



Global Tea Art

國際茶亭

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January 2015

THE BUDDHA'S PALM
MASTER LÜ LI ZHEN

佛手烏龍



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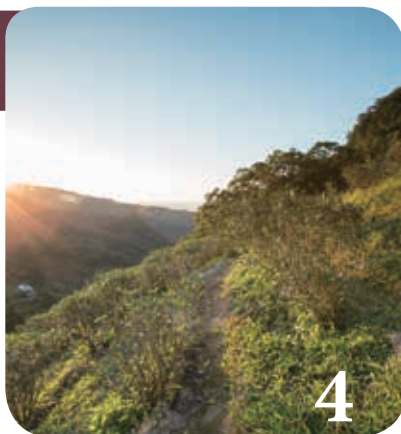
GLOBAL TEA HUT

Tea & Tao Magazine



THE BUDDHA'S PALM

Happy New Year! And to start it off right, we have one of the finest teas ever to be drunk in this Global Tea Hut! Not only will we discuss this Buddha's Palm traditional oolong, but we'll explore oolong roasting in general. Also, we are going to start introducing you to some of the teachers that we find inspirational, starting this month with Master Lu Li Zhen.



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LOVE IS
CHANGING THE WORLD
BOWL BY BOWL

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Letter from the Editor

In January, we cross into the middle of winter—a time for tea brewing to thrive. There is nothing better than sitting inside on a cold day, warm and full of soup (in our case my famous “bakutei”) and drinking lovely tea without a care in the world. Many of you have a snow-swept view out the window to compliment the sentiment. We hope this finds you warm and happy, sharing great teas with friends and family! For those of you who live in hot or warm climates, we hope that you appreciate your warmth, too!

Around here, we boil tea a lot, drink aged puerh, Liu Bao, and always try out new shou puerhs. As we mentioned last month, we also like to mix them with red teas in the morning. A bit of shou with a red tea can brighten a gray day! We also brew more tea, which means more kinds of tea brewing, like whisked tea and gongfu tea. Fortunately, the holidays also bring tons of guests which results in many different tea sessions happening simultaneously throughout the center. When brewing gongfu, it is often very wonderful to drink a traditional tea with heavier oxidation and roast on a cool or cold day. Cliff Teas, traditional Taiwan teas and aged Tie Guan Yin are all coming out of their meditative jars these days!

This is going to be our year! We have the same aspirations we had last year: to reach 2,000 members in this Global Tea Hut and thereby begin building our new tea center, Light Meets Life. And we need your help. Spread the word this year and we’re sure to meet our goals! We have a feeling that we’ll gather the resources needed to break ground on our new center this year. There are more guests coming here than ever before, and there’s more support for this Global Tea Hut experience as well!

We are very proud of all the improvements we made to this experience in 2014—from the better and brighter photography to overcoming printing issues, all of which have resulted in a more beautiful and colorful magazine. The variety and quality of the articles have also improved greatly, and with more contributions coming in from all of you, we can expect that to continue! We also plan to travel more this year, bringing a greater journalistic element to these pages over the coming year. We are proud of the love and hard work that has gone into all the design and layout shifts as well. We feel that this magazine is finally starting to find its professional style and voice, and it’s getting closer and closer to where we want it to be. None of us have any training, so the learning curve has required a lot of time, love and heart—all given freely by many people devoted to this tradition, Cha Dao and the wisdom that Tea can bring to all our lives.



After celebrating all that we have achieved in the last year, this beginning is also a great place to herald our future goals: along with more journalism and travel, we hope to introduce new organic farmers and production methods, find and share new and exciting teas and tea folklore, and also begin some translation projects we have had on our shelf for some time, sharing some ancient and modern tea wisdom from Chinese to English. We are also discussing the ways we can make this experience more communal and real, connecting you to each other so that this feels like more than just a magazine, but a family of Tea brothers and sisters! Aside from organizing more events, gatherings, workshops and lectures worldwide, we hope to figure out ways to use the Internet to connect to each other more often and in heartfelt ways...

We have a great magazine in store for you this month, with some articles from the community, as usual. This month we are going to start what we hope to be a trend for the whole year: to introduce you to some of the teachers that have been influential in our tea journey. It’s important for us to learn the source of our brewing methods, wisdom and lifeways from the previous generation of *Chajin*, who have so graciously passed down what they know. We hope to present you to many more tea masters than just those in our lineage, celebrating all tea traditions and the insights they have shared with us. You are going to meet one such bright star in this issue, and over some great tea too...

Happy New Year!

WINTER 2014 BUDDHA'S PALM OOLONG

Pinglin, Taiwan

There's nothing like a well-roasted oolong to soothe you on a cold day! This Buddha's Palm was roasted by one of Taiwan's most famous tea masters! Here, we explore some of the characteristics that make oolong tea special. And then there is the magic of this Buddha's Palm as well...

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Oolong is the richest and most refined of tea chests, filled with so many varieties and kinds of tea that you couldn't explore them all in a lifetime. It is technically defined by the fact that it is semi-oxidized, but that barely sketches an outline of this huge genre of tea—especially since “semi-oxidized” can mean everything from ten to seventy percent. When you add to that all the different mountains oolong tea comes from, the varieties of trees and variations in processing you have a huge map, spanning Taiwan, Chaozhou and Fujian mostly. We'd truly need the “black dragon” this tea is named after to fly through the rich heritage, history and variety of oolong. But what a journey that would be!

When talking about genres of tea, it is always important to remember that the typical understanding that “all tea is one plant and the differences are in the processing” can be very misleading, indeed. There is some truth in that statement, but authors who use it rarely qualify it as much as they should.

Different processing methodologies were developed regionally over

time and are as much a part of the terroir as the rain, sun or soil composition. And these regional variations in processing grew alongside certain varieties of tea. The masters that lived and worked with these leaves were listening to them, and that conversation was often responsible for the evolution of any given processing methodology. In other words, oolong processing was developed over time to suit certain varieties of tea because that is what brought out their greatest potential. The farmers mastered their craft by processing the tea the way it “wanted” to be—for lack of a better word, we use “want” to describe the nature of the tea. Just as water “wants” to flow downhill, these leaves *wanted* to be oolong. In that way, oolong is as much in the varieties of tea as it is in the processing. And that is true for most of the other seven genres of tea, as well (Red and Black teas can be exceptions to this rule, but not always). While you could process tea leaves from Wuyi mountain like a green tea or an artificially fermented black tea (not red!), they would not be nearly as good as green tea from such a varietal or Liu Bao black tea.

Furthermore, they wouldn't be as nice as the oolong made from the same leaves!

And this evolution continues on in every tea growing season, even now. If you travel to Wuyi, for example, and watch a true master make oolong tea each year, you would see a lot of variation from year to year. The overall methodology used to describe oolong production is as general and rough a sketch for what actually happens as any basic understanding of an artistic process is. In any art, the basic formula is always a very abstract and simplified explanation of what the practitioner knows much more intimately, subtly and with complex discrepancies. Similarly, when a beginner watches a master brew gongfu tea, he or she tries to grasp the basic steps of pre-warming the cups, showering the pot, steeping the tea, showering the pot again, and so forth. But to the master, there are great and very important subtleties that change these steps from tea to tea, like how high you pour water into the pot from, which is different for different teas.

The master farmers are changing the way they make tea each and every season. Everything from when they pick—what day and which time of day—to how long they fire the tea to de-enzyme it will change based on the weather and season and how the tea looks and feels to them. This means that their processing must suit their trees and terroir; not just in terms of some fixed methodology, but rather a changing and adaptable process that, like any skill, requires them to intuit and then modify their processing to suit the current leaves. In that way, also,

oolong is as much the terroir and trees as it is the processing methods.

Oolong tea involves the most sophisticated and complicated of all tea production, requiring the greatest skill that can refine or ruin a tea. Each kind of tea measures its quality in some ratio of these three factors:

- 1) The trees and the environment
- 2) The farming methods, viz. organic or not, fertilized or not, irrigated or not, etc.
- 3) The processing/drying of the tea leaves

With puerh tea, for example, the quality is almost exclusively in the first of these:—the trees and the environment. When producing a fine oolong, however, all three are equally important. It's not enough to have great trees in a nice environment, for the complicated processing will have as much to say as Nature. These is true of all teas, as a manifestation of Heaven, Earth and Man energies, but none as profoundly so as oolong tea.

The basic steps that make up all oolong production are harvesting, withering/shaking, de-enzyming, rolling and roasting.



How Oolong Got Its Name

Oolong tea gets its name from an old folk-tale about a lazy son who was nicknamed “Black Dragon” because he was always so tan from falling asleep in the tea fields during the day. Though he was a great hunter, his father didn’t seem to notice. After so many poor harvests, the old man had had enough and told Black Dragon to come home with a full basket or not at all! Black Dragon was clever, though, and worked vigorously to fill his basket with tea leaves by midday so he could take a nap. After some time, he saw a rabbit and chased it down, forgetting that his basket was still strapped to his back. When he got home, he discovered that half the leaves had flown out in the pursuit. His father was furious and kicked him out of the house.

Several days later, the elders of the village came to see the old father, saying that the tea he brought in that day was the best they’d ever tasted. They all went to the forest to find Black Dragon and ask him where he’d gotten the tea. When he showed them that it had come from the same trees it always came from, they were confused. They asked him to tell them everything that had happened that day. One of the wiser elders quickly realized that the difference in the tea had something to do with Black Dragon chasing the rabbit. After some experimentation, they realized that it was the result of shaking the leaves on his back, which bruised the edges of the leaves and furthered their oxidation.

From that day, all their tea was named after its founder, who became one of the village chiefs. And even now, all oolong tea is shaken during the withering to bruise the leaves red around the edges!

But these steps are a part of most all tea production. What really sets oolong apart is the withering. Because oolong is a semi-oxidized tea, it is withered in a very particular way—both indoors and outdoors. Oolong is mostly withered on big, round bamboo trays that are stacked on shelves, allowing for airflow underneath.

thumb to feel the humidity during indoor withering, and then ask his sons to bring a can full of burning charcoal to place in the back right corner of the room since he felt the humidity was too high there.)

During the withering, oolong tea is also shaken. This shaking is the most distinctive feature of oolong tea processing. It helps to bruise the cells and further the oxidation of the tea. When you see a master pick up one of the big round trays and dance the leaves around with grace, you may think that it looks easy—until you try it and toss all the leaves onto the ground (or in your face). Like all stages of fine tea, this too takes great skill. The best shaking will just bruise the cells at the edges of the leaf, which will be apparent when you brew the tea. When the shaking is done masterfully, there is a redness only at the edges of the tea, all around each leaf. Nowadays, most stages of tea processing are done with machines (in a world of quantity over quality). The shaking is done in a large machine that turns around on an axis and tumbles the tea, bruising it, but not with the precision that a master can do by hand.

Oolong tea is either ball-shaped or striped, depending on how it is rolled. The rolling is done to further break down the cells in the leaf and to shape the tea as well. Striped teas are rolled flat across large, ridged bamboo mats. Ball-shaped oolongs, on the other hand, are rolled in twisted-up bags. You can tell a lot about a tea by looking at the shape of the balls or stripes. Hand-processed teas, for example, will have a variety of shapes, sizes and twists in the balls or stripes, whereas machine-processed tea will be much more uniform.

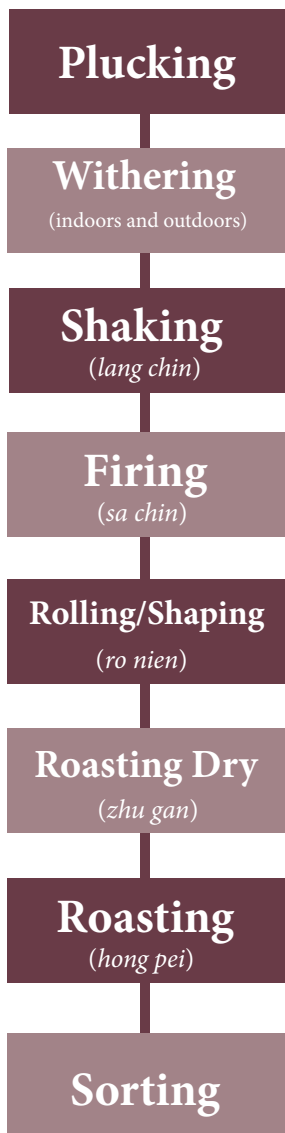
After withering/shaking, the second most important part of oolong processing is the roast. If a farmer is roasting the tea, they will usually just roast the tea dry—to arrest oxidation and stop the processing—



until all the tea is finished that year. They don't have the time to keep up with all the tea coming in, and rarely sleep during harvests. After the picking and initial processing of *maocha* is done, they will then roast the tea slowly and with care, knowing this is one of the most crucial stages in the production of fine oolong tea.

Traditionally, all oolong tea had higher oxidation and roast than what you see these days. The range of oxidation that defined the genre of oolong was much smaller for the first few hundred years of its development. Most old-timers can't stand the lightly-oxidized, greener teas that are popular these days. Some say that "if it looks like a green tea and smells like a green tea, then,

Basic Oolong Processing



But production in larger quantities, as well as a movement towards more modern production methodology means that it is also often withered on large tarps outside on the ground. As we discussed earlier, there are infinite subtle variables in the withering of fine oolong tea. (We have even seen a master lick his



well...” That trend began in Taiwan in the late 1970’s, or more predominantly in the 1980’s. And the shift towards greener oolong was also to do with terroir and varietal.

As we discussed in previous issues, the majority of Taiwanese oolong tea is produced from Qing Shin trees, which were brought to Taiwan from Wuyi. They are very sensitive trees, which get sick easily. As Taiwan started to develop infrastructure, culture and prosperity in the 1970’s, tea culture grew in popularity and farming started to increase, with a trend of moving towards higher altitudes where Qing Shin trees thrive. Higher altitude farms receive less sunlight, and the tea leaves therefore respond well to such light oxidation. Again,

the innovations in processing were a result of changes in terroir. This can’t be stated enough, especially since so many authors mistakenly promote the idea that all tea is one plant and that the differences in kinds of tea are just based on the arbitrary decisions made by farmers who choose to process their tea as white, red, black, oolong, etc. And if you are reading between the lines, as good teawayfarers, you can perhaps see the more profound truth hiding between the rows of tea trees: *there is no tea tree by itself*.

Saying that there is no such thing as a tea tree in itself seems obvious to state, but necessary. We so often forget to connect the dots, because our rational mind is all about dissection and analysis,

fragmentation and exploration of conceptually cut-up parts. *There is no tea tree*. Not really. Tea is an environment. Tea is the soil, the weather, the water, rocks and mountain. Oolong tea is not a formula in a textbook. (Show me a farmer that uses a textbook to process his tea!) Neither is it in the leaves alone. *Oolong tea is a certain terroir*, one that includes a particular processing methodology that suits the environment, trees and leaves of that place. It is also the culture and heritage that has developed, refined and passed on that processing wisdom from generation to generation.

And so you can understand how traditionalists might not see tea in such simple categories as “oolong”, especially when the whole industry

has so radically transformed in a single generation.

Generally speaking, we find that most tea lovers will slowly migrate towards deeper, darker and more full-bodied teas over time. That doesn't mean we don't enjoy a lightly-roasted oolong now and again. They can be spectacular! But a nice roasted oolong, like this month's, at the height of winter can change your day, and maybe even your week. And even if you find yourself in warmer climes, like our brothers and sisters down in Australia and New Zealand, you'll still find that a nice oolong like this month's in the late afternoon is great. Raise a cup, sending the rest of us some of that warmth! There is a lot of magic in this month's cup. We can't wait to start brewing this tea together, for what better way to start the year than a really fine tea that heralds many more to come?

Tea of the Month

This month's tea is a Buddha's Palm (*Fo Shou*, 佛手) oolong from

Pinglin county, Taiwan. It was roasted and then donated by one of our teachers, Master Lu Li Zhen. Later on in this issue, we'll introduce Master Lu and tea roasting, as they are both topics important enough to warrant their own articles.

Our tea is from this winter, so it's fresh. Taiwan often has a smaller, winter harvest, which produces teas with less vibrancy than the spring, but with a subtle and refined character. While most of Master Lu's teas would be oxidized to a traditional level of around forty percent, the weather this year was too rainy, so this year's Buddha Palm is only oxidized to around thirty percent. Ideally, to produce fine oolong, you want lots of rain, followed by a week or so of nice weather, resulting in a bit less water content in the leaves.

Master Lu roasted this tea for sixty hours continuously to bring out the nutty, fruity and lasting floral notes. It is a very fine tea, with a deep and lasting minty-coolness on the breath (*hui gan*, 回甘) and a satisfying warmth that makes it perfect for this time of year. You'll be able to

tell that this tea was master-roasted even before you add water. In smelling the dry leaves, take long and slow inhalations, paying attention to how far the smell travels into the nasal cavity. We find the aroma smooth and long-lasting, and some of us even commented that the aroma of the dried leaves already began the movement of Qi for us.

This tea is a great tea for the afternoon, with a relaxing and uplifting Qi that can open the heart. You may find yourself feeling flighty, and therefore want to ground yourself with some nice music to accompany your session. This month's tea is one of the finest and most valuable teas that has ever been donated to the Hut; and one we are so happy to begin the year with, as it feels like we're definitely getting things off to an excellent start! Maybe we can all hold our cups with closed eyes and feel the dragon slowly lifting, soaring into a new year of tea fellowship...



Brewing Tips for This Month's Tea

Because of the great skill that goes into the production of oolong tea, it was always a more expensive tea. In the south of China, a new method of tea brewing developed along with oolong, called gongfu tea. Gongfu tea brewing was created by martial artists, and was therefore inspired by much of the same Daoist philosophy that informed those practices. By brewing the tea in small pots, with small cups, these masters simultaneously preserved this valuable tea and cultivated skills and refinement, grace and fluidity that was in concordance with their worldview.

If possible, we would always recommend brewing an oolong like this gongfu, with an Yixing pot, porcelain cups, a tea boat and kettle/stove. If that isn't possible, you can adapt this tea to any method of brew-

ing or pot/cup/bowls that you have. Don't feel like you have to brew this tea gongfu or not at all.

A general rule for brewing oolong tea is to cover the bottom of the pot like the first, freshly-fallen leaves of autumn: *covering the bottom, but you can still see it*. This is important because ball-shaped oolong teas really open up a lot, and they therefore need the room to do so. Remember, it is always better to start with too little and add more, than start with too much, which wastes tea. Give the tea a longer rinse, so that the balls can open a bit more before pouring. This helps ensure they won't get bunched up near the spout before they fully open. The ideal is to get all the balls to open equally and at the same time, which will produce an ethereal third through fifth steeping!

Master Lu's antique stove and charcoal baskets used to boil water for gongfu tea



*Careworn trails
Up mountain passes;
With a staff for a guide
I never get lost.
Nature chooses
Where to have Tea,
As the clouds discuss
How long the sojourn...
One last cup to decide:
Should I stay here
'Neath Buddha's raised palm
Or head back down
And finish the laundry?*

— Wu De

MASTER LÜ LI ZHEN

Interviewed by Wu De

Over the coming year, we'd like to introduce you to some of the teachers that have inspired us, helping us along on our tea journey. As we pass along our insights to future tea lovers, we must also bow to those who have shared these teachings with us. So much of what we share in these pages was freely poured into our cups as well, always with great generosity. And Master Lu is a great place to start! As many of you who have visited here know, he is a wise old tea spirit and a good friend...

茶道

Much of what we are creating now and for future tea lovers is a product of this new world of global friendship, spiritual and cultural fusion. Our center is a testament to the amalgamation of tea traditions, of East and West, and a shining exemplification of cooperation between tea lovers around the world. The evolution of ideas has always been fueled by such cultural exchange, and the modern age has brought an ease to travel, communication and information that has allowed us all to explore new and exciting possibilities in the ways we live, cultivate ourselves and prepare tea. You can see this materially, in the way a Taiwanese shop may brew oolongs from central Taiwan with water prepared in a Japanese tetsubin, in a Zisha pot from

Yixing, China and finally poured into antique Korean cups. And here at the center, you'll recognize that through us new insights have been born alongside some old approaches to Tea that have re-awoken in powerful ways. However, it's also important to remember that our Cha Dao was transmitted, and to pay homage to the previous generations of teachers that have handed this wisdom down to us. For that reason, we'd like to take the time to introduce you to some of our teachers in this and coming issues...

Among those we bow to, Lu Li Zhen stands tall, with a lifetime devoted to Tea. His kind smile, generosity and tea wisdom have greeted so many of you in your travels here in Taiwan. Master Lu's loving-kindness has poured freely from

the very first time we met him, and years later that tea session continues to be as fragrant and delicious as the first steepings were. He is always patient in transmitting a life's worth of Tea wisdom to the next generation of tea lovers, shares tea and teaware generously and brews endless cups from the heart. He has a very down-to-earth, laidback demeanor that makes him very easy to like, and from the first smile our guests are usually enamored, grateful to have shared tea with one of Taiwan's tea legends.

For more than thirty years now, Master Lu has roasted and sold his tea in Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Japan and more recently to Europe, especially Germany, where he often travels to give lectures. During that time, he has helped spread tea cul-



ture and awareness through many, many tea gatherings he participated in or hosted himself. We have attended and/or served at several of these gatherings over the years, and they are amongst the best we've seen. Sometimes such events can be overly commercial or repetitive in their themes. But Master Lu has always done a great job of roasting new and interesting flavors into the tea gatherings he hosts, like the time we shared four aged oolongs, including one that was one hundred years old, while floating down the same river tea was once transported down on a lovely yacht. We were entertained by musicians and occasional lectures on the history of oolong tea in Taiwan. In fact, we wrote about that gathering in an earlier edition of *Global Tea Hut*. And we've cov-

ered other gatherings as well, like the international *chaxi* he arranged in Taipei where we served tea alongside tea lovers from all over Asia while a dozen or so great musicians played in the courtyard next door.

Background

Lu Li Zhen was born on June 6th, 1952 in Xin Bei, the very north of Taiwan. In those days, Taiwan was a simpler place without highways or skyscrapers. His father was a factory worker and his family lived simply. Tea is one of the seven "untaxable essentials" of Chinese life, so you'd be hard pressed to find a family whose daily life wasn't steeped in tea, especially in Taiwan. But in Master Lu's house, there was an even stronger connection: his

father's younger brother owned a tea shop in Ban Chiao. Over cups of his favorite traditional-roast oolong, I've more than once heard Master Lu tell the story of how his uncle would take him to the tea farms in Dong Ding by motorcycle. His eyes gleam with a childish glee as he relates how it took seven or eight hours to get there from Taipei since there weren't any highways. What an adventure for a young boy! "It was great to get out of the city and into the mountains, and to ride on a motorcycle for so long. In those days, the adults would put us to work when they saw us, so getting the chance to go off on adventures with my uncle are some of the treasures of my childhood!"

The tea world was simpler then. There weren't as many teas and the

shops were much more straightforward than today. We've heard from several of our teachers about the "good old days", when the price of teas genuinely reflected the quality. You could go into a shop and when a certain tea was labeled "special grade" it was certain to be a better tea.

Master Lu remembers sitting around with his relatives and his uncle's friends cupping tea that they were evaluating for sales. He said that each person would write down a price and they would end up with an average that way. He giggles, saying that he always marked the teas lower than the adults because he was the last to taste them and the tea had over-steeped and was bitter: "They'd all write eighty dollars and I would say sixty! And if they said sixty, I'd say forty!", he jokes. "Nowadays, people base the cost of tea on what they pay. That makes sense from a business perspective. You buy something and then mark it up and sell it at your cost plus profit. But if your product is overvalued to begin with, then you are selling it for a lot more than it's worth. Back then, tea shop owners knew tea very well. They knew how to taste it and appraise it. They based their prices on the quality of the tea, not weighed on business scales for profit margins. They worked with the farmers and determined prices based on a real scale that represented intrinsic value..."

Essentially, Master Lu is sharing an essential truth about the nature of buying tea in these times: most new shops don't have the same rapport with farmers or the skills and knowledge of tea as the previous generation. Back in the day, the shop owners and farmers worked together and priced the teas based on their qualities. That means that these days the more expensive teas are not necessarily better. If you go into a shop and one tea is 2,000 NTD per *jin* (600g) and another is 3,000, the cheaper one may be a

finer tea. This is because the prices aren't based on the quality of the tea, but rather the price the shop owner paid for them. So, an American tea shop owner might travel to Taiwan and find a great tea for cheap and a mediocre tea that comes from a more expensive farm and he will sell them accordingly. This situation puts pressure on the consumer to know a lot more about tea. Master Lu gleams with pride when he emphatically states that all the teas in his shop are priced based on their quality, and many of the prices haven't changed in twenty years!

"Nowadays, people base the cost of tea on what they pay... Back then, tea shop owners knew tea very well. They knew how to taste it and appraise it. They based their prices on the quality of the tea, not weighed on business scales for profit margins."

From Master Lu's stories, you get the picture that his uncle genuinely loved tea. He sold Baozhong from Northern Taiwan, Oriental Beauty from Beipu, some Dong Ding oolongs, Tie Guan Yin from Muzha and a cheap oolong from Miaoli, where our center is. (Some of you may recall that we sent you an aged version of that from the 1970's many moons ago.) His uncle worked closely with the farmers themselves, which is a practice that Master Lu has continued to this day. Back then, all the tea was sold in paper wrappers, hand-packaged by shop owners like Master Lu's uncle.

Romance with the Leaf

When Master Lu was in his twenties, he started to develop a real

love for Tea, especially the oolongs from Dong Ding. In those days, all the oolong produced in Taiwan was made in a traditional way, with heavier oxidation and a deeper charcoal roast. And tea farms were small. Everything was produced by hand. Some of the teas from that time have survived, and they have an amazing charm born not just out of age, but rather the simplicity and natural grace of the times. "Most everyone in the tea industry at that time loved tea," Master Lu says with a smile. And that seemed like the opportune time to turn the conversation to the changes in the industry over time, asking about the movement towards lighter, greener oolongs. We say that it must have taken some time to get used to such teas and Master Lu puts his cup down, grinning ear to ear, "We still haven't gotten used to such teas!"

When I was a kid, everything in America was made in Taiwan. It's interesting that I ended up living here, for all the times I looked down at Star Wars figures that had "Made in Taiwan" labels and wondered about the mystical island on the other side of the world where all the toys come from... Anyway, the huge economic boom in the seventies brought a lot of changes to Taiwan: wealth, infrastructure and a boom in the luxury and cultural markets, including tea and teaware. Tea farms started to get bigger and a trend of moving up the mountain began. The higher-altitude tea farms in central Taiwan don't get as much sunlight, and therefore produce a lighter tea. Master Lu jokes that when the oolong tastes just like green tea, it's not oolong—*it's green tea!* Traditional oolong was oxidized to around forty percent and then roasted. Nowadays, teas tend to be oxidized much lower and roasted without much skill. While Master Lu does offer a variety of oolongs of different oxidation and roast, he still likes to drink the traditional teas most.



In the late seventies, Master Lu owned a restaurant that wasn't doing well. His uncle invited him to come work with him, wholesaling tea. His uncle's children, Master Lu's cousins, had other careers and the two of them seemed to share a similar destiny and connection. Over time, Master Lu's uncle would pass on the relationships he had cultivated with farmers over decades to his nephew, some of which continue today—even unto the next generations of farmers as well. As a result of the economic changes in Taiwan, tea shops were beginning to open all around. The domestic wholesale tea business wasn't as lucrative as working with retail and wholesale both, so in 1980 Master Lu opened his first tea shop in Yong He, Taipei, selling many of the same teas his uncle had...

Puerh Tea

As Master Lu learned more about tea, his understanding of Yixing teapots and other kinds of tea also developed. In the 1980's there were a lot of Japanese and Hong Kong tourists in Taiwan, and many became his clients. He sold a lot of tea wholesale to Hong Kong and started making trips there to do business and meet with tea friends. At first, he didn't think much of the puerh tea there. "I had really only tried shou tea. I didn't really like it." On one such trip, his friend convinced him to try some aged puerh and the first cup blew him away. "My friend said it was *Song Ping Hao*. But at the time, that didn't mean anything to me." Master Lu imported some aged puerhs, but was unable to sell them in Taiwan. As we talk on about his life, he

has an amazing ability to sweep you up in his nostalgia. Maybe it's the wonderful teas he's brewing, his genuine smile or perhaps our mutual love for the Leaf... "It's amazing. I can hardly believe it! Some of the aged teas I sold to a client and friend for two hundred thousand... Well, those same teas I bought back twenty years later for thirty million! Unbelievable!"

It wasn't really until Deng Shi Hai's seminal book on puerh tea that people in Taiwan started to develop a real interest in puerh tea. It was around that same time that Master Lu made puerh history. He and his friends were curious why Yiwu wasn't producing tea like back in the Antique Era (pre-1949). They were drinking all these amazing aged puerhs from those times and so, of course, wanted to go and see the place where they had come

from. When they got to Yiwu, they were shocked to find that tea production had all but ended. “People there didn’t know anything about the industry that had once thrived there.” Moved by the spirit of Tea, to share and inspire other tea lovers, Master Lu wondered what future tea lovers would drink, not having great aged vintages of Yiwu tea themselves...

Looking around, he found some old timers that still knew how to process tea and began producing some old-growth, forest tea from Yiwu like back in the day. In 1994, Master Lu was the first person to go to Yunnan and produce single-region puerh tea, at least for an age.

In the Masterpiece (1949-1972) and *Chi Tze* (1972-1998) eras of puerh, all the tea was blended from different farms and regions—often combinations of some forest tea and some plantation tea. The *maocha* was all brought to Menghai, and from there processed into cakes for distribution to Hong Kong, Malaysia and other regions. But in the earlier Antique Era, puerh was more local and made from old-growth forest tea exclusively. Master Lu’s early cakes were a throwback to that time, and one that revitalized the tea industry in the region.

In that way, Master Lu has been a trail-blazer for the modern era of puerh tea: one in which forest tea is

once again celebrated and valued by tea lovers around the world, and in which small boutique owners from around the world travel to Yunnan themselves to produce single-region teas. As we spoke about in our September issue, this isn’t to say that all blended tea is inferior. They both have their merits—their good and bad cakes. Over the course of his first three or four years of traveling to Yunnan, Master Lu produced around three tons of tea. In his happy way, he tells us that “in those days” the tea was 7 RMB per kg. “I would pay them fifteen all at once, if they promised to sell me three years of tea... The real expense was in the importation. We couldn’t



do it by ourselves, and import fees were high. We had to pay around 300 NTD per kg to import the tea.” None of that early tea had a wrapper even. Master Lu says that he hardly sold any of it at the time, since he mainly bought it to store for future tea lovers. When we ask if he has any left he giggles with the joy of a boy and brews us some amazing mid-nineties tea, saying that he has since sold all the tea he produced in the nineties to friends and tea lovers, though slowly over the years...

If you go to Yiwu’s old street, there isn’t a farmer that doesn’t know Master Lu, and with a great respect for what he has done for the industry. To this day, he continues

to produce Yiwu tea every year. His cakes are always of excellent quality, being made of old-growth, forest tea. He has every cake wrapped with a unique, hand-painted wrapper made by artist friends, lending them each a life and vibrancy. It’s difficult to appreciate puerh tea in this modern era without offering a bow to Master Lu, for changing the way puerh was made and appreciated in modern times and starting many of the positive trends that continue today. Before Master Lu and other Taiwanese started traveling to Yunnan to write books about puerh, tracing its history and producing cakes in traditional ways, the industry was a shriveled remnant of

its former glory. But now, trade is booming. And puerh tea has gone worldwide. Of course, many people have played major roles in restoring puerh to front stage and in revitalizing traditional, single-region cakes from old-growth trees. Master Lu himself wouldn’t want any credit, preferring to be humble and just drink some tea, but we can’t help but raise a cup of Yiwu tea in his name...

Roasting Oolong

Master Lu roasts all the oolongs he sells in his shop, following a tradition where the farmers in Taiwan



Master Lu’s Advice for the Beginner

With the confusion in the modern tea world, and so much misinformation, we thought it would be great to ask Master Lu what his advice would be to the beginner looking to find fine tea and learn more. He brought up the age-old proverb of tea made by businessmen “tasting like coin”, suggesting that the feeling that surrounds a transaction is as important as the product itself. He said that the most important thing is that the shop owner really has Tea Spirit and loves Tea. If you also love Tea, that won’t be hard to feel out when you enter a shop. “When someone loves Tea, they may not do so much business, but they will probably have better quality teas and a richer body of tea wisdom.” The vendors with the flashiest marketing and lots of fancy packaging are almost always more interested in what Tea can do for *them* than in Tea itself. It is a business avenue for them, as opposed to a way of life.

Like most of the tea masters of his generation, Master Lu often repeats that when buying Tea, stories don’t matter. Flowery descriptions or stories won’t improve the quality of a tea. *The proof is in the cup.* However, when sharing tea with guests or friends, a story about a tea can enhance the experience, especially if you found the tea in an interesting way. But when buying tea, it is better to rely on your own experience and keep things simple. “Those who know don’t speak, and those who speak don’t know”, says the oldest of sages.

Master Lu reminded us that in a capitalist market, the consumers have all the power. All the changes we’d like to see in the sustainability and environmental safety surrounding tea production are in our hands. When we promote these qualities, only buying healthy, chemical-free teas, we help create the world we want to see.

produced *maocha* that the tea shops then roasted to their and their clients' tastes. Nowadays, most farmers roast their own teas and often without as much care or concern as the old master roasters have done. "Evaluating *maocha* is a very different process than tasting finished tea," he says, taking out four tasting bowls and filling them with a Baozhong and three Li Shan teas he is going to roast for an upcoming competition. We taste the teas and he asks us to smell the leaves deeply. He's proud when we choose the third tea as our favorite, saying that he agrees. "You can taste the weather and any processing issues in the *maocha* very clearly!" He then goes on to point out that while the third tea is the best *maocha*, the fourth will be the highest quality finished tea. "As the third tea steeps longer—try it again now," he says pointing. "It has a lingering astringency. When roasting tea, the bitterness and astringency are very important. Because of that, I will just roast the third tea until its fragrance comes out. But the fourth tea is now bitter. Bitterness is good. It means I can roast this fourth tea longer and deeper, coaxing more out of it. In the end, it will be a deeper and more long-lasting tea, with a more satisfying tea liquor..." He giggles and joyfully invites us to come back next week to try the finished teas again.

Tea is a Bitter Herb

Our discussion of bitterness brings up one of our favorite teachings that we've received from Master Lu—one you'll hear a lot about when you come to our center: *The nature of Tea is bitter*. Tea is a bitter plant. Master Lu always says this, reminding us that before it was called "cha (茶)" in Chinese it was called "tu (荼)" which means "bitter herb." He always reminds us that as you drink more tea, you begin to enjoy the bitterness and its transfor-

mation more. He then always relates this to life, suggesting that people always want to process the bitterness out of life—enjoying the pleasure and hiding from the pain. But the suffering is the medicine. The bitterness is the medicinal part of the herb; the part that heals us. We need the bitterness along with everything else. If we don't embrace the hard times, the good ones are also meaningless. Then the lows are times to pass over quickly in order to get to the highs. But they are also a part of our experience as humans—our growth and change. And they are to be celebrated, as well. Every time Master Lu discusses his ideas about bitterness, its relationship to tea appreciation and life, we always learn something new and refine our appreciation for the Leaf and Cha Dao.

"And that hospitality and loving-kindness is the true spirit of Tea. You can see it in all the masters' eyes—inviting you with a warmth that fulfills as much as their teas do."

And speaking of highs in life, in 2011, Master Lu won first prize in the Li Shan Tea Competition for his roasted teas. He has won many awards in his long career, but this is the one he is most proud of, displaying it on the wall of his shop. We remember when he won, as he asked us to accompany him to the awards in Tai Chung and serve tea at the festival that proceeded the judges' decision. He was glowing then. And rightly so! There were thousands of teas in that competition, and winning first prize is no small feat! Such mastery (gongfu) of roasting oolong teas is a waning art, with fewer and fewer shops roasting their own teas. More tea is roasted large scale at the

farms, and rarely with such expertise and love.

A love of Tea is something that comes up a lot when we reminisce with the tea generation above us. All these masters, and Master Lu is no exception, shine with the kind of Tea Spirit that attracted most of us to tea in the first place. He jokes that all the money he earns these days is mostly for his son and grandchildren, so "why not just share tea out of a love of doing so". Though this seems to imply that this is the wisdom of age, we doubt that there was ever a time that Master Lu wasn't kind and generous to anyone who wanted to share some tea, learn about tea or tea culture (or just have a chat). And that hospitality and loving-kindness is the true spirit of Tea. You can see it in all the masters' eyes—inviting you with a warmth that fulfills as much as their teas do. These days, there are way too many people invested in tea as a business, resulting in over-production that strains and damages natural environments, not to mention crowded and convoluted tea markets that are confusing to the consumer. Such production methods and business tactics aren't based on quality, and they aren't service-oriented either. Master Lu carries another, more traditional energy from a time when things were simpler and you could trust that the merchants bought what they would drink themselves, and based on generations of expertise, would sell you teas that made you feel good—*healing teas*. Like most masters of his time, he often repeats that the "proof is in the cup... Tea tells the story. There are no words needed."

These days, Master Lu and his family run two shops and a tea house in San Tze. His nephews and brother all work with him, assuring that a lot of his connections, wisdom and understanding will survive into the next generation. We find his nephews kind and hospitable when Master Lu is off in Yunnan or

Yixing. He is selfless with his time, teaching us about how to taste tea and about the changes he's seen in his life and what he's learned from them. Like I am sure all of you do, we look forward to sharing more tea with him, hearing his stories and learning about the ways he evaluates, roasts and creates fine teas.

Master Lu's Goals

At the end of several pots of tea, we ask Master Lu if he has any goals for the future. He smiles, "Of course! I have three main goals!" he says emphatically, and then goes on to point by point reaffirm our own goals in his own words, inspiring us to feel like we are on the right path. First and foremost, Master Lu hopes to promote healthier and safer tea production. He talked to us at length about how the trees in the forests of Yunnan can survive centuries or even millennia because of the natural ecologies. "The trees are

never destroyed completely by pests, because if the pest population rises high in a natural ecology, then that attracts birds, monkeys and other species that come and eat them up, restoring balance." The modern trend towards quantity rather than quality upsets him. It's a message you'll hear echoed lots around here: *that we are the care-takers of the land and if we don't steward it well, the future tea lovers won't have any tea.*

Master Lu's second goal is to promote health, peace and ease in those who drink tea, helping them to live happier and calmer lives. This, too, is something the Earth needs desperately.

His final goal is to shift the perspective of tea lovers, especially more seasoned ones, to stop thinking of tea as something snobby. Real tea is a natural product, changing from region to region and season to season. He hopes that people will celebrate these differences more fully, reducing production and

returning it to the hands of artisanal tea makers. "The tea world needs standards, of course, but it's easy to make them too abstract and discount the natural changes and qualities of a particular terroir. Tea should be produced with the intention of making the best quality possible!"

Like his character, Master Lu's tea is unadorned. He isn't showing off. There's no pretension in his shop. It's the ordinary kind, but it shines with a hospitality rarely found in the tea world these days. It's the kind of place you can come to every day and drink some tea without having to buy something—the kind of place where you're greeted by name and with an honest and open heart that is genuinely pleased to have you there. And that is the spirit of Tea, the "Master" that is the honorary title before his name...



AND A HEART FREE OF OBSTRUCTIONS

Wu De

Continuing our discussion of the poem that has transmitted the essence of gongfu tea in our tradition, Wu De discusses the third line, which is always a very important topic of classes around here, as it pertains to brewing tea and living skillfully both.

茶道

We'd like to continue our discussion of the poem that inspires our gongfu tea brewing in this tradition. There is much more depth than we can possibly explore in these articles, even if this series went on for years. But so much of gongfu tea is in the hands and heart, where the best tea always comes from. You can't really understand the poem until you experience the Tea this way. Knowing something is never the same as feeling it. As Master Lin always says, "the proof is in the cup." We therefore encourage you to read more deeply into this poem, and more importantly apply it to the way you prepare gongfu tea—instilling the mastery into your heart so that you feel it in your hands when the time comes to do so.

This month, we turn to the third line, which is perhaps the most important of the whole poem: "with a heart free of obstructions." This is the only line in the poem to have its own historicity. It comes from the *Mahaprajnaparamita Hridaya Sutra*, known as the "Heart Sutra" in English. In that profound teaching, this line is often translated as "the bodhisattva lives without walls of

the mind, and thus without fears..." The "without walls of the mind" part is the "heart free of obstructions" part of our poem. It is one of the deeper points of an already deep sutra, demonstrating that the warrior or being (*satva*) of enlightenment (*bodhi*) lives without any barriers of the mind/heart, which is only one word in Chinese (*shin*). Without any barriers, she is fearless—committed to the liberation

*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.*

of herself and her world at all costs and willing to enter the very gates of Hell itself to save those within. But that is a very high state, indeed.

Sometimes Master Lin replaces this line with a tamer one, "*xin wu bie xiang* (心無別向)", expressing the same truth with less depth or profundity, and much less historical weight. But the Buddhist version says so much more about what it means to brew tea with skill, alluding to the ancient Chinese concept of doing without a doer, act-

ing without an actor—essentially flowing with the activity so that it is doing itself—the way an athlete loses herself in "the zone" or a musician becomes so completely enraptured in the performance that he no longer exists. This state is known as "wu wei".

In the West, there is often a misunderstanding that mastery is about control. For that reason, Western students are often reluctant to call their teacher "master"; and who could blame them when the word has been used so pejoratively throughout history: to refer to the owner of slaves or dogs, etc. But true mastery is never about

control. Mastery is about finding the part of you that meets the Universe and acting from there. In that way, you have the power of the world behind you, in all that you do. Your actions then flow with the current, and there becomes a very real sense in which your power and breadth is magnified manifold. You move and create with the energy of the world itself, in a way doing its bidding—though that is only a turn of the pen or a way of speaking. *Wu wei* is as a dancer says that when she

performs there is no music and no her, only dance. *Wu wei* is when you are such a natural part of the flow of Tea that you belong in the process as much as the teaware or even the Tea...

As we discussed last month, one of the most important basics of Tea is to learn to never, ever pick up the kettle until your heart is clear. There is a tradition dating back hundreds of years in China that one shouldn't talk while pouring the tea, lest the words pollute the tea liquor. The pours have always been opportunities for pauses, even in business meetings or casual conversations over tea. In that way, both the host and the guest gather themselves and reflect on the discussion, weighing their responses properly. Then we speak from the heart, and we learn the art of listening well.

There is no more important advice than to take the time to center yourself before you start each brew. Clear your heart and mind. This could happen through meditation, breathing, a prayer or my favorite, which is to connect the kettle to the pot—with one in each hand—while breathing deeply to calm the mind and center one's energy in the heart. As I do this,

I can feel when the connection between the water and Tea is clear, through my heart. When the line is clear and the connection is strong and without any interference or static—only then do I raise the kettle. This requires some patience. But remember that there is no hurry. *Tea is always about slowing down!* There is never any reason to rush, and nothing good will come from it (and talking while you pour, whether outside or in the form of internal dialogue, also results in more broken teaware over time). If you are to prepare tea masterfully, it must be from the place in you that meets the Universe.

When you are resting deep and centered, the tea brewing happens all its own—in a *wu wei*, to use a pun... Therefore, the more you cultivate yourself, through meditation and other practices, the better tea you'll make. Tea brewing is not something you *do*, in other words, but rather something you *are*...

This month, try to make a greater effort to take a pause before each brew to clear your heart. Live without walls of the mind for a second and put yourself into the tea brewing process, as opposed to standing outside and “doing” it.

Connect the kettle's handle to the button of your pot and see if you can feel the flow of energy and communication between the tea and the water/heat. It will be easier to feel after the first steeping, as they have already met—there is water in the leaves and pot, in other words. See if you can recognize when the connection is not clear—when it is bumpy/static as opposed to a smooth flow. What happens when you brew tea with your mind? If you find clarity within and pour from there, how is the tea different? What is the difference in the preparation itself? Where do the guiding principles come from when you aren't there? When there is no sense of 'I' as subject who is 'preparing tea' as verb, who/what is preparing the tea? Where do the movements come out of and where do they go when they are done?

We hope that these questions will not only help you explore your gongfu preparation more, but that they will also shed some light on this poem—so central to our tradition—and help pave the road for some greater transformations in your tea practice and life...



ROASTING OOLONG TEA

Wu De



茶道

A lot of the quality in an oolong tea is in the roast, and you can tell when you come into a room where it's baking: The fragrance uplifts everything, reminding you of all the reasons why you fell in love with Tea in the first place! There is no clearer demonstration of this as when you cup some yet-to-be-roasted rough tea from the farm (*maocha*) and find a clearly superior tea, only to return after the leaves have been roasted and find that the tea you selected is no longer the best. Even though everyone present could agree that the finest tea was smoother, clearer and processed so well, the roast has had such a huge impact on the oolong tea that another tea is clearly the best of the bunch. And since oolong is a roasted tea, whether light or heavy, this means that what we take home to enjoy at the end of the day is as much in the roast as it is in the leaves!

Traditionally, very little oolong tea in Taiwan was roasted by farmers themselves. They would produce the *maocha* and the shop owners would roast it. This increased the amount of skill and heritage in oolong tea, as there were secrets and traditions, skills and roasting methods passed on for generations just like the farming or brewing techniques—enhancing and enriching tea culture in general. One of the things that makes tea so special, in fact, is that the leaves aren't the finished product, the liquor in the cup is. In that way, the brewer is as essential to the process as the Nature that produced the

tree, the sun and rain that made the leaf or the farmer that plucked and processed it.

This trend of roasting tea in shops seems to be dying in Taiwan, as more shops move towards commercial presentation and tea preparation and more farmers begin to roast their own teas. Customers often choose to buy their teas

directly from farmers these days, and as a result some shops will eventually go out of business.

As we talked with Master Lu Li Zhen about all this, he commented that it was a shame because nowadays anybody, without any knowledge, skill or tradition in tea can open a tea shop. Back in the day, shop owners like Master Lu worked



in relationship with farmers to produce the kinds of tea they wanted, and then they roasted the tea themselves to suit their taste, or the taste of their customers.

Although such master roasters aren't as common as before, they are still around Taiwan. Master Lu, as we discussed, roasts all his own teas, and still has the same relationships with tea farmers that he has cultivated for decades. And when a master roasts a fine oolong tea, you can really tell the difference!

Oolong tea can be roasted with charcoal, as it was traditionally, or electrically. Master Lu does all his roasting in electric machines. As he makes a great variety of teas, his roasting time also varies greatly—from twelve to seventy hours. Darker teas like Tie Guan Yin will need to be watched and checked on for the duration of what is, essentially, three days.

There are different schools of thought when it comes to roasting oolong, and some of them relate to the discussions we've had in previous issues concerning aging oolong: Some farmers or roasters suggest that the tea should be roasted in sessions, stopping and starting again, whilst others think that the tea

“Roasting takes a lot of skill, some of which can be learned and some which is cultivated by years of experience.”

should be roasted in one session. As some of you will remember, we discussed how some people roast a tea once and then age it, while others open the jar every few years and re-roast again, ostensibly to get rid

of humidity and any unwanted flavors that have accumulated. Like Master Lu, our experience shows that the single-session philosophy always makes better tea, in both roasting and aging oolong.

Once or Several Times

Master Lu discussed with us that you really only have the one chance to bring the best out of a tea. It is all about knowing the tea and then choosing a temperature and time to roast it, watching it and rotating the shelves in the roaster. It takes a lot of skill, some of which can be learned and some which is cultivated by years of experience. When oolong is re-roasted throughout its aging, it often ends up tasting exclusively of roast. And with such re-roasted tea, it is always easier to lie about the age and bump up the price, since it all



starts to taste the same after it has been roasted and re-roasted a few times.

The best roasting always enhances the tea and leaves no trace of itself. In Chinese, they say that the roast (*pei*, 焙) enhances the tea without any fragrance or flavor of fire (*huo*, 火). When you smell teas that Master Lu has roasted, you smell nutty, fruity, roasty aromas but do not smell anything burnt or carbony. If the tea is roasted too strongly, it tastes burnt. When smelling the dry leaves of such tea, the aroma pinches the nostrils and burns slightly when you inhale. A fine oolong, on the other hand, is inhaled very deeply and comfortably; and though you will smell the roast, there is no fire or burning sensation accompanying this. A good way to begin to sense this is to focus on the way the air feels in your nostrils—the sensation(s) of its touch—as opposed to the fragrance itself.

Sometimes teas that were roasted more heavily with charcoal, like Wuyi Cliff Tea or Anxi/Muzha Tie Guan Yin, the shop owners wouldn't sell the spring tea of a given year until New Year of the next, in order to let the fire in the roast cool down to the point where you couldn't smell or taste it. Alternatively, some vendors, then and now, would sell the tea, but encourage the customer to store it for some time before opening the bag.

