

Global Tea Art

國際茶亭

TEA & TAO MAGAZINE
December 2014

老夫樟

ZEN IN THE MEDITERRANEAN
"OLD MAN CAMPHOR" SHOU PUERH





HAPPY HOLIDAYS

This holiday issue we are going to share some marvelous shou puerh and discuss the “grades” of puerh leaves. Since this is the holiday month, and Global Tea Hut is all about family, we thought we would devote the bulk of this issue to Wu De’s recent travels, allowing us all to feel the glowing coals of tea family that are spreading around the world, bowl by bowl!



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CHANGING THE WORLD
BOWL BY BOWL

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OF FRANCE



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Chris Sage, USA



老夫樟



Letter from the Editor

In December, we start to feel winter setting in. At the center, we start to add weekly trips to the hot springs to the schedule. The natural heat is soothing and the water is mineral-rich, penetrating into the body and soul deeply and filling the week with a warm glow. In ancient times, hermits and Daoist mendicants alike used hot springs in the winter to extend their life force, conserving their natural heat and warming the body from the inside. You're welcome to come to the center and join us on a trip to the hot springs with some nice tea in a thermos to drink while there!

We know our winter here in Taiwan is mild compared to where many of you live, but it is still chilly, especially without central heating! As the cold sets in, we move towards darker teas, boiled teas, aged puerh or Liu Bao. We love to make a blend of red tea and shou puerh in the mornings. Try mixing some shou with just a tad of Dian Hong or even "Elevation" and you will find the mixture delicious and rewarding on a cold December day!

There are so many gatherings, meetings and organic fellowships developing through this community. As you'll read about soon, we held a retreat in Spain last October and fourteen people attended from ten countries, a very significant testament to all the tea family we've made around the world. Several of the people I met on this recent trip to Spain and France have been members of this community for a long time. Like others, I felt an immediate kinship, as if we'd always known one another—perhaps living only blocks away and sharing tea weekly. Such meetings always feel more like reunions to me.

In this issue you can read about some of my travels in Spain and France, as we hope to include you in our trips and help inspire similar gatherings where you live, with or without any of us. In making these articles about our personal tea journeys and our work to share this plant medicine around the world, we also help make you a part of that work, as loving witnesses! I set a bowl out for you all at our three-day retreat!

We love the holiday season around here. We cherish the significance of being with the people we love, giving gifts as tokens of affection and taking the time to honor the year's relationships. We do the holidays right at the center! There are always a lot of guests, great food and tons of gifts. We like to take the time to open them one-by-one for hours and say thanks to each gift-giver, making eye contact. Maybe this helps make the practice of gift-giving feel less materialistic. Anyway, these are some of our holiday traditions. And we want you to know that you are here with us in spirit. We will be thinking of all of you with gratitude and warm hearts this holiday season!



December is a month for family gatherings. Let this month's magazine be another such gathering. If you aren't accustomed to drinking these teas in the spirit of fellowship, please make an effort to do so this month. As you drink the tea, think of all your tea brothers and sisters here at the center and all around the world drinking this warming brew. As the warmth spreads from your chest, feel the same warmth spreading with these envelopes around the world.

Maybe you have some relatives visiting this month, or you are going to visit them. What a great time to serve some tea to the ones you love, and what better than this tea—donated lovingly, then sent with love and devotion to you and your family, so that they may also be warm on what is for most of you a cold day!

Let us use this holiday season as an important reminder of what is truly real: *our beloved sits near us*. Tomorrow we say goodbye, but today here we are together. What a miracle! Let us say what needs to be said. Let us treasure these moments together, sharing a warm tea that fills our hearts with warmth so that we may look once more deeply in each other's eyes and say, "I love you!"

We love you all! You are the greatest of our gifts this year! We honor each and every one of you. In America, there is a tradition of sending extended family a photo for the holidays. Since you are our family, we do that with all the warm-hearted cheer we can muster. Wishing you all a glorious celebration these holidays! Tea and cheer, spread bowl by bowl...

SPRING 2007

SHOU PUERH TEA

Lincang, Yunnan, China

“Old Man Camphor” is one of our favorite shou puerh teas to drink on a cold winter day. It is actually a blend of two different grades of shou puerh. We are sure you will love learning a bit more about shou as you drink this heart-warming tea!

茶道



In the cold of winter, we enjoy a nice warming tea that spreads from the chest to the heart-soul, and from there changes our day. We find ourselves brewing bowls and cups of shou puerh these days, increasingly with every drop in temperature. And we have a great shou in store for you this holiday season—one that will warm up your body, heart and soul and help you celebrate more happily with your family and friends!

As many of you know by now, there are two kinds of puerh, ripe and raw (shou and sheng). Sheng tea is produced much like green tea and then fermented over time. Traditionally, all puerh tea was “black” or “dark” tea (not “red”, which is a mistake we’ve discussed repeatedly in previous issues). That’s because it was all fermented, whether naturally in the case of sheng or artificially in the case of shou. In fact, during the early 2000’s sheng puerh wasn’t even included in the Chinese government’s statistics for annual puerh production, which would have been much higher had it been. This means that they viewed sheng puerh as an unfinished product, as did most puerh lovers at the time. Over time,

however, as aged sheng has grown more rare and expensive, we’ve all learned to appreciate young sheng on its own terms—without evaluating it in terms of “ageability” or comparing it to aged sheng. Furthermore, as more and more young sheng is consumed, puerh tea increasingly warrants a category of tea all its own! It can no longer be called “black/dark” tea and it isn’t precisely green tea either.

Black puerh (shou, 熟), often called “cooked” or “ripe”, is produced through a processes that ferments (*fa xiao*, 發酵) the tea to varying levels before it is compressed. Called “wo dui” in Chinese, this step in puerh production is akin to composting. The tea is piled, moistened and then often covered with a thermal blanket to increase internal heat. Sometimes previously fermented tea is introduced to promote certain bacterial growth. The process could be stopped at any time, though a typical, “full” fermentation runs from forty-five to sixty days. Different factories may adjust the length of time that a tea is piled based on their recipes, the kind of tea they use, or the desired level of fermentation. Most older shou tea was fermented

only partially, whereas the majority of shou produced today is stronger, fully-fermented tea. Ripe (shou) puerh can never attain the quality of flavor, aroma or Qi as a properly aged sheng puerh.

The process of piling puerh to artificially ferment it was developed in the late sixties and then licensed for commercial production in 1973, which is usually the date most books will cite as the beginning of shou puerh. Factories were looking to mimic the qualities of aged sheng in less time. Of course, they were not successful. What they did create, instead, was a whole new category of puerh tea to be evaluated and enjoyed by itself, and according to its own criteria of quality, rather than comparing it to sheng puerh. There are some magical shou teas, indeed—ones that leave long-lasting memories, especially when you are warm and indoors on a cold day!

Ripe tea doesn’t age the same as sheng. If the tea was partially fermented, however, it will age. Since many old ripe teas were only partially fermented, they can even be sold as sheng to the uninitiated. Ful-

ly-fermented ripe teas tend to mellow out over time, losing some of the rough, “pondy” or ammonia flavors associated with such a long period spent piling.

Tea of the Month

Our tea of the month was not fully fermented, leaving some room to change over time (which it has). This usually makes for a better shou, especially if the raw material (*mao cha*) was good to begin with. Most shou is piled from forty-five to sixty days to fully ferment it. Our tea of the month was only piled for just

under a month, allowing for a real change as it aged, as opposed to just mellowing like most shou teas produced these days.

This month’s tea is a blend of two teas from Lincang that we call “Old Man Camphor (老夫樟)”. It was piled in a small factory in Yunxian County, though the tea is from two different areas of Lincang. They were both harvested and piled in 2007, aging for seven years since then. (It is important to mention both dates, since *mao cha* can technically sit around for years and then be piled at a later date, which is often desirable. Our tea doesn’t fall into that category, however.) This tea was

produced intentionally as loose-leaf. Shou puerh has to be compressed immediately after the piling. It cannot age for some time and then get compressed, as the steam will not work to soften the aged shou puerh enough for compression.

The first tea is a grade one and the second a grade three tea. Traditionally, rough tea (*mao cha*) and/or artificially fermented shou puerh tea were separated according to grade, from one to ten, signifying the size of the leaf. (We will introduce the grades of puerh in more detail in another article following this one). If you remember from our Special Puerh Edition this September, we

Lincang

The Lincang region is the northernmost of the three major tea-producing areas in Yunnan. It is also the birthplace of all tea. The forests there have the oldest trees, and deepest roots in Cha Dao.

There is some disagreement amongst scholars as to the origin of tea, but in traveling to the three major areas of Yunnan, we have found that the Lincang region is the home of all tea. We especially feel this in the “Five Mountains”. Our understanding, however, is based more on a feeling, a connection and affinity to Tea and Her spirit than on any linear proof—take it or leave it. Our tea of the month is a blend of teas from these mountains and also the Mengku region. Shou is almost always such a blend. The five mountains all tea originated from are:

1. Ming Feng (鳴風)
2. Mang Fei (忙肺)
3. Mei Zi Qing (梅子菁)
4. Wu Jia Zhai (武家寨)
5. Da Xue Shan (大雪山)



THE PROCESSING OF MAO CHA



Rough tea, called “mao cha” in Chinese, is finished tea from the farm. Mao Cha can become sheng or shou puerh depending on how it is processed at the factory. If it is compressed green, it will ferment naturally and become sheng. Otherwise, it will undergo artificial fermentation. Shou tea can also be compressed before it is dried, but that doesn't apply to our tea of the month.

THE PROCESSING OF SHOU AT THE FACTORY



noted these two separations in our discussion of puerh production. In the case of shou tea, there will often be two sortings: when the *mao cha* arrives at the factory and then again after the artificial fermentation (piling, *wo dui*). The latter is the more important grade in terms of shou, and the one we mean when we say this month's tea is a blend of grade one and three leaves from Lincang.

One of this month's teas is from older trees. We blended this tea with an all-bud tea from an organic plantation—grade one. The older-tree, larger leaves bring a depth and Qi, along with the flavors of camphor that have helped name this tea, while the buds bring a sweetness and darkness to the blend. Also, the buds weren't as artificially fermented so they have aged more than the grade three tea.

We blended these teas in much the same spirit that we blended the Light Meets Life Ai Lao sheng puerh that so many of you have donated for and enjoyed by now: we mixed a deep tea full of Qi with a sweeter, more delicious one to make a blend that satisfies on all levels. The strength of the bigger leaves and the deep camphor flavors make the tea strong, with an inward flowing Qi that leaves you warm and tranquil. The smaller buds, on the other hand, are sweet, fragrant and taste like fruits. They have a more Yang Qi that rises. Over all, the blend is one of our favorite winter teas, leaving you balanced in your heart but with some of your energy still outwardly focused. The overpowering camphor flavors of the older, grade three tea is mitigated by the sweetness of the smaller buds, and the result is a rich and creamy shou that still sings

enough camphor notes to be named “Old Man Camphor”.

This beautiful shou tea from the birthplace of all tea and Cha Dao is a perfect excuse to prepare some loving, warming tea for your friends and family this holiday season. We hope that you feel our heart and warmth there with you, celebrating with you.

Sometimes, the holiday season can be stressful. But it shouldn't be thus for *Chajin*, as we have such a great practice of calm and centeredness to rest in, allowing the real holiday spirit to reign over this December—a season for joy and love, and a season for family and giving. And these are the things Global Tea Hut is all about!





*Beckoned by Winter's whisper
And a handful of leaves*

We sit

Sun scattered

In stillness and song

Under the bamboo eaves

We boil dark brews

Of Earth and loam

Toasting

Old friends

New friends

As ever before

As never again

—*Kai Ya*

Brewing Tips for This Month's Tea

Shou puerh is a very forgiving tea to brew. It is really nice brewed strong, so don't be afraid to put a little bit extra in the pot. It should be dark and creamy, smooth and earthy—with hints of camphor, of course.

You will want to steep this month's tea in a pot. We recommend a side-handle brew for this tea, but you could also brew it gongfu, preserving the tea for more steepings. It is time for many of you to move from bowl tea to side-handle, getting more used to using a pot in your tea brewing. You could also brew this shou in a large pot, Ming Dynasty style (which later became the Western style of brewing, as well).

Shou puerh like this requires a lot of heat. The hotter your water, the better. Having tried our gongfu experiments concerning temperature, you'll know the importance of heat in gongfu brewing. This is even more essential when it comes to shou puerh like this. Oftentimes, beginners want to blow on tea to cool it down. This distorts the tea's energy and diffuses its flavors and aromas, distracting from the experience.

Learn to appreciate tea brewed at higher temperatures (without burning yourself, of course). As you progress, you will see that hotter tea makes for a more flavorful, aromatic and energetically deeper brew. In the meantime, wait patiently for your tea to cool enough to where you are comfortable drinking it, as opposed to blowing on it, which distorts it. You can do an experiment to verify this yourself, blowing on one cup and then refraining over another.

Notice how the warmth spreads outward from the chest and stomach. This is where puerh enters the subtle body. For that reason, it is better drunk from larger cups, with big gulps. Oolong, on the other hand, enters the subtle body through the head (aroma/air) and is therefore better drunk from small cups, with the smallest possible sips. Try brewing this tea in bigger cups or bowls, and taking large sips to facilitate the Qi in your chest/stomach. Enjoy the warmth, as well as the contrast to what is, for most of us, a cold scenery just out the window...

PUERH TEA LEAF SIZES

Leaf sizes help determine value, but not always quality. In this article, Wu De briefly introduces the grades of puerh tea and how they relate to the shou tea we are drinking this month.

Wu De

茶道

Traditionally, rough tea (*mao cha*, 毛茶) for puerh production was sorted by grade, from one to ten based on the size of the leaves. This qualitative scale is based on the idea that smaller buds are higher in value, as they are rarer and more difficult to pick. They tend to be sweeter as well. However, grades of teas are often very complicated. Sometimes a blend of different grades makes for a much better tea, like our tea of the month. Larger leaves can add depth, flavor or Qi. We recently tried a green tea that was much better with some leaves mixed in than the all-bud version, which was more beautiful to look at but lacked character, subtlety, body and breadth—not to mention Qi.

The word “grade” confuses English-speaking people. This is because the grade mentioned above is not always relevant to quality. Of course a first grade leaf is more expensive by weight because they are smaller and there are a lot less of them. But price and quality are not always commensurate. The word “grade” in English also denotes quality and is therefore misleading. There are two Chinese words, one for the grade (*deng ji*, 等級), i.e. size and location of the leaves on the plant, and another for the quality of the leaves/tea (*pin tze*, 品質). Often the first leaves are of better quality, but not always. Sometimes the third grade leaves of the exact same tree are better than the first of two years before and so on. And all that

is before you complicate the process with age! Then you get into all kinds of riddles about whether a fourth grade five years old is better than a first grade that is two years old...

Furthering this confusion, different factories follow different guidelines and change them over time. Generally, though, the first grade leaves are the smaller ones at the tips of the bush/tree stems and the bigger and further back, the higher the grade. What changes is where they draw the second through tenth or sometimes even thirteenth lines. Some factories also add extra grades like “royal” or “special” (often called “*gong ting*, 宫廷” and “*te ji*, 特級” in Chinese) and sometimes even subdivide those categories. However, all of these categorical systems are completely arbitrary. Not only do they change from factory to factory, author to author; they also change over time within the same factory. Sometimes one can find the leaf size on the paper wrapper—printed on the logo or the recipe code, like 7542 (3rd digit is leaf size), in this case fourth. Still, what a particular factory was calling fourth grade leaves in 1960 is not necessarily what they are coding as fourth grade in 1980. Even the state run, large factories like Meng Hai changed their grading system more than once. Also, the “4” in “7542” only signifies the average leaf size, as the cakes is a blend. Typically the first 4 grades are used to process *tuochas* (melons) and *jingcha* (mushrooms) and larger fifth through

ninth grades are reserved for *Bingcha* and brick puerh.

This is not to say that there is no standard in leaf size, but rather that the grading process is done by eye and the scale from one to ten has varied slightly from factory to factory and over time. These grades weren't originally meant to be public information; they were for internal use only, just like factory codes. The variations between factories and over time, however, are mostly minor. Getting to know the grades of leaves, therefore, is still worthwhile for the connoisseur interested in a better understanding of puerh tea.

The other difficulty with the grading system is that many cakes are mixed grades. Sometimes mixed grade loose tea (*mao cha*) is processed together uniformly throughout the cake; other times the middle and outside may be different grades. This is done to make the cake more beautiful and is a common marketing technique the factories use to target collectors. More and more in the last few decades, factories have even begun mixing together completely different kinds of leaves to produce different flavors and tea varieties for the consumer. So, for example, they mix different percentages of raw (*sheng*) leaves with cooked (*shou*) puerh; or perhaps mix leaves from old tea trees with those from their plantation bushes. Mixed cakes can sometimes yield incredible results that are both delicious and full of Qi, but many times these cakes are infe-

rior to the traditional ones. It is better to have a cake composed wholly of old tea tree/larger leaves than a mixed one which presents confusing aromas, flavors and/or energies, for example.

In general, old-growth forest trees will have larger leaves than plantation tea (*tai di cha*, 台地茶). This doesn't mean that leaf size is a sure sign of which is which, however. A bud from an old-growth tree may still be smaller than an older leaf from a plantation tree. How long

the leaf is on the tree matters as well. Energetically, leaves cross a threshold after which they are no longer the giving of the tree, but rather the receiving of light. In other words, the leaves expand and eventually aren't an outward expression of the tree's nutrients, from the roots, and start absorbing light inwards instead. This is why the lower grades are usually better. But as I said, this isn't always true, because a higher grade could also signify old-growth *mao cha*. A good example of a vibrant tea with

higher-grade leaves is the famous "8582" first blended in the eighties, in which the average leaf size is "8", which is rather large. 8582 was a throwback to Antique Era teas that were composed solely of old-growth *mao cha*. And the vintage versions of 8582 are amongst some of the best puerh ever made.

Below is a table with some photos of the average first through tenth grade leaf sizes:

GRADES OF SHOU PUERH LEAVES

First Grade



Second Grade



Third Grade



Fourth Grade



Fifth Grade



Sixth Grade



Seventh Grade



Eighth Grade



Ninth Grade



Tenth Grade



In general, old-growth forest trees will have larger leaves than plantation tea. This doesn't mean that leaf size is a sure sign of which is which, however. A bud from an old-growth tree may still be smaller than an older leaf from a plantation tree.



WITH SLOW, GENTLE, GRACEFUL MOVEMENTS

Wu De

Continuing our discussion of the poem that has transmitted the essence of gongfu tea in our tradition, Wu De discusses the second line, which has such a strong influence on what mastery in tea brewing really encompasses. This is an important article!

茶道

The poem that has been used to convey the practice and philosophy of gongfu tea in our tradition is a profound way to explore the art of tea brewing. Each line expresses much more than we could say in these small articles, but more of gongfu is in the brewing than in the discussion anyway. In the last few issues we have discussed the first line of the poem and the importance of temperature in tea brewing. The ideal is to maintain temperature from kettle to cup, which is very difficult. If you tried the experiments, however, you'll know what a great impact this has on our tea. In this issue, we'd like to turn to the second line of the poem.

Gentle and graceful movements are the art and essence of gongfu tea. If you have had the chance to share tea with an experienced brewer or a master like my teacher Master Lin, you know how impressively graceful tea brewing can be. The softness in his body is obvious. Watching master craftsmen in any art is always a joy to behold: the way everything flows so smoothly, like how the tea is prepared in a subtle manner that transcends the ordinary.

This is also true of tea processing. In Wuyi Mountain, for example, I have often marveled at the difference between the elder generation of tea producers and their children. Take rolling the tea, for example. The tea is rolled across large, round bamboo trays with ridges. This breaks down the cellular structure of the leaves and also shapes them. The younger generation can only push the tea halfway across the tray, and you can clearly

*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.*

see the tension in their upper bodies—arms and shoulders flexed with each push and pull of the tea back and forth across the ridges. The master, on the other hand, rolls the tea all the way back and forth across the tray, doing so with an otherworldly ease and grace. Despite the fact that he is much smaller than the younger tea producers, he doesn't strain. The leaves seem to roll themselves, gliding back and forth. And if you stand back and watch from a distance, you can see quite clearly that the rolling involves his entire body, as opposed

to using upper body strength. From his feet to his ankles, ankles to calves, and so on upward, the energy flows from the earth into the leaves. That is gongfu.

Tea is a unique art, because the dried leaves aren't the final product—the liquor in the cup is! And a cup of tea is as much in the brewing as it is in the quality of the leaves, especially when brewing gongfu. When Master Lin brews, he also uses his whole

body, as opposed to just the upper body, and the movements seem to rise effortlessly from the ground. For that reason, he always suggests that when sitting at a table to brew, you keep

both feet shoulder-width apart, flat and firmly planted on the ground.

From the beginning of one's tea practice, the connection to the kettle via the hand seems solid and real. But we then often feel (maybe unconsciously) that the connection ends at the spout. The same could be said of the teapot—that we pour the liquor into the cups without real connection to the stream from the spout. To proceed to more advanced brewing, we need to rethink that—we need to realize, and then feel, that the connection doesn't end until the

cup is in the hands of our guest(s). I always teach my students to never, ever *pour* the water into the pot, but rather *place* it there. The same principle applies when distributing the liquor into the cups: gently *place* it, feeling your connection to the cups. The whole process is connected, physically and spiritually. And it is only when we begin to sense this connection that we can really begin to express the essence of the second line of our poem. During your next session, try feeling the connection of the kettle to your arm, to your body, your feet and even the ground. Then try to see if you can feel the difference when you *place* the water in the pot and *place* the liquor in the cups, guiding the entire effort from the beginning, which is in the ground.

To achieve “gentle and graceful” movements will take some time and skill (gongfu)—a lot of which will come only after years of tea brewing, when the process itself is ingrained in our bodies. However, the “slow” part is something we can practice no matter what level of gongfu we have achieved. And that is the aspect of

this line of the poem that we’d like you to focus on this month.

Make a practice of *staying with the tea*. That is one of the basics of all tea brewing, bowl tea or gongfu. After you pick up the kettle, put all your awareness and attention into the brewing. Try brewing tea with your complete self. Focus and attention to every detail is the beginning of more masterful brewing (gongfu). There is a Chinese tradition of pausing conversation during the actual brewing, as it is said that the words will be steeped into the tea and come out in the cup. Such pauses are great for more heartfelt dialogue, as they allow us the time to reflect, listen to our guest(s) and respond properly. Gaps also allow us to concentrate and brew with a one-pointed, meditative mind. This will surely have a profound effect on the tea we prepare.

For this month’s experiment try brewing with these three principles, whether you have practiced them before or not. Make an effort to have a single session where they are the focus and intention of your brewing. First, practice brewing from the

ground. This may be easier if you sit cross-legged on the floor. Otherwise, do as Master Lin suggests and place your feet shoulder-width apart and plant them firmly. Either way, try bringing the energy that will move your arms and hands up from the ground, through the center of your body. Second, make a strong effort to slow everything down. Do each movement slowly and carefully. Finally, *stay with the tea*. Don’t let a single drop of your attention wander. Put every bit of your focus and concentration into the brewing, following the connection between each of the steps. Pay attention to what changes when you brew tea this way. Maybe you can invite a friend over who you often share tea with and ask them about what they found different in your tea brewing this time.

We hope that these discussions of our beloved poem will help give you some insights into the spirit and practice of gongfu tea, as well as real ways you can progress in your tea brewing. And, as always, share the results with us. It is always great to hear your insights...



Zen IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Antonio Moreno

茶
禪
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味



In the spirit of community, we thought we'd let you travel along with us to Spain and France in the next few articles, learning more about what we do on the road, teaching Cha Dao, promoting tea family and expanding this Global Tea Hut!

茶禪



Over the past two years, Wu De and I had been planning a trip to Barcelona so he could meet the Global Tea Hut community here, hold a series of tea events at Čaj Chai teahouse, help us further Barcelona tea culture, raise some money for Tea Sage Hut and Light Meets Life and, of course, spend some good fun-loving time together with me and my family! This October the time was right and we finally made it happen... And we even included a beautiful three-day road trip to visit Sabine in Nice and spread some Tea and Zen there!

Three Weeks of Zen & Tea

All in all, it was an incredible three weeks and I'd like to share some of this wonderful experience with you, since you were all very much part of this trip. Wherever Wu De goes, Global Tea Hut goes with him. Figuratively and physically speaking. The figurative aspect goes without saying, as it's a foundational pillar in sharing and spreading Tea and Zen around the world, not to mention all of the proceeds from all the events we did went straight back to the center and future center. The physical aspect was a beautiful surprise as Global Tea Hut members from around the world booked their flights when they read the news and, beyond participating in the events, they bonded and reminded us we are a community of tea lovers who esteem each other very highly and our lives are all richer thanks to each and every one

of you! It was a special joy to meet a lot of tea brothers and sisters for the first time, some of whom I had already connected with in emails or on social networks, and all of whom I had heard of by way of mouth. And it was great to reconnect with those I did know and share some very special and memorable days together. For in this Hut we share friendship as much as we do Tea!

“Those who participated in the events learned a lot about tea: Cha Dao, its potential, and about ourselves as a human species and as individuals...”

Over three weeks we held numerous workshops, some short and some longer, but the highlight and centerpiece was a full weekend retreat of Zen and Tea!

Along the way, lots of people were connected to the Dao of Tea. For Čaj Chai customers it was a great opportunity to meet the master in person. It was beautiful to see how their perception of Tea was changed and given new direction. I enjoyed watching how their faces changed by the end of the workshops—softer and lighter, having understood they had found a new ally in Tea that would accompany them throughout their lives. It's not that the tea was new, but in meeting a tea monk they opened a door and invited Tea into

their lives in a more personal and spiritual way!

Those who participated in the events learned a lot about tea: Cha Dao, its potential, and about ourselves as a human species and as individuals... And they certainly left learning about things they never would have expected to, like how our lives will change if we simply begin the day drinking three bowls of tea in silence!

The workshops with Wu De were fun, humorous, insightful and loving gatherings with organic, Living Tea of the highest quality and aged teas we all felt privileged to enjoy together, especially when prepared with such fine-honed gongfu skills and the wisdom of a life spent in service of the Leaf. For the Global Tea Hut community and those who already knew Wu De through his books and magazines, it was an eagerly awaited occasion to share a cup of tea with him and imbibe the moment, savoring it like a precious tea.

For me, Wu De's first visit to Spain was a dream come true after a long time of preparation and planning, to finally spend time with my dear friend, tea brother and master, spread our tea tradition and culture and also to raise awareness about the fascinating projects we are nurturing: the Tea Sage Hut tea temple, the international community of tea lovers and walkers down the path of Cha Dao in Global Tea Hut and to raise money by way of donations for the future creation of the free tea center, Light Meets Life, whether through

his artwork, the three incredible teas they pressed this year or the workshops themselves. I give my most sincere heartfelt thanks to everybody who assisted the workshops, some of you from very far away, for your participation guaranteed the success of this trip and that more gatherings of this type will follow in the future.

For all of you wondering what kind of events we held, I'm going to give you a little summary:

Meditative Tea

We set up the workshops so that we'd begin with events where we'd look at tea from a spiritual perspective... As a Zen Tea monk, these are Wu De's favorite types of events, where he explained what it meant to live a life of tea and how the Five Elements of Traditional Chinese Medicine work together when we prepare tea. These workshops were packed with stories, proverbs, splendid metaphors and a lot of deep bowl tea so we could really understand the special alchemy that exists in tea brewing and its unique relationship as the 'Emperor of All Herbs' and how it affects our body, mind and soul.

Nice, France

After that first weekend, Wu De and I took a road trip to France to spend a few days performing tea events and tea ceremonies in Niza that fellow Global Tea Hut sister Sabine organized to perfection with the help of her dear friend Anne-Marie and a one-man camera crew, Raphael Zamochnikoff!

We had been on the road since morning, talking, listening to music, sharing stories and laughing and before we knew it we were arriving at the city of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Marseille. Something very beautiful happened there that I'd like to share:

We had just arrived, parked the car and immediately went out in search of a vegetarian restaurant. It was almost 6pm, and we still hadn't had lunch. We searched on, turning here and there, scoping streets, but little by little we realized we would be hard-pressed to find a good place to eat that was open... and then we found a health food shop with no food service but where they informed us that there wasn't a single vegetarian restaurant in all of Marseille. Hard to believe! So we kept searching, rejecting the few possibilities we found along the way for their quality was dubious, or at least I thought so.

After a while Wu Du stopped us and said:

*"We're doing this wrong. We're looking for a good place to eat at the wrong time, in a city we are totally unfamiliar with and we can't even speak their language. How can we think we can use our mind to find a good place to eat? We have to **feel** it! Now, **feel** it and tell me where we should turn."*

I laughed heartily, understanding his logic perfectly and how absurd it really was for us to be seeking a restaurant using our brain power when we knew absolutely nothing



“I’m not taking advantage of the moments where I can allow myself to follow my intuition and be surprised. I had forgotten what it felt like to give into intuition and spontaneity... It’s such a beautiful, flowing, all-encompassing sensation!”

about the space we were moving through... but I also felt unsure of my ability to navigate using my intuition and I began pointing the way without much conviction.

“Ok, let’s go that way...” I began tentatively.

At every intersection he asked me again where we should turn. I’d wait a moment to feel it and point in a

“that way” direction. We were walking Lord knows where, following my intuition but I really had no idea where I was leading us or that we would find anything any time soon.

I exaggerate not when I say it only took me four “that ways” to turn a corner and know instantly that we had reached our destination! *Le Palmier Restaurant Tunisien...*

“Look! I bet they make a nice vegetarian cous-cous!”

We got a little closer and took in a glass display full of homemade Arab sweets. We entered with conviction—even though there weren’t any customers. It was easy to ascertain it was a family venture, where off-hours were spent repairing a chair or restocking a tray of pastries fresh out of the oven. We asked if they would serve us and, of course, a Tunisian family would never turn someone from their home—this restaurant was their home as well, at least that’s how they made you feel. Mint tea was on our table in no time. In the same way a Tunisian would never turn down a hungry traveler, a man of Tea will never turn away a cup of tea no matter how much sugar they put in it... It was delicious and there couldn’t possibly be anything better! We found our place and Wu De was particularly pleased because it was the kind of place he’d never find in Taiwan. (It would probably be difficult to find a more genuine establishment even in Tunisia!) I won’t go on telling you all the delicious dishes we enjoyed or how many times we helped ourselves to seconds, but it was a glorious meal and a very valuable lesson...

I’m not following my intuition as much as I should. I’m not granting it enough space to listen to it. I have the habit of using my head even in situations where it doesn’t even make sense. I spend the day thinking and controlling, organizing and doing what I must do, so that my day is full of routine and obligations. Not only is there little room left in it to welcome the unexpected, but I’m not taking advantage of the moments where I can allow myself to follow my intuition and be surprised. I had forgotten what it felt like to give into intuition and spontaneity... It’s such a beautiful, flowing, all-encompassing sensation!





Singing farewell songs at the retreat

The next morning we packed up and drove onwards to Nice and were blessed with three days of meeting beautiful people, an incredible blue sea unlike any I've ever seen, the best Italian gelato I ever had and wonderful tea sessions with warm, open people, many of which were relatively new to tea and deeply moved by the stillness and depth of quiet tea, and the new perspective they gained. Our tea sessions were all recorded by Raphael, a beautiful, gentle and passionate film-maker who surely will put together some amazing footage to remember those days forever. Thank you Sabine for inviting us and organizing such a beautiful series of events!

Tea & Zen Retreat

Back in Barcelona we returned to a warm greeting by the group of

international Global Tea Hut members who came to participate in the weekend retreat of Tea and Zen. The place we choose for the retreat, the In Out Hostel in Collserola Park, is a non-profit social project that fits perfectly with the non-profit spirit of Global Tea Hut.

This retreat was undoubtedly the main dish in our schedule of events: a special occasion to meet Global Tea Hut members from around the world (finally, I counted and we were 14 people from 10 different countries!) for the first time, an incredible weekend of meditation and a steady flow of bowl tea and discourse revolving around the famous proverb, "The taste of Tea and Zen are the same".

The weekend was full of emotional, deep, fun and memorable moments; with new friendships forming and more mature ones gathering greater strength. As I think

of all of you present, I can't wait to share tea with you again!

There was also a fantastic last-minute surprise that rocked my world and served as another lesson to me, along a very similar vein as what I learned when we found the restaurant in Marseille:

It occurred just as we were settling into the hostel. We were emptying the car and preparing the main hall when two young ladies who had been sitting in reception asked us who we were and what we were doing. I explained we were about to begin a weekend retreat with Tea and Zen and they could join if they liked. One of them was very interested from the get go, the other was quite unsure. Curiously, the first had studied Traditional Chinese Medicine and the second studied the properties of natural herbs in her home country. I was blown away by the coincidence! We were about

to begin a retreat rooted in the Five Elements and the curative power of *Camellia sinensis*! I explained a little more about Global Tea Hut, Wu De's new book *Tea Medicine* and what they could and couldn't expect from the workshop, assuring them there was no obligation; they could leave at any time. Then, rather suddenly, the second lady decided she was game! I was so psyched for them... for being in the right spot at the right time and for not failing to see it!

These two brave ladies had just arrived at the hostel after spending a few days in Barcelona center. They came to Collserola Park to rest a bit, but without a plan or idea what they would do there. And suddenly they were about to learn that they actually had unknowingly come to participate in a retreat that was just starting—one that later I'd find out would truly change their lives! Maybe we'll even hear from them in a future issue of Global Tea Hut. (I hear that quite amazingly these two are right now staying at the center in Taiwan!)

So, once again I was stunned by the power of the unexpected when we leave space for it, and the importance of inviting free time into our lives and allowing Destiny to surprise us.

In Tea we observe that emptiness is what gives function to all the elements we use to prepare tea. The whole process is made possible and connected by emptiness. The fact that a kettle, teapot, cup or bowl has emptiness allows it to fill up and serve its function. Even the mind of the one preparing tea should be empty, functioning as a medium to connect the fire, water, kettle, teapot and the cups or bowls of our guests. And even our guests benefit from drinking with an empty mind. Likewise, if a mind is full, it has no space to learn. If we think we know everything, how can we learn anything new? Or as Wu De likes to say, if we buy an incredibly beautiful painting that can change our lives but when

we get home we find there is no place to put it on the walls... What good is that painting?

Workshops to End All

After the retreat, we took a few days rest and picked up with a very special Global Tea Hut session for our local Barcelona community and were even joined by tea-brother Alexei from Russia. Next, we continued with our schedule of events, which involved a couple of gongfu tea ceremonies and a final intensive weekend full of more “linear” tea courses on sheng and shou puerh tea, the mountain ranges of Yunnan, aged tea and Wu Yi Cliff Tea.

All in all, I'd say the trip was a huge success, as it turned a lot of people on to Tea's healing potential,

and many lives were impacted by their discoveries in Tea, which will continue to be a big part of their day in the hopes of finding a little bit more harmony in their lives.

And now that Wu De has returned to Taiwan, I've finally gotten a chance to open his new book and begin reading. I'm delighted to find that it almost reads like a summary of everything we spoke about! Wu De had just finished the book the day before traveling to Spain, so the material must have been so fresh, so near and dear to him and edited so thoroughly that now many passages of the book ring on as echoes of our shared time together... A time I can now turn back to over and over. Thank you Wu De. For everything. And thanks to all of you who made this such a memorable experience!



Wu De reading from “Tea Medicine”





A BARCELONA WORLD RETREAT

Steve Kokker

There was a beyond-belieft ten countries represented at our three-day retreat in the hills outside Barcelona! In his friendly way, Steve makes us feel like we are there, sharing in the peace, insights, laughter and fellowship. And, as he says, we were there!

茶禪

At some point during our recent three-day Zen and Tea retreat held just outside central Barcelona, Wu De reminded us that in all our endeavors, we need to do our part to help the Universe along. We all might want to be struck by lightning (enlightenment), for example, but if we do little to encourage this from happening, we can hope and wish all we want to little effect. If, however, we went to the trouble of climbing to the top of a mountain during a thunderstorm wearing a copper helmet, we would surely increase our chances of being struck. In contrast, sitting locked in a room whining about how years of meditation in this same room has not yet produced enlightenment is not a terribly effective strategy of partnership with the Universe.

A Unique Gathering

The weekend of October 10th, we gathered high up in the hills outside Barcelona in the Collserola Natural Park, all of us in our figurative copper hats, receptive, open. For many of us, lightning struck.

This was the Zen and Tea Weekend Retreat that Antonio had organized, part of the Sky/Heaven/Dao

component of the series of Barcelona tea events. It was held at a hostel in the park; a series of buildings placed along a winding path leading ever higher into the hills, completely embraced by thick, lush vegetation which bathed us in sweet smells by day and sweet sounds of bugs and insect nightlife after sunset.

The core staff of Tallinn-based Chado teashop—Triin, Siim, and I—had flown there to take part in this, to tickle Wu De and reaffirm our commitment to Tea as our main vehicle on the never-ending path towards lightning strikes. Our brother Alexei was also there, making the “Estonian contingent” one fourth of the entire group. Two Finnish sisters showed up unexpectedly in a show of Baltic solidarity, Jasper, the Thor of GTH, also came to take part, as well as yet another northern GTH sister, the gorgeous Karen from northern Scotland. Not to be outdone by this Viking-inspired preponderance of blond hair, pagan attitudes and ancient, wise-sounding accents, there was a scattering of southerners too for counterbalance. Hailing from fabulous Nice, the lovely Sabine (who had just recently hosted Wu De in a series of sun-drenched, windswept events) also made her way to these sweetened,

forested hills. Still others travelled from various corners of Spain, and of course, our beloved Antonio held court in a beautiful way that would make King Felipe VI proud.

Ok, perhaps it’s better to put the carbon footprint calculator aside for the moment and stop calculating the tens of thousands of kilometers traversed by everyone to be together, and concentrate instead on the further-reaching consequences that the gathering likely has led to. There surely are other ways of measuring net benefits for a gathering such as this...?

The Dao of Cha

As the emphasis here was on the Dao part of Cha Dao, there was a considerable amount of meditation time; some brave ones even left the rhythmic, often creative snoring patterns of their roommates to join Wu De for a 6am session of listening to chanting as part of the self-discipline and practice of cultivating an appropriate mind-space for the teachings during the day. On our schedule were other meditation times through the day and evening, thematic teaching sessions, *sangha*, time for questions, meals and even swimming

pool breaks, and so much transformational, stunning tea. Some transcendent magic can happen when an atmosphere of openness, safety and warmth is created, and then filled with living, liquid Nature energy, and finally bathed in nourishing, loving wisdom in the form of teachings/discourses. It is a holistic bath for the mind, body and spirit that opens a person to exploring one's own depths and allows the heart to soften.

Have no doubt; there was also time for frolicking, laughing, recounting ribald jokes, and of course discussing my kitchen table.

A Circle of Insights

As opposed to delving too deeply into the precise teachings that emerged on that weekend, I feel that by summarizing what the participants themselves felt they learned, you, dear reader, will have a better sense of the value of those happy days and nights. On the last day, a few hours before the hoop was to

break and we were all to part on our own ways, we sat in a circle, hearts rather mushy, eyes a bit watery, and shared some of the insights and feelings inspired by the previous days.

One person had been reminded of the importance of being at your best in every moment as you never

“Some transcendent magic can happen when an atmosphere of openness, safety and warmth is created, and then filled with living, liquid Nature energy, and finally bathed in nourishing, loving wisdom in the form of teachings/discourses.”

know when someone is watching you and ready to be inspired by you. You can set a powerful example at times when you least expect it, and so being still within oneself is important as often as you can man-

age it. Their challenge was in remaining “with” the tea throughout the entire tea session—even with people watching, and even with the mind pulling in different directions.

Another was touched to be in a circle of other humans dedicated to their personal growth and indirectly helping her with hers. She felt inspired to commit to meditation, both for her benefit and for others’ around her.

Still another felt her sensitivity was fine-tuned by the experiences, able to sense different kinds of energies in different surroundings. One of our topics of discussion, about what great teachers annoying people can be in our lives, also touched her deeply. The annoyance is, of course, in ourselves, not existing independently and fixed in the other. That we can learn so much from those who piss us off was one deep lesson for her.

Yet another sister found that the idea of bowl tea and how it returns us to simplicity, to our roots, resonated strongly for her. She was also



reminded to continue the path of self-discipline, towards mastery of the self, and the need to settle the self-doubts which come creeping up so often, trying to destabilize this

the principles she had been trying to live by. Feeling a part of a larger community of others struggling with the same issues gave her great strength to continue, for example,

“...this weekend had been the first time she had been with a group of strangers in a very long time, and the courage she managed to find to do this, and to share this very intimate space without fear, was deeply significant.”

process. Oh, how plagued most of us are by self-doubt!

Still another felt more certain than ever about the path she was on, feeling a renewed commitment to

acting in accordance with her heart and intuition.

For one brother, simply the peace and quiet afforded by the weekend was such a rare gem for him, some-

thing so sadly uncommon in his life, that this aspect alone had been a profound gift.

One other brother felt stronger to continue his ongoing process of removing self-doubts, of flushing out confusions in order to be clearer about where to go in his development, and also that the ultimate goal of any personal development can only be measured by how effectively we bring this beyond ourselves, to share with others.

Another brother's big lesson was of the importance of showing one's heart without fear. To show up, in the big way.

We drank tea and meditated all day...





An amazing international tea family from ten countries!

For another lovely soul, this weekend had been the first time she had been with a group of strangers in a very long time, and the courage she managed to find to do this, and to share this very intimate space without fear, was deeply significant. She felt that the safety created by the group, as well as the realizations she had about herself, will set the stage for her next phase of life.

“I look at you and see the smiles of the people you will later serve to. I thank you all for helping to make me a better teacher. All of the mistakes that you have been patient with and borne have helped me get better and be there for future students.”

The time we live out this Dao of Tea is now, and the effects we can have on others is now, not later, so let's fearlessly show our hearts, make our mistakes publicly, try out this brave mode of being regardless of consequences, now that we can. Regardless of whether our deeds are met with judgment, derision or a lack of comprehension. Now that we are ready, we need to act according to what has already been struck by lightning within us. And we are, believe it or not, ready.



Humility, in the End

In humility, Wu De closed with some words that we would all do well to remember in the future. For we are not only students (of the Leaf, of the Dao, of Wu De, of the books and YouTube lectures we devour), we are also teachers. And always have been, even when we have not been aware of it. Even if we are not always teachers in an open sense, we offer teachings, in our very ways of being. We can never know what long-term effects the most casual of acts might have on others in the distant future. So his words are best remembered by us all:



TEA IN THE SOUTH OF FRANCE

Sabine Minh Sen

It is always nice to read about our events from the perspective of those who attended them, rather than from behind the scenes. Sabine has collected a nice montage of what she calls “tributes”, since they express a newfound gratitude and joy.



茶禪

I discovered the Tea Sage Hut in November of 2013. I had been looking on the Internet for a bed and breakfast in Taiwan, adding “tea” to the search. I was lucky to drink tea with Wu De, Kai Ya, Shane, Lindsey and Nick. These strangers soon became my Tea family. My two short days there radically changed my perspective. At the time, we discussed Wu De coming to Nice in the south of France. And here we are one year later living this experience! Wu De arrived in Nice with the delightful Antonio Moreno of the Čaj Chai Tea House in Barcelona.

France is the home of gastronomy and we have a reputation for having fine palates. Nice is an attractive tourist city, very close to Italy, where we are more used to drinking coffee than tea. People come to Nice for its wonderful climate, its beaches and the beauty of the hinterland. Mountains and snow are just a one-hour drive away. The beauty of our environment has us used to receiving abundance without any effort. In the midst of this superficial activity, where tea is an unknown culture, I have paved the way, from workshops at the Museum of Asian Arts to gatherings around tea and creative writing in the old part of town. I live somewhere balanced between pro-

moting and selling tea and my deep passion for the Leaf. I am always in search of expressions to convey the wealth and depth of this culture and was therefore gratefully awaiting Wu De’s visit to help me come even closer to this plant, to share the taste of this medicine. All was perfect, since his dates coincided with the launch of his book “Tea Medicine”.

“Tea helps clear away the interference between us and what is essential, helping us to connect with what is within or quite simply to let go of the reflex that pushes us to look at our screens the moment we get up.”

The lovely Anne-Marie, a living encyclopedia on tea, came from Belgium to help us organize the events. And there followed two days of encounters at different venues: an estate agency with a yoga room upstairs, a friendly co-working office, at my home for a vegetarian teenager, on the most beautiful beach in Nice early one morning...

Hardly anyone knew what a tea master was, other than a vague idea of a ceremony in a Kimono. Every tribute written at the end of this article and every photograph taken of the events shows a huge surprise, an intense encounter that often began in silence. Humor, entertaining anecdotes and Wu De’s deep knowledge of Tea punctuated our exchanges. He passes on the wisdom of Tea by being and incarnating it in his daily life. His hugs are communicative and loving. Without asking for anything for himself he touched us, each one of us in a different way—one of us by the tea, the other by a numbered puerh cake, or his original drawings, Global Tea Hut bracelets, Zen, or the sharing of the experience of the Global Tea Hut community, all the stories he told...

He challenged us to drink three bowls of tea every morning first thing before becoming absorbed in our daily activities. Some have told me how much this has already changed their lives, as it has mine. It helps clear away the interference between us and what is essential, helping us to connect with what is within or quite simply to let go of the reflex that pushes us to look at our screens the moment we get up.

Meeting Wu De has helped reinforce my purpose, to continue on my path, to worry less about how I can earn a living and to intensify my tea practice. I am looking for continuity and regularity in my exchanges and for this I had to remove myself from the stress of “doing business”. Following Wu De’s visit I am pursuing his ambition to create more free tea sessions in different places around town. The Global Tea Hut experience has been a great help to me. I feel a part of this wonderful embracing community. A film director, Raphael Zamochnikoff offered to film the Nice gatherings with Wu De. His art will be helpful in order to continue demonstrating the benefits of Tea for humanity. All of this revolves around being in harmony with oneself, others and Nature.

Thank you, Wu De, for dedicating your life and soul to this cause. I feel stronger now to bring my own contribution to this human adventure and the feeling of solitude on my tea path has completely left me.

The tea ceremonies themselves were translated into French and then these tributes into English by Vanessa Gheorghiu:

Raphaël Zamochnikoff: I was very impressed by the simplicity of Wu De’s stories. They were really easy to understand, and everything seemed so obvious. There was one unexpected aspect. I was wondering what it meant to be a tea master, and he answered that for me. The group energy came into being very easily, concentration, sharing, etc. What will stay with me are the hugs, the new feeling of community. This struck me. A magical power of authority, a kindness that was not seeking power—lots of quiet, we took our time—Wu De is present and his contact is warm. Monastic calm can be daunting; it’s a silence that asks for nothing. The medium of Tea creates a link between peo-

ple. We use an ordinary pretext as a social tool. Wu De shares his beliefs, a respectful silence surrounds us. A door opens.

Nicolas Bergé: It was an intense presence. I especially loved the man/Tea in silence before listening to the master and learning from his knowledge. Such an intense silence. This corresponds to my true nature and to my taste for Asian arts. I found Wu De sincere and brilliant. Wu De encouraged us to listen. I was delighted that he chose to come to the “Satellites” (a communal office

space). There was a transversal quality to it. Never mind the place; it’s what happened inside that counts. The place is secondary compared to the people who are present. There were three consequences of sharing this tea: As Wu De said, we connect to our environment, ourselves and others. I agree 100-million%.

Donatella Anzalone: Friendly, sometimes silent, a voyage of discovery; these are the words that come to mind. Actually, I found the experience very interesting for several reasons: first the master himself; it





A stunning morning on the Riviera

is always impressive to meet such a person. Then the ceremony in itself, during which the silence around us creates a silence within (meditation actually); and then third, Wu De's teachings, which were simple yet true. As for the Tea, Spirit flows through its powerful flavor, so light and so deep at the same time.

