! Tien had spoken to me many times before about the Tea Sage Hut in Taiwan, imploring me to visit the center and meet Wu De and drink tea with him. I booked the yoga retreat with a three-week-layover in Taipei the next day.



When I stepped through the center’s doors, I immediately felt at home. I felt my spirit dance, hugging all the empty space between the jars of tea, like old friends embracing after time apart and reeling in the palpable flow of energy in the main teaching and drinking area. Tea spirit lives in all the teaware, the wood tables, and even in the seat cushions! There are two main rules while living in the center, which are painted on the wall above a portrait of the Buddha: “Hug everyone in this house everyday,” and “Be in love”

Loving and hugging everyone here has been the easiest rule I’ve ever had to abide by. My tea brothers here are the most helpful, kind, and honorable men I have ever had the pleasure to be around.


Our journey has just begun, and I will happily uncover Her depths and await Her offerings for the rest of my life. Tea is the root connection, my new friend, and counterpart in life. I suspect She will be the voice that answers back when I ask “Is anyone out there?”


I’d love to share some tea if you live in LA or are visiting. You can contact me at:


ameliafranklin06@yahoo.com


Inside the Hut

 In Los Angeles, there are Global Tea Hut events every Thursday at 6 PM and Sunday at 9:30 AM. To reserve a spot, email Colin at livingteas@gmail.com. The community in LA also has a new meet up page: (<http://www.meetup.com/Los-Angeles-Tea-Ceremony-Meetup/>).


 In Barcelona, Spain, Global Tea Hut member Antonio holds tea events each month at Caj Chai Teahouse. Contact him at info@cajchai.com for more info.


 In Moscow, Russia, there are frequent tea events. Contact Tea Hut member Ivan at teeabai@gmail.com or Denis at chikchik25@gmail.com for details.

 In Nice, France, GTH member Sabine holds regular tea events at the tearoom Les Causeries de Blandine. You can email her at sabine@letempsdunthe.com.

 In Darwin, Australia, Sam holds GTH tea events on Fridays at 6 PM. Email him at sdsgibb@gmail.com.

 In Melbourne, Australia, Lindsey hosts Friday night tea sessions at 7/7:30pm. Contact her at lindseylou31@gmail.com


 In Tallinn, Estonia, *Chado* tea shop holds events most Friday evenings at 7 PM. Contact events@firstflush.ee for more details. Also, Timo Einpaul and Herkko Labi both hold small weekly tea events in their homes in Tartu, Estonia and Tallinn, Estonia (respectively), on Wednesdays at 6 PM. You can email Timo at timo@sygis.net and Herkko at herkots@gmail.com.


 In England, Prabhasvara (Nick Dilks) holds regular Tea events all around the UK including a weekly Tea Club in Birmingham. For more information, please contact him at living-teauk@gmail.com.


 In Almere, The Netherlands, GTH member Jasper holds tea events every 4th Tuesday of the month at 7:45 PM. Email him at hermansjasper@gmail.com.





Center News

 Before you visit, check out the center's website (www.teasagehut.org) to read about the schedule, food, what you should bring, etc. We've had a big increase in our number of guests lately, so if possible please contact us well in advance to arrange a visit.

 If you are interested in one of the 2014 Ai Lao cakes you should order one soon. There were only 150 made in total and around half have already been sold. Check out our website for details: www.globalteahut/lmlcakes.html

 It is a great time to visit Tea Sage Hut. The weather is nice in Taiwan and Wu De will be here until late January or February.

 Wu De will be teaching in New Zealand and Australia next Jan./Feb.. Contact Sam Gibb (sds-gibb@gmail.com) for more information about dates and events.

 Wu De's new book is out and ready to be purchased. Check our site for details!

NOVEMBER AFFIRMATION

I am filled with hope.

In what ways am I working to make this a better Earth for those to come? Do I believe in hope itself?

Tea Inspired Poetry

Hold the sadness and pain of Samsara in your heart and at the same time the power and vision of the Great Eastern Sun. Then the warrior can make a proper cup of tea...

—Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche