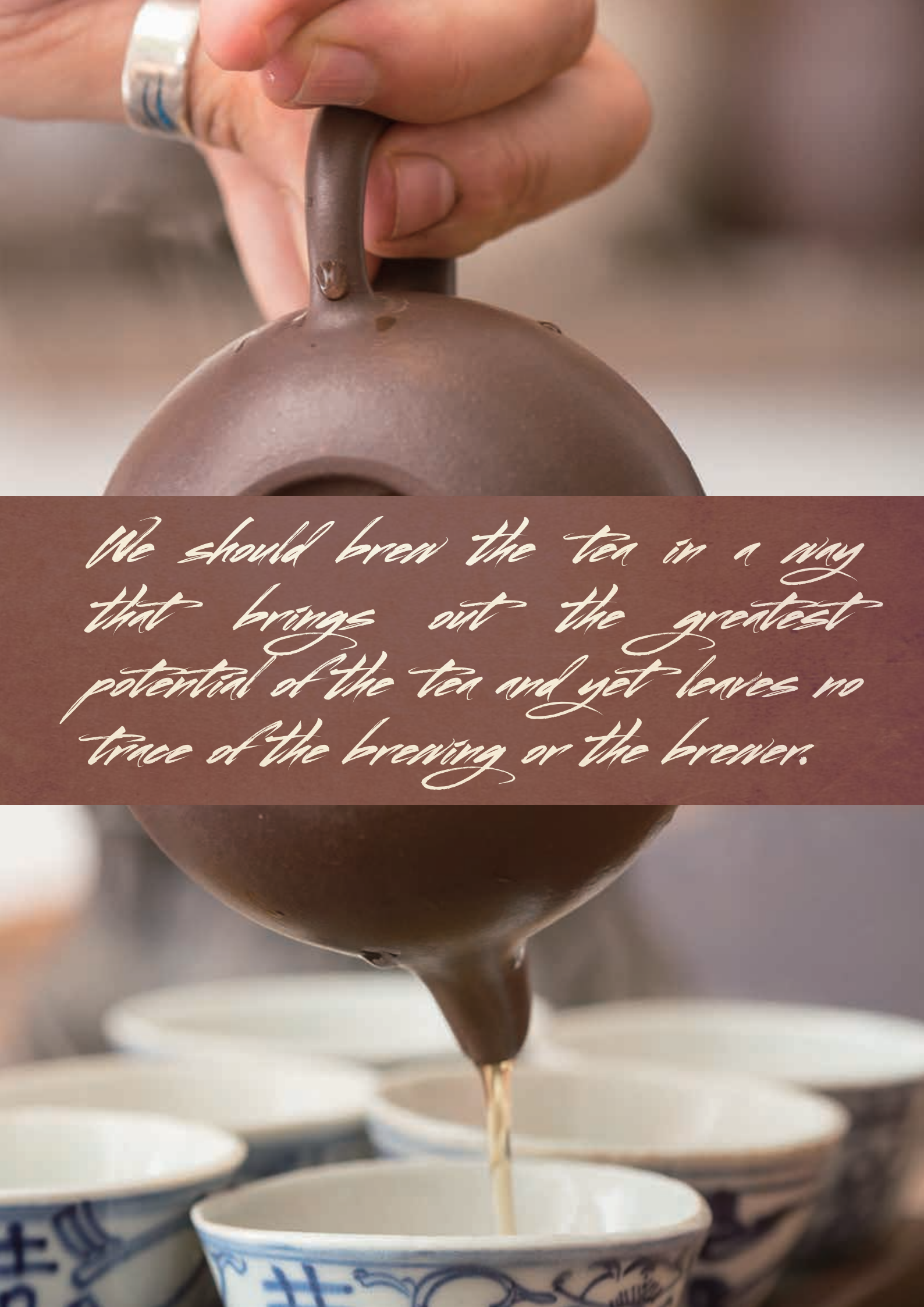
Roasting as a Dao

There is a lot of depth in understanding that each stage of tea processing should enhance the tea without leaving a trace of itself. The firing should enhance the tea by removing enzymes that make it bitter and arresting oxidation, but should do so in a way that leaves no flavor of de-enzyming. Similarly, the rolling of tea should help break down the cells and shape the tea without leaving a taste or fla-

vor of rolling. And, as we have discussed, the roasting and aging of a tea should also improve it without marking it—teas marked by the environment in which they are aged will never be as nice as clear, clean and peacefully aged teas. (In a way you can think of aging tea like meditation: a comfortable, clean and peaceful environment is more conducive to success.) In the same way, the brewing of tea should also follow this trend: we should brew the tea in a way that brings out the greatest potential of the tea and yet leaves no trace of the brewing or the brewer.

If you can taste the teaware or the mind of the brewer, this will adulterate the tea, and what might have been a fine tea will be ruined. This often happens in tea shops when money and business are discussed over tea. Like a fine roast, our teaware should lift the tea up so that it can shine, but without disturbing it. You might think of the teaware, brewing and the brewer as all the props and stagehands that go into a great concert. The stagehands, sound and lighting technicians are all there to enhance the performance of the star, but they should do so in an unseen way. The audience should never know they are there. If you hear the soundman tinkering with the sound, he hasn't yet mastered his art. And that is what we should strive for in the gongfu of tea, whether in the roasting or in the brewing. And this month's Buddha's Palm tea is a testament to that, and appreciating the aroma of the dry leaves and the liquor says a lot about what a master roaster like Master Lu can do with a fine oolong tea!



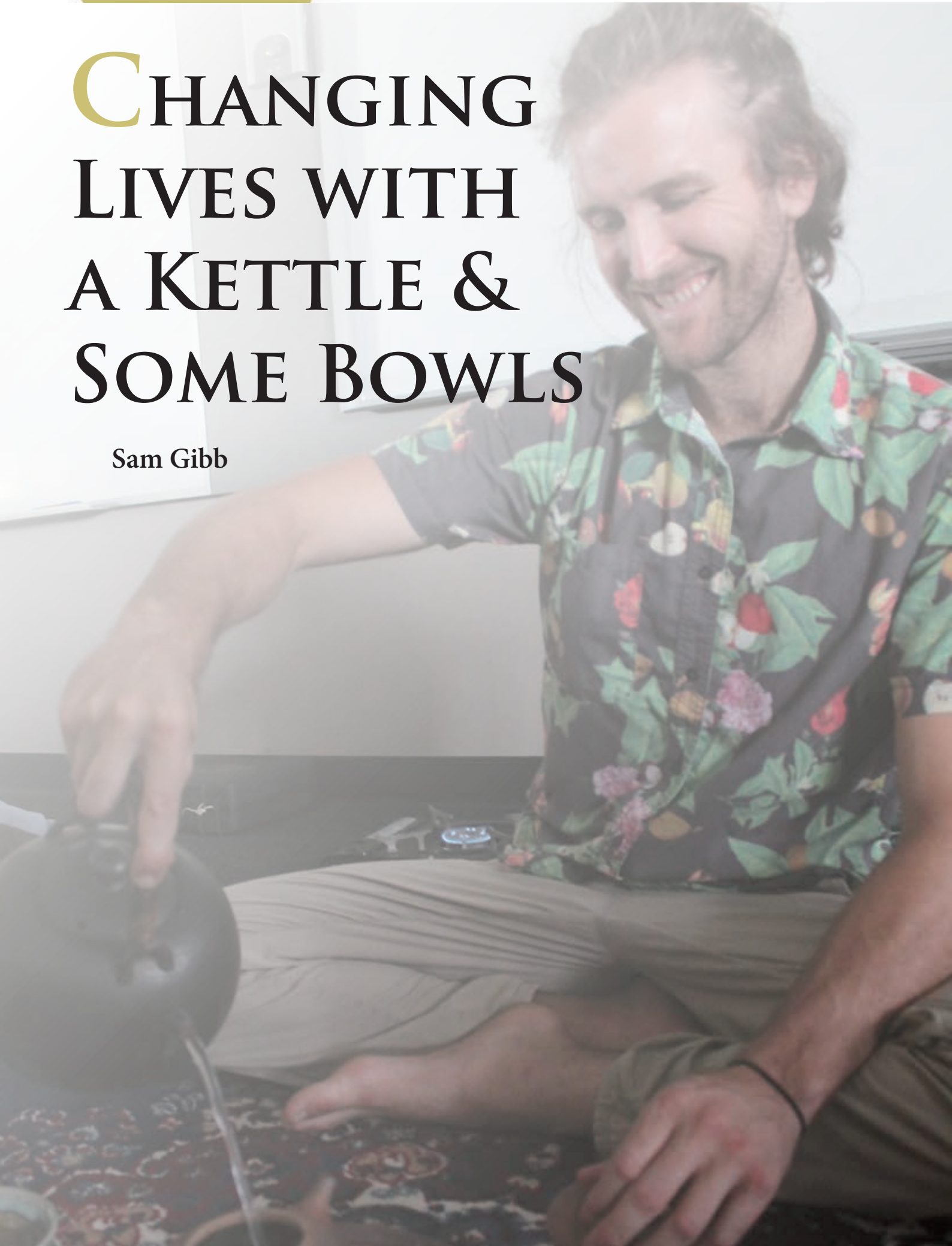


We should brew the tea in a way that brings out the greatest potential of the tea and yet leaves no trace of the brewing or the brewer.

Voices from the Hot

CHANGING LIVES WITH A KETTLE & SOME BOWLS

Sam Gibb



This is one of the most inspiring stories our community has produced; one that may moisten your eyes... Our Tea brother Sam started causally serving tea to some of his students on a camping trip. Over the course of the next few months, these amazing young people started to transform, and so did he. We offered all these participating students a free month of Global Tea Hut if they'd also share with us their experiences surrounding Tea. This is a beautiful tale best read over a bowl of your favorite tea.

茶友

So often I look around and feel we have it all backwards: Society is not an easy place to live, to *really* live. It seems we are encouraged to numb ourselves to experience. At every turn there is an escape, a way to avoid things we do not accept or over-indulge in things we find pleasurable. We are encouraged all the time to bury our heads in the sand so we do not have to face our lives.

As a middle school teacher, I see this so clearly in my students. The moment something bores them, they are upset or unfocused, their phones are out and their heads are in the sand. It is almost automatic. Sometimes I wonder whether they even had a chance.

Then I look at my own life and realize I am no different. I am no better. I do the same things. I do not have a phone or Facebook for this very reason. I use them to hide. But even in getting rid of these things, I am still running. Because I get so frustrated with myself for not being able to have self-control or discipline I throw these things away. They feel too big an obstacle, so I don't want to face them.

Within these few paragraphs lies the essence of why I am leaving teaching, I think. Ultimately, the role of a teacher is to guide students—guide them towards a better life, a more authentic version of themselves and to show them by example how to face existence. Perhaps one could say I am merely running away again, but I do not feel I can be this example. Despite my

efforts, I feel for the most part like I've let my students down. While I loved them and they loved me, which is an amazing experience in itself, I am not ready to be a guide to others.

Before I became a teacher, I had done a lot of things. I was blessed with a good education that opened a lot of doors for me. But I came to the realization that most of these doors did not take me anywhere I wanted to go.

“Contemplation, for me, seems central to living. For growth, for understanding and for being. I have often wondered how I could share this with my students...”

After sitting my first Vipassana course some five years ago, I had my first glimpse of the path that I was meant to walk. Since then I sort of oscillated between the externally and internally focused realms. I jumped from advertising to monastery, ashram to refugee camp, trying to find a balance, bring the two together, and dissolve the barrier. I never really achieved this, but I believe this was my intention when I became a teacher—to bring the self-reflective, spiritual realm into my students' lives.

Contemplation, for me, seems central to living. For growth, for understanding and for being. I have

often wondered how I could share this with my students. For two years they have had to meditate for a few minutes at the start of every lesson. Perhaps some have benefited from this, while others have not, but it's always felt like something imposed on them. I don't believe growth or Spirit can be forced on anyone. It is only when we knock that the door is opened.

Most of you turning these pages will have some experience of the power of Tea, and Her ability to transmit Stillness and guide us through the forest of noise to a quiet spring within. My first experience of sharing this with my students came at a year eight camp. It was something I stumbled upon really. I had set a resolve to practice daily, and so had brought a few bowls and a thermos along for the ride. Every morning at 5am I would wander down to the lake to drink Tea and meditate. I was surprised to find that the very first morning two students were waiting for me—two students that I had taught for the year and had always resisted meditation. And by resisted, I mean refused! They were in a scattered group of students within every class that would just stare at you as you guided the class through the meditation with eyes that said, “Try and make me, you weird hippie”. So before the sun had risen over the lake we sat and drank Tea, watching the crocodiles silently moving through the water.