Rosa Jackson: It's hard to find words to describe the experience of meeting Wu De, since much of what he teaches is about the value of not speaking, not doing, just being. The first time I attended one of his sessions, we drank several bowls of tea in silence before he started to speak, and I found myself wondering whether he had anything to say at all. Then he began talking about health and it all made perfect sense. I learned many things with Wu De, but what will stay with me the most is the habit of drinking three bowls

of tea in the morning before doing anything else. By the time I have finished drinking my tea, it no longer seems urgent to check the messages on my phone or open my laptop, and I am able to concentrate better on each task throughout the day. With him I learned that Tea, despite

“What really struck me was the image of the ancient centennial trees whose roots are connected to the past and connected to each other—a discovery for me.”

its caffeine content, can be a means to access a state of inner calm, and I now use it throughout the day to create moments of peace. After one session with Wu De, my 12-year-old son is doing the same! I was excited to receive my first issue of Global Tea

Hut last week and have been savoring the articles just as I do my morning tea.

Adele Stefanoni: A beautiful, significant encounter!

Jérémie Atlani: A particularly rich and moving moment. Wu De is a model of calm and spirituality. The ceremony begins plunged in complete silence, savoring the first bowls of tea. Wu De serves us tea in all simplicity and humility. The first part of the ceremony leads to meditation, the second to dialogue and exchange. A beautiful experience. Thank you.

Vanessa Gheorghiu: Sharing time and drinking tea with Wu De turns minutes into the most precious of moments. Moments to learn and reflect on how to navigate these

times, to delve deep into ourselves for a better understanding of our true nature and how we are being called to change from within. His deep understanding of Zen philosophy, his warm and engaging personality, his delightful sense of humor all contributed to an unforgettable experience. Thank you Wu De and Sabine for bringing love, light and joy into our lives.

Catherine Montana Thu: What stayed most with me was the feeling of an intimate connection created in this small gathering of people who didn't know each other a few moments earlier. I arrived a little late, and could feel that there had been a real meeting, beyond words. The atmosphere in the room was dense when I entered. What really struck me was the image of the ancient centennial trees whose roots are connected to the past and connected to each other—a discovery for me. There was a real impression of stability, echoed by the master himself, in all his being.

Silvain Leone: Restful and energizing—a good booster for those of us who are constantly on the go, a beautiful moment in his company. I would recommend this and do it again.

Anne-Marie Vandervodt: I will always remember those wonderful days in Nice. Since I met my tea sister Sabine last year in Taiwan, she and her big heart haven't stopped sharing tea moments, laughs, and a never ending vessel of chocolate spread! In the black days when my German friend suddenly died—a drummer in a cover band whose heart stopped beating—intuition between tea friends has worked and even though Sabine didn't know exactly what was going on, she sent me a whole box of my favorite French jams from *La Chambre des Confitures*. Then,

she invited Wu De to Nice so we could learn what Tea really is.

A lot of French people found real tea happiness, and I did as well. I came to understand more deeply what I had read before in Wu De's books. I understand and feel now what it means to live in the HERE and NOW.

Nice *was* connection to others, in silence or not. It was so nice to meet people like Antonio, Raphaël and Jean. It was also connection to Nature through the tea leaves, fire,

earth and water Wu De put in the tea we drank together and in the blue sky, sea, and air of the *Côte Azur*. And the connection to myself, a 50+-year-old red-haired tea lover, started. I'm proud to continue my tea path and be a GTH member!!!



Sabine showing off our 2014 Ai Lao cake to guests





CLEANLINESS & PURITY

Shen Su

Shen continues his ongoing exploration of the Eight Bowls of our tea tradition. If you haven't read his previous three articles, be sure to check them out. In this episode, he dives into the fourth bowl, which is all about one of the Virtues of tea: Purity.

茶道

Sitting quietly at the tea table, having already drunk three of the Eight Bowls, our minds settle, our eyes gently close, our shoulders drop, and yet we feel vibrantly alive. There is a subtle energy becoming more prominent as our attention draws further inwards. As the steam rises with the pour of the next bowl and our eyes gently lift open, we take notice of just how clean this tea space is...

I always find myself sweeping. No matter the tradition, the monastery or shrine, the Zendo or the dojo. Be it a martial art or a spiritual path—Aikido, Shintoism, Buddhism, Zen, or Cha Dao—I find myself sweeping. Where there are *tatami*, courtyards, gravel pathways, mossy garden beds, tiled floors, or training mats, sweeping will precede and follow. Where there are fallen leaves, trodden rock beds, or debris wind-blown against the walls of a koi pond, sweeping will precede and follow. Where there are teachers and students, brooms and dust pans, sweeping will precede and follow. And at one particular spiritual center, where there was a rascally *sensei* with a nerve to drive over my freshly raked and swept gravel driveway every morning (in a mini-car), sweeping definitely preceded and fol-

lowed. Humbled, I now bow deeply to that *sensei* and his mischievous ways...

Sweeping, silhouetted monks standing tall in the distance. Deftly, like the last stroke of a calligrapher's brush, thatched bamboo brooms sway from left to right, cleaning temple graveyards.

Why do we clean so much? It's going to become dirty again tomorrow, isn't it? On an absolute level, everything is clean. Even dirt, as it glimmers under the sheen of morning dew, instills a sense of natural purity. True, in one sense, cleanliness is an attitude, an orientation towards life. There are degrees of cleanliness and a practical line must be drawn at one point or another. But that can't be substituted for the real work involved in cleaning. *One's attitude comes through in their actions.* The result of someone with an honest attitude towards cleanliness is a physically, energetically, and spiritually clean-feeling environment. It speaks for itself. Be it an altar, bedroom, garden, or kitchen. And that's just on the outside. In one sense, you

could say the more disciplined we are, the more clean we are.

Just as every infusion is different from the last, as every leaf on a tree wavers in the wind; as every dynasty comes to pass, and every musical note surrenders to the next, the unfolding of this world is one of change. Everything is dynamic, everything is changing, vibrating through the cycles of existence. Central to the Chinese concept of change is the idea of return. Everything is in a state of change and thus a state of return. When I lived in Japan and went to the Zen monastery every morning before university, the first thing we did was sweep the moss garden. Then we would wash the wooden temple floors by hand, meditate and finally share tea. At the time, these were all very separate activities to me. Each morning, the moss bed had returned to its previous state of disarray. Dried leaves had fallen and twigs collected. And so I swept, noticing how the edges and boundaries became like traps for debris. I preferred sweeping to meditating, garnering immediate satisfaction from a cleaned garden, and only pain in my legs from sitting. In fact, I took it upon myself to see the cleaning as the meditation. While there is great truth in that,

my idea of meditation was skewed at the time and influenced by the comparative mind. Still, one has to start somewhere. And so, I swept with a craving to finish while experiencing temporary satisfaction upon completion.

There is no point in trying to achieve a static state of fulfillment. It does not exist outside of this moment. Unfortunately, ever-lasting satisfaction will not be found in the attainment of that future vacation, that perfect spouse, house, car, job or that tidy garden. Such things will at best only temporarily satisfy us. There is no permanent plateau. Fulfillment is an earnest attitude towards what is happening right now. So, too, *cleaning* is a process, not a final state, and the attainment

of cleanliness as a finished product is not to be sought after. Like life, cleanliness is a process—a continuous sweeping, both inside and out. To have the attitude that cleaning is done in order to achieve a final state of cleanliness is to face dissatisfaction again and again. To treat cleaning as a means to an end, in other words, as a task on your to-do list that will actually never be checked, not for very long at least, is to fail to be clean at all.

And so, we face the same conundrum: why clean? There is always work to be done and yet there is nothing to be done. If everything is clean on the absolute level and if it's just going to become unclean again tomorrow on the relative level, what difference does it make? *Why are*

those monks sweeping in the graveyards? Surely if I understand this, so do they; and yet, there they are sweeping day in and day out...

There are Four Virtues of Tea. The first virtue is Harmony, the second, Reverence, and the third, Purity. The last is Tranquility. When we see something in harmony with Nature, and we ourselves are brought into harmony as a result, we develop a deep respect for that thing. We then purify that which we deeply respect. Cha Dao is eighty percent cleaning, which means we have a great respect for this tradition! So I clean my teaware, my tea space, and most importantly, my self.

One important way of showing respect in Asia is through hygiene. In part for this reason, we clean teaware



in front of guests. They were already clean because we always leave time to clean up after every tea session, but like we said, cleaning is not a fixed state. So one practical reason for cleaning our teaware is to show a certain level of social respect. It also demonstrates a level of respect for ourselves as well. On a deeper level, however, cleansing the bowls at every tea ceremony is symbolic of sweeping away the dust of the world. In other words, removing all aspects of the self that separate us from others. At the tea table, we are of one family, you and I. Deeper still, in rinsing our teaware, we sweep away the remnants of any previous tea session, reminding us that this moment will occur but only once in our lives. I want my last tea session to be impeccably clean, every corner of the tea-room swept, every element of the *chaxi* perfectly placed, every impurity of the mind vanquished.

Every tea hour becomes a masterpiece, to serve as a distillation of all tea hours, as if it were the first and with no others to follow.

— Lu Yu, “*The Classic of Tea*”

At our center, we clean everything and we do it often! So much so that I've heard countless guests remark how clean it feels as soon as they walk through the front door and into our main tea hall. They immediately feel calm, comfortable, and welcomed. Isn't that feeling true of your own home after a recent cleaning? Doesn't it feel somehow rejuvenated and inviting after a good spring cleaning? That sense of renewal is uplifting and energizing. That's the feeling we get at least once a week on our main cleaning day. The really beautiful thing is that what once felt like a chore is slowly but surely transforming into a joy. I look forward to cleaning at the center, and more and more appreciate how integral a



role it plays in a life dedicated to Tea, shaping the atmosphere of every session. What once felt like something that had to be done in order to drink tea, is now becoming something that merges with the tea session itself, breaking down the boundaries of where the session begins and where cleaning ends. *The cleaning is becoming as much the tea session as the session is itself*, just as a really fine tea has no boundaries!

My teacher often says that it is the empty space that connects all elements at the tea table. For without that, where are we to brew and pour our tea? Should there be any impurities in the kettle, they would come through in the bowl. It is most important that we first empty ourselves because the one brewing is

just as much a part of the tea making process as every other element. That is why we must open our heart and still our mind, for should any impurities reside in the heart, they will surely come through in the brew. It is through the heart that the mind connects to the hand. I have great respect for my body, through which I experience life. Consequently, I purify myself outwardly and inwardly. This is a great indicator for any person of Tea. As we purify ourselves, we make better tea. Better in flavor and aroma, but more importantly, better in our ability to serve tea that connects us with ourselves, with others, and with Nature.

Those monks are sweeping because they understand through experience that there is no distinc-



Cha Dao is eighty-percent cleaning, inside and out

tion between inner cleaning and outer cleaning, aside from a conceptual one. In the way that meditation purifies the mind, which our actions then stem from, so too does the outward act of cleaning our environment also have a way of cleansing us spiritually. As I purify my inner self through daily meditation, my external self in turn becomes cleaner. And as I cleanse my external self through daily acts of cleaning, my inner self in turn becomes more pure. Cleaning the internal environment of the mind and the external environment in which you live reflect each other proportionally. The cleanliness of one indicates the cleanliness of the other.

Like meditation, we clean for its own sake. Because there is clean-

ing to be done, we skillfully see it as a joyful process. A process that has no finished state, and one that ties in seamlessly to every other process. Purity is the act of cleaning; it is a labor of love. We clean before and after tea, and rest in the understanding that everything is in a state of return. We sweep diligently, even where no one will ever see (even under the proverbial rug!). We sweep to keep our environment clean, acknowledging that *we are* our environment. And also like meditation, we realize that purifying is not always an action. Like murky water, it settles on its own through inactivity. Whether we sweep the graveyard of the mind or the graveyard of the temple, we are always sweeping out of reverence and harmony.

*Sweeping,
silhouetted monks sitting
tall with legs crossed.
Diligently, like clouds over
mountaintops,
breath sweeps over mind,
cleaning temple graveyards.*





WATER IS THE JOURNEY

Max Raphael

We have a long-standing tradition of hiking up to Celestial Mountain each week to draw our water for tea. It's an integral part of a visit to our center, and central to life here. Max shares what it's like to gather this mystical water we all share.

茶道

I look up at the first set of stairs before me, under a great wall of trees that lead further up the mountain. Setting down my empty container for fetching water, I pause to take a silent, mindful breath before beginning the hike. With a quiet mind, I join the others again, slowly pacing the several hundred steps up the winding stone path, enclosed by lofty pines and arching bamboo. Suspended in the cool morning mist some 1,000 meters up, my mind goes inward.

Only a few minutes in, I find myself thinking over many things. Great life questions pass through my mind; things to figure out, ways to improve myself, lessons to learn... It seems with each step along the worn stone path, I go deeper into reflection. After only a few more steps, I realize that the same familiar thoughts seem to visit me each time I walk up this path. What is it that causes the deeper parts of me to come to the surface? Could it be this mountain? Could it also be the reverence people have brought to this place for many years now?

Walking a little farther, we pass a big-hearted Taiwanese woman with an “auntie” like character about her. She booms a strong “hello”

and “good morning” to each of us, echoed by a wide, genuine smile, as we walk by with our empty water containers...

At our tea center in Taiwan, each day is punctuated by morning and evening meditation—except for one morning each week, when we head into the mountains to fetch fresh spring water for tea. Packing breakfast and empty water jugs, we share silence during the drive up, still welcoming the meditative mind to start the day. In less than an hour's drive, we arrive at *Xian Shan* (仙山, “Celestial Mountain”) in Shitan Township. The water there is well worth the drive and hike to collect; Wu De often says it's essentially the best water for tea in all of Taiwan, and is the primary reason that our center is situated in Miaoli County.

We often say that we raise a bowl to you, our global tea community, while drinking tea here at the Hut—and it's true! The same can be said about our altars, upon which we regularly set a freshly brewed cup of tea; this tea is also offered to our brothers and sisters around the world, to signify that there is always a hot bowl or cup of tea waiting for you, whenever you should make it to our center. Indeed, our Way of

Tea at the center is inseparable from this ritual of gathering water at this spring. Wu De began fetching water for tea at *Xian Shan* twelve years ago. For many of the early years, he would go even twice a week, cradling between his arms a large ceramic urn full of the water. Such urns are quite heavy even when empty; we can only imagine how much more demanding it was to carry water, as we now use metal and plastic jugs that are much lighter! But Wu De relates to the challenging passage each week as an experience that changed not only his Tea, but also his life. Constantly engaging both his physical strength and mindfulness for the sake of Tea would call for an alignment of body and mind... of tea and everyday life, of taking the seat at the tea table and walking on the Earth. This is why we treasure this ritual of fetching water; beyond the calm we find on the mountain, or the special water we tap at the spring, we get to connect with our Tea much earlier than the moment we first pour from our kettle.

When brewing tea, I focus on creating a space of harmony and awakening for myself and my guests sitting before me. When fetching water, I don't even know who will

drink of it, or in what ways it will serve their hearts, bodies or minds. And I don't need to know. I can bring my mind and body in alignment, knowing that I am taking these steps for Tea itself, for this wonderful Dao that is always a path home to our true selves, unfolding itself in the next hot bowl of tea passed our way.

I keep this in mind when carrying this fresh, magical spring water down the mountain. I know that this water will not only serve those physically at the center this week to enjoy tea; it will also facilitate our practice of Cha Dao here at the Hut, where our cultivation influences hundreds of people around the world. With this in mind, I try to remember there are many joining me on this drive into the mountains, and with each step up the quiet mountain trail...

The road quickly transforms from city streets to country roads, bordered by vibrant flowers and foliage that climb the encompassing valleys.

Stepping out of the car, the air is cooler and mistier than before, and the morning is often blanketed by clouds and mist rolling through. We put on our hiking shoes, and maintain silence as we begin the hike up to the spring. The empty jugs in our hands will be filled with twenty liters of fresh spring water, and brought back down the several hundred steps of the canopied trail.

We often pass people along the way, also coming to visit the temple and sacred spring. Many are locals, though people sometimes travel from all parts of the island to visit the temple and take of the spring water.

People have been coming to *Xian Shan* for spiritual and healing purposes for over seventy years now, ever since locals spread word of the water's healing properties. As the story goes, a local family in Shitan was stricken with malaria. Living in the mountains several decades ago, the parents and children alike had little options or medical resources to turn to. They had all but resorted to prayer for a solution, until one night, someone in the family had a dream.

In it, a spirit told them of a mountain that could heal their illness. At first, they didn't think anything of it, but being so desperate, they decided to ask around. Sure enough, rumors had been spreading among locals of a strange light appearing on a certain mountain, which was thought to be auspicious.

The family eventually came to this place and bowed down to Great Nature herself, humbly asking for a blessing. They lit incense, offered tea, and prayed at this mountaintop, also taking of its heavenly-tasting spring water. Miraculously, after a short time everyone in the family was healed. They attributed this wonder to the mountain, giving full credit to the spring near its peak.

As word spread about this, more people began to come to the hum-

ble mountain to pray and take water. In less than ten years, a sizable Daoist temple called *Ling Dong Gong* (靈洞宮, "Temple of the Spiritual Cave") was constructed in an area slightly lower than the peak, which the spring still fed.

Some years later, hundreds of large stone steps were laid by hand on the steep slope of the mountain, forming two trails up to where the spring originates, so that the freshest water could be gathered. At the top of the trails, locals constructed a much smaller Daoist shrine to the deity *Jiu Tian Xuan Nu* (九天玄女, "The Mysterious Lady of the Ninth Heaven"). She was invoked to preside over this temple, called *Xie Ling Gong* (協靈宮, "Communal Spirit Temple"), and to protect the spring. *Xuan Nu* is often depicted holding



a sword for battle in one hand, and a gourd of the elixir of immortality in the other, symbolizing healing and longevity. As legend has it, she equipped the Yellow Emperor to defeat the warrior God, Chi You in a legendary battle some 4,500 years ago. Maybe she was invoked here for her fierceness, to secure this precious spring that locals have come to revere. Indeed, to this day people bring water down the steep path by hand to deliver to those who are sick and in need of healing.

Within this temple is a series of sinks and faucets where the spring has been tapped into for people to drink from. Incense, fruit, flowers and other offerings adorn just about every surface in this open-air temple. Statues of the deities worshiped here sit behind their altars, looking out onto a magnificent view of the valley below, cupped by steep hills and mountains.

Setting down my empty container once again, I bow facing the main altars, feeling gratitude for this sacred place, and join those who erected this temple in revering the Nature before me. I then walk to the edge of the shrine, where the water is fetched. The sinks fed by the spring are arranged around a large column, along with a small altar to the water itself. Here I bow yet again, connecting with this moment, and why we are here.

I feel stillness in my heart, as I ask for blessings to rain down on our center and the people in this community. I set an intention that our thoughts, actions and speech positively affect all whom we encounter. The idea that water can help fulfill such a wish may sound far-fetched. However, I experience each day how sensitive water is as a medium, especially in this practice of Tea. As a *Chajin*, and/or reader of past issues of this magazine, you are no doubt familiar with the idea of water as a great communicator and container. Far beyond things like taste and fla-

vor, it conveys healing and wisdom on many levels: from spirit to tree, leaf to brewer, bowl to guest.