Later that day, another two students asked to drink some Tea. Shocked again, we headed down

to the lake and sat in the shade of a tree, hiding from the oppressive Australian Outback sun. We drank in silence for forty minutes, which was at the time the longest time I'd spent in silence with a student. Afterwards, we did not talk much, but I overheard one say to the other: "The patterns in the tree's leaves are amazing! I've never noticed them before!" To which her friend replied, "I know, and did you see the way the sunlight was shining through the trees; it was awesome!" I just smiled...

The next morning, I was up at 5am again and surprised to see that our numbers had grown: *some five students awaited me this time!* I was delighted by the motley crew that awaited me this time. After drinking with the sunrise for a second morn-

ing, some sat with me as I meditated and others headed back up to camp. Later that evening, while most students were playing games, a small group asked to have Tea and we sat under the stars while the chaos raged around us, bowls in hand.

A Second Chance

The two-day camp was soon over and I was back in the classroom trying to get the same students to meditate—back to pushing the boulder up the hill. I had thought about drinking Tea at school but this idea never developed. The camping trip still stuck out in my mind, and when I was asked to go on a year nine weeklong camping trip a few months later, I decided to focus on

servicing Tea to students during this trip. So I packed up my kettles, pots and bowls, preparing to more thoroughly introduce my students to Cha Dao.

This time, I was lucky enough to have Dan along with me. He is a dear friend, colleague, spiritual brother and my general partner in crime. We rose on the first morning and after some yoga and meditation a group of boys drifted over to the tree we were set up at. Just as the sun rose, I found myself once again sitting with an unlikely group of students drinking Tea in silence. Over the next few days, I shared Tea a number of times: some in silence, some over deeper conversation, but I always left with the feeling that the students had experienced something



they had not been exposed to, something out of the ordinary for them.

Halfway through the week, we moved camp. Our new site was in a dried-up riverbed, surrounded by lush tropical forest. This was where the power and potential for Tea with youth was really shown to me. By this point I had drunk Tea with a large portion of the students, so I set up regular drinking times at 5.30am, lunchtime and another in the evening. At 5.30am, I had a full table of ten students, sitting in silence waiting to be served. And this continued every morning for the rest of the trip! Every ceremony was done in silence and every time I was either at capacity or close to it.

Perhaps one of the most illuminating experiences happened at midnight after two extremely rambunc-

tious students had been swearing, breaking tents and threatening to “skull drag” a teacher. Our principal suggested we all sit for Tea. After only three bowls of Tea, the two boys excused themselves, walked over to their tent and fell straight to sleep while the teachers stayed and drank more under the stars.

Back to School

Upon returning to school, a small core group that was really drawn in by the Leaf asked me to continue the ceremonies. So, for the last three months, I have served Tea every Monday after school, and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my short teaching career. Every week, between six to ten students from all year levels join me for Tea. We sit for an hour in silence as music plays and incense burns with our bowls in hand.

These days, the students set everything up and I just watch. They meet me at the door asking what Tea we will be drinking and the old hands quiet those that talk during the ceremony. Seven students started drinking Tea at home on a regular basis, some rising early for three bowls in the morning while others drink theirs in the garden during the afternoon. In one of my younger students, I’ve noticed an especially radical shift starting to take place: He’s started opening up, dropping his guard, speaking with confidence, smiling a lot more, socializing with others and generally he just seems much happier! Teachers have made comments about his improvements and I see he has a lot more friends than before. He tells me he is not as sad all the time after drinking Tea and that life does not seem as bad.

I love my job. (Well, I don’t actually love the job part, but I love the students whom I work with.) Working with youth is such an inspiring privilege that I often do

not honor in the way it deserves. I spend lunchtime sitting and eating with students because I love being in their presence. I do not know what happens to us as we grow older, but my kids seem so quick to love and forget mistakes you made with the same ease. Teaching middle school has been one of those opportunities that have challenged me in so many ways. Like all human systems, it seems to be so broken. In many ways, schools reflect our society: There is a focus on obedience, outward success and competition. I often find myself falling into demanding these things of my students, even though they feel empty. I then see my kids taking on these values. Schools also seem to be echoing society in the movement away from Stillness and connection. For the easily distracted mind, there are so many outs these days...

But for those students drawn to the Leaf, Tea seems like an amazing gateway into Stillness. As with all of us, Tea guides them deeper within their experience, offering insight and tranquility along the way. This seems so important and needed in the lives of my students. Seeing the changes and effects it has had on some of these students gives me a sense of hope, not just for them but also for all of humanity!

Wu De told me you have to draw a circle around one area of your life and in that be who you would like to be. I am trying to draw that circle around my Cha Dao, making it a path I walk fully with my heart. While I think there are many areas of being a teacher in which I was untrue to myself, perhaps in this one area I came close to really serving my students. Mother Teresa said, *“In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.”* Maybe this is closer to the truth of it, that while serving Tea I did one small act with great love. And it is amazing the impact those small acts can have...





The Students' Experiences

Ben

I enjoyed learning about Tea at school because I was curious about it. I do drink Tea at home in the mornings now and life is not as bad. I am interested in the impact Tea has on people's everyday lives both mentally and physically. I've learnt that the Tea ceremony makes you one with Nature and clears the mind. I do think that after school finishes, I will still do Tea ceremonies and enjoy drinking Tea. Since I started drinking Tea, I am not as sad all the time.

Lachlan


Hi! My name is Lachlan Miller and I have been asked to write this paragraph on behalf of the Mackillop Catholic College Tea group. When I first heard about this group, I asked what a Tea ceremony was. Luckily, one of my friends was in it so he informed me on what it was and how it helped in day to day living. Examples are that it calms your mind, relieves pain and helps your overall mental health. When I was first told of the benefits of Tea drinking by my friend, I was pretty skeptical on these things but I went along anyway. I was excited and curious, as most kids would be. When I arrived I saw my friend and the other kids sitting down. The teacher ushered me over and I sat down and copied the other kids. I listened to the music and started to feel relaxed and I was surprised that I was. I waited for my first cup of Tea and when it came I drank it. A sudden warmth came over me and I was completely calm, nothing distracting me, nothing in my mind, no troubles or anger; and for the first time in my life I felt at one with myself. A true happiness had overcome me and I became calmer and calmer. As it went on, I had no muscle pain anywhere. I was centered. When it finished, I had never felt better in my life. So far the Tea had done everything my friend had said it would. I was calm, happy and painless. That day, I went home and did some work. I had never been so focused and it was all thanks to some Tea and music. I was amazed. The thing about Tea that I enjoy the most is the feeling you get from it. I feel calm and happy after drinking Tea at school, more than I've ever been. I've noticed many changes in my life since I've started drinking Tea, such as being more focused, in less pain and I'm happier.

Mackinlay

When I drink Tea the world seems to slow down. You have to be very still and not talk for the Tea to do its magic.

Amelia

I like Tea because of a few reasons. One reason is that I like the way I feel after I drink it; it feels like I've been given relaxation pills or something. Another reason is that I love all the different flavors. Flavors like oolong or GABA. Tea for me is a safe, peaceful place.



It's amazing to read about all the ways Tea has helped these young people, some of which are struggling with the values of society or coming from troubled homes or neighborhoods. Their voices are clean and simple, demonstrating sentiment without too much gloss. And this can help inspire us all to take Tea where She's needed: to nursing homes and troubled youth, etc., etc. This medicine is needed now more than ever!



Dear Tea Lovers,

I'm Mackayla McGowan from Mackillop Catholic College in the Northern Territory of Australia. My teacher Mr. Gibb introduced me to real Tea. Not the Tea you buy in the supermarket. Tea that when you drink it, it clears your mind and any tense muscles. It is the number one cure for many illnesses you might have. There is a large range of Tea, so many that I may not be able to try all of them. But I will try my very best to try different Teas and show other people. You may think Tea is gross. You may be drinking the wrong Tea. I'm sure you will find one you will enjoy. Tea is also a great liquid to drink if you are trying to lose weight.

The thing that inspires me the most about Tea is that each one is unique, just like people are. I also like when the Tea is hot and you can feel it going into your stomach. Once I have Tea at school I feel like the stress has been lifted off my shoulders from the day I just had. Then I would be a nice, calm person when I get home. I have my own little Tea ceremony on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. I have noticed I sleep better because I am calm and collected. Tea feels like a light of power going into every part of my body, relaxing it and giving it power, especially my heart and brain. Tea is a form of energy that allows me to have an open and clear mind. If I could drink Tea with anyone it would be the person who owns Lipton Ice Tea to prove to him what real Tea is. I love all the different ways of having Tea and meditating as well as that Tea has been used as a form of medicine helping people with great sicknesses.

So guys, get out there! There is a whole world of Tea just waiting to be discovered. These are my opinions, feelings and emotions about Tea.

From,
Mackayla McGowan



Cameron

The first Tea ceremony was at camp. I'd had a rough day and Mr. Gibb invited me to a Tea ceremony. At first, I was skeptical, but by the end I was relaxed and nothing could ruin my mood, not even Joseph! Best thing ever! So I kept on coming back and now you know what happened in my first Tea ceremony. And it is also the reason why I come back.

Felix

I think Tea is a great type of meditation because of the concept of being able to drink something that has been used for thousands of years for meditation and medical purposes. I like drinking Tea because of the way it makes me feel when drinking it and afterwards. The Tea makes me feel calm and relaxed with the taste and the warmth of the Tea running down my body into my belly. After we finish Tea at school, I feel better after a big day of school because it gives me quiet time to reflect on the day. I drink Tea around six days a week, not including Mondays because I drink at school. I drink in the mornings, but if I miss out in the morning I do it at night. Tea in the mornings sometimes cures sore throats or headaches, but in school I am calm for most of the day. My favorite Tea would be an oolong because they just have a good taste and it was one of the first Teas that I drank. I would like to learn where Teas are grown because I am interested if they are grown on a farm or in the wild and I would also like to learn about all the types of Tea. I have served Tea to my brother and sister a few times. When I serve Tea to them it is a lot different to when it is getting served to you. Overall, Tea is a great social or private drink that can cure people and make them feel calm and better. While I haven't noticed any major changes in my life, I have been a lot calmer. I think these changes will get a lot stronger as I proceed with drinking Tea.



Sarah

The thing about Tea that I enjoy the most is how it calms and relaxes you but at the same time makes you aware of your surroundings. After drinking Tea at school, at first I feel tired, like I could go to sleep. But then it's like all the energy I saved during the Tea ceremony comes back to me like an energy rush. It's a hard feeling to explain. I get this feeling quite a lot as I drink Tea every second morning at home. Also, I feel on the mornings I don't drink Tea that it is harder to focus on something for a long period of time and I feel restless most of the day. Whereas on the mornings I do drink Tea, it is a lot easier to get my work done and I get more time to myself. I think everyone likes me more on those days. I feel I don't really have a favorite Tea because for 1) I don't know many Tea names and 2) I think although they are all so different I like them all the same. One thing I would really like to learn about Tea is how it can help or improve injuries, mentally and physically. I would like to do this so I can spread the word about Tea and get everyone interested in trying it. I think that Tea is an amazing thing and it should be shared. I am definitely going to continue to drink Tea and encourage all of my friends to join me.

Nathan

Tea helps you and makes you feel happy, restores your energy and tastes good. Different Teas can help you in different ways. I reckon everyone should have some. I don't drink Tea at home but I would like to. I would do it out in my front lawn in the morning. The thing I like about Tea the most is that it relaxes you right down afterwards.

TEA MEDICINE

A REVIEW

Mike Baas

We wanted someone in the Hut to review Wu De's new book. And Mike's the perfect one, for his insight and the heart of a student he bears, which Wu De reminds us is also the heart of a master.

茶道

If we are lucky and our karma is ripe, our first true encounter with Tea will come by way of a Tea session with a master. By means of hot water and leaves, bowls and cups and some seemingly esoteric formalities, the master reveals that there is indeed a Way, via Tea, that one can travel upon towards a promise of fulfillment. You find yourself overwhelmingly grateful, changed, and wanting nothing more than to pass the knowledge of this Way onto others. But after the last cup is cleaned, the guests have all departed, including you, the wisdom that was so pristine and obvious just moments ago starts to slip away. Once home, you find that the methodologies employed so effortlessly by the master are clearly not yet your own! The Path is suddenly very long and daunting! Overwhelmed, in a typical modern fashion, you desperately search the Amazon catalog for help—and you find *Tea Medicine* in paperback!

Tea Medicine is a paradisaic crash course for a most-fortunate Tea apprentice, namely you, through the vast world of Cha Dao. The author consecrates each chapter by graciously “serving” you a new type of Tea and introducing a new method of Tea preparation in a beautiful setting. The first sips of Tea act as stepping-stones for the lessons to follow. These introductions are so well written; one cannot help but be transported to each Tea session (and one can certainly emulate each one as you proceed through the book!).

The arc of the first section, “Book I: The Medicine of Tea”, begins by establishing the foundation of properly drinking bowl Tea and how that relates to the cultivation of health. As the apprentice, bowl in hand, starts the journey down the road to health, they slowly become more connected and integrated into all the elements involved. Having found answers to the question “Why Tea”, the apprentice then works to experience the subtle importance of properly prepared

“There is no mastery in self service. In this tradition, we don't learn to make Tea but to serve Tea. True mastery must be in the service of mankind.”

—From the *Five-Fold Essence of Tea*

leaves, water and fire on our well-being. Practical lessons are soon swapped out for the deeper substance of “Book II: The Teachings of Tea”. For the apprentice, this is where the Tea life really begins; for here Tea requires that they cultivate the inner virtues and orientation that will work part and parcel with the outer formalities of Tea preparation in order to truly be of service.

Did I mention there was homework? Punctuating each lesson is a homework assignment, which you will feel encouraged to attempt

before the next day's Tea! As the book progresses, the assignments become more challenging: the baby step of serving Tea awkwardly for a friend becomes the giant step of serving Tea in public for strangers. The easy and relaxing personal cultivation of the stuff of Tea becomes the more difficult pursuit of self-actualization through service.

The third section, “Book III: The Sutras of Tea” spells out the service path in precise language, inculcating and distilling the lessons of the entire book down to their essence, codifying the Tea tradition espoused by the author. It is lovely to now have these sutras available in print!

A master is one who has walked far down the path and has the skillful means to share what they have learned with others in a meaningful and impactful way, one that has the potential to produce real beneficial change in another. When mastery has ripened to the necessary degree, it is a blessing when it gets enthusiastically poured forth into the world, as it now has in this book. This master author's vehicles, underpinned by Tea, are the inspired written word, sublime Tea-themed artwork, poignant photographs and a beautiful typesetting, well executed in every way, especially for a self-published work. This book belongs amongst those reserved for reading only in a sacred space, and of course along with a mandatory cup of Tea.

Each chapter is meant to be digested over time and practiced.

Some of the homework, like taking a day off to do “nothing”, will push you outside of your comfort zone to reveal what real service to Tea feels like. I strongly believe that as you attempt what each chapter asks of you, you will begin to find the Way you have always been looking for.

Please allow me now, humbled, to acknowledge that the voice of the “master” speaking in first-person throughout, imparting the medicine of *Tea Medicine*, is none other than our beloved Wu De. On behalf of the GTH community, I put myself beneath Wu De in gratitude for giving us everything he has for this

book and distilling it down so that it can be consumed and we can be better for it.

Perhaps we all can practice what it asks of us and become masters in turn, first of ourselves, and then once we too ripen, for the benefit of others...

Tips for Reading Tea Medicine

- 1) Emulate each chapter’s tea session to the best of your ability as you start the day’s reading. More experienced tea drinkers will have an easier time at this, perhaps having some prior experience and access to the various teas served in the book. Those who are just starting out with Cha Dao might be advised to serve tea to themselves in whatever way is comfortable and upon returning for a second reading, stretch out their techniques with the more diverse teas and preparation methods. By drinking lots of different kinds of tea, see how the quality of your mind changes as you read and process the information in the book.
- 2) Read the book in a sacred space. Don’t just lounge around on the couch in a prone position, casually taking sips from a mug, reading to pass the time away. Try sitting upright on the floor and reading in between bowls, holding the bowl with reverence at heart center, holding the book with reverence at heart center in turn. When drinking tea, drink tea. When reading the book, read the book.
- 3) Be open to the information. Just like we have heard about red tea being black tea and black tea not having an English name so many times, read as if this is the very first time you are hearing about it. Beginner’s mind will unlock the hidden potential in each chapter’s lesson and is a mechanism for developing mastery.
- 4) Digest each chapter fully. Tea will tell you when it is time to stop or start reading. Reflect on the questions at the end of each chapter and find your own wisdom. Nothing that Wu De imparts is not already in you or in Tea. Sit with Tea and allow it to answer any questions you have before acting on the impulse to reach out to another for advice.



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 Matt Hansen:

I have heard people say they have life-changing experiences when traveling abroad. While this was certainly true for me during my first trip to Taiwan, what was more profound when visiting the Tea Sage Hut in Miao Li was having a multitude of life-*confirming* experiences. The biggest confirmation was how important it is for us humans to trust our intuitions and not be led astray by fear, but rather to be driven by love and follow the subtle yet powerful signs life provides us. Unfortunately, it is sometimes too easy to stick to social norms or worry about what others will think no matter how unhealthy a current lifestyle may be. I had no idea what I was doing when I booked my ticket to Taiwan. I didn't even know anything about Global Tea Hut at the time. I just knew that if I booked a ticket, the Universe would provide. How did I know? A little Leaf told me!

I remember sitting in a teahouse in Portland, Oregon with a good friend of mine. I'm not quite sure how we ended up there but neither of us had ever tried anything but stale Lipton or Celestial Seasonings and knew nothing about Tea culture. The first genuine Tea conversation was with a Yunnan gold tip "black" Tea commonly known as "Emperor's Gold". I will never forget the feeling it gave me. After my first sip, I could feel a warming sensation spread through my body from my throat to my stomach to the tips of my fingers down to the tips of my toes. I just sat there in silence for a few seconds listening to this experience and I knew what I had just put in my body was going to steer my existence down a wonderful path. In the following years, I learned to trust myself in new ways through the advice of Tea. By this I mean sitting in silence sipping Tea and welcoming the calm and clear sensations the warm liquor brought to my body and mind. Devoting time, space and conscious energy to create an open dialogue with Tea allowed a bond to form between this magical Leaf and myself.

As a musician I have attempted to explore, accept and steep in quite a diverse range of emotional/energetic states in order to better speak through my music. During the first silent Tea session I had with the Global Tea Hut group a gushing fountain of pulsing energy drenched my body and inspired my heart to awaken and soar through the Heavens. The energy had such a deep-rooted wisdom and sense of




healing, it felt like it could unravel the tightest knot any physical being could emotionally create within its body. The amount of unconditional love coursing through my marrow felt like an overflowing kettle of boiling water bubbling over with feelings of gratitude and happiness. I was grateful for being allowed to participate in such a beautiful community surrounded by beings opening their hearts and allowing love to saturate the air around them. I felt happy to share these feelings by being present and knowing each person around me has, consciously or unconsciously, accepted Tea as a vehicle for bringing love into their lives.


These life-*confirming* experiences have helped me consciously change my life by bringing the awareness of equanimity and love into each thought that passes through my mind. Love is alive and well, my friends. It is patiently waiting for you to find it in various places in your life and be a conduit to share its sacred power to all those around you. Be bold. Take chances. Create a life for yourself that speaks from your heart! The entire Universe will thank you.


Please feel free to reach out to me with the email address below. I look forward to sharing a cup of Tea with all of you wonderful people...


matt.bassplayer@gmail.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 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 livingteauk@gmail.com.


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





Center News

 Before you visit, check out the center's *new* 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 less than fifty remain! Check out our website for details: www.globalteahut/lmlcakes.html

 Unbelievably, Jared Krause finally came to Taiwan. What a great time we're having with our brother here :)

 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, *Tea Medicine*, is out and ready to be purchased. Check our site for details!

JANUARY AFFIRMATION

I am committed to a New Year of Growth

Am I focused on organizing my life in a way that is conducive to my growth?



Wu De's New Zealand and Australia Tour

Tea Master, Zen Monk and Artist

Tour Dates:

New Zealand: 31st January - 5th February

Brisbane: 6th - 10th February

Sydney: 11th - 12th February

Geelong: 13th February

Melbourne: 14th - 16th February

Contact Details:

There are extremely limited spaces. For bookings or more information please email sdsgibb@gmail.com