Brewing tea, you notice how water carries the flavor and aroma of the Leaf, along with all the characteristics of the teaware and materials it passes through; you experience *cha Qi* through this medium of water, further activated by the element of heat, as we discussed in October's issue. And, maybe you've tried the gongfu experiment a few issues back in September, where you experienced the difference of drinking the same tea prepared by two different brewers, using the same teaware, water, etc. What ends up in the cup or bowl for our guest is not only the steeped tea, but also our own cultivation in that moment—from the gross to the subtle dimensions, water will convey it all.

After my prayer before the water's altar, I join the others once again. Before rinsing and filling the containers, we each fill up a cup at the sink, and taste the spring today, while looking out upon the valley below. It tastes pure and clean, with the perfect balance of mineral content and hardness-to-softness. Its texture is thick and coating. When I swallow it, it almost disappears like a cloud, without leaving the faintest bit of dryness or pinch in my throat. It was almost as if I was enjoying an amazing tea right in that moment! Indeed, ideal water for tea should exhibit most of the same qualities of a good tea: splashing to the upper palate and coating the mouth pleasantly; moving to the back of the palate almost on its own, swallowing effortlessly; coating the throat and causing salivation and lingering seetness.

Though it changes in interesting ways depending on the weather of a particular week, the water at *Xian Shan* takes on all of these qualities in an exceptional and undeniable way. I remember my very first hike up the trail to taste this water; after

climbing the several hundred stairs on an empty stomach with stiff legs, I could feel how the water immediately penetrated and nourished my body. The very moment I swallowed a sip, it was absorbed and integrated in my body. The feeling was more like breathing fresh mountain air than drinking. Ideal water for drinking—and for brewing tea—should satisfy and nourish in this same way.

After a couple of cups of the pristine water, I set down my mug and proceed to the rear of the sinks, where we collect the water for our tea. The empty containers we carried up with us are now rinsed out in the sink, and set on the ground under a couple of taps. Still observing silence, I kneel before my container, alongside another tea brother or sister. We each place our hands on our containers as they fill up with the fresh pure spring water, setting our own intention while the water pours into the silence of the morning.

In a shamanistic manner, I ask that each of us here on the mountain



may let this water's qualities penetrate our bodies and minds; that we welcome and embody the characteristics of water within ourselves. After all, water is free and unobstructed, happy wherever it finds itself. As it is said in the Dao De Jing,

*The supreme good is like water,
Which nourishes all things
without trying to.
It is content with the low
places that people disdain,
Thus it is like the Dao.*

Water is accepting and forgiving, taking the shape of whatever container it is in, and gracefully embracing what enters it.

Often referred to as a metaphor for the Dao, water can subtly teach us how to live our lives. And because water can transmit our own energies and states of mind so purely, we can awaken or harmonize others *through* it.

In our center, our tea water is stored with respect in a special urn

that sits right beside us in our meditation room. In this way, not only is our water exposed to the higher vibrations of everyone meditating, but the act of filling up each kettle for tea becomes a meditation as well. Even outside meditation times, we still are moved to bow before entering the meditation room, and to observe silence there. And, before filling up each kettle for our tea sessions, we place our hands on the water urn and send it *metta* (loving-kindness), along with any other special intention for the tea session. The water responds to all of these things, and in return enhances our tea sessions and the rest of our day!

Our particular rituals of fetching water shouldn't discourage you from bringing your own unique ideas and meaning to your tea. You don't need a mountain to hike up, or a famous river or spring to draw from. Even if your water fetching involves heading to the supermarket to collect filtered water, it can be done thoughtfully and mindfully, even with gratitude.

Just the same, storing the water and filling your kettle can be done with similar reverence and attention. In its yielding nature, water will take on the energies that you bring to it. In this way, the purity and sensitivity of water make your tea an extension of your mind and cultivation. No longer is it the water you collected at such and such a place, or a tea you received or purchased from this or that place—it becomes “your tea”, and anyone you serve will take it in for their highest benefit.



May you connect with yourself, others, and Great Nature through your tea sessions. May more and more of the things you do throughout your day become your tea brewing, and may you join us in each step up and down this mountain.



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 Chris Sage:

As you have no doubt discovered through reading each month's wayfarer article, the Way that Tea finds Her way to each of us is as unique and varied as the Leaf itself. Sometimes it's a chance encounter, and for others it is the culmination of a lifetime of searching. Regardless of the journey, however, the destinations always share a common theme of renewed connection to Nature and to each other through the alchemy of this simple Leaf. My journey is no different, a chance encounter, an unexpected shift in direction that brought me to this table with all of you.

There was a time when all there was to know about tea was "Do you like it hot or on ice?" It was a choice of beverage at lunch, nothing more. The first time I found Tea was quite by accident. Looking for a warm drink on a cold morning, I stumbled into what at first glance seemed like the wrong place. I wanted a cup of tea; what were all these people doing with these tiny pots and thimble-sized cups? It was all very odd. I took a chance, though. I sat down and slurped a few snack-sized servings and discovered something new—something unexpected, something that tasted like dirt, leaves and magic. As I sat at the table, making my way to being tea drunk for the first time, the thing I remembered most was that even in a room full of strangers, it seemed like everyone knew each other. Conversations flowed so naturally and there was a powerful sense that I could share anything with the people around me—and I did! There was laughter; there were tears; but above all else, there was compassion and understanding. We had come together from all over the world to share those tiny cups of magic together...

It wasn't until several years later that I met Wu De and learned about Global Tea Hut—again, quite by accident... My wife had run into some tea people at a local yoga festival and, it turns out, they were looking for a place to host a workshop on tea. Being the beautiful open spirit that she is, she graciously offered to host these strangers at our home. I remember it vividly. I got there late after having some last minute details to wrap up at work, I walked into the garden and there was this guy... sitting quietly, serving tea to a small group of very focused looking people. I awkwardly made my way to the last available seat, climbing over some of the other guests and, missing the introduction and generally not used to silence amongst so many people, I blurted out



"What kind of tea is this?" in the most acutely newbie manner possible. To this, the gracious man serving tea replied, "It is the tea we are having in this moment". Needless to say I was shrinking a little in my embarrassment, but in some way, what he said made sense. You see, there were some dots from my previous experiences with Tea that I hadn't connected yet. It wasn't the tea or the people that made these experiences special; they were special because we were sharing Tea and each other in that moment. We were choosing to make that moment sacred and profound, a small space in time that we had carved out for each other.

Over the years as my relationship with Tea has deepened, it has become a beautiful part of my life. It has taught me patience and how sometimes it is important to just be still and listen to the wind in the trees. It has afforded me so many opportunities to fall in love with my wife, my friends and all of you over and over again. Through this magic, this alchemy of leaves, water and spirit, I have found so much more than a hot beverage on a cold day... I have found a home.

Thank you to my wife, Wu De, Tien Wu, Qing Yu and Adam Yasmin (who served me my first cup of leafy dirt magic).

csage@mac.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 Museum of Asiatic Arts. You can email her at sabine@letempsdunthe.com.

 In Darwin, Australia, Sam holds GTH tea events on Fridays at 6:30 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.

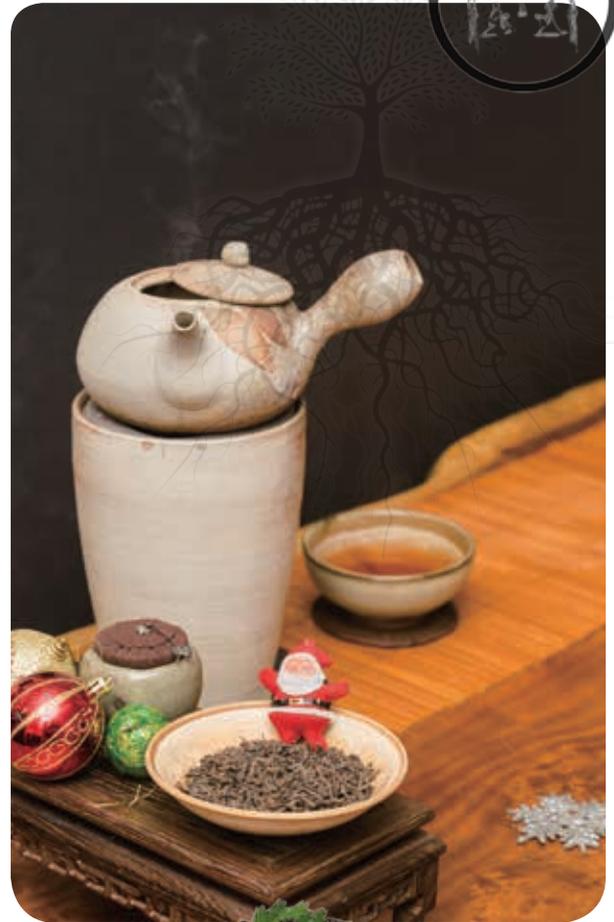
 In England, Prabhasvara (Nick Dilks) holds regular Tea events all around the UK including a weekly Tea Club in Birmingham. For more information, please contact him at living-teauk@gmail.com.

 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.

DECEMBER AFFIRMATION

I am selfless and giving.

*In what ways am I celebrating the holidays?
Am I manifesting the true spirit of giving
and generosity?*



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 more than half have already sold. Check out our website for details:
www.globalteahut.com/lmlcakes.html

 The center is filling up for Dec. and Jan. so be sure to contact us in advance if you are thinking of coming.

 Wu De will be teaching in New Zealand and Australia this winter. Contact Sam Gibb (sdsgibb@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!

Tea Inspired Poetry

Where there's Tea, there's hope

—Anonymous

